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Perceptions of Crime, Security, and School Resource Officers in High Schools

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**PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME, SECURITY, AND
SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS IN HIGH SCHOOLS**

A thesis submitted to the

School of Justice Studies at
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in partial fulfillment of the
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by

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B.S., Roger Williams University, 2017

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Dean of the School of Justice Studies: Dr. Eric Bronson

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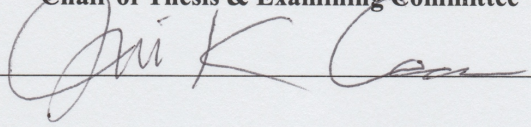
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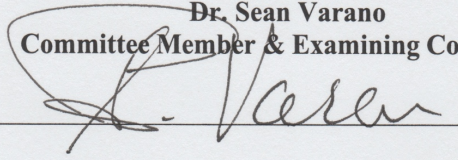
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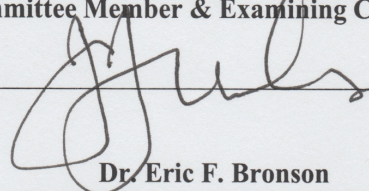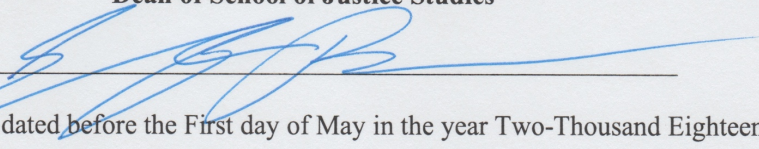
I need to especially thank and acknowledge my Chair: Dr. Julie K. Coon. Dr. Coon thank you for all your assistance over the course of my career at Roger Williams University. Having had the opportunity to work alongside you as a research assistant in my undergraduate career, and traveling to Washington, D.C. to present research with you were both amazing and valuable experiences. You have taught me so much about the field of criminal justice, engaged my curiosity on multiple topics, and have served as a trusted mentor. Thank you, so so so much!

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Lastly, the entire campus community at Roger Williams University. Not many students can say they had the same experience as I did. I am so very grateful to have chosen this esteemed university for my undergraduate and graduate degrees. It is bittersweet to say goodbye, as I have called you home for five years.

This thesis is dedicated in memory of my Uncle Amerigo Sanzo.

While presenting in Washington, D.C. at the American Criminology Society annual conference, I found out that you passed, fifteen minutes before the poster session. I told myself that night my master thesis would be in dedication to you.

November 19, 2015

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Abstract

Perceptions and voices from high school students on crime, security, and school resource officers is essential information for criminal justice researchers; high school administrators and teachers; and law enforcement agencies that help keep high schools safe. A handful of national surveys have been done (e.g., Madfis, 2015; Coon, 2007) on school safety, security, and police officers in schools; however, limited information has been collected to hear student voices on school crime, security, and school resource officers. Since the post-Columbine era of American history, the topic of school safety has been a concern of administrators and parents. This exploratory research project collected data from those students who have since graduated from high school and are enrolled as an undergraduate at Roger Williams University. The data that is collected will add to the limited literature to gain a better understanding about student perceptions on the topic.

Keywords: students, perceptions, safety, security, high school

PREFACE

Reason to Study School Safety

Call to Dispatch: December 14, 2012 at 9:36:13 A.M.

911 Operator: You've dialed 911. What's the location of your emergency?

Caller: Sandy Hook Elementary School, 12 Dickenson Drive.

911 Operator: O.K. I've got that. What going on down there?

Caller: Inside. I believe they are shooting at the front, at the front glass.

911 Operator: O.K.

Caller: Something's going on.

911 Operator: Alright. I've got all, I want you to stay on the line with me. Where are you in the school?

Caller: I'm down the corridor.

911 Operator: Alright. I want you to take cover... [Jen, get the sergeant.] {Alight.} [Get everybody you can going down there.] Alight. Let me get some information. What makes you think that?

Caller: The front glass is all shot out. It kept, it kept going on.

911 Operator: O.K. (Voice OFF PHONE: I'm on the line with a 911 caller, there's a shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School).

Caller: It's still happening.

911 Operator: Alright, what about the students in the front of the building?

Caller: Everything is locked up, as far as I know. I'm right in front.

911 Operator: Alright. They're in lock down?

Caller: Yeah. They're in lock down.

911 Operator: Did you see anything out the window?

Caller: No, it's still going on. I can't get over there.

911 Operator: Ok. I don't want you to go over there. I want to know what's happening with the students though along the front corridor. This is in the front parking lot?

Caller: Yes. I'm not, I'm not in the front. I'm actually down the other part. But I'm close.

911 Operator: O.K. Do you seen anything or hear anything more?

Caller: I keep hearing shooting. I keep...

911 Operator: O.K.

Caller: I keep hearing popping.

911 Operator (OFF PHONE): Guys, we've got a shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, that's what 911 is ringing off the hook for.

911 Operator 1: All right Jen, let's get one, let's get one caller, I'll take my caller, you...

911 Operator 2: Calling all cars... calling all cars. Be advised...
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.
.
(New York Times, 2013).

On December 14, 2012, Adam Lanza shot his way through the front office doors at

Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. Lanza then proceeded to intrude into

the school where he carried out one of the most violent acts that America has seen in a public

school (Sendensky, 2012). The shooting became international news. Children, staff, and faculty

were killed in the school. Before going to Sandy Hook Elementary School (SHES), Lanza killed

his mother at her residence. Police officers throughout the entire State of Connecticut including

the Connecticut State Police rushed to SHES to eliminate the threat. However, by the time all

units got there to enter the school – the shooting had stopped and Lanza pulled the trigger one

last time – on himself. The final count of individuals killed by Lanza was twenty-eight,

including him. School safety became a topic of concern for many students, staff, faculty, and

parents after the Columbine incident; however, the world stopped turning for a brief moment in time once news struck about the shooting at SHES. School safety, security, technologies, and the use of private security and/or school resource officers in schools is essential, but there are still a lot of unanswered questions. By studying school safety and deploying new strategies, practitioners and academics can help keep schools safe, making schools a less vulnerable target for crime and violence.

Introduction

A safe and secure environment for students to flourish and be educated in high school is an essential part of each student's experience. High school is a time where students learn about themselves, where students decide on college, and where students spend the majority of their day. That said, a goal of each high school is to make sure that students are going to be able to thrive in a safe school. Schools at all educational attainment levels have prepared for and taught teachers how to respond to threats such as school shootings, security breaches, and the like (Crawford & Burns, 2015). Current research suggests that schools are generally a safe place and that the likelihood of violent crime occurring within the grounds of the school are low (Crawford & Burns, 2015). The generalization that schools are safe is able to be made for many schools, but as with much of everything, there are going to be exceptions and high school institutions that have issues with crime and security.

Schools nationwide have crime and security concerns, there are alternatives that can be deployed that appear to keep schools safe (e.g., security technologies, security staff, and school resource officers). Further so, policy changes and enforcement of policies within high schools are factors on behavior within schools (Bracy, 2010). If students believe that policies in the school are being enforced fairly, these schools typically have disorder levels that are low (Bracy,

2010). By gaining information from students on their perceptions, it is evident that schools can then make changes to keep their schools safer. Since the events unfolded at Columbine High School, schools have seen a swing in school safety; however, the voice of the student and whether they feel safe in school typically is not heard when schools apply new policies (Madfis, 2015). School safety has changed in recent years. Someone writing something on the bathroom stall wall could shut down an entire school, compared to pre-Columbine when a custodian would just wipe if off and people would go about their days. The "Columbine Effect" is notably a theory that has changed school safety (Madfis, 2015).

The Present Study

The aim of this survey research project is to add to the literature on school safety, crime, and school resources officers; however, from the student's voice and to better understand what students believed worked or did not worked in their high school. The data that is collected through this project, will be essential to learn how to keep schools safer from the administrator's and law enforcement's perspectives. Further, to be able to contextualize perceptions of students on the topic of crime in schools could decrease crime with proper policy changes.

There are several primary, guiding research questions that this study addresses:

1. *What are student perceptions of their school resource officer? Did students have a positive experience with their school resource officer?*

2. *Feminist criminological theory and the general theory of crime suggest that males are more likely to engage in criminal activity and commit criminal acts against other males. Are males more likely to be victims of crime (e.g., bullying) compared to females?*

3. *In regards to urbanism, is there any association where respondents live and skipping class?*

4. *Is there a relationship between students who come from "broken homes" and delinquent behavior? Delinquent behavior measured on the instrument includes drug/alcohol use and bullying.*

The focus of the research questions and following hypotheses look at the angle of the students' perception of crime within their school. There are some questions on the instrument that asked students to indicate their levels of delinquency; however, to be able to better generalize to the rest of the population, perceptions are critical to understand. The first research question is an exploratory question to understand student perceptions and interactions with SROs. Research questions two, three, and four relate to the hypotheses presented.

The first hypothesis of this study is that males will report that they have been a victim of bullying more frequently than females. This hypothesis is supported by the general theory of crime and feminist criminology. Feminist criminology suggests that males are more likely to commit a crime (Simpson, 1989) and the general theory of crime suggest that males are most likely to commit a crime that affects another male (Burton *et al.,* 1999). That said, males should experience bullying at a higher rate than females.

Based on the Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2016 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016), there was an association between students who attended a school in an urban setting reporting that they avoided one more places in school or a specific class because of a fear of being attacked (indicator 17 and 18). The second hypothesis of this present study is that those students who self-classified themselves as attending school in an urban setting will

have an increased level of "skipping or cutting class" (truancy) and/or will rate truancy among the top listed crimes of students.

The final hypothesis is based on the broken homes model of delinquency that those children who come from a "broken home" are more likely to take part in deviant and delinquent behavior (Wells & Rakin, 1986). For this study, broken home will be defined as those who come from any form of a divorced or single-parent household. Delinquent behavior was measured in question 28 on the instrument. (see Appendix A).

CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

Importance of Collecting Student Perceptions

Research on the students' perceptions of crime and security within the schools is scarce, but crucial as schools, both public and private have changed regarding policy, security technologies, plans for incidents, and the like (Bracy, 2010). Student perceptions of crime and security in schools can contrast differently from administrators, faculty, and staff in schools (Kyle, Schafer, Burruss, & Giblin, 2016). The fear of crime and the fear of being victimized is different based on age (Kyle, et al, 2016). That said, perceptions of crime and security from students will be different from those who are professionals within the schools. Students can offer a variety of different perspectives to questions that administrators may not have the answer to.

Hitherto, limited research, interviews, and surveys have been collected and analyzed. Only a few studies have examined student's perceptions of fairness of policy, security, and safety. Kupchick and Ellis (2008) found that schools that do not have police regularly in the building have higher perceptions of fairness when it comes to enforcement of policy. Inconsistencies in policy enforcement and how administration view any given policy compared to how students perceive a policy is counterproductive. When new policies go into effect students want to clearly understand what is wanted from them. When administrators do not enforce in accordance to what students were told this will lead to tension. When there is tension, physical altercations could arise causing a police presence or introduction of a SRO in a school.

