

POLICE PRESENCE, ACTIVITIES, AND POLICIES AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
A NATIONAL ANALYSIS

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership
Sam Houston State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

by

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May, 2021

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DEDICATION

I dedicate dissertation to my grandparents respectively, Mrs. Love Marie Adams, Mr. Willie Frank Mason, Mrs. Joan Parker Clamon, Mr. Terry Gilder, Sr, & Mrs. Dorothy Horn Gilder. Without a strong foundation built in faith and belief that all things are possible, I wouldn't have made it to this great milestone in my life.

To Mother, who taught me how to count and roll coins to begin my college bank account, I thank her. For always believing that I could do anything in the world, her belief in me has pushed me along a paved way!

Pawpaw, he is everything! His patience, love, kindness, courage, and strength still keep me to this day! I try my best to emulate him in so many ways! My goal is to make him proud of me. He put so much faith in me as a small child. My cup perpetually overfloweth.

Grandma Jo-Ann, who taught me how to work hard no matter the color my skin. She showed me how to talk to superiors and "bring them down a few notches" and how to effectively walk into a room with confidence because I already had everything that I needed! I thank God for placing her and the Parker/Clamon into my life!

Papa Terry, I saw, as a young boy utilize a God-given craftsmanship and become memorable through his work ethic and will that God laid out for his life. I learned more in 5 years from him that can sustain me a lifetime!

To the memory of my beloved brother, Clendon Terrell Mason Gilder, I've felt his spirit encouraging me throughout my life to this point. I feel the duty to carry on for the both of us. I do believe that all things are possible and attainable, and that is because I do believe that I have a guardian angel. I'm striving.

I dedicate this dissertation to my Mother, Marie Antoinette. Her countless sacrifice has not gone in vain. I remember the hard times and what she endured to make sure that I was just as good as the other kids! That means so much! She always saw excellence in her son and that has been a force that has catapulted me into rooms that I wasn't supposed to enter or levels that were never designed for me to access. She believed in me, sometimes blindly, and that has garnered a level of support that I could never repay.

I dedicate this dissertation my Father, Terry Lee Gilder. He is the hardest working man I know. I believe that I received some of that from him, just in a different way. I thank him for taking me to work with him and for taking me to fix everyone else's breakdowns. This level of service trained my leadership into what I am right now. For his humility, generosity, and capacity to open his heart to others are characteristics that I carry with me. I had a great model. I thank him for always being my friend, even when he was unsure how to be my father, for being honest, transparent, and forthcoming. We are overcomers, and as he stated in May of 1997, "It does get greater, later!" Well, here we are later, and it did get GREATER!

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Kristina; and children, Corey, Kaleigh, and Christiane. I'm for the untimely arrival and willingness to adapt to everything that I have thrown into life. In a weird attempt to grow, much like Job, we have suffered the price of a relentless relationship with God. I'm grateful for the love, service, and understanding as I have needed to go write, study, travel to conferences, and give up late nights in the "back house." Kristina, for carrying the weight, sympathizing with my physical,

spiritual, and mental pain, I am grateful. For always being there, albeit a pain, it was accomplished. Thank You!

I dedicate this dissertation to those who have been there, but now gone on: my best friend, Calvin Brooks, Jr; and pastor, Reverend Michael C. Davis, Sr; Aunt Joanne Horn; Uncle Kenneth Wayne Horn; Uncle Willie K. Mason and Aunt Lavern. I am grateful for the memories and the love. I am grateful for the many memorable moments and growth from my best friend and SHSU roommate, Calvin. For the hope that was placed in me that was expressed two weeks before the “heaven bound” journey of Rev. Michael C. Davis, when I was called a heavy-hitter; I still strive to achieve! I’m grateful for the fight and the wit of Uncle Kenneth Wayne and the brains and the dimples from Aunt Lavern! I’m grateful for Aunt Joanne teaching me my ABCs on the domino table and to Uncle Willie K for getting the doctorate first...

I dedicate this dissertation to the life and legacy of the Masons, Gilders, Horns, Holmans, Porters, Barnes whose blood flows through my veins. I am proud of who I am, and wear my family lineage as a badge of honor. I’m grateful to my aunts and uncles who let me do my thing and for loving me like their own: Aunt Joyce, Aunt Teddy, Aunt Penny, Uncle John, Uncle Don, Uncle Leroy, Uncle Jimmy Ray, and Uncle Tommy!

Finally, as I dedicate this dissertation to the memory, gratitude, and love of all who have prayed for me, did me a favor, or covered for me; I must acknowledge that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I am grateful to God Almighty for the unmerited favor over my life, for the second “wind” when I felt down, and for the spirit to fight! I know that I fall short of the glory every day, but His strength has been made perfect in my weakness.

ABSTRACT

Gilder, Carnelius D., *Police presence, activities, and policies at public schools: A national analysis*. Doctor of Education (Educational Leadership), May, 2021, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

Purpose

The overall purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine sworn police officer presence, activity, and types of weapons carried and policies that govern sworn police officers by school level. In the first study, the degree to which differences were present in sworn police officer presence (i.e., while students are arriving and leaving school, at school activities, at other times, and during all instructional hours at school) by school level was determined. In the second study, the degree to which differences existed in police activity (i.e., participation in discipline, solving school problems, prevention training, student mentoring, and teaching law related classes) by school level was addressed. In the third study, the degree to which differences were present in the types of weapons (i.e., carried stun guns, chemical sprays, firearms, body cameras, restraints; and officers who made arrests and reported) carried while on campus and policies used to govern their sworn police officers by school level was examined. In all three studies, the extent to which consistencies were present in schools across two school years was addressed.

Method

A causal-comparative research design was present for all three studies. Archival data were collected from the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Survey on Crime and Safety (2018) surveys, which is a national dataset available at the National Center for Education Statistics.

Findings

Inferential analyses revealed that high schools had statistically higher percentages of sworn police officer presence, more use of police in various capacities, and more types of weapons carried on campus. Similar percentages were established by school level for having body cameras and for written policies that governed sworn police officers. With respect to the survey questions that were analyzed, consistencies were documented. In both years of national data, a stair step effect was observed, with high schools having the highest percentages of sworn police officer presence, how they were used, and in the weapons that were carried, followed by middle schools, and then by elementary schools. Results delineated herein were commensurate with the existing research literature. Implications for policy and for practice, as well as recommendations for future research, were provided.

Keywords: Elementary school; High school; Middle school; School resource officer; School safety; School survey on crime and safety

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Words cannot express the level of gratitude that I have for my dissertation chair, Dr. John R. Slate, who was gracious when I came to him. He has been professional, patient, and positive throughout my entire process. I would like to extend gratitude to the other members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Lunenburg, Dr. Martinez-Garcia, and Dr. Hemmen. I thank them for their help!

I am truly grateful for the journey that I have traveled with Cohort 38! We encountered issues together that the other cohorts wouldn't understand, which makes us overcomers. I thank them for their tenacity, encouragement, laughs, and the "tea and chip" nights that we have shared. I contend that we have a bond that is unique to other groups and I believe that success, growth, and greatness lies within our purview. The best is yet to come!

Various professors within the department have been a true blessing, and I am grateful for their help and patience with me. Particularly, Dr. Julie P. Combs, Dr. Anthony Harris, Dr. Rebecca Bustamante, Dr. Tony Onwuegbuzie, Dr. Cynthia Martinez-Garcia, Dr. Mack Hines, Dr. Pamela Gray, Dr. Susan Borg, and Dr. George Moore, they have been helpful and I appreciate any and all that they did to make this journey a success!

I am truly grateful for colleagues from UCEA, AERA, TAA, the Barbara L. Jackson Scholars Network! What an AWESOME opportunity the program gave to be able to meet and sharpen my skills at this awesome time in my life. Their support has been great. I pray that I have been as good to many of them as they have been to me. I have learned, grown, and become better at this academic thing because of them. In

particular, Dr. Michael Dantley, Dr. Khaula Murtadha, Dr. Lisa Bass, Dr. Hollie Mackey, Dr. Muhammad Khalifah, Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, Dr. Pamela Gray, Dr. Ronald Whitaker, Dr. Darius Prier, Dr. Judy Alston, Dr. Kristina Hesbol, Dr. Julia Ballenger, Dr. Kofi Lomotey, Dr. Meggin McIntosh, Dr. Dessynie Edwards, and Dr. Merriam Ezzani for countless words of encouragement and leadership along the way!

I would like to thank my West Sabine ISD family, they know who they are, who have fought for me a place at the table. Many of us have been together as long as 15 years, and their love and devotion to kids and to me has yet to waver. I cannot begin to explain my appreciation to them.

To various members of Greater Mount Nebo, Roberts, Greater Zion, Emmanuel, Canaan, and Goodwill, I am grateful for them embracing me as I have effectively navigated pastoral duties in the midst of COVID-19, a dissertation and administrative duties. Without faith in the Lord and your prayers, I wouldn't have made it! My Christian mentors (e.g., Rev. Charles Allen Jr, Rev. Kenneth L. Cotton, Deacon Chris Kelly, Rev. H. F. Johnson) have given leadership that has been proven invaluable! "I am forever indebted to the service to me, my ministry, my leadership, and my future. On Christ the Solid Rock I STAND, all other ground is but sinking sand!"

To the rest of my family, friends, loved ones, coworkers, co-laborers who have encouraged me or lifted me up as the weight got heavy, supported me, or let me vent; *time will never dilute, nor ages destroy my gratitude.*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

School programs that place sworn law enforcement officers at schools have emerged as one of the most prevailing tactics in the fight against school violence (Bracy, 2010; Brown, 2006; May & Higgins, 2011). According to Atkinson (2002), the School Resource Officer program is a community policing-based model with goals of facilitating positive relationships between youth and law enforcement; thereby promoting safety and order on public school campuses. Although many programs have been generated in efforts to prioritize school safety, the number of school resource officers has experienced a rapid increase since highly publicized school shootings have occurred in places such as Littleton, Colorado, Jonesboro, Arkansas, and Newtown, Connecticut. These instances have heightened concerns about safety on school campuses (Theriot, 2016). After these key events, federal funds made it possible to create school resource officer programs on campuses across the country to further enforce law and order and safety (Kennedy, 2001).

The school resource officer, however, serves as more than an armed sworn police officer to combat oncoming issues that threaten the campus, but also serves to educate about safety and violence prevention, and to mentor students. The school resource officer has evolved as a new breed of public servant: a hybrid of educational, correctional, and law enforcement official (Brown, 2006). According to Bracy (2011), security tactics and methods used to secure school campuses included, but were not limited to, (a) security guards, (b) metal detectors, (c) surveillance cameras, and (d) police officers (commonly referred to as school resource officers). In this journal-ready

dissertation, the literature regarding sworn police officers at elementary, middle, and high schools in the United States was reviewed.

Literature Review Search Procedures

For this journal-ready dissertation, the literature regarding sworn police officers partnering with schools, sworn police presence at school, sworn officer police activity while on campus, and the policies that govern these sworn police officers was reviewed. The following phrases were used in the search for relevant literature: *school resource officer, elementary school, middle school, high school, sworn police officer, policies, weapons, discipline, and prevention*. These searches were conducted through the EBSCO Host database for academic journals. Applicable articles were reviewed that related to school level and sworn police officers.

Key word searches for “school level” yielded 44,045 results. By narrowing the search to include “elementary”, the search was reduced to 10,757 articles. Adding “school resource officer” to the search resulted in nine articles. When “school level” and “middle school” were searched, 6,669 results were yielded. Adding “school resource officer” to that search resulted in six articles. When “school level” and “high school” were searched, 16,342 results were yielded. Adding “school resource officer” to that search resulted in 13 articles. When “school level” and “school resource officer” were searched, 30 results displayed. A separate search was conducted for “school resource officer” and resulted in 813 articles. This number was reduced to 30 when “school level” was added. Key word searches for “school resource officer” and “weapons” yielded 23 articles. “School level” and “school violence” displayed 1,080 results, whereas “school resource officer”, “school violence and “prevention” yielded 86 results. Applicable

articles were reviewed pertaining to the authors' relationship to school level and sworn police officers or school resource officers. Additionally, relevant articles were reviewed pertaining to police presence and policies.

Review of the Literature on Sworn Police Officer Presence by School Level

According to Weiler and Cray (2011), the school resource officer program was begun in Liverpool, England in the early to mid-1950s. Nearly a decade later, the program began to debut in the United States, but did not gain prominence until, decades later, in the 1990s in response to various school shootings (Trump, 1998). Until then, the program was not very common across the country. Black (2009) contended that the school officer program is the latest effort by both school and government leaders to promote school safety. As a result, school resource officer programs have initially been funded through federal dollars and phased into the school budget after three years (Kennedy, 2001).

In the 2015-2016 school year, about 69% of public schools reported one or more violent incidents, 15% reported one or more serious violent incidents, and 39% reported one or more thefts (School Survey on Crime and Safety, 2018). As such, these incidents, along with incidents in previous years have resulted in an escalating police presence in public schools at local and national levels (Department of Justice, 2018; Perano & Ellis, 2018). The presence of police officers in schools in the United States has more than doubled in the past 25 years, making the presence of police on school campuses a common occurrence (Presman & Rosen, 2005; Stefkovich & Miller, 1999).

School resource officer programs, or programs that place sworn law enforcement officers at schools, have emerged as one of the most prevalent strategies for increasing

school safety and reducing violence (Bracy, 2010; Brown, 2006; May & Higgins, 2011). According to Weisburst (2019), the State of Texas has embraced the use of School Resource Officers with larger districts that have their own designated police departments that commonly assign two sworn police officers per high school, one per middle school, and sworn police officers who rotate across elementary schools.

Although McDaniel (2001) has asserted that no uniform definition of a school resource officer exists, Lavarello and Trump (2001) identified common characteristics as “certified peace officers employed by local or county law enforcement agencies and assigned to a particular school or schools” (p. 32). One note is that the school resource officer is a police officer first (Umphey, 2009), and should not be confused or considered to be another building or campus administrator or teacher (Bond, 2001). Moreover, Weiler and Cray (2011) asserted that sustainability of the school resource officer program and the constitutional rights of students through the lens of suspicion or probable cause as unresolved issues related to the school resource officer program.

Na and Gottfredson (2013) contended that both school level and school location influenced the implementation of the sworn police on school campuses. In their 2013 investigation, Na and Gottfredson established the increased application of school police from rural schools being the lowest, to towns, urban fringe, and cities being the highest. Within the same context, elementary schools used the police the least often with combined schools being next, then middle schools, and high schools having the greatest use of school police. Na and Gottfredson (2013) documented that rural elementary schools used sworn police officers the least at 5% and urban high schools the most at 68%.

According to Theriot and Cuellar (2016), the widespread implementation of school violence programs has forged formal arrangements between schools and police departments. In these formal arrangements, the roles and expectations for sworn police officers and school administrators within the school system are articulated to differentiate responses between disciplinary issues and criminal behaviors (Advancement Project, 2013; Denver Public Schools, 2013; Theriot & Cuellar, 2016). Many instances have been documented that substantiate the presence of sworn police officers on campus. For instance, in 2006, a middle school principal was fatally shot by a student. This event was swiftly followed with a public declaration by the then Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen that he would look into making the school resource officer job a part of the framework in every public school (Kovac, 2006). Furthermore, former President Barack Obama deemed the school resource officer a focal point in protecting children after the school shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary in Connecticut (Theriot & Cuellar, 2016). President Obama called for federal incentives to place thousands of school resource officers and counselors in schools across the nation (White House, 2013).

Due to a shortage of research investigations in the area of sworn police officer and student relations, Theriot (2016) examined the effects of interacting with school resource officers on the feelings of middle and high school student about sworn school police and their sense of school connectedness. A comprehensive survey was completed by 2,015 students in middle and high school. Almost half, 48%, of the sample reported having at least one interaction with their school resource officer, with 22% of this group having five or more interactions. Additionally, another 29% had attended presentations facilitated by the school resource officer. Based upon the results of his study, Theriot

(2016) contended that interactions with the school resource officer yielded positive student attitude toward school resource officers. Furthermore, of the students who reported greater interactions, they had more positive attitudes toward the school resource officers, but lower levels of school connectedness.

In a study (Jackson, 2002) in the southeast region of Missouri, a sample of 271 students across four schools was used to evaluate the effects of sworn school resource officers on the views and attitudes of young people about police and offending. Addressed by Jackson (2002) was whether police input into schools had any measurable effect on young people's perceptions about the police and offending over time in comparison with schools that did not have a school resource officer as part of their delinquency prevention program. It was determined that student perception of their school resource officer did increase positively, but not significantly, as their contact with the officer increased. Moreover, Jackson (2002) determined that school resource officers were helpful for preventing assaults on school campuses.

Concerns and critiques exist around the efficacy of police officers on campus. Within a study of school and police partnerships in New York City, Brady, Balmer, and Phenix (2007) examined the presence of police on New York City's schools and the link to higher than average practices that foster future criminality such as higher student suspensions, overcrowding, lower attendance rates, and less funding. An initial examination of school-level demographic and environmental variables revealed that despite the presence of sworn police officers, students enrolled at New York City's schools continued to experience problems that evidenced criminality, characterized by the school-to-prison pipeline. Furthermore, Balko (2018) argued that students in poverty

and students of color did not benefit from a disciplinary culture that was heavy-handed and adversely affected learning.

The school resource officer has evolved to be more than just a police officer or disciplinarian. As noted by Girouard (2001, p. 1), school police officers serve a multifaceted role which incorporates the duties of “law enforcement officer, counselor, teacher, and liaison between law enforcement, schools, families, and the community.” Brown (2006) described the school resource officer as a “new breed of public servant: “a hybrid of educational, correctional, and law enforcement official” (p 593). This interpretation of the school resource officer is leading as the definition opens beyond simply law enforcement. Therefore, the roles of these sworn police officers, by level, are essential to the understanding of police presence within the school. According to Jennings et al. (2011), these officers often perform simultaneous duties of police officer, counselor, and mental health professional. Prior researchers (i.e., Chen, 2008) indicate high schools are most likely to exhibit more serious crime problems, including violence and serious violence.

Data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (O’Murphy, 2013) are reflective that a greater proportion of high schools report having School Resource Officers than elementary or middle schools. O’Murphy (2013) contended that middle schools, city schools, and schools with a higher proportion of students in poverty had higher rates of violence, and serious violent incidents. In 2007-2008, only 37% of high schools did not have a school resource officer along with 45% of middle schools, and 76% of elementary schools. According to Crawford and Burns (2015), grade levels other than high school that had guards in uniform had a lower occurrence of gun possession. Consequently,

security presence was positively associated with the measures of violence in high schools as opposed to elementary and middle schools. Kupchik and Ward (2013) also discussed the effect of poverty as a major factor in the presence of policing in schools. Within the context of this study, poverty was identified as the greatest and most consistently found factor that could be detected early and observed in elementary and middle schools; thereby justifying the need for law enforcement and school security presence. The results mentioned by Kupchik and Ward (2013) are most consistent with O'Murphy (2013) data that yielded the city schools and higher proportions of low-income students influencing the higher rates of violence and serious violent incidents.

Review of the Literature on Activities of Sworn Police Officers While at public Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, and High Schools

According to Theriot (2009), school law enforcement is the fastest growing sector of policing. This increase in the presence of sworn police officers, known as school resource officers, was due in light of recent large scale violent incidents at schools, such as Sandy Hook Elementary in 2013 (Swartz et al., 2016). Johnson (1999) stated that schools have turned to the police for help in their attempts to achieve order and safety. The belief was and remains that police presence would have a deterrent effect on school violence and delinquency (Jackson, 2002). Due to a lack of data regarding effects of school resource officers on campuses, Zhang (2019) analyzed the effects of these sworn police officers on school crime, disciplinary actions, and disciplinary problems in 238 middle and high schools in West Virginia over the course of three years. Multiple problem outcomes decreased as the number of years a sworn officer was assigned to the campus. When compared to schools that did not have a sworn officer present, those

schools with an officer had higher numbers of reported drug-related incidents and higher numbers out-of-school suspensions, thus suggesting that crime detection is higher with the presence of the officer. Schools that had a sworn officer on duty for at least three years had lower rates of violent crime and disorder than schools that did not have an officer. The findings of this study are evidence that sworn police officers on campus can improve school safety.

Weiler and Cray (2011) investigated the history, roles, and issues related to school resource officers. Initially, the purpose of the school resource officer program was to provide students and staff with a safe learning environment to ensure that learning can effectively take place (Trump, 1998). Furthermore, as argued by Kim and Geronimo (2010), “the primary role of the School Resource Officer is to improve school safety and the educational climate of schools” (p. 33). Kim and Geronimo (2010) contended that the number of children arrested or referred to court for school discipline coincides with the rise of the school resource officer program.

Despite the widespread implementation of the school resource officer program, little is known about the effects of interacting with these officers on student attitudes about the officers. Theriot (2016) investigated the interactions through surveys issued to 1956 middle and high school students in 12 schools. Overall, of the students who had interactions with the sworn police officers (48%), evidence was revealed that such interactions positively influenced student attitudes about school resource officers. Moreover, student attitudes toward sworn police officers appeared to rise as the number of interactions increased in the areas of (a) fairness, (b) helpfulness, and (c) competence.

In a recent study, Devlin and Gottfredson (2018) investigated beyond the presence of the sworn police officers on campus to assess whether school crime outcomes differed in schools that had these officers as law enforcement only and schools that used these officers as teachers in mentors in comparison to schools without school resource officers. Schools that had law enforcement only, school resource officers recorded more crimes than schools that did not have school resource officers. Furthermore, schools with mixed approach school resource officers reported more crimes than was reported by law enforcement only.

In 1999, Johnson determined that placement of police officers in city schools had positive effects on school violence and disciplinary infractions. Using a series of four questionnaires and interviews, school resource officers and members of their campus staff answered a set of questions related to the duties and responsibilities of the officer. In this study, 58% of the resource officer sample reported maintaining daily positive interactions with parents, 94% of school officials reported affirmative support of the officers assigned to their campus. Regarding daily counseling activities and assignments, 52% of officers reported counseling with students academically, 82% counseled about school fights, 64% counseled on drug-related behaviors, and 94% counseled on truancy. In student interviews, students reported that the presence of the officers assigned to their campuses positively affected their sense of security on campus, but the presence of uniformed officers did affect a minority of the student population and their sense of privacy due to random searches and high visibility. Johnson (1999) concluded that school suspensions decreased in high and middle schools, and that positive relationships through visibility, education, and counseling were fostered.

