

Research on School Resource Officers

*Presented to the Governor's
Workgroup on Student Safety
September 25, 2018*

LAURA E. WELFARE, PHD

GERARD LAWSON, PHD



Acknowledgements

This project was supported by Award No. 2015-CK-BX-0007 and 2016-CK-BX-0021 awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice. Additional funding provided by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program supported analysis of new data and further exploration of discipline of students with disabilities.

The research team includes Gerard Lawson, Laura Welfare, Kami Patrizio, and Yasuo Miyazaki with assistance from Patrick Rowley, Kazuki Hori, Mary Norris, Kevin Krost, Cherie Edwards, Alison Bowers, Tom Bluestein and Ghadir Asadi.

School Discipline and Law Enforcement

	Number of Referrals	Referrals per 1000 Students
Checkbox	39,032	15.2
Potential Matches	10,581	4.1
True Matches	5,924	2.3

Combined: 2015-2016 & 2016-2017

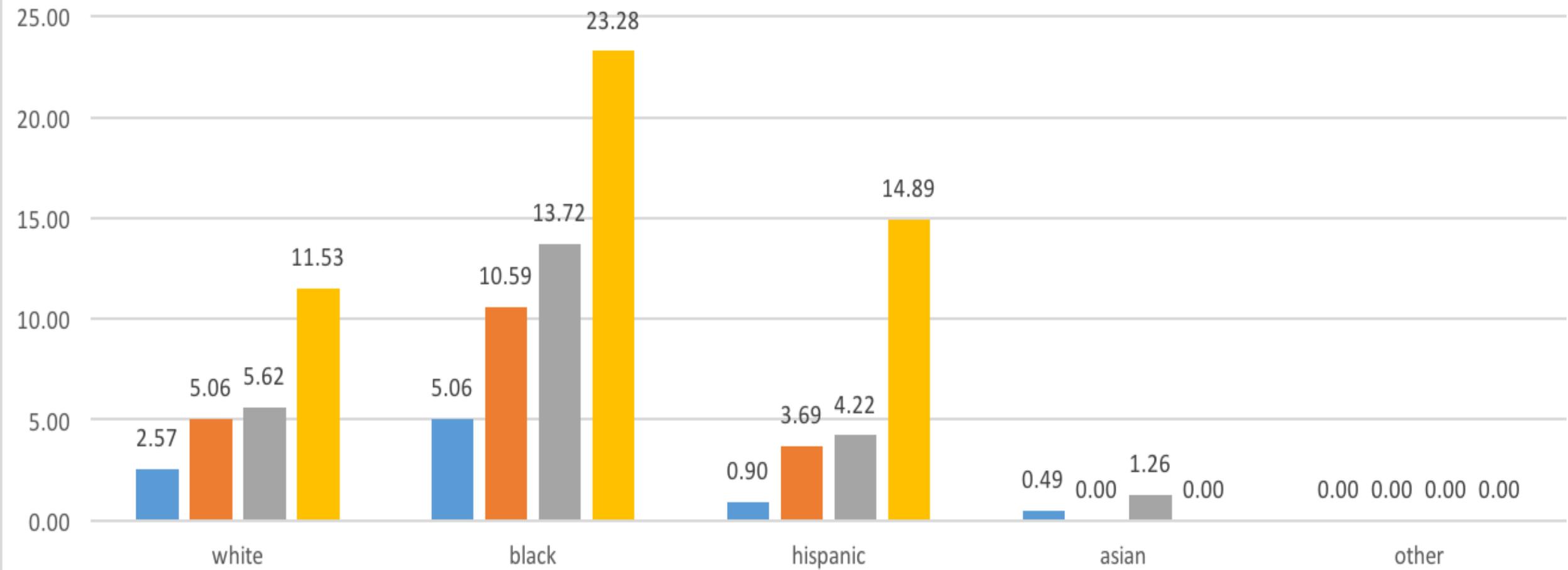
Referrals to Law Enforcement

	Discretionary	Mandatory	Total
Students without a Disability	N = 802 (18.7%)	N = 3,488 (81.3%)	N = 4,290 (72.4%)
Students with a Disability	N = 379 (23.2%)	N = 1,255 (76.8%)	N = 1,634 (27.5%)
Total	N = 1,181 (19.9%)	N = 4,743 (80.1%)	N = 5,924 (100.0%)

