

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES NEEDED FOR A SCHOOL-BASED POLICE CHIEF

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## ABSTRACT

School-based law enforcement is a specialized law enforcement service to the community. Although it has evolved over the years, school-based law enforcement remains vital in a school setting for safety and security. The dynamic of school-based law enforcement has been heavily researched through the popular crime prevention program called School Resource Officer. The introduction of police officers in schools' thrusts law enforcement's reputation, abilities, and authority into the spotlight. Limited studies have shown the unique leadership qualities needed to lead a school-based law enforcement agency. Police chief qualification is dependent on the law enforcement agency's requirements and expectations and often requires years of experience and education. Further, there are excellent police chief positions nationwide but few openings for a school-based position. This research study focuses on the question does school-based police chief need specialized training due to the complexities a school environment breeds. These complexities include understanding juveniles' laws, family codes, and leadership training to successfully lead a school-based law enforcement agency toward positive engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

*Keywords: school-based law enforcement, school resource officer*

### **Dedication**

As I reflect on my professional, personal, and academic journey, there are a few people to whom I would like to dedicate this manuscript. My family has been vital during my educational journey's darkest moments. The loss of my dad affected me deeply, and without the support and love my family provided me, I would not have been able to continue. I appreciate my wife, two children, and siblings for giving me the strength and wisdom to continue. My mentors gave me the light to continue pushing forward when I felt low. I am forever grateful for my mentors, who assisted me and lent me an ear when I was lost.

### **Acknowledgments**

My ultimate career goal is to be police chief of a progressive law enforcement agency that assists in bridging the gap between the community and law enforcement. During my career as a law enforcement officer, I have had the opportunity to work with exceptional leadership and enhance my leadership skills. However, I have also worked with individuals I did not care for or who did help me grow as a leader. As I reflect on the leadership positions that I have held, I learned a great deal more from setbacks, obstacles, and despair than from successes. I want to acknowledge those leaders who inspired me to develop this study. I firmly believe that this study can assist in professionalizing school-based law enforcement and create greater prestige for this specialized field. School-based law enforcement is a challenging area to work and operate in owing to the politics involved. However, it has been most rewarding to see individuals grow into productive citizens and see their children navigate the same obstacles they had with greater success.

