OPEN: 6:31 pm

THE COMMON COUNCIL IS HOLDING THIS PUBLIC HEARING ON THE RE-ENVISION PUBLIC SAFETY TASKFORCE REPORT

Facebook https://www.facebook.com/events/1035567706955617

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

When: Feb 11, 2021 06:30 PM

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89879614677?pwd=MIFDNIdGNTRLZ1huNGdLcVQ4c202QT09

Passcode: Q5itJcis

TO JOIN BY PHONE: Dial

    : +1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 898 7961 4677

Passcode: 41696252

WRITTEN COMMENTS

SPEAKERS: (NS= no show. I=in favor of SROs NI= Opposed to SROs)
Lesler Strong – overview of taskforce report
Jean Jacobs   I

Amanda Sisente   NI

Val Dwyer   I

Pat Pellicano   NI

Rose Quinn   NI

Elizabeth Render   NI

Debra Fitzgerald   I

Steven Spicer   I

Suzanne Timbrouck   I

Brian Timbrouck   I

Lisa Royer   NI

Callie Jane   NI

Malia Cordel   NI

Kyla Thomas   I

Joann Reposa (NS)

Pat Ford   I

Lisa Mitten   NI

CLOSED 8:13 pm

Written comment until 2/17/2021 noon

Tinti, Elisa

My husband and I are writing in support of keeping our SRO's in our schools. We have two daughters in the Kingston City School District and having an SRO in their buildings gives us peace of mind throughout our day. Our older daughter started Miller Middle school last year and had all of the normal worries and anxieties that come along with transitioning to a new school. Upon arrival she was met by Officer Killian and she entered the building with a huge smile and never looked back! Having an SRO makes her feel safe and protected. Many of the SRO's have formed positive relationships with the kids they see on a daily basis. Every friend and family member I have spoken to regarding this topic feels as we do, thankful! I know there is a report stating "trauma" caused by the presence of an SRO, never have I heard of this from any children or families. Sometimes the loudest, or most vocal, do not represent the majority.

I am also an educator in the district and I wish there could be an SRO in every building. Knowing an armed officer is in the building deters crime, and sets the tone that crime is not welcome here. We all deserve to feel safe and protected. Especially with the recent violence taking place in our community. The idea of removing our SRO's is a terrible one. I hope we can keep them, and definitely allow them to remain armed. How are our children supposed to be protected from an active shooter without them?

Donald R. and Rhea Checksfield

1

From:	Tara S <taraseoane@hotmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, February 09, 2021 4:09 PM
To:	Tinti, Elisa
Subject:	[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Comments on Re-envision Public Safety Task Force report

Hi,

I can't make the meeting on Thur 2/11 but would like my comment below read at the meeting:

I looked over the document the Re-envision Public Safety Task Force released. I also checked out the link to the FBI report Amy references in her SRO section where she states the following -

"Finally, there is a misconception that police in schools make schools safer and deter mass shootings. A study of Active Shooters Incidents in the United States between 2000 and 2013 conducted by the FBI found that in 27 mass shootings that occurred in schools, only one was brought to an end by an armed school security guard. The rest were brought to an end by responding police officers, school employees or suicide." - end quote

I believe she's being disingenuous and deceptive concluding it's a "misconception that police in schools make schools safer and deter mass shootings."

There are only two mentions of SRO'S in that FBI report and in one case the shooter committed suicide as the SRO approached. The other shooter got grabbed by a guidance counselor and taken into custody by an SRO. (She was correct in those cases.)

However, it's very possible the other schools did not even have SRO's. The report doesn't mention the presence or absence of them. And on the flip side how many schools did would-be-shooters decide not to target because they have SRO's? We'll probably never know since those shootings didn't happen. Also, if other shootings were brought to an end when responding police arrived wouldn't it make sense to already have a SRO in the school, thereby cutting response time?!

Thanks,
Tara

1

From:	Kim Williams <kimmiee1390@msn.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, February 09, 2021 5:15 PM
To:	Tinti, Elisa
Cc:	Val Dwyer
Subject:	[EXTERNAL EMAIL] SROs

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this email in support of keeping School Resource Officers in the Kingston City Schools.

My child is a graduate of Kingston City Schools and I am an employee of the district.
I have seen on numerous occasions when the SROs have come together to present to the students at the elementary level a presentation on social media and internet safety, Officer Kurz, Officer Woltman, and Officer Killian (Ulster). I have also been a witness to the SROs coming to the elementary schools and introducing themselves so the students going into the middle schools had a familiar face and someone to seek out if they needed it. They have even done a question and answer session.

If you have ever been to a sporting event at Deitz stadium you would see the students approach the SROs as well as other officers on assignment for security and chat with them, the youth weren't sneaking or avoiding them unless they were up to no good. At graduation, the number of students that would fist bump and even hug SRO Harry Woltman (now retired) would give you a small indication of the positive impact these officers have had on our youth.

When there is a walking field trip, the SROs arrange security along the route to make sure all students are safe and accounted for and that the route is secure. Schools have to do their evacuation drill to an undisclosed location, it is the SROs that also make sure the students, staff and route are safe. Schools also have SROs available during lockout or lockdown drills, so that in case of a real situation we are all prepared and work together as a team.

Officer Killian is seen playing basketball with the students during recess in many Facebook posts. Officer Woltman and Officer Kurz would dress up for a themed Halloween. These are just a few of many positive impacts the SROs have on our youth.

I would also like to respectfully request transparency on the situations that are referred to as causing trauma. I realize the complainant is under age so if you could provide to the public the dates, locations, age of complainant and the Officer involved as well as the outcome of the investigation of said incidents that would be greatly appreciated.

Please read this email at the 2/7/21 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Williams
Sent from my iPhone
ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

1

From:	goldens120@aol.com
Sent:	Tuesday, February 09, 2021 2:57 PM
To:	Tinti, Elisa
Subject:	[EXTERNAL EMAIL] SRO's in KHS

Dear Ms. Tinti,

My husband and I live in Kingston, NY and while we do not currently have any children in KHS we take an interest in everything that affects Kingston.

We strongly support SRO presence in Kingston High School.

The violent crime has risen in Kingston and we all need to do everything we can to keep all of the children and staff as safe as we can.

If anything very bad went wrong and there were no SRO's on campus, very precious minutes would be lost in having to get law enforcement to the campus.

I don't know why anyone would want to risk a single life especially since we have all tried to save all lives during Covid19.

Having SRO's on campus can also be a wonderful opportunity for a positive relationship to happen between kids and cops. Respect on both sides should be nurtured not negated.

Please keep SRO's on campus.

Most Sincerely,
Julie Donovan
120 Fair Street
Kingston, NY 12401
845-616-4141

Sent from my iPhone
ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

1

I do prefer to keep anonymous - I am emailing in support of continuing our SRO program at the middle/high schools in the Kingston school district. I am unable to attend the meeting but do want to send my highly positive thoughts and experiences with the officers. These officers provide invaluable assistance to the students, staff and parents and are trained to help the school in many ways such as conflict resolution and active shooter training. It would be impossible to replace the services they provide with teachers as I am sure they would not want to try to dissuade an active shooter from harming students. These types of situations require intense training which SRO's have and are taught to handle conflicts so no one gets hurt. The SRO's have not done anything to justify being removed. They are EXTREMELY helpful and EXTREMELY trustworthy officers and all around very caring people. My son had a minor issue one time in the past that turned into an extremely positive conversation leaving my son feeling less stressed and better about life. This may not sound like a big deal, but to him it meant a lot! These types of interactions are more important now then ever due to the pandemic, not being in school and unable to socialize as they did in the past with friends. Depression is high right now as I have experienced it first hand in my family. I also feel that with the HUGE increase in crime in the Kingston community (especially shootings) it would put parents minds more at ease having the officers present at the school. I know I feel more at ease knowing they are there to protect our children and teachers. We all will need the help of an officer at some point in our lives and if they were not present there would be many tragedies. Please do not let unprecedented times in our country cause you to make a quick decision that could have grave consequences . A decision you would quickly regret if something critical happened at the school. My son looks up to these officers, enjoys seeing their smiling faces and goes to school feeling safe because they are there in case anything bad did happen. Both my children have stated that having SRO's in the school make them feel safe especially during uncertain times like now. PLEASE DO NOT remove the SRO's!

Thank you,
A Bailey Middle School & Kingston High School Mom

Tinti, Elisa

All,

Please see comment below regarding the re-envisioning task's force recommendations.
Thank you.
Rita

Hello!

I am one of your constituents, residing on St. James between Pine and Fair.

I am writing to express my support for three parts of Kingston's EO203 proposal:

1. I support the complete removal of SROs from Kingston City Schools, and the redistribution of those funds to counseling and other true student support services. As a teacher, I know that cops have no place in schools and that there are much better ways to keep students, staff, and teachers safe and cared for.

2. I support the proposal to create a non-carceral community de-escalation team as an alternative to police. 22% of KPD calls are for actions that do not require armed officers. Let's limit the exposure of our community to armed officers by creating another community-based group that can answer calls for help. There are many successful forward-thinking examples of this around the country - Kingston can be one of these visionary cities!

3. I support the proposal to make changes to the police commission in order to re-envision police accountability. Accountability is the first step toward healing. It needs to be real; watering it down does nothing to move us toward true repair.

I look forward to following your vote and hope that you will speak up for your community members by supporting and advocating for these same proposals.

All the best,
Hannah Giles
109 St James St
Kingston NY

Sills, Dee

From: Tinti, Elisa
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 9:36 AM
To: Sills, Dee
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Fwd: Police officers / Kingston Schools District/ SRO's

Please print and add to comments.

Elisa Tinti

City Clerk and Registrar
City of Kingston

(845) 334-3914 Office
(845) 334-3918 Fax

Kingston City Clerk Webpage

From: Margaret Sauer [mailto:margaretsauer2@aol.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 5:20 PM
To: Tinti, Elisa <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Fwd: Police officers / Kingston Schools District/ SRO's

To Whom It May Concern:
I am forwarding an email that I would like to be read at the Common Council meeting.
This letter was sent the Kingston City School Board at the beginning of this school year.

-----Original Message-----
From: Margaret Sauer <margaretsauer2@icloud.com>
To: Margaret <margaretsauer2@aol.com>
Sent: Wed, Feb 10, 2021 5:13 pm
Subject: Fwd: Police officers / Kingston Schools District

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** Margaret Sauer <margaretsauer2@icloud.com>
> **Date:** February 10, 2021 at 8:30:57 AM EST
> **To:** Margaret <Margaretsauer2@aol.com>
> **Subject: Fwd: Police officers / Kingston Schools District**

1

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Margaret Sauer <margaretsauer2@icloud.com>
Date: June 25, 2020 at 12:25:44 PM EDT
To: jshaughnessy@kingstoncityschools.org, plowe@kingstoncityschools.org, jchilds@kingstoncityschools.org, hlamb@kingstoncityschools.org, rjacobowitz@kingstoncityschools.org, sjordan@kingstoncityschools.org, jmichael@kingstoncityschools.org, nsherer@kingstoncityschools.org, sspicer@kingstoncityschools.org, ppadalino@kingstoncityschools.org
Cc: Margaret Sauer <margaretsauer2@aol.com>
Subject: Police officers / Kingston Schools District

Kingston City School Board Members,

As a Grandparent of student who will be entering the Kingston High School this year I was sickened to see a petition on Face Book asking for the removal of the SRO's from our schools. These officers at our schools give students, parents, and families of students some assurance that our children are safe during the school day. As we have all seen in the past years of school shootings lives have been saved by these officers. I personally know of students who were involved in several lockdowns at one of our middle schools who were very frightened but knew their SRO was there to protect them. They create a safer environment for students, teachers and staff.

It is also very important that our children have a positive relationship with officers at the elementary level. That friendship and bond can make a difference in our children lives. It's better that an officer gets to know these students so that there is a better understanding of their behavior if something is to happen. A positive relationship in the early years will hopefully carry through to adulthood. I have spoken to parents who are appalled at the thought of removing these officers. Let's not forget the tragedies that many of our schools in this country have experienced. As we all know it can happen anywhere. We are not exempt.

I want the Board to consider the safety of our children, teachers, and staff. PLEASE keep politics out of our schools!

Thank You,
Margaret Sauer

jmichael@kingstoncityschools.org, nsherer@kingstoncityschools.org,
sspicer@kingstoncityschools.org, ppadalino@kingstoncityschools.org
Cc: Margaret Sauer <margaretsauer2@aol.com>
Subject: Police officers / Kingston Schools District

Kingston City School Board Members,

As a Grandparent of student who will be entering the Kingston High School this year I
was sickened to see a petition on Face Book asking for the removal of the SRO's from
our schools. These officers at our schools give students, parents, and families of students
some assurance that our children are safe during the school day. As we have all seen in
the past years of school shootings lives have been saved by these officers. I personally
know of students who were involved in several lockdowns at one of our middle schools
who were very frightened but knew their SRO was there to protect them. They create a
safer environment for students, teachers and staff.

It is also very important that our children have a positive relationship with officers at the
elementary level. That friendship and bond can make a difference in our children lives.
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understanding of their behavior if something is to happen. A positive relationship in the
early years will hopefully carry through to adulthood. I have spoken to parents who are
appalled at the thought of removing these officers. Let's not forget the tragedies that
many of our schools in this country have experienced. As we all know it can happen
anywhere. We are not exempt.

I want the Board to consider the safety of our children, teachers, and staff. PLEASE keep
politics out of our schools!

Thank You,
Margaret Sauer

To: sweetshope@aol.com
Subject: Fwd: Common Council Public Hearing 2/11 at 6:30pm

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Cherelyn B. Volpert** <cherelyn@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Feb 10, 2021, 10:20 PM
Subject: Common Council Public Hearing 2/11 at 6:30pm
To: <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>

Dear. Ms. Tinti,

I have attached a letter that I was hoping could be read at the meeting tomorrow night at the
public hearing. I am a Guidance Counselor at Bailey Middle School and would like to express
my opinions regarding SRO's in the school community. Please review this letter and let me
know if a council member could read it at the meeting.

Thank you very much!
-Cherelyn Volpert
cherelyn@gmail.com

February 10, 2021

To Whom it may concern,

I have been a Guidance/School Counselor at Bailey Middle School for 12 years. Prior to that, I held the same role at Kingston High School for 2.5 years and Miller for one year. I love my job and I love "my kids". I also want to do right by them and advocate to the best of my ability not only for them but for their families, teachers, and my colleagues. I am writing this because I feel like it is the right thing to do to advocate to keep School Resource Officers in our schools. I can only speak to my experiences with the SRO's I have personally worked with whom I respect and appreciate very much. They have protected me and the school community while also going above and beyond. It is difficult to convey the true impact they have made on my student's lives without divulging too much personal information. Here are some examples of how SRO's have helped our students:

1. Home visits/check-ins on students at their homes because I am worried about them being alone – not unsafe – just need someone to show they are looking out for them.
2. Educating students about the dangers of social media and the repercussions that can come of it. I worked side by side with an SRO who tirelessly explained this to several of my students individually, as it pertained to each of them personally.
3. Keeping an extra eye on students who I think might be getting bullied during recess, in the hallways, etc. when I cannot be there.
4. Providing me information about community/family/student situations that I may not know about so I can keep an extra eye out for the emotional well-being of my students.
5. Raising thousands of dollars so kids can go to see a Mets, Yankees, or Globetrotters game...and giving them a special shirt and snacks to go along with it.
6. Playing in basketball, dodgeball, etc. games to show students they can have a good time. Plus, raising money while doing so to provide funds for college scholarships for our KHS students.
7. Bringing necessary supplies (food, meds, clothing, etc.) to the homes of families in need who either can't afford it and/or don't have the transportation to acquire it themselves.
8. Giving students a ride home because they had an anxiety attack at school.
9. Chasing kids who may run out of classrooms or out of the building who are having a tough time in school and just feel like they need to escape ....and then de-escalating them by having a heart to heart conversation and bringing them back into the building.
10. Going to the hospital with a student and/or staff member.

11. Directing traffic outside the schools every morning to keep all pedestrians, buses, parents dropping off their kids, etc. safe.
12. Providing insight into the law when we need help with deciphering the best way to help our students learn from their mistakes.

School Resource Officers are the eyes, ears, and hearts that I (or other school staff members) cannot be sometimes. They not only keep our students safe but equally important are an ear to listen or a shoulder to cry on. They are role models to our students and another adult in our school buildings to rely on.

Sincerely,

Cherelyn Volpert

Sills, Dee

From:	Tinti, Elisa
Sent:	Thursday, February 11, 2021 9:33 AM
To:	Sills, Dee
Subject:	FW: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] PUBLIC HEARING 2/11/21

Please print and add to comments.

Elisa Tinti
City Clerk and Registrar
City of Kingston

(845) 334-3914 Office
(845) 334-3918 Fax

Kingston City Clerk Webpage

—Original Message—
From: JEAN JACOBS [mailto:sweetshope@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 7:36 AM
To: Tinti, Elisa <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>
Cc: Jean Jacobs <sweetshope@aol.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] PUBLIC HEARING 2/11/21

Good Morning Elisa:

As a parent in the KCSD all my life, I had the privilege to work for many years as a parent at JWB. My resume and credentials for my work there, would take a full notebook. Rarely educators allow a parent in their world but I was welcomed with open arms. I ran the show lol ☺. Patrick O'Reilly can attest to this totally. Therefore I know Cheryl Volpert, and she is not available this evening to read her statement, and I told her I would read hers, after I speak. I know the other evening (Common Council meeting) a woman read a statement for someone that was not available.

I am attaching her email for your review.

Thank you as always for your time and understanding in these matters. Have a beautiful day.

Sincerely,
Jean Jacobs

Sent from my iPhone
ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

Sills, Dee

Please print and add to comments.

Elisa Tinti
City Clerk and Registrar
City of Kingston

(845) 334-3914 Office
(845) 334-3918 Fax

Kingston City Clerk Webpage

Written comment for the Common Council Public Hearing: Re-envision Public Safety Task Force Report

My name is Lizette Edge, I am a resident of the City of Kingston. I have read the final report of the Re-envision public safety task force.
I strongly support the removal of SROs from Kingston City schools. SROs are not a NYS requirement, there are alternative ways that a safe school environment could be fostered.
I also support the creation of alternative community desescalaition teams. There are examples, as pointed out in the report where other cities have successfully implemented such programs.
There are many instances where an armed officer is not the appropriate response. We should have trained mental health, social workers, medical professionals, attending to these calls. These measures would go a long way towards moving away from the inherently racist system that exists and move towards community based public safety solutions.
Thank you,
Lizette Edge

Sills, Dee

From:	Tinti, Elisa
Sent:	Thursday, February 11, 2021 9:35 AM
To:	Sills, Dee
Subject:	FW: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] EO 203 comment for common council

Please print and add to comments.

Elisa Tinti

City Clerk and Registrar
City of Kingston

(845) 334-3914 Office
(845) 334-3918 Fax

Kingston City Clerk Webpage

From: Hannah K Giles [mailto:hkgiles@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 10:09 PM
To: Tinti, Elisa <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] EO 203 comment for common council

Hello!

I am a Kingston resident and local elementary school teacher, and I am writing to express my support for three parts of Kingston's EO203 proposal:

1. I support the complete removal of SROs from Kingston City Schools, and the redistribution of those funds to counseling and other true student support services. As a teacher, I know that cops have no place in schools and that there are much better ways to keep students, staff, and teachers safe and cared for.

2. I support the proposal to create a non-carceral community de-escalation team as an alternative to police. 22% of KPD calls are for actions that do not require armed officers. Let's limit the exposure of our community to armed officers by creating another community-based group that can answer calls for help. There are many successful forward-thinking examples of this around the country - Kingston can be one of these visionary cities!

3. I support the proposal to make changes to the police commission in order to re-envision police accountability. Accountability is the first step toward healing. It needs to be real; watering it down does nothing to move us toward true repair.

1

I look forward to following the common council vote and hope this body will hear the calls of the community and advocate for these same proposals.

All the best,
Hannah Giles
109 St James St
Kingston NY

Sills, Dee

From:	Tinti, Elisa
Sent:	Thursday, February 11, 2021 9:49 AM
To:	Sills, Dee
Subject:	FW: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] FW: Please keep our SRO's!

Please print and add to comments

Elisa Tinti
City Clerk and Registrar
City of Kingston

(845) 334-3914 Office
(845) 334-3918 Fax

Kingston City Clerk Webpage

From: Val Dwyer [mailto:val.dwyer@arold.us]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 9:42 AM
To: Tinti, Elisa <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] FW: Please keep our SRO's!

Here's the email from Rhea – it looks like she definitely sent it to your email, very odd. She isn't calling in so I think just add it into public record.

PLEASE NOTE MY NEW EMAIL ADDRESS val.dwyer@arold.us

Thank You,

Valerie M. Dwyer, CPA
President
Arold Construction Co., Inc.

51 Powder Mill Bridge Rd.
Kingston, NY 12401
(845) 336-8753 Office Ext. 302
(845) 518-8001 Cell
(845) 336-8245 Fax
Arold Construction Website

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CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INC.
A CERTIFIED WBE & DBE CONTRACTOR

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New York State Certified DBE
New York State Certified WBE
New Jersey Certified WBE
Port Authority of NY & NJ Certified WBE
New York City Certified WBE
National WBE Certification & WOSB Certified
Vermont Certified DBE
New Hampshire Certified DBE
City of Albany, NY Certified WBE

From: Rhea Checksfield <mrschex623@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 9:16 PM
To: Val Dwyer <val.dwyer@arold.us>
Subject: Fw: Please keep our SRO's!

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: "Rhea Checksfield" <mrschex623@yahoo.com>
To: "emtinti@kingston-ny.gov" <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>
Cc:
Sent: Tue, Feb 9, 2021 at 3:07 PM
Subject: Please keep our SRO's!

My husband and I are writing in support of keeping our SRO's in our schools. We have two daughters in the Kingston City School District and having an SRO in their buildings gives us peace of mind throughout our day. Our older daughter started Miller Middle school last year and had all of the normal worries and anxieties that come along with transitioning to a new school. Upon arrival she was met by Officer Killian and she entered the building with a huge smile and never looked back! Having an SRO makes her feel safe and protected. Many of the SRO's have formed positive relationships with the kids they see on a daily basis. Every friend and family member I have spoken to regarding this topic feels as we do, thankful! I know there is a report stating "trauma" caused by the presence of an SRO, never have I heard of this from any children or families. Sometimes the loudest, or most vocal, do not represent the majority.

I am also an educator in the district and I wish there could be an SRO in every building. Knowing an armed officer is in the building deters crime, and sets the tone that crime is not welcome here. We all deserve to feel safe and protected. Especially with the recent violence taking place in our community. The idea of removing our SRO's is a terrible one. I hope we can keep them, and definitely allow them to remain armed. How are our children supposed to be protected from an active shooter without them?

Donald R. and Rhea Checksfield

2

Sills, Dee

From:	Tinti, Elisa
Sent:	Thursday, February 11, 2021 10:29 AM
To:	Sills, Dee
Subject:	FW: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Executive Order 203

Please print and add to comments.

Elisa Tinti
City Clerk and Registrar
City of Kingston

(845) 334-3914 Office
(845) 334-3918 Fax

Kingston City Clerk Webpage

From: Worthington, Rita
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 10:28 AM
To: Alderman <Alderman@kingston-ny.gov>
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Executive Order 203

FYI . . .

Thanks,
Rita Worthington
Alderwoman, Ward 4

From: KayCee Wimbish <kaycee.wimbish@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 9:12 PM
To: Worthington, Rita; Shaut, Andrea
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Executive Order 203

Dear Ms. Worthington and Ms. Shaut,

I am writing to express my support of some specific things to be included in what is sent to the governor to meet the requirement of Executive Order 203.

I support the removal of SRO's from Kingston City School District. My son started at Bailey this year as a 5th grader and is horrified that there are armed and uniformed police in his school.

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I support the proposal to create alternatives to police by creating a non-carceral community de-escalation team. This is especially important in times of mental health crises.

I support the proposal to re-envision police accountability by making further changes and improvements to the police commission.

Thank you for all you do for Kingston. I hope Executive Order 203 results in meaningful change.

Sincerely,
KayCee Wimbish
Ward 4

--

KayCee Wimbish
Project Director/Farmer
Kingston YMCA Farm Project
www.kingstonymcafarmproject.org

To Common Council,

I want to start off by saying thank you for taking the time to listen to community members in regard to this SRO report. I would like to voice my own concerns with this report and request that you do not accept it as it is written.

After reviewing the entire report, I feel that it is based more on opinion than fact, with hand-picked report quotations that do not tell the whole story. The parents of KCSD have not been provided with the facts from our specific district. As Superintendent Paladino stated, there have only been two reports of misconduct by an SRO since his hiring in January 2012. Both of those instances were found to be unsubstantiated.

The investigations into these matters were independent of the Kingston Police Department, or any police department for that matter. Instead, these investigations were conducted by the Kingston City School District itself.

It is my understanding that, by law, any incidents have to be documented and reported to New York State. Given that no one has provided any facts to disprove this track record of two unfounded incidents in 9 years, I believe the audit trail to be accurate.

As a taxpayer and parent of children in this district, the SRO program is incredibly important to my family. My children go to school feeling safe, knowing that an SRO is nearby to help them in any capacity they may need. These officers not only act as security to protect our children, but also as guidance and role models for children who might feel lost. In my opinion, they are a resource this school district sorely needs.

Based on the lack of facts to support this report, I would respectfully request that you do not accept it as it is currently written. As a community, we deserve facts and the opportunity to form our own opinions, not misconstrued quotations or baseless claims.

Respectfully submitted,
Kayla Hendricks

From:	Tinti, Elisa
Sent:	Thursday, February 11, 2021 2:05 PM
To:	Sills, Dee
Subject:	FW: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Comments on the Police Reform Task Force Report

Please print and add to comments.

Elisa Tinti

City Clerk and Registrar
City of Kingston

(845) 334-3914 Office
(845) 334-3918 Fax

Kingston City Clerk Webpage

From: nbm18west@aol.com [mailto:nbm18west@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 1:35 PM
To: Tinti, Elisa <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Comments on the Police Reform Task Force Report

Please include my comments in the record for the Common Council as it considers ratifying the CITY OF KINGSTON RE-ENVISION PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT January 22, 2021.

Please confirm receipt.

Thank you.