School Resource Officers (SROs)

SROs formally defined are, "a licensed peace officer employed by the local law enforcement agency or county law enforcement agency with the goal of increasing safety and

security for the school" (McKenna & Pollock, 2014, p. 164). SROs' duties are to work with students, serve as a counselor, and to uphold the law within schools. SROs are not there to be another principal, disciplining for school policies, as sworn duties could cross over and create a conflict of interest and role conflict.

SROs have been around for some time now and seem to be common within high schools throughout the nation; however, there was a time when SROs were non-existent. School based law enforcement first appeared in schools around 1950 in Flint, Michigan (McKenna & Pollock, 2014). However, the officer in schools in Flint was not called an SRO – rather just a police officer within the school. It wasn't until the 1960s when the Miami, Florida police chief coined the term "School Resource Officer(s)" (McKenna & Pollock, 2014). Up until the 1990s the number of high schools with an SRO was steady until the United States saw a mass-shooting at the General Motors Acceptance Corporation in Jacksonville, Florida (Weiler & Cray, 2011). James Edward Pough, forty-two, opened fired and killed fourteen employees (Follman & Aronsen, 2013). National data shows that after the shooting at General Motor Acceptance Corporation there was an increase in thirty-five percent of public schools that then had an SRO (Weiler & Cray, 2011).

It was not until 1994 that two major events occurred that created significantly more funding for SROs. For starters, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) awarded upwards of $10 million to hire SROs, and the second event was the passing of the Safe Schools Act of 1994 (20 USC §5961), allowing schools to use budgeted money for school security and an increase in SROs (McKenna & Pollock, 2014).

Under the Obama administration, there were several executive orders, one of which planned to increase the number of SROs around the country and help pay for SROs through

grants. Unfortunately, even though there is grant money available, some jurisdictions are strapped with a tight budget where they cannot afford an SRO inside their schools. Once a police department determines they can enter into a contract with a school district, the officer who is selected to serve as the SRO must undergo training (available in a plethora of options), and must be the "right" fit for the school. Although, an officer may make a phenomenal patrol/street officer, they may not be the best fit for a school milieu. While skills such as patience, communication and approachability are equally important in both patrol and SROs – SROs also need a special understand of youth and child psychology (McKenna & Pollock, 2014).

Juvenile Delinquency and School Crime

When it comes to school crime and delinquency there are many different opinions and theories why students commit crime within the boundaries of any given academic setting. Many often blame a family's socio-economic status, whether parents are employed, general family problems, and the choices made to associate with people who have been inducted into the criminal justice system, one way or another as it relates to childhood delinquency (Lawrence, 2007). Differential association theory, developed by Edwin Sutherland, made the connection between crime and behavior that, just like any other behavior, criminal behavior must be learned (Sutherland & Cressey, 1974). The connection between Sutherland and Cressey (1974) to Lawrence (2007) is shocking similar, specifically to the point where Lawrence notions that when juveniles associate with people that have been in the criminal justice system, there could be increases in criminal behavior. This association would also make reference to Sutherland and Cressey (1974) because the behavior of criminal delinquency is learned. If the people students are "hanging out with" commit behavior that is against rules and laws, then the chances of students committing criminal behavior are more likely.

As delinquency relates to school crime in the 2013-2014 school year, there was an estimated 757,000 crimes within all public schools rendering 15 crimes per 1,000 students (Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 2016). While the same variance of crimes that occur outside of a public high school committed by adult offenders will not be the same as those committed by student offenders, the chances for violent and criminal offenses to be committed can still occur. The same notion can be used that some of the crimes that are reported within the schools committed by juveniles might not happen at the same frequency as with adult offenders outside of the school (e.g., bullying). Since the 1990s, when there was more of an increase in school based law enforcement (SBLE) and SROs, there has been a dramatic decrease in crime, generally speaking (McKenna, 2016). For example, theft and violent victimization rates were once at 181 victimizations per 1,000 in 1992 to 33 per 1,000 students in 2014 (McKenna, 2016).

Student Victimization

As stated in the conclusion of the last section, victimization for theft and violent offenses are decreasing in schools. Bullying and peer victimization during high-school, has an impact on the student (Fisher, Middleton, Ricks, Malone, Briggs, & Barnes, 2015). When students are victims of crimes during the 12-18 years of age range, there are further substantial consequences of psychological, social, and academic outcomes (Fisher et. al., 2015). These are the developmental years where students are starting to figure out who they are as people. When added stressors that challenge their psychological, social, and academic outcomes are threatened there will be higher chances for delinquency causing them to go from a victim to a potential bully. Bullying can occur in two different ways: direct and indirect. Direct bullying consists of physical altercations compared to indirect bullying that consists of the verbal aspect and gossip towards an individual (Espelage & Swearer, 2010; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Olweus, 1993).

However, arguably there is a third form a bullying which has indirect features and a main component: cyber-bullying.

Twenty-First Century Bullying: Cyberbullying

Communication through electronics has benefits, such as being able to deliver a message promptly, receive an immediate response, and have a transcript of messages; however, with much of everything there are also downfalls and negative consequences. Cyberbullying is a very large con of electronic mediums. In a technological dependent country, people will rely on cell phones as a part of their daily activities for work or pleasure. Students (not excluding adults, but for the purposes of this section only students will be examined) are well aware of the twenty-first century cyberbullying process, either as the originator, victim, or audience for the cyberbullying. Literature suggests that cyberbullying through text messaging, Facebook, or YouTube can have considerably worse effects than traditional bullying for the victim (Sticca & Perren, 2012). The difference between traditional forms of bullying and cyberbullying include the increased chance for a large public audience, increased chances for an anonymous attack, typically no response given back from the victim, and decreased levels of supervision (Sticca & Perren, 2012).

Victims of cyberbullying often experience lower levels of academic performance, lower family relationship quality, psychosocial challenges, and affective disorders (Sticca & Perren, 2012). While these qualities are similar to those of whom experience traditional bullying, it is still considered a detrimental crime that could occur to someone. Furthermore, there is a link between cyberbullying and fear of victimization. Those who have reported that they are victims of cyberbullying discuss that there are few other causes that directly relate to further fear of victimization (Randa, 2013).

Security Technologies

Security technologies have seen a transformation over the last several decades. As technology advances and evolves over time, security technologies need to keep up and improve also. After the shootings at Columbine High School there were many changes in technology that were used by public schools; one of the major changes was the increase of "visible security measures" (Addington, 2009). Visible security measures are those measures that are not concealed security technologies. They are the technologies that are in plain view to serve, hopefully, as a deterrent. For example, visible security measures could include the use of metal detectors as students, staff, and visitors walk into the schools.

While rural country schools are not exempt from school violence or crimes, literature suggests that there was only an increase in the "problematic urban schools, such as those in Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago" (Addington, 2009, p. 1429). Visible security measures can be broken down into four different categories. Categories include: limiting access to school building, limiting weapons on campus, increasing surveillance of students, and reacting to a crisis of violent incident. Table 1 depicts the four categories of security measures and provides examples of such.

Table 1. Examples of Visible Security Measures

Category of Security Measure	Examples
Limiting access to school buildings	Identification cards (students and/or staff)
	Locked school entrances during the day
	Gated campuses
	Visitor sign-in requirement
	Campus design changes
Limit weapons on campus	Metal detectors
	X-ray inspection of student bags
	Clear-backpack policies
	Lockless student lockers
	Removal of student lockers
	Random sweeps for contraband
Increasing surveillance of students	Security cameras
	School resource officers
	Private security guards
	Staff training
Reacting to a crisis or violence incident	Student drills
	Duress alarms
	Telephones in classrooms

Source: Addington, 2009, p. 1430

In further literature (Coon, 2007), security technologies and strategies can be used to deter negative behavior that might occur. Examples include marking and identifying school property, having a well-lit campus at night, providing telephones or alarms in classrooms, install alarm systems in schools, and physically control access to school before and after school days. While schools take precautions noted by Coon (2007) and Addington (2009), the rhetorical question of why violence is still occurring in schools and why are schools not a hard target still remains at large.

As mentioned in the beginning of this section of the literature review, technology evolves daily (security technologies included). Perumean-Chaney and Sutton (2012) discuss that the vast majority of schools have some sort of policies in place that require visitors to sign-in at an office

or security post upon entry into schools. The technological part might be lacking for districts in this area because of the antiquated pencil and paper system that is still in place. However, with the improvements in security, some large schools that have an urban or suburban classification have adopted visitor policies, which prompt visitors to surrender their government identification and be scanned into a computer. The scan can perform a brief criminal history check as well as a sexual offender check. Software systems such as LobbyGuard, Raptor Visitor Management Software, and Ident-A-Kid are just examples of what schools can do and invest in to know who is in the school at any given time.

Zero-Tolerance Policies

Zero-tolerance policies in the education system were first coined in 1989, with the goal to send unambiguous, direct, and clear messages so that violence and drug use would not be allowed in any form on school grounds. Ultimately zero-tolerance policies that were implemented around 1990 led to a high rate of school suspension and expulsions (Monahan, VanDerhei, Bechtold, & Cauffman, 2014). In these zero-tolerance policies, schools would often indicate that the behavior would not be tolerated regardless of the circumstances (hence, *zero*) and would require students to be suspended or expelled based on the charge or violation of the school's code of conduct (Mohan, et. al, 2014).

The use of zero-tolerance policies has their own implication and dangers to students. Suspension and expulsion (regardless of the application of zero-tolerance or not) result in higher rates of juveniles experiencing antisocial and illegal behaviors that include drug use, as well as, increased chances of future suspension, and contact with the criminal justice system (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008) The American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force (2008) came to the conclusion that polices that

implement zero-tolerance are unproductive (essentially, it doesn't work). It is important to note; however, there are theoretical frameworks that would not support the claim that is made by the task force's statement (2008).

For example, Deterrence Theory coined by Cesare Beccaria discusses that punishments should be swift, severe, and certain (Moyer, 2001). Zero-tolerance policies are part of all three components of Beccaria's theoretical framework. A fair assumption to make is for a student who is in violation of a code of conduct being suspended or expelled is severe, indicating that the punishment will occur implies the certainty, and the swiftness and quickness of the student's case be disposed is based on the investigation that occurs.

