



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

2020 Annual Census NC School Resource
Officers

Session Law 2019-222, House Bill 75

Date Due: April 15, 2020
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2019-2020

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Preface

This annual Census report is the product of a collaborative effort between the Department of Public Instruction, Center for Safer Schools, North Carolina public school units and the multiple law enforcement agencies who willfully support the mission of school safety through the deployment and support of School Resource Officers (SROs). The information contained herein is the result of surveys distributed to each public-school unit through school District Safety Directors and Chief Financial Officers. This information will be used to satisfy the legislative requirement as contained in HB 75 and identify potential needs such as funding, staffing and training advancements for SROs.

This report is submitted in furtherance of legislation established under Session Law 2019-222 as contained in House Bill 75.

Executive Summary

School resource officers (SROs) are law enforcement officers who are assigned to work within the school setting. Officers have the jurisdictional authority to make arrests and conduct investigations on school grounds, however these duties account for only a fraction of the functions they perform. The SRO program is a vital part of any department's community policing philosophy, beginning with the trust that students gain by interacting with an officer. Such relationships can be extremely important in preventing threats of any sort on and off campus. School Resource Officers are also called upon to provide some legal or civics lessons to students, teachers and administrators in classroom environments. SROs not only provide a level of deterrence on the school campus, but they also assist the school and first responders to prepare safety canvases of the campus and to plan and prepare for potential critical incidents on campus.

Selecting officers suitable to become SROs is an important first step. Officers should be efficient at communicating with youth and have a desire to work with school-aged children and youth. They should also be comfortable working in school environments where they will work independently with little to no supervision and where school administration may not fully understand their sworn law enforcement responsibilities. Although they work on a school campus, their primary role is that of a law enforcement officer who uses professional discretion and recognizes the differences between school policy and state law. This discretion is vital in eliminating unnecessary law enforcement contact with students. The SRO should not be involved in the enforcement of any school policy. Using discretion to either act or observe helps lessen any threat that might be felt by school administrators due to the SROs presence. It is also vital for school administrators to properly utilize the SRO. Schools and school systems generally deal with the delineation of authority through memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the law enforcement agencies providing the SRO support. These MOUs define the expectations of the role of an SRO within the school environment.

An assignment as a school resource officer may be a step in the professional development of a law enforcement officer. To achieve promotion through the departmental ranks, an officer might be required to serve time in many different agency roles--from patrol officer to SRO to investigator--to gain rank, senior status, and the salary that such rank provides. An officer who desires to continue as an SRO for more than a few years may lose the opportunity to move up in their agency ranks. This dilemma may prevent many

officers who are highly effective in the school setting from remaining as SROs. However, some agencies recognize the advantages of having professional officers that can remain in specific assignments for extended periods and allow for rank and command progression within those roles.

Based on the mapping of funding sources, this census highlights the impact of SRO grants, in supporting North Carolina Schools, as these funds are second only to funding provided by participating law enforcement agencies.

Research Methodology:

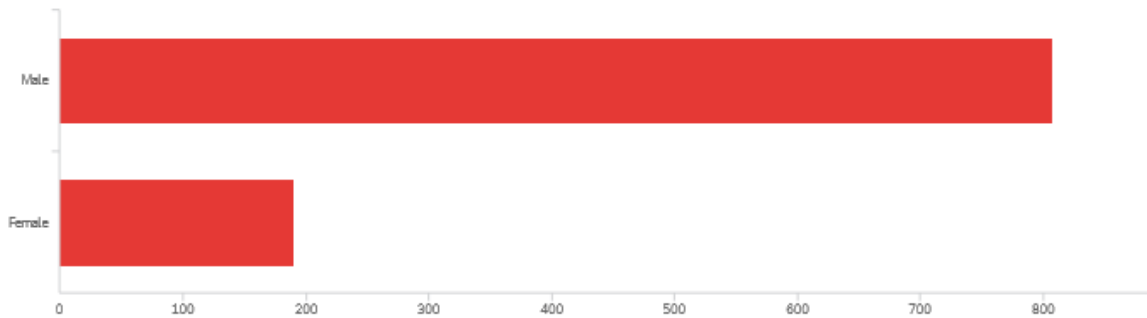
In December 2019, the Center for Safer Schools contacted North Carolina public school Superintendents/Charter school Directors as well as the school District Safety Directors in all local education agencies (LEAs) and charter schools advising of the School Resource Officer Census as legislated by the North Carolina General Assembly. Specifically, District Safety Directors were instructed to poll their respective SRO population in answering the specific areas referenced by House Bill 75. In February 2020, the survey was closed. To further enhance accuracy of the SRO population as well as associated funding sources, the Department of Public Instruction, School Business Division, conducted a funding survey, through district, charter and residential school financial officers to gather funding sources associated with SRO staffing supporting each school unit. The results of this census effort identified approximately **1550** SROs throughout the state of North Carolina.