First, we should acknowledge and appreciate the Task Force members who volunteered their time and efforts to help move Kingston forward. While we may not be in agreement with some of their findings and recommendations, we can still recognize the shared intent to better our Kingston community.

Second, I think the rank and file from the KPD should have been represented on the Task Force. It has been my experience that trying to reform an organization is challenging enough without its members feeling like the changes are being imposed on them. Including all stakeholders in the process and giving them a voice helps them become vested and buy into the ultimate recommendations. This point is underscored by Chief Tinti's comments on the morale issues and divide between leadership and the rank and file.

Third, multiple paragraphs of text from pages 14 and 15 of the Report are repeated on pages 16 and 17. Needs to be edited and cleaned up.

Fourth, the specific recommendations of the Task Force should have been stated in a consistent format throughout the document. It varies quite a bit by author. Further, the recommendations should also be collected and listed in one place in the report. While these are simple formatting matters, they will measurably help the community better process and understand the Report.

Fifth, I do not agree with the suggestion on page 14 that clergy be involved in any decision to increase police presence. I have much respect for clergy, but that decision should remain with elected officials and trained law enforcement.

Sixth, I support increasing the size of the Police Commission and vesting appointment power of the majority of the members in the Common Council.

Seventh, the City should have an app created to facilitate feedback of police interactions with the Community (whether positive or negative). It should capture information including date, time, location, nature of incident/interaction, parties involved, and impression of officer performance. It should allow for photos or videos to be uploaded. Data goes to administrator of the Police Commission, Mayor and Common Council. After vetting, can be made available to the public. Positive feedback is shared on social media and earns officer internal points/rewards...ex. Officer of the Week

Eighth, I support taking a hard line on CBA to allow for more accountability, but that's a hard sell and fighting precedent. Need a compelling argument and possibly tradeoff to get officers to buy in.

Ninth, regarding recommended solution #1 on page 21, I suggest focus on training rather than discipline to address mistakes. Less adversarial tone.

Tenth, with regard to recommendation #3 on page 22, I don't think adding more voices to the negotiation process will be constructive. Too many cooks.

Eleventh, regarding the statements made about SROs on page 43, much of it seems unsupported by the available facts and merely unsubstantiated heresay which has no place in this report. Specifically, SROs have not been serving as school disciplinarians and to state the contrary as fact perpetuates a lie. The same charge is true for the statement about SROs causing trauma. Where is the supporting documentation/evidence to back this up?

Twelfth, I do not agree or support the recommendations on pg 43 regarding SROs. They belong in the schools, in uniform and with firearms, the use of which are limited by use of force guidelines.

Your consideration of my comments is appreciated.

Neil B. Millens
Kingston

Sills, Dee

Please print and add to comments.

Elisa Tinti

City Clerk and Registrar
City of Kingston

(845) 334-3914 Office
(845) 334-3918 Fax

Kingston City Clerk Webpage

From: Joann reposa [mailto:jmarquette1@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 12:49 PM
To: Tinti, Elisa <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Council meeting

Thank you! Here is my statement- sorry it took so long, work is insane today! Sign me up for a slot and hopefully I can be home in time!!

Good evening, As a parent, active PTO member, and employee of the Kingston City School District, I felt it was imperative that I voice my concerns tonight. Our District is at risk of losing a very valuable asset- our SROs. I feel safer knowing that the SROs are in our buildings- not only for myself and my child, but all of Kingston City School District students and employees. I have witnessed first hand the SROs in action. What I have seen are caring, professional members of our community and our District. They interact with our students and staff every day in a positive manner. It is not unusual for a student to seek out an SRO when they have a problem or need advice. An SRO will engage with the students during recess by joining them in a ball game or other activity. They are present at school dances, where they speak with the students and join in the fun by dancing along with them. This establishes a positive relationship for our students with our community law enforcement, which is crucial at this time. Removing the SRO program would be a great disservice to our students, staff and community as a whole, and could result in a disastrous outcome. Thank you for your time. Joann Reposa

On Thu, Feb 11, 2021 at 11:17 AM Tinti, Elisa <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov> wrote:

You may either call in and read a statement or you may email a statement to be posted.

Elisa Tinti

City Clerk and Registrar

City of Kingston

(845) 334-3914 Office

(845) 334-3918 Fax

Kingston City Clerk Webpage

Good Morning!

Checking to see if we are still able to email a statement to be read at this evening's meeting?

Thank you!

Joann Reposa

2

Tinti, Elisa

Hello! I am writing in complete support of the SRO program in KCSD. I have three children in KCSD and have always felt comfort knowing that there was an Officer within our schools; whether it be an Officer in the hallways with my older children at Miller Middle School or an Officer at bus duty in my younger child's elementary school. The young man that protects and serves at Miller Middle School has become a household name often mentioned at the dinner table. This day in age it's so important that our kids feel safe at school. Its equally important for them to have such a positive roll model in their lives that they look forward to seeing at recess and/or out in the community. The REMOVAL of this program would be "traumatizing" for our children.

Sincerely,

Kristi Lee
KCSD Parent
ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

1

Tinti, Elisa

_____

From:	martj_77@yahoo.com
Sent:	Sunday, February 14, 2021 3:36 PM
To:	Tinti, Elisa
Subject:	[EXTERNAL EMAIL] SRO

Good afternoon,

As an uncle of a student in Kingston High School, I fully support the need for SRO's to be present in school on a daily basis. Despite Rise Up Kingston's demand to remove them, I think the majority of our community feel the benefits out weigh the moot points this group makes. As a teacher myself, I find the presence of law enforcement to be a positive in the lives of young adults. Our community overwhelmingly feels the same when I've engaged in conversations with neighbors and residents. Please continue to allow these fine officers the opportunity to be a bridge between law enforcement and our community. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joe Martelli
Kingston NY

Sent from my iPhone
ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

1

From:	Karen Sprance <sprancek@hotmail.com>
Sent:	Sunday, February 14, 2021 10:23 AM
To:	Tinti, Elisa
Subject:	[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Please keep SROs in our schools!

Good morning. I am an employee of KCSD and a parent of two students at the high school.

As a teacher I've seen violence in our schools firsthand, even at the Middle School level. SROs make me feel safer as an employee. As a parent, everyone complains when school shootings and violence occur, and now some contradict themselves by asking to abolish an SRO presence. I don't understand this. SROs, in my experience, have been nothing but a positive resource in our schools.

Thank you.

Tinti, Elisa

I am a parent of a 1st grader at ER Crosby School. I am in support of having SRO's in the school buildings. I feel that there should be more. I have seen the great things done at Miller Middle school and have seen the connections made with youth at Kingston high school. I have witnessed the SRO's coming to the aid and supporting students in the building. We always here of the negatives and I have worked with students who complain about the SRO's for things that have happened to them (the student) out of the school building and they bring that incident into the school. The SRO is a professional that is there to do good, support others, and provide a connection/service to the community.

On a personal note, I have a grievance (I have already relayed it to the school admin and I know this is not in your jurisdiction as it is at Crosby school and town of ulster PD SRO is there) I know that the SRO is not enforcement of school policy, that is securities job but I see parents refusing to park in parking spots, take handicapped spots who do not have a handicapped sticker on their car, who park on the lined spots; all in an effort to just get closer to the parent pick up door. I have seen security try to stop this from happening but it is the SRO that has been effective in stopping this from happening. IT is just a pet peeve of mine but it is also needing people to do the right thing. The SRO has been there to ensure the safety of the students at dismissal often but I would love to see them around more.

Thank you for taking the time to read my (longer than planned) support for the SRO.

Sean Bailey

From:	kyle tochterman <ktochterman74@gmail.com>
Sent:	Sunday, February 14, 2021 9:09 AM
To:	Tinti, Elisa
Subject:	[EXTERNAL EMAIL] SRO program

Good morning Sir,

This is in response to comments made in the City of Kingston Police Task Force Report that is claiming that SRO's are "traumatizing" our students and are pushing an agenda to have them removed from our schools.

As a parent of 2 children in the KCSD, 1 of them going into KHS this fall. We feel that SRO's are very important to the safety and security of our children's well-being.

Please RE-CONSIDER this agenda to have SRO'S removed from our schools.

Sincerely,
Concerned parent
Kyle Tochterman

From:	Steven Spicer <SSpicer@kingstoncityschools.org>
Sent:	Saturday, February 13, 2021 6:10 PM
To:	Tinti, Elisa
Cc:	Dr. Paul J. Padalino; LeShawn Parker; Robin Jacobowitz; Val Dwyer; James Shaughnessy; Nora Scherer; Suzanne Jordan; PRISCILLA LOWE; Herbert Lamb; VINCE DECICCO; James Michael; Cathy Collins; ashley
Subject:	[EXTERNAL EMAIL] KCSD Submission To Official CKPSTF Record

Good Day Mrs. Tinti,

Thank you for hosting the public comment session of the City of Kingston Re-Envision Public Safety Task Force meeting this past Thursday. Gleaning our communities' concerns only enables us to serve them better. Below I am forwarding a copy of the statement I read during the discussion. Please submit it to the official record of the meeting.

Sincere Thanks,
Steven Spicer
Vice Pres. KCSD

The following statement is made in response to the City of Kingston Re-Envision Public Safety Task Force report, dated January 22, 2021, specifically in relation to the components of the report that refer to SROs in the Kingston City School District.

The Kingston City School District Board of Education takes all concerns about school safety with the utmost seriousness. We take seriously our charge to create and maintain a school environment that makes our students, teachers, and staff feel welcome and safe. Given recent community conversation about the role of SROs in the KCSD, the BOE authorized the creation of a KCSD SRO Advisory Committee to review SRO procedures, contracts, and training toward establishing an SRO program that all of our community can support and feel supported by. It is in this context that the KCSD SRO Advisory Committee would like to respond to some of the points made in the City of Kingston Re-Envision Public Safety Task Force report about the use of SROs in KCSD.

First, we want to assure our community that the KCSD SRO contracts prohibit SROs from serving as school disciplinarians or as enforcers of school regulations. That is, SROs do not make decisions about the outcome of disciplinary incidents. This is a function of school administrators only. To be clear, an SRO may get involved if a student becomes aggressive or if there is a dangerous situation that requires quick reaction. But SROs cannot – and do not – determine the outcome, or consequence, for those incidents and, as such, do not serve as school disciplinarians or as enforcers of school regulations.

Second, in the past nine years, there have been only two formal complaints filed against SROs. These two complaints were investigated by KCSD administration and, in one case also by the Kingston Police Civilian Review Board and in the other by the KCSD and complainant's attorneys. Following investigation, the first incident was ruled, unfounded, while the second was not pursued by the attorneys of the complainant with the KCSD.

Third, we agree with the report's statement that the SROs and security guards are often conflated and that this creates confusion within our community. The KCSD SRO Advisory committee hopes to address these misconceptions through the KCSD strategic communications plan. And finally, we appreciate the reference in the report to a sample SRO agreement, along with ideas for training and data monitoring, that may clarify roles and expectations for both the community and the SROs that serve our schools. The KCSD SRO Advisory Committee is reviewing these, and the more general findings of the SRO portion of the City of Kingston Re-Envision Public Safety Task Force report, for possible inclusion in our committee's final report and recommendations to the rest of the BOE.

Finally, as part of its work, the KCSD SRO Advisory Committee is planning a public comment forum in March to hear our community's views on the SRO program. Information about this forum is forthcoming; look for it on the KCSD website and in the KCSD email blast. We hope you will join us to continue this important conversation. Thank you for your time.

24 Hoffman Street
Kingston, NY 12401
October 10, 2020

Dr. Paul Padalino, Superintendent
Kingston Consolidated School District
Kingston, NY 12401

Re: Petition to remove SRO's from our schools.

Dear Dr. Padalino,

This letter is written to you in *opposition* to the petition we have seen circulating social media for "the immediate removal of school resource officers" from KCSD.

We are a family of color. Not only did I graduate KHS (class of 1982), but so did my 6 siblings, as our father did before us. My wife and I have 6 children of our own, four of whom have already graduated from KCSD, with two more still at KHS.

I have lived in Kingston my entire life. When I met my wife (who was not from this area), I convinced her to move here to Kingston to start and raise our family. I wanted to raise our children here and in *this* district, as I already knew what a diverse, dynamic, accepting, and vibrant community Kingston was and is. We could have moved and settled anywhere. We settled here BY CHOICE. KCSD was the only district I wanted my children to attend. The list of reasons for that is long!

We have seen a petition circulating FB calling for the removal of the SRO program in the district. Please know that me and my family are completely OPPOSED to that petition. All of our children have each had amazing years in the district. Their reasons are as varied as the number of clubs, academics, sports, art, theater, teachers, ethnicities, colors, languages, and support staff that make up the fabric of the KCSD. And included in that diverse and supportive fabric has been the very positive and nurturing relationships my children have had with the SRO's and safety staff in their respective buildings, including KHS itself.

Our children have faced their share of tragedy in their short lives, including the loss of their eldest sibling followed by a house fire that displaced us from our home for 6 months. Then there are the normal day-to-day struggles we all sometimes face as humans at various times along our journey. The adage, "it takes a village to raise a child" was in FULL EFFECT in the Kingston District each and every time; and that village has INCLUDED school SRO's and safety officers! The fact that our children would be checked in on *emotionally* by security and SRO's actually MORE than by school social workers or guidance counselors or administrators speaks volumes to the work these safety officers do with our children. I don't know who is spreading the false narrative attempting to make it seem like some sort of line of armed guards is

standing in hallways with their fingers on the trigger, but this could not be further from the truth. I know YOU know that, but I really want the community to know that as well.

We thank you for the program of safety that is in place in our district schools and ask that you do NOT consider removing the SROs nor the safety officers from our district due to the petition circulating which erroneously portrays the job they actually do in keeping all of our students safe from those who would want to bully, harass, harm, or injure them.

Last, I want to commend every SRO and safety officer in the district for the great job they do, and personally thank them for being a part of the village that has helped us raise our children to be the nurturing, caring, and secure young adults they have become.

Sincerely

Brian Timbrouck

Tinti, Elisa

FYI . . .

Dear Rita Worthington

Regarding EO 203:

I support the removal of SROs from Kingston City School District
I support the proposal to create alternative to police by creating a non-carceral community de escalation team
I support the proposal to re-envision police accountability by making further changes to the police commission.

Please know that your recommendations to the governor will directly impact people's lives. Make the right recommendations. Invest in the Kingston community. Please review the link below which shows how the police budget is currently being utilized.

Thank you,
Rebecca Flack
Concerned Citizen

bit.ly/riseupdefundzine

1

My name is Patrick Ford and I am a resident of Kingston

-I have 3 children, A son who has graduated from Kingston and is now in college

-2 daughters, one at the high school and one at Bailey M.S.

*I am calling to strongly urge you not to accept the SRO report!!! We need to keep school resource officers in our schools.

-I don't make this plea blindly. I have asked all of my children about any interactions with SRO's. All three said they feel safer with them present and have never felt threatened. My children said they have never seen a negative interaction between an SRO and a student.

-I have also spoken to SRO's, teachers, and administrators and they all seem to be in support of retaining SRO's

-I wonder about the people behind the opposition to SRO's...

1-Do they have a safety plan in place (without SRO's present) for any and all events that could happen in a school?

2-Have they made regular visits to schools to observe what goes on when a full student body is present?

3-Have they analyzed the data surrounding SRO's or do they just want them out because of their personal agenda?

4-Do they have children that attend Kingston City Schools?

5-Are they part of an organization that is blindly pushing an agenda?

6-Are they part of an organization that is paying them to push this issue?

I believe that kids make mistakes and they need second and sometimes third chances, but they also need to be held accountable for their actions. Students (according to them) can have negative interactions with teachers, administrators, SRO's, counselors, and even parents. Following the same logic should we remove teachers, administrators, & counselors from schools? Where does it stop?

Tinti, Elisa

From:	JEAN JACOBS <sweetshope@aol.com>
Sent:	Friday, February 12, 2021 11:39 AM
To:	Tinti, Elisa
Cc:	Jean Jacobs
Subject:	[EXTERNAL EMAIL] FOIL REQUEST 2/12/21

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

This is a formal request under the FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT . I Jean C. Jacobs hereby request any and all payments made directly/ indirectly by the City of Kingston to Peaceful Guardians, and or Lester Strong, or any other Peaceful Guardian Employees, and or Police Commission member. Timeline includes but not limited to 2019, 2020, 2021.

If you have any questions regarding my request, please feel free to contact me by E-Mail sweetshope@aol.com or by phone 845-616-2788. I look forward to receiving your response, within the legal timeframe of the FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

Thank you for your time and consideration, for this Foil Request.

Sincerely,
Jean C. Jacobs

Sent from my iPhone
ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

Tinti, Elisa

Good morning,

I would like my statement to be recognized as part of the discussion around keeping our City Safe and keeping SRO's in our schools in support of safety.

As a life long resident of Ulster County, a graduate of Kingston Highschool 1989, a property owner in the city of Kingston, a father to 3 Kingston City Consolidated Schools students (12th Grade, 9th Grade, 7th Grade) ; my family and i have a vested interest in our community and making sure our children can thrive.
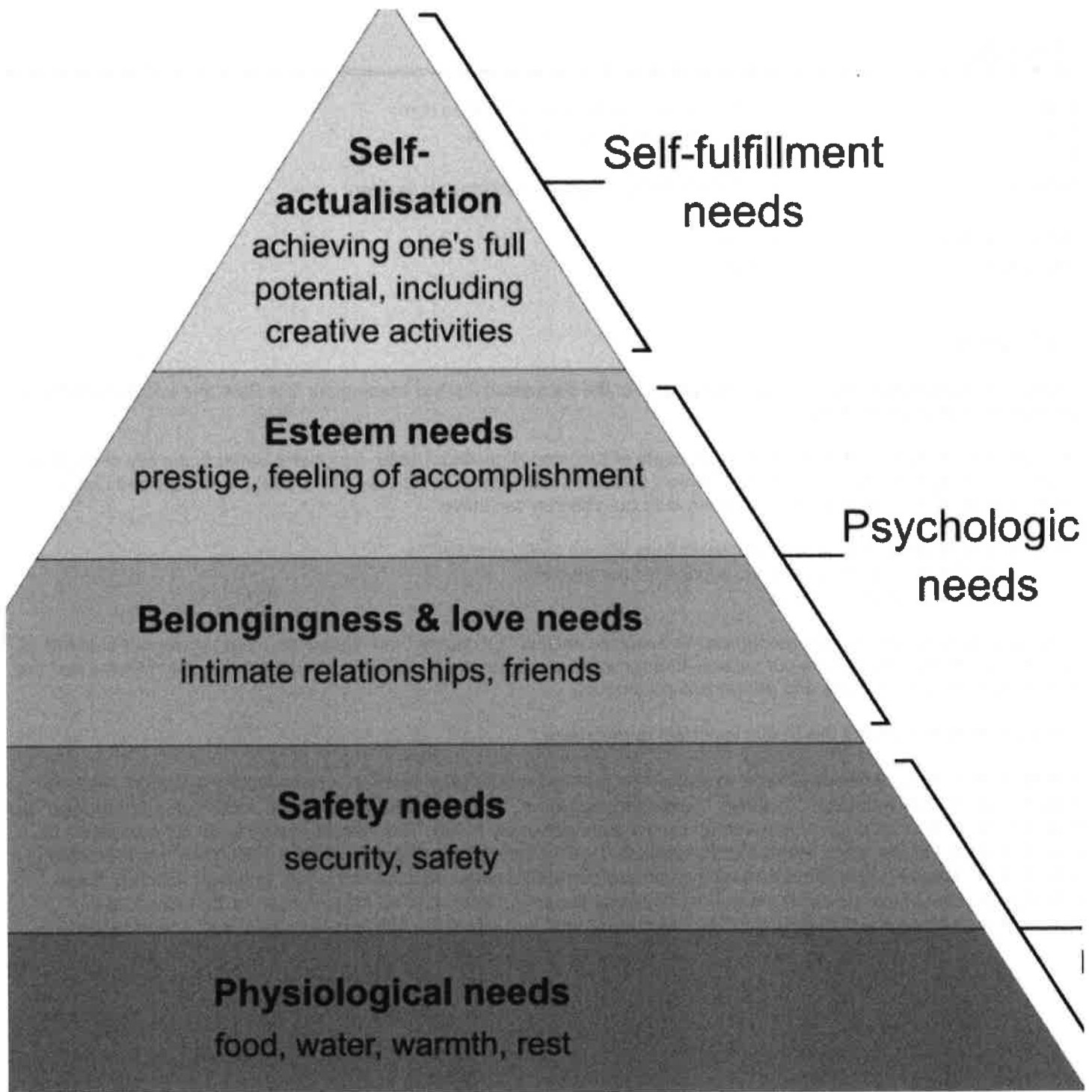
There are two separate topics in the conversations around safety and SRO's
1. the Mental Health, programs, support for our Students
2. the safety of our Students

These should be supported and recognized as separate entities. Of course there should be programs for our students to get the support they need within our schools through various programs and logic also dictates that safety within a learning environment for our Teachers and Students is paramount.

There is a definition around this that is important to recognize:

"Maslow's hierarchy of needs is used to study how humans intrinsically partake in behavioral motivation. Maslow used the terms "physiological", "safety", "belonging and love", "social needs" or "esteem", and "self-actualization" to describe the pattern through which human motivations generally move. This means that in order for motivation to arise at the next stage, each stage must be satisfied within the individual themselves. Additionally, this hierarchy is a main base in knowing how effort and motivation are correlated when discussing human behavior. Each of these individual levels contains a certain amount of internal sensation that must be met in order for an individual to complete their hierarchy.[3] The goal in Maslow's hierarchy is to attain the fifth level or stage: self-actualization"

Self-fulfillment needs

Self-actualisation
achieving one's full potential, including creative activities

Psychologic needs

Esteem needs
prestige, feeling of accomplishment

Belongingness & love needs
intimate relationships, friends

Safety needs
security, safety

Physiological needs
food, water, warmth, rest

I share this above because removing "SAFETY" from our Schools takes away from our students / teachers opportunity to strive towards much more important community engagement through their psychological needs of belonging, friendship, self esteem and more.

Thank you

Kriston DeLisio

Tinti, Elisa

From:	Morell, Jeffrey
Sent:	Thursday, February 11, 2021 5:55 PM
To:	Alderman
Cc:	Tinti, Elisa
Subject:	Fwd: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] SRO in Public Schools

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** Janet Kelley <tjmjmac@aol.com>
> **Date:** February 11, 2021 at 5:39:35 PM EST
> **To:** "Morell, Jeffrey" <ward1@kingston-ny.gov>, "Davis, Tony" <tdavis@kingston-ny.gov>
> **Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] SRO in Public Schools**
>
> Dear Mr. Morell
>
> After reading the Re-envisioned Public Safety Task Force Final Report, I feel that a considerable amount of time and effort was spent on its creation. That is commendable. However, many sections read like opinion pieces without clear references to valid data or evidence based conclusions. Perhaps the idea of this being a "final report" is premature.
>
> I would like to add my opinion on the subject of SROs in Public Schools. I have worked in the Kingston City School District for over 20 years. I am also a proud mother of two graduates from KHS. During these years I have never seen a SRO act in any threatening, intimidating, or aggressive manner. It has been my experience to see the SROs as a compliment to the community they serve inside the schools. Children learn from what their parents teach them and from what they see on social media. In school, we try to encourage children to draw conclusions based on what they see and experience. When students see SROs that are helpful, friendly, and compassionate they lose the preconceived notions they have about police. As Daniel Grunner stated in the Report, "Put forth a better effort as an entire community to build a better level of trust between our community and Kingston Police Department".
>
> We as a community are happy to have the police out "walking the beat" in the community. The schools are also our community.
>
> Thank you,
>
> Janet Kelley-McWeeney
> ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

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From:	Hirsch. Michele
Sent:	Thursday, February 11, 2021 5:05 PM
To:	Alderman; Tinti, Elisa
Subject:	Fw: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Opposition to removing SROs

Michele Hirsch
Alderwoman, Ward 9

From: Kathleen Collins <kathyadamscollins@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 4:27:02 PM
To: Hirsch. Michele
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Opposition to removing SROs

Dear Alderwoman Hirsch,

We realize this email may be received late for public comment in tonight's
meeting; however we feel it is vitally important to express our viewpoint.

Kathleen was a six year member of the Kingston Board of Education and chaired the policy committee. She has
witnessed firsthand the positive effects and relationship established by our school resource officers. She firmly
believes they are an asset and is strongly against their removal.

Jeramie has served the district for nine years as a guidance counselor, working with many of our at risk
students. He has worked very closely with the SROs in de-escalating many issues that could have turned far
worse. He too is strongly against their removal.

We both question the validity of the study recently performed. Many of the data cited in the comments made
were attributed to just first names. There was no clear explanation about the "experts" relationship to or
investment in our district, only their distrust of those in uniform.

Please listen to the voices of your constituents in this important matter.

Thank you,

Jeramie and Kathleen Collins
375 Abeel St.
Kingston, NY 12401

Tinti, Elisa

Thank you! Here is my statement- sorry it took so long, work is insane today! Sign me up for a slot and hopefully I can be home in time!!

Good evening, As a parent, active PTO member, and employee of the Kingston City School District, I felt it was imperative that I voice my concerns tonight. Our District is at risk of losing a very valuable asset- our SROs. I feel safer knowing that the SROs are in our buildings- not only for myself and my child, but all of Kingston City School District students and employees. I have witnessed first hand the SROs in action. What I have seen are caring, professional members of our community and our District. They interact with our students and staff every day in a positive manner. It is not unusual for a student to seek out an SRO when they have a problem or need advice. An SRO will engage with the students during recess by joining them in a ball game or other activity. They are present at school dances, where they speak with the students and join in the fun by dancing along with them. This establishes a positive relationship for our students with our community law enforcement, which is crucial at this time. Removing the SRO program would be a great disservice to our students, staff and community as a whole, and could result in a disastrous outcome. Thank you for your time. Joann Reposa

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Elisa Tinti

City Clerk and Registrar

City of Kingston

(845) 334-3914 Office

(845) 334-3918 Fax

Kingston City Clerk Webpage

Good Morning!

Checking to see if we are still able to email a statement to be read at this evening's meeting?

Thank you!

Joann Reposa

From:	nbm18west@aol.com
Sent:	Thursday, February 11, 2021 1:35 PM
To:	Tinti, Elisa
Subject:	[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Comments on the Police Reform Task Force Report

Please include my comments in the record for the Common Council as it considers ratifying the CITY OF KINGSTON RE-ENVISION PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT January 22, 2021.