Students spend the majority of their day at some sort of school level educational campus (e.g., public or private high school building). Students, although in class, are really unsupervised by their parents. Parents trust that the schools will keep their children safe but there are faults and delinquent behavior occurs. Routine Activity Theory, coined by Cohen and Felson (1979) would not support zero-tolerance policies as it would contribute to a student's delinquent behavior. In Routine Activity Theory the criteria include: 1) a motivated offender; 2) a suitable target; and 3) absence of a capable guardian. The theory would suggest that there would be an increase in criminal behavior because there is a capable guardian lacking (Monahan, et. al, 2014). If the theory supports behavior it could be found that when students skip school there is increase chances in deviant behavior, leading to arrest because of the time that they have while not being supervised. However, as noted previously with the increases in technology development, there are chances that students will engage in the risky behavior online as well. Online risky behavior can also lead to cyberbullying, as discussed previously.

CHAPTER II: METHODS, PROCEDURE, & DESIGN

Methods

In this study, the sample size was 195 (response rate = 89.9%) undergraduate students at Roger Williams University (RWU) in Bristol, Rhode Island. All participants were enrolled in a university "Core" curriculum course (better known as a general education course that all students are required to take) at the one-hundred or the four-hundred level. Courses were chosen by compiling a list of all Core courses at RWU, assigning each course a unique identification number and by using a random number generator, selected twenty courses at random. After the courses were selected, the researcher contacted the professors listed as the instructor for that course. In some instances, before agreeing to allow the survey to be administered, professors asked to meet with the researcher to discuss and go over the survey prior to the commitment.

Ten classes were surveyed (50% of the sample of the original 20) over a three-week period in mid to late-October 2017. Of the sample, 44.1% was male. The participants were 92.9% White, 5.6% Asian, 1.0% Black or African American, and .5% American Indian or Alaskan Native. The median age was 19 ($M = 19.12$, $SD = 1.183$), and the participants ranged in age from eighteen (18) to twenty-four (24). Participants were from twelve (12) States, one (1) from Washington, D.C. and three (3) who indicated their high school was not located in the United States. The majority of the sample indicated that their high school was located in Massachusetts (40.6%) followed by Connecticut (21.4%), New York (13.0%), Rhode Island (8.2%), New Jersey (5.7%), and New Hampshire (4.2%). The following States only had one participant indicated all measuring at .5%: Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Vermont, and Wisconsin (including Washington, D.C.). The final three participants indicated "Outside of the

United States." Further demographic information about the participant, participant's family, and school were collected, which will be discussed further later in this paper.

This study consisted of a convenience sampling approach. While some may argue that this study did not consist of a convenience sampling approach, the survey was only administered at Roger Williams University. The researcher did not travel to any other college or university. Sections were randomly selected; however, even though a random sampling approach was used to narrow down the full list of Core classes at the university, all participants were conveniently surveyed at this university. Surveys were administered anonymously and voluntarily. No personal identifiers were collected to link the participant to the completed surveys.

Protection of Human Subjects

As with the vast majority of all social science research, researchers take safeguarding steps for their participants to ensure the overall protection of their subjects. Throughout the entire data collection phase of this survey responses were kept anonymous and confidential. Being the principal investigator, I was the only person who had and currently has access to the hard copies of survey results. While an online survey might have been more efficient on resources and time, there is no way to assure complete anonymity with online style surveys (e.g., internet protocol address). With that said, the decision to remain with paper surveys was most apt to assure further protection of the participants and to assure maximum response rate.

During the time frame in which the survey was administered – the informed consent form (See Appendix A) was verbally read to participants, highlighting the voluntary participation, zero compensation, there being no associated risks of being a participant (physical, psychological, social, legal or other risks), and added benefits such as being able to help to add to the limited,

but existing literature. Participants had to indicate that they understood and read the form by checking a box at the conclusion of the informed consent form.

As the principal investigator continued to administer surveys to undergraduate students – completed surveys were secured at a facility off campus where only the principal investigator had access. As it pertains to the electronic database (e.g., SPSS file), information was inputted on a secure, RWU owned computer in the School of Justice Studies where only the principal researcher had access to logon. Further to ensure the protection of participants, no information was saved on the computer tower itself. All data was saved on an encrypted external hard-drive in which only the principal researcher had and has access (secured at an off-campus facility).

Once all of the data was inputted into the SPSS database, the principal investigator sent the faculty chair of this project a dataset and hand-delivered an output of the frequencies. The faculty chair has taken steps to secure all of the data to maintain the same level of confidentiality as the principal investigator. Once this project has been finalized, fully written, and defended for completion of the degree to which it pertains, all surveys will be destroyed.

Design and Materials

This cross-sectional, descriptive, retrospective design collected information from the participants during one sitting in their Core class at RWU that lasted approximately twenty-five minutes. The instrument design (See Appendix A) consisted of free-formatted and fix-formatted questions, in which, participants had to recall their experiences on security, crime, and school resource officers from their high school.

Participants had the opportunity to answer forty-seven (47) questions. Examples of questions included multiple choice (question or scenario posed and participants were given an option of answer choices, some of which included ratio level measures), free-formatted questions

(questions posed and participants had the opportunity to describe qualitatively on their perceptions) along with quantitatively (questions posed regarding the year of high school graduation, age, and grade point average). Further, two questions on the instrument were measured using either a five-point or six-point Likert scale (1 = All the time, 2 = Most of the time, 3 = Some of the time, 4 = Rarely, 5 = Never, 6 = Don't know). The only difference between the five and the six-point scale is the final answer choice of six (6) was not included when asking questions about perceived school problems. Finally, one question included a ranking system, where participants ranked the top five common crimes (1 = Most common, 5 = Fifth most common) from a list of eighteen (18) different options.

The final section of the survey measured demographics (nominal level) about the participant and questions to better understand their high school. To learn more about the participants, the instrument asked: gender, ethnicity, age, year of high school graduation, racial classification, family's approximate household income, parents' marital status, grade-point average, and the frequency in which they skipped class. To learn more about a participant's high school, the instrument asked: private versus public, urbanism of hometown/city of school, whether textbooks were provided, did teachers appear to enjoy their job and care about their job. Concluding this section, the instrument asked the climate of the participant's high school.

Several variables were operationalized for this instrument. The researcher operationalized questions on how often, level of fairness, level of approachability, and levels of trust students and faculty had in his or her SRO(s) and/or private security staff by using a six-point Likert scale method. Further, perceived school problems were operationalized using a five-point Likert scale. In the "about you and your high school" section of the instrument several other variables were operationalized. Family's approximate household income was

operationalized by using a six-choice interval scale, level of parental involvement in planning events by using a five-choice nominal Likert scale, and the frequency in which the participant skipped class by using a five-point nominal Likert scale.

Some of the questions throughout the instrument were only required if the participants answered "yes" to the question prior, called filter questions. For example, "Did your school have a school resource officer present at least once a week?" the following question would start with, "if yes to question XX." If the participants answered, "no" they were to skip that item and move to the next measure.

Procedure

After all materials were collected and the instrument was approved through the human subject's review board at RWU, a letter (See Appendix B) was sent to professors of twenty (20) Core classes at RWU. Some professors allowed immediate access to their class, while others wanted to meet first. The other half of professors who denied access either contacted me back immediately and the majority did not contact me back after several other attempts to make contact. Once an agreement was met between the professor and myself, I visited ten sections of Core classes at RWU, explaining to them who I am as a researcher, the purpose/benefits of this study, and that their participation is voluntary even though their class was selected at random.

While I did not offer any compensation to participate in this study, three sections of professors did state explicitly to their class they would receive some extra-credit incentive for their participation. After briefing participants on the further parts of the informed consent form, assured them again of their confidentiality and anonymity, I directed them to the bottom of the consent form to have them read and check a box indicating that they are at least eighteen (18) years of age, they can withdraw or decline to participate at any time and participation is

voluntarily. At the conclusion of the survey, participants came forward and turned their survey in to the front of the class. I thanked them for their participation and offered a business card with contact information if they had any questions or needed to discuss anything further.

Targeted Population & Sample

The target population of this project were first year and fourth year students at RWU who graduated from a high school in which they could describe how their school kept students safe, discuss crime, and discuss the presence (or lack of) an SRO. First year students were more apropos to complete the study because they would be able to recall their experiences considering how recent their year of graduation was compared to when they took the survey. However, fourth year students were also a targeted population to see if there was any change over time between roughly 2014 and 2017 in security measures, techniques, or perceptions of the different age range of participants.

With the sample of this project including students from all four years (freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior) it provided a variety of results and answers from over the four-year span. As noted the targeted population was first and fourth year students, it is important to note that the majority of students did fall within the 2016-2017 and 2013-2014 ranges (which are the years in which they graduated high school)

Dependent and Independent Variables

The goal of the research project is to measure the perceptions of crime, security, and school resource officer(s) from a person's high school days. This (perceptions) is the dependent variable. As noted earlier, perceptions of crime, security, and school resource officers from the student perspective are often limited as they are not studied in depth, as compared to the administrator's view point. By furthering the discussion in the latter portions of this paper,

discussing any similarities or differences between the perceptions and effectiveness is interesting. Independent variables included the presence or lack of: security cameras, school resource officer or private security staff, and security practices (e.g., lock down drills, active shooter drills, and the like). In addition to the independent and dependent variables, several descriptive variables were measured to gain a better understanding of the participant, participant's town/city, and participant's high school.

Several variables were operationalized in this project to measure values that otherwise could not necessarily have been measured as they were qualitative measures. Examples of these variables that were operationalized typically were demographical information (gender, race, parents marital status) and also individual characteristics to include the frequency in which respondents skipped class, frequency of crimes committed against them, and the like.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

The instrument first examined whether participants could recall if his or her high school had cameras inside of the building. An overwhelming majority recalled having cameras inside his or her school (See Table 2). A follow up question regarding effectiveness and possible prevention.

Table 2. Cameras inside your school?

		n	Percent
	Yes	174	89.2
Valid	No	19	9.7
	I do not know	2	1.0
	Total	195	100.0

While, yes, the majority of respondents noticed school cameras, the feelings about their effectiveness were quite mixed. Some students felt that cameras were not effective because they were not watched or the cameras simply did not work – resulting in no video. Others felt that cameras were effective for reviewing incidents (e.g., fights and other physical acts). Others thought they were primarily used for "catching" students skipping class. Some of the other student comments were more explicit in detail such as below.