Combined: 2015-2016 & 2016-2017

of students who went to intake officer per 1000 in the population (gender by disability; High)

female - able female - disable male - able male - disable



School Resource Officer Research

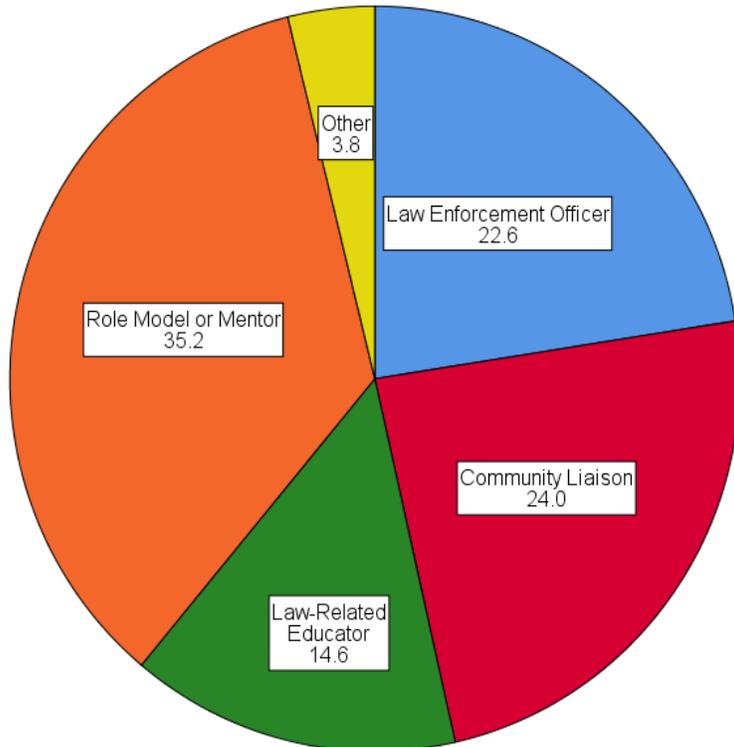
- New Surveys
 - 265 SROs (of \approx 700 invited)
 - 60 SRO Law Enforcement Supervisors (of 136 invited)
 - 45 SRO School-Based Liaisons (of 93 invited)
- 2017 School Safety Audit
 - \approx 2000 schools
 - \approx 1000 schools had an SRO

SRO Duties

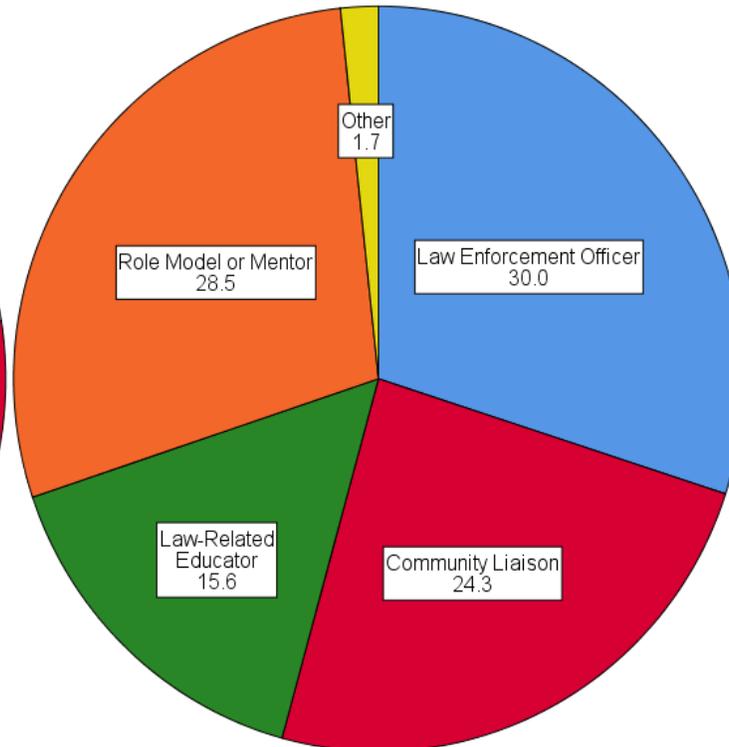
- Law Enforcement Officer (ex. Respond to criminal activity and public safety threats)
- Community Liaison (ex. Build relationships and identify resources)
- Law-Related Educator (ex. Give presentations for students, parents, and school staff)
- Role Model or Mentor (ex. Be professional, approachable, and compassionate)