May and Higgins (2011) surveyed 149 novice and veteran police officers in Kentucky to determine the characteristics and functions of said officers. In regard to tenure status, 70% of the officers surveyed were veterans, the average officer was employed by a city/county police department, was assigned to one school but was on call to other schools. The school resource officers were 96% White, 95% male and had an average age of 46 years old with an education level slightly higher than high school and had 19 years of experience in law enforcement. Further, the average school resource officer was asked to teach on a weekly basis and to provide the following activities daily (a) clear hallways, (b) assist teachers with maintaining order in classrooms, (c) transport suspension students home, (d) monitoring lunchroom, (e) monitor parking areas, (f) searching students who were not under arrest, (g) breaking up fights, (h) teaching classes, (i) counseling students, (j) consulting with administrators and staff about safety issues, and (k) conducting investigations. The perceptions of school administrators of the school resource officers were statistically similar. All officers, despite their tenure, performed the same duties.

In a later investigation, Swartz et al. (2016) determined that sworn police officers at school were not effective at reducing violence. Officers detected more violence, and campus based data increased due to higher detection and reporting of such crimes in schools. The results of this investigation raised doubt in the management of schools by law enforcement (Brady, Balmer, & Phenix, 2007; Nickerson & Martens, 2008). Furthermore, many critics (Jennings, Khey, Maskaly, & Donner, 2011; Wike & Fraser, 2009) believe that the presence of school resource officers can contribute to student fear

and anxiety because of the potential of violence and threats; thus, negating the purpose of the school resource officer program.

Due to gaps existing in the literature on school resource officers, Fisher and Devlin (2020) identified common profiles and roles of school resource officers and examined the effects of implementing these sworn police officers on school crime outcomes, identified patterns of school resource officer roles, and linked those patterns to school crime outcomes. Three role profiles were identified within this study including Low Engagement, Full Triad, and Reactionary school resource officers. Furthermore, the roles exhibited by the officers were categorized as law enforcement only or mixed approach (Devlin & Gottfredson, 2018). Fisher and Devlin (2020) determined that officers across all three role profiles were likely to be engaged to varying degrees in roles both related to law enforcement and beyond; and, that meaningful differences engaged the sworn police officers beyond the law enforcement only category.

Review of the Literature on School Policies for Sworn Police Officers at public Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, and High Schools

School resource officers are used extensively, especially in secondary schools, to maintain safe, orderly, and secure school environments (Na & Gottfredson, 2013). Na and Gottfredson further asserted that the increased use of police in schools increased, partly, due to increased funding from the federal government through a grant sponsored by the Department of Justice Office of Community Policing Services called Cops in Schools in 1999 after the shootings at Columbine High School. Prior to this highly publicized event that sparked the surplus of funds from the federal government, there had been increasing rates of juvenile crime throughout the 1980s and 1990s that climaxed

with the Columbine High School event (Na & Gottfredson, 2013). The influx of crime spiraling through the decades, led to the passage of the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994. This Act urged school leaders to implement zero tolerance policies to make schools safer from drugs, alcohol, and guns.

The prevalence of school resource officers persists in response to the school administrator responsibility of creating a safe learning environment. According to Weiler and Cray (2011), six core standards were related to effective school leadership as issued by the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium. Within these standards, the charge given to school administrators was to foster a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment (Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium, 1997). As such, with a lack of skillset and training to set the safe environment, many administrators welcomed the idea of additional resources to assist in properly addressing the issues that threaten to disrupt this safe learning environment (Dunn, 2002). Furthermore, Dunn (2002) asserted that administrators, being fully trained in educational and leadership concepts, were not well versed in safety protocols such as responding to potential acts of violence such as gang violence and an armed intruder.

As the necessity for school resource officers has increased over time, the roles and purpose of these officers have evolved, often without formalized policies or guidelines locally, within state legislation, or nationally (Counts, et al., 2018). As recommended within the Safe School-based Enforcement through Collaboration Understanding and Respect State and Local Policy Rubric, developed by the Departments of Justice and Education, needs assessment and program evaluation are important in determining how to most effectively utilize funds and resources for the safety efforts of schools such as the

school resource officer duties. Counts et al. (2018) recalled that one of the primary recommendations issued by the Departments of Justice and Education within the rubric was the development of a memorandum of understanding, a document that clarifies roles and responsibilities between school districts, local law enforcement, and other critical stakeholders. Although school resource officers are one of the fastest growing branches of policing (NASRO, 2012), federal guidelines do not exist in which procedures are outlined for training school resource officers (Counts et al., 2018). Furthermore, Counts et al. (2018) contended that a total of 32 states have some legislation in regard to the school resource officer. After analyzing national legislation, researchers determined that only 13 states require a memorandum of understanding, no states require collection of data to determine the need for evaluation of the school resource officer program. Furthermore, Counts et al. (2018) recommended that states (a) establish policies regarding the use of school resource officers; (b) establish a memorandum of understanding/memorandum of agreement that clearly identifies specific roles and responsibilities for school resource officers; (c) increase school resource officer training to include behavior management, child development, communication techniques, and disability awareness; and (d) develop a data collection and reporting systems that allow programs to be evaluated for effectiveness in reaching goals for the purpose of decision making and evaluating school resource officer programs. Overall, the researchers of this study revealed a substantial lack of regulation and policy in regard to training and maintaining school resource officer programs.

Due to the ambiguity of school resource officer and school administrator duties, oftentimes, campus climate would influence the range of responsibilities assigned to

school resource officers. To that end, Weiler and Cray (2011) suggested that school principals establish memorandums of understanding with police agencies to establish clear guidelines for police guidelines after studying various duty assignment patterns issued to school resource officers. Empirical analyses of sworn police officer behavior and activities at various school levels are essential to ascertain the effects of police interactions and presence on student achievement.

The practice of developing written governance documents or memorandums of understanding that provide structure and formal organization emerged from a lack of clear guidelines and responsibilities between the school administrator and the school resource officer (Bond, 2001; Kim & Geronimo, 2010; United States Department of Education, 2014). Kim and Geronimo (2010) urged that these agreements and memorandums simultaneously outline the rights of students to delineate understanding among all parties and prevent the infringement of students' rights. These statements of understanding should include providing strong, clear due process protections for all students in disciplinary policies, appropriate communication, fair hearings, and an appeal process to enhance fairness, clarify who is in charge of discipline, who makes the decision to arrest a student, and who should approach a disruptive student (Bond, 2001; Finn & McDevitt, 2005; Kim & Geronimo, 2010; United States Department of Education, 2014).

In all likelihood, schools use resource officers because they are widely regarded as effective for maintaining school safety (Na & Gottfredson, 2013). Furthermore, Na and Gottfredson (2013) determined that in the 2007-2008 school year, principals in 21.1% of the nation's schools reported that at least one full-time police officer was

stationed at the school once a week. These principals reported the vast majority of officers in their schools wore uniforms or other identifiable clothing (93.7%) and carried a firearm (81.7%); only 63.5% carried chemical sprays and 43.8% stun guns. Principals also reported that 76% of their officers were involved in maintaining discipline, 77.5% in mentoring students, 45.8% in teaching law-related education courses, and 62.4% in training for teachers and staff related to security or crime prevention.

In summarizing the literature on the prevention of school violence, McLaughlin and Miller (2008) noted:

Numerous high-profile forms of violence in the school setting have led to an atmosphere of fear and apprehension among many students, teachers, administrators, health care professionals, parents, and communities about the safety of their schools. While statistics show that schools, in general, remain safer than their surrounding neighborhoods, every community must take steps to address school violence. (pp. 439-440)

In a later investigation, Jennings et al. (2011) examined the associations between law enforcement and school security measures and the incidence of violence and serious violence in a large nationally representative sample of high schools. Using data collected as part of the 2006 School Survey on Crime and Safety by the National Center of Education Statistics, researchers analyzed the report of contextual conditions, safety measures utilized, and the number of crimes occurring at schools across the United States. The focus was placed on 954 high schools because of the exposure of this school level to the more serious crime problems. Within the context of this study, the number of school resource officers and security guards were both positively associated with school

violence, but only the security guard variable was statistically significant. School violence was statistically significantly lower in schools where the security officer or school resource officer was in uniform; whereas school violence was statistically significantly higher in schools where the security officer or school resource officers carried firearms. Furthermore, school violence was lower in schools that had critical incident plans and had weapons-detection devices in place.

Maskaly et al. (2011), in an investigation of the relationship between school characteristics and school crime by security personnel type, commented:

Although school crime and the use of security measures to combat school crime has been the focus of a number of prior empirical studies, there is substantially less information known about the relationship between school resources officers and private security guards in school and school crime. (p. 159)

Using data from the 2006 School Survey on Crime and Safety by the National Center of Education Statistics, researchers evaluated school characteristics were related to school crime in schools that did not have any security personnel or utilize school resource officers only or private security guards only by school size. The use-of-force capabilities that the security personnel had was associated with school crime. School crime was determined to be higher in larger sized high schools and in middle schools relative to elementary schools, regardless of whether school resource officers or private security guards were utilized. Furthermore, the effect of medium-sized and large-sized schools on school crime was nearly one and one half times greater in schools with private security guards than with schools that only had resource officers.

Examining school crime variables, Maskaly et al. (2011) determined, with the use-of-force capabilities by school security and school crime variables, that school crime was higher in school resource officer schools only that had mid-level force capabilities (i.e., pepper spray and/or tasers). More extreme use-of-force capabilities available to school resource officers may provide some degree of deterrence for school crime whereas mid-level force capabilities are not necessarily providing the same deterrent effect.

School crime is a major issue for policymakers, educators, students, parents, and concerned citizens (Chen, 2008). In 1999-2000, 71% of public schools in the United States experienced at least one violent incident (Miller & Chandler, 2005). Chen investigated how community characteristics, student background, school climate, and zero-tolerance policies interact to affect school crime. Schools are extensions of the community, and community crime rates have been posited to be associated with school crime (Anderson, 1998, Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Mateu-Galabert, 2003). Chen (2008) analyzed data from the 2000 School Survey on Crime and Safety to support the school crime model, where the elements of school culture and structure exerts a substantial effect on school crimes. The higher the level of student mobility and discipline problems, the higher the school crime rate becomes; and control-based, punitive programs failed to demonstrate effects on school crime. Also determined was that a positive school climate in combination with necessary security control, was necessary to improve school safety and reduce school crimes.

Evidence that officer placement has the potential to raise complex challenges for students' rights was recognized by Theriot and Cuellar (2016). Particularly, students were at risk of unreasonable search and seizure, inappropriate sharing of confidential

information, and students' overall decreased feelings of safety were reviewed among other challenges. Theriot and Cuellar (2016) concluded that more research was needed about the School Resource Officer programs' intended and unintended outcomes. Moreover, several research-based recommendations for the assignment of school resource officers including, frequent opportunities for formal and informal communication between the officers and school leaders; respectful, positive, and nonthreatening interactions amongst all stakeholders of the school in regard to the sworn officer; recognize the potential for violating students' rights; formal governance documents and memorandums of understanding to address responsibility of the sworn officer, the administrator, and teachers; and extensive and comprehensive training for all responsible stakeholders to reduce negative outcomes and increase the potential safety and security benefits for students and schools were suggested for districts who employed school resource officers.

As a response to the increasing number of crime prevention strategies and armed presence of officers on campuses, Crawford and Burns (2015) sought to assess the effects of protective measures, policies, and school/neighborhood characteristics on school violence. From data on the School Survey on Crime and Safety in 2006, Crawford and Burns (2015) determined differences in school violence among grade levels in relation to various law enforcement security measures, school security measures, and school characteristics. Mixed and counterproductive results were present for law enforcement and school security efforts to control school violence.

Statement of the Problem

Although school violence has been consistent across the United States, affecting the well-being of students, teachers, administrators, and parents over a number of years, only a limited number of research investigations have been conducted on the School Resource Officer and the effect of this program on violence in the school (May & Higgins, 2011). According to Juvonen (2001), the presence of School Resource Officers will heighten students' fears of violence and thus adversely affect the school environment. Berger (2002) further asserted that the influx of police presence in schools across the United States is taking the responsibility for maintaining discipline and order in the classroom away from the teacher and placing it into the hands of law enforcement. Whereas some researchers (e.g., Dohrn, 2001; Johnson, 1999) have argued that productivity of School Resource Officers reduces the instances of school violence, Theriot (1999) contended that the increase of School Resource Officers would result in criminalizing student behavior.

Although many police officers at schools, referred to as School Resource Officers, perform many activities while on school campuses, researchers (e.g., Theriot, 2009) have shown that police officers on campus may unnecessarily criminalize student behavior. Furthermore, the punitive and closed nature of law enforcement can conflict with the open and supportive nature of most schools (Dickmann & Conner, 2007; Jackson, 2002). Additionally, other researchers (Eisenbraun, 2007; Greene, 2005; Hyman & Perone, 1998; Juvonen, 2001; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Theriot, 2016) have determined that some strategies that can include security guards can negatively affect

student sense of school connectedness and could contribute to more school violence and disorder.

Theriot (2009) determined that middle schools and high schools with a police officer on campus had fewer arrests for weapons possession and assault charges yet substantially more arrests for disorderly conduct charges than schools without a police officer on campus. Mallett (2015) stated the following:

Over the past 30 years a partnership among schools and courts has developed through a punitive and harmful framework, to the detriment of many vulnerable children and adolescents. This phenomenon is often referred to as the “school to prison pipeline (Kang-Brown et al., 2013) or “school pathways to the juvenile justice system.” (p. 15)

According to Hopkins, Hewstone, and Hantzi (1992), students started with marginally positive views of police that decreased over the course of a school year. Furthermore, concerns are present about students’ rights and the introduction to the juvenile justice system due to the integration of armed police officers in schools (Theriot & Cuellar, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine sworn police officer presence, activity, and types of weapons and policies that govern sworn police officers by school level. In the first study, the degree to which differences were present in sworn police officer presence (i.e., while students are arriving and leaving school, at school activities, at other times, and during all instructional hours at school) by school level were determined. In the second study, the degree to which differences

existed in police activity (i.e., participation in discipline, solving school problems, prevention training, student mentoring, and teaching law related classes) by school level was addressed. In the third study, the degree to which differences existed in the types of weapons carried while on campus (i.e., carried stun guns, chemical sprays, firearms, body cameras, restraints; and officers who made arrests and reported) and policies used to govern their sworn police officers by school level were examined. In all three studies, the extent to which consistencies were present in schools across two school years was addressed.

Significance of the Study

Due to the level of concern experienced by parents and the public at large because of school violence and emotionally charged tragedies such as the shootings at Columbine and Sandy Hook, it is important for legislators, educators, and families have an understanding about the role and effects of the measures of safety taken by schools. Furthermore, any information that has the capability to keep students and schools safer is inherently important (Kupchik, Brent, & Mowen, 2015; Lester, Lawrence, & Ward, 2017). Despite the high costs and all-encompassing nature of many of these programs, current research information about them is limited (Theriot, 2016). Evaluations to date on the effectiveness of school resource officers are limited, often lacking methodological rigor (Gottfredson, 2001; Greene, 2005), and frequently yield mixed results (Brown, 2005).

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined to assist the reader in understanding the context of this journal-ready dissertation.

Elementary School

An elementary school was defined as the grade level for a school that has students enrolled within Grade Pre-K through Grade 3 and a highest grade level that is within Grade 1 and Grade 8 (School Survey on Crime and Safety, 2018).

High School

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2008), high schools are commonly referred to as secondary schools and enroll students in the upper grades, generally Grades 9-12 with variations.

Middle School

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2008), middle schools serve pre-adolescent and young adolescent students between Grades 5 and 9, with the majority of the grade levels between Grades 6 through 8.

School Resource Officer

According to Theriot (2016), law enforcement officers assigned to work at a school or schools who are charged with maintaining law and order and are expected to be visible and central figures at their school. They are also responsible for patrolling school buildings and grounds, investigating delinquent complaints, and assisting with student discipline. This police presence at schools is expected to reduce students' opportunities for misbehavior or delinquency (Felson, 1998). A School Resource Officer is a career law enforcement officer, with sworn authority, deployed in community-oriented policing,

and assigned by the employing police department or agency to work in collaboration with school and community-based organizations (Girouard, 2001; Raymond, 2010).

School Safety

School Safety is defined as the creation and development of a school environment in which students have a sense of belonging as well as personal efficacy, use alternatives to violence and feel secure, and in which early warning signs of violence are actively addressed (Haynes, 1996; Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Noonan, 2004)

School Survey on Crime and Safety

The National Center for Education Statistics described the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) as the following.

The School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) is the National Center for Education Statistics' sample survey of the nation's public schools designed to provide estimates of school crime, discipline, disorder, programs and policies. SSOCS is administered to public primary, middle, high, and combined school principals in the spring of even-numbered school years. (2004, p. 14)

Delimitations

In this journal-ready dissertation, the datasets that was used to examine school safety of elementary, middle, and high school students in United States public schools were obtained from the School Survey on Crime and Safety. The datasets that were analyzed contain staff reported data regarding school safety training and procedures used in public schools across the United States. Only two years of data were analyzed, thereby the degree to which any results may be generalized were restricted. Also, the data within the dataset were collected from principals, assistant principals, security staff, other

school-level staff, the Superintendent or district level staff members who were selected as a sample group from across the country; therefore, the number of participants was limited to the criteria set forth by the NCES. The datasets that were analyzed contained survey responses from the 2015-2016 and the 2017-2018 school years. Restricting the variables of the study to two years may reduce the overall generalizability over time.

Limitations

For this journal-ready dissertation, the availability of formal programs intended to prevent or reduce violence and teacher safety training in elementary, middle, and high schools with respect to the school location was analyzed. Internal validity, according to Johnson and Christensen, is the “ability to infer that a causal relationship exists between two variables” (p. 285). Furthermore, Gay and Airasian (2000) described internal validity as “the condition that observed differences on the dependent variable are a direct result of the independent variable, on some other variable” (p. 345). One threat to the internal validity of this study was the consistency in which the data were reported to the National Center for Education Statistics. Considering that various members of staff from multiple departments are qualified to self-report data on the survey, the degree to which a homogeneous sample is at risk based upon various experience and backgrounds and could negatively affect the accuracy of the discoveries by National Center for Education Statistics through the SSOCS.

Another limitation is the use of a dataset from 2016. With the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act recently passed in 2015, subsequent district and campus changes would have occurred concurrently as the initiatives collected in the surveys. District and campus administration geared many of their available professional

development hours to align with the newly voted federal legislation as a means of maintaining funding focused on those new legislative tenets to comply with what was then new policy. Consequently, variables other than formal programs and teacher training may have contributed to any results that may be present.

Assumptions

For this journal-ready dissertation, the assumption is that the data reported by the school district officials on the Survey of Crime and Safety were accurate and consistent. Furthermore, the assumption was made that the teacher training data and the formal program data collected and reported accurately and consistently by National Center for Education Statistics. Consequently, any results obtained from this journal-ready dissertation would be skewed by any errors or inconsistencies in the National Center for Education Statistics data.

Procedures

Upon receiving approval of this journal-ready dissertation from the doctoral dissertation chair and committee, an application was submitted to the Sam Houston State University Institutional Review Board to perform the study. Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board, the data from the National Center for Education Statistics School Survey on Crime and Safety were downloaded and analyzed. The data that were collected and analyzed were from the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years. All data sets are publicly available through the website of the National Center for Education Statistics.

Organization of the Study

This journal ready-dissertation is comprised of five chapters. Chapter I includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, definition of terms, delimitations, limitations, assumptions, and outline of the journal-ready dissertation. Chapter II is the first empirical research investigation about the degree to which differences might be present in the presence of sworn police officers at school by school level. Chapter III includes the second empirical research study and was about police activity while on campus. The third empirical research investigation was in Chapter IV and will cover the extent to which differences might exist in the types of weapons carried while on campus and policies used to govern their sworn police officers by school level. Finally, in Chapter V, a summary of the findings delineated in the three research articles was provided, along with implications for future policy and for practice, as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II**POLICE PRESENCE AT SCHOOL: WHEN ARE THEY THERE?: A NATIONAL
INVESTIGATION**

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

Abstract

The degree to which differences might exist in sworn police officer presence (i.e., while students are arriving and leaving school, at school activities, at other times, and during all instructional hours at school) by school level was investigated in this study. National archival data were obtained from the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Survey on Crime and Safety. Inferential analyses revealed the presence of statistically significant differences police officer presence across elementary, middle, and high schools. High schools consistently had more sworn police officers present than middle schools and middle schools consistently had more officers than elementary schools. Recommendations for future research, as well as implications for policy and practice were discussed

Keywords: Elementary school; High school; Middle school; School resource officer; School safety; School survey on crime and safety

POLICE PRESENCE AT SCHOOL: WHEN ARE THEY THERE?: A NATIONAL INVESTIGATION

According to Weiler and Cray (2011), the school resource officer program was begun in Liverpool, England in the early to mid-1950s. Nearly a decade later, the program began to debut in the United States, but did not gain prominence until, decades later, in the 1990s in response to various school shootings (Trump, 1998). Until then, the program was not very common across the country. Black (2009) contended that the school officer program is the latest effort by both school and government leaders to promote school safety. As a result, school resource officer programs have initially been funded through federal dollars and phased into the school budget after three years (Kennedy, 2001).

In the 2015-2016 school year, about 69% of public schools reported one or more violent incidents, 15% reported one or more serious violent incidents, and 39% reported one or more thefts (School Survey on Crime and Safety, 2018). As such, these incidents, along with incidents in previous years have resulted in an escalating police presence in public schools at local and national levels (Department of Justice, 2018; Perano & Ellis, 2018). The presence of police officers in schools in the United States has more than doubled in the past 25 years, making the presence of police on school campuses a common occurrence (Presman & Rosen, 2005; Stefkovich & Miller, 1999).

School resource officer programs, or programs that place sworn law enforcement officers at schools, have emerged as one of the most prevalent strategies for increasing school safety and reducing violence (Bracy, 2010; Brown, 2006; May & Higgins, 2011). According to Weisburst (2019), the State of Texas has embraced the use of School

Resource Officers with larger districts that have their own designated police departments that commonly assign two sworn police officers per high school, one per middle school, and sworn police officers who rotate across elementary schools.

Although McDaniel (2001) has asserted that no uniform definition of a school resource officer exists, Lavarello and Trump (2001) identified common characteristics as “certified peace officers employed by local or county law enforcement agencies and assigned to a particular school or schools” (p. 32). Of note is that the school resource officer is a police officer first (Umphrey, 2009), and should not be confused or considered to be another building or campus administrator or teacher (Bond, 2001). Moreover, Weiler and Cray (2011) asserted that sustainability of the school resource officer program and the constitutional rights of students through the lens of suspicion or probable cause as unresolved issues related to the school resource officer program.