"Cameras were effective" comments:
- *Pretty effective. They had no audio, but they did catch anyone that appeared to be doing something bad on them.*
- *Pretty effective. I know I never thought of leaving school early knowing the cameras were faced towards the exits.*
- *Pretty effective. Lots of kids were caught because of them.*
- *They are very good. There is a room in the school used by the police officer so he could see all the cameras.*
- *Effective because they were in various locations playing/recording at all times.*
- *Effective because people could not just openly do what they wanted or get into the school.*

"Cameras were not effective" comments:
- *I don't think the cameras were effective at all for preventing crimes, they were used for catching students skipping class.*
- *Not effective. There were multiple cases of cameras being non-functioning and failing to record video of crimes that took place within their field of view.*
- *Not very effective, people still stole things/vandalized things.*
- *I don't think that the cameras were effective because they were mainly used to see if people were skipping classes and 'vaping' in the bathrooms (both of which continued to occur).*
- *I do not think students were aware of the cameras*
- *There weren't many and most people knew where the cameras were point, so not really.*

"Kind-of effective... but not too effective" comments:
- *Kind of effective. Some stuff may have been stopped due to the presence of the cameras but there was a lady that was like 4' 5" that stopped most incidents.*
- *Mildly effective. Most students think twice about doing something.*
- *They didn't prevent crime but were used to gather evidence after the crime.*

Another follow up question regarding cameras on the inside of the school was asked. This specific item asked participants whether they believe if cameras served as a preventative tool. There appeared to be commonality in the theme as responses tended to be related to theft of student or school property, while some respondents noted more serious acts such as fights/physical altercations, sexual assaults, and pulling fire-alarms. Again, much like the responses from the previous question, these results were mixed as well. Some of the most notable comments from students are listed below.

"Yes! Cameras prevented..." comments:
- *Break-ins to school, they could see who entered in and out of the bathrooms (bomb threats in bathrooms).*
- *Illegal substances between students or any extreme violence like handling weapons in the classrooms/halls.*
- *Prevented students and non-students from stealing from lockers after school hours.*
- *Incidents with students leaving class and causing disruptions/breaking school rules.*
- *Kicking balls into doors and break the glass..."*

"No! Cameras did not prevent..." comments:
- *Not prevented, more help with aftermath*
- *I don't think it prevented much*

Still on the topic of cameras – the second set of camera questions relied on the

participants to recall information about his or her high school cameras on the exterior of the

building (See Table 3). There were fewer students that indicated that there were cameras

installed outside. Of those participants that indicated there were roughly sixty-four that

indicated, yes, cameras were effective – compared to roughly thirty-five that indicated they were

not effective.

Table 3. Cameras outside school?

		n	Percent
Valid	Yes	135	69.2
	No	43	22.1
	I do not know	17	8.7
	Total	195	100.0

The answers that the respondents noted in the follow-up question, "do you think cameras

outside were effective to deter crime from occurring?" considered factors such as crimes or acts

that involve vehicles, drugs/alcohol use, vandalism, or the unauthorized access to the school.

Some specifics are noted below.

"Yes! Cameras outside were effective..." comments:
- *Car theft. Only because new cameras were installed in the parking lot after the old ones failed to record a theft.*
- *Absolutely, they prevented folks from stealing because they were quite prevalent all-around campus.*
- *Yes, because I had a large school where we had to switch buildings for our classes. So, we were outside all the time.*
- *Yes, I know of a few times that there was an accident in the parking lot and the cameras were used to see what happened.*
- *Yes, more from keeping strangers out then crime amongst the students.*

"No! Cameras outside were not effective..." comments:
- *No because they only covered a limited amount of space.*

- *No because people still vandalized things.*
- *No, fights would still break out and street cops would arrive when it's too late.*
- *...not enough to cover everything.*

While the perceptions of students regarding cameras is mixed, comments support that students feel the cameras are there for more of an investigative tool, rather than a preventative tool as administrators might think. Some appreciate the cameras in place and in theory want to think that they prevent crime, violence, and other mishaps within the campus of the high school; however, students might not think twice if they are on camera or not. Further, participants indicated they were aware of the placement, where the cameras did and did not cover, as well as if cameras were functioning or not. It is prevalent that students are aware of their surroundings in high school.

The use of police K-9s for drug sweeps is a technique that school administrators and police departments use nationwide to try to eliminate drugs from school grounds. The first question about drug sweeps was a filter question, which allowed respondents to select either his or her school used drug sweeps or did not use drug sweeps (a third option of "I don't know" was provided for those students who could not recall if his or her school did or did not use sweeps). Table 4 shows that 49.7% of students recalled having drug sweeps in their school.

Table 4. Were drug sweeps used in your school?

		n	Percent
	Yes	97	49.7
Valid	No	77	39.5
	I do not know	21	10.8
	Total	195	100.0

Of those 97 students that indicated that there were drug sweeps in their schools, 96 respondents provided some sort of insight on their opinions of the effectiveness of those sweeps.

A select group of comments are provided below in response to: how effective were random sweeps to deter the use of drugs or alcohol?

"Yes! Drug and Alcohol Sweeps were effective…" comments:
- *Pretty effective, I only remember a few instances where people brought drugs/alcohol to school*
- *Really effective because it prevented kids from bringing drugs and alcohol to school*
- *Very [effective] because most teachers didn't know so they couldn't stop students (students were caught at my school)*

"No! Drug and Alcohol Sweeps were not effective…" comments:
- *I think it prevented students from bringing them to school but not from using them*
- *Not at all well. No one got any repercussions if they were caught*
- *Not very effective, most students seem to know how to hide it or not get in trouble*

"Neither Effective or Not Effective…" comments:
- *People cared more about the dogs. It was an unsaid rule that nothing would be found. It wasn't that type of school – more like practice for if we ever needed to use it seriously.*
- *Well, they were able to confiscate items to deter use for a temporary amount of time*

Following the drug sweep, the next set of questions asked respondents if his or her school used any strategies for drug testing for students, specifically, student athletes and/or leaders within the school. Question eight (8), a filter question, asked students if his or her school used this strategy. An overwhelming number of respondents indicated that his or her school did not use drug testing or they did not know.

Table 5. Did your school use random drug screens for students (e.g., student athletes/leaders)?

		n	Percent
Valid	Yes	18	9.2
	No	135	69.2
	I do not know	42	21.5
	Total	195	100.0

Following the filter question to determine how many respondents could recall the practice

of drug screening, a question was asked if those who responded "yes" to the question presented

in Table 5 could provide his or her opinion on the effectiveness. Those comments are listed

below.

> ***"Yes! Drug screens were effective…" comments:***
> - *Yes, those who knew would either a) be in trouble or b) refrain from drug use*
> - *Effective for the time but students knew and just waited to use drugs*
> - *Somewhat if students were athletes, not really otherwise*
> - *The screens were moderately effective*
>
> ***"No! Drug screens were not effective…" comments:***
> - *No, they were rare and only given if a student was found with drugs*
> - *No!*

The responses in the previous section did not yield as many comments and quality

comments as other questions have presented thus far. The limited and short responses are most

likely attributed to the small number of respondents who indicated that his or her schools used

drug screening strategies or they were not involved in sports or a leadership position. The use of

drug screens does not seem to be a popular strategy to deter the use of drugs and/or alcohol

within school. Even the comments that were presented favorably to the use of drug screens were

not in support fully as there was typically a "but" or a second statement that contradicted the first

part of their answer.

The final question in the first section of the instrument asked respondents to recall if they

remember any acts of students in high school that "challenged" the purpose of security

technology. This question is critically important for administrators, school resource officers, and

other school security staff because it will give an insight into what students are doing to commit

acts that violate school conduct code or the criminal law. The majority of comments discussed

how students would prop locked or electronic access doors open during the day for various

reasons. Those comments are listed below.

- *Doors were constantly propped because it was inconvenient to enter through the main lobby from the lower parking lot*
- *Many times students would leave note cards to keep the doors from locking as well as spray painting over the camera lens*
- *Electronic doors were propped open always to allow students to take shortcuts to class*
- *Many times students would prop doors open in order to sneak in/out of class without teachers noticing*
- *People would prop doors open at the school during lunch hours to come and go whenever they please; they would also do this to go outside and smoke*
- *Yes, people who were not students held open doors for other non-students when every person is supposed to get buzzed in individually*
- *Yes, some of them [cameras] weren't position well, so students would cover them up by propping doors*

The second section of the instrument asked respondents to answer questions to better

understand the respondents' high schools and the technologies that could be used within his or

her school. Questions discussed if the school limited cell phone use, used an emergency

notification system, online submission forms for confidential reporting, and the like.

Electronic notification is a tool that is used by schools for a plethora of reasons. Some

districts will use this type of notification system for closures for inclement weather or other

important announcements. In instances where there is a threat to school safety it is important for

schools to notify family and students within the school. Table 6 shows that the overwhelming

majority of schools have some sort of electronic notification system. As we live in the twenty-

first century and a technology dependent society, it is important and expected for information to

be available in a quick and sometimes discrete and anonymous manner.

Table 6. Did your school have an electronic notification system?

		n	Percent
Valid	Yes	158	81.0
	No	13	6.7
	I do not know	24	12.3
	Total	195	100.0

Quickness and confidential reporting is crucial in some situations where individuals have limited access to resources and need to report an incident. When these instances arise, confidential, online reporting is helpful and may even encourage more people to report incidents. Respondents were asked to identify if his or her school had any form of online reporting. Results in this question varied and are difficult to assess because the majority of the responses for this question categorized in answer choice "I Do Not Know." Table 7 further shows that the second highest rated answer choice was "No." Having an online submission form seems to be a strategy that is not used by many public high schools or they do exist, but students do not know that this resource is available to them.

Table 7. Did your school have an online submission form?

		n	Percent
Valid	Yes	47	24.1
	No	62	31.8
	I do not know	86	44.1
	Total	195	100.0

Cell phones tend to be distractions for students and adults in America. Legislators have made laws that prohibit certain cell phone use in our day to day activities and for good reasons (e.g., driving). Students while in class have to actively listen to their instructor, take notes, ask questions when appropriate, and maintain all of the other academic requirements of being a

student. When students take their cell phones out in class to read or send text-messages or check

social media, they are distracted from the real reason of why they are in school. While cell

phones are crucial for quick communications in emergency situations, high schools have been

seen as an enforcer to limit or prohibit the use all together. Cell phone usage, while in school

can have further effects that take away from learning and strike problems that lead to crime (e.g.,

cyberbullying). Respondents were asked to identify if his or her school prohibited cell phone

usage, which resulted in a nearly fifty-fifty of yes/no results (see Table 8).

Table 8. Did your school prohibit the use of cell-phones?

		n	Percent
	Yes	87	44.6
Valid	No	104	53.3
	I do not know	4	2.1
	Total	195	100.0

At the root of cyberbullying is social media and the amount of time spent on social

media. Respondents were asked if his or her school limited the amount of social media that was

allowed on school computers. It was found that the majority of respondents answered that his or

her school did limit the amount of social media on school devices (see Table 9).

Table 9. Did your school limit the amount of social media on school computers?

		N	Percent
	Yes	149	76.4
Valid	No	40	20.5
	I do not know	6	3.1
	Total	195	100.0

Cyberbullying is an apparent issue that many teenagers face at one point or another.

However, since cyberbullying typically happens outside of the school, before or after school

hours, respondents were asked about the interventions his or her school did or did not have in

place. Based on Table 9, it was clear that schools believed that social media did not belong on a

school computer for one reason or another. One of those reasons potentially could be to have

reduced the amount of cyberbullying that occurred within the walls of the school. Table 10

presents the answers that the respondents indicated when prompted with the question, "If

cyberbullying occurred (before or after school hours), was there a response from the school to

address that issue?" Two-thirds of the respondents ($n = 132$) indicated that his or her school did

intervene.