In furtherance of adhering to House Bill 75, the following information was collected.

1. Age
 2. Years of Law Enforcement Experience
 3. What department they work for
 4. Total number of SRO's in state and in each public-school unit
 5. Education levels
 6. Years of SRO Experience
 7. Funding Source
 8. Location of SRO's
 9. Percent of SRO's assigned to 1 school
 10. Law Enforcement Affiliation
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AGE and GENDER

According to census results, School Resource Officers in North Carolina are on average 42 years of age. As seen in the graph for Q2, 39% of respondents reported being in the 40-49 age range. Of those that responded, 81% are male while 19.5% are female.



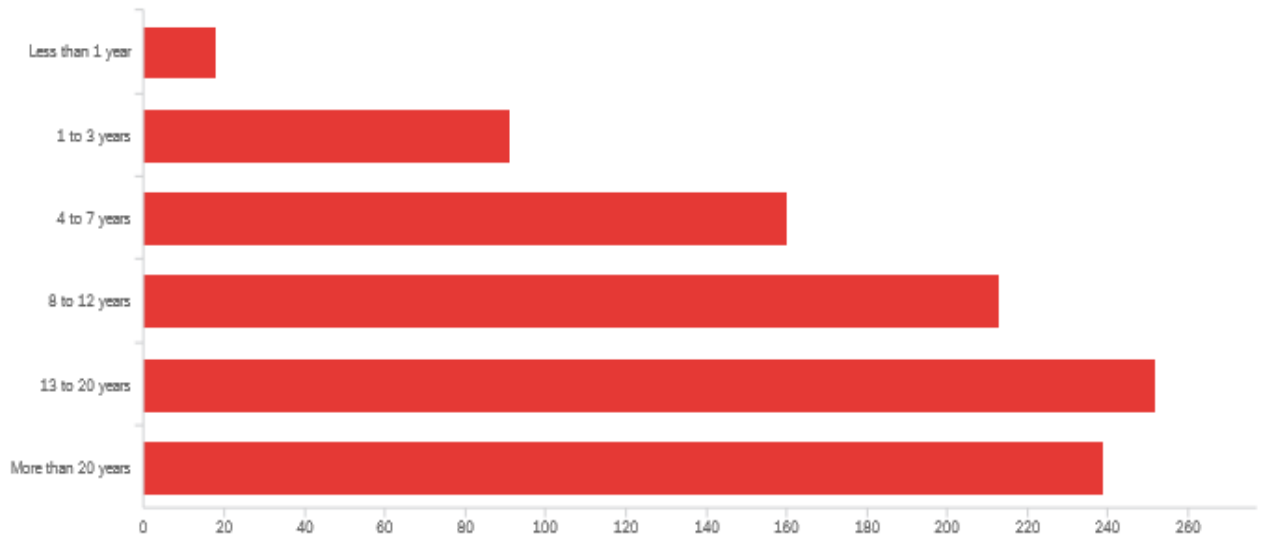
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Your Gender	1.00	2.00	1.19	0.39	0.15	999

#	Field	Choice Count	
1	Male	80.88%	808
2	Female	19.12%	191
			999

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Your age	0.00	70.00	41.70	10.06	101.12	1,014

YEARS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCE

Census results indicate Sheriffs and Police Chiefs are very cognizant that they should place an SRO with extensive experience in schools. Over 25% of survey respondents reported having been an officer for 13-20 years, while 24% of respondents reported having been a sworn law enforcement officer for more than 20 years.