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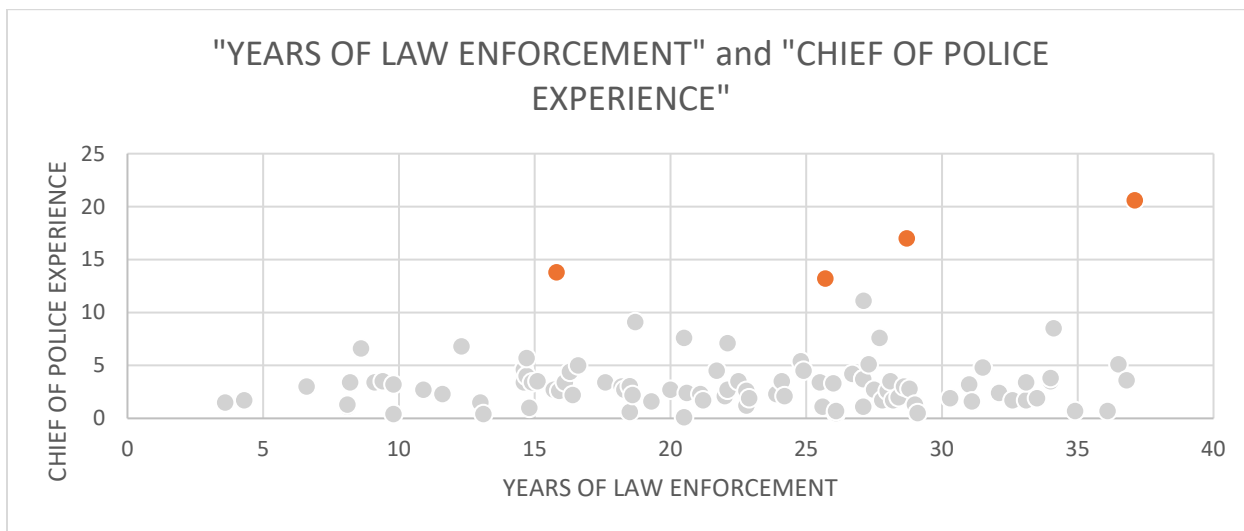
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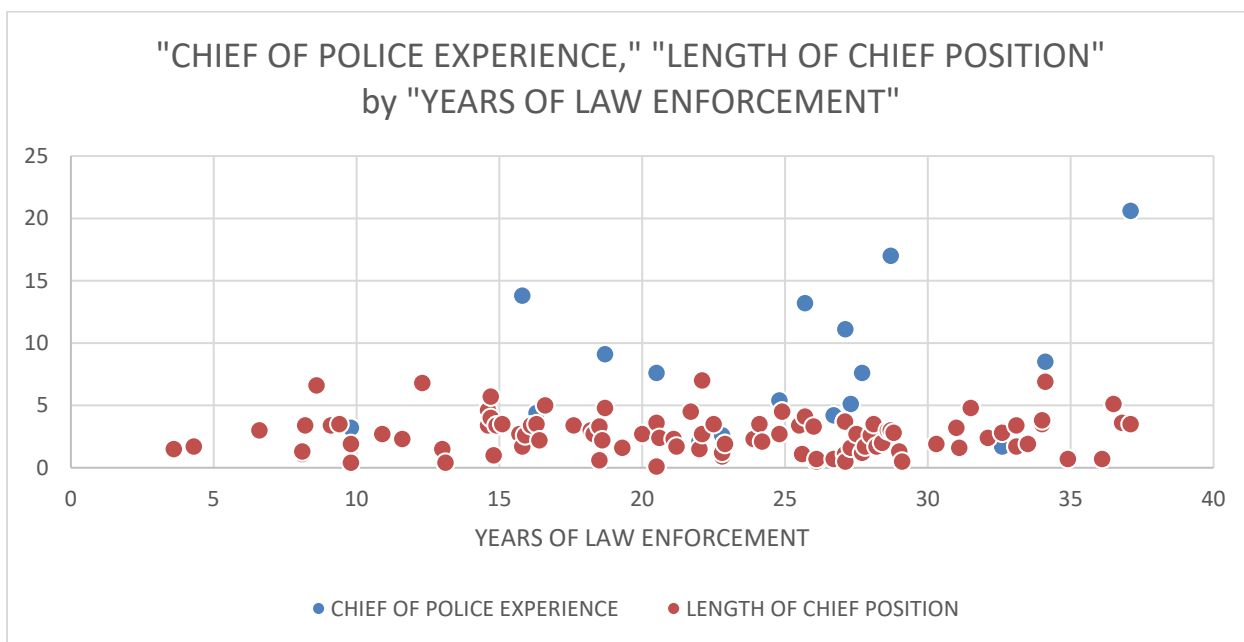
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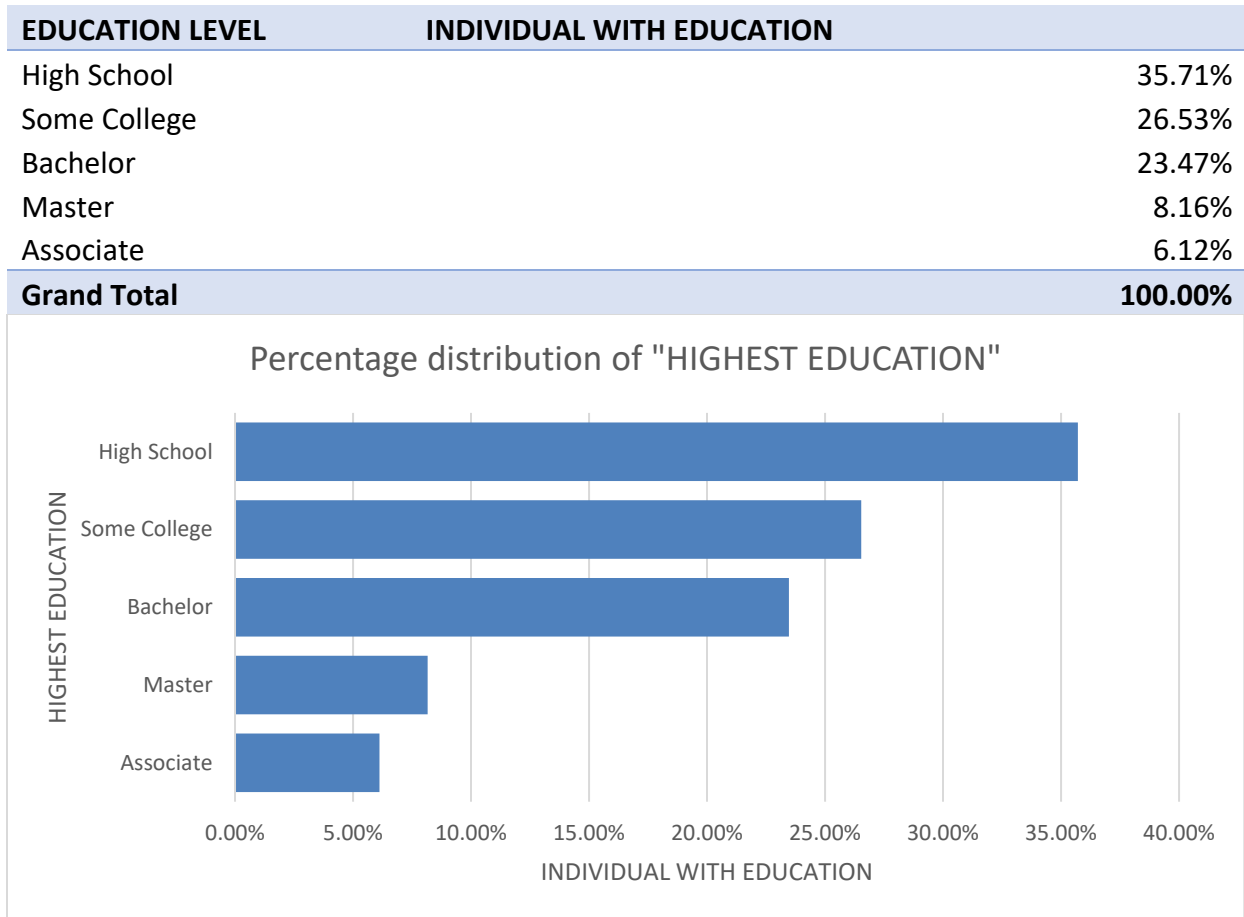
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**Figure 2 (page 72)**

Hours	OR	Education	OR	Military Service Training Credit	AND	Years
1200						20
2400						15
3300						12
4000						10
		Associate degree		2 Years		12
		Bachelor's degree		4 Years		9
		Master's degree		5 Years		7
		Doctorate/JD		8 Years		5

**Figure 3 (page 73)**

<b>AMOUNT OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING</b>	<b>INDIVIDUALS WITH LEADERSHIP TRAINING</b>
LESS THAN 50 HRS	24
51–100 HRS	21
201 PLUS HRS	16
151–200 HRS	5
101–150 HRS	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>70</b>