Time in Each Component of SRO Duties

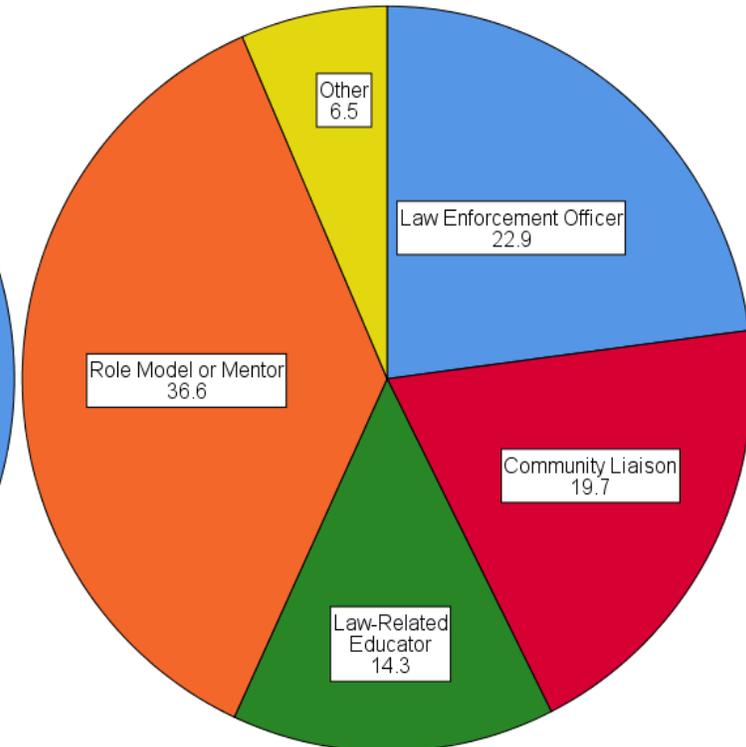
SRO



SRO Supervisor



SRO Liaison



Law Enforcement Training

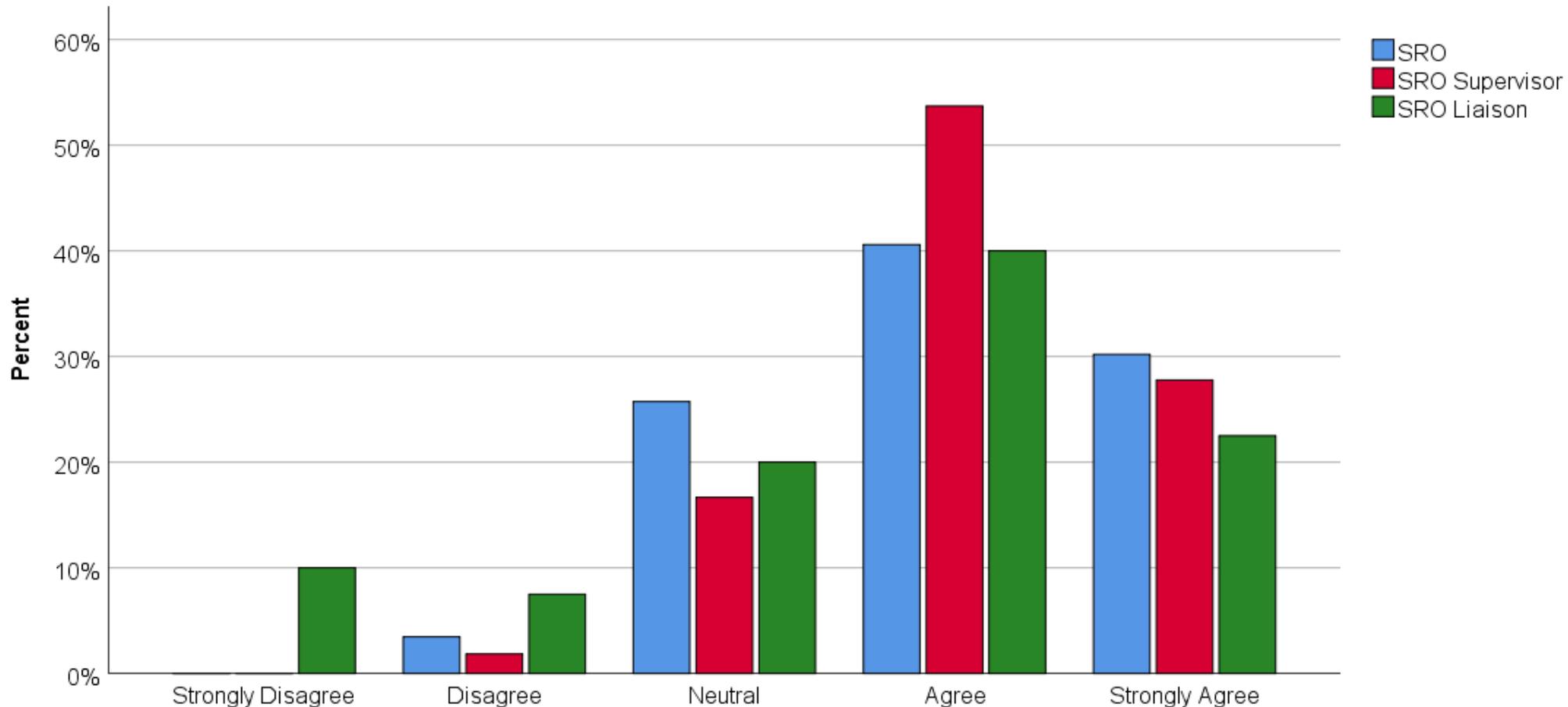
- **Mandatory Law Enforcement Training**
 - Training that applies to all settings: Average 56% but varied widely (sd = 24.9)
 - Training that applies to the school setting specifically: Average 22% but varied widely (sd = 16.9)
 - Training that usually does not apply to a school setting: Average 22% but varied widely (sd = 22.6)
- Department of Criminal Justice Services offers specific training for SROs and School Leaders