Na and Gottfredson (2013) contended that both school level and school location influenced the implementation of the sworn police on school campuses. In their 2013 investigation, Na and Gottfredson established the increased application of school police from rural schools being the lowest, to towns, urban fringe, and cities being the highest. Within the same context, elementary schools used the police the least often with combined schools being next, then middle schools, and high schools having the greatest use of school police. Na and Gottfredson (2013) documented that rural elementary schools used sworn police officers the least at 5% and urban high schools the most at 68%.

According to Theriot and Cuellar (2016), the widespread implementation of school violence programs has forged formal arrangements between schools and police

departments. In these formal arrangements, the roles and expectations for sworn police officers and school administrators within the school system are articulated to differentiate responses between disciplinary issues and criminal behaviors (Advancement Project, 2013; Denver Public Schools, 2013; Theriot & Cuellar, 2016). Many instances have been documented that substantiate the presence of sworn police officers on campus. For instance, in 2006, a middle school principal was fatally shot by a student. This event was swiftly followed with a public declaration by the then-Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen that he would look into making the school resource officer job a part of the framework in every public school (Kavoc, 2006). Furthermore, former President Barack Obama deemed the school resource officer a focal point in protecting children after the school shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary in Connecticut (Theriot & Cuellar, 2016). President Obama called for federal incentives to place thousands of school resource officers and counselors in schools across the nation (White House, 2013).

Due to a shortage of research investigations in the area of sworn police officer and student relations, Theriot (2016) examined the effects of interacting with school resource officers on the feelings of middle and high school students about sworn school police and their sense of school connectedness. A comprehensive survey was completed by 2,015 students in middle and high school. Almost half, 48%, of the sample reported having at least one interaction with their school resource officer, with 22% of this group having five or more interactions. Additionally, another 29% had attended presentations facilitated by the school resource officer. Based upon the results of his study, Theriot (2016) contended that interactions with the school resource officer yielded positive student attitudes toward school resource officers. Furthermore, of the students who

reported greater interactions, they had more positive attitudes toward the school resource officers, but lower levels of school connectedness.

In a study (Jackson, 2002) in the southeast region of Missouri, a sample of 271 students across four schools was used to evaluate the effects of sworn school resource officers on the views and attitudes of young people about police and offending. Addressed by Jackson (2002) was whether police input into schools had any measurable effect on young people's perceptions about the police and offending over time in comparison with schools that did not have a school resource officer as part of their delinquency prevention program. Jackson (2002) determined that student perception of their school resource officer did increase positively, but not significantly, as their contact with the officer increased. Moreover, Jackson (2002) determined that school resource officers were helpful for preventing assaults on school campuses.

Concerns and critiques exist around the efficacy of police officers on campus. Within a study of school and police partnerships in New York City, Brady, Balmer, and Phenix (2007) examined the presence of police on New York City's schools and the link to higher than average practices that foster future criminality such as higher student suspensions, overcrowding, lower attendance rates, and less funding. An initial examination of school-level demographic and environmental variables revealed that despite the presence of sworn police officers, students enrolled at New York City's schools continued to experience problems that evidenced criminality, characterized by the school-to-prison pipeline. Furthermore, Balko (2018) argued that students in poverty and students of color did not benefit from a disciplinary culture that was heavy-handed and adversely affected learning.

The school resource officer has evolved to be more than just a police officer or disciplinarian. As noted by Girouard (2001, p. 1), school police officers serve a multifaceted role which incorporates the duties of “law enforcement officer, counselor, teacher, and liaison between law enforcement, schools, families, and the community.” Brown (2006) described the school resource officer as a “new breed of public servant: “a hybrid of educational, correctional, and law enforcement official” (p 593). This interpretation of the school resource officer is leading as the definition opens beyond simply law enforcement. Therefore, the roles of these sworn police officers, by level, are essential to the understanding of police presence within the school. According to Jennings et al. (2011), these officers often perform simultaneous duties of police officer, counselor, and mental health professional. Prior researcher (i.e., Chen, 2008) indicated high schools are most likely to exhibit more serious crime problems, including violence and serious violence.

Data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics show a greater proportion of high schools report having School Resource Officers (O’Murphy, 2013) than elementary or middle schools. O’Murphy (2013) contended that middle schools, city schools, and schools with a higher proportion of students in poverty had higher rates of violence, and serious violent incidents. In 2007-2008, only 37% of high schools did not have a school resource officer along with 45% of middle schools, and 76% of elementary schools. According to Crawford and Burns (2015), grade levels other than high school that had guards in uniform had a lower occurrence of gun possession. Consequently, security presence was positively associated with the measures of violence in high schools as opposed to elementary and middle schools. Kupchik and Ward (2013) also discussed the

effect of poverty as a major factor in the presence of policing in schools. Within the context of this study, poverty was identified as the greatest and most consistently found factor that could be detected early and observed in elementary and middle schools; thereby justifying the need for law enforcement and school security presence. The results mentioned by Kupchik and Ward (2013) are most consistent with O'Murphy (2013) data that yielded the city schools and higher proportions of low-income students influencing the higher rates of violence and serious violent incidents.

Statement of the Problem

Although school violence has been consistent across the United States, affecting the well-being of students, teachers, administrators, and parents over a number of years, only a limited number of research investigations have been conducted on the School Resource Officer and the effect of this program on violence in the school (May & Higgins, 2011). According to Juvonen (2001), the presence of School Resource Officers will heighten students' fears of violence and thus adversely affect the school environment. Berger (2002) further asserted that the influx of police presence in schools across the United States is forcing the responsibility for maintaining discipline and order in the classroom away from the teacher and into the hands of law enforcement. However, Jennings et al. (2011) suggested that the presence of School Resource Officers appeared to be an effective crime prevention approach regarding bullying, racial tensions, student disrespect, and gangs on high school campus during the day. At the middle and high school levels, Johnson (1999) determined that school suspensions and crime decreased after School Resource Officers were assigned during the school day. Whereas some researchers (e.g., Dohrn, 2001; Johnson, 1999) have argued that productivity of School

Resource Officers reduces the instances of school violence, Theriot (2009) contended that the increase of School Resource Officers would result in criminalizing student behavior.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which differences were present in the presence of sworn police officer availability at elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. Specifically addressed was the degree to which differences existed in the presence of sworn police officer presence at school, while students are arriving and leaving school, at school activities, at other times, and during all instructional hours. A final purpose was to ascertain the extent to which differences were present in sworn police officer presence by school level.

Significance of the Study

As police have become a fixture in public schools, policymakers, educators, and researchers are debating the merits of the inclusion of sworn police officers' approach to school discipline (Weisburst, 2019). Critics (e.g., Balko, 2018) of the school resource officer program have argued that students in poverty and students of color may experience further disadvantages to the learning process due to such a punitive disciplinary culture. More research is necessary to determine the relationship of sworn police officers on student success. Moreover, an absence of research is present on school resource officer programs and the availability and activities of sworn police on elementary school, middle school, and high school campuses. Hanushek and Welch (2006) documented that school police can positively or negatively affect the educational attainment of the students they interact with, potentially affecting their human capital development, labor market attachment, and earnings later in life. As such, this study is

important because information obtained herein may further close a gap in research regarding sworn police officers and student interactions at elementary, middle, and high schools. Another exception of this empirical investigation may be that findings of sworn officer availability regarding school level may be generalized to elementary, middle, and high schools across the United States.

Research Questions

One overarching research question was addressed in this study: What is the difference in the availability of police officer presence on school campus by school level? Subquestions under this overarching question were: (a) What is the difference in the availability of police officer presence on school campus during school by school level?; (b) What is the difference in the availability of police officer presence on school campus while students are arriving or leaving by school level?; (c) What is the difference in the availability of police officer presence on school campus at school activities by school level?; (d) What is the difference in the availability of police officer presence on school campus at other times by school level?; (e) What is the difference in the availability of police officer presence on school campus for all instructional hours by school level? These research questions were addressed for two school years of data: 2015-2016 and 2017-2018.

Method

Research Design

For this empirical investigation, a non-experimental, causal comparative research design was present (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Dependent variables were responses to five questions regarding (a) availability of police

officer presence on school campus during school, (b) availability of police officer presence on school campus while students are arriving or leaving, (c) availability of police officer presence on school campus at school activities, (d) availability of police officer presence on school campus at other times, and (e) availability of police officer presence on school campus for all instructional hours. The independent variable was school level (i.e., elementary, middle, and high schools). Archival data from the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 National School Safety Datasets were analyzed in this study.

Participants and Instrumentation

The unit of analysis for this study was public and private school principals of campuses across the United States. Principals or persons who are most knowledgeable about school crime and school policies to provide a safe environment for school were asked to complete a questionnaire voluntarily as part of the School Survey on Crime and Safety (2018), conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics on behalf of the United States Department of Education. For the purpose of this study, data were obtained from the School Survey on Crime and Safety (2018). Specifically addressed was sworn police officer participation on elementary, middle, and high school campuses in the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years. The number of school administrators who completed this principal questionnaire in 2016 and 2018 was around 4,000.

The School Survey on Crime and Safety (2018) self-administered questionnaire was intended to collect information on school practices and programs, school mental health services, number of incidents, parent and community involvement at school, limitations on crime prevention, school security staff, staff training, frequency of crime and violence at school, disciplinary problems and actions, and school characteristics

(School Survey on Crime and Safety, 2018). The School Survey on Crime and Safety (2018) has been conducted seven times including: 1999-2000, 2003-2004, 2005-2006, 2007-2008, 2009-2010, 2015-2016, and 2017-2018.

Archival data were collected from the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Survey on Crime and Safety datasets and converted to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data. A codebook was used to recode the data from the following survey questions: (a) Did you have any sworn law enforcement officers (including school resource officers) present at your school at least once a week?; (b) Were sworn law enforcement officers (including school resource officers) used at least once a week in or around your school at the following times: at any time during school hours, while students were arriving or leaving, at selected school activities, or when school/school activities were not occurring? Respondents of the survey completed the survey questions with a Yes or a No.

Results

To ascertain the extent to which differences were present in the presence of sworn police officer availability at elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools, Pearson chi-square procedures were conducted. This statistical method was the optimal statistical procedure because of the presence of frequency data for the survey questions (i.e., Yes or No) by school level (i.e., elementary, middle, high). When both variables are categorical, chi-squares procedures are the statistical procedure of choice (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). With a large sample size, the criteria for using Pearson chi-squares were met.

Results for Police Officer Presence by School Level Across Both School Years

Regarding the presence of sworn police officers in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 283.02, p < .001$, moderate effect size, Cramer's V of .38 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 2.1, high schools were more than two times more likely to have sworn police officers present than elementary schools. Middle schools were almost two times more likely to have sworn police officers present than were elementary schools. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 324.52, p < .001$, moderate effect size, Cramer's V of .35 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.1, more than two times as many high schools had sworn police officers present than elementary schools. Further, more than two times as many middle schools had sworn police officers present than elementary schools.

Insert Table 2.1 about here

Results for Police Officer Presence During School Hours by School Level Across Both School Years

Concerning the presence of sworn police officers during school hours in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 62.94, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .22 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 2.2, high schools were more than four times more likely to have sworn police officers present than elementary schools during school hours. Middle schools were almost three times more likely to have sworn police officers present

during school hours than were elementary schools. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 28.93, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .13 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.2, more than three times as many high schools had sworn police officers present during school hours than elementary schools. Further, almost three times as many middle schools had sworn police officers present during school hours than elementary schools.

Insert Table 2.2 about here

Results for Police Officer Presence While Students Were Arriving or Leaving During by School Level Across Both School Years

Regarding the presence of sworn police officers during school hours in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 89.44, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .26 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 2.3, high schools were more than four times more likely to have sworn police officers present than elementary schools while students were arriving or leaving school. Middle schools were more than three times more likely to have sworn police officers present while students were arriving or leaving school than were elementary schools. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 90.28, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .22 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.3, more than three times as many high schools had sworn police officers present while students were arriving or leaving school than

elementary schools. Further, three times as many middle schools had sworn police officers present while students were arriving or leaving school than elementary schools.

 Insert Table 2.3 about here

Results for Police Officer Presence During School Activities by School Level Across Both School Years

Concerning the presence of sworn police officers during school activities in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 164.07, p < .001$, moderate effect size, Cramer's V of .35 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 2.4, high schools were more than five times more likely to have sworn police officers present than elementary schools during school activities. Middle schools were more than three times more likely to have sworn police officers present during school activities than were elementary schools. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 165.62, p < .001$, moderate effect size, Cramer's V of .30 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.4, more than four times as many high schools had sworn police officers present during school activities than elementary schools. Further, more than three times as many middle schools had sworn police officers present during school activities than elementary schools.

 Insert Table 2.4 about here

Results for Police Officer Presence at Other Times by School Level Across Both School Years

Regarding the presence of sworn police officers at other times in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 18.76, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .19 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 2.5, high schools were more than four times more likely to have sworn police officers present than elementary schools at other times. Middle schools were more than two times more likely to have sworn police officers present at other times than were elementary schools. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 23.40, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .11 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.5, more than four times as many high schools had sworn police officers present at other times than elementary schools. Further, almost three times as many middle schools had sworn police officers present at other times than elementary schools.

Insert Table 2.5 about here

Results for Police Officer Presence for All Instructional Hours by School Level Across Both School Years

Concerning the presence of sworn police officers for all instructional hours in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 118.47, p < .001$, moderate effect size, Cramer's V of .30 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 2.6, high schools were more than 13 times more

likely to have sworn police officers present than elementary schools during all instructional hours. Middle schools were more than seven times more likely to have sworn police officers present during all instructional hours than were elementary schools. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 135.47, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .27 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.6, more than 10 times as many high schools had sworn police officers present during all instructional hours than elementary schools. Further, more than six times as many middle schools had sworn police officers present during all instructional hours than elementary schools.

Insert Table 2.6 about here

Discussion

The presence of sworn police officers in public schools was investigated by school level (i.e., elementary, middle, and high schools) in this multiyear nationwide investigation. For the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years, statistically significant differences were established in each school level. High schools in both the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years had statistically significantly higher percentages of sworn police officers present while students are arriving and leaving school, at school activities, at other times, and during all instructional hours at school than did middle schools and elementary schools. Middle schools had statistically significantly higher percentages of sworn police officers present while students are arriving and leaving school, at school activities, at other times, and during all instructional hours at school than did elementary

schools. Depicted in Figures 2.1 through 2.6 are the stair step representations of the percentages of school police officer presence that decreased from high schools to middle schools and from middle schools to elementary schools. This representation was present in each of the survey items analyzed. Further depicted in Figures 2.1 through 2.6 are the percentages for elementary, middle, and high schools for both years.

Insert Figures 2.1 through 2.6 about here

Results of the 2017-2018 school year, the most recent school year of data, were congruent with the findings in the 2015-2016 school year despite an increase of police presence. Within the 2017-2018 school year, a similar stair step effect was present with high schools having higher percentages of sworn police officers present, followed by middle schools, with elementary schools having the lowest percentages of sworn police officers present. The use of sworn police officers on school campuses has increased as the years progressed. This statement is supported by the fact that the frequencies of police officer presence increased across all school levels. Because each school level had equal access to resources that made school police available, it appears that the school level had an effect on police officer presence in all years investigated.

Connections with Existing Literature

As documented in this study, high schools had statistically significantly higher percentages of sworn police officers present while students are arriving and leaving school, at school activities, at other times, and during all instructional hours at school than middle schools and middle schools had higher percentages than elementary schools

in this national dataset. Results delineated herein were congruent with the findings of previous researchers (e.g., Crawford & Burns, 2015; Na & Gottfredson, 2013, O'Murphy, 2013; Weisburst, 2019) who established the greater need of school resource officers on high schools, then middle schools, and finally elementary schools in priority order. Student safety and ability to learn is negatively affected with the presence of school violence.

Researchers (e.g., Bracy, 2010; Brown, 2006; May & Higgins, 2011) concurred that school resource officer programs are most effective for increasing school safety and violence. More complex school schedules needed the presence of school police (i.e., arriving and leavings, school activities, during the school day). As high schools maintain much more liberal supervision such as between classes, student drivers, school size, and lunch, the findings mirror the need for higher frequencies of campus police. Berger (2002) argued that the influx of police in schools was forcing the responsibility for maintaining discipline and order away from the teacher and into the hands of law enforcement. Furthermore, Johnson (1999) documented that at the middle and high schools, school suspensions and crime decreased after school resource officers were assigned during the day which justified the percentages of police on secondary campuses being higher than elementary campuses. Crawford and Burns (2015) established that sworn police officer presence positively was associated with the measures of violence in high schools as opposed to elementary and middle schools; thus, substantiating the need for more police on high school campuses.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Multiple implications for policy and practice may be generated based on the findings of this multiyear nationwide investigation. With respect to policy implications, legislators and administrators respectively should make funds available to supplement school campus safety budgets to resolve the threats to safety that exist by school level. Schools that are faced with high populations, urban environments, and high proportions of low-income students, high rates of violence and serious violent incidents should have access to safety programs. Secondly, the neighboring communities, where the students transit to and from school, should ensure increased safety protocols are in place to greater influence the students' overall need for safety, thus creating a better environment for the school community. Also, it would be beneficial for students to have access to more positive interactions with police from a young age to cultivate better relationships between the police officers and the community at large. Henceforth, more funds need to be made available from federal, state, and local governments for schools, neighborhoods, communities, and apartment complexes to finance these safety programs for the greater good of all of society.

In regard to implications for practice, elementary schools need to have police present on more than just a rotating basis. The number of students in primary, elementary, and intermediate is statistically significantly less than students in middle school and high school. The pipeline effect to influence positive relationship should begin as early as possible. As a result of the reduced interactions, middle schoolers and high schoolers who are not affiliated with societal enforcement are criminalized at a much greater rate than necessary. Practice should include disciplining students with realistic principles from

society. Students should be exposed to the implications that would occur in the real world without further filling the school to prison pipeline. More professional development for administrators and teachers about classroom management and fostering desired behaviors is necessary. Development of school officer and school administrator roles is necessary to further cultivate disciplinary relationships concerning best practice for student behaviors.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations for further research studies can be made based on the findings of this empirical, multiyear nationwide study. First, this investigation was restricted to those schools that responded to the national questionnaire on a voluntary basis; therefore, researchers are recommended to replicate this study from a more formalized, uniformed collection that would represent a greater population of campuses from across the country. Also, researchers are recommended to conduct this national study at individual state levels. Next, only police officer presence during school, while students are arriving or leaving, at school activities, on campus at other times, and on campus for all instructional hours were used as variables for this study. As such, researchers are encouraged to extend the study to more variables as present within the National School Safety Datasets. Furthermore, it is recommended that the following be investigated (a) sworn police activity while at school, (b) school and legislative policies that protect and govern sworn police officers, and (c) types of weapons that sworn police officers carry while at school. Finally, it is suggested that researchers perform qualitative studies on the nature of sworn police officers on school campuses that evaluate police effectiveness, student-police relationship, student efficacy, and administrator-police relations.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to analyze the degree to which differences were present in the presence of sworn police officer availability at elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools by school level. Statistically significant differences were documented in the percentages of sworn police officers present in elementary schools,

middle schools, and high schools in 2015-2016 and 2017-2018. For the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years, high schools had statistically significantly higher percentages of sworn police officers present than middle schools and middle schools had statistically significantly higher percentages than elementary schools. With respect to each of the three school levels, consistencies were revealed. The results of this multiyear national study were congruent with previous researchers (Crawford & Burns, 2015; Na & Gottfredson, 2013, O'Murphy, 2013; Weisburst, 2019) in terms of the safety disparities present and the necessity for school police at elementary, middle, and high schools.