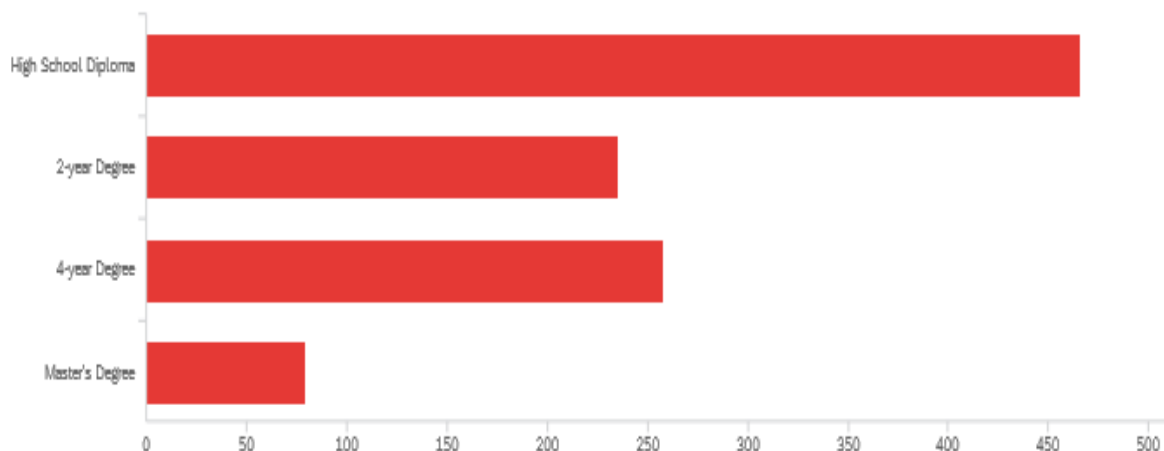
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	How many years have you been a sworn law enforcement officer?	1.00	6.00	4.34	1.35	1.83	973

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Less than 1 year	1.85% 18
2	1 to 3 years	9.35% 91
3	4 to 7 years	16.44% 160
4	8 to 12 years	21.89% 213
5	13 to 20 years	25.90% 252
6	More than 20 years	24.56% 239

973

EDUCATION LEVELS

While it is a requirement that every law enforcement officer have a high school diploma for hiring purposes in any law enforcement agency, not all officers have college degrees or higher. According to Census results, 45% had high school diplomas while nearly the other half of respondents had either a 2-year or 4-year Degree. Only 7% had a Masters Degree.



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	What is the highest level of education you have completed?	1.00	4.00	1.95	1.00	1.00	1,038

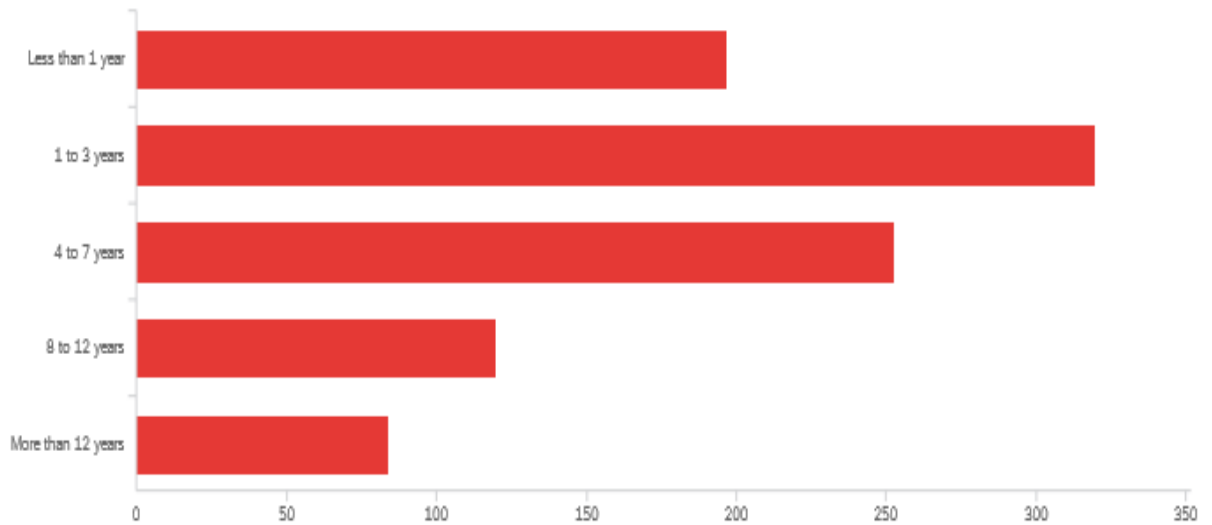
#	Field	Choice Count
1	High School Diploma	44.89% 466
2	2-year Degree	22.64% 235
3	4-year Degree	24.86% 258
4	Master's Degree	7.61% 79