Please confirm receipt.

Thank you.

First, we should acknowledge and appreciate the Task Force members who volunteered their time and efforts to help move Kingston forward. While we may not be in agreement with some of their findings and recommendations, we can still recognize the shared intent to better our Kingston community.

Second, I think the rank and file from the KPD should have been represented on the Task Force. It has been my experience that trying to reform an organization is challenging enough without its members feeling like the changes are being imposed on them. Including all stakeholders in the process and giving them a voice helps them become vested and buy into the ultimate recommendations. This point is underscored by Chief Tinti's comments on the morale issues and divide between leadership and the rank and file.

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Seventh, the City should have an app created to facilitate feedback of police interactions with the Community (whether positive or negative). It should capture information including date, time, location, nature of incident/interaction, parties involved, and impression of officer performance. It should allow for photos or videos to be uploaded. Data goes to administrator of the Police Commission, Mayor and Common Council. After vetting, can be made available to the public. Positive feedback is shared on social media and earns officer internal points/rewards...ex. Officer of the Week

Eighth, I support taking a hard line on CBA to allow for more accountability, but that's a hard sell and fighting precedent. Need a compelling argument and possibly tradeoff to get officers to buy in.

Ninth, regarding recommended solution #1 on page 21, I suggest focus on training rather than discipline to address mistakes. Less adversarial tone.

Tenth, with regard to recommendation #3 on page 22, I don't think adding more voices to the negotiation process will be constructive. Too many cooks.

Eleventh, regarding the statements made about SROs on page 43, much of it seems unsupported by the available facts and merely unsubstantiated heresay which has no place in this report. Specifically, SROs have not been serving as school disciplinarians and to state the contrary as fact perpetuates a lie. The same charge is true for the statement about SROs causing trauma. Where is the supporting documentation/evidence to back this up?

Twelfth, I do not agree or support the recommendations on pg 43 regarding SROs. They belong in the schools, in uniform and with firearms, the use of which are limited by use of force guidelines.

Your consideration of my comments is appreciated.

Neil B. Millens
Kingston

Comments: Suzanne Timbrouck

I am a mother of 6 children of color and we have lived in our midtown home for over 25 years. My husband, Brian Timbrouck, is a Firefighter for the City of Kingston. He was born and raised in Kingston, as was his father before him. I am not from this area, but my husband convinced me to settle here in Kingston to raise our family. This is my 21st year teaching at Kingston High School. I chose to teach at KHS because it is the school district, I wanted my children to attend. The two main reasons for settling in Kingston were the large variety of extra-curriculars at KHS and the ethnic and racial diversity of the City of Kingston. Being an inter-racial couple we wanted to be in a place we knew didn't blink an eye at racial diversity.

My experiences with the SRO's and security staff are as both a teacher and a mother. When our eldest, our daughter Amanda, was tragically killed in a car accident, our other children were attending KHS, JWB, and Edson (after Sophie Finn closed). When this tragedy struck and the kids returned to their schools I got to see first-hand the work the security staff and SRO's really do. My JWB son was the most outwardly affected by losing his sister. It was the SRO at JWB who first noticed that our son, Elijah, was not doing OK. He alerted other staff and the school social worker and then I got a phone call to come to JWB. The social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors, and administrators are not the people who get around the whole school and get to see and know EVERY kid. It's the SRO's and security officers that do that. THEY are the people who see the kids every day and get to know them and what is going on in their lives both inside and outside the school building. THEY are the ones who notice changes in kids' behavior, facial expressions, and the look in their eyes. As wonderful as our support staff members are (and they are) they are assigned a cohort and do counseling as students are referred to them. They are doing their job, and they do it well. But their job is different from that of the SRO and safety officers. It is because of this skill (surveying the room and tuning in) that our safety officers and SRO's have that my Elijah was checked in on and then sent to the mental health professional. The social worker would never have even met Elijah otherwise. To this day none of my children even know/knew who their Assistant Principal is/was, nor who their social worker or psychologist is/was. You have to be referred to see the mental health workers, and you have to be in trouble to see the AP. But thanks to the TEAM effort in place in ALL our schools, Elijah was cared for – as all my children have been.

As a teacher at KHS I can attest to the fact that the SRO's and safety officers know the students personally. They know their lives inside and outside of school. They check in with students regularly in a nurturing way. I have seen students who want a particular safety officer or SRO BEFORE they want to see a counselor or AP. I have watched SRO's de-escalate situations. I have watched SRO's cut off a problem before it even starts. They are able to do this BECAUSE they know what's going on inside and outside the walls of KHS.

To see the students in action with the relationships they have with our safety officers and SRO's is heartwarming. I've lost track of how many students attribute their graduation or other successes directly to a particular officer. We are a TEAM at KHS. Everyone from the secretaries to the teachers, to the TA's to the counselors, to the safety officers all have one

goal, and that is keeping everyone safe, and supporting each student with what they need to be successful. It does take a village, and our safety officers and SRO's are an integral part of that village.

It is my understanding that there are two incidents that are cited by the Rise Up Kingston group that seeks the removal of the SRO's and safety officers. First, if we take the 2000 students x 180 school days a year x 9 years with SRO's, that is a potential of 3,240,000 'incidents'. They cite two – both of which were confirmed by the board last week to have been 'unfounded'. Second, let's remember there are three sides to every story: mine, yours, and the truth. Both sides of those two incidents need to be FULLY heard (and viewed on video) by neutral third parties in order to ascertain the truth of those two alleged incidents.

Additionally, as an employee of KCSD I can attest to the fact that for many years the district has been working to be the most inclusive, anti-racist, trauma-informed, empathetic, and socially just district around. It is woven into the fabric of what we do, and our professional development reflects that. We are responsive to the needs of our community and are vigilant in ensuring our district continually reviews our practices and strives for perfection. We know we are not perfect – no institution nor any one person inside one is – but it is the mark we strive towards.

Last, I want to tell you a **true** story about the City of Kingston Police that is unrelated to the SRO's. Remember, we are a family of color, living in Midtown (Hoffman Street) with six black children. FOUR of them are boys, currently aged 18 – 26. The incident that follows happened when the boys were high school aged.

The boys all owned air-soft guns (the little plastic BB's that you would go play with at those parks where you try to capture the other teams' flag). We have lots of family and friends with acres of property where the boys would run around the woods playing with their toy guns. As black males, their father schooled them on NEVER EVER being outside in the City of Kingston with them or playing in public with them. He told them they look too real at quick glance and they could easily be mistaken for real, by even a police officer who has only an instant to make a judgment call. He explained to them it would be too easy to find themselves shot (as black males 'carrying a weapon' openly in public), and if they were playing with them and someone saw them, they could find themselves DEAD. This is certainly the narrative we are living under today.

I wish I could report that my children were perfect and always did what they are told. I cannot.

My sons came home from playing at Sophie Finn one day. (It is basically our back yard and before it turned into the UCCC campus, it was their school with a playground and a hill for sleigh riding and it is where they always played). My son, Josh, tells me the following story:

Josh: Mom, we nearly crapped in our pants. I know you and dad told us never ever to play with our airsofts here in Kingston, but we did.

Me: Oh no. What happened?

Josh: We were at Sophie Finn playing. I was standing up with my back against a tree and my gun drawn looking for the guys. I look down in the parking lot of KHS and see a guy walking his dog. He is staring at me. I realize he might not know my gun is fake and I'm playing with my brothers, so I give him a head nod and he nods back and then walks away. I go back to looking for the guys. Next thing I know we are all surrounded by all these cop cars! All these cops came flying up and were on their knee behind their open doors with their guns pointed at us!!

Me: OMG. What happened?

Josh: They told us to drop our weapons and put our hands up!

Me: What did you do?

Josh: We dropped our weapons and put our hands up.

Me: (Happy they did what they were told do and pissed they disobeyed our order to never be outside with the toys). Then what happened?

Josh: They asked what we were doing and we told them we're playing with our airsofts guns (hands still in the air). They asked where we lived and we told them.

Me: Then what happened?

Josh: The officers kept their guns out and walked up to our guns on the ground to check them out.

Me: Then what?

Josh: They walked up slowly and checked out all the guns we threw on the ground. Next thing we know their real guns were back in their holsters and they started shooting at us with the airsoft guns. BEST DAY EVER! That was so much fun. But I'm not gonna lie, we were scared to death.

Me: And NOW you understand why you were forbidden to play with those guns outside. I'm really glad you're not dead. Don't do it again!

I like to tell this story (Josh tells it better in person). First, because it is a story that is now part of our family legend and it makes us laugh (now that's it over and ended well). And

second, because it 100% reflects our experience as a family of color with law enforcement in our community. Remember, we settled here by choice to raise our family because of everything we believe this community stands for, and this includes our law enforcement. According to the narrative of today, that story should have ended with four dead black boys. Instead, it ended with my black boys and their community police officers playing together. Both were laughing and having fun.

I believe this story ended the way it did because our community is a diverse place where all stakeholders have worked towards having just this type of community.

But, let me now tell you a recent story. This past summer one of our sons (a soldier in the US ARMY) was home. He was sitting outside our house on the roof his car enjoying the summer night and talking to his girlfriend on the phone. The long story short is that he was robbed at gun point, pistol whipped in the head, and locked in the trunk of his own car! He thought he was going to be killed and his body dumped. If you want the details of the incident I am happy to meet with you all and give them. This is not a kid who was engaging in illegal activity, and he did not know his assailants. Did you hear of this in the paper? No, you did not.

Kingston has started to become unrecognizable as that Kingston we chose to live in. Violence is escalating and spreading. I don't believe we are completely broken – yet, but I do believe that as a community we are standing at a crossroad. Some in our community are asking us to take a hard left, others a hard right. Neither of those turns is good for our community. We need to get back on the path where this community is a diverse, eclectic, vibrant AND SAFE community. Those things are not mutually exclusive.

From:	Tinti, Elisa
Sent:	Wednesday, February 17, 2021 9:35 AM
To:	Mesches, Sue
Subject:	Fwd: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] SRO's

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** "Tinti, Elisa" <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>
> **Date:** February 17, 2021 at 9:21:04 AM EST
> **To:** "Mesches, Sue" <smesches@kingston-ny.gov>
> **Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] SRO's**

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** Sharlene Martin <smartin7@hvc.rr.com>
> **Date:** February 17, 2021 at 9:15:49 AM EST
> **To:** "Tinti, Elisa" <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>
> **Cc:** "Scott-Childress, Reynolds" <rscott-childress@kingston-ny.gov>
> **Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] SRO's**

To The Kingston City Common Council:

I am a life long Kingston resident. I attended Kingston City Schools. I am a business owner, a landlord, and a mother. I wear many hats, everyday of the week. But the single most important responsibility in my life is my children and their safety. I I listened to the public hearing last week, in regards to the School Resource Officers. It is irresponsible to believe that an officer, who has fully committed to the police academy training, field training and the additional requirements necessary to become a SRO, would have anything other then the best intentions walking on a school campus everyday. I am outraged that people speak out against this factor without having attended these schools, or have children enrolled. They are misleading and misguided.

My son is a seventh grader at J. Watson Bailey Middle School. Officer Kurz is professional, fun, approachable and visible. He parks his patrol car front and center every morning for the children getting off the buses and walkers to see. He filled big shoes when Officer Woltman retired, but he quickly took the reigns and has acclimated to Bailey's environment.

My daughter is a ninth grader at Kingston High School. She knows many of the officers by first name. Some are father's of friends and others she has known from being in the district or just because of living in Kingston. She has witnessed them break up fights, direct traffic and patrol basketball games. They are very much apart of her daily activities in school and out. While she was a first grader at Edson, the Sandy Hook tragedy took place. I spoke with her teacher to ask if it was her intention to speak with the students and explain the circumstances. It was unfathomable that first graders could understand this monstrous event. But now as a ninth grader, I feel an even bigger need to protect her and make her aware of her surroundings and situations.

The children of the Kingston City School District learned from Officer Habernig with the DARE program at a young age and have continued having positive reinforcements from the School Resource Officers since. Why would we want to change that? Please do not remove these vital elements of our children's safety from their school

1

campuses. Please listen to the facts, from people with first hand knowledge, as Debra Fitzgerald's account of her witnesses day in and day out. These officers are absolutely necessary to the safety of our community.

Thank you,

Sharlene Martin

From:	Tinti, Elisa
Sent:	Wednesday, February 17, 2021 9:35 AM
To:	Mesches, Sue
Subject:	Fwd: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Fwd: Information on Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** "Tinti, Elisa" <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>
> **Date:** February 17, 2021 at 9:22:29 AM EST
> **To:** JEAN JACOBS <sweetshope@aol.com>
> **Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Fwd: Information on Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative**
>
> Hi Jean,
> They did receive the email as did I.
> Thank you,
> Elisa
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
>
> On Feb 17, 2021, at 7:22 AM, JEAN JACOBS <sweetshope@aol.com> wrote:
>
>> Good Morning Elisa:
>>
>> When I looked this morning my email was returned that I sent to the email you sent me for the Alderman and Alderman at Large and not sure if you received yours? . Could you please forward this email to the Alderman and the Alderman At Large this morning, before the deadline at noon, with the attachment.
>>
>> I am not sure what occurred but it was in my mailbox this morning from the Postmaster. Please let me know, if there is a problem. I really want them to have this as per discussed, in the ReEnvision Task Force public hearing on 2/11/21.
>>
>> Thank you as always for your professional time in this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.
>>
>> Have a wonderful day,
>>
>> Regards,
>> Jean Jacobs
>>
>> Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: JEAN JACOBS <sweetshope@aol.com>
Date: February 16, 2021 at 9:49:23 PM EST
To: Alderman City Of kingston <Aldermen@kingston-ny.gov>
Cc: Alderman At Large Andrea Shaut <ashaut@kingston-ny.gov>
**Subject: Fwd: Information on Police Reform and Reinvention
Collaborative**

Good Evening:
Date: February 16, 2021
FROM: Jean C Jacobs
139 Wall Street
Kingston, NY 12401
Life Long Resident: And my entire family dating back to 1881

I would like to take this opportunity to share the correspondence I
received from Ms. Tina Tierney, Center for School Safety,
Contracted by the State of New York on 2/11/21 as it relates to the
Governor Cuomo's Police Reform ReEnvision Collaborative. I
have had the opportunity to speak with her on several occasions,
and I bring to all of you the importance of the Project Save
Legislation that became LAW in July 2000, and has been in affect
for 21 years in all of the KCSD Schools.

The Save Legislation became LAW after Governor Pataki and
Mary Donahue felt the need, after the Columbine School
Massacre. Their Goal was if we can save one chid, this is worth
our effort. Every year in July the LAW IS REVISITED and NYS
School Districts, must send in their addendums, additions etc. I
was involved in the initial implementation back in 1998-2000
when we crafted all the initial documents required by the State,
when I was on the KCSB as a Trustee.

Therefore, I urge all of you to read page 18 of the Governor's
Police Reform ReEnvision Collaborative as it relates to SRO's and
the MEMORANDUM LETTER ATTACHMENT that Ms. Tina
Tierney has included, regarding the Memorandum of Agreement
for every school Superintendent and School Principals as it relates
to SRO's and School Safety Plans. The information provided in the
report presented by Ms. Amy Shapiro, absolutely did not follow
the Governors Recommendations, which should have involved
COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS BY BUILDING TRUST AND
TRANSPARENCY within the community.

There are 6,800 students in THE KCSD and every child, regardless
of their race, creed or color deserves to be educated in a safe
learning environment. The law dictates this through the School
Safety Plans and the Emergency Response Plans in every school.

The ReEnvision Task Force appointed by Mayor Noble, did not follow the recommendations of Governor Cuomo, if you read them in their entirety. The information directed by the Governor, was at the fingertips of the ReEnvision Task Force and they never engaged their community. This is dangerous when you are voting on a plan that has to do with the safety and lives of our most valuable possession, our children and every citizens safety and quality of life. Over the last 20 years numerous deadly school shootings have occurred in our Nation, including 20 children at Sandy Hook, Elementary School in Connecticut between ages 5-9 and 6 adults.

I also attended both Town Hall ReEnvision Task Force meetings on 11/18/20 and 12/16/20 and maybe 15 people spoke. I was included in that figure and spoke at both meetings. Mr. Strong quoted a figure of 100 at one of his virtual meetings last week. There are 23,000 residents in our community which does not include children, and yet maybe a 100 people made comments for change? Where are all those comments? This absolutely did not follow the police Reform Recommendations involving all the STAKEHOLDERS.

There should have been a survey sent to all residents spending some of the $100,000 set aside in the budget. My career in finances was in the Health Care Industry all my life, creating NEEDS Assessments and multi million dollar budgets, you always craft a budget associated with the NEED. That is called GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT creating the standards of compliance, policies and procedures, and recommendations for COST. I heard Mr. Strong say the other evening this will be a long range plan 5-10 years, can you even imagine the cost associated with all of this, at the taxpayers expense?

My vote on the Police Reform ReEnvision Collaborative plan would be a NO Vote, as presented on 1/26/21, which did not follow the recommendations set forth by the Governor of NYS. Careful consideration should be reviewed regarding the credentials of the ReEnvision Task Force members and their experience in this field of expertise?

What about engaging with the Police Benevolent Association, Superintendent KCSD Dr. Paul Padalino, Local Social Services, Local Clergy, Mental Health Professionals, Principals, Guidance Counsellors, Family Court Attorney's, Drug and Alcohol Professionals, the Recent KPD Accreditation Award recently received and for the last 30 years. THAT IS TRULY A STELLAR achievement.

I have presented some facts for your review and consideration. I'm all about research and I welcome it without reservation, but what attempt was made to engage our Community? Please give your

sincere consideration to this before adopting this report, that requires serious revisions. I have also been in contact with the Governor's Office.

Thank you for this opportunity and for listening, as our elected officials remembering, despite political party affiliation, you work for all the people. never lose sight of this. Our Community is truly divided and I would hope that in the future, we could truly improve on this for the betterment of everyone. Citizens want to feel safe in their homes, on the streets, in our schools, in our churches and everyone deserves this.

Presently residents live in fear, in our fine city, and our local KPD Law Enforcement Officers deserve everyone's support and respect. My husband was a Police Commissioner in the City of Kingston for 18 years, and my son Daniel Jacobs was Chief of Presidential Security on Air Force One. His life was on the line each and every day for 30 years, in law enforcement, in the military. I know first hand the respect they deserve, and what I have observed over this last year in our nation, and the sad and untimely death of Mr. George Floyd only strengthens and enforces the fact, all the more that UNITY, RESPECT, TRUST, AND TRANSPARENCY must prevail, if we are going to go forward together.

Thank you for your professional time in this matter.

Sincerely
Jean C Jacobs

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** sweetshope <sweetshope@aol.com>
> **Date:** February 16, 2021 at 7:10:36 PM EST
> **To:** Jean Jacobs <sweetshope@aol.com>
> **Subject: Fw: Information on Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative**
>
>
>
> Sent from the all new Aol app for iOS
>
> Begin forwarded message:
>
> On Thursday, February 11, 2021, 4:13 PM, Tina Tierney <ttierney@measinc.com> wrote:
>
> > Dear Jean,

As discussed, please find the
Guidance document from Governor
Cuomo's office. The text we
discussed regarding consideration of
SROs can be found on page 18.

Source:
https://www.governor.ny.gov/news
/governor-cuomo-announces-new-
guidance-police-reform-
collaborative-reinvent-and-
modernize

Direct link to document:
https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/
governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/P
olice_Reform_Workbook81720.pdf

NEW YORK STATE POLICE REFORM AND REINVE COLLABORATIVE

police reform and reinvention collaborative new york state resources & guide for p
2020 ¬

www.governor.ny.gov

I've attached the NYSED memo
regarding MOUs.
Source: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/
sss/documents/MOUMemo9-19.pdf

Warm regards,
Tina

Tina Tierney
Project Director
New York State Center for School Safety
nyscfss.org
518-427-9840 ext. 205
844-897-9567

<pastedImagebase640.png>

<MOU 9-5-2019.pdf>

From: Tinti, Elisa
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 9:23 AM
To: Mesches, Sue
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] SRO's

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** CHRYSTAL DELISIO <cdelisio@kingstoncityschools.org>
> **Date:** February 17, 2021 at 6:48:55 AM EST
> **To:** "Tinti, Elisa" <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>
> **Cc:** val.dwyer@arold.us
> **Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] SRO's**

Due to the ongoing discussion of the relevance and need for SRO's to remain present in the Kingston City Schools, I see it extremely important to explain how these officers are needed for so many reasons. As a parent of three in the Kingston City Schools and a teacher, the high value of keeping these important role models present within each school. Not only are they there for safety of the building, but they are there for the students as another positive outlet for our children to connect with. Many times, I find myself walking the hallways and see students making conversation with the security officers when a teacher may not be available, or they may be having a tough day. It is an invaluable gift to keep these SRO's present not only for the safety and security of the staff and students, but they go beyond for these children without question. I have witnessed security dancing with the students in the hallways, having lunch when they are feeling down, lending an ear when they need to hear from someone other than a teacher or classmate. These officers make a difference every day to each and every child and staff member in our buildings. They show up to community ice cream socials, sporting events, and will even go as far as reaching out to families when in need to provide another outlet to relieve the stress.

With school shootings happening throughout the country, as well as this has been hitting too close to home here in the city of Kingston, our community should be embracing our district in the fact that we are lucky enough to have these officers present in our buildings. Without the SRO's we are decreasing safety, increasing stress and removing a social aspect in our school that supports mental health on many levels as outlined above.

Chrystal Delisio
Grade 8 English
Grade 8 Advisor

M. Clifford Miller Middle School
65 Fording Place Road
Lake Katrine, NY 12449
845-943-3941
cdelisio@kingstoncityschools.org

Mesches, Sue

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

To The Kingston City Common Council:

I am a life long Kingston resident. I attended Kingston City Schools. I am a business owner, a landlord, and a mother. I wear many hats, everyday of the week. But the single most important responsibility in my life is my children and their safety. I I listened to the public hearing last week, in regards to the School Resource Officers. It is irresponsible to believe that an officer, who has fully committed to the police academy training, field training and the additional requirements necessary to become a SRO, would have anything other then the best intentions walking on a school campus everyday. I am outraged that people speak out against this factor without having attended these schools, or have children enrolled. They are misleading and misguided.

My son is a seventh grader at J. Watson Bailey Middle School. Officer Kurz is professional, fun, approachable and visible. He parks his patrol car front and center every morning for the children getting off the buses and walkers to see. He filled big shoes when Officer Woltman retired, but he quickly took the reigns and has acclimated to Bailey's environment.

My daughter is a ninth grader at Kingston High School. She knows many of the officers by first name. Some are father's of friends and others she has known from being in the district or just because of living in Kingston. She has witnessed them break up fights, direct traffic and patrol basketball games. They are very much apart of her daily activities in school and out. While she was a first grader at Edson, the Sandy Hook tragedy took place. I spoke with her teacher to ask if it was her intention to speak with the students and explain the circumstances. It was unfathomable that first graders could understand this monstrous event. But now as a ninth grader, I feel an even bigger need to protect her and make her aware of her surroundings and situations.

The children of the Kingston City School District learned from Officer Habernig with the DARE program at a young age and have continued having positive reinforcements from the School Resource Officers since. Why would we want to change that? Please do not remove these vital elements of our children's safety from their school campuses. Please listen to the facts, from people with first hand knowledge, as Debra Fitzgerald's account of her witnesses day in and day out. These officers are absolutely necessary to the safety of our community.

Thank you,

Sharlene Martin

1

Good evening and thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Kyla Thomas and I currently have a 15-year-old in 10th grade attending KHS. I am a graduate of KHS myself, a lifelong resident of the area and currently live in the town of Ulster. I have seen it change for both the better and for the worst. Unfortunately, we cannot keep hoping for the better to always present itself, however we can take certain steps to maintain the safety of everyone specifically all of those on our school grounds on a daily basis.

School resource officers have been present now at our schools for several years and I know firsthand it has and will continue to be a huge asset for our schools. The benefits are abundant but the ones that I feel may stand out the most are as follows...

There is an increased perception of safety by school administrators, teachers, staff, and students. It helps the school to achieve their full potential if the schools are safe and feel safe. Students feel safe, are more productive, and engaged. The same goes for the teachers. The school resource officers are not meant to scare the kids but however someone who the kids look up to for advice, support, safety along with someone they can depend on. By this happening, the kids feel that the school resource officers are approachable, and they can confide in them to discuss any issues whether in school or even at home. Think about it, if the officer were not there to talk to, the chances the kid would pick up the phone to call the police would be slim to none.

Having a school resource officer at the schools helps in improved police call response time and faster medical help if needed. Why would we ever want to decrease the response time in the event of an unforeseen situation. These are our children, and we need to protect them and keep them safe.

School resource officers may from time to time have to conduct a criminal investigation because the student had their cell phone taken or they were possibly struck by another student during a fight but if there is a resolution available the school resource officer can entertain that. Again, it is about interacting with students and the syudent feeling comfortable talking to the school resource officer regardless of the reason. They are young adults looking for a good direction.

Police officers are trained for various situations and are taught to always be observant for potential threats or actions they would generate cause for concern. Let them be another set of eyes while our dedicated teachers do what they do best and that is teach. Without school resource officers it would make our schools very vulnerable.

So, in conclusion, the benefits of having school resource officers in our schools goes beyond reducing violence. I am completely against the removal of them from our schools and our children's lives. We need to as adults set aside our personal opinions of police officers and focus on the main goal of safety for our current and future students, our children. I cannot even fathom why anyone could or would even suggest the removal of school resource officers......community policing begins here.