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Table 2.1

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officer Presence for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018

School Years

School Year and School Level	Present		Not Present	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	191	37.0	325	63.0
Middle	494	68.7	225	31.3
High School	635	82.0	139	18.0
2017-2018				
Elementary	274	40.8	397	59.2
Middle	718	73.6	257	26.4
High School	811	81.3	186	18.7

Table 2.2

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officer Presence During School Hours for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Present		Not Present	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	162	84.8	29	15.2
Middle	475	96.2	19	3.8
High School	624	98.3	11	1.7
2017-2018				
Elementary	251	91.6	23	8.4
Middle	693	96.5	25	3.5
High School	798	98.4	13	1.6

Table 2.3

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officer Presence While Students are Arriving or Leaving School for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Present		Not Present	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	131	68.6	60	31.4
Middle	420	85.0	74	15.0
High School	599	94.3	36	5.7
2017-2018				
Elementary	212	77.4	62	22.6
Middle	636	88.6	82	11.4
High School	782	96.4	29	3.6

Table 2.4

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officer Presence at School Activities for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Present		Not Present	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	117	61.3	74	38.7
Middle	388	78.5	106	21.5
High School	613	96.5	22	3.5
2017-2018				
Elementary	184	67.2	90	32.8
Middle	590	82.2	128	17.8
High School	782	96.4	29	3.6

Table 2.5

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officer Presence at Other Times for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Present		Not Present	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	74	38.7	117	61.3
Middle	189	38.3	305	61.7
High School	319	50.2	316	49.8
2017-2018				
Elementary	107	39.1	167	60.9
Middle	315	43.9	403	56.1
High School	434	53.5	377	46.5

Table 2.6

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officer Presence for All Instructional Hours for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Present		Not Present	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	28	14.7	163	85.3
Middle	204	41.3	290	58.7
High School	370	58.3	265	41.7
2017-2018				
Elementary	45	16.4	229	83.6
Middle	294	40.9	424	59.1
High School	455	56.1	356	43.9

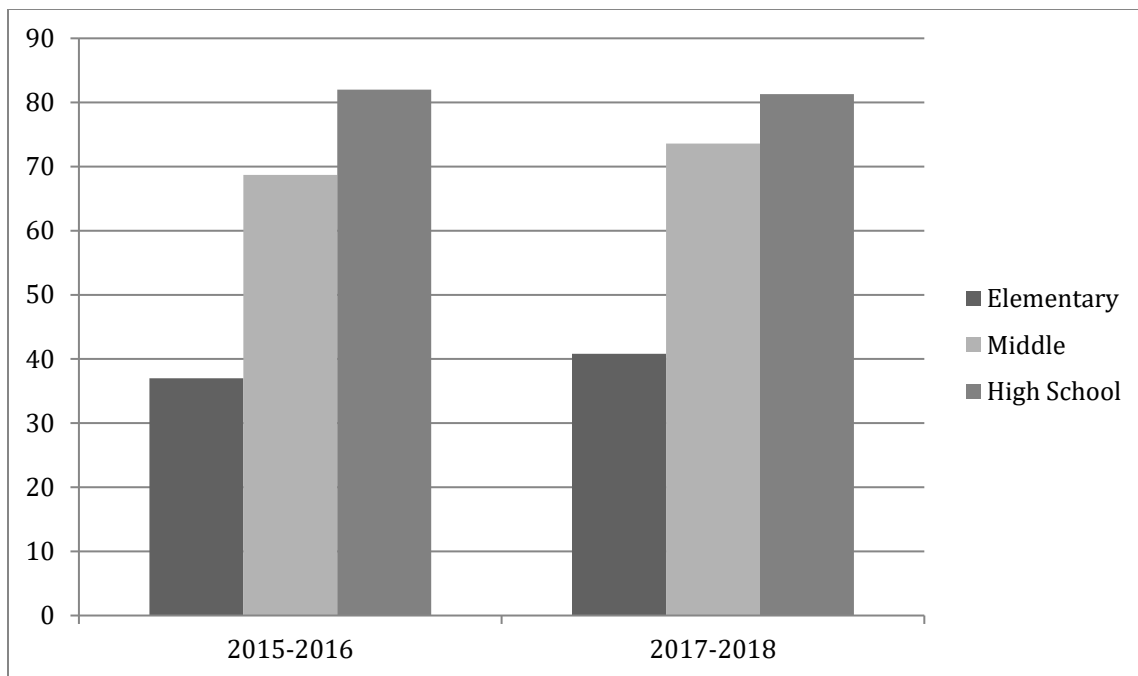


Figure 2.1. Percentages of sworn police officer presence for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

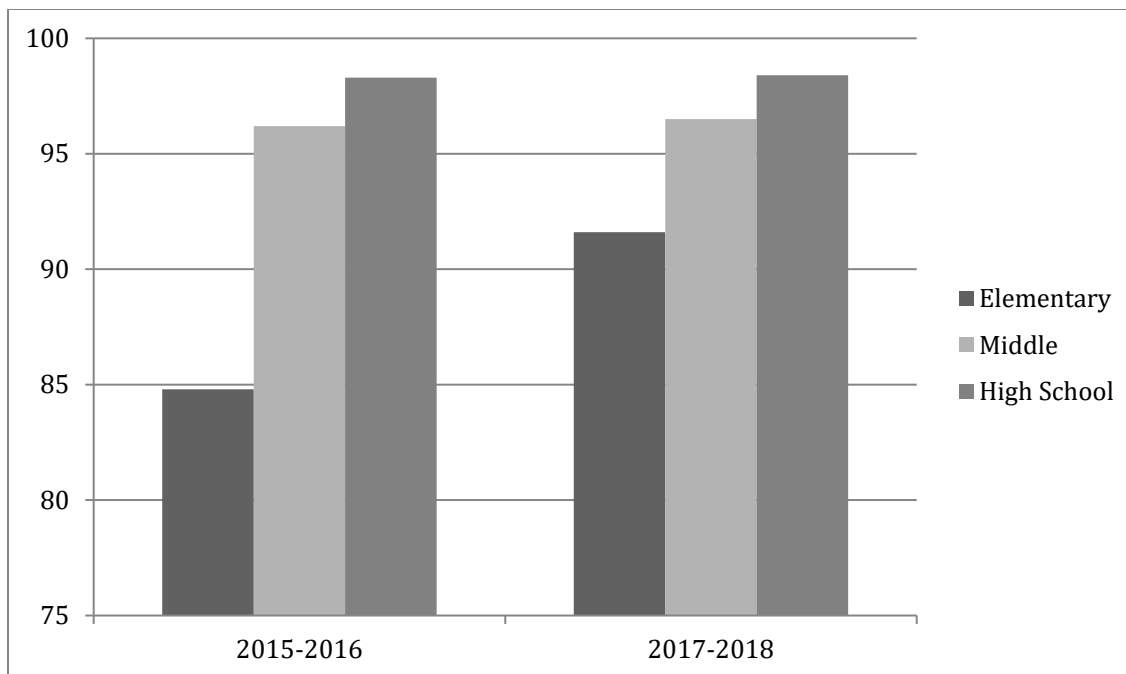


Figure 2.2. Percentages of sworn police officer presence during school hours the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

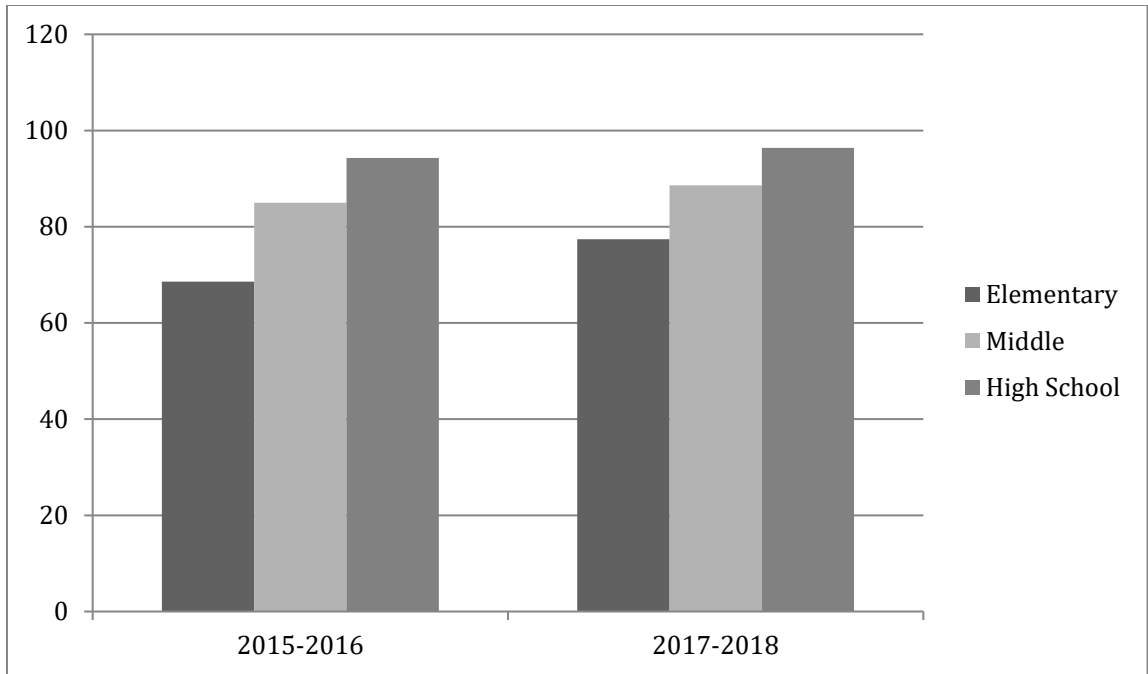


Figure 2.3. Percentages of sworn police officer presence while students are arriving or leaving for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

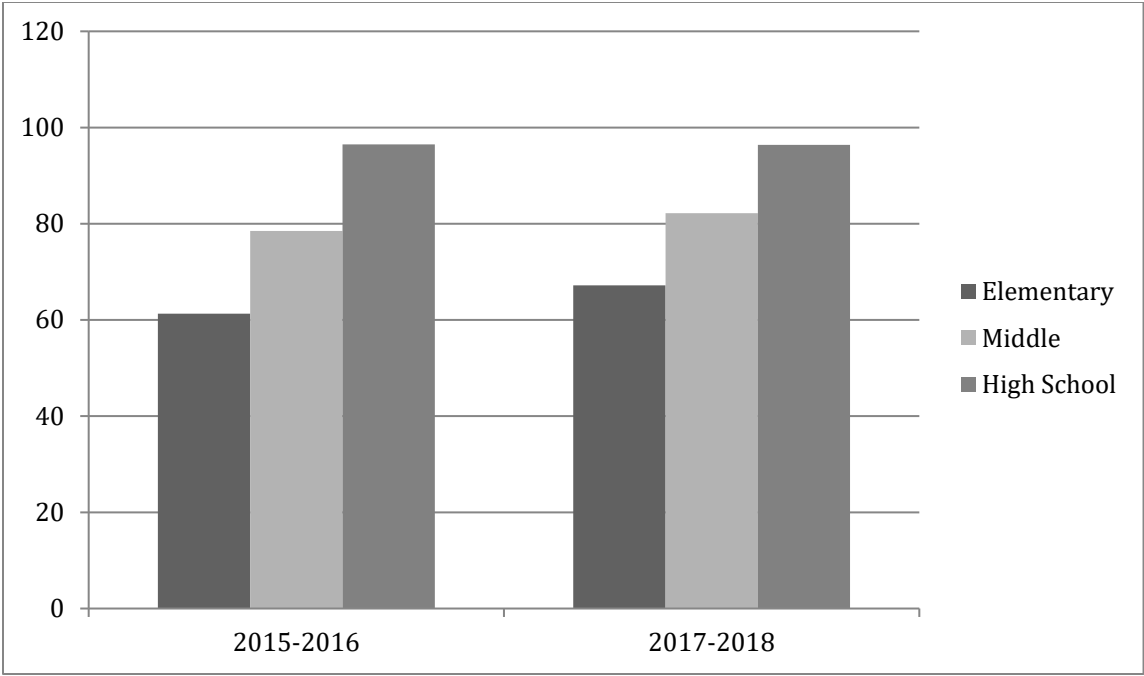


Figure 2.4. Percentages of sworn police officer presence at school activities for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

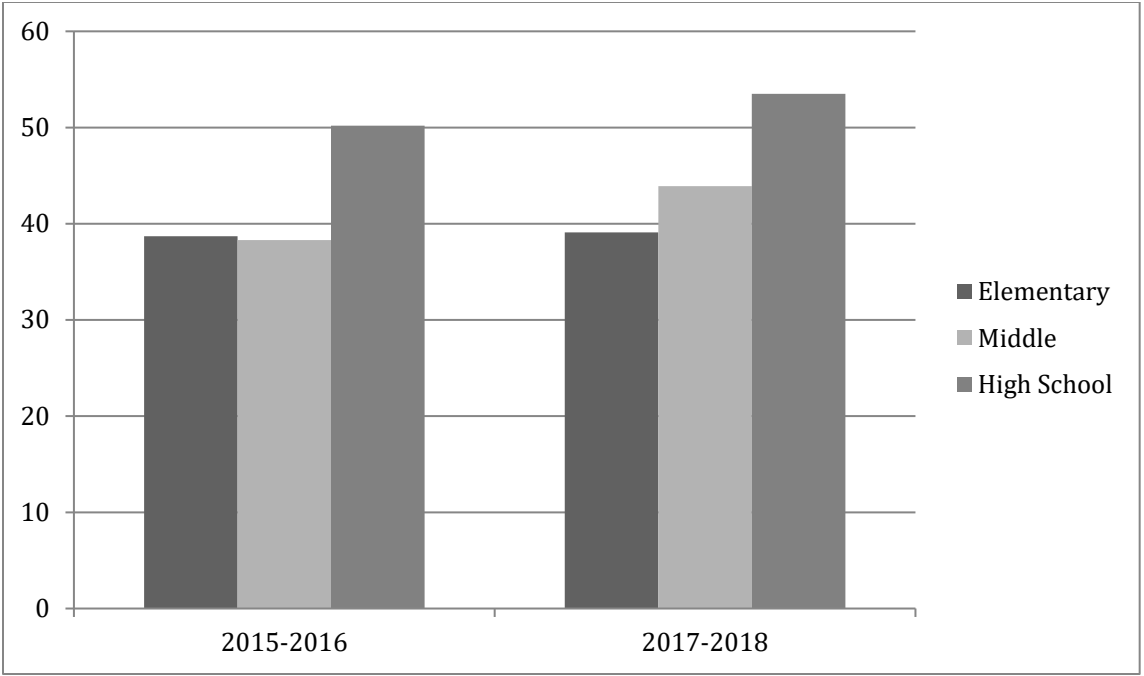


Figure 2.5. Percentages of sworn police officer presence at other times for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

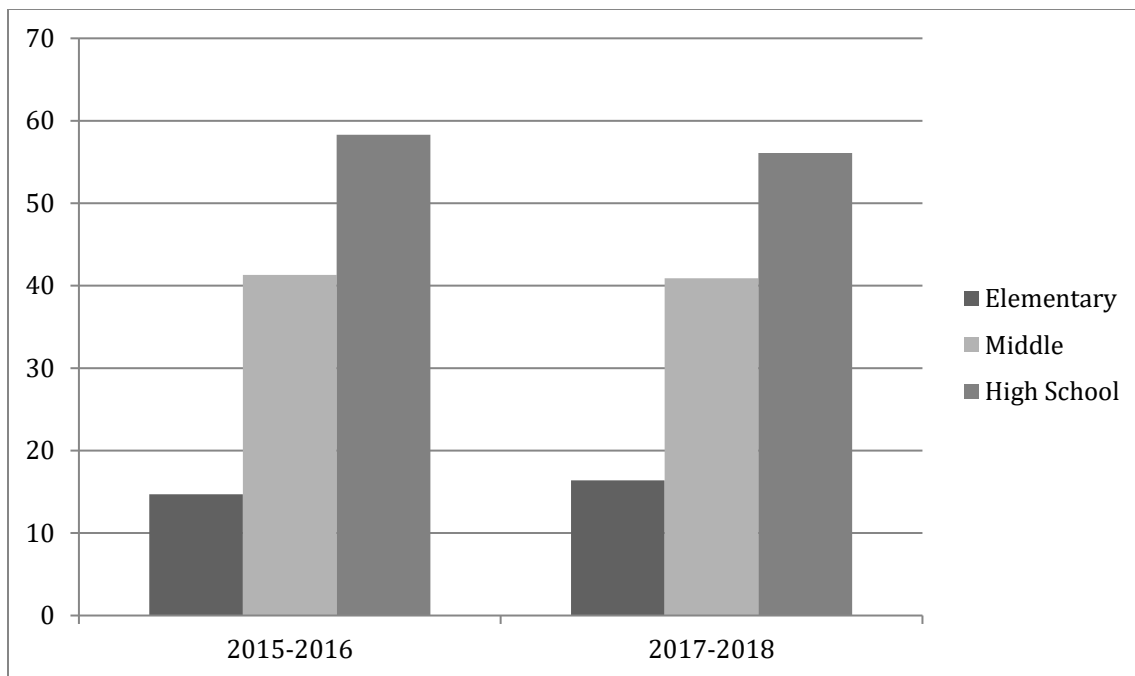


Figure 2.6. Percentages of sworn police officer presence for all instructional hours for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

CHAPTER III

WHAT ARE POLICE DOING WHILE AT SCHOOL?: A NATIONAL STUDY

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

Abstract

The degree to which differences existed in sworn police officer activity (i.e., in discipline, solving school problems, prevention training, student mentoring, and teaching law related classes) by school level was investigated herein. National archival data were obtained from the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Survey on Crime and Safety datasets and analyzed in this study. Inferential analyses revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in sworn police officer activity across elementary, middle, and high schools. High schools consistently had higher percentages of sworn police officer activity than middle schools and middle schools consistently had higher percentages of sworn police officer activity than elementary schools. Recommendations for future research, as well as implications for policy and practice were discussed

Keywords: Elementary school; High school; Middle school; School resource officer; School safety; School survey on crime and safety

WHAT ARE POLICE DOING WHILE AT SCHOOL?: A NATIONAL STUDY

According to Theriot (2009), school law enforcement is the fastest growing sector of policing. This increase in the presence of sworn police officers, known as school resource officers, was due in light of recent large scale violent incidents at schools, such as Sandy Hook Elementary in 2013 (Swartz et al., 2016). Johnson (1999) stated that schools have turned to the police for help in their attempts to achieve order and safety. The belief was and remains that police presence would have a deterrent effect on school violence and delinquency (Jackson, 2002). Due to a lack of data regarding effects of school resource officers on campuses, Zhang (2019) analyzed the effects of these sworn police officers on school crime, disciplinary actions, and disciplinary problems in 238 middle and high schools in West Virginia over the course of three years. Multiple problem outcomes decreased as the number of years a sworn officer was assigned to the campus. When compared to schools that did not have a sworn officer present, those schools with an officer had higher numbers of reported drug-related incidents and higher numbers out-of-school suspensions, thus suggesting that crime detection is higher with the presence of the officer. Schools that had a sworn officer on duty for at least three years had lower rates of violent crime and disorder than schools that did not have an officer. The findings of this study are evidence that sworn police officers on campus can improve school safety.

Weiler and Cray (2011) investigated the history, roles, and issues related to school resource officers. Initially, the purpose of the school resource officer program was to provide students and staff with a safe learning environment to ensure that learning can effectively take place (Trump, 1998). Furthermore, as argued by Kim and Geronimo

(2010), “the primary role of the School Resource Officer is to improve school safety and the educational climate of schools” (p. 33). Kim and Geronimo (2010) contended that the number of children arrested or referred to court for school discipline coincides with the rise of the school resource officer program.

Despite the widespread implementation of the school resource officer program, little is known about the effects of interacting with these officers on student attitudes about the officers. Theriot (2016) investigated the interactions through surveys issued to 1956 middle and high school students in 12 schools. Overall, of the students who had interactions with the sworn police officers (48%), evidence was revealed that such interactions positively influenced student attitudes about school resource officers. Moreover, student attitudes toward sworn police officers appeared to rise as the number of interactions increased in the areas of (a) fairness, (b) helpfulness, and (c) competence.

In a recent study, Devlin and Gottfredson (2018) investigated beyond the presence of the sworn police officers on campus to assess whether school crime outcomes differed in schools that had these officers as law enforcement only and schools that used these officers as teachers and mentors in comparison to schools without school resource officers. Schools that had law enforcement only, school resource officers recorded more crimes than schools that did not have school resource officers. Furthermore, schools with mixed approach school resource officers reported more crimes than was reported by law enforcement only.

In 1999, Johnson determined that placement of police officers in city schools had positive effects on school violence and disciplinary infractions. Using a series of four questionnaires and interviews, school resource officers and members of their campus

staff answered a set of questions related to the duties and responsibilities of the officer. In this study, 58% of the resource officer sample reported maintaining daily positive interactions with parents, 94% of school officials reported affirmative support of the officers assigned to their campus. Regarding daily counseling activities and assignments, 52% of officers reported counseling with students academically, 82% counseled about school fights, 64% counseled on drug-related behaviors, and 94% counseled on truancy. In student interviews, students reported that the presence of the officers assigned to their campuses positively affected their sense of security on campus, but the presence of uniformed officers did affect a minority of the student population and their sense of privacy due to random searches and high visibility. Johnson (1999) concluded that school suspensions decreased in high and middle schools, and that positive relationships through visibility, education, and counseling were fostered.

May and Higgins (2011) surveyed 149 novice and veteran police officers in Kentucky to determine the characteristics and functions of said officers. In regard to tenure status, 70% of the officers surveyed were veterans, the average officer was employed by a city/county police department, was assigned to one school but was on call to other schools. The school resource officers were 96% White, 95% male, had an average age of 46 years old with an education level slightly higher than high school, and had 19 years of experience in law enforcement. Further, the average school resource officer was asked to teach on a weekly basis and to provide the following activities daily (a) clear hallways, (b) assist teachers with maintaining order in classrooms, (c) transport suspension students home, (d) monitoring lunchroom, (e) monitor parking areas, (f) searching students who were not under arrest, (g) breaking up fights, (h) teaching classes,

(i) counseling students, (j) consulting with administrators and staff about safety issues, and (k) conducting investigations. The perceptions of school administrators were statistically similar. All officers, despite their tenure, performed the same duties.

In a later investigation, Swartz et al. (2016) determined that sworn police officers at school were not effective at reducing violence. Officers detected more violence, and campus based data increased due to higher detection and reporting of such crimes in schools. The results of this investigation raised doubt in the management of schools by law enforcement (Brady, Balmer, & Phenix, 2007; Nickerson & Martens, 2008). Furthermore, many critics (Jennings, Khey, Maskaly, & Donner, 2011; Wike & Fraser, 2009) believe that the presence of school resource officers can contribute to student fear and anxiety because of the potential of violence and threats; thus, negating the purpose of the school resource officer program.

Due to gaps existing in the literature on school resource officers, Fisher and Devlin (2020) identified common profiles and roles of school resource officers, examined the effects of implementing these sworn police officers on school crime outcomes, identified patterns of school resource officer roles, and linked those patterns to school crime outcomes. Three role profiles were identified within this student including Low Engagement, Full Triad, and Reactionary school resource officers. Furthermore, the roles exhibited by the officers were categorized as law enforcement only or mixed approach (Devlin & Gottfredson, 2018). Fisher and Devlin (2020) determined that officers across all three role profiles were likely to be engaged to varying degrees in roles both related to law enforcement and beyond; and, that meaningful differences engaged the sworn police officers beyond the law enforcement only category.

Statement of the Problem

Although many police officers at schools, referred to as School Resource Officers, perform many activities while on school campuses, researchers (e.g., Theriot, 2009) have shown that police officers on campus may criminalize the behaviors of students unnecessarily. Furthermore, the punitive and closed nature of law enforcement can conflict with the open and supportive nature of most schools (Dickmann & Conner, 2007; Jackson, 2002). Additionally, other researchers (e.g., Eisenbraun, 2007; Greene, 2005; Hyman & Perone, 1998; Juvonen, 2001; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Theriot, 2016) have determined that some strategies that can include security guards can negatively affect student sense of school connectedness and could contribute to more school violence and disorder.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this article was to examine the degree to which differences existed in police activity while on campus by school level (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school). In particular, the degree to which differences were present in sworn police officer participation in discipline, solving school problems, prevention training, student mentoring, and teaching law related classes by school level was determined.

Significance of the Study

According to Brown (2006), more than 20,000 school resource officers serve in schools across the nation. With the vast increase in the number of officers in recent decades, since the occurrence of school tragedies such as Sandy Hook, Kupchik and Ward (2014) asserted that renewed attention has been drawn to the issue of school security. Although researchers (e.g., Bracy, 2011; May, Fessel, & Means, 2004) have

addressed the perceptions of school resource officers, relatively few studies have been published about officers' perception of their roles and responsibilities (Kelly & Swezey, 2015). The climate of school campuses complexity of duties for school administrators often influences the mode of duties assigned to a school resource officer. To that end, Weiler and Cray (2011) suggested that school principals establish memorandums of understanding with police agencies to establish clear guidelines for police guidelines after studying various duty assignment patterns issued to school resource officers. Empirical analyses of sworn police officer behavior and activities at various school levels are essential to ascertain the effects of police interactions and presence on student achievement.