1038

YEARS OF SRO EXPERIENCE

While indications are most SRO's have served in the position for 1-3 years, it is important to understand that many SRO's are not able to be promoted while in a specialty position. SROs commonly return to other departmental assignments in furtherance of career advancement. This usually occurs when the SRO is on the job 4-7 years. The Center for Safer Schools believes it is important to place officers that want to serve in

this role and have a passion for making the difference in the lives of children and young adults.



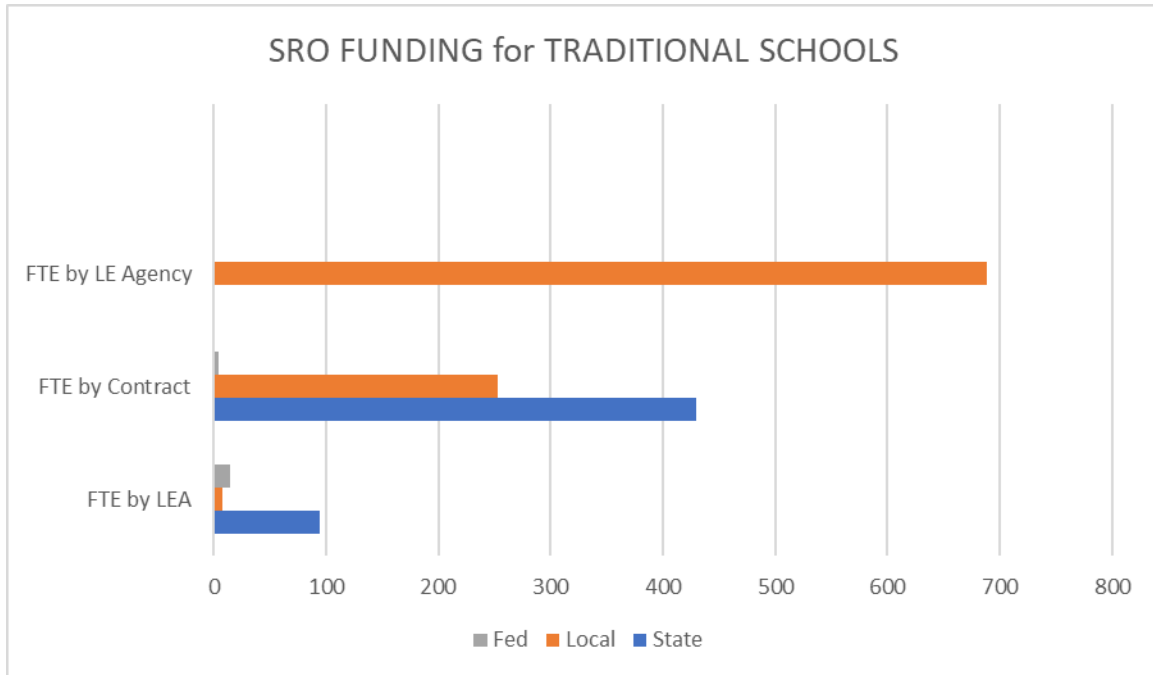
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	How many years have you served as an SRO?	1.00	5.00	2.56	1.19	1.41	974

