

*Improving
Student-Centered
Safety by
Removing SROs
from our Schools*

***Please find draft script in note
section below***



I. How Are SROs Harmful?

Effects of Police Presence

- SRO presence generally leads to student alienation and a more threatening school environment.
- There is no conclusive evidence that police presence in school buildings reduces crime among students.
- SROs are more likely to treat young individuals like potential criminals, instead of students.
- For many students, having police officers in school creates trauma in an environment that should be safe and nurturing.

Disproportional Treatment

- In schools where 75% or more of the student population identified as Black, 54% had one or more SROs present, contrasted against just 33% of schools where students identified as all White.
- Black students make up 15% of the nationwide K-12 student population but constitute 31% of all referrals to law enforcement and 36% of all school-based arrests.
- Black students are more likely to be targeted and to receive frequent, harsh treatment.

Disproportional Treatment

- Cedar Rapids:
 - Black students are 6 times more likely than White students to have a complaint filed against them.
 - Black students were arrested at higher rates than White students.
- Des Moines:
 - Between 2021-2022, Black youth comprised 59.2% of all Des Moines public schools' complaints, but made up only 20.8% of the enrolled student population

Disproportional Treatment

- Students with disabilities have different needs that SROs are often not trained to address.
- Students with disabilities are often restrained and secluded by SROs.
- Many students with disabilities are disciplined "because they are not receiving the support, services, interventions, strategies, and modifications to school or district policies that they need."
- The U.S. Department of Education suggests that schools re-examine their policies and procedures to avoid disability discrimination.

Mental Health

- Students feel as though SROs do not protect – they punish.
- SROs inevitably escalate situations.
- SROs have the power to arrest, while school staff does not.
- If an SRO is involved, it only increases the chances of a student getting suspended, expelled, or arrested.
- Encounters with SROs can impact entire families.

School-to-Prison Pipeline

- Students who have encounters with police are more likely to later go to prison as adults.
- Around SROs, childish behavior is considered a crime.
- Iowa data shows that of the 1,027 youth that were direct filed to adult court, 84% had a prior juvenile court complaint before entering the adult court system.
- About 80% of youth in the adult court system are male and about 34% are Black.

SROs are Ineffective

- SRO presence tends to be correlated with *more* casualties in mass shootings, not fewer.
- SROs do not deter violence.
- Uvalde, Texas
 - 376 law enforcement officers at the scene
 - Over 75 minutes before an officer acted

SROs are Expensive

- ***You may be able to find the cost of placing SROs at your school by examining your school district's memorandum of understanding with the local police department***