Finn and McDevitt (2005), in a national assessment of sworn resource officer programs, identified vast diversity regarding officer roles within schools. Analyzing the trends of these officers, by school level, reduces the assumption that all sworn police officers maintain the same responsibilities while assigned to their campus. Additionally, findings may have practical implications for school district and campus leaders, policymakers, and ranking police leadership to their decision-making, district and campus police delegations, management of school resource officers, and preparation programs for prospective school resource officers.

Research Questions

The overarching question addressed in this investigation was: What is the difference in police officer participation while on school campus by school level (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school)? Within this overarching research question, five sub-questions were present: (a) What is the difference in police officer participation in

discipline while on school campus by school level?; (b) What is the difference in police officer participation in solving school problems while on school campus by school level?; (c) What is the difference in police officer participation in prevention training while on school campus by school level?; (d) What is the difference in police officer participation in student mentoring while on school campus by school level?; and (e) What is the difference in police officer participation in teaching law related classes while on school campus by school level? These research questions were addressed separately for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

Method

Research Design

Present in this empirical investigation was a non-experimental, causal comparative research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Johnson & Christensen, 2020). National archival datasets from the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Survey on Crime and Safety were analyzed in this study to determine the extent to which differences in sworn police officer activities were present by school level. As such, both the school level outcomes and the sworn police officer activities had already occurred. Therefore, in this non-experimental, causal-comparative research, neither the independent variable nor the dependent variables were manipulated (Johnson & Christensen, 2020).

The independent variable was school level (i.e., elementary, middle, and high schools). The dependent variables were responses to five questions regarding (a) participation in discipline while on school campus, (b) participation in solving school problems while on school campus, (c) participation in prevention training while on

school campus, (d) participation in student mentoring while on school campus, and (e) participation in teaching law related classes while on school campus.

Participants and Instrumentation

The unit of analysis for this study was school principals across the United States. Principals or persons who are most knowledgeable about school crime and school policies to provide a safe environment for school were asked to complete a questionnaire voluntarily as part of the School Survey on Crime and Safety (2018), conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics on behalf of the United States Department of Education. For the purpose of this study, data were obtained from the School Survey on Crime and Safety (2018) for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years. The number of school administrators who completed this principal questionnaire in the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years was around 4,000.

The School Survey on Crime and Safety (2018) self-administered questionnaire was intended to collect information on school practices and programs, school mental health services, number of incidents, parent and community involvement at school, limitations on crime prevention, school security staff, staff training, frequency of crime and violence at school, disciplinary problems and actions, and school characteristics (School Survey on Crime and Safety, 2018) The School Survey on Crime and Safety has been conducted seven times including: 1999-2000, 2003-2004, 2005-2006, 2007-2008, 2009-2010, 2015-2016, and 2017-2018.

Archival data were collected from the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 National School Safety Datasets and converted to Statistical Package for School Sciences (SPSS) data. A codebook was used to recode the data from the following survey questions: Did these

sworn law enforcement officers (including school resource officers) participate in the following activities at your school: motor vehicle traffic control, security enforcement and patrol, maintaining student discipline, identifying problems in the school and proactively seeking solutions to those problems, training teachers and staff in school safety or crime prevention, mentoring students, teaching a law-related education course or training students? Respondents of the survey completed the survey questions with a Yes or a No.

Results

To ascertain the extent to which differences were present in the participation of sworn police officers at elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools, Pearson chi-square procedures were conducted. This statistical method was the optimal statistical procedure because of the presence of frequency data for the survey questions (i.e., Yes or No) by school level (i.e., elementary, middle, high). When both variables are categorical, chi-squares procedures are the statistical procedure of choice (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). With a large sample size, the criteria for using Pearson chi-squares were met.

Results for Police Officer Participation in Discipline by School Level Across Both School Years

Regarding sworn police officer participation in discipline in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 34.53, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .16 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.1, high schools were more than five times more likely to have sworn police officers participate in discipline than elementary schools. Middle schools were more than three times more likely to have sworn police officers participate in discipline

than elementary schools. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 53.65, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .17 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 3.1, more than four times as many high schools had sworn police officers participate in discipline than elementary schools. More than three times as many middle schools had sworn police officers participate in discipline than elementary schools.

Insert Table 3.1 about here

Results for Police Officer Participation in Solving School Problems by School Level Across Both School Years

Regarding sworn police officer participation in solving school problems in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 60.93, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .21 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 3.2, high schools were more than four times more likely to have sworn police officers participate in solving school problems than elementary schools. Middle schools were more than three times more likely to have sworn police officers participate in solving school problems than elementary schools. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 63.47, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .18 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 3.2, more than three times as many high schools had sworn police officers participate in solving school problems than elementary schools. More than three

times as many middle schools had sworn police officers participate in solving school problems than elementary schools.

Insert Table 3.2 about here

Results for Police Officer Participation in Prevention Training by School Level Across Both School Years

Regarding sworn police officer participation in prevention training in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 28.91, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .14 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.3, high schools were more than four times more likely to have sworn police officers participate in prevention training than elementary schools. Middle schools were almost three times more likely to have sworn police officers participate in prevention training than elementary schools. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 39.34, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .14 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 3.3, more than four times as many high schools had sworn police officers participate in prevention training than elementary schools. More than three times as many middle schools had sworn police officers participate in prevention training than elementary schools.

Insert Table 3.3 about here

Results for Police Officer Participation in Student Mentoring by School Level

Across Both School Years

Regarding sworn police officer participation in student mentoring in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 28.12, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .14 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 3.4, high schools were more than five times more likely to have sworn police officers participate in student mentoring than elementary schools. Middle schools were almost three times more likely to have sworn police officers participate in student mentoring than elementary schools. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 46.84, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .16 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 3.4, more than four times as many high schools had sworn police officers participate in student mentoring than elementary schools. More than three times as many middle schools had sworn police officers participate in student mentoring than elementary schools.

Insert Table 3.4 about here

Results for Police Officer Participation in Teaching Law Related Courses by School Level Across Both School Years

Regarding sworn police officer participation in teaching law related courses in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was not revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 4.54, p = .10$. Though not statistically significant, high schools were more than four times more likely to have sworn police officers

participate in teaching law related classes than elementary schools. Middle schools were more than three times more likely to have sworn police officers participate in teaching law related classes than elementary schools. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 10.16, p = .006$, below small effect size, Cramer's V of .07 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 3.5, more than four times as many high schools had sworn police officers participate in teaching law related courses than elementary schools. More than three times as many middle schools had sworn police officers participate in teaching law related classes than elementary schools.

Insert Table 3.5 about here

Discussion

The activity (i.e., in discipline, solving school problems, prevention training, student mentoring, and teaching law related classes) participation of sworn police officers in public schools was investigated by school level (i.e., elementary, middle, and high schools) in this multiyear nationwide study. For the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years, statistically significant differences were established in each school level. High schools in both the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years had a statistically significantly higher participation of sworn police officers than middle schools and elementary schools in discipline, solving school problems, prevention training, student mentoring, and teaching law related classes. Middle schools had statistically significantly higher participation of sworn police officers than elementary schools in discipline, solving school problems, prevention training, student mentoring, and teaching

law related classes. Depicted in Figures 3.1 through 3.5 are the stair step representations of the percentages for sworn police officer presence; percentages that decreased from high schools to middle schools and from middle schools to elementary schools. This representation was present in each of the survey items analyzed.

Insert Figures 3.1 through 3.5 about here

Results of the 2017-2018 school year, the most recent school year of data, were indicative of similar findings as the 2015-2016 school year, even with an increase of police participation. Within the 2017-2018 school year, a similar stair step effect was present with high schools having the highest levels of sworn police officer participation, followed by middle schools, with elementary schools having the lowest levels of sworn police officer participation. The activity of sworn police officers on school campuses has increased as the years progressed. This statement was reflected in the increased frequencies of sworn police officer participation across all school levels. School campuses, regardless of school level have equitable access to district resources; therefore, factors related to school level had an effect on sworn officer participation in all years investigated.

Connections with Existing Literature

As documented in this study, high schools had statistically significantly percentages of sworn police officer participation than middle schools and middle schools had statistically significantly higher percentage than elementary schools in this national dataset. Results delineated herein are congruent with the findings of previous researchers

(e.g., Kim & Geronimo, 2010; Trump, 1998; Zhang, 2019) who established the purpose of the school resource officer to provide students and staff with a safe learning environment to ensure that learning can effectively take place. According to Kim and Geronimo (2010), the primary role of the school resource officer is to improve school safety and the educational climate of schools.

Johnson (1999) determined that police placement had positive effects on school violence and disciplinary infractions, which justified the frequency of police participation as the school level increased. As high schools maintain greater flexibility in student activities, these findings mirror the need for more flexible roles for campus police. May and Higgins (2011) determined that police officer activity was consistent among novice and veteran officers on campus which further validated the need for a rigorous officer schedule that included teaching, monitoring, maintaining order, collaborating with administration, and counseling. Within the review of literature, it was apparent that a myriad of roles was necessary for sworn police officer effectiveness on school campuses. As delineated in the results of this study, police officers are utilized for multiple roles and these roles have diversified with time and a greater number of officers perform the roles with time.

Recommendations for Future Research

Some recommendations for further research studies can be made based on the findings of this empirical, multiyear nationwide study. First, this investigation was restricted to those schools that responded to the national questionnaire on a voluntary basis; therefore, researchers are recommended to replicate this study from a more formalized, uniformed collection that would represent a greater population of campuses

from across the country. Also, researchers are recommended to conduct this national study at individual state levels. Next, only police officer participation in discipline during school, participation in solving school problems, participation in prevention training, participation in student mentoring, and participation in teaching law related classes were used as variables for this study. As such, researchers are encouraged to extend the study to more variables as present within the National School Safety Datasets. Furthermore, it is recommended that the following be investigated (a) sworn police presence while at school, (b) school and legislative policies that protect and govern sworn police officers, and (c) types of weapons that sworn police officers carry while at school. Finally, researchers are suggested to perform qualitative studies on the nature of sworn police officer participation on school campuses that evaluate police effectiveness, teacher-police relationship, student efficacy, and parent-police relations.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to analyze the degree to which differences were present in the activities of sworn police officers at elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools by school level. Statistically significant differences were documented by school level in the participation of sworn police officers in 2015-2016 and 2017-2018. For both school years, high schools had statistically significantly higher rates of sworn police participation than middle schools and elementary schools. Middle schools had statistically significantly higher rates than elementary schools. Regarding the three school levels, consistent results were established. The results of this multiyear national study were congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Kim & Geronimo, 2010; Trump, 1998; Zhang, 2019) in terms of the school resource officer contributions to address safety

disparities present and the necessity for a flexible schedule for school police at elementary, middle, and high schools.

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Table 3.1

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officer Participation in Discipline for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	85	44.5	106	55.5
Middle	318	64.4	176	35.6
High School	430	67.7	205	32.3
2017-2018				
Elementary	113	41.2	161	58.8
Middle	400	55.7	318	44.3
High School	534	65.8	277	34.2

Table 3.2

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officer Participation in Solving School Problems for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	122	63.9	69	36.1
Middle	388	78.5	106	21.5
High School	561	88.3	74	11.7
2017-2018				
Elementary	191	69.7	83	30.3
Middle	590	82.2	128	17.8
High School	729	89.9	82	10.1

Table 3.3

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officer Participation in Prevention Training for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	89	46.6	102	53.4
Middle	246	49.8	248	50.2
High School	403	63.5	232	36.5
2017-2018				
Elementary	129	47.1	145	52.9
Middle	439	61.1	279	38.9
High School	553	68.2	258	31.8

Table 3.4

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officer Participation in Student Mentoring for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Present		Not Present	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	113	59.2	78	40.8
Middle	334	67.6	160	32.4
High School	491	77.3	144	22.7
2017-2018				
Elementary	155	56.6	119	43.4
Middle	477	66.4	241	33.6
High School	625	77.1	186	22.9

Table 3.5

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officer Participation in Teaching Law Related Courses for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	60	31.4	131	68.6
Middle	183	37.0	311	63.0
High School	253	39.8	382	60.2
2017-2018				
Elementary	76	27.7	198	72.3
Middle	266	37.0	452	63.0
High School	310	38.2	501	61.8

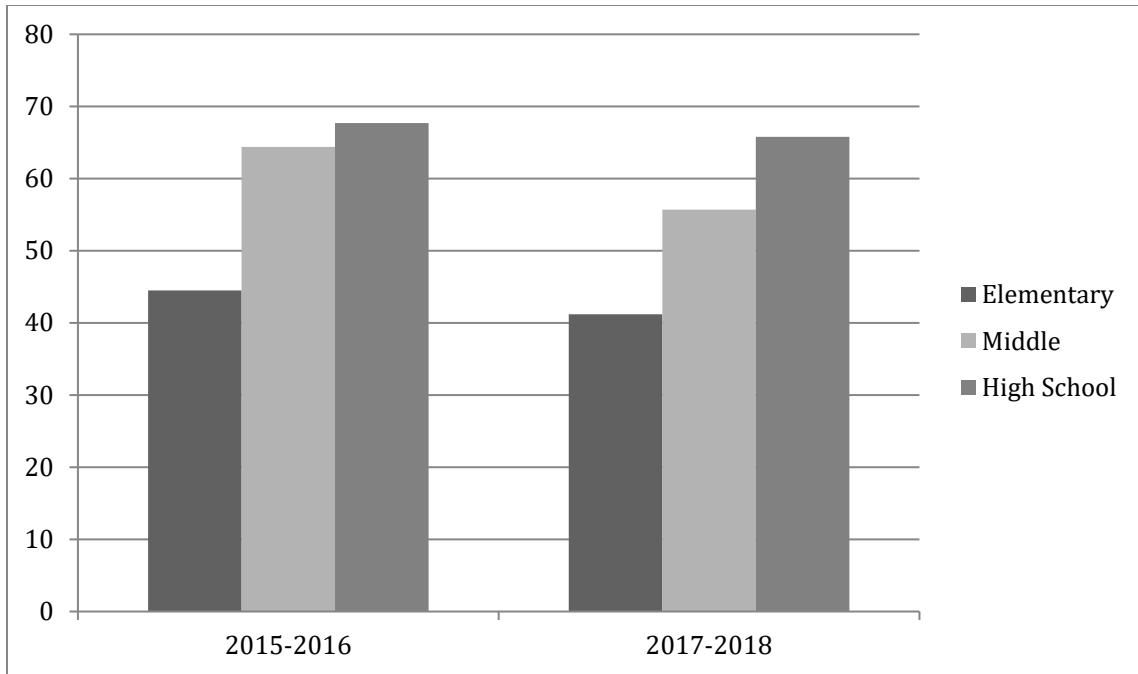


Figure 3.1. Percentages of sworn police officer participation in discipline for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

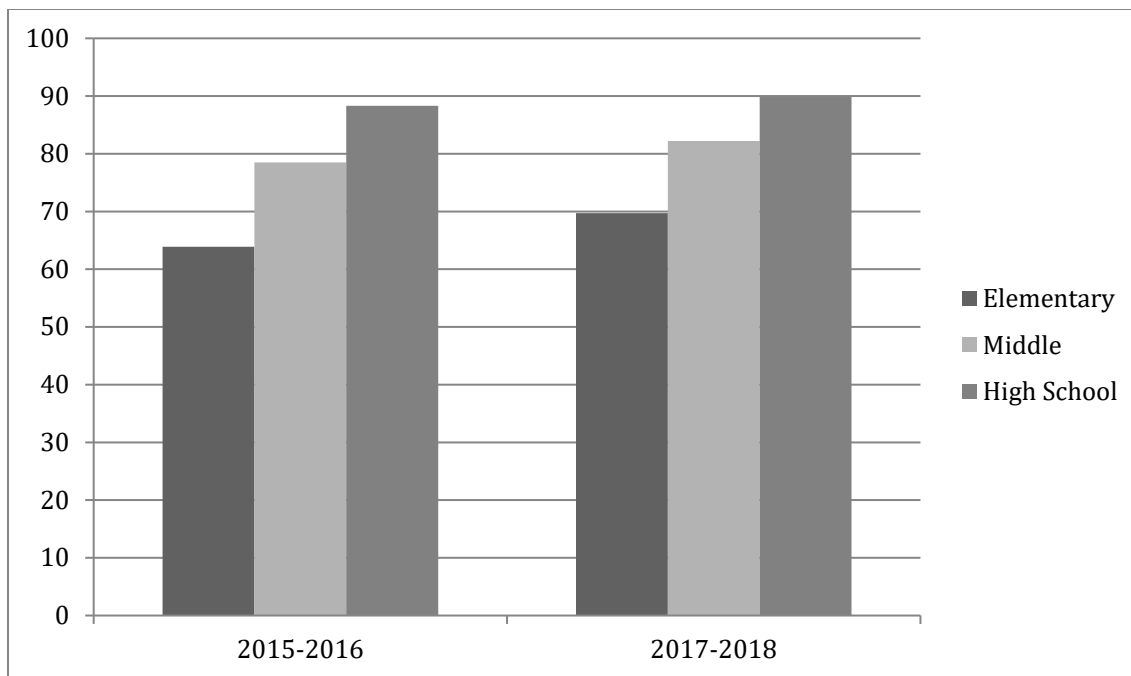


Figure 3.2. Percentages of sworn police officer participation in solving school problems for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

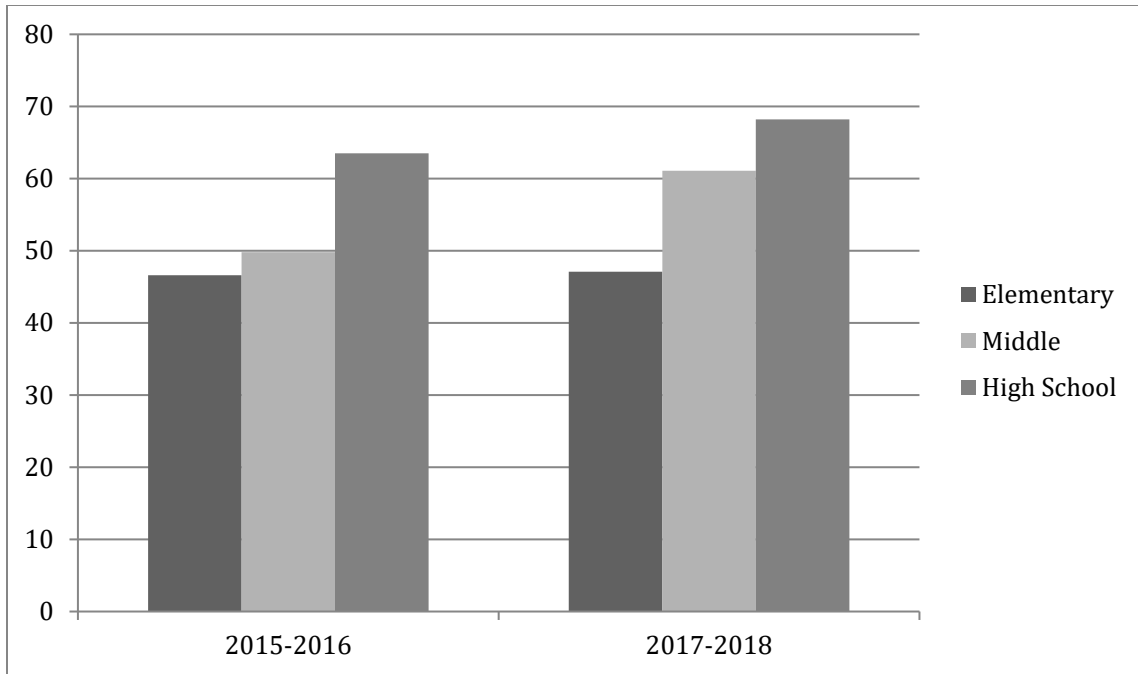


Figure 3.3. Percentages of sworn police officer participation in prevention training for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

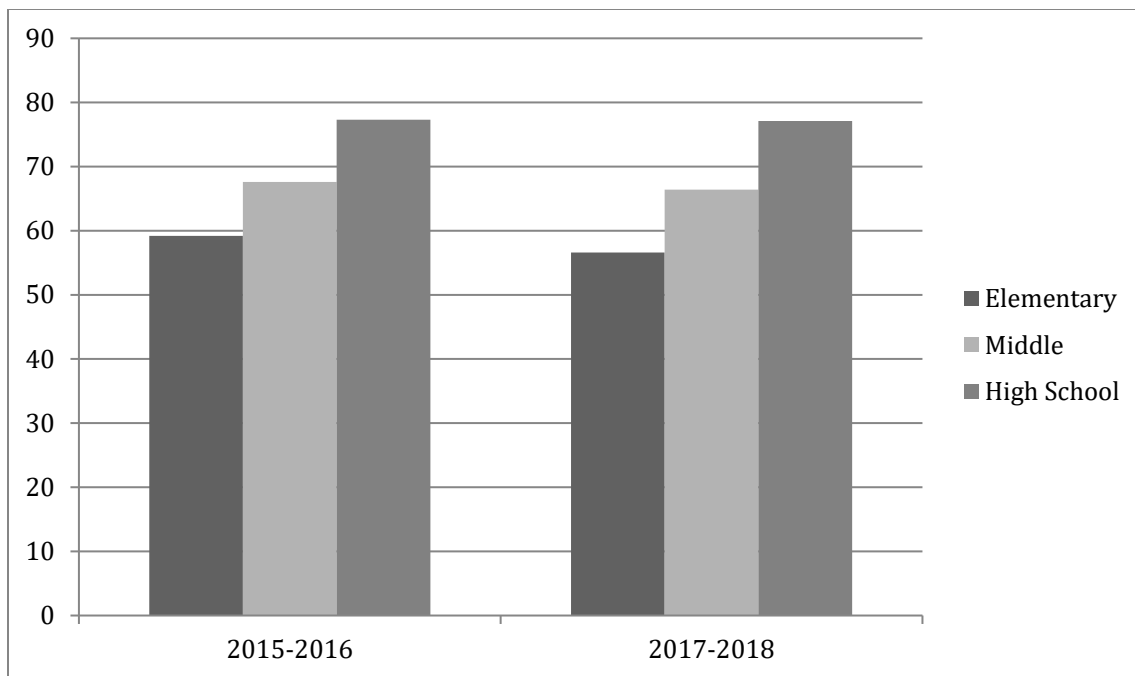


Figure 3.4. Percentages of sworn police officer participation in student mentoring for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

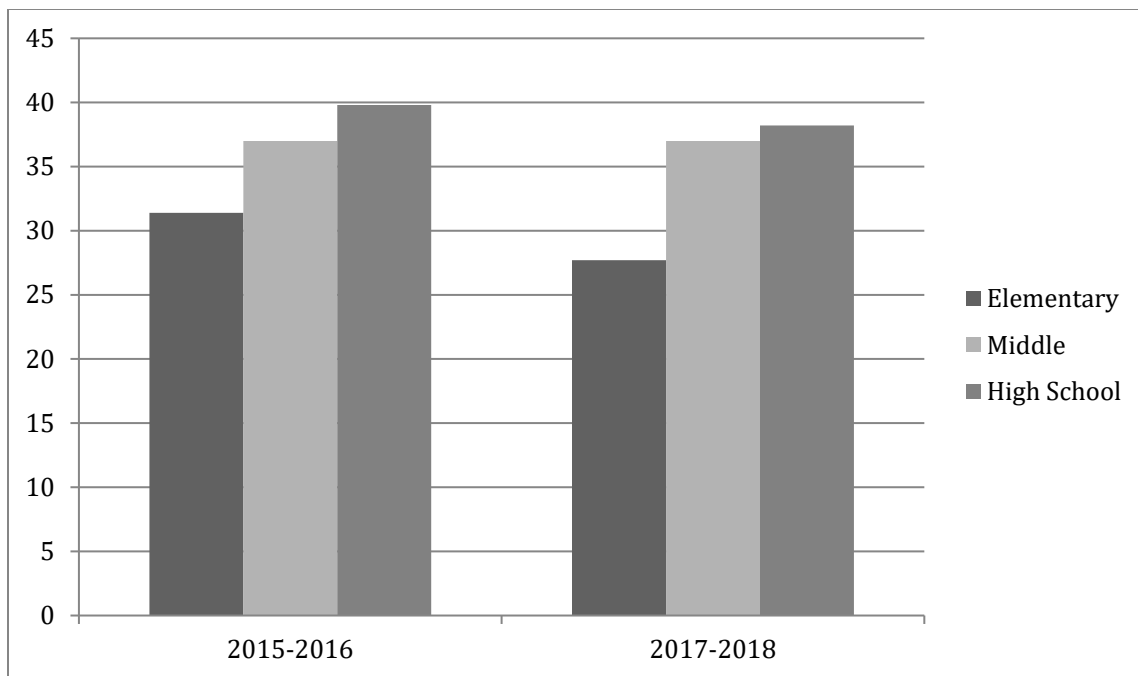


Figure 3.5. Percentages of sworn police officer participation in teaching law related courses for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

CHAPTER IV**SCHOOL POLICIES FOR SCHOOL POLICE: A NATIONAL INVESTIGATION**

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

Abstract

The degree to which differences were present in the types of weapons carried and policies that govern their sworn police officers by school level was investigated herein. National archival data were obtained and analyzed from the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Survey on Crime and Safety. Inferential analyses revealed the presence of statistically significant differences by school level. High schools consistently had higher percentages of sworn police officers who carried these types of weapons than middle schools and elementary schools. Middle schools had higher percentages of sworn police officers who carried these weapons than elementary schools. Statistically significant differences, however, were not established in the percentages of sworn police officers who wore body cameras, policies for use of restraints, policies for making arrests and for reporting offenses.