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Less than 1 year	20.23% 197
2	1 to 3 years	32.85% 320
3	4 to 7 years	25.98% 253
4	8 to 12 years	12.32% 120
5	More than 12 years	8.62% 84
		974

FUNDING SOURCES

In 2013, the NC General Assembly provided a \$7 million grant to fund elementary and middle school SRO positions throughout the state. There were 210 SROs employed under this recurring grant at that time. In 2018, the General Assembly added an additional \$5 million to the original grant for distribution throughout the state. A separate survey was sent to all districts so that we could better track the funding source per

officer per school. This breakdown is a result of **Session law 2019-222 (HB 75) Section 3.1** which amends the general statute and requires DPI to conduct an annual census of school resource officers (SROs). The requirements include the following data as it pertains to funding. Although it is extremely difficult to ascertain which officers share schools, because that may change daily based on several different law enforcement functions, the following data strongly represents where the SRO's in the state are assigned. The below data accounts for a total of **1550.81** School Resource Officers funded throughout the state of North Carolina.



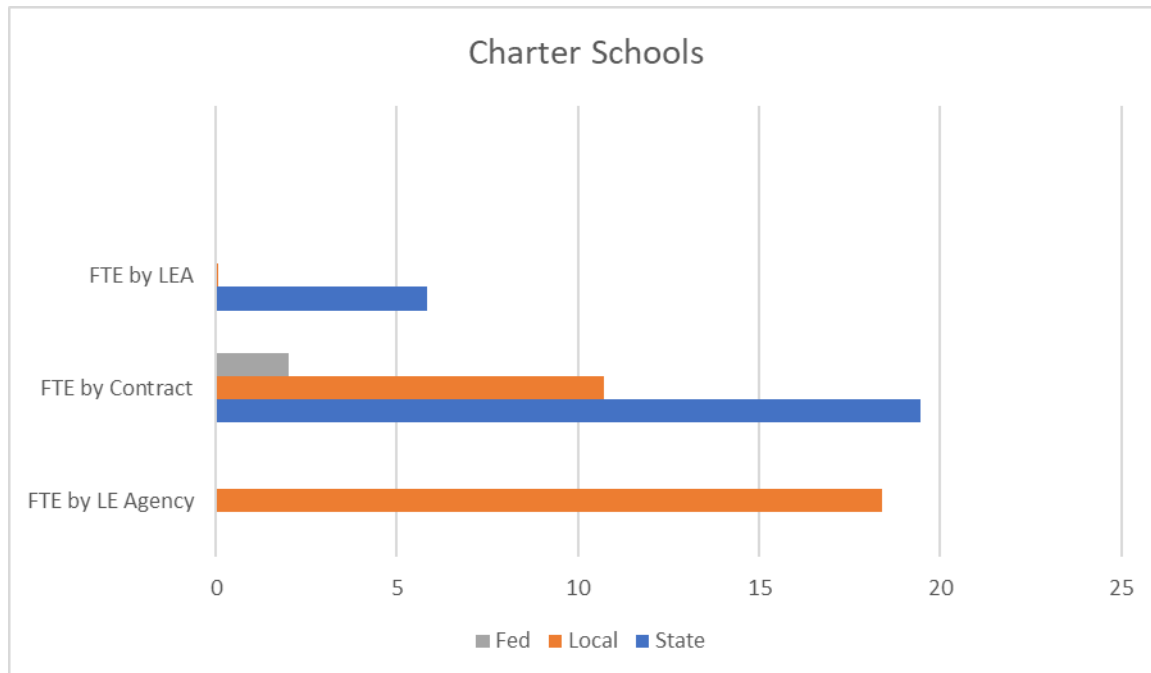
SEE APPENDIX A

Full-time employed by Law Enforcement Agency = **688.32**

Full-time employee contracted by LEA (State funding, CFSS grants) = **429.8** state funded / **253.2** local funded / **3.97** federal funded

Full-time employed by LEA (School Districts) = **94.6** state funded / **7.33** local funded / **14.7** federal funded

Traditional schools have a total of 1492.34 School Resource Officers.