Table 10. School intervention to cyberbullying

		n	Percent
Valid	Yes	132	67.7
	No	19	9.7
	I do not know	44	22.6
	Total	195	100.0

The next group of questions on the instrument were targeted to find out if respondents'

schools participated in any form of safety presentations, internet safety, and the different type of

drills (e.g., lock-down, after shooter drills). In greater detail, the instrument also asked

respondents if his or her parent(s) attended any school safety seminar hosted by the high school.

Table 11 shows the five variables about seminars and drills. The majority of respondents

indicated that his or her school did not have an internet safety presentation for parents, where the

rest of the variables all favored more towards the "yes" answer choice to responses.

Table 11. Safety Presentations, Accompanied by Drills

		n	Percent
Valid	Yes	122	62.6
	No	59	30.3
General Safety	I do not know	14	7.2
Presentations?	Total	195	100.0
		n	Percent
Valid	Yes	103	52.8
	No	72	36.9
Internet Safety	I do not know	20	10.3
Presentation for Students?	Total	195	100.0
		n	Percent
Valid	Yes	19	9.7
	No	97	49.7
Internet Safety	I do not know	79	40.5
Presentations for Parents?	Total	195	100.0
		n	Percent
Valid	Yes	194	99.5
	No	1	.5
Practice Security	I do not know	0	0
Drills	Total	195	100.0
		n	Percent
Valid	Yes	109	55.9
	No	75	38.5
Practice Active	I do not know	11	5.6
Shooter Drills	Total	195	100.0

Following the questions that respondents answered from Table 11, respondents were asked in a free-formatted style question to discuss if drills had any influence on how safe and/or secure they felt in school. The responses were mixed in terms of their effectiveness of drills.

Some students stated that they did not think the drills were effective and did not make them feel safer, some indicated that they were unrealistic, and some thought that they were effective. Below are a sample of comments:

"Yes! Practice drills for incidents and active shooters made me feel safer…" comments:
- *Having knowledge on what to do in case of an emergency means the difference to people in a life/death situation.*
- *Having practice drills helped me to feel safe, but I wished we would've had active shooter drill because they never really told us what to do in case of a shooting.*
- *I felt better having these policies to ensure safety of everyone (didn't appreciate it until now with current events in the news).*
- *I felt scared [at first], but was happy a plan was at least in place which made me feel safer because at least I would know what to do*

"No! Practice drills for incidents and active shooters did not make me feel safer" comments:
- *Didn't feel safe when practicing drill.*
- *Didn't really influence, were basically the same drills with old hide in the corner method.*
- *…I'm not sure hiding in the corner of a dark classroom is an effective response.*
- *I did not feel safe because most students took it as a joke.*
- *I never liked the drills because they made me anxious, and our school is so small that I felt there was no way out. Overall I never was really nervous about the shootings to actually occur.*
- *Sometimes doing these drills made me more scared/aware of the possibility of school shootings; however, I don't think it necessarily helped me feel less scared in the real situation.*

Mixed comments for incidents and active shooter drills:
- *I felt safer knowing there were plans in place, but when the teacher's confused I felt unsafe.*
- *My school did not practice or prepare well for crime related incidents. Only natural disasters such as fires. An incident occurred with a gunman outside of the school. Parents were not informed until they saw it on the news or heard from kids.*
- *It gave the illusion that your school was safe but in reality, there is only so much that can be done to stop a shooter.*
- *I was worried but at the same time realize there was always a possibility and we were being cautious.*

In regard to safety presentations, respondents were asked if they were useful for students to listen to and attend. Further so, if they were taken seriously. A number of students all indicated that the presentations were repetitive with the content being the same year after year. A number of respondents also indicated that they noticed other students not taking them seriously. However, it should be noted other respondents did not have the same view points and thought the presentations were much needed and valuable. A sample of comments are below:

"Yes! Presentations were useful, informative, and provided good content for students" comments:
- *I hope they did. Some presenters were very intense with scenarios but I certainly was shook to the core about the importance of security and safety.*
- *I think they took them seriously because they gave real situations to explain from my town.*
- *They were useful and I think most students did take them seriously.*
- *They were repetitive, somewhat helpful, students listened.*
- *They were useful presentation but very hard to listen. Very boring because we have been hearing the same speech forever.*

"No! Presentations were not useful or informative, and did not provided good content for students" comments:
- *No one took them seriously, should do something to fix that, maybe more interactive. They are useful though.*
- *No. Students heard them over and over so they didn't listen.*
- *Not super seriously. It was just another presentation to sit through for most students.*
- *Only the teachers were serious. Kids would talk, laugh, etcetera during the presentations*

The next part of the survey asked respondents to indicate their perceptions of school resource officers (SROs) and/or if his or her school had any sort of private security. They were asked several of the same variables to understand how they view private security compared to SROs. Where respondents had both an SRO and a private security staff, answers seemed to be relatively close and perception levels did not differ significantly. Of the 195 respondents, 131 respondents (67.2%) indicated that his or her school did have a SRO and provided the following comments, when asked to respond to: "How was your SRO generally perceived? Was he or she

a trustworthy person that students went to as a resource to report crime, listen to students? The

large majority of respondents favored his or her SRO; however, there were others that provided

insight into differing opinions:

> ***"Yes! My SRO was perceived well, trustworthy, listened to students, etc." comments:***
> - *He came off as a bit scary at first but later he became well known and loved by all of the students who he talked to and he tried to meet everyone.*
> - *He was a well-respected person in our school and student knew they could always go to him if they needed anything. People wished he was at the school more often.*
> - *Most kids thought it was ridiculous to have a cop in school. But by senior years, I ended up seeing many kids go to him as a resource – so over time, they had taken a likening to him.*
> - *Yes, the officer got to know almost all the students and was befriended by all because we all knew he was there incase anything did happen.*
>
> ***"No! My SRO was not perceived well, was not trustworthy, did not listen to students, etc." comments:***
> - *No this resource officer was looked at as someone who had nothing better to do than ticket cars, etc.*
> - *Perceived as a 'cop.' Few people went to him directly. He was also the defensive football coach so football players were the only students that frequently talked to him.*
> - *There was a lot of gossip in a small town and the officer became 'closer' with the same students than others.*
> - *I feel like the officer wasn't helpful when things occurred because the only thing he did was rely on the cameras to do his job.*

Considering private security staff, respondents were asked if they had a private security

staff at his or her school. Of the 195 total respondents, 71 respondents (36.4%) indicated that

they did have a security staff at his or her school. Table 12 shows the levels that respondents

rated his or her SRO and private security staff.

Table 12. S.R.O. Compared to Private Security Staff

	Part I. SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER						Part II. PRIVATE SECURITY STAFF					
	All the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Rarely	Never	Don't Know	All the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Rarely	Never	Don't Know
Present in the building while students arrived at school?	63*	39	14	2	1	9	41*	12	3	5	3	6
Present in the building while students departed?	63*	37	11	4	3	10	42*	12	4	3	2	6
Present in the hallways during passing time/class change?	24	32	39*	18	8	5	32*	9	10	5	6	7
Present in the cafeteria/dining area during student lunches?	35*	21	28	27	14	4	28*	15	7	3	10	6
Consult with students as needed?	54*	20	27	4	2	20	17*	9	12	5	6	18
Assist in teaching efforts as a guest lecturer for classes?	6	9	30	33	41*	10	1	10	13	33*	10	67
Participate in after school activities or attend events? (e.g., concerts or sporting events)	21	24	33*	18	12	21	16*	12	11	6	12	11
Approachable?	59*	32	18	10	2	6	28*	17	11	4	1	7
Chaperone field trips?	4	7	14	28	40*	35	3	3	5	7	31*	19
Assist in coaching athletic programs?	7	3	13	17	60*	27	2	5	13	4	31*	15
Fairly enforce school policies within the school?	44*	35	30	4	3	10	22*	21	7	5	3	11
Provide group counseling with students?	7	10	8	12	26*	64	6	1	5	8	19	30*
Respond to calls for service within the school?	78*	23	11	2	0	15	33*	9	9	3	3	12
Trusted by students?	55*	37	18	4	3	11	27*	16	11	4	1	8
Trusted by faculty and staff?	78*	26	6	2	1	16	33*	16	1	1	3	15
Provide safety presentations for students?	20	16	24	25*	21	22	7	7	8	6	27*	14
Provide safety presentations for faculty and staff members?	12	10	10	7	8	80*	4	2	6	4	14	38*

The figures shown in Table 12 represent the number of respondents that selected that specific answer choice. Not all rows for each respective section (e.g., school resource officer and private security staff) will sum to the full 195 respondents. For each box within the table, an asterisk was placed to represent the highest score for that row. Some respondents indicated that they did not have a SRO, where others indicated that they did have a SRO. This same factor is applicable to private security. Some respondents indicated that his or her school did have a private security staff in addition to a SRO, others indicated that they only had private security and not a SRO, and others indicated that they did not have either a SRO or private security staff. This could cause limitations in future analysis since not all respondents had both, creating some missing data. Further, not all students were from the same high school. That said, each response theoretically, represents a different SRO and private security staff.

There were some consistencies across Table 12 for both the SRO and the private security staff where both sections yielded the category where students believed that performance was the same. Specifically, the categories that had the same results for the "never" answer choice include: chaperone field trips, assist in athletic coaching, and provide safety presentations for faculty and staff members. Realizing that most respondents, more than likely would not have been able to answer the question regarding faculty and staff, the purpose was to see if the faculty and staff shared any information with students about presentations that they attended. The questions that asked students about chaperoning trips or attending after school functions was to tap into the community-policing aspect. Are the police getting into the community (in this instance, the schools that they oversee), to better know students, learn the culture, and be able to provide assistance based on the needs of that district?

Following Table 12 on the instrument, was a free-formatted question that allowed students to share experiences about his or her interaction with a SRO, outcomes of that contact, how fairly they were treated, and in general if it was a positive or negative encounter. A sample of the comments are provided below, where students indicated that they had positive and negative encounters. Other students felt as if his or her SRO did not do enough to help them with their situation.