Keywords: Elementary school; High school; Middle school; School resource officer; School safety; School survey on crime and safety

SCHOOL POLICIES FOR THEIR POLICE: A NATIONAL INVESTIGATION

School resource officers are used extensively, especially in secondary schools, to maintain safe, orderly, and secure school environments (Na & Gottfredson, 2013). Na and Gottfredson further asserted that the increased use of police in schools increased, partly, due to increased funding from the federal government through a grant sponsored by the Department of Justice Office of Community Policing Services called Cops in Schools in 1999 after the shootings at Columbine High School. Prior to this highly publicized event that sparked the surplus of funds from the federal government, there had been increasing rates of juvenile crime throughout the 1980s and 1990s that climaxed with the Columbine High School event (Na & Gottfredson, 2013). The influx of crime spiraling through the decades, led to the passage of the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994. This Act urged school leaders to implement zero tolerance policies to make schools safer from drugs, alcohol, and guns.

The prevalence of school resource officers persists in response to the school administrator responsibility of creating a safe learning environment. According to Weiler and Cray (2011), six core standards were related to effective school leadership as issued by the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium. Within these standards, the charge given to school administrators was to foster a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment (Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium, 1997). As such, with a lack of skillset and training to set the safe environment, many administrators welcomed the idea of additional resources to assist in properly addressing the issues that threaten to disrupt this safe learning environment (Dunn, 2002). Furthermore, Dunn (2002) asserted that administrators, being fully trained in educational and leadership concepts, were not

well versed in safety protocols such as responding to potential acts of violence such as gang violence and an armed intruder.

As the necessity for school resource officers has increased over time, the roles and purpose of these officers have evolved, often without formalized policies or guidelines locally, within state legislation, or nationally (Counts, et al., 2018). As recommended within the Safe School-based Enforcement through Collaboration Understanding and Respect State and Local Policy Rubric, developed by the Departments of Justice and Education, needs assessment and program evaluation are important in determining how to most effectively utilize funds and resources for the safety efforts of schools such as the school resource officer duties. Counts et al. (2018) recalled that one of the primary recommendations issued by the Departments of Justice and Education within the rubric was the development of a memorandum of understanding, a document that clarifies roles and responsibilities between school districts, local law enforcement, and other critical stakeholders. Although school resource officers are one of the fastest growing branches of policing (NASRO, 2012), no federal guidelines exist in which procedures have been outlined for training school resource officers (Counts et al., 2018). Furthermore, Counts et al. (2018) contended that a total of 32 states have some legislation in regard to the school resource officer. After analyzing national legislation, researchers determined that only 13 states require a memorandum of understanding, no states require collection of data to determine the need for evaluation of the school resource officer program. Furthermore, Counts et al. (2018) recommended that states (a) establish policies regarding the use of school resource officers; (b) establish a memorandum of understanding/memorandum of agreement that clearly identifies specific roles and

responsibilities for school resource officers; (c) increase school resource officer training to include behavior management, child development, communication techniques, and disability awareness; and (d) develop a data collection and reporting systems that allow programs to be evaluated for effectiveness in reaching goals for the purpose of decision making and evaluating school resource officer programs. Overall, the researchers of this study revealed a substantial lack of regulation and policy in regard to training and maintaining school resource officer programs.

Due to the ambiguity of school resource officer and school administrator duties; oftentimes, campus climate would influence the range of responsibilities assigned to school resource officers. To that end, Weiler and Cray (2011) suggested that school principals establish memorandums of understanding with police agencies to establish clear guidelines for police guidelines after studying various duty assignment patterns issued to school resource officers. Empirical analyses of sworn police officer behavior and activities at various school levels are essential to ascertain the effects of police interactions and presence on student achievement.

The practice of developing written governance documents or memorandums of understanding that provide structure and formal organization emerged from a lack of clear guidelines and responsibilities between the school administrator and the school resource officer (Bond, 2001; Kim & Geronimo, 2010; United States Department of Education, 2014). Kim and Geronimo (2010) urged that these agreements and memorandums simultaneously outline the rights of students to delineate understanding among all parties and prevent the infringement of students' rights. These statements of understanding should include providing strong, clear due process protections for all

students in disciplinary policies, appropriate communication, fair hearings, and an appeals process to enhance fairness, clarify who is in charge of discipline, who makes the decision to arrest a student, and who should approach a disruptive student (Bond, 2001; Finn & McDevitt, 2005; Kim & Geronimo, 2010; United States Department of Education, 2014).

In all likelihood, schools use resource officers because they are widely regarded as effective for maintaining school safety (Na and Gottfredson, 2013). Furthermore, Na and Gottfredson (2013) determined that in the 2007-2008 school year, principals in 21.1% of the nation's schools reported that at least one full-time police officer was stationed at the school once a week. These principals reported that the vast majority of officers in their schools wore uniforms or other identifiable clothing (93.7%) and carried a firearm (81.7%); only 63.5% carried chemical sprays and 43.8% stun guns. Principals also reported that 76% of their officers were involved in maintaining discipline, 77.5% in mentoring students, 45.8% in teaching law-related education courses, and 62.4% in training for teachers and staff related to security or crime prevention.

In summarizing the literature on the prevention of school violence, McLaughlin and Miller (2008) noted:

Numerous high-profile forms of violence in the school setting have led to an atmosphere of fear and apprehension among many students, teachers, administrators, health care professionals, parents, and communities about the safety of their schools. While statistics show that schools, in general, remain safer than their surrounding neighborhoods, every community must take steps to address school violence. (pp. 439-440)

In a later investigation, Jennings et al. (2011) examined the associations between law enforcement and school security measures and the incidence of violence and serious violence in a large nationally representative sample of high schools. Using data collected as part of the 2006 School Survey on Crime and Safety by the National Center of Education Statistics, researchers analyzed the report of contextual conditions, safety measures utilized, and the number of crimes occurring at schools across the United States. The focus was placed on 954 high schools because of the exposure of this school level to the more serious crime problems. Within the context of this study, the number of school resource officers and security guards were both positively associated with school violence, but only the security guard variable was statistically significant. School violence was statistically significantly lower in schools where the security officer or school resource officer was in uniform; whereas school violence was statistically significantly higher in schools where the security officer or school resource officers carried firearms. Furthermore, school violence was lower in schools that had critical incident plans and had weapons-detection devices in place.

Maskaly et al. (2011) investigated the relationship between school characteristics and school crime by security personnel type, citing:

Although school crime and the use of security measures to combat school crime has been the focus of a number of prior empirical studies, there is substantially less information known about the relationship between school resources officers and private security guards in school and school crime. (p. 159)

Using data from the 2006 School Survey on Crime and Safety by the National Center of Education Statistics, researchers evaluated school characteristics were related

to school crime in schools that did not have any security personnel or utilize school resource officers only or private security guards only by school size. The use-of-force capabilities that the security personnel had was associated with school crime. School crime was determined to be higher in larger sized schools and in middle schools relative to elementary schools, regardless of whether school resource officers or private security guards were utilized. Furthermore, the effect of medium-sized and large-sized schools on school crime was nearly one and one half times greater in schools with private security guards only compared to schools with resource officers only.

Examining the effects of school crime variables, Maskaly et al. (2011) determined, with the use-of-force capabilities by school security and school crime variables, that school crime was higher in school resource officer schools only that had mid-level force capabilities (i.e., pepper spray and/or tasers). More extreme use-of-force capabilities available to school resource officers may provide some degree of deterrence for school crime whereas mid-level force capabilities are not necessarily providing the same deterrent effect.

School crime is a major issue for policymakers, educators, students, parents, and concerned citizens (Chen, 2008). In 1999-2000, 71% of public schools in the United States experienced at least one violent incident (Miller & Chandler, 2005). Chen investigated how community characteristics, student background, school climate, and zero-tolerance policies interact to affect school crime. Schools are extensions of the community, and community crime rates have been posited to be associated with school crime (Anderson, 1998, Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Mateu-Galabert, 2003). Chen (2008) analyzed data from the 2000 School Survey on Crime and Safety to support the school

crime model, where the elements of school culture and structure exert a substantial effect on school crimes. The higher the level of student mobility and discipline problems, the higher the school crime rate becomes; and that control-based, punitive programs failed to demonstrate effects on school crime. Also determined was that a positive school climate in combination with necessary security control, was necessary to improve school safety and reduce school crimes.

Evidence that officer placement has the potential to raise complex challenges for students' rights was recognized by Theriot and Cuellar (2016). Particularly, students were at risk of unreasonable search and seizure, inappropriate sharing of confidential information, and students' overall decreased feelings of safety were reviewed among other challenges. Theriot and Cuellar (2016) concluded that more research was needed about the School Resource Officer programs' intended and unintended outcomes. Moreover, several research-based recommendations for the assignment of school resource officers including, frequent opportunities for formal and information between the officers and school leaders; respectful, positive, and nonthreatening interactions amongst all stakeholders of the school in regard to the sworn officer; recognize the potential for violating students' rights; formal governance documents and memorandums of understanding to address responsibility of the sworn officer, the administrator, and teachers; and extensive and comprehensive training for all responsible stakeholders to reduce negative outcomes and increase the potential safety and security benefits for students and schools.

As a response to the increasing number of crime prevention strategies and armed presence of officers on campuses, Crawford and Burns (2015) sought to assess the effects

of protective measures, policies, and school/neighborhood characteristics on school violence. From data on the School Survey on Crime and Safety in 2006, Crawford and Burns (2015) determined differences in school violence among grade levels in relation to various law enforcement security measures, school security measures, and school characteristics. Mixed and counterproductive results were present for law enforcement and school security efforts to control school violence.

Statement of the Problem

Theriot (2009) determined that middle schools and high schools with a police officer on campus had fewer arrests for weapons possession and assault charges yet substantially more arrests for disorderly conduct charges than schools without a police officer on campus. Mallett (2016F) stated the following:

Over the past 30 years a partnership among schools and courts has developed through a punitive and harmful framework, to the detriment of many vulnerable children and adolescents. This phenomenon is often referred to as the “school to prison pipeline (Kang-Brown et al., 2013) or “school pathways to the juvenile justice system.” (p. 15)

According to Hopkins, Hewstone, and Hantzi (1992), students started with marginally positive views of police that decreased over the course of a school year. Furthermore, concerns are present about students’ rights and the introduction to the juvenile justice system due to the integration of armed police officers in schools (Theriot & Cuellar, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this article was to examine the degree to which differences existed in the types of weapons carried while on campus and policies used to govern their sworn police officers by school level (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school). In particular, the degree to which differences were present in sworn police officers who had carried stun guns, chemical sprays, firearms, body cameras, restraints; and officers who made arrests and reported offenses by school level were determined. Also, the degree to which differences were present in policies for sworn law enforcement officers to report offenses by school level was determined.

Significance of the Study

Violence and crime within and around schools in the United States are a major topic of emphasis. Consequently, attention has been given to topics such as school security, police, surveillance cameras, and other measures of school safety (Kupchik & Ward, 2014). Despite the rapid expansion of police officers in schools and vast financial implications to local, state, and federal budgets over the last 15 years, the body of research on this subject is very limited (Theriot, 2016). Very few researchers (e.g., Cohen, 1985) have investigated measures to regulate deviance in school where authorities incorporate crime prevention and punishment practices. In fact, most research on school resource officers have concentrated on crime and violence rates on campus to substantiate the need for school resource officer programs. Therefore, gaps are present in the literature where modes of deviance regulation are examined. Empirical analyses of the types of weapons carried by sworn police officers on campus, with respect to school level, are vital to the determination of student success and perception of the police and

the school environment. Furthermore, data are needed to understand student reactions to school programs that are linked to reductions in violent and delinquent behavior, truancy, substance abuse, and risky sexual activity (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002; Stewart, 2003; Theriot, 2016; Thomas & Smith, 2004; Whitlock, 2006). School leaders, policymakers, and student advocacy groups may be motivated to consult more effective methods and incentives to decrease student infractions on campus and increase safety measures for students.

Research Questions

The overarching research question addressed in this study was: What is the difference in the types of weapons and carried by police officers while on school campus and the policies that govern law enforcement officers by school level? Sub-questions present within this overarching question were: (a) What is the difference in police officers who carried a stun gun while on campus by school level?; (b) What is the difference in police officers who carried chemical sprays while on campus by school level?; (c) What is the difference in police officers who carried firearms while on campus by school level?; (d) What is the difference in police officers who wore a body camera while on campus by school level?; and, (e) What is the difference in policies for sworn law enforcement officers to use restraints by school level?; (f) What is the difference in policies for sworn law enforcement officers to use firearms by school level?; (g) What is the difference in policies for sworn law enforcement officers to make arrests by school level?; and (h) What is the difference in policies for sworn law enforcement officers to report offenses by school level?

Method

Research Design

For this empirical investigation, a non-experimental, causal comparative research design was present (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Dependent variables were responses to nine questions regarding (a) police officers with a stun gun while on campus, (b) police officers with chemical sprays while on campus, (c) police officers with firearms while on campus, (d) police officers who wear a body camera while on campus, (e) policies for sworn law enforcement officers to use restraints, (f) policies for sworn law enforcement officers to use firearms, (g) policies for sworn law enforcement officers to make arrests, and (h) policies for sworn law enforcement officers to report offenses. The independent variable was school level (i.e., elementary, middle, and high schools). Archival data from the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 National School Safety Datasets were analyzed in this study.

Participants and Instrumentation

The unit of analysis for this study was elementary, middle, and high school principals across the United States. Principals or persons who are most knowledgeable about school crime and school policies to provide a safe environment for school were asked to complete a questionnaire voluntarily as part of the School Survey on Crime and Safety (2018), conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics on behalf of the United States Department of Education. For the purpose of this study, data were obtained from the School Survey on Crime and Safety (2018) for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years. The number of school administrators who completed this principal questionnaire in the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years was around 4,000.

The School Survey on Crime and Safety (2018) self-administered questionnaire was intended to collect information on school practices and programs, school mental health services, number of incidents, parent and community involvement at school, limitations on crime prevention, school security staff, staff training, frequency of crime and violence at school, disciplinary problems and actions, and school characteristics (School Survey on Crime and Safety, 2018) The School Survey on Crime and Safety has been conducted seven times including: 1999-2000, 2003-2004, 2005-2006, 2007-2008, 2009-2010, 2015-2016, and 2017-2018.

Archival data were collected from the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 National School Safety Datasets. A codebook was used to recode the data from the following survey questions: (a) Did any of the sworn law enforcement officers (including school resource officers at your school routinely carry physical restraints, carry chemical aerosol sprays, carry a firearm, or wear a body camera?; and (b) Did your school or school district have any formalized policies or written documents (memorandum of use, memorandum of agreement) that outlined the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of sworn law enforcement officers (including school resource officers at school?; (g) Did these formalized policies or written documents include language defining the role of sworn law enforcement officers (including school resource officers) at school in the following areas: student discipline, use of physical or chemical restraints, use of firearms, making arrests on school grounds, and/or reporting of criminal offenses to a law enforcement agency? Respondents of the survey completed the seven survey questions with a Yes or a No.

Results

To ascertain the extent to which differences were present in the types of weapons carried while on campus and policies used to govern their sworn police officers at elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools, Pearson chi-square procedures were conducted. This statistical method was the optimal statistical procedure because of the presence of frequency data for the survey questions (i.e., Yes or No) by school level (i.e., elementary, middle, high). When both variables are categorical, chi-squares procedures are the statistical procedure of choice (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). With a large sample size, the criteria for using Pearson chi-squares were met.

Results for Sworn Police Officers with a Stun Gun by School Level in the 2015-2016 School Year

With respect to sworn police officers who carried a stun gun in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 12.20, p = .002$, below small effect size, Cramer's V of .09 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.1, high schools were almost four times more likely to have sworn police officers who carried a stun gun than elementary schools. Middle schools almost three times more likely to have sworn police officers who carried a stun gun than were elementary schools.

Insert Table 4.1 about here

Results for Sworn Police Officers Who Carried Physical Restraints by School Level in the 2017-2018 School Year

Regarding sworn police officers who carried physical restraints in 2017-2018 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 42.59, p < .001$, small size, Cramer's V of .15. As delineated in Table 4.2, high schools were more than three times more likely to have sworn police officers who carried a physical restraint than were elementary schools. Middle schools were almost three times more likely to have sworn police officers who carried a physical restraint than were elementary schools.

 Insert Table 4.2 about here

Results for Sworn Police Officers Who Carried a Chemical Spray by School Level Across Both School Years

Concerning sworn police officers who carried a chemical spray in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 24.91, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .13 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.3, high schools were more than four times more likely to have sworn police officers who carried a chemical spray than elementary schools. Middle schools were more than three times more likely to have sworn police officers who carried a chemical spray than elementary schools. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 25.57, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .11 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 4.3, more than three times as

many high schools had sworn police officers who carried a chemical spray than elementary schools. More than three times as many middle schools had sworn police officers who carried a chemical spray than elementary schools.

Insert Table 4.3 about here

Results for Sworn Police Officers Who Carried a Firearm by School Level Across Both School Years

Regarding sworn police officers who carried a firearm in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 22.63, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .13 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.4, high schools were almost than four times more likely to have sworn police officers who carried a firearm than elementary schools. Middle schools were almost three times more likely to have sworn police officers who carried a firearm than elementary schools. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 19.20, p < .001$, small effect size, Cramer's V of .10 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 4.4, more than three times as many high schools had sworn police officers who carried a firearm than elementary schools. More than two times as many middle schools had sworn police officers who carried a firearm than elementary schools.

Insert Table 4.4 about here

Results for Sworn Police Officers Who Wore a Body Camera by School Level Across Both School Years

Regarding sworn police officers who had a body camera in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was not revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 4.50, p = .10$. As revealed in Table 4.5, similar percentages of sworn police officers wore a body camera in this school year, regardless of school level. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 3.39, p = .18$. As delineated in Table 4.5, similar percentages of sworn police officers wore a body camera in this school year, regardless of school level.

Insert Table 4.5 about here

Results for Policies for Sworn Police Officers Use of Restraints by School Level Across Both School Years

Regarding policies for carrying restraints by sworn police officers in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was not revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 0.37, p = .84$. As delineated in Table 4.6, similar percentages of sworn police officers carried restraints in this school year, regardless of school level. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present, $\chi^2(2) = 3.39, p = .18$. As delineated in Table 4.6, similar percentages of sworn police officers carried restraints in this school year, regardless of school level.

Insert Table 4.6 about here

Results for Policies for Sworn Police Officers Who Made Arrests by School Across Both School Years

Regarding policies for sworn police officers who made arrests in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was not revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 0.12, p = .94$. As delineated in Table 4.7, similar percentages of policies were present for sworn police officers who made arrests, regardless of school level. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 2.43, p = .30$. As revealed in Table 4.7, similar percentages of policies were established for sworn police officers who had made arrests, regardless of school level.

Insert Table 4.7 about here

Results for Policies for Sworn Police Officers Who Reported Offenses Across Both School Years

Regarding policies for sworn police officers who reported offenses in 2015-2016 on elementary, middle, and high school campuses, a statistically significant difference was not revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 0.24, p = .89$. As delineated in Table 4.8, similar percentages of policies were revealed for sworn police officers who reported offenses, regardless of school level. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant

difference was not yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 2.35, p = .32$. As revealed in Table 4.8, similar percentages of policies were present for sworn police officers, regardless of school level.