SEE APPENDIX B

Full-time employee by LEA (School Districts) = **5.82** state / **.08** local / 0 Fed

Full-time employee contracted by LEA (State funding, CFSS grants) = **19.47** state / **10.70** local / **2** fed

Full-time employee by Law Enforcement Agency = **18.4**

Charter Schools have a total of 56.48 School Resource Officers

APPENDIX C represents SRO funding associated with Residential schools Eastern NC School for the Deaf NC School for the Deaf and are classified as follows:

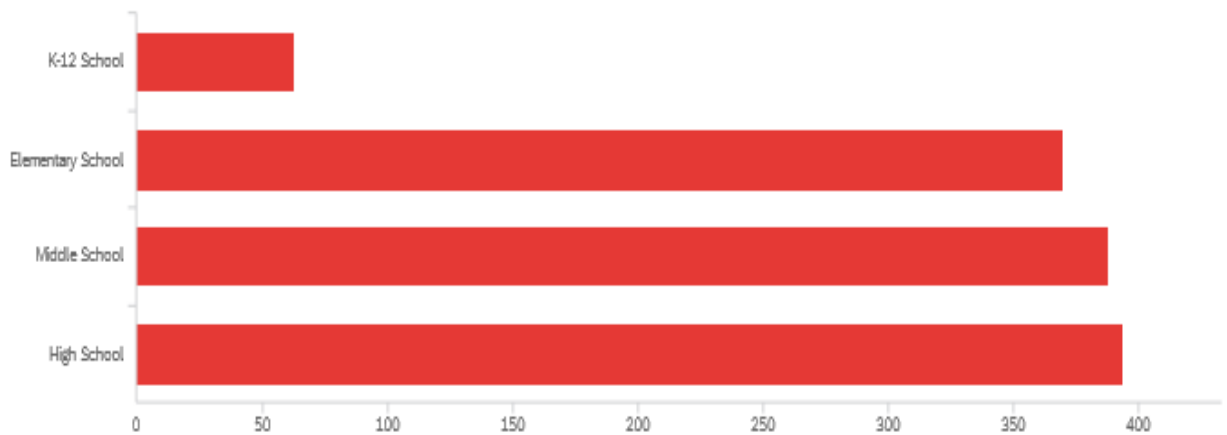
FTE contracted by LEA (State Funding, CFSS grants) = **1** state / **1** local

Residential Schools account for 2 School Resource Officers

LOCATIONS OF SRO's

While the majority of SRO's work in traditional schools throughout the state, Charter schools are seeing the benefit of having an SRO on campus as well. As previously referenced Traditional schools account for **1492.34** SROs and Charter schools account for **56.48** SROs. Additionally, as indicated below, the types of schools these SRO's are assigned to can vary. While most of the SROs work at high schools, middle and elementary schools are well represented.

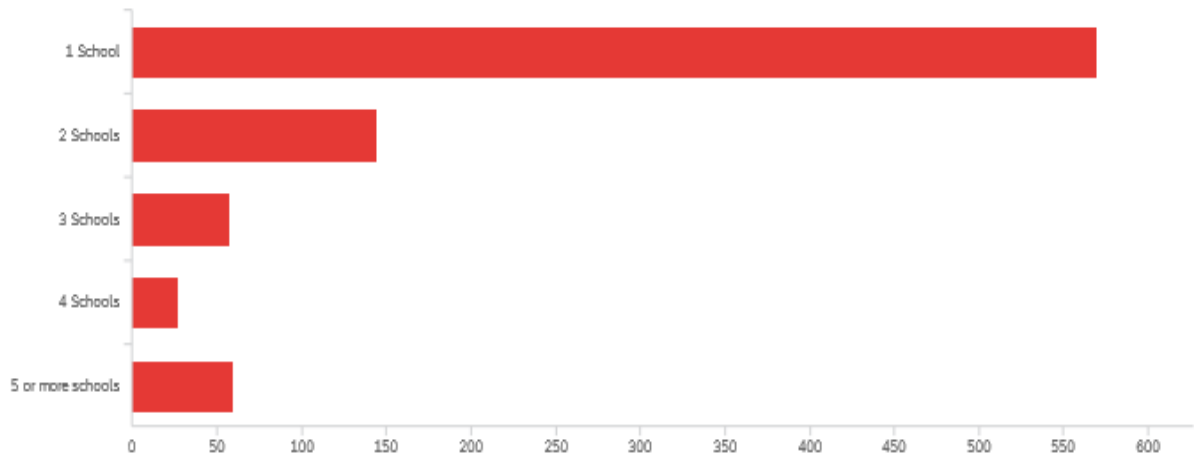
This graph illustrates what type of school SROs are assigned to.