### **List of Abbreviations**

The following are abbreviations that are used in this research study:

Federal Bureau Investigation National Academy (FBI NA)

National Association for School Resource Officers (NASRO)

Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Bisexual (LGTB)

School Resource Officer Program (SRO)

Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE)

Texas Police Chief Association (TPCA)

Texas School District Police Chiefs' Association (Texas ISD Police Chief)

Texas Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy Associates (FBINAA Texas)

The Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT)

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Overview

School-based law enforcement is a specialized law enforcement service to the community. Although it has evolved over the years, school-based law enforcement remains vital in a school setting for safety and security. The dynamic of school-based law enforcement has been heavily researched through the popular crime prevention program called School Resource Officer (SRO). The SRO program is deemed popular because of the level of response school setting acquired and the collaboration with school administration and law enforcement (Owens, 2017; Theriot, 2016). The program has multiple variations nationwide, but the foundation is similar.

Although much empirical research has been completed on the SRO program, there are limited studies on the unique leadership qualities needed to lead a school-based law enforcement agency (Wolfe et al., 2017; Zhang, 2019; Zirkel, 2019). The leadership required to lead a school-based law enforcement agency requires a different mindset, understanding of juveniles and family code, and different training for police officers assigned to the school (Owens, 2017). School-based law enforcement has been deemed a retirement position for older police officers to work until retirement. The dynamic of policing has changed along with the complexities of working in a school setting. The most substantial opposition to school-based law enforcement has been the concept of the “school to prison pipeline,” which refers to introducing minority students into criminal justice for minor crimes (Owens, 2017; “Trey” Marchbanks et al., 2018).

A school-based law enforcement officer’s utilization of physical force against school-age children to gain compliance can have different optics than a municipal police officer’s response to resistance. The use of force against students adds to the complexities of school-based law

enforcement policing and community policing, and recruitment and training of school-based police officers require a police chief who understands the different elements. Municipal police chiefs deal with issues that can be resolved through legal routes, whereas school-based police chiefs need to strike a delicate balance between law enforcement and accounting for youth misbehaviors. The policies and procedures associated with a different realm of law enforcement require a school-based police chief to build a relationship with their team members rather than delegate their tasks. School-based law enforcement has always had a place in school, but the recent negative attention to law enforcement has challenged the role of law enforcement in a school setting (Crawford & Burns, 2020).

### **Background**

Every day, parents entrust their children's safety to school administration and police officers assigned to their campus. Over the years, the role of school-based law enforcement has developed toward professionalism and a well-trained police agency. School-based law enforcement has gained notoriety in the law enforcement community, as comparable to a mid-size municipality, with the ability to operate and function as a full-fledged police agency. With technological advances, schools adapt to security measures to reduce their vulnerability to perpetrators of violent crimes such as active shooters (Mowen, 2015). These countermeasures are designed to establish a sense of security, a safe learning environment, and a sense of protection for a parent (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018).

In conjunction with providing a safe learning environment, school-based law enforcement officers have many duties and responsibilities. They have a significant amount of time to be proactive and engaged with all individuals in the school setting to build a relationship and foster growth (Zhang, 2019). The growth trajectory can be measured by the successful

relationship among school administration, police officers, and innumerable individuals in a school setting (Mowen, 2015; Theriot, 2016). The impact of a school-based police officer is wide-ranging, and effects can be long-term, dragging out generations of different family members. As a result, the ability of school-based police officers to connect with internal and external stakeholders is paramount to the success of law enforcement agencies.

Although there has been a significant amount of literature on the concept of a school resource officer, there are minimal studies on the unique leadership qualities necessary to manage, lead, and succeed as a school-based law enforcement police chief (Barnes, 2016; Bartkowiak-Théron, 2019; Bleakley, 2018). The school environment has a multidimensional process and unique obstacles in a school setting with complex challenges (Torrats-Espinosa, 2020). Police chief qualification is dependent on the law enforcement agency's requirements and expectations and often requires years of experience and education. Also, there are excellent police chief positions across the nation but few openings for a school-based police chief position. The work environment of a school-based police chief is vastly different from a municipal-style agency and requires a different mentality and education requirement.

The evolution of police officer qualification has changed over the years and has been a talking point because of contemporary policing issues. The community standards on the expectation of police officer credentials have risen, emphasizing the value of education, training, and professionalism (Bartkowiak-Théron, 2019). In addition, the police chief needs to have leadership skills to lead their respective agency effectively in these components. Each law enforcement agency sets their qualifications and requirements for a police chief. This is similar to police officer qualifications and requirements, which can be seen through the school-based law enforcement agency.

The one-size-fits-all approach or cookie-cutter mentality is not practical for school-based law enforcement, which is a specialized police agency that requires a higher level of training and experience and a different mentality. The growing polarization of negative police officer decision-making and the convergence of ineffective police officers have challenged professionalism (Bartkowiak-Théron, 2019). Professionalism is often used to describe the level and quality of service that the public can expect from their law enforcement agency. Professionalism can also be translated to the level of training an officer receives, particularly in an executive-level position.

Command college has been the pinnacle of law enforcement executive training that provides potential police chiefs with the training and knowledge to effectively manage, lead, and operate a law enforcement agency (Harrison, 2019). Command college is contingent and dependent on state laws and funding and the different variations of a law enforcement culture. There are prestigious police executive training programs that law enforcement executives attend to gain knowledge, skills, and leadership skills. The Federal Bureau of Investigation's flagship training has been the National Academy, which selects police executives and gives them practical training on leadership qualities needed to run an effective law enforcement agency. The quality of the training has been proven effective. It has been the national standard in selecting police executive-level or police chief positions because of the ability of these individuals to make critical organizational changes in culture, mentality, and community relationships (Schafer & Varano, 2017).

