

# School-based law enforcement is likely ineffective for keeping schools safe, finds analysis

November 8 2023

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A systematic review that analyzed the results of published studies concluded that school-based law enforcement (SBLE)—having sworn law enforcement officers stationed in schools on at least a part-time basis—is likely ineffective for keeping schools safe, and it may even

have detrimental consequences.

The research, which is [published](#) in *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, included 32 studies that examined the relationship between SBLE presence and school-related outcomes including crime and [behavior problems](#), perceptions of school, and [student learning](#). The studies compared outcomes in schools with SBLE to those without SBLE, or schools that added SBLE to schools that did not.

Schools with SBLE had higher rates of crime and behavior problems than schools without SBLE. This was primarily driven by higher rates of suspensions or expulsions, with no detectable improvements to school [crime](#) or violence. Students in schools with SBLE tended to feel safer at school, but this finding was based on very little data. No other analyses showed that SBLE had beneficial effects.

"This summary of the existing scientific literature provides no evidence that our collective investment in putting police in schools has led to safer schools, but instead is associated with harmful practices of excluding students from school," said corresponding author Benjamin Fisher, Ph.D., of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "If we want to take the problem of violence in schools seriously, we need to expand our imagination beyond putting police in schools."

**More information:** School-based law enforcement strategies to reduce crime, increase perceptions of safety, and improve learning outcomes in primary and secondary schools, *Campbell Systematic Reviews* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/cl2.1360](https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1360). [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cl2.1360](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cl2.1360)

Provided by Wiley

Citation: School-based law enforcement is likely ineffective for keeping schools safe, finds analysis (2023, November 8) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-11-school-based-law-ineffective-schools-safe.html>

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