#	Field	Choice Count
1	K-12 School	5.19% 63
2	Elementary School	30.45% 370
3	Middle School	31.93% 388
4	High School	32.43% 394

PERCENTAGE OF SRO's ASSIGNED TO 1 SCHOOL

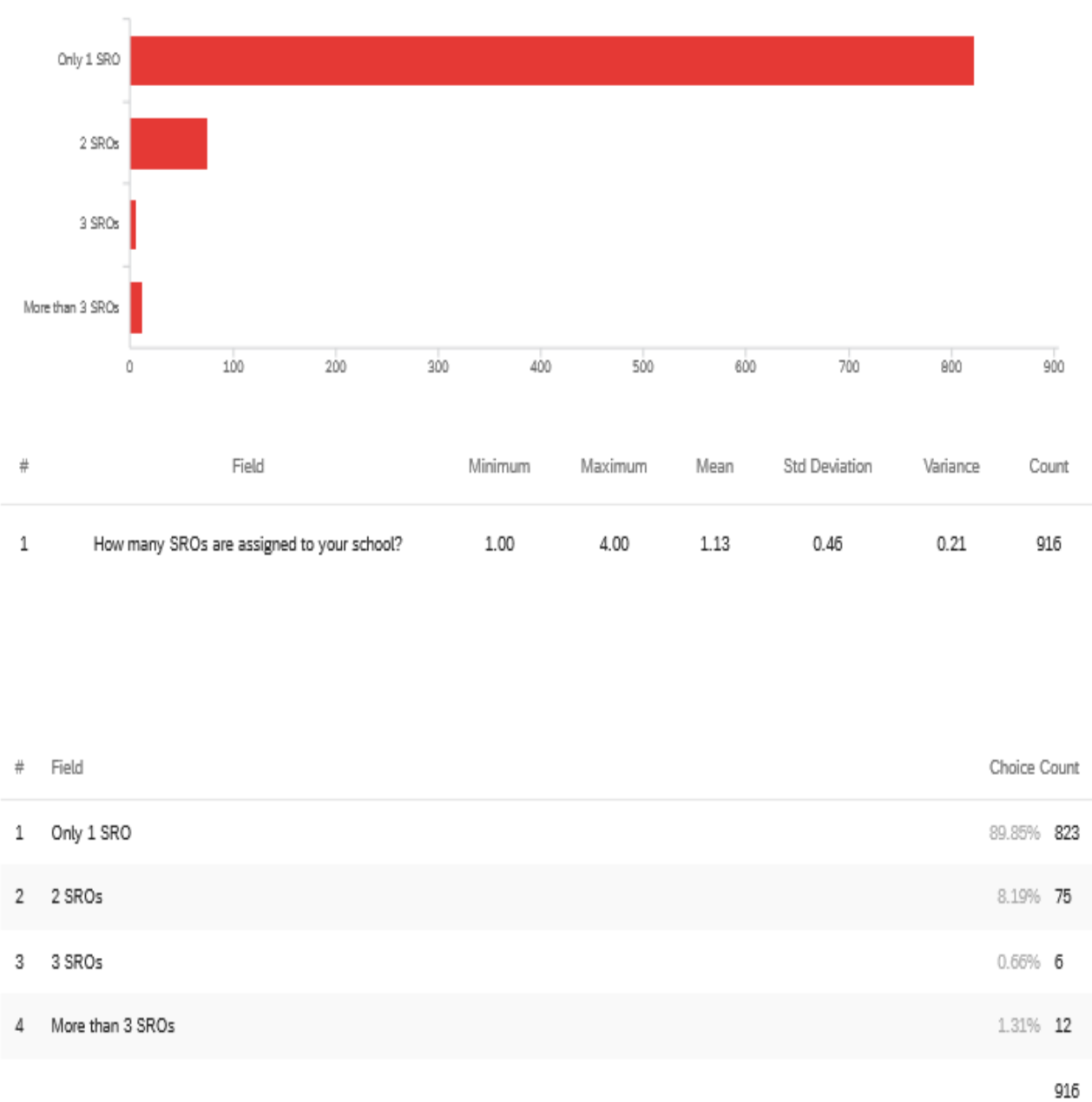
Although it is optimum to be able to assign an SRO to only one school, an SRO assignment is often dependent on departmental staffing. While the high majority of SRO's are assigned to high schools, they are also assigned to schools as determined by community trends and need. Middle and elementary SRO's generally share multiple schools as illustrated.