### ***Police Chief Qualifications***

The police chief position varies among states, counties, and municipalities. Although there are many resources dedicated to training for police positions in law enforcement agencies,

there is limited training for school-based police chief positions. The concept of school-based policing differs from any other law enforcement agency because the emphasis is on community policing and working cohesively with school administration (Barnes, 2016). The school environment setting is a multidimensional component that can complicate law enforcement actions. The legality of the utilization of force, training, and legitimacy of a police officer in a school setting.

Police leadership in school settings requires the police chief to relinquish control of their authority and power to civilian managers while empowering police officers to conduct their duties and responsibilities within the realm of the laws. The empowerment of police officers and delegations of authority will affect the building of morale and sustainable growth (Hassan et al., 2019). A police chief's duration of tenure in municipality is often dependent on the satisfaction of city management staff and can be anywhere from 3–5 years. This contrasts with a school-based law enforcement police chief, which relied on relationship building with students, teachers and staff. The prominence of school-based law enforcement has become a national conversation because of the sanctity of protecting youth and preparing them for the future.

The program has limited studies on the unique leadership qualities needed for a school-based police chief. In contrast, there are significant studies on the effectiveness and drawbacks of having police officers in a school setting. The mentality of having a police officer assigned to the school is a crime prevention strategy that is designed to reduce violent crime from happening in school. Although research has indicated severe shootings on campuses are usually conducted by nonstudents who are older, the accessibility and prevention of handguns is critical in reducing the likelihood of school shootings (Livingston et al., 2019). A school-based police chief needs to



possess similar training as a municipal police chief but have specialized training and understanding of the complexities of working in the school environment.

School-based law enforcement is complex because of juvenile laws and family codes associated therewith. Further, school-based law enforcement refers to police officers employed by the school district, while school resource officers are employed by county or city law enforcement agencies (McKenna et al., 2016). The difficulties of leading a school-based law enforcement agency are complex and require a deep understanding and navigation of school policies and procedures. Whereas school resource officers conform with their respective law enforcement agencies, school-based law enforcement officers must conform with school district policies and police department directives. As a result, the police chief leading a school law enforcement agency requires diplomacy skills and tactful navigation of proper law enforcement.

### **Problem Statement**

The program has limited studies on the unique leadership qualities needed for a school-based police chief. In contrast, there are significant studies on the effectiveness and drawback of having police officers in a school setting. The mentality of having a police officer assigned to the school is a crime prevention strategy that is designed to reduce violent crime from happening in school. While research has indicated severe shootings on campuses are conducted by non-student who are older, the accessibility of handguns and prevention is critical in reducing the likelihood of school shootings (Livingston et al., 2019). A school-based police chief needs to possess similar training as a municipal police chief but have specialized training and understanding of the complexities of working in the school environment.

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According to Li and Brown (2019), the average tenure of a police chief is between 4 and 6 years owing to the organizational internal politics and performance. The dynamic of the school setting requires school-based law enforcement to be educators, community liaisons, and law enforcement officers, thus compounding leadership difficulties (Zhang, 2019). This research design will comprise an analysis of governmental data from law enforcement agencies. The data would be police qualifications for school-based law enforcement and tenure. This research will encompass three prominent police chiefs' associations in the State of Texas, along with the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), the agency that sets peace officers' training standards. TCOLE sets the training standards for police chief training and specialized training for school-based law enforcement officers. Employing government and state data poses a threat to internal validity because no data can be manipulated and assumed to be correct.

### **Purpose Statement**

This applied study's aim is to solve the problem of police chiefs lacking the leadership qualities needed to lead a school-based law enforcement agency. The author used a multi-method design, consisting of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The first approach would be surveys using electronic email through major police chief associations in Texas. The second

approach would be documents analysis through TCOLE. School-based law enforcement operates in a dynamic environment and requires specialized training to make effective leaders.

Additionally, school-based law enforcement was formed based on zero-tolerance and broken-window theory, reformed because of the shift in mentality (McKenna et al., 2016). This shift in mentality has led to the prominence of a school-based police officer affecting youth and the domino effect on a school-to-prison pipeline. There are different school-based law enforcement agencies throughout the United States, each adhering to distinct rules and regulations and working in the confines of the school district the police officers serve. A police chief with specialized training in school-based law enforcement, juvenile law, family code, and leadership training can have deeper understanding of the intricacies of working in school-based law enforcement.

### **Significance of the Study**

Throughout the past several years, there have significant events in the call for police reform because of adverse actions by police officers. The result has been increasing mistrust of law enforcement and a shift toward analyzing the need for law enforcement in school. The law enforcement community and professionals have changed within the past several years, emphasizing that police leaders must change their tactics and reform their police departments (Robinson, 2020). School-based law enforcement has faced similar calls for defunding obstacles, resulting in reduced police officer positions and funding. The most significant aspect of this study is the unique leadership qualities needed to lead a school-based law enforcement agency and bridge the gap between police and the community. School-based law enforcement is the tipping point and provides a solid foundation for law enforcement to slowly turn the tide in its favor and increase its standing in the community.