SRO Training Needs

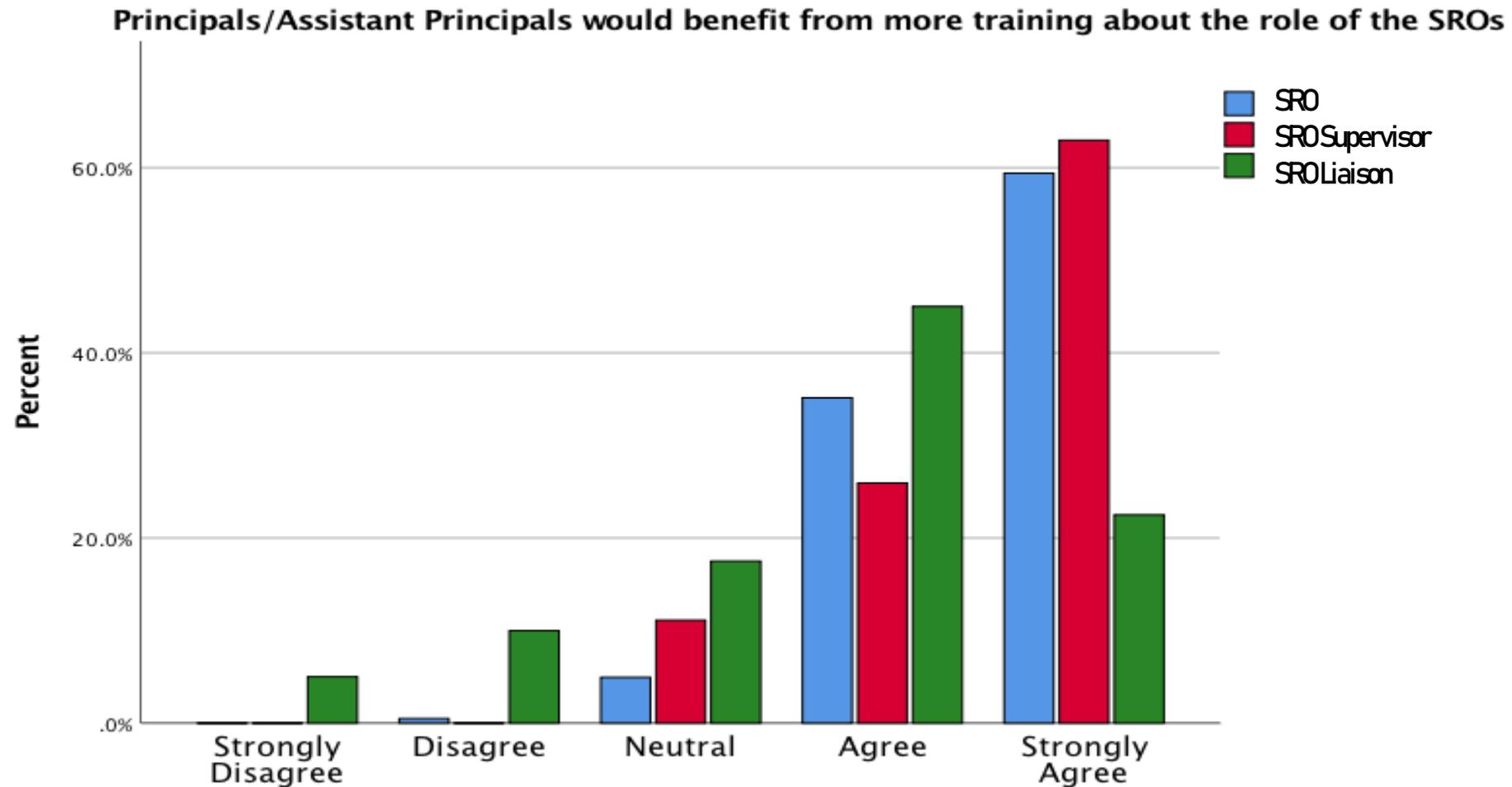
1. Working with Students with Special Needs
2. Mental Health Issues in Childhood and Adolescence
3. Dangerous/Threatening Students
4. Bullying
5. Establishing Effective Working Relationships with Parents

SRO Training in SRO Duties

SROs would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.