II. What Can We Do Instead?

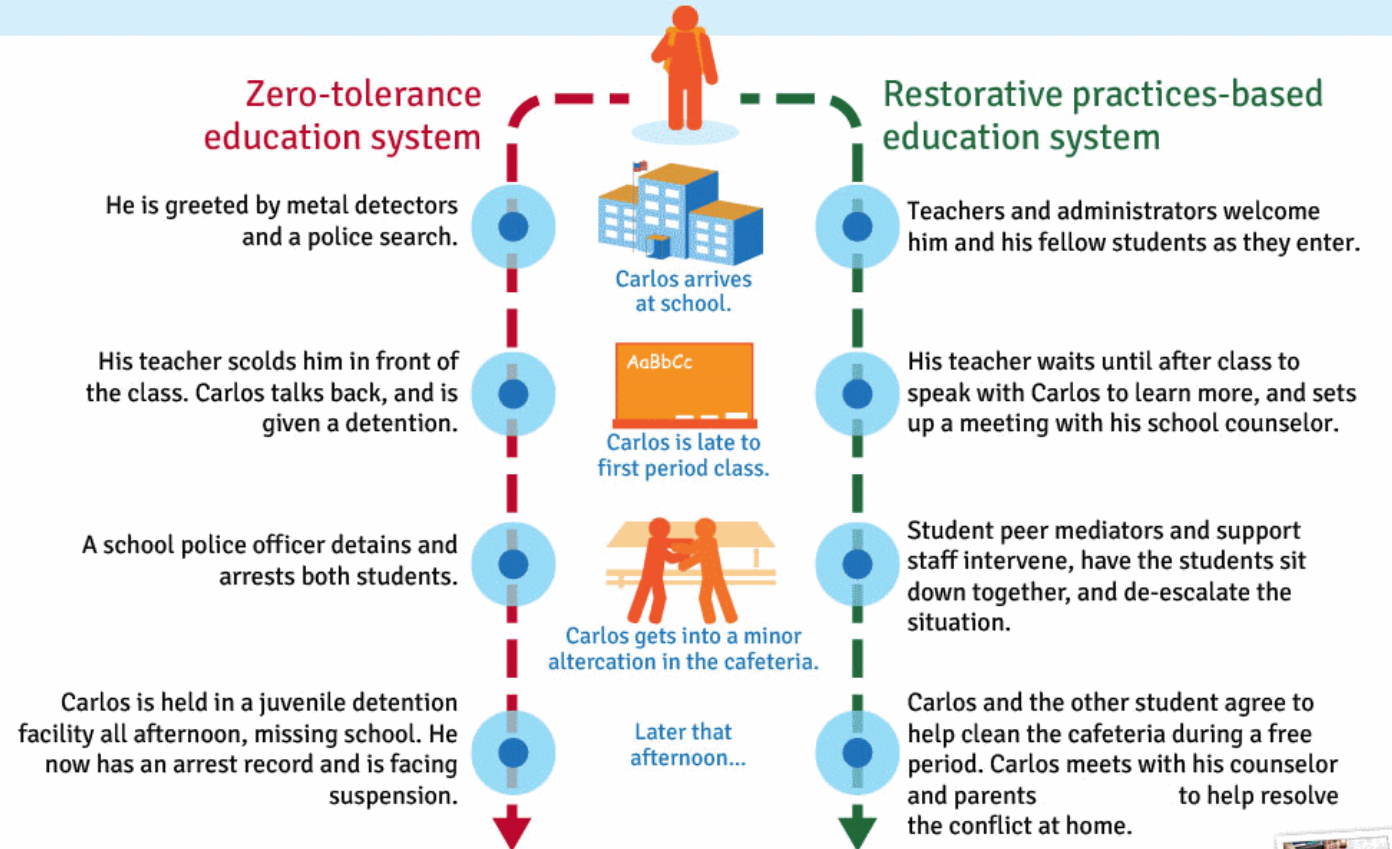
Restorative Justice

- Restorative justice is a process whereby all the parties with a stake in a particular offence come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future.
- Key is COMMUNICATION and BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
- Benefits include developing work and social skills; minimizing disruptions and distractions; improving relationships; and helping students succeed.

Restorative Justice in Practice

A Tale of Two Schools

Carlos had a heated argument with his parents before leaving for school, so he's running late.
Let's see the difference that restorative policies and practices can make.



Restorative Practice-Based Education Systems

- Restorative practice-based education systems provide students with the opportunity to walk through what they did and restore relationships.
- This framework is used to create safe, supportive spaces where the inherent worth and potential of each student is recognized.
- Implementing restorative practices leads to decreases in major disciplinary issues; reductions in the number of absences, suspensions, and expulsions; and improvements in overall school climate.

Counselors & Mental Health Professionals

- Counselors can be essential for students to navigate the various feelings they have.
- Schools with mental health professionals see improved attendance rates, higher academic achievement, and higher graduations rates, along with lower rates of suspension, expulsion, and other disciplinary incidents.
- The recommended student-to-counselor ratio is 1 school mental health professional per 250 students.
 - In Iowa, the school-to-counselor ratio is 1 school mental health professional to every 378 students.
- Unlike SROs, school mental health professionals are trained to work with students.

Fostering a Positive Environment

- Engage Parents
 - Students with parents involved in their education are more likely to have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school.
- Promote Peer-to-Peer Interactions
 - Positive peer relationships will help students to feel included and valued as a student at their school and in their classroom.
- Celebrate Growth & Good Behavior
 - Interventions where school staff use challenging moments as a teaching tool for students and reinforce positive behaviors to replace negative behaviors is most effective.
- Build Meaningful Relationships
 - Meaningful relationships between school staff and students will help students feel like they belong and are cared for.

III. Has This Worked Before?

Ames Community School District

- Students came forward at school board meetings to discuss racism they have experienced from SROs.
- ACSD even has their own data on SRO incidents within their district, which shows disproportionate numbers of interactions with Black or African American students.
- School board voted unanimously to cut ties with the Ames Police Department, which saved the district and city \$241,512 per year.
- ACSD has added an additional Assistant Principal to the high school and have reinstated unarmed campus monitors in the secondary schools in the district.

Orchard Gardens

- Orchard Gardens was one of the lowest ranking schools in Massachusetts.
- The school had several restrictive practices, including prohibiting students from carrying backpacks and zero-tolerance policies.
- When Principal Andrew Bott was hired, he removed the SROs and used the funds to hire additional teachers and implement a curriculum that centered around the arts.
- Within four years, Orchard Gardens saw a spike in student improvement rates and became ranked as one of Boston's top public schools.

Intermediate District 287

- School officials removed SROs after noticing that students of color with mental health challenges were frequently being removed from class and arrested, instead hiring school safety coaches.
- School safety coaches build relationships with students and advocate for them when they engage in challenging behavior rather than punishing them.
- School safety coaches focus on proactive measures rather than reactive.

Minneapolis Public Schools

- Following the murder of George Floyd, the Minneapolis School Board voted to end its contract with the Minneapolis Police Department.
- The schools instead hired unarmed public safety support specialists.
- With SROs
 - Nearly 250 student incidents that involved law enforcement
 - 13,000 disciplinary actions
- Without SROs and with public safety support specialists
 - Only 13 student incidents that involved law enforcement in first half of year
 - 1,900 disciplinary actions in first half of year