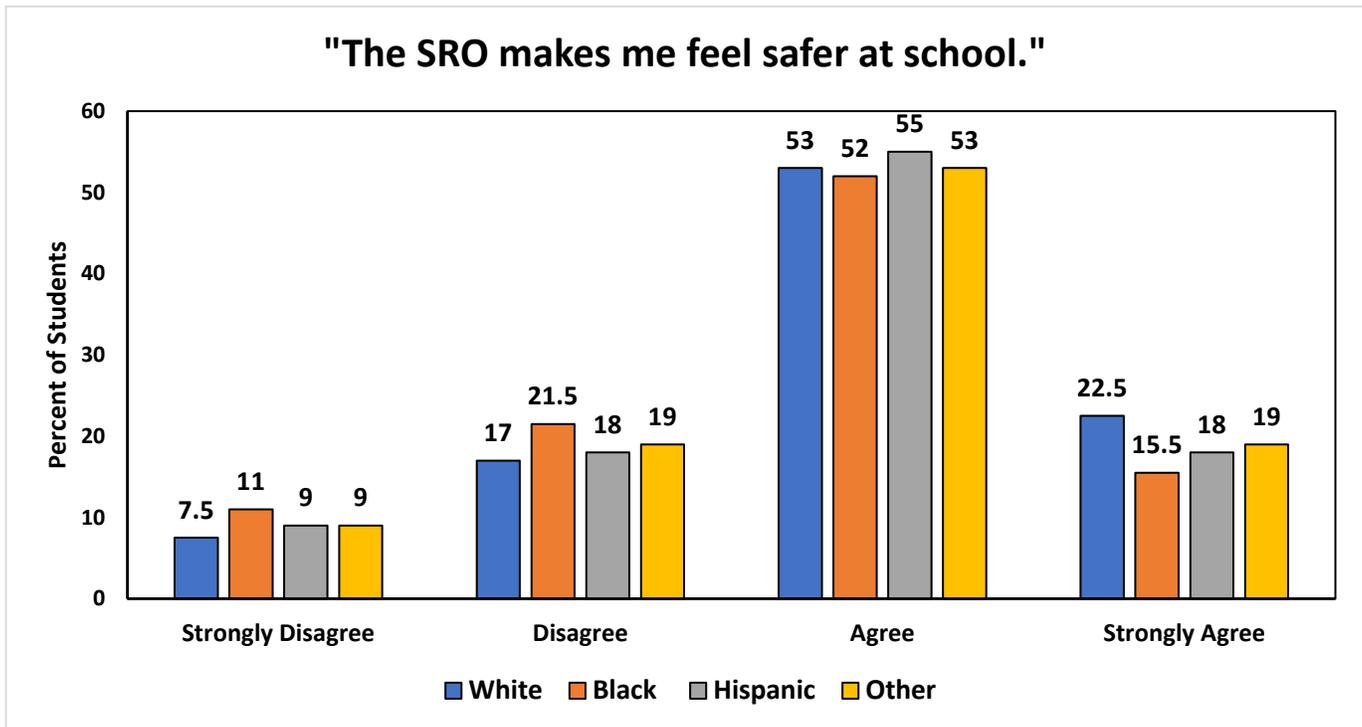


Practical Findings from the Virginia School Climate Survey

Students Perceptions of School Resource Officers

The Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey conducted in the winter of 2020 asked high school students how often they spoke with their School Resource Officers (SROs) and whether the SRO makes them feel safer at school. A statewide sample of 106,865 students in 299 schools reported a wide range of interactions with their SROs: they reported speaking with them weekly or every day (6%), once or twice a semester (23%) or never (71%). Nearly three-fourths (73%) of students agreed (agree or strongly agree) that the SRO makes them feel safer at school. This generally positive perception differed across racial/ethnic groups: Black (67.5%), Hispanic (73%), White (75.5%), and Other (72%). On average, Black, Hispanic, and Other race students



were less likely than White students to report that the SRO makes them feel safer at school.

Note. The sample included students self-reporting as White (46%), Black (18%), Hispanic (of any race, 19%), or Other (17%, including Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, two or more races, and other race students). Additional breakdowns available in the full technical report. Students (3,924) who said there was no SRO in their school were not included in this table.

Practical Suggestions. Schools should review their students’ perspectives on SROs and school conditions in the individual reports sent to each high school and division. The [National Association of School Resources Officers](#) (NASRO) identifies three main roles of school resource officers: educator, informal counselor/mentor, and law enforcement officer. NASRO recommends that all schools have a memorandum of understanding between the law enforcement agency that defines SRO roles and responsibilities. The [Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services](#) provides training for SROs (and other school safety officers) on a regular basis.

Study Overview. The Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey was administered in the winter of 2020 as part of the annual School Safety Audit (§ 22.1-279.8.A) by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS) in the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Education. This project was supported by grant #NIJ 2017-CK-BX-007 awarded to the University of Virginia by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and recommendations expressed in this report are those of the researchers at the Youth Violence Project of the University of Virginia and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Justice or the Center for School and Campus Safety at the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. More detailed analyses are available from the Virginia Youth Violence Project: <http://youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu>.