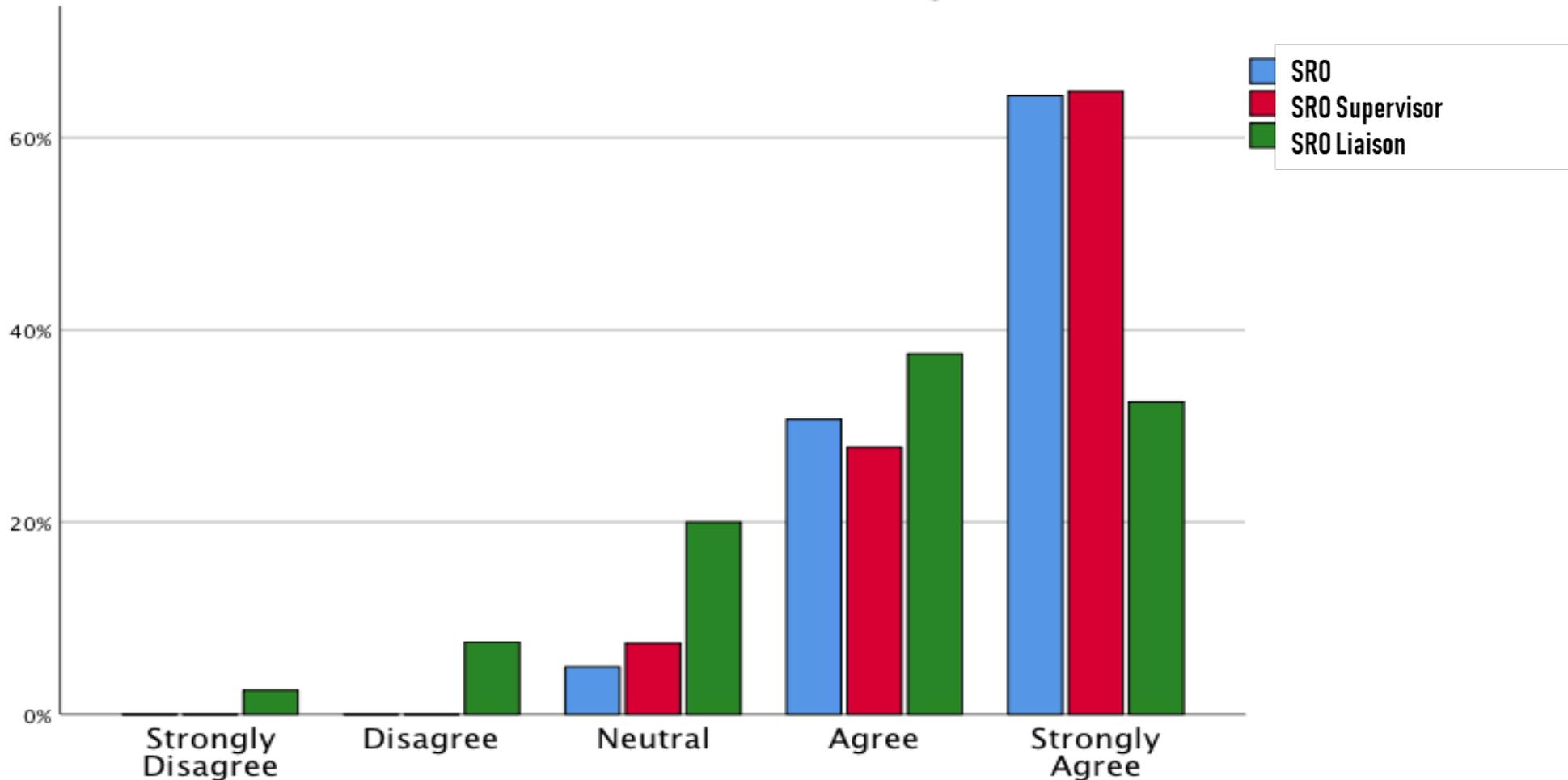


School Leader Training in SRO Duties

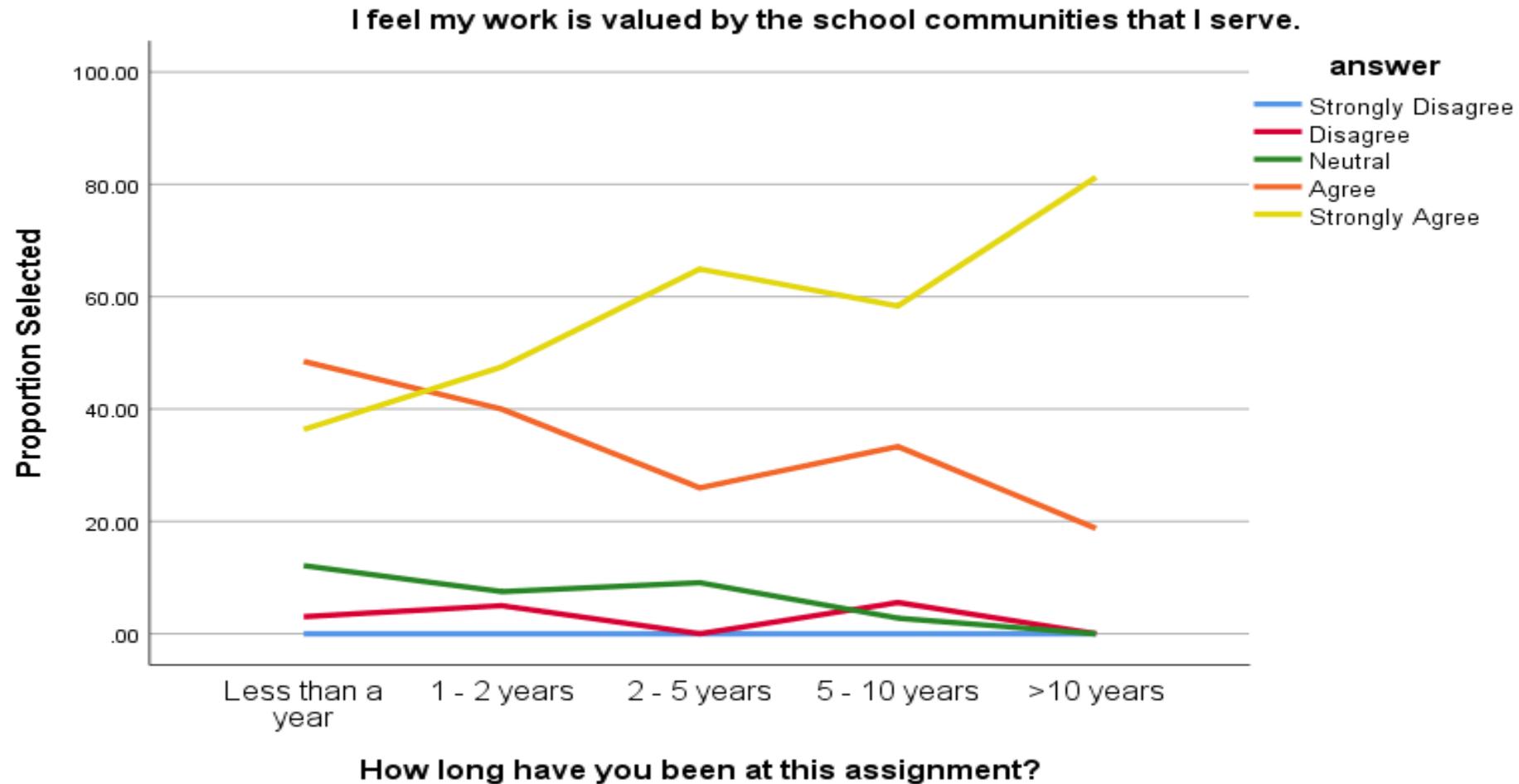


Teacher Training in SRO Duties

Teachers would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.



SROs Feel Valued by the School



Implications: Collaboration is Key

- Multifaceted role of SROs
 - Explore options for training SROs, school administrators, and teachers about the roles of SROs
- SRO Training Needs
 - Mental Health Issues and Special Needs Students
 - Dangerous/Threatening Students
 - Bullying
 - Working with Parents
- Explore solutions for addressing mental health needs and racial and special education disparities

Questions?

Laura E. Welfare, PhD

Associate Professor

540-231-8194

welfare@vt.edu

Gerard Lawson, PhD

Professor

540-915-2961

glawson@vt.edu