Positive Encounter comments:
- *Anytime I had an issue it was dealt with fairly and always positive. Each officer was really nice and got along well with students.*
- *Being interviewed, yes he was nice and got along well with students*
- *Although he yelled at me driving too fast on my way to school "reckless driving" and told me to slow down, he treated me fairly and it was a positive encounter.*
- *I was suspected for an incident at our school. I was interviewed, they found I didn't do it and let me go. Positive and fair encounter.*
- *There was once an account made on Twitter that bullied many students; including me. I talked to the SRO to explain the situation. I am not sure exactly what happened to the student who created the account, I do know he got some sort of discipline.*

Negative Encounter comments:
- *I had $500 stolen from me in the locker room and he only relied on cameras to catch someone, but I felt as if they didn't do enough.*
- *I personally didn't get along with this particular law officer individual so my opinion is bias but I thought he was intense and contradictory*
- *I was not treated fairly, because I didn't tell on my friend for opening a freezer in the café after hours, he said it was the same as me getting in the car with a drunk driver and just kept yelling*

An interesting comment that was made is listed in the positive encounter section and the last bullet point. There was a discussion about bullying over a Twitter account. The account could not have been used on the premises of the school, yet actions were still taken by the SRO. Earlier in the results section of this paper, it was discussed if intervention by the SRO was prevalent if there was cyberbullying, and the majority of respondents indicated yes. The

comment made here further supports the statement that there are interventions and that cyberbullying is being addressed.

The next section of the instruments discussed perceived crime within the school. The respondents were asked to respond on five-point Likert scale on their levels of agreement to the statements provided. Table 13 provides those results, further indicating the highest rated category for that row with an asterisk.

Table 13. Perceived Levels of Crime and Victimization

	All the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Rarely	Never
I felt safe at school	119*	72	4	0	0
I was bullied in school	2	5	18	50	120*
I knowingly bullied others	0	0	6	33	156*
I was bullied online (e.g., cyberbullying)	0	2	11	27	155*
I knowingly bullied others online	0	0	3	16	176*
I noticed other students using drugs or other illegal substances on school grounds (e.g., marijuana)	23	28	80*	44	20
I felt threatened by another student	1	2	8	37	147*
I was threatened by a teacher	1	2	0	15	177*
I consumed alcohol at school	1	0	6	21	167*
I saw others consume alcohol at school	5	8	65*	60	57
I saw weapons on school grounds possessed by another student (e.g., knife, gun, baton, and the like)	2	2	22	49	120*
I saw a teacher possess a weapon while inside of the building	1	1	0	4	189*

The majority of the results yielded never as the option to threat-related questions, and respondents indicated that they always felt safe in school. Following with the fact that students sometimes noticed other students using drugs or illegal substances and consuming alcohol.

One of the final substantive questions on the survey about perceived crime levels in each of the respondent's respective school, was to rate the top five crimes that they believed occurred.

A selection of eighteen different, yet common, crimes were selected, including: vandalism of school property; theft of school property; theft of student property; assault/physical fighting (student on student); assault/physical fighting (student on faculty or faculty on student); sexual assault misconduct (student on student); sexual assault/misconduct (student on faculty or faculty on student); gang involvement; cyberbullying; skipping class (e.g., truancy); student possession of weapon; student use of a weapon; student possession of illegal contraband; student possession of alcohol; "sexting" or the sharing explicit photos/videos; teen-dating violence between partners; and hate crimes (e.g., crimes that attack a race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, identity, etc.). Of those eighteen different crimes, respondents indicated the following:

The most common crime: skipping class

Second most common crime: vandalism of school property*

Third most common crime: vandalism of school property*

Fourth most common crime: assault/physical fighting (student on student) **and** student possession of illegal contraband **(TIE)**

Fifth most common crime: "sexting" or the sharing of explicit photos/videos

For each category of "how common" a minimum of one respondent indicated that hate crimes were most common at his or her school.   There was a tie between the second most and third most common perceived crimes determined by the respondents indicated by the asterisk.

The final section of the instrument were demographics questions. In the beginning of this paper there was a brief discussion about demographics including race, gender, age, and the State in which respondents went to high school. As with all research, samples should be representative of the population. Since this survey was administered to students at Roger Williams University and those students who were in one CORE class, the sample will be

compared to the overall population of the campus. Representativeness will allow this study to be

generalized to the rest of the population. Since gender, race, age, and State location were

discussed previously, they will not be discussed again. Respondents were asked to indicate the

year in which they graduated. There was a range of six (6) years between the respondents and

the median and mode are both 2016 ($SD = 1.164$). The minimum year is 2011 and the maximum

year is 2017 (see the table 14).

Table 14. Year of Graduation

		n	Percent
	2011	1	.5
	2013	2	1.0
	2014	36	18.5
Valid	2015	5	26
	2016	79	40.5
	2017	72	36.9
	Total	195	100.00

Further, respondents were asked to approximate their average household income on an

ordinal, rank level scale. More than half of the respondents indicated that their family's median

household income was greater than $100,000 (see Table 15).

Table 15. Family's Average Household Income

		n	Percent
	Less than $20,000	3	1.5
	$20,000 to $34,999	5	2.6
	$35,000 to $49,999	25	12.8
Valid	$50,000 to 74,999	23	11.8
	$75,000 to $99,999	28	14.4
	Over $100,000	111	56.9
	Total	195	100.00

Following the average household income, respondents were asked to approximate the

population of their high school. Respondents were provided five different answer choices on an

ordinal, rank level scale. 62 respondents from the original 195 indicated that his or her school

population was between 1 and 499 students and another 62 respondents indicated that their

school's population was ranged from 1000-1499 students (31.8%) (see Table 16).

Table 16. Approximate Population of Respondent's High School

		n	Percent
	1-499	62	31.8
	500-999	39	20.0
	1000-1499	62	31.8
Valid	1500-1999	18	9.2
	2000+	14	7.2
	Total	195	100.00

Respondents were asked to select his or her parents' marital status by indicating if their

parents were married, divorced, separated widowed, never been married, or if one of their

parents got remarried after a divorce (See Appendix A). The purpose of this question was to

assist in answering one of the hypotheses of this study. Typically, what literature has presented

is that children from broken homes will typically have more police contact and participate in

more deviant behavior. There were eight original categories that respondents were able to select

for this question; however, due to the lack of responses to some of the answer choices, they were

recoded into two different labels: married and some form of divorce/single household. This new

recoded data matrix is what was used for the analysis to compare through a cross-tab, bivariate

chi-square analysis to the frequency in skipping classes. Table 17 shows the descriptive results

for respondents' parents' marital status.

Table 17. Parent's Marital Status

		n	Percent
	Married	135	69.2
Valid	Divorce/Single Parent House	60	30.8
	Total	195	100.00

The majority of respondents indicated that his or her parents were married; however, yet almost a third of respondents indicated that they came from a "broken household." While choosing to use marital status as an indicator of a broken home there are many more variables that could have been asked in the instrument.

Table 18 shows the remaining of the descriptive results for remaining questions of the instrument that respondents were asked to answer. Questions asked about the urbanism of his or her school location, grade point average, were textbooks provided by the school, perceptions on teacher enjoyment, perceptions of if teachers cared about students, parental involvement, and the frequency in which they skipped class.

Table 18. Descriptive Statistics for Demographics and School Climate

	n	%
Was your high school		
Public	162	83.1
Private	33	16.9
Urbanism		
Urban	27	13.8
Suburban	130	66.7
Rural	38	19.5
G.P.A		
M	3.46	
SD	.338	
Textbooks Provided		
Yes	178	91.3
No	17	8.7
Teachers appeared to enjoy their job		
Yes	183	93.8
No	12	6.2
Teachers appeared to care about students		
Yes	185	94.9
No	10	5.1
Parenteral Involvement in Events		
All the time	60	30.8
Most of the time	75	38.5
Some of the time	39	20.0
Rarely	14	7.2
Never	7	3.6
Frequency of skipping class [a]		
All/Most of the Time	10	5.12
Some of the time to Rarely	88	45.13
Never	97	49.75

[a] The results shown are after the data was recoded from the original, possible answers provided on the instrument.

As a reminder, this study had four guiding research questions, where the first question served as an exploratory question and others had a hypothesis:

1. *What are student perceptions of their school resource officer? Did students have a positive experience with their school resource officer?*

2. *Feminist criminological theory and the general theory of crime suggest that males are more likely to engage in criminal activity and commit criminal acts*

against other males. Are males more likely to be victims of crime (e.g., bullying)

compared to females?

3. *In regards to urbanism, is there any association where respondents live and*

skipping class?

4. *Is there a relationship between students who come from "broken homes" and*

delinquent behavior? Delinquent behavior measured on the instrument includes

drug/alcohol use and bullying.

Further, this study had the following hypotheses:

The first hypothesis of this study is that males will report that they have been a victim of

bullying more frequently than females. The second hypothesis of this present study is that those

students who self-classified themselves as attending school in an urban setting will have an

increased level of "skipping or cutting class" (truancy) and/or will rate truancy among the top

listed crimes of students. The final hypothesis is based on the broken homes model of

delinquency that those children who come from a "broken home" are more likely to take part in

deviant and delinquent behavior (Wells & Rakin, 1986).

A bivariate analysis was computed to see if there was a relationship between gender

(male, female) and the frequency of cutting/skipping class (all/most of the time, some of the time

to rarely, never) (see Table 19) and found that there was a relationship between gender and

skipping class. The Pearson Chi-Square test indicated that the significance is measured at .018.

Another bivariate analysis was computed to see if there was a relationship between

skipping class (all/most of the time, some of the time to rarely, never) and urbanism (urban,

suburban, rural) (see Table 19). The Pearson Chi-Square test indicated that there was no

significant relationship between urbanism and skipping class in this study and was measured at

.348. In this instance the hypothesis is not supported at the .05 level of significance.

Regarding the hypothesis, the expectation that males are more likely to be a victim of bullying compared to females was unfounded. After computing a cross-tabulation it was found that in all instances females were found to be victims of bullying at a higher frequency, compared to males. The Pearson Chi-Square did not find any significance between gender and bullying and was measured at .203 (see Table 19). Again, this instance the hypothesis is not supported at the .05 level of significance.

The last, chi-square test was computed and found that there was no significant relationship between respondents' parents' marital status and the frequency of them cutting class (deviant/criminal behavior) resulted in a measurement of .763 (see Table 19).