A police chief has the authority and influences that can alter the trajectory of the officers under their command, which can promote positive engagement or reduce public trust within a school setting (Rollwagen & Jacob, 2018; Sanden & Wentz, 2017). Police officers' interactions with juveniles are often based on prior engagement and their experiences in resolving conflicts with limited utilization of force (Sanden & Wentz, 2017). Police officers who understand the relationship between victims and offenders on misconduct, misbehaviors, and criminal conduct can alter the perception of law enforcement (Rollwagen & Jacob, 2018). A new police chief transitioning into a school-based law enforcement career can benefit from specialized training to promote positive engagement with the community, successfully navigate the school district politics, and bridge the gap between minority groups based on the negative perception of the school-to-prison pipeline.

### **Research Questions**

The central research question is “should a police chief need specialized training in school-based law enforcement?” This training should include juvenile law, family code, and leadership training to successfully lead a school-based law enforcement agency toward positive engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The content of specialized training should include the intricacies of school board policies and procedures, school district funding, prioritization of budgeting for departments, employees' training, and the need to avoid school closures.

### **Definitions**

The author lists and defines terms pertinent to the study in this section.

1. *Campus Policing*: policing style focused on college-age students' school settings (Appelbaum, 2019).

2. *Independent School District Police Department*: School district police department directly employing police officers (McKenna et al., 2016).
3. *School-Based Law Enforcement*: School district law enforcement agency employing police officers directly (McKenna et al., 2016).
4. *School Resource Officer*: Police officers employed by the city/county who are assigned to campus (McKenna et al., 2016).
5. *Texas Commission on Law Enforcement*: An agency that oversees law enforcement training, screening, and establishing policies and procedures (McKenna et al., 2016).
6. *Texas Education Agency*: An agency that regulates compliance for educators (McKenna et al., 2016).
7. *Texas Safety School Center*: An agency specializing in school safety (McKenna et al., 2016).

### **Summary**

Chapter 1 provides a detailed overview of the research study, including the purpose, background, and problem statement. The evolution of law enforcement has changed along with the dynamic of working in a school setting. Law enforcement officers assigned to school have a significant impact on bridging gaps between the community and police. Further, school-based law enforcement officers can mend, mitigate, and build bridges, areas in which law enforcement has failed. As a result, school-based police chiefs could increase positive interaction to build more robust relationships. This strength in the relationship can be affected in various ways and will need to be sustainable. Next, we will explore the literature review on current research regarding school-based law enforcement.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview

The literature review includes studies focused on the different elements associated with policing, use of force, school-based law enforcement, police training, and community policing. Although there is numerous literature related to policing in a broad spectrum, few studies are associated with the school-based law enforcement specialization. Many works emphasize a SRO program, which differs from an independent school district police department's uniqueness. According to Theriot (2016), the SRO program is a popular intervention, prevention, and proactive response by municipal and school leaders to achieve campus safety. Numerous kinds of literature are focused on the interactions and impacts of the SRO program, which result in the infamous "school-to-prison pipeline."

The "school-to-prison pipeline" concept focuses on the socioeconomic foundation of placing students into the criminal justice system based on school policies to use SROs as disciplinarians (Owens, 2017; Torrats-Espinosa, 2020). The significant impact of the school-to-prison pipeline results in unparalleled and negative responses toward the SRO program. The pipeline's negativity focuses on a zero-tolerance approach to providing safety, with minority students suffering because of their early and rapid introduction to the criminal justice system ("Trey" Marchbanks et al., 2018). Although copious studies are focused on SROs, there are limited studies on school-based law enforcement's unique leadership qualities. Moreover, there are limited studies on the complexities of an independent school district police department leadership training and police chief qualification.

Thus, school-based law enforcement requires a different police chief qualification than a municipal police chief. Municipal police chiefs need an analytical mindset to dissect statistical

data, so they can allocate limited resources in specific areas to reduce high crime rates (Degeling & Berendt, 2018). The result would be assigning additional police officers to saturate the locations for a particular time. Although school-based law enforcement has limited budgeting, public safety is not the core function. As a result, a school-based law enforcement police chief relies on their officers' ability to formulate a relationship with students, teachers, and internal and external stakeholders to achieve a common goal.

### **Theoretical or Conceptual Framework**

The two theories that apply to this study are social learning and rational choice theory. These two theories play a critical role in police chief qualifications and the development of future police executives. The social learning theory foundation is based on the principle that individuals will develop their behaviors and routine through their relationships with or exposure to others (Pratts et al., 2010). The rational choice theory is based on the principle that individuals will make choices that align with their preferences or ideals (Manzo, 2013). A police chief in school-based law enforcement is often hired outside of school-based law enforcement because of the credibility and qualification a municipal agency offers (Li & Brown, 2019).

The professionalism of police leaders and their officers has arisen because of modernizing policing methods and strategies. Modern-day policing requires police leaders to be educated and have leadership skills and training to lead a high-stakes organization (Fyfe, 2013). Thus, police chief training encompasses a one-size-fits-all approach, with leadership training such as Federal Bureau of Investigation prestigious training, National Academy, and other states' leadership command college. However, most police chiefs leading a school-based law enforcement agency have no experience working in the school district. This research study would be mixed method, including qualitative and quantitative, exploring the current data to

analyze any relationship between having specialized training to be a school-based police chief and the leadership qualities needed. This research will encompass the different components of school-based law enforcement and the intricacies of understanding and leading them. The various features of school-based law enforcement working in a school setting are paramount for police leaders to experience.

### **Related Literature**

The author obtained the literature resources using Liberty University's Jerry Falwell Library article searches. Most of the research material from Jerry Falwell Liberty is focused on peer review articles online. The set parameters focus on scholarly peer-review articles written within the past 5 years. The literature review items were from January 2015 to December 2020 to provide the most modern statistical data and research on school-based law enforcement leadership. The period also focuses on the significant transformation in the policing culture, affected by publicizing national events.

