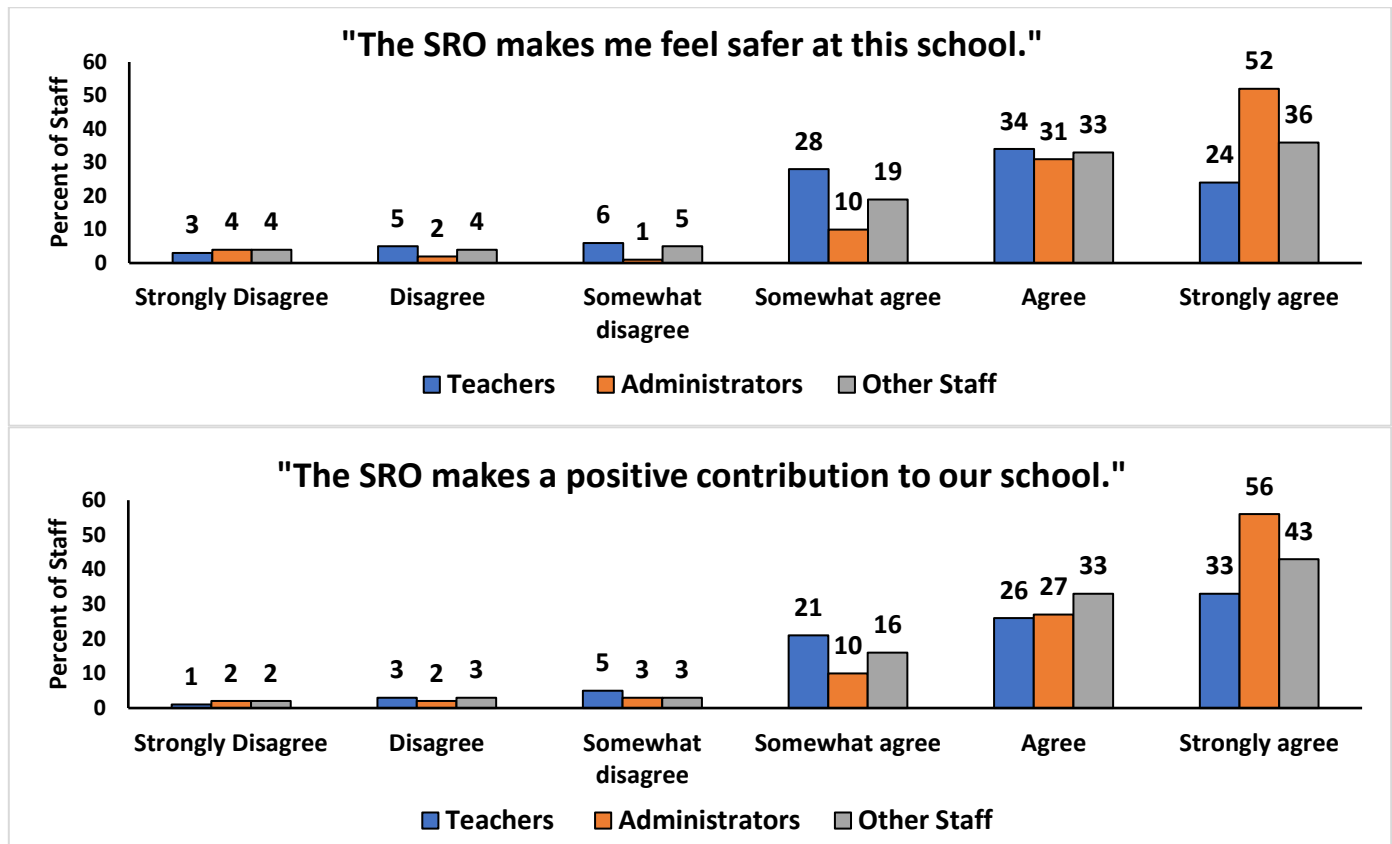


# Practical Findings from the Virginia School Climate Survey

## Staff Perceptions of School Resource Officers

The Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey conducted in the winter of 2020 asked high school staff how often they spoke with their School Resource Officer (SRO) and whether their SRO makes them feel safer at school and makes a positive contribution to their school. A statewide sample of 15,707 staff in 299 high schools reported speaking with their SROs: every day (18%), about weekly (30%), once or twice a semester (37%), or never (15%). Most staff agreed (somewhat to strongly agree) that the SRO makes them feel safer at school (85%) and makes a positive contribution to the school (90%). Administrators tended to report more interactions and more favorable views than teachers and other staff.



Note. The staff included teachers (12,192), administrators (336), and other staff (3,179) such as instructional aides and school counselors.

**Practical Suggestions.** Schools should review their staff 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>.