Table 19. Bivariate, Chi-Square Results

Gender (male, female) and **Skipping Class** (all/most of the time, some of the time to rarely, never)		p = .018	
		Male	Female
All/Most of Time	Count	6	4
	Expected	45	5.5
Some to Rarely	Count	48	40
	Expected	39.7	48.3
Never	Count	34	63
	Expected	43.8	53.2

Parents Marital Status (Married, some sort of single-parent household) and **Deviant Behavior** (Cutting Class)		p = .763	
		Married	Single-House
All/Most of Time	Count	8	2
	Expected	7	3
Some to Rarely	Count	60	27
	Expected	60.5	26.5
Never	Count	67	30
	Expected	67.5	29.5

Gender (Male, Female) and **Victims of Bullying** (I was bullied...)		p = .203	
		Male	Female
All/Most of Time	Count	0	7
	Expected	3.1	3.9
Some to Rarely	Count	32	36
	Expected	30.3	37.7
Never	Count	55	65
	Expected	53.5	65.5

Gender (Male, Female) and **Victims of Bullying** (I was bullied)		p = .348		
		All/Most	Some/Rarely	Never
Urban	Count	3	12	12
	Expected	1.4	12.1	13.5
Suburban	Count	4	60	63
	Expected	6.6	56.9	63.5
Rural	Count	3	14	21
	Expected	2	17	19

The final question on the instrument asked students to describe his or her schools to include school cultural, student involvement, and if there was an open line of communication between school and home. For the most part, students had positive experiences at his or her school indicating that there was involvement from many students. A common theme is that sports were a priority and had the support from parents, faculty/staff, and students. However, as with all other comments provided by respondents from the survey, there were some negative comments about schools. A sample of comments can be viewed below:

- *A small community, wanted students to feel like a family and wanted the school to feel like a second home. Students were very involved and mostly ineffective communication between home and school, especially on days where school would/should close unexpectedly.*
- *At an all-boys school it was a different experience. Sports were taken very seriously and academics took a back seat. Parents would rarely be involved and it seemed that students nor teachers cared about their work.*
- *Closely knit community in a larger suburban town. Everyone knew of everyone, students were highly involved in sports and music as well as mock trial, robotics, etc. Very smooth communication between school and home.*
- *Culturally very separated. Students tended to stay with people they could relate to the most. Mostly I think because it was such a big school and that was the easiest way to make friends. Students were very involved as well as the parents.*
- *Everyone was really involved and our Principal advocated for school spirit. Parents were very involved in the school and pushed for many things to make the school better. The physical state of the school is poor.*
- *I attended a performing arts school in Hartford where being a white, straight, female was the minority. It was a predominately black population and communication was only automated voice mails from our principal. Students were very involved with planning, but typically only those with good grades participated.*

The descriptive results are an essential part of this research study. Comments that students were able to provide in the free-format style questions, provide greater detail than the fix-format style of questions. While some students did not take the open response questions as seriously or provide much detail in the responses that asked for elaboration, others provided detail that was beyond what was being asked. The data about school safety and security, technologies, and school culture will be essential for school administrators and law enforcement professionals and administrators to view. Generally speaking, students found that their schools

were a safe place for them to be educated and have fun. There were instances that students provided strong opinions and suggestions about how security practices need to change. In modern day, as sad as it is, we have become accustomed to shootings as they are now part of everyday lives. When this thesis first began, history and the timeline of mass shootings have changed and many have been added to the list. One of the most recent school shootings in Parkland, Florida might be "the one" where we all say enough is enough. However, without studies to hear the unspoken voice of the student about school safety, there will not be effective approaches by administrators to keep their schools safe.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

Strengths of the Present Study

One significant strength to this research is that it was completed over the course of two semesters at Roger Williams University, including project design, approval through the human subjects' review board, data collection, input, analysis, writing, and the defense. The study could not have been possible without the tremendous support of the faculty and students at Roger Williams University. Having the agreement from the professor to allow thirty minutes taken out of classroom time to administer the survey is obviously crucial – without their cooperation, this study would not have happened. That said, one significant strength of this study is the relatively high n and response rate. Further, for some of the demographic questions the generalizability to the overall population at Roger Williams University is within plus or minus several percent (e.g., gender).

Another strength of this study is that there was a lot of consistency throughout the data (both quantitatively and qualitatively). Respondents, generally, favored certain strategies and approaches (e.g., school resource officers) and other students did not support what schools were doing for security strategies (e.g., hiding in a corner during a lock-down). The consistency supports the notion that schools are typically using the same techniques and strategies throughout the nation. Hopefully, with further research and addition to literature from other scholars, school administrators will continue to adjust policies and practices for their school districts to enhance school safety.

Another strength of this study is that the instrument was administered in class which yielded a high response rate and participation n. Though it was a time-consuming process to administer all the surveys, it allowed for consistency as I was the sole administrator.

And one last strength is that the instrument designed allowed for both quantitative and qualitative data. While qualitative data is very subjective it allowed for respondents to provide more detailed answers to questions, as opposed to selecting pre-determined answer choices. Many respondents provided much detail in their answers to questions.

Limitations of the Present Study

This study provided findings and conclusions on perceptions of student responses to security techniques, school resource officers, and crime within high school that will add to the literature on school safety. Nevertheless, this study as with many other studies had limitations that need to be acknowledged. One limitation was that there was not much diversity in the sample, speaking in terms of race of the participants and socio-economic status. Roger Williams University is a predominately mono-racial university, with the majority identifying as White middle to upper-middle class. Generalizability will be a concern to the true population; however, other variables were measured, which were more in line with the population. Another possible limitation is the number of students who graduated high school between 2016 and 2017, compared to the number of participants that graduated between 2014 and 2015. This study had far less support from Core four-hundred level seminars than the one-hundred seminars. While the students from 2016 and 2017 would have more vivid memories of high school; those who graduated a few years prior provided more detailed responses in the qualitative free-formatted questions.

In some situations, participants skipped an item on the survey creating missing data. In these circumstances, the entire instrument would have to be discarded from the sample. Instead, using a replacement method, those items that were missing were replaced with the overall

average. This could have some statistical implications as it might not directly relate to the student's true perceptions and opinion to that specific item.

Another limitation to the study is that not all of the 195 respondents were from the same schools. The chances of getting two respondents that were from the same schools was slim. That said, the potential to have 195 different schools involved in this one study could provide variance causing skewed data. If all 195 respondents were from the same school, then it could have provided information for one school and been able to compare their actual rates of reported crime, victimization, security technologies, and the like to the perceptions of the respondents. This is not possible with the given data.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

This project has provided a potential for much insight for law enforcement and school administrators. As noted earlier in the introduction of this paper, the voice of the student is often not as heard as much as it should be, which poses a problem because they are the ones (along with administrators and teachers) day in and day out of the school (however, administrators and teachers have that voice and option to be heard, unlike in many circumstances students. When students have feelings or opinions about a topic that needs to be heard, and administrators do not want to hear those opinions, tensions will be created. This project yielded some interesting descriptive results and comments that were made by students. If the opportunity arises where this project could be duplicated, collecting identifying information to link surveys to respondents would be beneficial for follow-up interviews to clarify or hear more about an experience that a respondent had while in high school.

While none of the research questions and hypotheses were supported through the data collected, it is still important information that was collected to understand what students' perceptions are on the topics of school safety, security, and school resource officers. Perhaps, administrators will have the opportunity to revamp their security efforts within the schools that are more in line with what students suggest. For example, in regard to safety presentations, students felt that they were repetitive and useless; however, if administrators wanted to keep safety presentations in the yearly curriculum, consideration of a new topic each year that will keep student engaged would be suggested.

School safety is a concern of everyone. It is a concern of administrators, students, parents, citizens, and the police. Since the first time that this project started, the most current school shooting has changed many times. There is a problem in the United States, simply put.

The unsolved problem of school shootings needs to be addressed. Schools, generally speaking, are soft targets because of the amount of traffic that comes in and out of the building throughout the day. The solution to the problem will be found in a joint effort within the criminal justice and education community. With scholars adding to the existing literature on school safety and security, there might a universal solution; however, until then the community will continue with their efforts to target harden.

The design of this study was to allow students the opportunity to discuss his or her experiences from his or her high school and provide this information to other scholars, law enforcement, and educational administration highlighting, "voice of the student" perspective. In hope, the findings will be able to provide the aforementioned the necessary tools to address policy and procedures within schools. Students, generally, are in favor of school resource officers and they have been shown to have positive benefits. The most recent school shooting in Maryland, where a 17-year-old student shot two other students was confronted by the school resource officer where they engaged in a shoot-out. While it is still unclear if the school resource officer's bullet was the one that killed the shooter, or if the shooter committed a successful suicide, it is apparent that this shooting could have been much worse without the intervention of the school resource officer. Regardless of how many research projects get done and how much data is collected on school safety, the steps to keep schools safe will lay in the hands of each specific school district. Once one school district finds what works for them, other districts might start to adopt techniques and safety strategies. But for now, being able to hear what students say and think about how to keep schools safe is just as imperative as what administrators think. Schools are supposed to be a safe environment and when there is a breakdown of that safety, students will become distracted and feel on edge – this is not what students should experience at

school, nor is it conducive to a healthy learning environment. Building on existing literature to enhance school safety should be at the top of the list until a solution is reached.

Appendix A: Student Survey

Perceptions of Crime, Security, and School Resource Officers in High Schools

Informed Consent Form

Principal Researcher: Nicholas Joseph Dillon
Master of Science Candidate in Criminal Justice at Roger Williams University

Purpose of Study: This study will examine the perceptions of enrolled college students on the subject of crimes, security, and school resource officers in their former high school. Results will be presented in a final thesis for completion of a Master of Science degree.

Importance of this Study: School crime and violence have been a concern of administrators, faculty, staff, parents, and students; however, Columbine brought this topic to the forefront to their attention. There have been several studies completed on the perceptions of crime and violence from the administrators' point of view; however, the students' voice is often limited in these types of studies. The information collected through this survey will help to understand how students feel in school and whether the practices that are being used by schools are effective.

Procedures Experienced by Participants: To participate in this study, please be sure to read this consent form fully and check the box at the bottom. You will then be asked to complete a questionnaire and return the survey to the proctor after completing during a designated time.

Time Duration: Participants should expect survey to take approximately twenty minutes, but no longer than thirty minutes.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: The survey presented to participants will <u>not</u> contain any identifying information. The researcher will ensure that all response are kept anonymous and confidential.

Your Rights: You have the right to decline to participate in this study without any penalties, since your participation is strictly voluntary. Further, should you decide at any point to withdraw from this study, you may do so without penalty.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participation.

Risks and Benefits of Being a Participant: No physical, psychological, or emotional risks are associated with this study. At any time during this study, you may choose to stop participating without penalty. One benefit as a participant is being able contribute to the literature and to gain a greater understanding of school safety issues.

More Information: Should you have any questions or concerns at any point, please feel free to contact Nicholas Dillon at <u>ndillon810@g.rwu.edu</u>.

By checking this box below, it indicates that I have fully read the informed consent form, I am at least 18 years of age, and understand I can withdraw at any point without penalty.

☐

Section I. This section of the survey will assess your perceptions of security technologies and strategies used within your high school. **Instructions: Please circle the letter choice corresponding to the answer that best fits or write your response in the space provided.**

1. Did you notice any cameras inside your school?
    a. YES
    b. NO
    c. I DO NOT KNOW

2. If yes to question one (1): how effective do you believe cameras were in preventing or deterring crime from occurring?

3. What crimes or incidents do you think cameras prevented the most, if any?

4. Did you notice any cameras outside of the school (e.g., monitoring parking lots, athletic fields)?
    a. YES
    b. NO
    c. I DO NOT KNOW

5. If yes to question four (4): do you think cameras outside were effective to deter crime from occurring?

6. Has your school used random sweeps for drugs or alcohol with police detection dogs?
    a. YES
    b. NO
    c. I DO NOT KNOW

7. If yes to question six (6): how effective were random sweeps to deter the use of drugs or alcohol?

8. Did your school use random drug screens for students (e.g., student athletes/leaders)?
    a. YES
    b. NO
    c. I DO NOT KNOW

9. If yes to question eight (8): do you think those screens were effective for deterring the use of drugs?

10. Did you observe any acts that challenged the purpose of technology (e.g., propping electronic access doors open, covering cameras, and the like)? If so, please explain that instance.