From:	Sarah Maouris <sarahmaouris@yahoo.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, February 16, 2021 2:31 PM
To:	Tinti, Elisa
Subject:	[EXTERNAL EMAIL] SRO

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in regards to the SRO program in the Kingston City School District.
I have been following the discussion on both "sides" and believe the overall safety of our children has to take precedence. I currently have a child attending Kingston High School and my other son recently graduated from KHS. There is always going to be an adult, whether it is a teacher, doctor or SRO that makes a bad decision. When that occurs, that does not mean we eliminate that position. It means we work harder, work together to change things and work toward a common goal. We strive to put the best people in these important positions so that our children can be safe, feel safe and focus on learning and growing as individuals. My hope is that we do not eliminate the SRO's from the buildings, but instead we model to students that working together, especially in this political climate, is possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sarah Maouris

Tinti, Elisa

To whom it may concern,
I currently have 2 children in KHS and a one year old who will be attending Kingston schools. I fully support keeping our SROs in all of our schools. They are a benefit to the kids and the community Thank you Denise Ahl

Sent from my iPhone
ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

From:	Val Dwyer <val.dwyer@arold.us>
Sent:	Tuesday, February 16, 2021 1:47 PM
To:	Tinti, Elisa
Cc:	jpurvis58@yahoo.com
Subject:	[EXTERNAL EMAIL] FW: Re-Envisioning Public Safety Report - SRO Section

Elissa – Here are comments from John Purvis. Please see email below, I am cc'ing John on this email in case he has anything further to add. Thanks! Val

PLEASE NOTE MY NEW EMAIL ADDRESS val.dwyer@arold.us

Thank You,

Valerie M. Dwyer, CPA
President
Arold Construction Co., Inc.

51 Powder Mill Bridge Rd.
Kingston, NY 12401
(845) 336-8753 Office Ext. 302
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Vermont Certified DBE
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----- Forwarded Message -----
From: John Purvis <jpurvis58@yahoo.com>
To: Scott-Childress, Reynolds <rscott-childress@kingston-ny.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021, 01:51:52 PM EST

1

Subject: Re-Envisioning Public Safety Report - SRO Section

Good Afternoon Rennie,

Unfortunately I'll be unable to attend/participate in this evenings Council meeting to discuss the Re-Envisioning Public Safety Report. However, I did want to express my concern about the idea of removing SROs from schools. The writer of the "SRO part" of the report clearly is of the perspective that, "I believe this is a problem, so now let me find evidence to support that belief." There is flawed logic in her conclusions, and the report includes general anecdotal examples/evidence which is never representative and just shows her perspective and biases.

My son is in 7th grade at Bailey and my daughter is in 10th grade at KHS. I take a small degree of comfort in knowing that there are SROs in the buildings each day to look after their safety. I would be fearful of what could potentially happen in these schools if SROs are removed. I fear the number of guns, and the amount of violence in the schools would increase, absent the presence of SROs in the buildings. Especially in today's high stress world, High School, and to a lesser extent, middle schools can be emotional, hostile environments during times like these I think the SRO's provide stability and calmness and have an ability to de-escalate intense situations. I also believe they add a degree of deterrence to those that might otherwise see opportunities to do something awful. I hope you will not support and/or endorse this section of the report.

Thank you for your time.

John Purvis
201.403.5311

Tinti, Elisa

From:	vlongo1970@gmail.com
Sent:	Tuesday, February 16, 2021 1:49 PM
To:	Tinti, Elisa
Subject:	[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Kingston City School District SRO Support

We are writing in full support of SRO's being in our school district. We have four children; three currently in the district and one having gone through and now is in college. Our son is a junior in the high school and our daughters are in sixth grade a JWB. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Dr. Daniel & Vikki Longo
251 Hillside Terrace
Kingston, NY 12401

Sent from my iPhone
ATTENTION: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders or unexpected emails.

February 10, 2021

To Whom it may concern,

I have been a Guidance/School Counselor at Bailey Middle School for 12 years. Prior to that, I held the same role at Kingston High School for 2.5 years and Miller for one year. I love my job and I love "my kids". I also want to do right by them and advocate to the best of my ability not only for them but for their families, teachers, and my colleagues. I am writing this because I feel like it is the right thing to do to advocate to keep School Resource Officers in our schools. I can only speak to my experiences with the SRO's I have personally worked with whom I respect and appreciate very much. They have protected me and the school community while also going above and beyond. It is difficult to convey the true impact they have made on my student's lives without divulging too much personal information. Here are some examples of how SRO's have helped our students:

1. Home visits/check-ins on students at their homes because I am worried about them being alone – not unsafe – just need someone to show they are looking out for them.
2. Educating students about the dangers of social media and the repercussions that can come of it. I worked side by side with an SRO who tirelessly explained this to several of my students individually, as it pertained to each of them personally.
3. Keeping an extra eye on students who I think might be getting bullied during recess, in the hallways, etc. when I cannot be there.
4. Providing me information about community/family/student situations that I may not know about so I can keep an extra eye out for the emotional well-being of my students.
5. Raising thousands of dollars so kids can go to see a Mets, Yankees, or Globetrotters game...and giving them a special shirt and snacks to go along with it.
6. Playing in basketball, dodgeball, etc. games to show students they can have a good time. Plus, raising money while doing so to provide funds for college scholarships for our KHS students.
7. Bringing necessary supplies (food, meds, clothing, etc.) to the homes of families in need who either can't afford it and/or don't have the transportation to acquire it themselves.
8. Giving students a ride home because they had an anxiety attack at school.
9. Chasing kids who may run out of classrooms or out of the building who are having a tough time in school and just feel like they need to escape ....and then de-escalating them by having a heart to heart conversation and bringing them back into the building.
10. Going to the hospital with a student and/or staff member.

11. Directing traffic outside the schools every morning to keep all pedestrians, buses, parents dropping off their kids, etc. safe.
12. Providing insight into the law when we need help with deciphering the best way to help our students learn from their mistakes.

School Resource Officers are the eyes, ears, and hearts that I (or other school staff members) cannot be sometimes. They not only keep our students safe but equally important are an ear to listen or a shoulder to cry on. They are role models to our students and another adult in our school buildings to rely on.

Sincerely,

Cherelyn Volpert

COMMON COUNCIL - PUBLIC HEARING 02/11/21 (updated 2/16/21)

Good Evening, my name is Val Dwyer.

I listened to the Governor's daily briefing on January 22 where he spoke about the statewide "Re-envision Police Task Force" process that is happening. Cuomo stated that he can't tell communities how to police their communities from Albany because what might work in Rochester is going to be different from what might work in the North Country and that might be different from what will work in New York City. Essentially, he was saying we need to figure out what will work for *our own community* because each community is different.

I raise this point because when I listened to the task force's public hearings, I heard a lot of information about what was going on **nationally**, but not about what's going on **locally** and that doesn't line up his comments that day. It concerns me that last week alone we had 3 shootings in **one week** and at Christmas, we lost a 12 year old girl – DJ Mason - to gun violence. Yet, when I listened to our **police task force**, the local issue of violence was never discussed or taken into consideration – NOT ONCE.

At the governor's press conference on February 15, he spoke about how police feel victimized and communities feel victimized, referring to some recent national events. He spoke about how both parties need to sit down at the table to talk and work this out. I feel as though this report, for the most part, is very much "one sided". It isn't sitting down at the table and talking; it's divisive and it is dangerous, when considering the violence that needs to be addressed in our City. We need to work together, as the Governor is requesting.

In regards to the SRO report, I take exception to the claims that students are being traumatized at the hands of SRO's and that SRO's are acting as disciplinarians. There are no facts given in this report and the presenter does not have any children in either of the middle schools or high school, nor is she employed by Kingston CSD, so she has no first hand experience. I am a mother of students at both Bailey Middle School and Kingston High School as well as the spouse of a KCSD teacher. I have experienced first hand our SRO's engaging positively with ALL students – white, black, brown, athlete, scholar, you name it. But most importantly, I see the positive relationships they have with the "at risk" kids. I am submitting for public record 1,017 signed hard copy petitions supporting the SRO program signed by parents, students, employees of KCSD with numerous positive comments that speak for themselves. These hard copy petitions represent those directly impacted by this program as opposed to an online petition which could be "signed" from **anywhere** and by **anyone**.

Also in response to the SRO report, there is an FBI report cited that was issued in 2013 using data on 27 mass shootings that go back as far as 21 years ago to argue that police are not needed in schools and have not been proven to stop mass shootings. This is an old, outdated report and it speaks only to mass shootings which is only a small portion of national school shootings. I firmly believe this report was used to meet the presenter's personal agenda.

My agenda is the safety of my children and ALL children in our district and I would direct the Common Council and the Task Force to a much more recent report which I am submitting into public record. It was just issued 8 months ago in June 2020 and is titled "K-12 Education: Characteristics of School Shootings". It was presented to Congress and issued by the United States Government Accountability Office.

On page 8 of the report, it states that following the Sandy Hook shooting, the White House developed a plan in 2013 called "Now is the Time" and among other things, the plan included steps to **encourage** schools to hire **more** SRO's .

More disturbing in the report is that between 2009-2019 , there were 318 school shootings in the United States. This report repeatedly mentions communities to be at a much higher risk where gangs and drug activity are present. Actually 1/3 of the 318 shootings that occurred were the result of conflicts between students, staff or gangs, not a mentally unstable person entering the building. **Here is a situation where it would have been helpful for the task force to take into consideration what is going on "locally" – gangs and drugs are prevalent in our community.** Within the past several months, you will read suspects arrested for shootings and stabbings that are barely out of high school. It is not unreasonable to think that there are currently students bringing knives and guns into our high school and removing SRO's would certainly send the wrong message to these students. It would put ALL of our students at risk.

> *I would respectfully request that the Common Council does not accept this SRO report; doing so would be buying into an agenda that would put our students and teachers at risk.*

In closing, I recognize the City has approximately $100,000 set aside to implement recommendations from this report. I love the idea of adding mental health workers however the County already has a mental health office and we should be piggy backing off of that office as other local communities also share that need. It is not fiscally responsible to add another bureaucracy at the City level when the Town of Ulster, Saugerties, Ellenville etc. share the same need.

<u>Here is my recommendation</u>: It is one that works on building relations between the community and law enforcement that Governor Cuomo speaks about. It also helps to address the violence, together as a community. Take the money to rent a space in midtown where the police department can have a sub station and have a presence there. Outside the police station, make it a playground/park that the kids and community can enjoy and encourage officers to engage with the community in this park area. Name the park the "DJ Mason Peace Park". On the weekends, ask local businesses to sponsor picnics and community events where law enforcement families and community members can get together and develop relationships. I know that mental health, racial bias, autism etc. have been discussed throughout the police forum; we could have days designated towards these topics where we as a community could grow and learn together. <u>For the sake of our children, we must unite and fight this violence together.</u>

GAO

June 2020

K-12 EDUCATION

Characteristics of School Shootings

GAO Highlights

K-12 EDUCATION

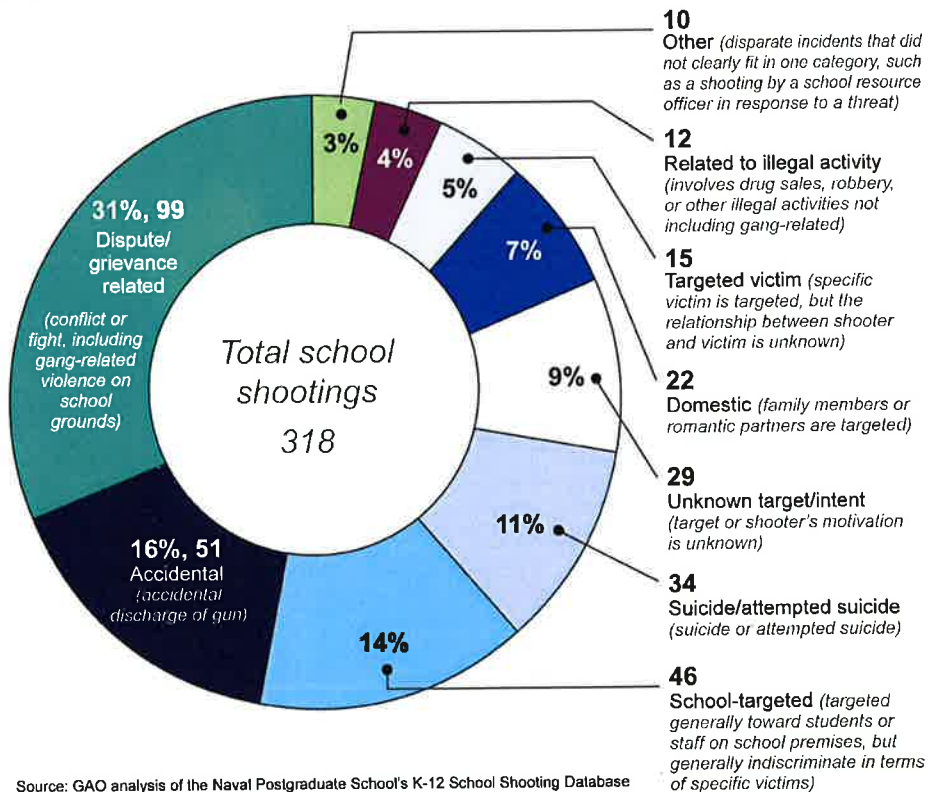## Characteristics of School Shootings

Why GAO Did This Study

In addition to the potential loss of life, school shootings can evoke feelings of profound fear and anxiety that disturb a community's sense of safety and security. Questions have been raised about whether schools' approaches to addressing student behavior are a factor in school shootings. These approaches include discipline that removes the offending students from the classroom or school, and preventative approaches meant to change student behaviors before problems arise.

GAO was asked to examine school shootings, including the link between discipline and shootings. This report examines 1) the characteristics of school shootings and affected schools, and 2) what is known about the link between discipline and school shootings. To do so, GAO analyzed data on school shootings and school characteristics for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19; and conducted a literature review to identify empirical research from 2009 to 2019 that examined discipline approaches in school, and the effects of these approaches on outcomes of school gun violence, school violence, or school safety. GAO also interviewed selected researchers to gather perspectives about challenges and limitations in conducting research on school discipline and school shootings.

What GAO Found

GAO found that shootings at K-12 schools most commonly resulted from disputes or grievances, for example, between students or staff, or between gangs, although the specific characteristics of school shootings over the past 10 years varied widely, according to GAO's analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database. (See figure.) After disputes and grievances, accidental shootings were most common, followed closely by school-targeted shootings, such as those in Parkland, Florida and Santa Fe, Texas.

K-12 School Shootings by Kind, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

- **31%, 99** Dispute/grievance related (conflict or fight, including gang-related violence on school grounds)
- **16%, 51** Accidental (accidental discharge of gun)
- Total school shootings 318
- **3%**
- **4%**
- **5%**
- **7%**
- **9%**
- **11%**
- **14%**

- **10** Other (disparate incidents that did not clearly fit in one category, such as a shooting by a school resource officer in response to a threat)
- **12** Related to illegal activity (involves drug sales, robbery, or other illegal activities not including gang-related)
- **15** Targeted victim (specific victim is targeted, but the relationship between shooter and victim is unknown)
- **22** Domestic (family members or romantic partners are targeted)
- **29** Unknown target/intent (target or shooter's motivation is unknown)
- **34** Suicide/attempted suicide (suicide or attempted suicide)
- **46** School-targeted (targeted generally toward students or staff on school premises, but generally indiscriminate in terms of specific victims)

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

The shooter in about half of school shootings was a student or former student; in the other half, the shooter had no relationship to the school, was a parent, teacher, or staff, or his or her relationship to the school was unknown, according to the data. When the shooting was accidental, a suicide, or school-targeted, the shooter was more often a student or former student. However, when the shooting was the result of a dispute or grievance, the shooter was someone other than a student in the majority of cases. For about one-fifth of cases, the shooter's relationship to the school was not known. (See figure.)
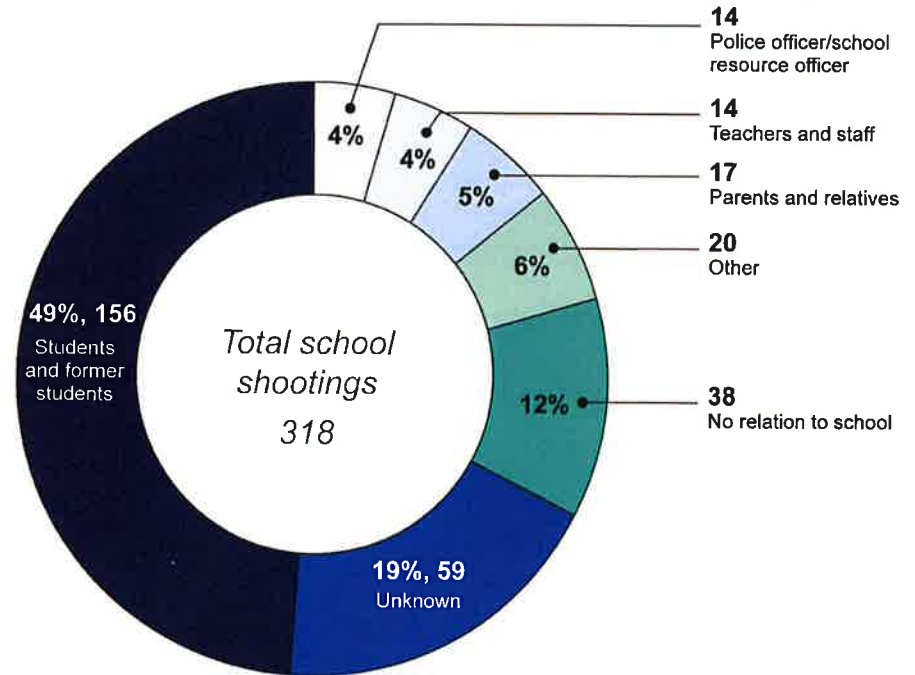
United States Government Accountability Office

The characteristics of schools where shootings occurred over the past 10 years also varied by poverty level and racial composition. Urban, poorer, and high minority schools had more shootings overall, with more characterized as a dispute or grievance. Suburban and rural, wealthier, and low minority schools had more suicides and school-targeted shootings, which had the highest fatalities per incident. Overall, more than half of the 166 fatalities were the result of school-targeted shootings.

The location of the shootings more often took place outside the school building than inside the school building, but shootings inside were more deadly, according to the data. Shootings resulting from disputes occurred more often outside school buildings, whereas accidents and school-targeted shootings occurred more often inside school buildings. (See figure.)

GAO found no empirical research in the last 10 years (2009-2019) that directly examined the link between school discipline and school shootings. According to literature GAO examined and five study authors GAO interviewed, various factors contribute to the lack of research examining this particular link, including that multiple and complex factors affect an individual's propensity toward violence, making it difficult to isolate the effect of any one factor, including school discipline.
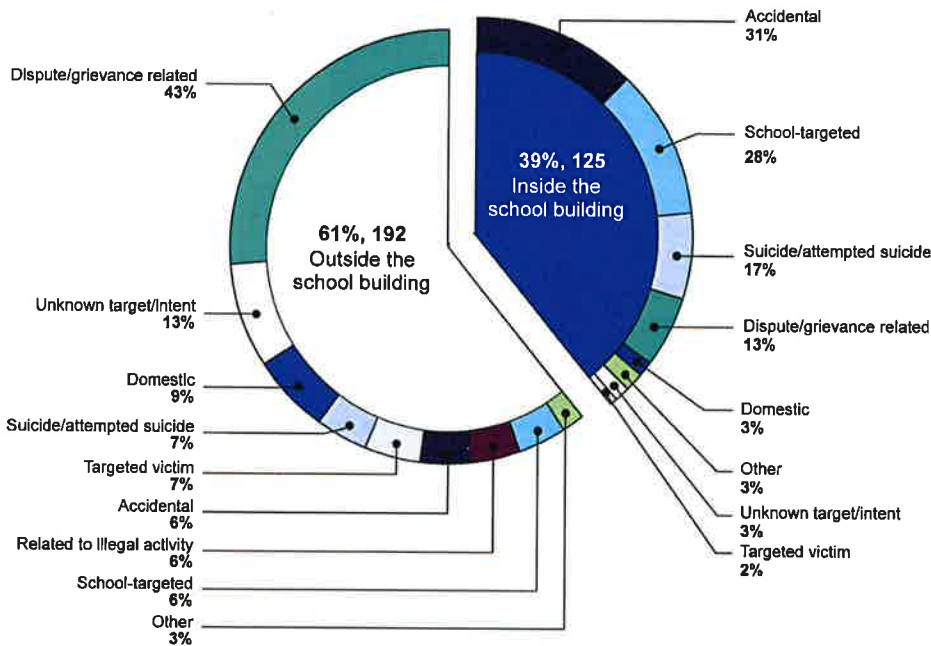
K-12 School Shootings by Shooter, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

Notes: Percentages do not add to 100 percent, due to rounding. "Unknown," as recorded in the K-12 School Shooting Database, includes incidents in which the shooter was identified but the shooter's relationship to the school could not be determined. "Other" combines four categories from the K-12 School Shooting Database: intimate relationship with victim, multiple shooters, students from a rival school, and non-students using athletic facilities/attending game.

K-12 School Shootings by Shooting Location and Kind of Shooting, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

Notes: The location of one of the 318 incidents was unknown, and therefore, excluded from this analysis. As a result, the total incidents in this analysis is 317. GAO combined three categories from the K-12 School Shooting Database into an "Outside the school building" category: outside on school property, off school property, and on school bus.

Contents

Figures

GAO

U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

441 G St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

June 9, 2020

The Honorable Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
House of Representatives

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
House of Representatives

According to a 2018 Pew Research Center Survey, a majority of American teenagers—especially those who are not white or are from lower income families—are worried about the possibility of a shooting happening at their school.[1] Since the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School, almost all K-12 public school districts have developed and adopted procedures to follow in the event of a shooting, and most currently conduct active shooter drills, as we reported in 2016.[2] In addition to the loss of life often resulting from school shootings, a shooting that occurs in school can profoundly disturb a community's sense of safety and security and may have lasting effects for students, teachers, principals, and parents. As a result of their trauma, students can experience fear, anxiety, worry, difficulty concentrating, angry outbursts, and aggression.[3] Students who experience the trauma of a school shooting might also perform poorly in school or attempt to harm themselves.[4] Further, questions have been raised about whether schools' approaches to addressing student behavior are a factor in school shootings. These approaches include discipline that removes the

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[1] The survey of teens was conducted in March and April of 2018, shortly after the shooting at a high school in Parkland, Florida, on February 14, 2018. Nikki Graff, *A majority of U.S. teens fear a shooting could happen at their school, and most parents share their concern* (Pew Research Center, Apr. 18, 2018).

[2] GAO, *Emergency Management: Improved Federal Coordination Could Better Assist K-12 Schools Prepare for Emergencies*, GAO-16-144 (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 10, 2016).

[3] K. Guarino and E. Chagnon, *Trauma-sensitive schools training package.* (Washington, D.C.: National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, 2018).

[4] K. Guarino and E. Chagnon.

offending students from the classroom or school, and preventative approaches meant to change student behaviors before problems arise.

You asked us to provide information on school shootings, including information on whether the way students are disciplined in schools might be a factor in school shootings. This report examines (1) the characteristics of K-12 school shooting incidents and the characteristics of affected schools, and (2) what is known about whether different approaches to discipline in school play a role in school shootings.

For the first objective, we developed a definition of school shootings to create a list of school shootings based on existing datasets, and matched the list of shootings with Department of Education (Education) data on school characteristics. Specifically:

- Because there is no uniform definition of a school shooting, we developed a definition of school shootings for the purposes of our analysis, by reviewing research on the topic of school shootings, and by reviewing and comparing definitions used in various datasets, such as the National Center for Education Statistics School Survey on Crime and Safety and Education's Civil Rights Data Collection. To ensure we focused on instances where students or staff were at risk, we defined a school shooting as "any time a gun is fired on school grounds, on a bus, during a school event, during school hours, or right before or after school."[5,6] Appendix I provides more information on how we developed our definition.

- Although the dataset we used captures school shooting incidents from 1970 to the present, we focused our analysis on the past 10 school years (2009-10 through 2018-19) to reflect the types of shootings occurring in today's schools. To develop a list of shootings, we applied our definition by comparing it to the description of each shooting occurring within this 10-year period in the Naval

[5] For our analysis, we included four incidents in which a gun was brandished due to the severity of the incidents. For example, the shooter initially made threatening gestures with a firearm, but was stopped prior to a shot being fired; for example, if the shooter was tackled.

[6] This definition includes instances in which the gun was fired onto school grounds or at a school bus, even if the shooter was outside of school grounds or outside of the school bus when they fired. In addition, this definition includes all times where school staff and teachers, including support and custodial staff, were on school grounds in their official capacity with the school (e.g. on duty, at school meeting).

Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database[7]—the dataset on which we primarily relied—and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Active Shooter reports.[8] We primarily relied on the K-12 School Shooting Database because we determined it to be the most widely inclusive database of K-12 school shootings (i.e., compiling every instance a gun is brandished, is fired, or a bullet hits school property for any reason, regardless of the number of victims, time of day, or day of week), and therefore most appropriate for our purpose. We included on our list, all shootings that met our criteria regardless of the shooter's intent (e.g., accidents and suicides). For purposes of our report, we categorized shootings identified in the FBI's Active Shooter reports as "school-targeted."[9] See appendix I for details on the categories of school shootings we identified.

- To develop our unique dataset on characteristics of schools that experienced school shootings, we used Education's Common Core of Data (CCD), which is the agency's primary database on public elementary and secondary education in the United States. We matched and then merged the school characteristics from the CCD, such as grade level and locale (urban, suburban, town, and rural), with our list of school shootings.

- To assess the reliability of the data in the K-12 School Shooting Database, we interviewed the researchers who developed and

[7] The K-12 School Shooting Database was developed by the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security which conducts a wide range of programs to develop policies, strategies, programs and organizational elements to address terrorism, natural disasters and public safety threats. The programs are developed in partnership with and sponsored by the National Preparedness Directorate at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The K-12 School Shooting Database (https://www.chds.us/ssdb/) is an open-source database of information from various sources including peer-reviewed studies, government reports, and media sources.

[8] The FBI defines an active shooter as one or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area. The FBI compiles active shooter incidents to assist law enforcement in preventing and responding to these incidents. For example, see: Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) Center at Texas State University and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, *Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2018* (Washington, D.C.: 2018).

[9] We define school-targeted incidents as shootings that were targeted generally toward school staff or students on school premises, but that were generally indiscriminate in terms of specific victims. These include incidents of hostage standoffs, indiscriminate shootings targeting the school staff and personnel, and active shooter incidents as categorized by the FBI. School-targeted shootings may also include incidents in which a specific victim was targeted because of their relationship to the school (e.g., student, principal, staff, school resource officer, etc.).

maintain the K-12 School Shooting Database and compared that data to other databases with similar data on school shootings. To assess the reliability of the CCD data, we reviewed technical documentation and interviewed officials from Education's Institute of Education Sciences. We found these data sufficiently reliable for our purposes.