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	How many schools are you primarily assigned to as an SRO?	1.00	5.00	1.67	1.17	1.38	858

#	Field	Choice Count
1	1 School	66.43% 570
2	2 Schools	16.78% 144
3	3 Schools	6.64% 57
4	4 Schools	3.15% 27
5	5 or more schools	6.99% 60
		858

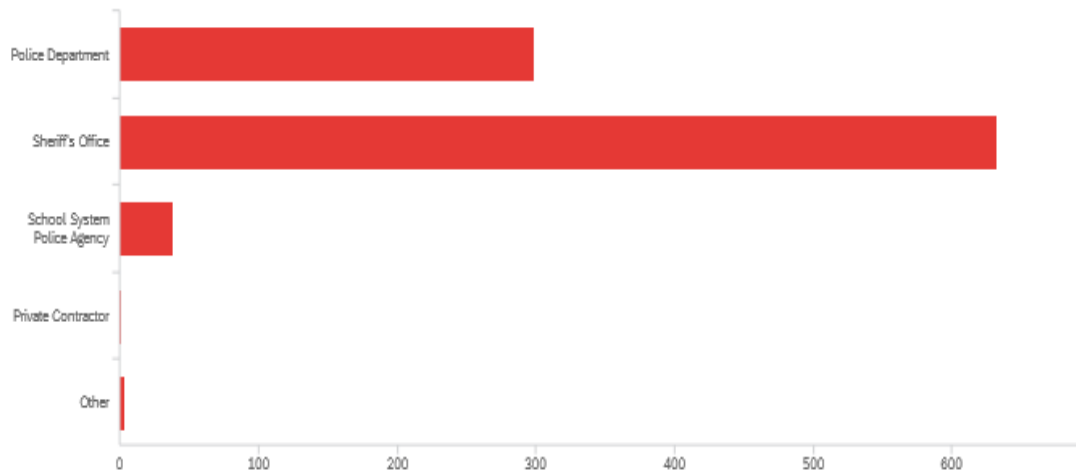
As stated above, the below illusrtates how many SRO’s are assigned to a prticular school.



LAW ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT AFFILIATION

While Sheriff's Offices staff many schools throughout the state, local police departments provide staffing as well. The below illustrates those statistics and also identifies other categories such as School System Police Agencies, Private Contractors and others which include 3 individuals. These are:

1. 2 individuals that are employed through the school system but a sworn Sheriff's Deputy.
2. A safety officer for the school system.



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Which type of law enforcement agency do you work for?	1.00	5.00	1.74	0.56	0.31	974

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Police Department	30.70% 299
2	Sheriff's Office	64.99% 633
3	School System Police Agency	3.90% 38
4	Private Contractor	0.10% 1
5	Other	0.31% 3
		974