• A positive school climate is crucial to creating safe and supportive schools. Schools do not need regular police presence in order to be safe.

Teachers and students report feeling safer in schools that have consistent and positive cultures, invest in training and supporting teachers, provide counselors and mental health professionals to students in need, and implement policies that treat student behavior as an opportunity to teach, rather than punish or criminalize.¹

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service on school policing, there is no empirical evidence to establish that police presence reduces school violence or deters or prevents school shootings.²

• Schools with regular police presence are more likely to refer children for prosecution in the juvenile courts.

One review of a national data set found that the presence of a police officer on campus doubles the rate of referral for lower-level offenses (such as fighting) even controlling for other factors such as school demographics and neighborhood safety.³

One study showed that after officers were regularly assigned to schools, arrest rates for disorderly conduct dramatically increased.⁴

Another study showed that when police were assigned to schools, arrest rates for low-level assault (such as fighting) more than doubled.\(^5\)

- **Arrests make it more likely that students will drop out of school, earn less money as adults, and end up in the criminal justice system.**

  A first-time arrest doubles the odds that a student will drop out of high school, and a first-time court appearance quadruples the odds.\(^6\)

  One study found that only 26 percent of students who were arrested graduated from high school, as opposed to 64 percent of their peers; arrested students were also half as likely to enroll in a four-year college.\(^7\)

  Young people who drop out of school in turn have lower income and lifetime earnings than their peers.\(^8\)

  Juvenile arrest also increases students’ chances of future imprisonment: young people with an arrest record are subject to greater surveillance and harsher discipline from police and other adults that significantly increases their chances of future arrest and incarceration.\(^9\)

- **When police are in schools, students can feel less connected with school, less trusting of adults, and less safe.**

  Highly restrictive efforts to control students by involving police in school disciplinary matters can lead to lower levels of student connection to school and lower levels of trust in adults.\(^10\)

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Students who lack trust in school officials and who fear punishment if they come forward are less likely to come forward with information that can avert potential violence.  

- **Students of color are disproportionately arrested in schools.**

  In the 2015-2016 school year Black students in Washington accounted for 8% of arrests and referrals and represented 4.4% of the student population. Latino students accounted for 34% of school-based arrests/referrals, and 22% of the student population. Native American students accounted for 2% of school-based arrests/referrals and 1% of the student population. Research indicates that teachers are more likely to identify black students as having behavior problems, even from a very young age.

  Research also indicates that members of the public are more likely to see black children as more threatening and less innocent, even from an early age.

- **Students with disabilities are disproportionately arrested in schools.**

  In the 2015-2016 school year, students with disabilities represented 31% of arrests and referrals in Washington schools, but only 16.6% of the student population.

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• **A significant number of Washington schools have more school police and security officers than nurses or school psychologists.**

  In the 2015-2016 school year, 331 schools in Washington had more law enforcement officers and security officers than nurses. 271 schools in Washington had more law enforcement and security officers than psychologists.\(^{16}\)

• **Schools pay significant amounts of money for school police.**

  In the 2015-2016 school year, the average Washington school district paid $62,000 per officer per year (and as much as $125,000 per year).\(^{17}\)

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\(^{16}\) US Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Civil Rights Data Collection 2015-2016.*

\(^{17}\) ACLU of Washington, *Students Not Suspects* (2016).