To address the second objective, we conducted a literature review to identify empirical research generally published in peer reviewed journals or by government agencies over a 10-year period, from January 2009 to June 2019 (see app. I for criteria used in screening studies). We included studies that examined exclusionary approaches to discipline, like suspension (both in and out of school), expulsion, and zero tolerance; as well as nonexclusionary approaches such as those intended to prevent behaviors that may lead to discipline.[10] These approaches include social emotional learning and positive behavior supports, and interventions like threat assessment. We searched for studies that examined the effects of discipline approaches on outcomes of school gun violence, school violence, and school safety.[11]

We conducted this performance audit from May 2019 to June 2020 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

Research on Youth Violence

Research suggests that a young person's propensity to commit an act of violence, like a school shooting, is influenced by the interplay of multiple risk factors and protective factors.[12] These factors, according to the

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[10] A school may use exclusionary and nonexclusionary approaches in combination. In addition, for the purposes of our literature review, "nonexclusionary" means approaches to address student behavior that focus on preventing behaviors that lead to a punitive disciplinary response. It does not include "time-out" or "detention", or other forms of discipline that may be used by teachers or schools.

[11] Because existing research was limited, we included literature that examined the outcome of violent behavior that was not always exclusive to school-based violent behaviors.

[12] C. David-Ferdon, et al, *A Comprehensive Technical Package for the Prevention of Youth Violence and Associated Risk Behaviors* (Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016).

research, can affect a young person's development from early childhood through young adulthood. Risk factors, like a prior history of exposure to violence or abuse or to high levels of crime or gang activity, can increase the likelihood of a person becoming a perpetrator of violence. Protective factors, like stable connections to school, school personnel, and nonviolent peers, decrease the likelihood of a person becoming a perpetrator of violence. Risk factors and protective factors play a role on many levels, such as the interpersonal and community levels. Table 1 summarizes several of the risk and protective factors identified by research.

Table 1: Examples of Risk and Protective Factors That Influence Youth Violence

	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Individual	• Impulsiveness • Substance abuse • Antisocial or aggressive beliefs and attitudes • Weak school achievement, peer conflict, or rejection • Prior history of exposure to violence or abuse • Unsupervised access to a firearm • Depression, anxiety, chronic stress and trauma • Prior history of arrest	• Development of healthy social, problem-solving, and emotional regulation skills • School readiness and academic achievement
Relationship	• Association with peers engaging in violent or delinquent behavior, including gang activity • Parental conflict and violence • Poor parental attachment and lack of appropriate supervision • Use of harsh or inconsistent discipline	• Strong parent-child attachment • Consistent, developmentally appropriate limits at home • Stable connections to school and school personnel • Feelings of connectedness to prosocial, nonviolent peers
Community	• Residential instability and crowded housing • Density of alcohol-related businesses • Poor economic growth or stability • Concentrated poverty • High levels of crime or gang activity • High levels of unemployment • High levels of drug use or sales	• Residences and neighborhoods that are regularly repaired and maintained, and are designed to increase visibility and control access (parks, schools, businesses) • Policies related to the density of alcohol outlets and sales • Stable housing and household financial security • Economic opportunities (e.g., employment) • Access to services and social support

Source: GAO analysis of C. David-Ferdon, et al, *A Comprehensive Technical Package for the Prevention of Youth Violence and Associated Risk Behaviors* (Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016); and C. David-Ferdon and T.R. Simon, *Preventing Youth Violence: Opportunities for Action* (Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014). | GAO-20-455

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), identifying risk factors and protective factors—a public health approach to

violence prevention—is an important step in understanding where to focus prevention efforts.[13] Risk factors are cumulative, meaning the more risk factors youth are exposed to, the greater likelihood they will develop violent behaviors. It is important to note that not everyone exposed to risk factors will develop violent behaviors.[14]

The CDC's resources on evidence-based youth violence prevention efforts include strategies that help ameliorate risk factors and bolster protective factors, such as strategies that enhance safe environments in communities, strengthen communication and problem solving skills of caregivers and parents, and educate students on violence in schools.[15] In addition, according to a 2007 meta-analysis, school-based prevention programs involving both psychological and social aspects of behavior, generally had positive effects for reducing aggressive and disruptive student behaviors in school settings, such as fighting with and intimidating others.[16]

Targeted Violence in Schools

These risk factors are often evident, for example, in the significant amount of analyses that have been done on the characteristics of attackers who have specifically targeted schools, like the shootings that happened at Columbine, and at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida and Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas in 2018. These shootings are particularly concerning because the shooter often indiscriminately targets victims in the school, and because of the high numbers of killed or wounded victims in a single incident. A 2019 joint report by Education and the Department of Justice (Justice) found that these kinds of shootings often involved a single, male shooter, mostly

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[13] CDC. See: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/publichealthissue/publichealthapproach.html (downloaded March 4, 2020).

[14] C. David-Ferdon and T.R. Simon, *Preventing Youth Violence: Opportunities for Action* (Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014).

[15] C. David-Ferdon and T.R. Simon.

[16] S.J. Wilson and M.W. Lipsey, "School-Based Interventions for Aggressive and Disruptive Behavior. Update of a Meta-analysis," *American Journal of Prevention Medicine,* vol. 33, no. 2S (2007).

between the ages of 12 and 18.[17] Further, in 2019, a U.S. Secret Service study of targeted school violence using firearms or other weapons found that most of these attackers were motivated by grievances with classmates and some were motivated by grievances involving school staff, romantic relationships, or other personal issues.[18] The Secret Service reported that all of these attackers experienced social stressors involving their relationships with peers and or romantic partners, nearly all experienced negative home life factors, most were victims of bullying, most had a history of disciplinary actions in school, and half had prior contact with law enforcement. Even so, experts warn against any attempts to profile shooters in school-targeted shootings because the vast number of students who have the same or similar characteristics and life and school experiences, do not commit school shootings. Experts warn that trying to develop a detailed profile of a shooter who specifically targets schools risks stigmatizing students who match the profile as well as ruling out students who are deeply troubled but do not match the profile.

Federal and State Response to School Shootings

For nearly two decades, state and federal commissions have studied and made recommendations to schools and communities in the aftermath of shootings. Following the shooting at Columbine, a state commission made recommendations for schools about how to respond to a crisis, communicate and plan for critical emergencies, and identify potential shooters.[19] In response to the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, the Sandy Hook commission recommended that the state of Connecticut create a work group to help develop safe school design standards that would guide renovations and expansions of existing schools and the construction of new schools throughout the state.[20]

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[17] L. Musu, et al., *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2018*, NCES 2019-047/NCJ 252571 (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, 2019).

[18] The U.S. Secret Service analyzed 41 incidents of targeted violence at K-12 schools of which 25 involved the use of firearms. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center, *Protecting America's Schools: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence* (2019).

[19] Report of Governor Bill Owens' Columbine Review Commission, Colorado Governor's Columbine Review Commission, May 2001.

[20] Final Report of the Sandy Hook Advisory Commission, Presented to Governor Dannel P. Malloy, State of Connecticut (Mar. 6, 2015).

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Also following the Sandy Hook shooting, the White House developed a plan in 2013, called "Now is the Time".[21] Among other things, the plan included steps to encourage schools to hire more school resource officers and school counselors, ensure every school has a comprehensive emergency plan, and improve mental health services in schools. The plan also directed federal agencies—Education, Justice, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)—to develop a set of model plans for communities on how to plan for and recover from emergency situations. In 2013, these agencies collaborated to produce comprehensive guidance on planning for school emergencies, including shootings.[22] The guidance advises schools on how to improve their psychological first aid resources, information-sharing practices, and school climate, among other things. In our 2016 report on school safety, we reported that, based on our nationally generalizable survey of school districts, nearly all districts had emergency operations plans.[23]

Most recently, in 2018, the President formed the Federal Commission on School Safety after the school shooting in Parkland, Florida.[24] The Commission made several recommendations to the federal government and state and local communities aimed at mitigating the effects of violence and responding to and recovering from such acts. For example, the Commission recommended that all appropriate state and local agencies should continue to increase awareness of mental health issues among students and improve and expand ways for students to seek needed care. The Commission also recommended that the federal government develop a clearinghouse to assess, identify, and share best practices related to school security measures, technologies, and

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[21] The White House, *Now is the Time: The President's Plan to Protect our Children and our Communities by Reducing Gun Violence* (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 16, 2013).

[22] U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans* (Washington, D.C.: 2013).

[23] GAO, *Emergency Management: Improved Federal Coordination Could Better Assist K-12 Schools Prepare for Emergencies,* GAO-16-144 (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 10, 2016).

[24] Final Report of the Federal Commission on School Safety, Presented to the President of the United States (Dec. 18, 2018).

innovations.[25] It also made recommendations to specific federal agencies, including that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) provide information to states on how they can fund comprehensive school-based mental health care services. The Commission also recommended that Education identify resources and best practices to help schools improve school climate and learning outcomes, and protect the rights of students with disabilities during the disciplinary process while maintaining overall student safety. Finally, the Commission also recommended rescinding the federal "Rethink School Discipline" guidance, citing the Commission's concerns with the legal framework upon which the guidance was based, and its conclusion that the guidance may have contributed to making schools less safe.[26]

Approaches to Addressing Student Behavior in School

There are a range of ways school officials might respond to students whose behavior in school is deemed unacceptable or inappropriate. Suspension and expulsion, for example, have been long established as traditional approaches to discipline used by schools to manage student behavior. These approaches remove the offending students from the classroom, and are therefore sometimes known as "exclusionary discipline." Schools that enforce "zero tolerance" policies require that offending students be removed from the classroom regardless of any mitigating factors or context, such as a student who was engaged in self-defense. The philosophy of zero tolerance is that removing students who engage in disruptive behavior in violation of the student code of conduct will create a better learning environment by deterring other students from

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[25] In response to this recommendation, DHS, Education, Justice, and HHS created the SchoolSafety.gov website to share actionable recommendations to help schools prevent, protect, mitigate, respond to, and recover from emergency situations. See https://www.schoolsafety.gov/.

[26] On January 8, 2014, Education and Justice jointly issued a Dear Colleague Letter and related guidance documents (collectively referred to in the Commission report as the "Rethink School Discipline" guidance). The purpose of the Dear Colleague Letter was to assist public K-12 schools in administering student discipline without discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The Dear Colleague Letter stated that in their enforcement of federal civil rights laws, the Departments would examine whether school discipline policies resulted in an adverse impact on students of a particular race. It also included recommendations for school districts, administrators, teachers, and staff that, among other things, emphasized the use of "positive interventions over student removal." Education and Justice withdrew the Rethink School Discipline guidance on December 21, 2018.

engaging in unacceptable or inappropriate behavior.[27] We have previously reported that exclusionary discipline disproportionately affects boys, black students, and students with disabilities.[28]
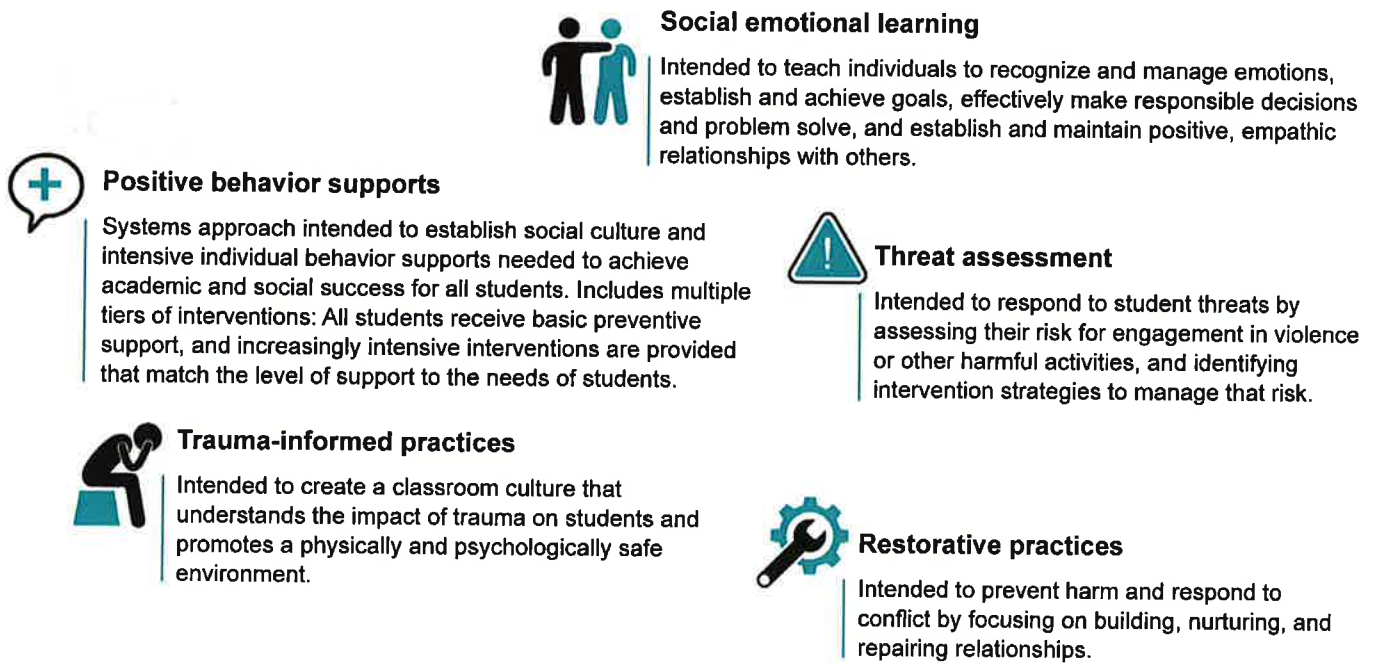
A growing body of research has highlighted concerns associated with the use of exclusionary discipline and, in particular, zero tolerance policies. For example, as we have previously reported, research has shown that students who are suspended from school lose important instructional time, are less likely to graduate on time, and are more likely to repeat a grade, drop out of school, and become involved in the juvenile justice system.[29] Some experts, parents, and school staff have called on schools to consider nonexclusionary approaches to addressing problematic behavior. Some of these nonexclusionary approaches, such as social emotional learning, are designed to change students' mindsets and behaviors before problem behaviors arise. Other approaches address the concerning behavior but seek to avoid using exclusionary discipline. For example, with a threat assessment approach, a multidisciplinary team assesses the threat of violence and develops a plan to manage such risk. With restorative practices, schools engage the student in relationship building and rectifying the consequences of the problematic behavior. Figure 1 describes several nonexclusionary approaches for addressing student behavior. According to researchers, nonexclusionary approaches do not eliminate the need for suspensions and expulsions, but may help reduce reliance on them. These approaches may use systemic school-wide practices, curriculum-based classroom lessons, and individual, as-needed interventions and supports; further, they may be used in combination with each other or with exclusionary approaches.

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[27] American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, *Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations* (2008).

[28] GAO, K-12 *Education: Discipline Disparities for Black Students, Boys, and Students with Disabilities*, GAO-18-258 (Washington, D.C: Mar. 22, 2018).

[29] GAO-18-258.

Figure 1: Nonexclusionary Approaches to Address to Student Behavior

Social emotional learning

Intended to teach individuals to recognize and manage emotions, establish and achieve goals, effectively make responsible decisions and problem solve, and establish and maintain positive, empathic relationships with others.

Positive behavior supports

Systems approach intended to establish social culture and intensive individual behavior supports needed to achieve academic and social success for all students. Includes multiple tiers of interventions: All students receive basic preventive support, and increasingly intensive interventions are provided that match the level of support to the needs of students.

Threat assessment

Intended to respond to student threats by assessing their risk for engagement in violence or other harmful activities, and identifying intervention strategies to manage that risk.

Trauma-informed practices

Intended to create a classroom culture that understands the impact of trauma on students and promotes a physically and psychologically safe environment.

Restorative practices

Intended to prevent harm and respond to conflict by focusing on building, nurturing, and repairing relationships.

Source: GAO analysis of literature on approaches to discipline. | GAO-20-455

A number of resources provide information on how to implement such approaches, as well as for information on outcomes associated with the use of such approaches. For example, Education's What Works Clearinghouse of evidence-based practices identifies programs for managing student behavior. The privately and publicly funded Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) provides information on social and emotional learning implementation, and research on outcomes.[30] Education also funds a technical assistance center to provide support to states, school districts, and schools to build their frameworks of positive behavior supports.[31] In addition, Education funds the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments,

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[30] The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. See: https://casel.org/

[31] Funded by Education's Office of Special Education Programs and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports can be found at: www.pbis.org.

which provides information on improving student supports and academic enrichment, including resources on restorative and trauma-sensitive practices.[32]

Characteristics of Shooting Incidents and Schools Varied

Shootings in K-12 schools most commonly resulted from disputes or grievances, such as between students or staff or between gangs, according to our analysis of 10 years of data from the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database. The shooters were students or former students in about half of the school shootings. More of the shootings took place outside than inside the school building, though shootings inside were more deadly. The frequency and type of shooting varied across a range of characteristics, such as school grade level, school demographic composition, poverty level, and location.

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[32] See The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/

Differences Exist in Characteristics of School Shootings, Shooters, and School Location

Disputes, Such as Fights, Were the Most Common Kind of School Shooting

At-a-Glance: kinds of school shootings

Dispute/grievance – conflict or fight, including gang-related violence on school grounds

Accidental – accidental discharge of a gun

School-targeted – targeted generally toward students or staff on school premises, but generally indiscriminate in terms of specific victims

Suicide/attempted suicide – suicide or attempted suicide

Domestic – family members or romantic partners are targeted

Unknown target/Intent – target or shooter's motivation is unknown

Targeted victim – specific victim is targeted, but the relationship between shooter and victim is unknown

Related to illegal activity – involves drug sales, robbery, or other illegal activities (not including gang-related violence)

Other – does not fit into any of the above categories

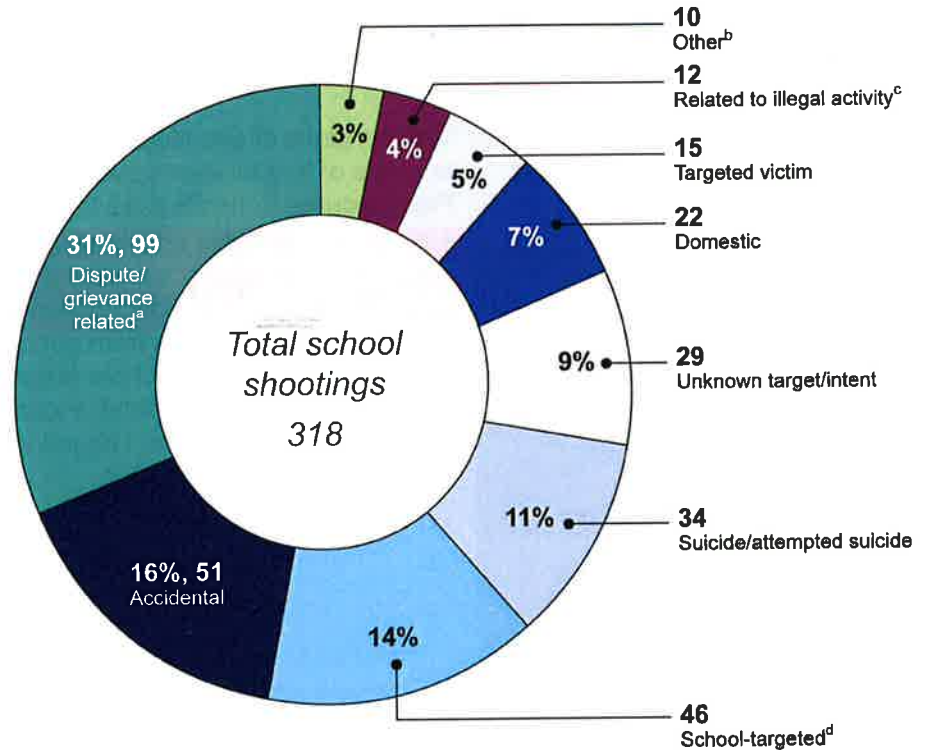See appendix I for full definitions.

Source: GAO analysis of incidents in the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database. | GAO-20-455

Various kinds of shootings occurred in K-12 schools, according to our analysis of 318 incidents over the past 10 school years from the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database.[33] Shootings arising from disputes or grievances, such as conflicts between students, school staff, or gangs, were the most common kinds of shootings, making up almost a third of school shootings (see fig. 2). Accidents, such as unintentional discharges from guns, were the next most common kind of shooting (16 percent). School-targeted shootings, such as the 2018 school shootings in Parkland, Florida and Santa Fe, Texas, made up about 14 percent of school shootings. Suicides were the next most common kind (11 percent).[34]

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[33] Our analysis includes incidents in which a gun is fired on school grounds (regardless of intent), on a school bus, or during a school event (such as a sporting practice or event, school dance, school play); and during, immediately before, or immediately after school hours or a school event. See appendix I for more details on our scope and methodology. For our analysis, we also included four incidents in which a gun was brandished due to the severity of the incidents. For example, when the shooter initially made threatening gestures with a firearm, but was stopped prior to a shot being fired; for example, if the shooter was tackled. Of the 318 incidents in our dataset, four are instances of a gun being brandished and 314 of a gun being fired.

[34] For 9 percent of the incidents in our dataset, information about the shooter or the motive of the shooting was unknown.

Figure 2: School Shootings by Kind of Shooting, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

10 Other[b]

12 Related to illegal activity[c]

15 Targeted victim

22 Domestic

29 Unknown target/intent

34 Suicide/attempted suicide

46 School-targeted[d]

3%
4%
5%
7%
9%
11%
14%

31%, 99 Dispute/ grievance related[a]

16%, 51 Accidental

Total school shootings 318

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

[a]Dispute/grievance-related: Shooting occurred in relation to a dispute or grievance between the victim and the shooter (that was not domestic in nature), for example: as an escalation of an argument, in retaliation for perceived bullying, in relation to gang-violence, or anger over a grade/disciplinary action (including disputes between staff).

[b]Other: Disparate incidents that did not clearly fit in one category, such as a shooting by a school resource officer in response to a threat.

[c]Related to illegal activity: Shooting related to an illegal offense, such as drug sales or possession, robbery, or intentional property damage (not including gang-related violence).

[d]School-targeted: Shootings that were targeted generally toward school staff or students on school premises, but that were generally indiscriminate in terms of specific victims. These include incidents of a hostage standoff, indiscriminate shootings targeting the school staff and personnel, and active shooter incidents as categorized by the FBI. Such shootings may also include incidents where a specific victim was targeted because of his or her relationship to the school (e.g. student, principal, staff, SRO, etc.).

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While shootings related to disputes/grievances occurred most often, school-targeted shootings resulted in far more individuals killed or wounded per incident than any other type of shooting (see table 2). Specifically, of the nearly 500 people killed or wounded in school shootings over the past 10 years, over half of those killed and more than one-third of those wounded were victims in school-targeted shootings. Additionally, school-targeted shootings resulted in almost three times as many individuals killed or wounded per incident than the average number of individuals killed or wounded per incident overall.

Table 2: School Shootings and Fatalities/Casualties by Kind of Shooting, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

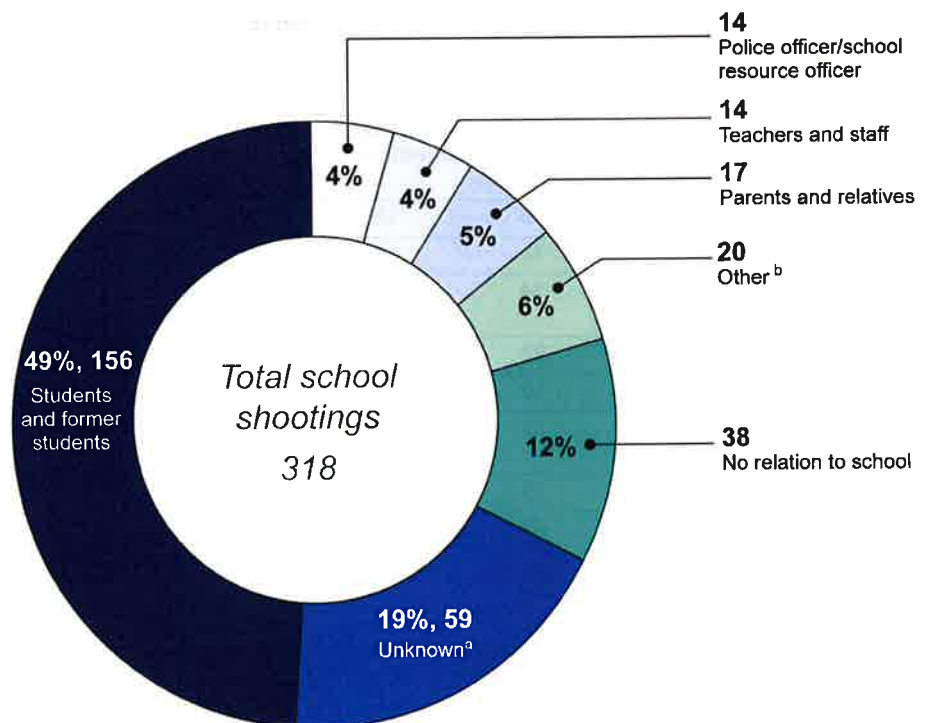|	Total incidents	Total killed (includes shooter)	Average killed per incident	Total wounded	Average wounded per incident	Total wounded or killed	Average wounded or killed per incident
All	318	166	0.52	330	1.04	496	1.56
School-targeted	46	89	1.93	122	2.65	211	4.59
Suicide/attempted suicide	34	29	0.85	5	0.15	34	1.00
Domestic	22	16	0.73	13	0.59	29	1.32
Other	10	5	0.50	7	0.70	12	1.20
Related to illegal activity	12	4	0.33	8	0.67	12	1.00
Targeted victim	15	4	0.27	16	1.07	20	1.33
Dispute/grievance-related	99	17	0.17	101	1.02	118	1.19
Unknown target/intent	29	1	0.03	15	0.52	16	0.55
Accidental	51	1	0.02	43	0.84	44	0.86

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

Students Committed Half of School Shootings, While Those Unknown, No Relationship to the School, And Others Committed the Other Half

The shooter's relationship to the school was unknown in almost 20 percent of all school shootings that have occurred over the past 10 years (such as when an unidentified shooter walked onto school grounds and

fired at a victim).[35] The shooters were students or former students in about half of the school shootings during the same time period. The other roughly 30 percent of shootings were committed by parents and relatives (such as when a husband shot his wife as she was picking up her children from school), teachers and staff, and people who had no relationship with the school (such as a shooting during a basketball game involving rival gang members who had no relationship with the school) (see fig. 3).