Insert Table 4.8 about here

Discussion

The types of weapons carried while on campus and policies used to govern sworn police officers on campus were investigated by school level in this multiyear nationwide investigation. For the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years, statistically significant differences were not established in each school level. High schools in both the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years had statistically significantly higher percentages of sworn police officers who carried weapons than middle schools and elementary schools. Middle schools had statistically significantly higher percentage of sworn police officers who carried weapons than elementary schools. Depicted in Figures 4.1 through 4.5 are the representations of the stair-step percentages for school police office types of weapons that decreased from high schools to middle schools and from middle schools to elementary schools. These representations were present in each of the variable investigated (i.e., stun guns, chemical sprays, firearms, body cameras).

Insert Figures 4.1 through 4.5 about here

Regarding policies for sworn police officers on campus, inconsistent results were established across the three school levels. With regard to policies for sworn police

officers to use restraints, the 2015-2016 school year followed a stair-step effect with high schools having the highest percentages, followed by middle schools, and then by elementary schools. However, in the 2017-2018 school year, elementary schools had the highest percentages, followed by high schools, and then by middle schools. Concerning policies for sworn police officers who made arrests, the statistically significant higher use of the policy did not yield a stair step effect across school levels. The 2015-2016 school year followed a slight stair step effect with the higher percentage being at the high school, followed by middle school, then elementary school. However, in the 2017-2018 school year, elementary schools had a statistically higher percentage of policies for officers who made arrests, followed by high schools, then middle schools. With respect to policies for sworn police officers who reported offenses, inconsistent results were present across the three school levels. The 2015-2016 school year yielded a stair step effect with high schools reporting more offenses, followed by middle schools, then elementary schools. In the 2017-2018 school year, middle schools had a higher percentage of policies for officers who reported offenses, followed by elementary schools, then high schools. Depicted in Figures 4.6 through 4.8 are the representations of the inconsistent percentages across school level and across school year. These representations were present in each of the survey items examined.

Insert Figures 4.6 through 4.8 about here

Results of the 2017-2018 school year, the most recent school year of data, were indicative of similar findings as the 2015-2016 school year despite the increase of the

types of weapons. With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a similar stair step effect was present with high schools having higher percentages of sworn police officers carrying weapons followed by middle schools, with elementary schools having the lowest percentages of sworn police officer weapons carrying weapons. However, in regard to policy, high schools followed elementary schools in the use of restraints but had higher percentages than middle schools. In respect to policy regarding arrests, high schools very closely followed elementary schools, but had higher percentages than middle schools. Regarding policy for officers who reported offenses, middle schools had the highest percentage of schools with policies, followed by elementary schools and then by high schools. The percentages of sworn police officers with weapons on school campuses has increased as the years progressed. This statement is evident in the results as the frequencies of police officer participation increased across all school levels. Because each school level had equal access to resources that made school police responsibility available, it appears that the school level had an effect on the frequencies and types of weapons carried by sworn police officers and the policies that governed them in both years investigated.

Connections with Existing Literature

As documented in this study, high schools had statistically significantly higher percentages of their sworn police officers who carried weapons than middle schools and elementary schools. Middle schools had higher percentages of their sworn police officers who carried weapons than did elementary schools. Results delineated herein are congruent with the findings of previous researchers (e.g., Counts et al., 2018; Devlin & Gottfredson, 2018; Dunn, 2002; Na & Gottfredson, 2013) who established the mission of

providing a safe and orderly school campus and the necessity of formalized documents to govern sworn police officer activity. According to Kim and Geronimo (2010), the agreements and memorandums simultaneously outline the rights of students to delineate understanding among all parties and prevent the infringement of students' rights.

Na and Gottfredson (2013) contended that schools use resource officers because they are widely regarded as effective for maintaining school safety. As high schools expose school resource officers to more serious crime problems, the number of school resource officers and types of weapons as identified in the study are justified. Maskaly et al. (2011) evaluated school characteristics related to school crime and the types of officers needed due to the characteristics that further necessitated the use of force needed to maintain order. In many cases, schools are extensions of the community, and community crime rates have been posited to be associated with school crime (Anderson, 1998; Bowen & Bowen, 1999; Mateu-Galabert, 2003). Within the review of literature, it was apparent that a multitude of factors play into the safety of a campus in regard to the types of weapons and security needed. As delineated in the results of this study, police officers have utilized varying degrees of use of force time and a greater variance of types of weapons to perform safety protocols with time.

Recommendations for Future Research

Some recommendations for further research studies can be made based on the findings of this empirical, multiyear nationwide study. First, this investigation was restricted to those schools that responded to the national questionnaire on a voluntary basis; therefore, researchers are recommended to replicate this study from a more formalized, uniformed collection that would represent a greater population of campuses

from across the country. Also, researchers are recommended to conduct this national study at individual state levels. Next, only police officer types of weapons such as stun guns, chemical sprays, firearms, body cameras, restraints, and policies for officers who made arrests and reported offenses by school level were used as variables for this study. As such, researchers are encouraged to extend the study to more variables present within the National School Safety Datasets. Furthermore, researchers are encouraged to investigate(a) sworn police presence while at school and (b) sworn police officer activity while at school. Finally, researchers are suggested to perform qualitative studies on the nature of sworn police officer types of weapons and policies that protect them on school campuses that evaluate police effectiveness, teacher-police relationship, student efficacy, and parent-police relations.

Conclusion

In this article, the degree to which differences were present in types of weapons carried and policies that governed of sworn police officers at elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools by school level was addressed. Statistically significant differences were not documented in the policies regarding sworn police officers in 2015-2016 and 2017-2018. For the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years, high schools had statistically significantly higher percentages of sworn police officers who carried different weapons than middle schools. Middle schools had statistically higher percentages than elementary schools. The results of this multiyear national study were congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Counts et al., 2018; Devlin & Gottfredson, 2018; Dunn, 2002; Na & Gottfredson, 2013).

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Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officers Who Carried Stun Guns for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Level	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Elementary	122	63.9	69	36.1
Middle	337	68.2	157	31.8
High School	478	75.3	157	24.7

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officers Who Carried Physical Restraints for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Level	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Elementary	240	87.6	34	12.4
Middle	677	94.3	41	5.7
High School	792	97.7	19	2.3

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officers Who Carried Chemical Sprays for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	111	58.1	80	41.9
Middle	358	72.5	136	27.5
High School	486	76.5	149	23.5
2017-2018				
Elementary	176	64.2	98	35.8
Middle	549	76.5	169	23.5
High School	643	79.3	168	20.7

Table 4.4

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officers Who Carried Firearms for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	163	85.3	28	14.7
Middle	455	92.1	39	7.9
High School	606	95.4	29	4.6
2017-2018				
Elementary	244	89.1	30	10.9
Middle	682	95.0	33	5.0
High School	778	95.9	99	4.1

Table 4.5

Descriptive Statistics of Sworn Police Officers Who Wore Body Cameras for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	27	14.1	164	85.9
Middle	84	17.0	410	83.0
High School	129	20.3	506	79.7
2017-2018				
Elementary	82	29.9	192	70.1
Middle	251	35.0	467	65.0
High School	292	36.0	519	64.0

Table 4.6

Descriptive Statistics for Policies of Sworn Police Officers Use of Restraints for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	39	69.6	17	30.4
Middle	166	71.2	67	28.8
High School	248	72.9	92	27.1
2017-2018				
Elementary	72	76.6	22	23.4
Middle	207	71.4	107	28.6
High School	310	74.3	212	26.5

Table 4.7

Descriptive Statistics for Policies of Sworn Police Officers Who Made Arrests for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	32	64.0	18	36.0
Middle	142	64.5	78	35.5
High School	234	69.9	101	30.1
2017-2018				
Elementary	86	86.9	13	13.1
Middle	409	82.9	57	17.1
High School	771	86.7	133	13.3

Table 4.8

Descriptive Statistics for Policies of Sworn Police Officers Who Reported Offenses for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 School Years

School Year and School Level	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2015-2016				
Elementary	53	88.3	7	11.7
Middle	241	89.6	28	10.4
High School	361	90.3	39	9.8
2017-2018				
Elementary	97	92.4	8	7.6
Middle	331	94.0	21	6.0
High School	445	91.2	43	8.8

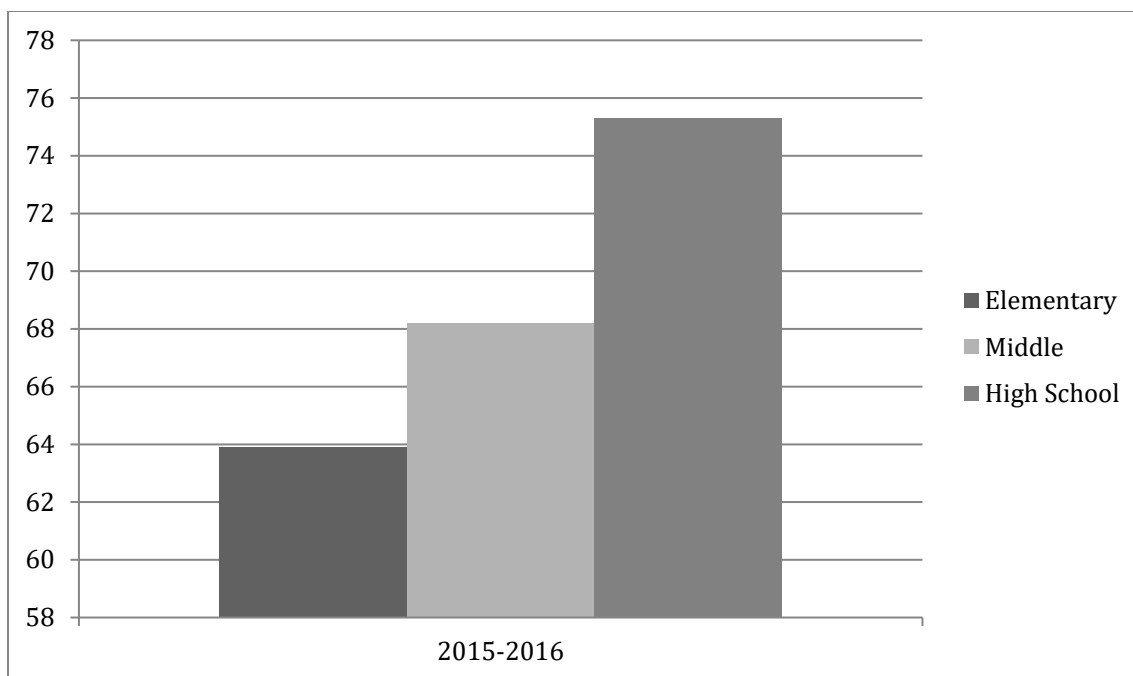


Figure 4.1. Percentages of sworn police officers who had carried stun guns for the 2015-2016 school year.

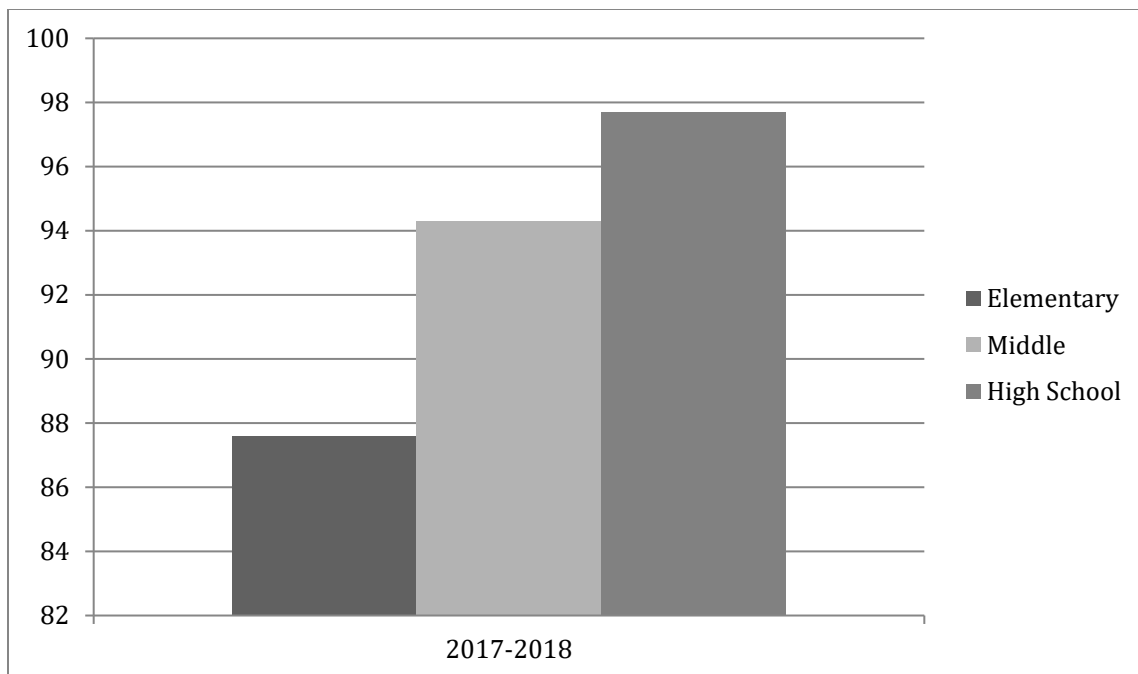


Figure 4.2. Percentages of sworn police officers who carried physical restraints for the 2017-2018 school year.

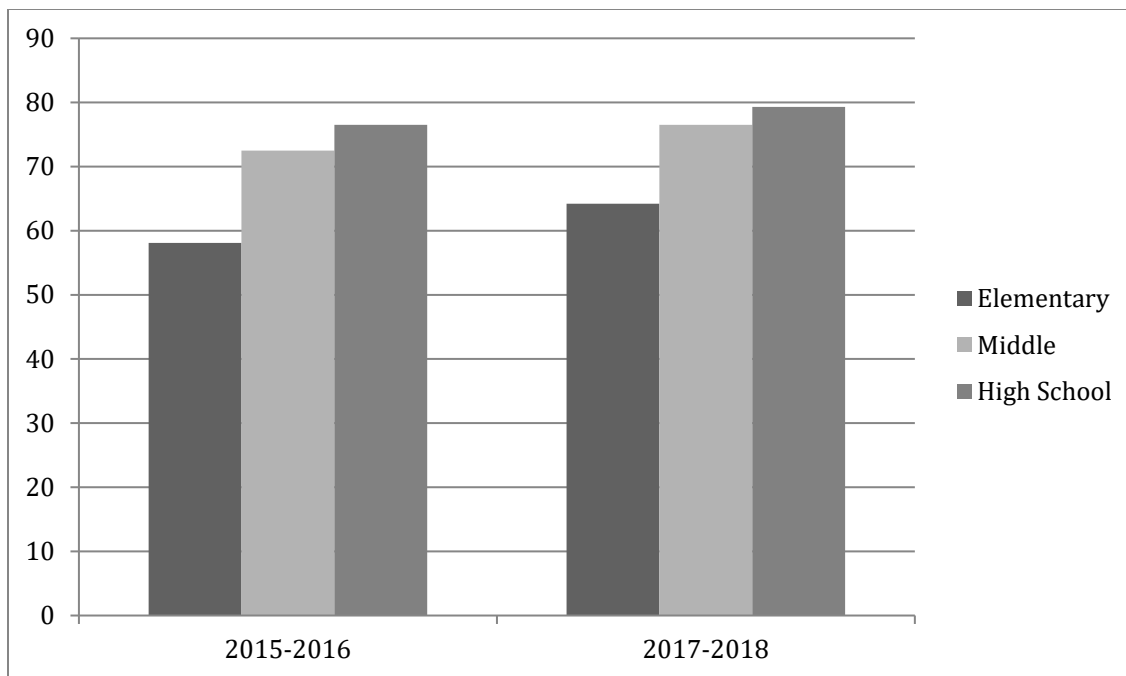


Figure 4.3. Percentages of sworn police officers who carried chemicals sprays for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

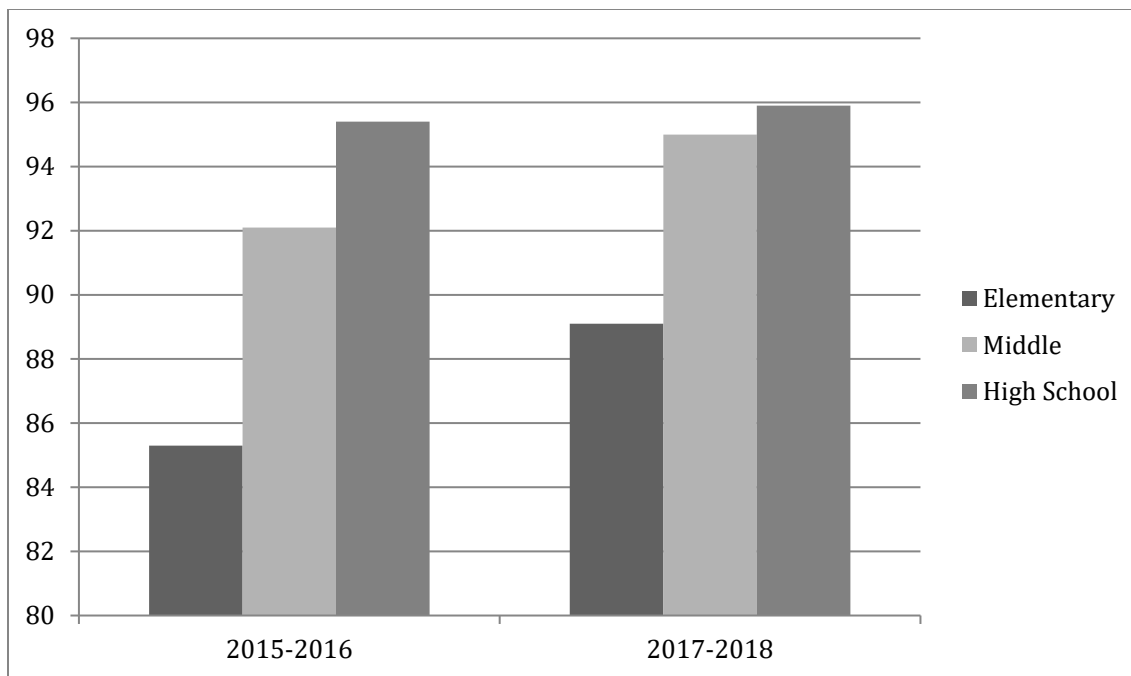


Figure 4.4. Percentages of sworn police officers who had carried firearms for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

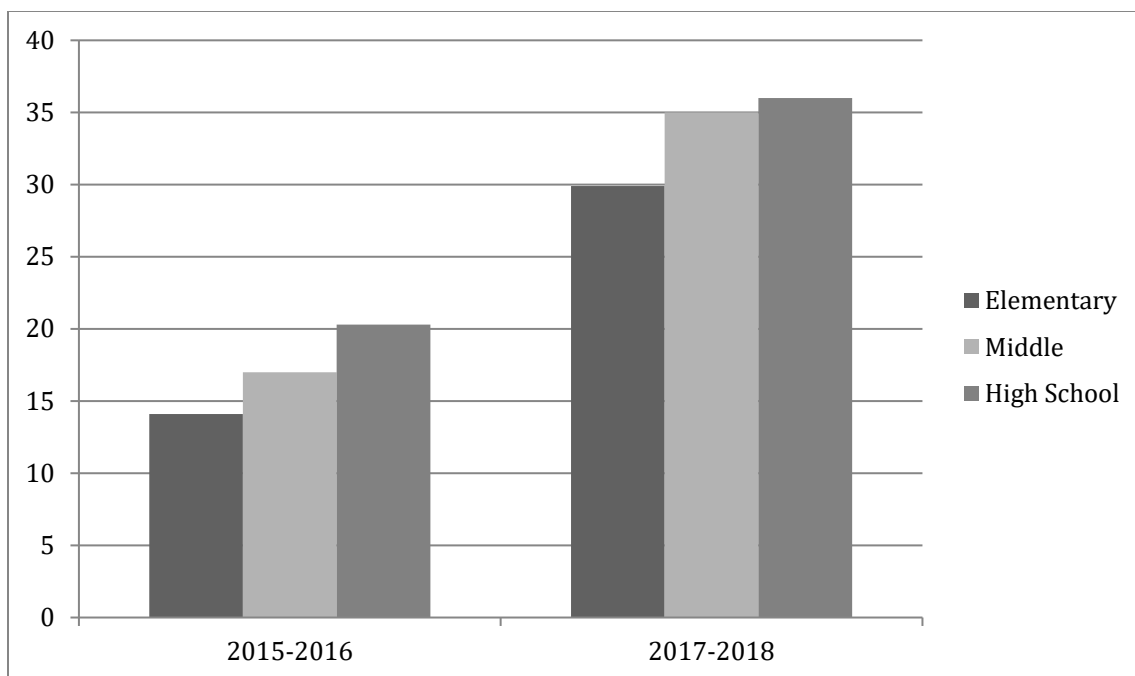


Figure 4.5. Percentages of sworn police officers who wore body cameras for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

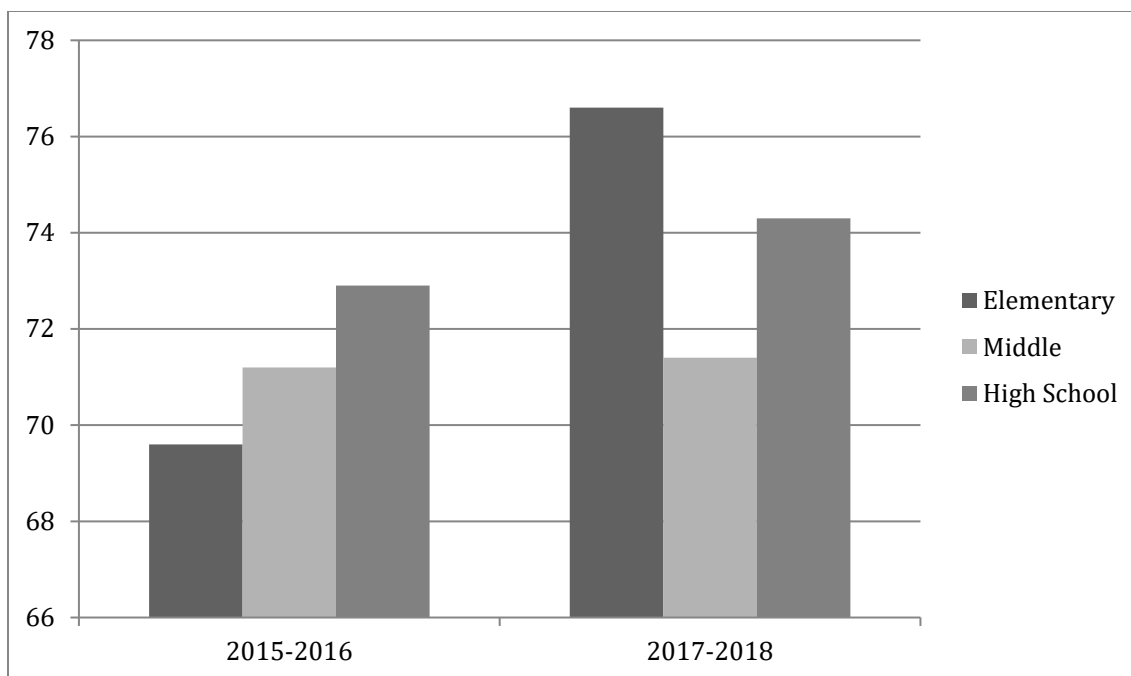


Figure 4.6. Percentages for policies of sworn police officers to include the use of restraints for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