The researcher employed several strategic terms when searching from Jerry Falwell Library. The terminology used resulted in various empirical research results heavily screened via the articles' abstracts. The initial language used was "school resource officer," which produced 60,808 results. The second terminology used was "school to prison pipeline," which yielded 2,032 results. The third terminology used was "campus policing," which produced 2,821 results. The fourth terminology used was "school-based police leadership," which generated 19,350 results. These terminologies resulted in many articles that helped the author compile relevant research and supported this research topic.



### **School Resource Officer Program/School-Based Law Enforcement**

The role of school-based law enforcement has evolved over the past several decades, resulting in a more professionalized and trained law enforcement agency. In 2015, there have been significant security measures in school districts, such as metal detectors, police officers, and security cameras (Mowen, 2015). These security measures aim to provide a safe learning environment for students and peace of mind for parents. A safe learning environment depends on the community's tolerance level to providing school-based police officers with duties and responsibilities. School-based law enforcement is a specialized law enforcement agency vastly different from municipal, county, and campus police.

Traditionally and infamously, municipal law enforcement agencies are regarded as of premier status among the law enforcement communities. The increasing threat of school violence and the exponential rise of active shooters on school campuses led to the SRO program rise across the United States (Theriot, 2016; Viano et al., 2021). School-based law enforcement's role and evolution are focused on prevention and relationships cultivated among students, teachers, and community leaders (Zhang, 2019). The concept of prevention and relationship building focuses on bridging the gaps among the purpose, consequences, and strategic purposes of law enforcement's function and role in a school-based setting (Viano et al., 2021). Over the past several decades, the evolution of school-based law enforcement has changed.

According to Zirkel (2019), most SRO programs consist of municipal police departments allocating police officers to school, and most SROs are direct employees of the school district. This results in different variations in the standard of training, policies, procedures, and accountability. The scrutinization arises from several court cases involving SROs overstepping their boundaries as police officers. The rise of court cases, such as an SRO using handcuffs on

students between 8 and 10, is for behavior issues. The SRO in Kenton County handcuffed two elementary students, ages 8 and 9, for noncompliance, which resulted in a clear need for training, policy reform, and proper regulations (Ryan et al., 2018).

The SRO program's success rests on the officer's school administration expectations and ability to conduct their job fairly and with legitimacy (Wolfe et al., 2017). The SRO program's foundation is to reduce the vulnerability of school infrastructure and strengthen the level of security on school campuses; however, the role of SROs is different from municipal policing (Glenn et al., 2019; Gottfredson et al., 2020). The evolution of the SRO program fosters a climate in which, like community policing, the role of SROs expands broadly. The contribution of SROs on campus appears to be to promote increased safety, but it has emphasized daily interactions and relationship building with students and staff (Glenn et al., 2019). This expansion increases the volatile nature of SROs on campus, which results in the amplified seizure of drugs and weapons on campus (Gottfredson et al., 2020).

### ***School Resource Program Impact***

The impacts of the SRO program have been mixed because of the deadly concoction of violence and safety. SRO programs place municipal officers on school campuses, which poses a conflict of interest because of the policies and procedures that counteract police department and school board policies (Count et al., 2018; Eklund et al., 2018). SROs must conform to their departmental policies and procedures while school administrators follow school board policies for discipline, creating a contentious atmosphere among SROs and school administrators. This is especially apparent during student crises that require professional diagnosis and health professionals. SROs work in a school setting that fosters a team environment providing layers of

intervention on students' behaviors to reintroduce them back to a typical setting (Eklund et al., 2018).

Over an extended period, the school administrator will misuse SROs on campus as a tool to advocate for the disciplines because of the unclearly established role of a police officer on campus (Count et al., 2018). The ideology of SROs on campus is to provide a robust framework and layers of strengthening security. However, most SRO duties overlap with school administration roles in discipline, with unclear legal guidelines and policies (Curran et al., 2019). Consequently, SROs may cross policing boundaries by violating the Fourth, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments (Chan et al., 2019). This results in the increased perception and continuous demand for reviewing the needs for SROs on school campuses because of the school-to-prison pipeline ("Trey" Marchbanks et al., 2018).

The work environment in which an SRO must operate is complex and vastly different from their municipal counterparts. The most significant impact of the SRO in a school setting is the more substantial possibility of students being placed in the criminal justice system for petty crimes and using it as a behavior deterrent (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). There is no uniformity among several states. Each state specifies the training, role, policies, procedures, and implementation of an SRO program in a school setting, resulting in disparity and variations among the SRO program (Barnes, 2016). With the variations of SRO programs among different states and different laws and policies, the legitimacy and impacts of the SRO program are difficult to evaluate. The leaderships required to manage and lead an SRO program need a different mindset.

The school-based policing model focuses on the relationship between school administration and police officers working cohesively to develop collaboration on law

enforcement's distinct role on campus (Barnes, 2016). This relationship is shaken because of the complexities of youth behaviors within a school setting, along with the law enforcement's insufficient knowledge of school policies and limits of authority (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). The manifestation of the SRO program toward exponentially increasing the volatile situations and changing the political landscape shifted the mentality on the purpose of SROs on campus (Turner & Beneke, 2020). The leadership required to manage and lead a successful SRO depends on vital components. These components play an integral and crucial role in the positive outcome of law enforcement's internal and external stakeholders on campus.