Figure 3: School Shootings by Shooter's Relationship to School, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

Note: Percentages do not add to 100, due to rounding.

a"Unknown," as recorded in the K-12 School Shooting Database, includes incidents in which the shooter's relationship to the school was not identifiable in the original source material used by the K-

[35] "Unknown," as recorded in the K-12 School Shooting Database, includes incidents in which the shooter's relationship to the school was not identifiable in the original source material used by the K-12 School Shooting Database researchers. This may include incidents in which the shooter's name was identified but the shooter's relationship to the school could not be determined.

Characteristics of shooters differed by the kind of shooting. For example, students or former students were the shooters in the majority of school-targeted shootings (over 80 percent). In contrast, parents or relatives of someone in the school were the shooters in almost a third of the shootings that involved some sort of domestic dispute (table 3).

Table 3: Shooter Relationship to School by Kind of Shooting, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

	All	Student/ former student	Unknown[a]	No relation	Parent/ relative	Police officer/ school resource officer	Teacher/ staff	Other[b]
All	318	156	59	38	17	14	14	20
Accidental	51	33	1	2	5	5	5	0
Dispute/grievance-related	99	37	22	19	4	0	4	13
Domestic	22	5	0	4	7	0	0	6
Related to illegal activity	12	1	5	2	0	3	1	0
School-targeted	46	37	2	5	0	0	1	1
Suicide/attempted suicide	34	30	1	0	0	1	2	0
Targeted victim	15	4	9	2	0	0	0	0
Unknown target/intent	29	7	18	2	1	0	1	0
Other	10	2	1	2	0	5	0	0

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455
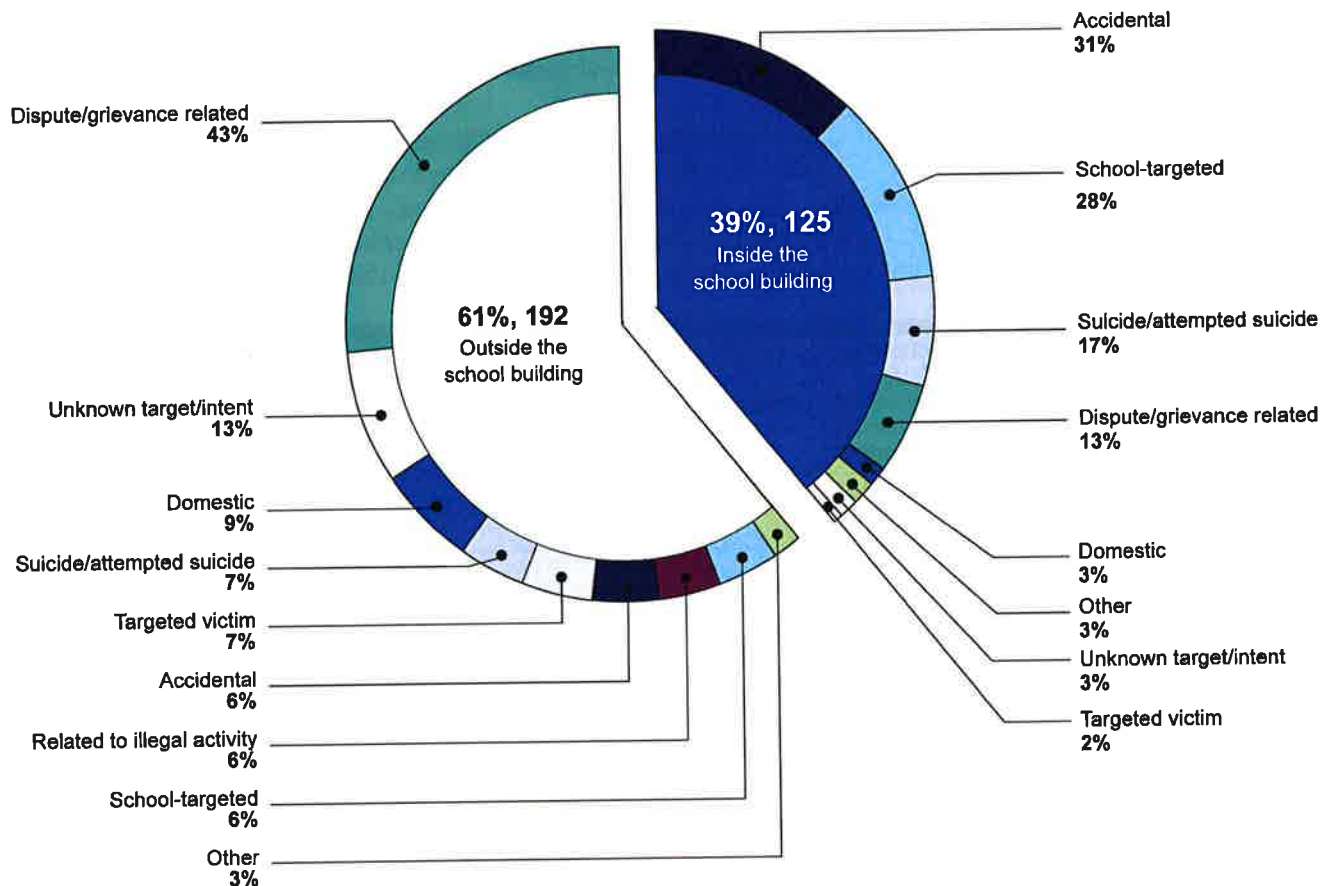
[a]"Unknown," as recorded in the K-12 School Shooting Database, includes incidents in which the shooter's relationship to the school was not identifiable in the original source material used by the K-12 School Shooting Database researchers. This may include incidents in which the shooter's name was identified but the shooter's relationship to the school could not be determined.

[b]We combined four categories from the K-12 School Shooting Database into an "Other" category: intimate relationship with victim, multiple shooters, students from a rival school, and non-students using athletic facilities/attending game.

Over Half of School Shootings Occurred Outside the School Building, but Shootings Inside the Building Were More Deadly

About 60 percent of school shootings occurred outside of the school building, like in a parking lot or on a school bus; in some cases, bullets hit school property when the shooter was not on school property (such as when a stray bullet from a neighborhood shooting broke a window in a school building). The remaining roughly 40 percent occurred inside the school building, such as in a classroom, hallway, or bathroom (see fig. 4).

Figure 4: School Shootings by Shooting Location and Kind of Shooting, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

Dispute/grievance related
43%

Unknown target/intent
13%

Domestic
9%

Suicide/attempted suicide
7%

Targeted victim
7%

Accidental
6%

Related to illegal activity
6%

School-targeted
6%

Other
3%

61%, 192
Outside the
school building

39%, 125
Inside the
school building

Accidental
31%

School-targeted
28%

Suicide/attempted suicide
17%

Dispute/grievance related
13%

Domestic
3%

Other
3%

Unknown target/intent
3%

Targeted victim
2%

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

Notes: There is one incident where the location of the shooting was unknown. This incident was excluded from our analysis of location. Therefore, the total number of incidents in this analysis totals 317.

We combined three categories from the K-12 School Shooting Database into an "Outside the school building" category: outside on school property, off school property, and on school bus.

When shootings occurred outside the school building, about 70 percent of the shooters were people other than students or former students, like parents of students, people who had no relation to the school, or people whose relationship to the school was unknown (see table 4). Further, certain kinds of shootings occurred more often outside the school building, such as those related to disputes/grievances, domestic disputes, illegal activities, and those in which the target or intent was unknown. In addition, of the shootings that occurred during school sporting events, like

basketball games or football games, nearly all—93 percent—occurred outside the school building.[36]

Table 4: Number of Shootings Inside and Outside the School Building by Shooter's Relationship to School, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

Location	All	Student/ former student	Unknown[a]	No relation	Parent/ relative	Police officer/ school resource officer	Teacher/ staff	Other[b]
All	318	156	59	38	17	14	14	20
Inside the school building	125	98	1	4	2	8	11	1
Outside the school building[c]	192	58	58	34	15	5	3	19
Unknown	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

[a]"Unknown," as recorded in the K-12 School Shooting Database, includes incidents in which the shooter's relationship to the school was not identifiable in the original source material used by the K-12 School Shooting Database researchers. This may include incidents in which the shooter's name was identified but the shooter's relationship to the school could not be determined.

[b]We combined four categories from the K-12 School Shooting Database into an "Other" category: intimate relationship with victim, multiple shooters, students from a rival school, and non-students using athletic facilities/attending game.

[c]We combined three categories from the K-12 School Shooting Database into an "Outside the school building" category: outside on school property, off school property, and on school bus.

Two examples of accidental shootings:

When an elementary school student sat down for lunch in the cafeteria, a handgun fell out of the student's pocket and discharged, injuring three other students.

A gun discharged in a teacher's pocket inside a classroom, injuring one student.

Source: GAO analysis of incidents in the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database. | GAO-20-455

In contrast, when shootings occurred inside the school building, the majority of the shooters—over three-quarters—were students or former students (see table 4). Accidental and school-targeted shootings occurred more often inside the school building than outside the school building, and together these two kinds of shootings made up the majority of shootings that occurred inside school buildings (see fig. 4). Shootings that occurred inside the school building were on average three times deadlier per incident than shootings that occurred outside the school building (see app.II).
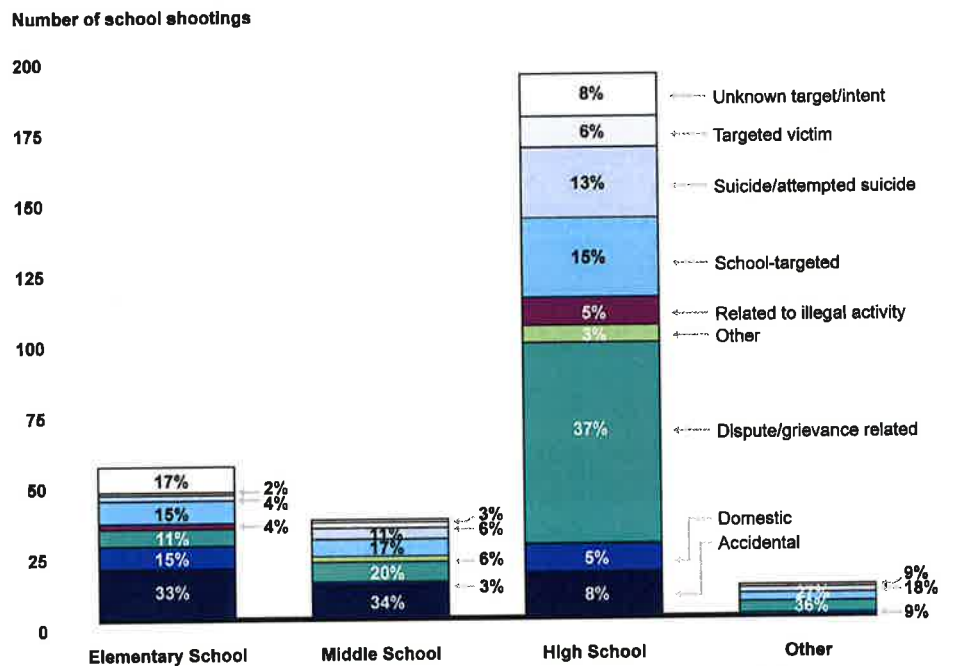
[36] Thirteen percent of all school shootings occurred in relation to a sporting event.

Certain Kinds of Shootings Were More Prevalent at Certain Types of Schools

High Schools Had More School Shootings Overall, and Elementary Schools Had More Accidental Shootings

Our analysis also showed that school shootings occurred across schools with a range of different characteristics, but certain kinds of shootings were more prevalent at certain types of schools.[37] High schools had the most school shootings (about two-thirds of all shootings) over the past 10 years. In high schools, shootings related to disputes/grievances, school-targeted shootings, and suicides were the most prevalent. In middle schools, accidental shootings and shootings related to disputes/grievances were the most prevalent. In elementary schools, accidental shootings were the most prevalent (see fig. 5).

Figure 5: School Shootings by School Level and Kind of Shooting, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database and Department of Education's Common Core of Data for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

[37] We matched 297 of the 318 incidents to corresponding data on school characteristics from the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data. The remaining 21 schools could not be matched due to either missing information or because they were private schools, which are not included in the CCD.

Notes: Percentages may not add to 100, due to rounding. At the time of this analysis, the Common Core of Data (CCD) variables were available only through the 2017-2018 school year, and were not available for the 2018-2019 school year. We matched school shootings from the 2018-2019 school year to CCD variables for the 2017-2018 school year for this analysis.

Of the 318 school shootings in our analysis, 21 could not be matched to data from the CCD due to missing information or because they were private schools, which are not included in the CCD. An additional 5 incidents were missing school level data in the CCD and were therefore excluded from this analysis. Therefore, the number of incidents in this analysis totals 292.

Further, although shootings occurred at all different times of day and throughout the school year, nearly 40 percent of shootings occurred in the morning and most frequently occurred in either January or September. Also, certain kinds of shootings occurred more often during different times of the day; for example, school-targeted shootings and suicides occurred more often in the morning, whereas shootings related to disputes/grievances occurred more often in the afternoon and evening (see app. II).
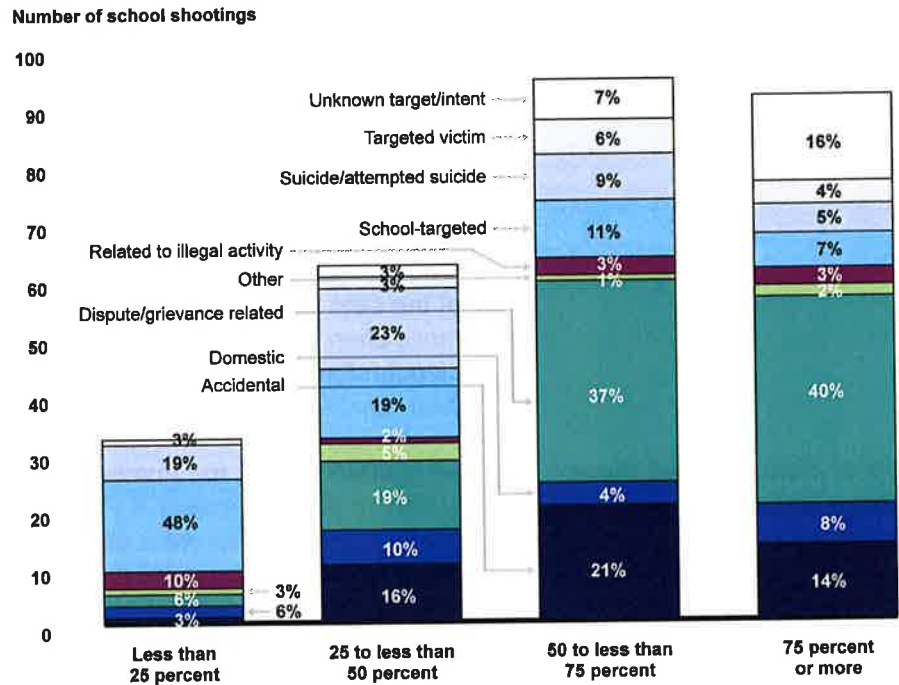
Poorer Schools Had More School Shootings Overall, but Wealthier Schools Had More School-Targeted Shootings and Suicides

As figure 6 shows, the number of shootings generally increased relative to school poverty level.[38,39] Poorer schools—those in which 50 percent or more of the students were eligible for free or reduced price lunch—had the most, or nearly two-thirds of all shootings. The wealthiest schools—those in which 25 percent or fewer of the students were eligible for free or reduced priced lunch—had the fewest with just over one-tenth of all shootings. Additionally, certain kinds of shootings increased with poverty, like shootings related to disputes/grievances and shootings in which the target or intent was unknown (see fig. 6). In contrast, certain kinds of shootings were more prevalent in wealthier schools, like school-targeted shootings and suicides.

[38] For our poverty level analyses, we grouped schools into four categories based on the percent of students enrolled who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL), according to the CCD data. The categories we used in our analysis are as follows: schools with 0 to 24.9 percent of students eligible for FRPL (the wealthiest schools), schools with 25 to 49.9 percent of students eligible, schools with 50 to 74.9 percent of students eligible, and schools with 75 to 100 percent of students eligible (the poorest schools).

[39] The number of school shootings generally increased relative to poverty level, defined by the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch (FRPL), but declined slightly in the highest poverty category. Specifically, there were 94 shootings at schools with between 50 percent and less than 75 percent students eligible for FRPL, and 91 shootings at schools with 75 percent or more students eligible for FRPL.

Figure 6: School Shootings by Free or Reduced Price Lunch Eligibility and Kind of Shooting, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

Number of school shootings

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database and Department of Education's Common Core of Data for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

Notes: Percentages may not add to 100, due to rounding. For our analysis, we grouped schools into four categories based on the percent of students enrolled who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL). The categories are as follows: schools with 0 to 24.9 percent of students eligible for FRPL, schools with 25 to 49.9 percent of students eligible, schools with 50 to 74.9 percent of students eligible, and schools with 75 to 100 percent of students eligible.
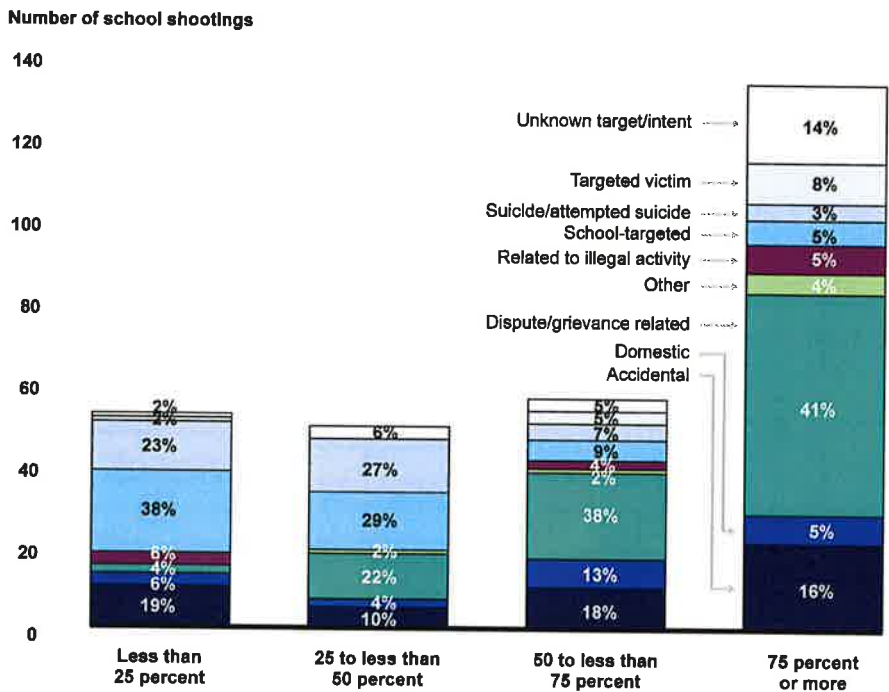
At the time of this analysis, the Common Core of Data (CCD) variables were available only through the 2017-2018 school year, and were not available for the 2018-2019 school year. We matched school shootings from the 2018-2019 school year to CCD variables for the 2017-2018 school year for this analysis.

Of the 318 school shootings in our analysis, 21 could not be matched to data from the CCD due to missing information or because they were private schools, which are not included in the CCD. An additional 19 incidents were missing FRPL data in the CCD and were therefore excluded from this analysis. Therefore, the number of incidents in this analysis totals 278.

Schools with the highest percentages of minority students had more shootings overall and proportionally more shootings related to disputes/grievances and shootings in which the target or intent was unknown. On the other hand, schools with the lowest percentages of minority students had fewer shootings overall, but proportionally more school-targeted shootings (see fig. 7). Further, as shown in table 3, for shootings related to disputes/grievances, which were most prevalent at

high minority and poorer schools, the shooter was more often someone other than a student or the shooter was unknown. In contrast, for school-targeted shootings and suicides, which were most prevalent at low-minority and wealthier schools, the shooter was more often a student or former student.

Figure 7: School Shootings by Minority Enrollment and Kind of Shooting, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

Number of school shootings

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database and Department of Education's Common Core of Data for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

Notes: Percentages may not add to 100, due to rounding. For our analysis, we define minority enrollment as the enrollment of all students who are not white.

At the time of this analysis, the Common Core of Data (CCD) variables were available only through the 2017-2018 school year, and were not available for the 2018-2019 school year. We matched school shootings from the 2018-2019 school year to CCD variables for the 2017-2018 school year for this analysis.
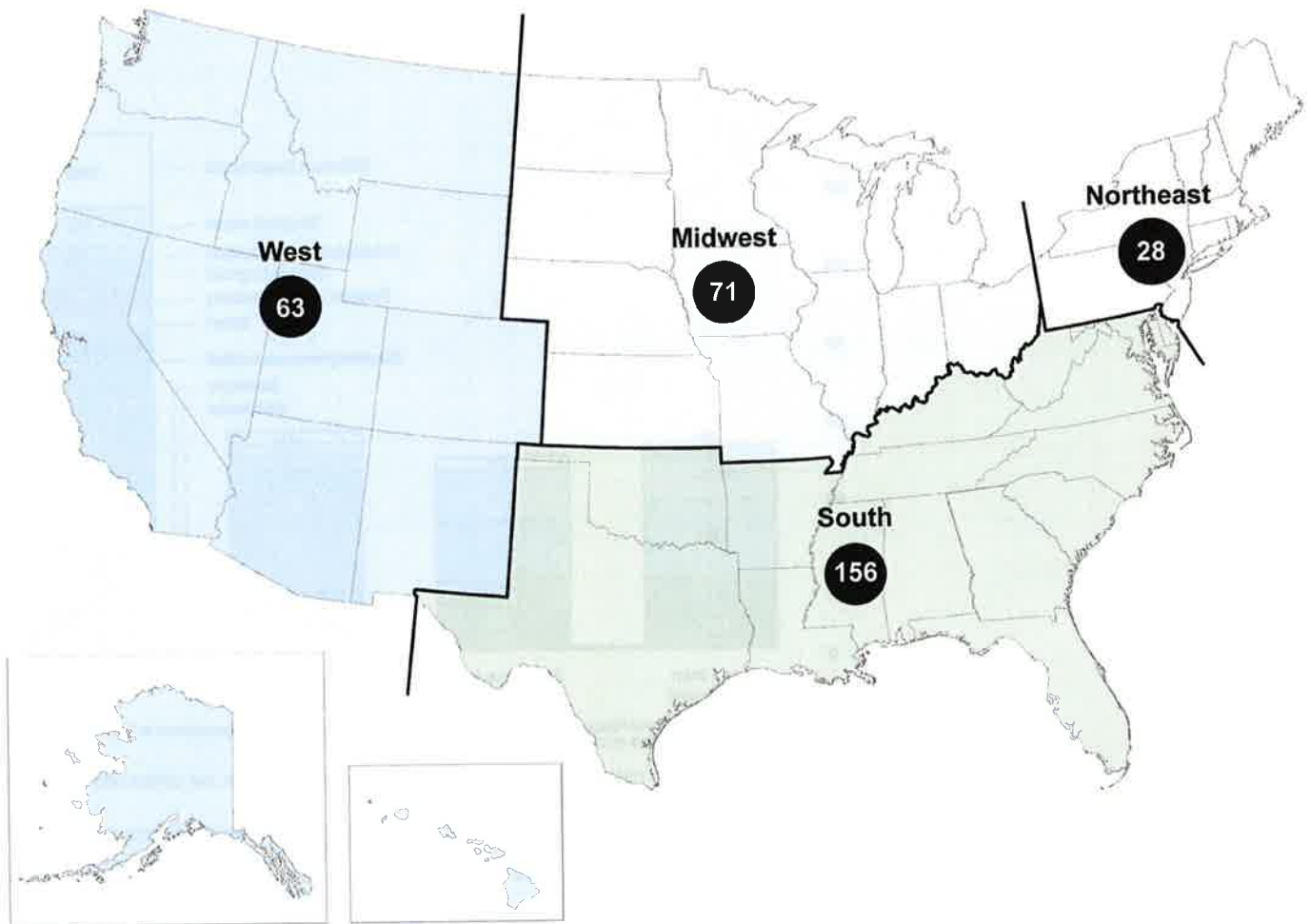
Of the 318 school shootings in our analysis, 21 could not be matched to data from the CCD due to missing information or because they were private schools, which are not included in the CCD. An additional 7 incidents were missing minority enrollment data in the CCD and were therefore excluded from this analysis. Therefore, the number of incidents in this analysis totals 290.

School Shootings Occurred Nationwide, but About Half Were in the South

School shootings occurred all across the country in all but two states (West Virginia and Wyoming). About half of school shootings in the past 10 years occurred in the South, according to our analysis, with the

greatest number of shootings in Florida (24), Texas (24), and Georgia (23) (see fig. 8). See appendix II for data on shootings over time, which shows an uptick in shootings in school years 2017-18 and 2018-19, as compared to earlier in the 10-year period.

Figure 8: Map of K-12 School Shootings in the United States, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19
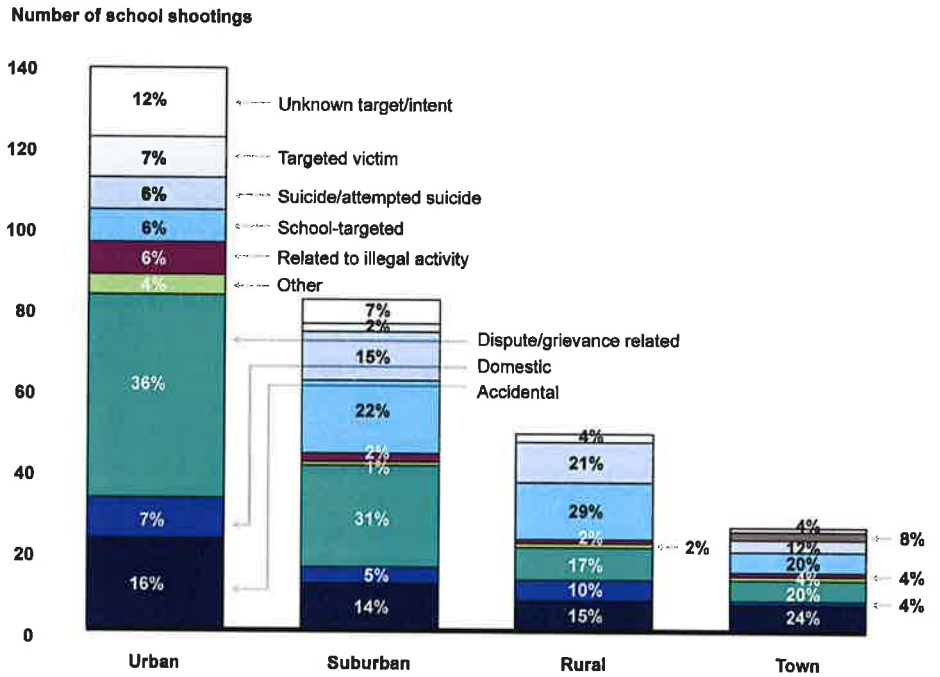

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. Regions of the United States as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Map (National Atlas). | GAO-20-455

School shootings also occurred across locations with varying population densities, but almost half of all shootings occurred in urban schools (47

GAO-20-455 K-12 School Shootings

percent).[40] However, while urban schools had more school shootings overall, suburban and rural schools had the most school-targeted shootings – the deadliest type of shooting. Specifically, 6 percent of shootings in urban schools were school-targeted, while 22 percent of shootings in suburban schools, and 29 percent of shootings in rural schools were school-targeted (see fig. 9).