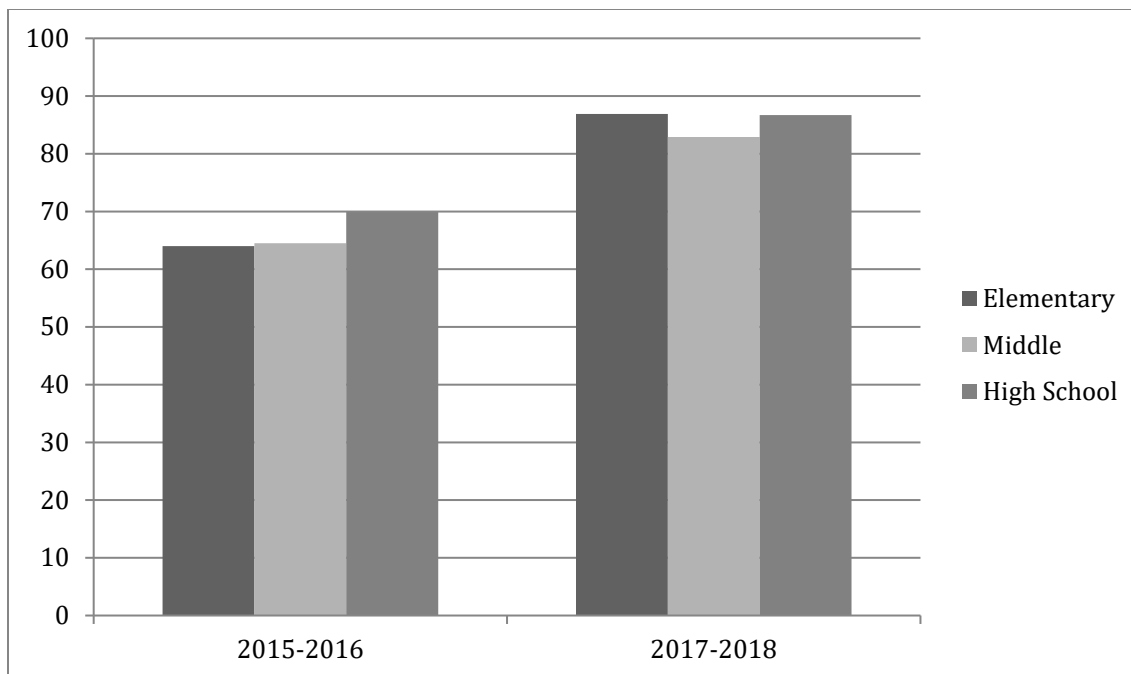


Figure 4.7. Percentages for policies of sworn police officers who made arrests for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

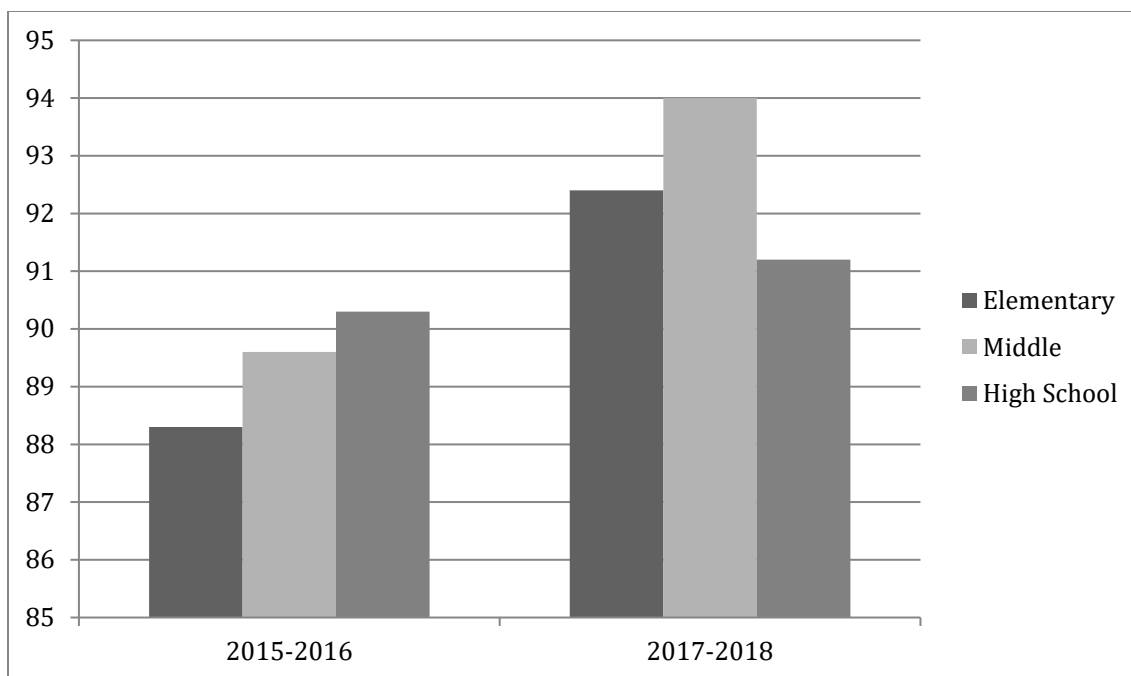


Figure 4.8. Percentages for policies of sworn police officers who reported offenses for the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The overall purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine sworn police officer presence, activity, and types of weapons and policies that governed sworn police officers by school level. In the first study, the degree to which differences were present in sworn police officer presence (i.e., while students are arriving and leaving school, at school activities, at other times, and during all instructional hours at school) by school level was determined. In the second study, the extent to which differences existed in police activity (i.e., participation in discipline, solving school problems, prevention training, student mentoring, and teaching law related classes) by school level was addressed. In the third study, the degree to which differences existed in the types of weapons carried while on campus (i.e., carried stun guns, chemical sprays, firearms, body cameras, restraints; and officers who made arrests and reported) and policies used to govern their sworn police officers by school level was examined. In all three studies, the extent to which consistencies were present in schools across two school years was addressed.

For each of the three studies in this journal-ready dissertation, the results are discussed and summarized in this chapter. Then, implications for policy and practice will be provided, followed by recommendations for future research. A summary will conclude this chapter.

Discussion of Article One Results

The results of the statistical analyses for sworn police officer presence in elementary, middle, and high schools for the 2015-2016 school year are summarized in

Table 5.1. In each sworn police officer presence variable and in the 2015-2016 school year, high schools had statistically significantly higher levels of police presence than middle schools and middle schools had statistically significantly higher levels than elementary schools. For the 2015-2016 school year, three effect sizes were moderate and three were small (Cohen, 1988).

Table 5.1

Summary of Results of Sworn Police Officer Presence by School Level for the 2015-2016

School Year

Presence Variable	Statistically Significant	Effect Size	Highest Level
Police Officer Presence	Yes	Moderate	High School
During School Hours	Yes	Small	High School
While Students are Arriving or Leaving	Yes	Small	High School
at School Activities	Yes	Moderate	High School
at Other Times	Yes	Small	High School
at for All Instructional Hours	Yes	Moderate	High School

The results of the statistical analyses for sworn police officer presence in elementary, middle, and high schools for the 2017-2018 school year are summarized in Table 5.2. In each sworn police officer presence variable and in the 2017-2018 school year, high schools had statistically significantly higher levels of police presence than middle schools and middle schools had statistically significantly higher levels than elementary schools. For the 2017-2018 school year, two effect sizes were moderate and four were small (Cohen, 1988).

Table 5.2

Summary of Results of Sworn Police Officer Presence by School Level for the 2017-2018

School Year

Presence Variable	Statistically Significant	Effect Size	Highest Level
Police Officer Presence	Yes	Moderate	High School
During School Hours	Yes	Small	High School
While Students are Arriving or Leaving	Yes	Small	High School
at School Activities	Yes	Moderate	High School
at Other Times	Yes	Small	High School
at for All Instructional Hours	Yes	Small	High School

Discussion of Article Two Results

The results of the statistical analyses for sworn police officer participation for elementary, middle, and high schools for the 2015-2016 school year are summarized in Table 5.3. In each sworn police officer participation variable and in the 2015-2016 school year, high schools maintained statistically significantly higher levels of police participation than middle schools and elementary schools. Middle schools had statistically significantly higher rates than elementary schools except in the participation in teaching law related courses. For the 2015-2016 school year, four effect sizes were small (Cohen, 1988).

Table 5.3

Summary of Results of Sworn Police Officer Participation While at School by School Level for the 2015-2016 School Year

Participation Variable	Statistically Significant	Effect Size	Highest Level
Discipline	Yes	Small	High School
Solving School Problems	Yes	Small	High School
Prevention Training	Yes	Small	High School
Student Mentoring	Yes	Small	High School
Teaching Law Related Courses	No		

The results of the statistical analyses for sworn police officer participation for elementary, middle, and high schools for the 2017-2018 school year are summarized in Table 5.4. In each sworn police officer participation variable and in the 2017-2018 school year, high schools had statistically significantly higher percentages of police participation than middle schools and elementary schools. Middle schools had statistically significantly higher percentages of sworn police officer participation than elementary schools. For the 2017-2018 school year, one effect size was moderate, three effect sizes were small, and one was below small (Cohen, 1988).

Table 5.4

Summary of Results for the Sworn Police Officer Participation While at School by School Level for the 2017-2018 School Year

Participation Variable	Statistically Significant	Effect Size	Highest Level
Discipline	Yes	Moderate	High School
Solving School Problems	Yes	Small	High School
Prevention Training	Yes	Small	High School
Student Mentoring	Yes	Small	High School
Teaching Law Related Courses	Yes	Below Small	High School

Discussion of Article Three Results

The results of the statistical analyses for sworn police officer types of weapons carried and policies used to govern them in the 2015-2016 school year are summarized in Table 5.5. In each sworn police officer type of weapon carried and school policy in the 2015-2016 school year, high schools had statistically significantly higher percentages of sworn police officers who carried stun guns, chemical sprays, and firearms than middle schools and elementary schools. Middle schools had statistically significantly higher percentages than elementary schools. For the remaining survey items, similar percentages were present for elementary, middle, and high schools. For the 2015-2016 school year, one effect size was below small and two were small (Cohen, 1988).

Table 5.5

Summary of Results for Sworn Police Officer Types of Weapons Carried and Policies Used to Govern Them by School Level for the 2015-2016 School Year

Type of Weapon or Policy Variable	Statistically Significant	Effect Size	Highest Level
Carried Stun Guns	Yes	Below Small	High School
Carried Chemical Sprays	Yes	Small	High School
Carried Firearms	Yes	Small	High School
Used Body Cameras	No		
Policies for Use of Restraints	No		
Policies for Officers Who Made Arrests	No		
Policies for Officers Who Reported Offenses	No		

The results of the statistical analyses for sworn police officer types of weapons carried and policies used to govern them in the 2017-2018 school year are summarized in Table 5.6. In each sworn police officer types of weapon carried and school policy variable and in the 2017-2018 school year, high schools had statistically significantly higher percentages of sworn police officers who carried stun guns, chemical sprays, and firearms than did middle schools. Middle schools had statistically significantly higher percentages than did elementary schools. The remaining variables in both years did not yield a statistically significant difference. For the 2017-2018 school year, three effect sizes were small (Cohen, 1988).

Table 5.6

Summary of Results for Sworn Police Officer Types of Weapons and Policies Used to Govern Them by School Level for the 2017-2018 School Year

Type of Weapon or Policy Variable	Statistically Significant	Effect Size	Highest Level
Officers Who Carried Physical Restraints	Yes	Small	High School
Carried Chemical Sprays	Yes	Small	High School
Carried Firearms	Yes	Small	High School
Carried Body Cameras	No		
Policies for Use of Restraints	No		
Policies for Officers Who Made Arrests	No		
Policies for Officers Who Reported Offenses	No		

Connections with the Existing Literature

Findings in all three articles were congruent with the previous research discussed in this journal-ready dissertation. As presented in the first investigation, high schools had statistically significantly higher percentages of sworn police officers who were present than did middle schools and elementary schools. These results were consistent with the findings of other researchers (e.g., Crawford & Burns, 2015; Na & Gottfredson, 2013, O’Murphy, 2013; Weisburst, 2019) who conveyed the greater need of school resource officers on high schools, then middle schools, and finally elementary schools in priority order.

As revealed in the second investigation, high schools had statistically significantly higher percentages of sworn police officer participation than did middle schools and elementary schools. Middle schools had higher percentages of sworn police officer participation than did elementary schools. Results delineated herein are congruent with

the findings of previous researchers (e.g., Kim & Geronimo, 2010; Trump, 1998; Zhang, 2019) who documented the purpose of the school resource officer to provide students and staff with a safe learning environment to ensure that learning can effectively take place. Further, within the review of literature, it was apparent that a myriad of roles was necessary for sworn police officer effectiveness on school campuses. As delineated in the results of this study, police officers are utilized for multiple roles and these roles have diversified with time and a greater number of officers perform the roles with time.

The findings revealed within the third study were representative of only a few statistically significant results for types of weapons carried and no statistically significant results for the policies used to govern them. These results are congruent with the findings of previous researchers (e.g., Counts et al., 2018; Devlin & Gottfredson, 2018; Dunn, 2002; Na & Gottfredson, 2013) who established the mission of providing a safe and orderly school campus as well as the necessity of formalized documents to govern sworn police officer activity. According to Kim and Geronimo (2010), the agreements and memorandums simultaneously outline the rights of students to delineate understanding among all parties and prevent the infringement of students' rights.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Based on the analyses discussed in this multiyear nationwide investigation, several implications for policy and practice may be recommended. With respect to policy implications, legislators and administrators respectively should make funds available to supplement school campus safety budgets to resolve the threats to safety that exist by school level. As mentioned previously, former-President Obama enacted federal incentives after the school attacks at Sandy Hook; however, funding must be maintained

proactively and more strategically than the incentives provided in 2013. Furthermore, the incentives built a phase-in program where the government shifts the cost to the schools after three years. Maintaining this funding at the federal level will provide a more equitable solution to school violence for schools across the country and will provide a system-based approach to the effectiveness of the sworn police officer program. Schools that are faced with high populations, urban environments, and high proportions of low-income students, high rates of violence and serious violent incidents should have access to safety programs.

Another policy implication from the local government standpoint is the need for neighboring communities to have increased safety protocols in place to create a better environment for the school community. It would be beneficial for students to have access to more positive interactions with police from a young age to cultivate better relationships between the police officers and the community at large. Henceforth, more funds need to be made available from federal, state, and local governments for schools, neighborhoods, communities, and apartment complexes to finance these safety programs for the greater good of all of society. Policymakers should take note of the documented differences of violence and safety in schools to justify further the increased spending on the school resource officer program.

With respect to implications for practice, school administrators and education leaders alike should prioritize the need for police presence in elementary schools. As mentioned in the investigation, elementary students were positively affected by the influence of sworn police officers at the earlier age. Therefore, elementary schools need to have sworn police presence on more than just a rotating basis. The number of students

in primary, elementary, and intermediate is statistically significantly smaller than students in middle school and high school. The pipeline effect to influence positive relationships should begin as early as possible. As a result of the reduced interactions, middle school students and high school students who are not affiliated with societal enforcement are criminalized at a much greater rate than necessary. Practice should include disciplining students with realistic principles from society. Moreover, to mitigate racial tensions further and the effects of the school to prison pipeline within the community, the introduction to students of various racial and ethnic backgrounds needs to occur as early as possible. Students should be exposed to the implications that would occur in the real world without further filling the school to prison pipeline.

Another strategy that educational leaders can implement is professional development. Administrators, teachers, and police should be exposed to culturally responsive teaching, classroom management, and fostering desired behaviors is necessary. As schools model society with the spectrum of demographics, the insensitivity to different modes of thought further strain the climate of schools with regard to student life. Development of school officer and school administrator roles is necessary to further cultivate disciplinary relationships concerning best practices for student behaviors.

Recommendations for Future Research

Some recommendations for further research studies can be made based on the findings of the three articles in this journal-ready dissertation. First, this investigation was restricted to those schools that responded to the national questionnaire on a voluntary basis; therefore, researchers are recommended to replicate this study from a more formalized, uniformed collection that would represent a greater population of campuses

from across the country. Also, researchers are recommended to conduct this national study at individual state levels. Next, only sworn police officer presence, participation, types of weapons, and policies for officers were used as variables for this study. As such, researchers are encouraged to extend the study to more variables as present within the National School Safety Datasets. Furthermore, it is recommended that researchers perform qualitative studies on the nature of sworn police officer participation, types of weapons and policies on school campuses that evaluate police effectiveness, teacher-student-police relationships, student efficacy, police efficacy, administrator efficacy, student-police relations, administrator-police relations, and parent-police relations.

Conclusion

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine sworn police officer presence, activity, and types of weapons and policies that govern sworn police officers by school level. School level was determined herein to be related to sworn police officer survey questions. High schools had higher percentages of sworn police officers present, used officers in more diverse capacities, and their sworn police officers carried more diverse types of weapons on campus. For police use of body cameras, percentages for all school levels remained similar and for policies that governed the sworn police officers, all percentages noted remained consistent by school level. With respect to all other variables investigated, consistent findings were established. In both years of national data, a stair step effect was noted, with high schools having statistically significantly higher percentages, followed by middle schools, and then by elementary schools.

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APPENDIX

TO: Cornelius Gilder, Cornelius Gilder, John Slate
Education

FROM: Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

DATE: Dec 21, 2020 9:26:03 AM CST

RE: Notice of Receipt of Initial Submission on Dec 21, 2020 9:26:03 AM CST

STUDY #: IRB-2020-381

STUDY TITLE: Police Presence, Activities, and Policies at Public Schools: A National Analysis

Your IRB submission for the above-referenced study has been received by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs via Cayuse IRB. You will be notified if further information is needed and when this has been reviewed and approved. As a reminder, IRB submissions are reviewed by the IRB in the order applications are received by the IRB office. Additionally, the IRB review and approval process **typically takes two to three weeks to complete** from the time routing of the submission is complete (i.e., once the application receives approval from a PI's department and college), although some applications require additional time.

Sincerely,

Chase Young, Ph.D.
Chair, IRB
Hannah R. Gerber, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, IRB

VITA
Carnelius Dekendrick Gilder, M.Ed

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership, May 2021

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas

Dissertation: Police Presence, Activities, and Policies at Public Schools: A National Analysis

Master of Education in Instructional Leadership, EC-12, May 2012

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas

Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication, Minor in English, December 2006

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas

Superintendent

West Sabine Independent School District, Administration

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

Rural School Education

Social Justice in Education

Principal Performance in Rural Education

Critical Race Theory in Educational Leadership

African American Men in School Leadership

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2020-present West Sabine Independent School District, Superintendent

2016-2020 West Sabine Independent School District, Executive Director of Academics, Curriculum & Instruction, Professional Development, Textbook Coordinator, Campus Administrator

2013-2016 Spring Independent School District
 Dean of Students, Assistant Principal

2012-2013 West Sabine Independent School District, High School Assistant Principal and District Special Services Coordinator

2011-2012 West Sabine Independent School District, Administrative Intern, District Special Services Coordinator, Fourth and Fifth Grade Social Studies Teacher

2009-2011 West Sabine Independent School District,
 Fifth and Sixth Grade Reading and Social Studies Teacher,
 Section 504 Coordinator

2007-2009 West Sabine Independent School District, Fifth Grade Elementary
Reading & English Language Arts Teacher

LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATIONS

Texas State Board for Educator Certification

May 2013 Principal, Grades EC-12
February 2013 Generalist, Grades 4-8
April 2012 Professional Development & Appraisal System (PDAS)
May 2011 Instructional Leadership Development (ILD)
August 2007 Generalist, Grades EC-4
English Language Arts & Reading Grades, 4-8

SCHOLARLY RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Presentations

Gilder, C. D. (2019, February). *Differences in principal performance by school size: A national analysis*. Poster presented at the Conference on Academic Research in Education, Las Vegas, NV.
Gilder, C. D. (2019, April). *Towards achieving the superintendency of a rural school district: An African American male's perspective*. Workshop presented at the annual convention of the Texas Chapter of the National Association for Multicultural Education, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX.

Publications

Gilder, C. D. (2019). *Ten be- "attitudes" of completing your dissertation or writing project. Top Ten Productivity Tips*. Retrieved from:
<https://toptenproductivitytips.com/ten-be-attitudes-completing-dissertation/>

Manuscripts in Progress

Gilder, C. D., & Slate, J. R. (in progress). *Differences in principal performance by school size: A national analysis*.
Gilder, C. D., & Slate, J. R. (in progress). *Differences in school performance by principal experience and tenure: A statewide study*.

HONORS AND AWARDS

April 2018 Dr. Jimmy N. Merchant Graduate Endowed Scholarship, SHSU
Educational Leadership, Department of Education's 40th Annual Awards
Celebration, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Nov 2018 UCEA Barbara L. Jackson Scholar, University Council for Educational
Administration's Annual Convention, Houston, TX.

PROFESSIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

2019-Present American Educational Research Association (AERA)
2018-Present University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA)
2018-Present Textbook and Academic Authors Association (TAA)

- 2017-Present Texas Alliance of Black School Educators
John Maxwell Team
- 2013-Present Texas Association of Secondary School Principals
- 2012-Present National Alliance of Black School Educators

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

- 2019-Present Pineland Early Learning Center, *Board Member*
- 2017-Present Clendon's Hope Memorial Scholarship Fund, *Founder & Chairman*
- 2012-Present Pineland Service Club, Member
- Pineland Day Steering Committee Chairman, 2019
Vice President, Spring 2019
Funds Allocation Committee, Fall 2018-present
- 2008-Present Pineland Community Outreach & Development Services, *Member*
Fundraising Chairman, 2010-present
Groundskeeper, Goodwill Cemetery II