The National Association for School Resource Officers (NASRO) is the premier agency that focuses on the proper training, development, leadership, and role definition of SROs in school settings (Glenn et al., 2019). The growth and success of the SRO program in the school setting rely on independent leadership qualities, municipal policing, and different approaches and mindsets. School-based law enforcement focuses on a proactive response to crime prevention, bridging gaps between school administration and law enforcement, and building trust with the community (Barnes, 2016). The concept of "zero-tolerance" in a school setting, creates a false sense of security because of the disparity in the introduction of youth into the criminal justice system for a minor infraction often associated with behavior issues (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). As a result, school-based police leadership needs to focus on building bridges, mitigating negative perceptions, and fostering a safe environment conducive to learning.

Schools reflect the community that police officers serve, resulting from the culture within an individual school. Consequently, each school has its culture defining its particular needs; goals; academic achievement; and parent, teacher, and staff involvement. According to Theriot (2016), school bonding is a multifaceted construct that involves students, teachers, parents, and

communities that generate the school identity and culture. The result of correctly assessing and placing an effective police officer on campus is like putting an effective teacher in a classroom. As a result, school-based police leadership needs to evaluate each school culture accurately and match the ideal police officer to create a positive atmosphere.

### ***Concept of School Resource Officer Program***

The SRO program is a different concept that takes community policing to a higher level of interactions with the public. A police officer assigned to campus has the ultimate authority to take legal actions and introduce an individual to a criminal justice system. The circumstances are based on their interpretation of the laws and method of articulation. SROs interact with the same school personnel daily and rely on the strength of their relationship with students, teachers, and staff to achieve “buy-in” (Wolfe et al., 2017). This buy-in correlates with the individual police officer’s effectiveness and ability to control their campuses while maintaining a high security level.

An SRO is a prominent figure on a school campus and exerts a force level that differs from school administration. According to Theriot and Orme (2016), SROs have comprehensive duties and responsibilities in a school setting and influence the campus atmosphere toward positivity or negativity. With the rise of significant national police interactions with the public, resulting in a negative outcome, SRO programs have been heavily scrutinized (Turner & Beneke, 2020). The allocations of school funds toward law enforcement officers on campus have mixed results. Thus, school-based police leadership needs to evaluate hiring, recruitment, selection, and training to enhance school security.

## **Campus Policing**

Campus policing is unique and requires an elevated approach to law enforcement services provided in a school. Campus policing refers to law enforcement agencies within a university, similar to school-based policing. Police officers on campus face negative perceptions of minority groups because of socioeconomic and political complexities (Vaughn & Johnson, 2021). However, campus-based law enforcement agencies' impact has played a critical role in criminal justice, transparency, and legitimacy. According to Hancock (2016), as campuses evolve and grow, a correlation between the rise in crime and diverse populations becomes apparent.

The purpose and functionality of campus policing are like their municipal counterpart, with a major distinction. The primary difference is that campus policing focuses on the wide range of law enforcement services concentrated on community policing strength (Hancock, 2016). Within the focused area, police officers working in campus protection face intense scrutinization because of their daily interactions with their community, resulting in stronger accountability in training (Vaughn & Johnson, 2021). Campus policing require leadership to focuses on various training and relies on leadership's ability to understand its campus's culture, needs, and future growth. The historical context of campus policing dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has evolved to professionalize more law enforcement services that require formal training than their municipal counterparts (Hancock, 2016).

Community policing has been an integral part of campus police and their expertise in this area. The expertise in campus policing arises from the police officers' ability, training, and interactions within a concentrated area; consequently, these officers have strong relationships with and a strong understanding of their community (Vaughn & Johnson, 2021). Additionally, campus law enforcement has a different function than municipal policing, in that campus

policing focuses on the holistic approach to resolving criminal matters and alternatives to arrests (Hancock, 2016). Campus policing is not immune to the violent crimes that plague its municipal counterpart. Law enforcement agencies exist on university campuses with the intention to provide safety and security.

The most significant challenges in campus policing and school-based law enforcement are delicately balancing law enforcement actions, debunking of the “campus” cop mentality, and constant pressure to make the right decision (Jacobsen, 2015). The legitimacy of having law enforcement officers on campus is subject to tense discussion and the interpretation of police and citizen interactions. Police officers on campus interact daily with students and staff, which results in systematic breakdowns and improvements in procedural justice (Wilson & Wilson, 2015). Procedural justice and legitimacy within the campus environment can be affected by the influences of authority figures. These authorities consist of political appointees on the school board, school administrations, and other campus stakeholders.

The campus law enforcement community has faced acts of extreme violence, such as the Virginia Tech shooting, resulting in numerous losses of lives (Aiello & Lawton, 2018). Additionally, campus policing involving distinct cultural and ideology changes makes it a prime area for political events. Several universities have hosted polarized events that result in protests, riots, and shootings that affect how campus police officers respond (Baker et al., 2018). As a result, the leadership level needed in on-campus policing is like that of school-based police officers. Although the functionality of campus protection and school-based police officers are similar, there are differences.

### *School District Policing*

There is a distinction between university campus policing and school district policing. Campus policing is empowered by the university board of regents, adheres to university policies and procedures, and has the distinct task of reporting criminal activity on campus (Appelbaum, 2019). The university's law enforcement officers also adhere to board policies by providing civil sanctions on students as an avenue to prevent social problems from entering the criminal justice system (Allen, 2015). The community audience for campus policing focuses on college-bound individuals in early adulthood who graduated from high school or professionals in the career field. School district policing is governed by the school board and adheres to board policies and procedures.