Figure 9: School Shootings by Locale and Kind of Shooting, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

Number of school shootings

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database and Department of Education's Common Core of Data for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

Notes: Percentages may not add to 100, due to rounding. At the time of this analysis, the Common Core of Data (CCD) variables were available only through the 2017-2018 school year, and were not available for the 2018-2019 school year. We matched school shootings from the 2018-2019 school year to CCD variables for the 2017-2018 school year for this analysis.

Of the 318 school shootings in our analysis, 21 could not be matched to data from the CCD due to missing information or because they were private schools, which are not included in the CCD. An additional 5 incidents were missing locale data in the CCD and were therefore excluded from this analysis. Therefore, the number of incidents in this analysis totals 292.

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[40] We used information from the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data to determine a school's locale. Urban schools have a locale designation of "city," suburban schools have a locale designation of "suburb," town schools have a locale designation of "town," and rural schools have a locale designation of "rural."

Empirical Research Does Not Directly Examine Link between Discipline and School Shootings

No Empirical Research Directly Examines the Link between Discipline and School Shootings

We found no empirical research in the last 10 years (2009-2019) that directly examines the link between approaches to school discipline—whether exclusionary (like suspensions and expulsions) or nonexclusionary approaches—and school shootings specifically.[41] We also reviewed 27 studies meeting our selection criteria that examined the link between discipline approaches and broader concepts of violent behavior and perceptions of school safety; however, none of these studies examined shootings specifically in school (see appendix I for detailed information on our overarching inclusion criteria we used to select the studies). One of the 27 studies examined shootings in which students of selected Chicago public schools were the victims, but were not necessarily on school grounds. The study examined a nonexclusionary approach to school discipline that used social media monitoring to identify and intervene with high school students who were engaging in potentially dangerous behaviors and offered them wrap-around services such as school-based social emotional support.[42] The study found that students who initially attended high schools that used the

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[41] Our literature review was designed to capture studies using empirical research methods to examine the effects of approaches to school discipline—including exclusionary and nonexclusionary—on school gun violence, school violence, and school safety. See appendix I for details of our scoping parameters used for our literature review.

[42] University of Chicago Crime Lab. *Connect & Redirect to Respect: Final Report* (January 2019). The study defined student shooting victimization as instances in which Chicago Public School students were the physical victims of gunfire, both fatal and non-fatal. This study was funded through an award by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, and was made publically available through the Office of Justice Programs' National Criminal Justice Reference Service. It was not published by the U.S. Department of Justice.

approach experienced fewer shooting incidents compared to students who attended schools that did not use the approach.[43]

There are characteristics of school shootings themselves that likely contribute to the lack of research that specifically examines the link between approaches to school discipline and school shootings, according to literature we examined and study authors we interviewed. It is difficult to isolate the effect of any one variable in a school shooting, such as the role of school discipline, because multiple and complex factors affect an individual's propensity toward violence, shootings have many types of shooters and many possible causes, and researchers have so few comparable cases to study. More specifically:

- **Violence has multiple causes:** Research suggests there are many complex factors that influence youth violence, like a prior history of exposure to violence or abuse, antisocial or aggressive beliefs, peer conflict or rejection, or parental conflict and violence.

- **School shooters and school shootings vary considerably:** We found that, in the past 10 years, the shooters were students or former students in about half of the incidents, and parents, teachers, or others were the shooters in the other half. Further, the reason for the shooting or kind of shooting varied from suicides and disputes to school-targeted shootings and the factors that precipitate these different kinds of shootings likely vary considerably.

- **School shootings are rare events:** Our analysis identified 318 school shootings that occurred over a 10-year period. In school year 2016-17, there were approximately 98,000 public K-12 schools in the U.S. Such rarity, coupled with the above factors, makes it difficult to design a study examining a direct causal relationship between a discipline approach and its effects on school shootings.

With respect to the 27 studies we reviewed, drawing bottom-line conclusions about the overall effectiveness of any given approach to school discipline is difficult because these studies varied in terms of their research methodologies, outcomes measured, populations studied, and research objectives. However, these studies can help illustrate some of the types of approaches currently being used. Among the approaches

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[43] The results from this study were marginally significant with p-values of 0.13 and 0.14 in the second and third year respectively. The study used a partially randomized control design.

addressed in the studies we reviewed were social emotional learning, threat assessment, and exclusionary discipline.

Some of the research on social emotional learning—which includes teaching students how to manage emotions and solve problems—found that using this approach reduces violent behaviors in students, particularly elementary school students. For example, a study employing random assignment of 20 elementary schools in Hawaii, found significantly fewer reports of violent behavior for students in schools using a social emotional learning program compared to students in schools that did not.[44] However, other studies—particularly those that included middle school aged youth and studies where measures of aggression included both physical violence and non-violent behaviors—were less likely to demonstrate positive effects. For example, a quasi-experimental study found no significant effects on student-reported aggressive behaviors among 6th-8th grade middle schools students in two rural counties in North Carolina.[45]

Two studies we reviewed involved threat assessment, in which a multidisciplinary team assesses a threat of violence and develops a plan to manage such risk. Both studies found evidence that this approach resulted in fewer instances of violent behavior among students when compared to schools using another form of threat assessment or no threat assessment. One was a quasi-experimental retrospective study across 280 urban, suburban, and rural high schools that found lower levels of violent behavior (ranging from theft of personal property to being physically attacked) among ninth graders in schools using the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines compared to students in schools using no form of threat assessment.[46] The other was a quasi-experimental retrospective study of over 300 Virginia middle schools that found lower levels of student violent behavior in the form of verbal or

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[44] Michael W. Beets, et al., "Use of Social and Character Development Program to Prevent Substance Use, Violent Behaviors, and Sexual Activity Among Elementary-School Students in Hawaii," *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 99, no. 8 (2009).

[45] Shenyang Guo, et al., "A Longitudinal Evaluation of the Positive Action Program in a Low-Income, Racially Diverse, Rural County: Effects on Self-Esteem, School Hassles, Aggression, and Internalizing Symptoms," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 44 (2015): pp. 2337–2358.

[46] Dewey Cornell, et al., "A Retrospective Study of School Safety Conditions in High Schools Using the Virginia Threat Assessment Guidelines Versus Alternative Approaches," *School Psychology Quarterly*, vol. 24, no.2 (2009): pp.119-129.

physical aggression, and higher feelings of safety among teachers at middle schools using the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines compared to schools with no threat assessment or another model of threat assessment.[47]

We also reviewed studies that examined how exclusionary approaches to discipline—or changes in policies affecting use of these approaches— may influence school violence and perceptions of safety more broadly. These studies differed in approach and findings. For example, one examined whether higher suspension rates and other factors are associated with students' perception of safety at school. In this study of elementary and middle school students in a large Maryland school district, schools with higher suspension rates were associated with decreased perceptions of safety as reported by middle school students; however, suspension rates were not significantly associated with perceptions of safety for elementary schools students.[48] Another study used a quasi-experimental method to examine whether a school district's limitations on out-of-school suspension reduced serious misconduct, including acts of violence and weapon possession as well as non-violent acts, among students. It compared these infractions in the Philadelphia school district after it ended its zero tolerance policy, to nearly all other school districts in Pennsylvania and found that serious incidents of student misconduct, including violence, increased after the zero tolerance policy was rolled back.[49]

For more details on the studies we reviewed, see appendix III.

[47] Erin K. Nekvasil and Dewey G. Cornell, "Student Threat Assessment Associated with Safety in Middle Schools," *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2015): pp. 98–113.

[48] Catherine P. Bradshaw, Anne L. Sawyer, and Lindsey M. O'Brennan, "A Social Disorganization Perspective on Bullying-Related Attitudes and Behaviors: The Influence of School Context," *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 43 (2009): pp. 204–220. The study examined whether indicators of school disorder, as measured by suspension rates and other factors, are associated with increased risk of victimization, feeling unsafe, having retaliatory attitudes, and perpetrating bullying.

[49] Johanna Lacoe and Matthew P. Steinberg, "Rolling Back Zero Tolerance: The Effect of Discipline Policy Reform on Suspension Usage and Student Outcomes," *Peabody Journal of Education*, vol. 93, issue 2 (2018). The revised discipline code of conduct eliminated out-of-school suspensions for less severe conduct infractions and gave school administrators greater discretion in handling more serious disciplinary infractions.

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to the Departments of Education, Homeland Security, and Justice for review and comment. Education and Justice provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

As agreed with your offices, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution until 30 days from the report date. At that time, we will send copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Attorney General. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on the GAO website at http://www.gao.gov.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (617) 788-0580 or nowickij@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix IV.

Sincerely yours,

Jacqueline M. Nowicki, Director
Education, Workforce, and Income Security Issues

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Overview

This report examines (1) the characteristics of K-12 school shooting incidents and the characteristics of affected schools, and (2) what is known about whether different approaches to discipline in school play a role in school shootings.

To conduct this work, we developed a unique dataset of school shootings by analyzing data on K-12 school shootings over a 10-year period, from school year 2009-10 through 2018-19, and data on school characteristics. We also conducted a literature review to identify empirical research generally published in peer reviewed journals or by government agencies from 2009 to 2019 examining the role of discipline approaches (both exclusionary approaches, like suspensions and expulsions, and nonexclusionary approaches that attempt to prevent or intervene to address behavior) in school shootings. To inform all aspects of our work, we interviewed academic researchers and federal agency officials from the Departments of Education, Homeland Security, and Justice; conducted literature searches to identify existing literature on characteristics of school shootings; and reviewed relevant federal agency documentation. The following sections contain detailed information about the scope and methodology for this report.

Analysis of School Shooting Incidents

To develop our dataset of school shootings, we developed a definition of school shootings (as described below) and applied that criteria to a list of school shootings identified in the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database.[1] The K-12 School Shooting Database is an open-source dataset that is carried out as a research product of the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School. [2,3] The K-12 School Shooting Database was compiled from other databases and media sources about school shooting incidents from 1970

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[1] We downloaded the K-12 School Shooting Database dataset on August 12, 2019.

[2] The Center for Homeland Defense and Security's programs are developed in partnership with and sponsored by the National Preparedness Directorate at the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

[3] In selecting the K-12 School Shooting Database for our analysis, we identified and considered other data sources. For example, we explored drawing on a variable detailing firearm use collected by the U.S. Department of Education's (Education) Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) for our analysis of K-12 school shooting data; however, after performing an assessment of the data's reliability, we determined it was unreliable for our purposes.

to the present, and it is updated regularly.[4] According to its website, the
K-12 School Shooting Database includes each and every instance a gun
is brandished, is fired, or a bullet hits school property for any reason,
regardless of the number of victims, time of day, or day of week. The K-
12 School Shooting Database includes detailed information about each
school shooting incident, including the name and location of the school, a
summary of the incident, and a score that indicates the reliability of the
information, among other things.

To analyze school shooting incidents that occurred recently, we limited
our analysis to the past 10 school years, from school year 2009-10
through school year 2018-19. To ensure that our analysis focused on
school shootings in which students and staff were typically present, we
defined a school year as running from July through June to ensure we
captured shooting incidents throughout the whole year, as long as the
incidents fit our criteria. Therefore, we excluded all incidents that occurred
before July 2009 and after June 2019 from our dataset.

Because there is no uniform definition of a school shooting, we developed
a definition of school shootings for the purposes of our analysis by
reviewing research on the topic of school shootings. We also included an
element of the time of the shooting in relation to the school day or event,
which allowed us to focus on school shootings in which students and staff
were typically present. To ensure we focused on instances where
students or staff were at risk, we developed the following definition of a
school shooting:

- Any time a gun is fired:[5]

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[4] The K-12 School Shooting Database is an open-source database of information from
various sources including peer-reviewed studies, government reports, and media sources.
For purposes of our analyses, we relied on information about each shooting as it was
recorded in the K-12 School Shooting Database, and did not independently review the
sources used by the researchers. For a description of the steps we took to assess the
reliability of the data, see the section on Data Reliability below.

[5] For our analysis, we included four incidents in which a gun was brandished due to the
severity of the incidents. For example, when the shooter initially made threatening
gestures with a firearm, but was stopped prior to a shot being fired; for example, if the
shooter was tackled.

- on school grounds, on a school bus, or during a school event (*such as sporting practice or event, school dance, school play*);[6] and

- during school hours or a school event or immediately before or after school hours or school event.[7]

- "Any time a gun is fired" includes all incidents that meet the criteria above, including accidents and suicides, regardless of intent.[8]

To determine if an incident met our criteria for inclusion in our review, two analysts independently reviewed each incident identified in the K-12 School Shooting Database. When the analysts disagreed about including an incident in our review, a third analyst reviewed the incident to determine if it should be included in our dataset. As a result of this selection process, we identified 320 incidents that met our definition of a school shooting. We dropped two incidents from this list because they had a reliability score of one.[9] Our final dataset of school shootings contained 318 incidents.

Analysis by Kind of Shooting

The K-12 School Shooting Database contains 19 categories of shootings; however, after reviewing the types of incidents in these categories, we developed our own categories to better reflect the type or nature of the school shooting. The categories of school shootings we developed for our review are described in table 5. To determine the category for each incident, two analysts independently reviewed each incident in the dataset and assigned the incident to only one category based on the

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[6] This includes instances in which the gun was fired onto school grounds or within or at a school bus, even if the shooter was outside of school grounds or outside of the school bus when they fired.

[7] This includes all times when school staff and teachers, including support and custodial staff, were on school grounds in their official capacity with the school (e.g., on duty, at school meeting).

[8] In developing this definition, we reviewed and compared definitions used in existing datasets, such as the National Center for Education Statistics School Survey on Crime and Safety and Education's Civil Rights Data Collection. Our definition includes shooting incidents regardless of intent.

[9] A reliability score of one indicated that the information came from a privately operated blog which we determined was unreliable for our purposes. A reliability score of two indicated that the information came from a single newspaper or online news report, a score of three indicated multiple news sources, a score of four indicated hundreds of news sources or a statement from a law enforcement official, and a score of five indicated court records or police report sources.

analysts' best judgement. When the analysts disagreed about incidents'
category assignments, eight additional analysts independently reviewed
the incidents to identify the most applicable category. When the analysts
did not reach a majority decision, we categorized the incident as "Other."
By having multiple analysts review each incident, we attempted to
eliminate any bias due to the subjective nature of this task. Additionally,
we used the FBI Active Shooter reports to identify all shootings
considered active shooter incidents by the FBI and we categorized these
active shooter incidents as school-targeted to reflect the nature of the
shooting.[10] For all additional variables in the K-12 School Shooting
Database, like the month of the shooting, location of the shooting, or the
shooter's relationship to the school, we relied on the determinations of the
researchers and did not independently verify their data. However, we took
multiple steps to assess the reliability of the K-12 School Shooting
Database—such as by comparing it to other databases with similar data
on school shootings—as we describe in more detail in the Data Reliability
section below.

Table 5: GAO Categories of School Shootings

Category	Description
Accidental	Shooter did not intend to fire the weapon (e.g., showing off gun and it went off; gun in backpack went off).
Dispute/grievance-related	Shooting occurred in relation to a dispute or grievance between the victim and the shooter (that was not domestic in nature), for example: as an escalation of an argument, in retaliation for perceived bullying, in relation to gang-violence, or anger over a grade/disciplinary action (including disputes between staff).
Domestic	Shooter had a current or former familial or romantic relationship (real or imagined) with the intended target; or intended target was in a romantic relationship with a former partner of the shooter (includes incidents of stalking).
Related to illegal activity	Shooting related to an illegal offense, such as drug sales or possession, robbery, or intentional property damage (not including gang-related violence).
School-targeted	Shootings that were targeted generally toward school staff or students on school premises, but that were generally indiscriminate in terms of specific victims. These include incidents of a hostage standoff, indiscriminate shootings targeting the school staff and personnel, and active shooter incidents as categorized by the FBI. Such shootings may also include incidents where a specific victim was targeted because of his or her relationship to the school (e.g. student, principal, staff, school resource office (SRO), etc.).
Suicide/ attempted suicide	Shooter committed or attempted suicide; shooter's only intended target was himself or herself (this does not include incidents of homicide/suicide in which the shooter kills himself or herself after shooting or attempting to shoot others).

[10] The FBI defines an active shooter as one or more individuals actively engaged in killing
or attempting to kill people in a populated area. The FBI compiles active shooter incidents
to assist law enforcement in preventing and responding to these incidents.

Category	Description
Targeted victim	Shooter likely specifically targeted the victim but no other information is available on the relationship between the shooter and the victim; incident does not fit into another category of shooting and likely was not random.
Unknown target/ intent	Unable to determine if school, including school staff and students, was the intended target. Includes incidents in which target is unclear and shooter is unknown, and the shots fired appear to be stray or random.
Other	Shooting does not fit clearly into any of the other identified categories based on the available information.

Source: GAO analysis of incidents in the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database. | GAO-20-455

For all 318 shootings in our dataset, we analyzed the number of shootings that fell within each category, the location of the shooting on school grounds (i.e., inside or outside of school buildings), and the time of day of the shooting, among others.

Analysis by School Year

We used the date of each shooting to determine the school year in which it occurred. We defined a school year as running from July through June of the next year. Therefore, a shooting that occurred in June 2010 happened in the 2009-10 school year, and a shooting that occurred in July 2010 happened in the 2010-11 school year.

Analysis by Region

We analyzed the shootings by region. We defined each region by aggregating state level data as defined in table 6.

Table 6: Regions in the U.S. by State

Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Connecticut	Illinois	Alabama	Alaska
Maine	Indiana	Arkansas	Arizona
Massachusetts	Iowa	Delaware	California
New Hampshire	Kansas	District of Columbia	Colorado
New Jersey	Michigan	Florida	Hawaii
New York	Minnesota	Georgia	Idaho
Pennsylvania	Missouri	Kentucky	Montana
Rhode Island	Nebraska	Louisiana	Nevada
Vermont	North Dakota	Maryland	New Mexico
	Ohio	Mississippi	Oregon
	South Dakota	North Carolina	Utah
	Wisconsin	Oklahoma	Washington
		South Carolina	Wyoming
		Tennessee	
		Texas	
		Virginia	
		West Virginia	

Source: Regions of the United States as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. | GAO-20-455

Analysis by Time Period

Using the original variable, "time period," from the K-12 School Shooting Database, we consolidated the categories of time, to facilitate our analysis as shown in table 7.

Table 7: GAO Consolidation of Time Period from the K-12 School Shooting Database

Time Period (GAO Category)	Time Period (K-12 School Shooting Database)
Morning	Before school
	As school is opening
	Morning classes
Lunch	Lunch
Afternoon	Afternoon classes
	Dismissal
Evening	After school
	Evening
	Night
Not a school day	Not a school day
Unknown	Unknown

Source: GAO analysis of variables from the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database. | GAO-20-455

Analysis by Shooter Relationship to School

Using the original variable, "shooter affiliation," from the K-12 School Shooting Database, we consolidated the categories of a shooter's relationship to the school to facilitate our analysis. Table 8 shows how we combined the categories. The K-12 School Shooting Database also contained information on shooter ethnicity; however, we found those data unreliable for our use.

Table 8: GAO Consolidation of Shooter Relationship to School from the K-12 School Shooting Database

Shooter Relationship To School (GAO Category)	Shooter Affiliation (K-12 School Shooting Database)
Student/former student	Student
	Former student
Parent/relative	Parent
	Relative
Teacher/staff	Teacher
	Former teacher
	Other staff
Police officer/SRO	Police officer/SRO
No relation	No relation
Unknown	Unknown
Other	Intimate relationship with victim
	Multiple shooters
	Students from rival school
	Non-student using athletic facilities/attending game

Source: GAO analysis of variables from the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database. | GAO-20-455

Analysis by Location

Using the original variable, "location," from the K-12 School Shooting Database, we consolidated the categories of a shooting's location to facilitate our analysis. Table 9 shows how we combined the categories.

Table 9: GAO Consolidation of Location from the K-12 School Shooting Database

Location (GAO Category)	Location (K-12- School Shooting Database)
Outside the school building	Outside on school property
	Off school property
	School bus
Inside the school building	Inside school building
Unknown	Unknown

Source: GAO analysis of variables from the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database. | GAO-20-455

Analysis by Common Core of Data Variables

To analyze characteristics of the schools affected by shootings, we matched the K-12 School Shooting Database with the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data (CCD) for information on grade level and locale (urban, suburban, and rural), among other characteristics. The CCD is administered by Education's National Center for Education Statistics, and annually collects data about all public schools in the nation. We matched 297 of the 318 school shootings in our dataset to their associated school and analyzed the school characteristics for the year in which the shooting occurred.[11] The remaining 21 school shootings could not be matched to a school or to school characteristics due to missing information about a school in the CCD or because the school was a private school, and was therefore not included in the CCD. Once we matched 297 shootings to the associated schools, we analyzed the schools by their characteristics as assigned in the CCD and also disaggregated this information by other variables from the K-12 School Shooting Database, such as the category of the shooting. Upon conducting this analysis, we found that in addition to the 21 schools with missing information, there were additional schools with missing variable-level data. As a result, the total number of schools we analyzed varied by each CCD variable. We specifically note the total number of schools analyzed for each CCD variable in the figure notes in the body of the report.

Analysis by School Locale

To determine a school's locale, we used the NCES locale type from the CCD. The locale variable in the CCD is primarily based on a school's location relative to populous areas. The locale variable is divided into four main types: City, Suburb, Town, and Rural (see table 10).

Table 10: Locale Variables Used from the Common Core of Data (CCD)

GAO category	NCES Locale Type
City	City, Large
	City, Mid-size
	City, Small
Suburban	Suburb, Large
	Suburb, Mid-size
	Suburb, Small

[11] At the time of this analysis, the CCD variables were only available through the 2017-2018 school year, and were not available for the 2018-2019 school year. We matched school shootings from the 2018-2019 school year to CCD variables for the 2017-2018 school year in this dataset.

GAO category	NCES Locale Type
Town	Town, Fringe
	Town, Distant
	Town, Remote
Rural	Rural, Fringe
	Rural, Distant

Source: GAO analysis of variables from the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data. | GAO-20-455

Analysis by Poverty Level

For our analysis of school shootings by poverty level, we analyzed data on free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) eligibility from the CCD. A student is generally eligible for free or reduced-price lunch based on federal income eligibility guidelines that are tied to the federal poverty level and size of the family.[12] State educational agencies supply these data for their schools and school districts. We then sorted schools into poverty quartiles based on the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch as follows: schools with 0 to 24.9 percent of students that are FRPL eligible, schools with 25 to 49.9 percent of students that are FRPL eligible, schools with 50 to 74.9 percent of students that are FRPL eligible, and schools with 75 to 100 percent of students that are FRPL eligible.

Analysis by Minority Enrollment

To determine the minority enrollment of the school, we analyzed data on ethnicity enrollment from the CCD. We defined minority students as those who were Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, or two or more races. We then sorted schools into minority enrollment quartiles by the percentage of their enrollment that is comprised of minority students. When analyzing minority enrollment, we defined the quartiles as follows: 0 to 24.9 percent, 25 to 49.9 percent, 50 to 74.9 percent, and 75 to 100 percent.

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[12] Education's National Center for Education Statistics uses eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch as a measure of poverty. The National School Lunch Program, administered at the federal level by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides reduced-cost or free lunches to eligible children in schools. Students are eligible for free lunches if their household income is at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty guidelines or if they meet certain other eligibility criteria, such as eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Students are eligible for reduced-price lunch if their household income is between 130 percent and 185 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

Data Reliability

K-12 School Shooting Database

To assess the reliability of the data, (1) we interviewed the researchers who developed and maintained the K-12 School Shooting Database, (2) reviewed technical documentation, and (3) compared the data in the K-12 School Shooting Database to other databases with similar data on school shootings. In addition, after reviewing the K-12 School Shooting Database's reliability score ratings, we determined that incidents assigned a reliability score of one were unreliable for our purposes because the data for these incidents primarily came from blog posts and may not have included source citations. Therefore, incidents with a reliability score of one were dropped from our dataset. After taking these steps, we determined the data were reliable for our purposes. Our final dataset included 318 incidents.

Common Core of Data

We determined that the data we used from the CCD were sufficiently reliable for our purposes by reviewing technical documentation and interviewing officials from Education's Institute of Education Sciences.

Literature Review

To identify what is known about whether different approaches to discipline in school play a role in school shootings, we conducted a literature review to identify recent empirical research generally published in peer reviewed journals or by government agencies over a 10 year period. Specifically, we searched for relevant studies published from January 2009 through June 2019. We employed research databases such as ProQuest, DIALOG, EBSCO, and Scopus which cover a range of disciplines including education, psychology, sociology, criminology, and health. We searched the titles, abstracts, and subjects or keywords for concepts related to school discipline approaches (both exclusionary approaches, like suspensions and expulsions, and nonexclusionary disciplinary approaches that attempt to prevent or intervene to address behavior) occurring in conjunction with terms related to gun violence or school safety. Discipline terms we searched for included variants of expulsion, suspension, exclusionary, zero tolerance, positive behavioral intervention, social emotional learning, trauma informed, restorative justice, threat assessment, and discipline reform. Articles addressing gun violence as it possibly relates to discipline were identified using variants of gun, handgun, rifle, automatic weapon, semi-automatic, pistol, firearm, or shooting. To identify how discipline might relate to school safety more generally, we added to our search terms variants of safety, violence, homicide, suicide, physical security, threat assessment, as well as factor, characteristic, trigger, prevention, postvention, risk, or protective. In both

searches, we also used terms denoting school settings, including schools, K-12, primary or secondary education, or classroom.