Section II. School Practices & Programs: This section of the survey measures what security practices were used by your high school administration, security staff, and/or School Resource Officer. **Instructions: Please circle the letter choice corresponding to the answer that best fits or write your response in the space provided.**

For each of the following, please select the best answer that describes your high school.

11. Did your school provide an electronic notification system that alerted parents/guardians in case of a school-wide threat?
   a. YES
   b. NO
   c. I DO NOT KNOW

12. Did your school provide an anonymous, structured form to report threats (e.g., online submission)?
   a. YES
   b. NO
   c. I DO NOT KNOW

13. Did your school prohibit the use of cell phones and text messaging devices during school hours?
   a. YES
   b. NO
   c. I DO NOT KNOW

14. Did your school limit access to social media on school computers?
   a. YES
   b. NO
   c. I DO NOT KNOW

15. If cyber-bullying occurred (before or after school hours), was there a response from the school to address that issue?
   a. YES
   b. NO
   c. I DO NOT KNOW

16. Did your school have a general safety assembly at the beginning of the school year to discuss what to do in the event of a school-wide threat?
   a. YES
   b. NO
   c. I DO NOT KNOW

17. Did your school have any internet safety presentation for students?
   a. YES
   b. NO
   c. I DO NOT KNOW

18. Did your school have any internet safety presentation for parents?
   a. YES
   b. NO
   c. I DO NOT KNOW

19. Did your school practice security drills (e.g., lockdowns, hiding in school or fleeing from school)?
   a. YES
   b. NO
   c. I DO NOT KNOW

20. Did your school practice active shooter drills?
   a. YES
   b. NO
   c. I DO NOT KNOW

21. If your school had these policies in place and practice drills for incidents or active shooters, how did this influence, if at all, your level of feeling safe and secure in school?

22. If applicable, were the presentations on safety and security useful for students to listen to? Do you think students took them seriously?

Section III. School Resource Officers and Private Security: This section of the survey measures the involvement, or lack of, involvement of a School Resource Officer (SRO) in your high school. **Instructions: Please circle the letter choice corresponding to the answer that best fits or write your response in the space provided.**

A School Resource Officer defined by the National Association of School Resource Officers is, "a career law enforcement officer with sworn authority who is deployed by an employing police department or agency in a community-oriented policing assignment to work in collaboration with one or more schools."

23. Did your school have a School Resource Officer present at least once a week?
    a. YES
    b. NO **(If NO, skip to question 25).**

24. How was your school resource officer generally perceived? Was he or she a trustworthy person that students went to as a resource, to report crime, listened to students?

25. Did your school have a private security staff present at least once a week?
    a. YES
    b. NO

Continue to next page.

26. Did/Was your School Resource Officer/or Security Staff: **(If your school did not have an SRO skip part I and answer part II. If your school did not have private security skip part II. If your school had both an SRO and private security answer both part I and II).**

	Part I. SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER						Part II. PRIVATE SECURITY STAFF					
	All the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Rarely	Never	Don't Know	All the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Rarely	Never	Don't Know
a. Present in the building while students arrived at school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Present in the building while students departed?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Present in the hallways during passing time/class change?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Present in the cafeteria/dining area during student lunches?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Consult with students as needed?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Assist in teaching efforts as a guest lecturer for classes?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. Participate in after school activities or attend events? (e.g., concerts or sporting events)	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. Approachable?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. Chaperone field trips?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. Assist in coaching athletic programs?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
k. Fairly enforce school policies within the school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
l. Provide group counseling with students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
m. Respond to calls for service within the school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
n. Trusted by students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
o. Trusted by faculty and staff?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
p. Provide safety presentations for students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
q. Provide safety presentations for faculty and staff members?	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6

27. If you had contacts with an SRO, briefly elaborate the contact(s) you had (contacts could include being interviewed, reported a crime, and the like). What was the outcome? Were you treated fairly? For example, was it a positive or negative encounter?

Section IV. Perceived School Problems: This section of the survey will measure your perceptions of violence that occurred in your high school and the commonality in which they occurred.

28. For each of the following please indicate your answer by circling the corresponding number. If you do not know the answer or do not want to answer, skip that item and move to the next line.

	All the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Rarely	Never
a. I felt safe at school	1	2	3	4	5
b. I was bullied in school	1	2	3	4	5
c. I knowingly bullied others	1	2	3	4	5
d. I was bullied online (e.g., cyber-bullying)	1	2	3	4	5
e. I knowingly bullied others online	1	2	3	4	5
f. I noticed other students using drugs or other illegal substances on school grounds (e.g., marijuana)	1	2	3	4	5
g. I felt threatened by another student	1	2	3	4	5
h. I was threatened by a teacher	1	2	3	4	5
i. I consumed alcohol at school	1	2	3	4	5
j. I saw others consume alcohol at school	1	2	3	4	5
k. I saw weapons on school grounds possessed by another student (e.g., knife, gun, baton, and the like)	1	2	3	4	5
l. I saw a teacher possess a weapon while inside of the building	1	2	3	4	5

29. What were the 5 most common crimes or problems that occurred? Rank in order from one (1) being most common (2) being second most common, (3) third most common, (4) fourth most common, (5) fifth most common.

____ Vandalism of school property
____ Theft of school property
____ Theft of student property
____ Assault/physical fighting (student on student)
____ Assault/physical fighting (student on faculty or faculty on student)
____ Sexual assault/misconduct (student on student)
____ Sexual assault/misconduct (student on faculty or faculty on student)
____ Gang involvement
____ Cyber-bullying

____ Skipping class
____ Student possession of weapon
____ Student use of a weapon
____ Student possession of illegal contraband
____ Student use of illegal contraband
____ Student possession of alcohol
____ "Sexting" or the sharing of photos/videos
____ Teen dating-violence between partners
____ Hate crimes (e.g., crimes that attack a person's race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.)

Section V. About you and your High School: This section of the survey is to better understand you and the high school environment you attended. **Instructions: Please circle the letter choice corresponding to the answer that best fits or write your response in the space provided.**

30. To which gender identity do you most identify?
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Trans*
    d. Gender Variant
    e. Prefer not to answer

31. To which ethnicity do you most identify with?
    a. Hispanic or Latino/a
    b. Non-Hispanic or Latino/a

32. Indicate your age

    Age: _____

33. Indicate the year in which you graduated high school

    Year of Graduation: _____

34. To which race do you most identify with?
    a. American Indian or Alaska Native
    b. Asian
    c. Black or African American
    d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    e. White

35. What is your *family's* approximate household income?
    a. Less than $20,000
    b. $20,000 to $34,999
    c. $35,000 to $49,999
    d. $50,000 to $74,999
    e. $75,000 to $99,999
    f. Over $100,000

36. Approximately what was the population of your high school?
    a. 1-499
    b. 500-999
    c. 1000-1499
    d. 1500-1999
    e. 2000+

37. Which best describes your parent(s) marital status?
    a. Married
    b. Divorced
    c. Separated
    d. Widowed
    e. Never been married
    f. Divorced, but mother re-married
    g. Divorced, but father re-married
    h. Divorced, but both mother and father re-married with new partners

38. Indicate the State in which your high school is located

    High School State: _____

39. Was your high school:
    a. Public
    b. Private

40. Would you consider your hometown or city:
    a. Urban
    b. Suburban
    c. Rural

41. What was your overall high school G.P.A. (based on a standard 4-point scale)?

    G.P.A.: _____

42. Were your textbooks provided for you by the school?
    a. YES
    b. NO

43. Did your teachers appear to enjoy their job?
    a. YES
    b. NO

44. Did it appear that your teachers cared about students?
    a. YES
    b. NO

45. Did parents appear to be involved in planning events, attending sporting events, concerts, and the like?
    a. All the time
    b. Most of the time
    c. Some of the time
    d. Rarely
    e. Never

46. How often did you skip class?
    a. Daily
    b. Weekly
    c. Monthly
    d. Once or twice a term
    e. Never

47. Briefly describe your school. What was the cultural like? Were students involved? Was there an open-line of communication between school and home?

Thank you for your time and participation in this survey!
Your responses are greatly appreciated.

If you have any further questions or comments about this survey or study please contact
Nicholas J. Dillon at <u>ndillon810@g.rwu.edu</u>

Thank you

Appendix B: Faculty/Staff Letter

Professor {LAST NAME}:

My name is Nicholas Dillon and I am a Master's of Science candidate at Roger Williams University's School of Justice Studies. I completed my undergraduate course work also at Roger Williams University and graduated in May 2017 cum laude and was awarded the Presidential Core Value Medallion for the School of Justice Studies. My aspirations are to complete my degree and work in the government side of the criminal justice system as a data analyst with specializations in community policing, school safety & violence, and community satisfaction. To successfully complete my degree course work, I am completing a thesis where I will need the assistance of your students.

First, I am sure you are wondering how your class was selected. I compiled a list of all Core curriculum courses from the one-hundred levels and the four-hundred senior seminar courses. Each course was assigned a number from one to one-hundred twenty-nine, as there are one-hundred twenty-nine Core classes. A random number generator was used and the first twenty numbers that were generated were selected as part of this study.

I am writing to see if there is an opportunity for me to come into your class and administer this survey for approximately twenty to thirty minutes. I understand that this is a time commitment against your existing class plan; however, the data that I can collect from your students will be imperative to write a successful thesis. Obviously, the decision is left in your hands and I truly do understand that if it is not possible (but truly appreciate if this can be allowed). Briefly, my thesis will look at the perceptions that college students have on crime, violence, security technologies, and school resource officers from their high school career. Those who have the opportunity to complete the survey will respond to a set of fix-formatted questions and several free-formatted questions. Questions include the level of security strategies that they think were used, and if applicable, express their opinions on security personnel and/or their school resource officer.

After my thesis has been finalized and defended to the thesis committee and others, I will be more than happy to send an electronic copy for your reading interest. I look forward to hearing back from you soon!

The plan is to administer the survey before late-October; however, the earlier the better. Currently, I am pending approval from the Human Subjects Review Board. Once approved, I will then be able to administer the survey and contact you to set up a time.

If you can commit and allow me to visit your class, please contact me at ndillon810@g.rwu.edu or call me at ███████.

Again, thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing back from you!

Class: {CLASS TITLE}   **Course Number:** {COURSE NUMBER}   **Days/Time:** {D&T}

Sincerely,

Nicholas J. Dillon

Nicholas Joseph Dillon
Principal Investigator
M.S. of Criminal Justice Candidate

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