

The Expanding Presence of Police in Schools: An Analysis of Florida's Expansion of School Resource Officers in Schools

The presence of law enforcement in schools, often implemented under a school resource officer (SRO) model, has become an increasingly common feature of public schools in America. This trend towards greater use of law enforcement in schools has occurred despite research that finds a generally negative relationship between the presence of SROs and a number of student outcomes. The case of Florida then, which through state law has required schools to either add SROs or other security personnel, presents a unique opportunity to examine the impacts of SROs on student and school outcomes by prompting schools that might otherwise not employ SROs to do so. To this end, this proposed work will address the following research questions:

1. How has the presence of SROs changed in Florida following passage of state statute?
2. What is the impact of SRO presence on rates of school-based juvenile arrests, school discipline (i.e. suspensions/expulsions), and school violence?

The answering of these questions has the potential to provide important information on the consequences of Florida's expansion of SROs on student and school outcomes. Such information may be useful to those implementing Florida's law as well as to development of future policy.