We also identified relevant literature cited in articles we screened. In addition, we asked officials from the Departments of Education, Homeland Security, and Justice, for recommendations of research. We identified 215 articles that were potentially relevant based on our search terms, literature screening, and interviews with federal officials.

We systematically reviewed the abstracts and, as necessary, full text of these studies to determine which studies met our inclusion criteria, as shown in table 11.

Table 11: Criteria Used to Screen Literature on the Role of Approaches to Discipline in School Shootings

Subject matter inclusion criteria:	Subject matter exclusion criteria:

• school-based exclusionary discipline (suspension, expulsion, "zero tolerance")
• school-based nonexclusionary discipline:
  • social emotional learning,
  • positive behavior supports/positive behavior intervention supports,
  • trauma-informed/trauma-based practices,
  • restorative justice/practices
  • threat assessment
• studies examining effects or perceptions of the effects of the above approaches on:
  • school gun violence,
  • school violence, and
  • school safety
	• youth violence that does not reference schools
	• articles examine a treatment rather than a discipline approach

Methodological inclusion criteria:	**Methodological exclusion criteria:**
• generally published in a journal with a peer review process or paper published by a government agency • original research including meta-analysis of research data examining the above subject matter • published in the last 10 years (2009-2019) • school setting (K-12)	• location is outside of the United States • book reviews • editorials and commentaries • summaries • blogs

Source: GAO. | GAO-20-455

When screening the studies we found from our search by key terms and
interviews, we only included in our review those studies that (1) examined
exclusionary discipline approaches (suspension, expulsion, zero
tolerance) and nonexclusionary approaches (social emotional learning,
positive behavior supports, threat assessment), and (2) examined the
effects of these approaches on outcomes of school gun violence, school
violence, and school safety including perceptions of school safety. Our
literature review was not designed to capture studies that examined the
effects of violence prevention programs unless they specifically included
the approaches to discipline described above. Because existing research
on the intersection of school discipline and school shootings was scarce,
we included literature that examined the outcome of violent behavior that
was not always exclusive to school-based violent behaviors. In addition,
while there are numerous risk factors and protective factors that may
affect the likelihood of youth violence, our literature review was not
designed to capture research that examined whether discipline
approaches affect risk factors and protective factors.[13] Our literature
review also was not designed to capture studies that examined the overall
effectiveness of different types of discipline approaches in improving
school climate broadly or students' social, emotional, or academic
behaviors.

To ensure the studies met our inclusion criteria, one analyst and one
methodologist independently screened the titles and abstracts, and when
necessary the full text, of the studies we identified. We reconciled any
differences in screening decisions by reviewing and discussing
documentation from our screening and, in some cases, by reviewing the
full text of the study.

Next, we examined the methodologies of the studies that met our
inclusion criteria to determine whether studies were sufficiently reliable for
our purposes. After taking these steps, we identified 27 studies that met
our inclusion criteria.

We reviewed the 27 studies to determine the types of approaches
examined, outcomes measured, methodologies used, pertinent findings

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[13] Risk factors may include low levels of school achievement, antisocial or aggressive
beliefs and attitudes, and depression and anxiety, among others. Protective factors may
include school readiness, academic achievement, and problem-solving skills, among
others. C. David-Ferdon, et al., *A Comprehensive Technical Package for the Prevention of
Youth Violence and Associated Risk Behaviors* (Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury
Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016).

reported, and any limitations identified. We focused on how the studies addressed the effects of school-based approaches on the following broad outcomes: school gun violence, school violence, and school safety. See appendix III, table 15 which identifies the 27 studies, as well as the approaches to school discipline and the relevant outcomes the studies examined.

We also interviewed five authors selected from the final list of 27 research studies in our literature review to gather perspectives about the challenges and limitations in conducting empirical social science research on different approaches to school discipline and the role of these approaches in school shootings. We selected the five researchers because they studied different discipline approaches, including social emotional learning, threat assessment, and exclusionary discipline; and represented a range of social science disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, and criminology.

We conducted this performance audit from May 2019 to June 2020 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: Additional Data Tables and Figure

This appendix contains several tables and a figure that show the underlying data used throughout this report, using the K-12 School Shooting Database of the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School and our following definition of a school shooting:

- Any time a gun is fired:[1]

  - on school grounds, on a school bus, or during a school event (*such as sporting practice or event, school dance, school play*);[2] and

  - during school hours or a school event or immediately before or after school hours or school event.[3]

- "Any time a gun is fired" includes all incidents that meet the criteria above, including accidents and suicides, regardless of intent.[4]

See appendix I for more details on our scope and methodology. The following tables and figure are included in this appendix:

- Table 12: School shootings and fatalities/casualties by shooting location.
- Table 13: Time of day of school shootings by kind of shooting.
- Table 14: Month of shooting by kind of shooting.
- Figure 10: Number of school shootings incidents over time.

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[1] For our analysis, we included four incidents in which a gun was brandished due to the severity of the incidents. For example, when the shooter initially made threatening gestures with a firearm, but was stopped prior to a shot being fired; for example, if the shooter was tackled.

[2] This includes instances in which the gun was fired onto school grounds or within or at a school bus, even if the shooter was outside of school grounds or outside of the school bus when they fired.

[3] This includes all times where school staff and teachers, including support and custodial staff, were on school grounds in their official capacity with the school (e.g. on duty, at school meeting).

[4] In developing this definition, we reviewed and compared definitions used in existing datasets, such as the National Center for Education Statistics School Survey on Crime and Safety and Education's Civil Rights Data Collection. Our definition includes shooting incidents regardless of intent.

Table 12: School Shootings and Fatalities/Casualties by Shooting Location, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

	Total Incidents	Total Killed (includes shooter)	Average Killed per Incident	Total Wounded	Average Wounded per Incident	Total Wounded or Killed	Average Wounded or Killed per Incident
All	318	166	0.52	330	1.04	496	1.56
Inside the school building	125	110	0.88	136	1.09	246	1.97
Outside the school building[a]	192	56	0.29	192	1.00	248	1.29
Unknown	1	0	0.00	2	2.00	2	2.00

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

[a]We combined three categories from the K-12 School Shooting Database into an "Outside the school building" category: outside on school property, off school property, and on school bus.

Table 13: Time of Day of School Shootings by Kind of Shooting, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

	All	Morning	Lunch	Afternoon	Evening	Not a school day[a]	Unknown
All	318	122	25	78	79	8	6
Accidental	51	25	4	14	4	2	2
Dispute/ grievance-related	99	16	7	30	42	3	1
Domestic	22	12	0	6	3	1	0
Related to illegal activity	12	2	1	1	7	1	0
School targeted	46	28	8	7	2	0	1
Suicide/attempted suicide	34	24	3	4	3	0	0
Targeted victim	15	4	0	3	7	0	1
Unknown target/intent	29	7	2	10	10	0	0
Other	10	4	0	3	1	1	1

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

[a]"Not a school day" includes incidents that met our scoping definition and occurred on a Saturday, Sunday, holiday, summer break, or other non-school day during the school hours (not evening or night). This includes incidents occurring at sporting events not held on school days or other school events, such as prom or registration for classes.

Table 14: Month of Shooting by Kind of Shooting, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19
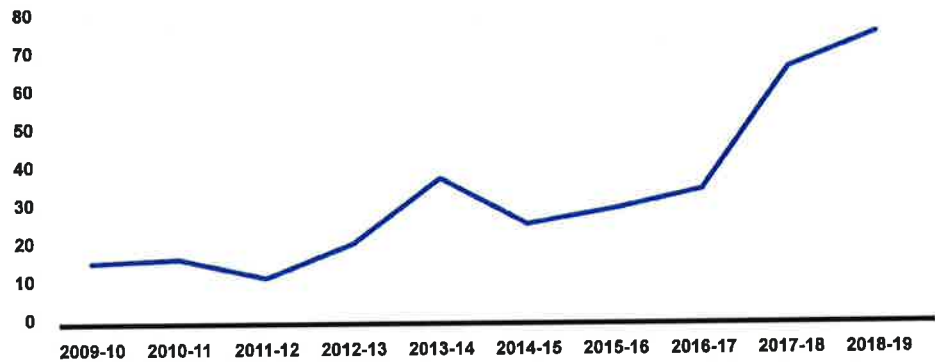
	All	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
All	318	0	18	42	34	21	22	47	35	22	31	32	14
Accidental	51	0	3	2	4	8	3	5	5	5	4	11	1
Dispute/ grievance-related	99	0	6	11	14	3	7	22	12	6	8	6	4
Domestic	22	0	1	1	2	0	1	4	5	3	3	2	0

	All	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Related to illegal activity	12	0	0	2	1	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	3
School-targeted	46	0	4	9	4	3	5	5	4	1	5	5	1
Suicide/ attempted suicide	34	0	2	6	2	5	2	1	3	3	6	3	1
Targeted victim	15	0	1	3	3	0.	1	0	1	1	1	3	1
Unknown target/intent	29	0	1	7	3	1	1	2	4	2	4	2	2
Other	10	0	0	1	1	1	2	4	0	0	0	0	1

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting Database for school year 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

Figure 10: Number of School Shooting Incidents Over Time, School Years 2009-10 through 2018-19

Source: GAO analysis of the Naval Postgraduate School's K-12 School Shooting database for school years 2009-10 through 2018-19. | GAO-20-455

Appendix III: Summary and Table of Studies Included in Literature Review

Our literature review found no empirical research from the last decade that directly examines the link between school shootings and approaches to school discipline. However, our literature review did find empirical research that examines the link between differing definitions of violent behavior and perceptions of school safety and discipline approaches among the 27 studies that met our overarching criteria.[1] See appendix I for more information on our inclusion criteria. These studies used a variety of methods, measures, and outcomes of interest, making it difficult to draw conclusions about the overall effectiveness of any one approach. In addition, it is unclear from the studies whether and to what extent the approaches examined were used in conjunction with other discipline or violence prevention efforts. For example, nonexclusionary discipline approaches may not entirely replace exclusionary discipline approaches, but may be used in conjunction with suspension and expulsion. Further, as many of the studies note, schools may have implemented the approaches examined with varying consistency. Finally, some schools may have put in place physical security measures or may have employed school resource officers, or support staff such as guidance counselors and psychologists. Such efforts may have interacted with the discipline approaches to impact the study results.

See table 15 below for the full list of the 27 studies we reviewed.

Table 15: Studies Meeting Inclusion Criteria for Literature Review

Study	Approach examined	Outcomes of relevance	School level of sample
Catherine H. Augustine, et al., *Can Restorative Practices Improve School Climate and Curb Suspensions? An Evaluation of the Impact of Restorative Practices in a Mid-Sized Urban School District* (RAND Corporation, 2018)[a]	Restorative practice	Violent behavior	Elementary, middle, high school
Michael W. Beets, et al., "Use of Social and Character Development Program to Prevent Substance Use, Violent Behaviors, and Sexual Activity Among Elementary-School Students in Hawaii," *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 99, no. 8 (2009)	Social emotional learning	Violent behavior; perceptions of school safety	Elementary

[1] Our literature review was designed to identify studies examining the effects of these approaches on school gun violence, school violence, and school safety. Our literature review was not designed to identify studies examining the effects of these approaches on other student outcomes, such as academic achievement, or on school climate. In addition, while some of the studies we included in our literature review may have also examined these other outcomes, we only report on outcomes most directly related to school gun violence, school violence, and school safety.

Study	Approach examined	Outcomes of relevance	School level of sample
Catherine P. Bradshaw, et al., "Maryland's Evolving System of Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Interventions in Public Schools: The Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools Project, "*Adolescent Psychiatry*, 4 (2014): pp. 194-206	Positive behavior supports	Weapons; perceptions of school safety	High school
Catherine P. Bradshaw; Anne L. Sawyer; and Lindsey M. O'Brennan, "A Social Disorganization Perspective on Bullying-Related Attitudes and Behaviors: The Influence of School Context," *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 43 (2009): pp. 204–220	Exclusionary	Perceptions of school safety	Elementary and middle school
Dewey Cornell, et al., "A Retrospective Study of School Safety Conditions in High Schools Using the Virginia Threat Assessment Guidelines Versus Alternative Approaches," *School Psychology Quarterly*, vol. 24, no.2 (2009): pp.119-129	Threat assessment	Violent behavior*	High school
Dorothy L. Espelage, et al., "The Impact of a Middle School Program to Reduce Aggression, Victimization, and Sexual Violence," *Journal of Adolescent Health,* 53 (2013): pp. 180-186	Social emotional learning	Violent behavior**	Middle school
Shenyang Guo, et al., "A Longitudinal Evaluation of the Positive Action Program in a Low-Income, Racially Diverse, Rural County: Effects on Self-Esteem, School Hassles, Aggression, and Internalizing Symptoms," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 44 (2015): pp. 2337–2358	Social emotional learning	Violent behavior*,**	Middle school
Rebecca Hinze-Pifer and Lauren Sartain, "Rethinking Universal Suspension for Severe Student Behavior," *Peabody Journal of Education*, 93:2 (2018): pp. 228-243	Exclusionary	Perceptions of school safety	High school
Robert H. Horner, et al., "A Randomized, Wait-List Controlled Effectiveness Trial Assessing School-Wide Positive Behavior Support in Elementary Schools," *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, vol. 11, no. 3 (2009): pp. 1330144	Positive behavior supports	Perceptions of school safety*	Elementary school
Johanna Lacoe and Matthew P. Steinberg, "Rolling Back Zero Tolerance: The Effect of Discipline Policy Reform on Suspension Usage and Student Outcomes," *Peabody Journal of Education*, vol. 93, issue 2 (2018)	Exclusionary	Violent behavior*	Elementary, middle, high school
Kendra M. Lewis, et al., "Problem Behavior and Urban, Low-Income Youth: A Randomized Controlled Trial of Positive Action in Chicago," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 44(6) (2013): pp. 622–630	Social emotional learning	Violent behavior**	Elementary school
Kin-Kit Li, et al., "Effects of the Positive Action programme on problem behaviors in elementary school students: A match-pair randomised control trial in Chicago," *Psychology and Health*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2011): pp. 187–204	Social emotional learning	Violent behavior**	Elementary school
David Maimon; Olena Antonaccio; and Michael T. French, "Severe Sanctions, Easy Choice? Investigating the Role of School Sanctions in Preventing Adolescent Violent Offending," *Criminology*, 50(2) (2012): pp. 495-524	Exclusionary	Violent behavior**	Middle and high school
Barry McCurdy, et al., "School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders," *Psychology in the Schools*, vol. 53(4) (2016)	Positive behavior supports	Violent behavior*	Elementary, middle, high school
Laura McNeal and Christopher Dunbar, Jr., "In the Eyes of the Beholder: Urban Student Perceptions of Zero Tolerance Policy," *Urban Education*, 45(3) (2010): pp. 293–311	Exclusionary	Perceptions of school safety	High school

Study	Approach examined	Outcomes of relevance	School level of sample
Gregory Moy, et al., "International Adoption of the 'Second Step' Program: Moderating Variables in Treatment Effects," *School Psychology International*, vol. 39(4) (2018): pp. 333–359	Social emotional learning	Violent behavior**	Elementary and middle school
Erin K. Nekvasil and Dewey G. Cornell, "Student Threat Assessment Associated with Safety in Middle Schools," *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2015): pp. 98–113	Threat assessment	Perceptions of school safety; violent behavior*	Middle school
David Osher, et al., "Avoid Simple Solutions and Quick Fixes: Lessons Learned From a Comprehensive Districtwide Approach to Improving Student Behavior and School Safety," *Journal of Applied Research on Children*, vol. 5, issue 2, article 16 (2014)	Social emotional learning	Violent behavior; perceptions of school safety	Elementary, middle, high school
Arthur H. Owora, et al., "Culturally congruent mentorship can reduce disruptive behavior among elementary school students: results from a pilot study," *Pilot and Feasibility Studies*, 4:147 (2018)	Other	Violent behavior*	Elementary school
Lawrence Shulman and Eugene Maguin, "The VISA Center: An Interdisciplinary Collaboration Serving Students Suspended from School for Violent or Aggressive Behavior, Substance Abuse, or Weapons Possession," *Children & Schools*, vol.39, no. 4 (2017)	Other	Violent behavior	Middle and high school
Suyapa Silvia, et al., *Impacts of a Violence Prevention Program for Middle Schools: Findings After 3 Years of Implementation*, NCEE 2011-4017 (Washington, D.C: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 2011)	Other	Violent behavior**	Middle school
Paul R. Smokowski, et al., "The North Carolina Youth Violence Prevention Center: Using a Multifaceted, Ecological Approach to Reduce Youth Violence in Impoverished, Rural Areas," *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research*, vol. 9, no. 4 (2018)	Social emotional learning	Violent behavior*,**	Middle school
Paul R. Smokowski, et al., "Evaluating Dosage Effects for the Positive Action Program: How Implementation Impacts Internalizing Symptoms, Aggression, School Hassles, and Self-Esteem," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 86(3) (2016): pp. 310–322	Social emotional learning	Violent behavior*,**	Middle school
Frank J. Snyder, et al., "Preventing Negative Behaviors Among Elementary-School Students Through Enhancing Students' Social-Emotional and Character Development," *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 28(1) (2013): pp. 50–58	Social emotional learning	Violent behavior	Elementary school
Katie Cotter Stalker, et al., "The impact of the positive action program on substance use, aggression, and psychological functioning: Is school climate a mechanism of change?" *Children and Youth Services Review*, 84 (2018): pp. 143-151	Social emotional learning	Violent behavior*,**	Middle and high school
University of Chicago Crime Lab, *Connect & Redirect to Respect: Final Report* (January 2019)[b]	Other	Shooting victimization[c] *,**	High school
Lacey N. Wallace, "Illicit juvenile weapon possession: The role of serious sanctioning in future behavior," *The Social Science Journal*, 54 (2017): pp. 319-328.	Exclusionary	Weapon carrying; violent behavior**	Middle and high school

Source: GAO literature searches and analysis of reviewed studies. | GAO-20-455

*Indicates outcome measure is not scoped exclusively to the outcome of interest for this engagement. For example, an outcome measure of violent behavior may also include non-violent behavior.

**Indicates outcome measure is not scoped only to the school-setting.

Note: School level was directly reported by most studies. For articles where school level was not directly reported, schools were coded based on reported student grade levels. As grade level ranges vary for school level across different districts, context was used to inform coding decisions. For example, some studies coded as having an elementary school sample included grade levels ranging from pre-K through grade 8 while others had a smaller grade range. Similarly, some middle schools and even high schools included grade 8 students.

[a]This study was funded by the National Institute for Justice as part of its Comprehensive School Safety Initiative, but was published by the RAND Corporation.

[b]This study was funded through an award by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, and was made publically available through the Office of Justice Programs' National Criminal Justice Reference Service. It was not published by the U.S. Department of Justice.

[c]The study defined student shooting victimization as instances in which Chicago Public School students were the physical victims of gunfire, both fatal and non-fatal.

Appendix IV: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact	Jacqueline M. Nowicki, (617) 788-0580, nowickij@gao.gov
Staff Acknowledgments	In addition to the contact named above, Sherri Doughty (Assistant Director), Cady S. Panetta (Analyst-in-Charge), Morgan Jones, Suzanne Kaasa, John Mingus, Amy Moran Lowe, Patricia Powell, Lauren Shaman, and Walter Vance made key contributions to this report. Also contributing were Sarah Cornetto, Holly Dye, Eric Erdman, Sarah Gilliland, Gina Hoover, Lara Laufer, Sheila R. McCoy, Samuel Portnow, Curtia Taylor, and Elaine Vaurio.

From:	Tinti, Elisa
Sent:	Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:27 PM
To:	Mesches, Sue
Subject:	Fwd: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Re-envisioning policing

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** "Scott-Childress, Reynolds" <rscott-childress@kingston-ny.gov>
> **Date:** February 17, 2021 at 12:22:08 PM EST
> **To:** "Tinti, Elisa" <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>
> **Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Re-envisioning policing**
>
> H Elisa,
>
> Can you add this message to the Police Task Force record?
>
> Best wishes,
> Rennie
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
> Begin forwarded message:
>
>> **From:** "Scott-Childress, Reynolds" <rscott-childress@kingston-ny.gov>
>> **Date:** February 17, 2021 at 12:18:14 PM EST
>> **To:** hazel <dhr111@gmail.com>
>> **Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Re-envisioning policing**
>>
>> Hi Diana,
>>
>> Thanks for your message. Please note that the Common Council has no authority over SROs in KCSD schools. Their use is solely at the discretion of the the School Board. I hoe you will contact them directly about your concerns regarding SROs.
>>
>> As for the other suggestions included in the report, I am enthusiastic to develop several of them. This will require a heavy lift as some of them require public referenda, others coordination with the County, and others a deep commitment from community members to make change happen.
>>
>> If you would like to be involved in developing any of the aspects you mention in your email, please let me know and I will keep you in the loop.
>>
>> Best wishes,

1

Rennie

Reynolds Scott-Childress
Alderman, Ward 3
845-616-3687

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 17, 2021, at 11:54 AM, hazel <dhr111@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Reynolds Scott -Childress,

I'm writing to let you know that I live in your ward and I support
the removal of SROs from Kingston City School District. I also
support the proposal to create alternatives to policing by creating a
non-carceral community deescalation team. Furthermore, I
support the proposal to re-envision police accountability by
making further changes to the police commission. I hope that you
will support these things as they will be of great benefit to our
community.

Thank you,

Diana Robin
Kingston, NY 12401

From:	Tinti, Elisa
Sent:	Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:28 PM
To:	Mesches, Sue
Subject:	Fwd: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Further comment on EO 203

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** "Worthington, Rita" <ward4@kingston-ny.gov>
> **Date:** February 17, 2021 at 12:11:27 PM EST
> **To:** Alderman <Alderman@kingston-ny.gov>
> **Cc:** "Tinti, Elisa" <emtinti@kingston-ny.gov>
> **Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Further comment on EO 203**

FYI . . .

From: Hannah K Giles <hkgiles@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:07 AM
To: Worthington, Rita
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Further comment on EO 203

Hi Ms. Worthington -

I listened to the Public Hearing last week with interest. Since I'd already submitted my comment earlier, I didn't opt to speak, but I wish I'd commented at the end, if only to speak up in support of the emotional testimony that Lisa Royer shared about the trauma her daughter and other young people of color have experienced at the hands of SROs at Kingston High School. It touched me deeply. I was really concerned to hear that there has been no accountability in that case, to hear it dismissed by other speakers as almost insignificant, and to hear about the lasting impact on other students as well.

I was struck with the sense that most everything the SROs are reported to be doing could be done by any caring adult, including parent or grandparent or community volunteers, and/or additional counselors or support staff. Apparently SROs are: helping kids calm down, accompanying them to the hospital, serving as role models, coordinating high school internships, giving career advice, returning students home safely, protecting rights of children in custody battles, arbitrating grievances of family members, checking on struggling students, playing basketball games, being the go-to person, providing traffic control, building meaningful relationships. These are all incredibly important and necessary, but they do not need to be done by armed guards.

We can and should be able to re-imagine a structure that doesn't just provide a perception of safety for some, but the reality of **safety for ALL**. I strongly believe that a reality of safety for all will not be based on policing as a system.

Even one student being assaulted is too many - and for more students to witness assaults and then see no accountability or repair of harm - that is too much harm done. The positives listed above do not outweigh that. *And since all those positives could still be achieved by non-armed personnel, we can find a way to get the positives without the negatives.*

We, white people like me especially, but Americans in general, have been socialized to believe that police make us safer - and so the idea of a school with no SROs perhaps feels unsafe, feels risky, feels vulnerable. But that's perception, not reality. And the knowledge that actual REAL harm has been done by continuing to have SROs in the schools, and the knowledge that there are many more families and students who have been harmed but are afraid to speak out - that is heartbreaking and unacceptable, and should be of grave concern to the city council.

The racial disparity in suspensions and expulsions in Kingston City Schools is likewise deeply disturbing - and seems to reflect a need for more investment in the most vulnerable members of Kingston's community, addressing housing, income security, and health care, as well as a need for a deep dive into school policies with an equity lens.

It should not take another traumatic event like the one Lisa Royer described happening to her daughter - even that one should never have happened, and should be enough for any parents to be able to empathize and be horrified - unless of course, that child's trauma is not seen as valid or worthy or real, unless that child is seen as the problem.

There must be a way to keep EVERYONE safe that does not expose BIPOC students to harm. The first step in figuring out how to do that is to remove SROs so we can build a safety system that truly works for EVERYONE, not just some.

Thank you,
Hannah Giles
St. James St, Kingston NY

On Wed, Feb 10, 2021 at 2:12 PM Worthington, Rita <ward4@kingston-ny.gov> wrote:

> Hello Hannah:
>
>
>
> Thank you for your comments. I will be sure to pass this to the rest of the council.
>
>
>
> Rita Worthington
>
> Alderwoman, Ward 4
>
> (845)430-2819

ward4@kingston-ny.gov

From: Hannah K Giles <hkgiles@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 2:00 PM
To: Worthington, Rita
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] EO 203

Hello!

I am one of your constituents, residing on St. James between Pine and Fair.

I am writing to express my support for three parts of Kingston's EO203 proposal:

1. I support the complete removal of SROs from Kingston City Schools, and the redistribution of those funds to counseling and other true student support services. As a teacher, I know that cops have no place in schools and that there are much better ways to keep students, staff, and teachers safe and cared for.

2. I support the proposal to create a non-carceral community de-escalation team as an alternative to police. 22% of KPD calls are for actions that do not require armed officers. Let's limit the exposure of our community to armed officers by creating another community-based group that can answer calls for help. There are many successful forward-thinking examples of this around the country - Kingston can be one of these visionary cities!

3. I support the proposal to make changes to the police commission in order to re-envision police accountability. Accountability is the first step toward healing. It needs to be real; watering it down does nothing to move us toward true repair.

I look forward to following your vote and hope that you will speak up for your community members by supporting and advocating for these same proposals.

All the best,
Hannah Giles
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