One of school district policing's essential tasks is law enforcement services for school-age children from infancy to early adulthood. Thus, the intricacies and complexities of leading a school-based law enforcement agency are much more complicated and require extensive and specialized training. Also, school-based police officers work in an intersecting education system, juvenile justice, and the civil process, which results in contact with privileged youth and families (Javdani, 2019). The foundation of school-based law enforcement is to foster a safe and secure campus environment while working with school administration to take preventative steps to reduce the threat of violence (McCurdy et al., 2019). The most significant threat in school-based law enforcement is the illegitimate practice of introducing school-age minority children into the criminal justice system for minor school infractions (Mallet, 2016). The minor offense can have unintended consequences that lead to lifetime association in the criminal justice system.

According to Jacobsen (2015), the student and police officer relationship can be turbulent based on the campus culture and location. Each campus has its own identity and structure, and



the tolerance level for criminal infractions can fluctuate. This can be compounded by the level of enforcement that police officers can impose based on the latitude given by their police department's policies and procedures. Campus law enforcement officers face the delicate balance of legally enforcing criminal laws while balancing misbehaviors arising from student mischief (Allen, 2017). As a result, campus police officers' perception of legality and authority is strained and reflects their leadership ability to convey legitimacy.

According to Wilson and Wilson (2015), campus policing's unorthodox realm has tremendous intricacies and complexities, with law enforcement roles heavily tied to the educational system. Consequently, a school-based police chief's leadership quality and training are unparalleled and require extensive review of an applicant's training, background, personality, and understanding of juvenile laws and family codes. School-based police chiefs face the daunting task of delicately balancing safety and security conducive to an educational learning environment. Most school-based police officer interactions among students are with parents, coaches, teachers, counselors, and social workers. In a school setting, police officers can use an alternative to the arrest method that reduces the perception of the school-to-prison pipeline.

The most significant supporter of the school-to-prison pipeline indicates that police officers in a school setting play a critical role in introducing children of color into the system (Torrats-Espinosa, 2020). Subsequently, the past and continuous perception of police officers' bias toward minority students' introduction to the criminal justice system has caused police leadership challenges. The historical relationship and contentiousness between minorities and law enforcement have been challenging, with a history of disputes and violence. As a result, empirical research data routinely show that minority groups have a higher disapproval rate of law enforcement (Roles et al., 2016). Thus, young children's upbringing in an immigrant family

plagued with negative interaction with law enforcement plays a critical role in their development. Immigrant families with young school-age children underreport crimes and negatively interact with law enforcement, resulting in mistreatments (Ellis et al., 2020).

The inability of law enforcement to effectively communicate with immigrant families significantly reduces the likelihood of positive interactions. Within the school setting, immigrant youths suffer various forms of victimization that may require law enforcement intervention to prevent further injuries. Empirical research conducted by Maynard et al. (2016) indicates that immigrant youth are more than likely to suffer from bullying than native-born peers, resulting in development issues affecting their social-emotional learning along with interpersonal skills. Immigrant youth's inability to appropriately respond to or understand the culture can result in negative law enforcement actions. Adverse law enforcement action can result in a citation issued or arrest, funneling the youth into the criminal justice system for behavior modifications.

The school environment provides the backdrop and source of excitement and despair for an immigrant family. The enthusiasm is learning a new culture while understanding and adapting quickly to their new environment. The school environment breeds and fosters incremental academic achievement, which negatively correlates with immigrant families (Dryden-Peterson, 2018). These correlations facilitate negative interactions with school administration and parents with negative bias associated with the perception. School-based law enforcement officers need to adapt to, adjust to, and overcome school administration's negative biases, resulting in skewed arrests.

### **School-to-Prison Pipeline**

The school-to-prison pipeline concept affects and hinders law enforcement officers assigned to the school from effectively conducting their lawful duties. According to McGrew

(2016), it originated in late 2003. It was used to describe the differences in treatment of African male students by law enforcement officers and incarceration rates in public schools' notion and belief that the school-to-prison pipeline negatively affects minority students from the substandard learning environment and zero-tolerance for misbehaviors. Law enforcement in school settings increased because of the rise in violent crimes in the early 1990s, which resulted in the creation of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (Owens, 2017). This act increases funding opportunities for school districts and law enforcement agencies to increase officer numbers in school and salary adjustments.

The increase of police officers in school settings has affected students, particularly minority students, who are subjected to more discipline variations than White students. A disproportionate number of African and Latino male students are subjected to higher school suspension, and introduction to the criminal justice for minor crimes has resulted in criminal records at an early age (Bryan, 2017; Hemez et al., 2020). The dehumanization of Black students compounds this through the lens of White teachers and students, who disregard their misbehaviors as nonconformist (Bryan, 2017). In conjunction with SROs in school settings and lack of proper training, the criminal justice system increases the risk of minority students' swift introduction to the justice system. Although empirical researchers have focused on Black students as the leading group introduced to the school-to-prison pipeline, Latino students are only slightly behind them (Seroczynski & Jobst, 2016).

Latino students face obstacles within the school setting, complicating their ability to function seamlessly in a proper learning environment. Latino students often face a language barrier, cultural differences, and other academic difficulties that often bring them toward interacting with police officers and school administrators (Seroczynski & Jobst, 2016). Although

bilingual police officers and school administrators are on campus, each campus's ability to understand the Latino culture's intricacies can affect how situations are handled. The variations among students progressing toward adulthood bring different challenges and affect criminal sanctions and interpretation. Additionally, most school disciplinarians resort to suspensions that affect family life's socioeconomic components, often leaving students in conflict with their parents (Hemez et al., 2020).

There are significant empirical studies on minority students funneled into the school-to-prison pipeline, but an emerging group also exists. The lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities also suffer from the school-to-prison pipeline in that they face intense bias and negative interactions with law enforcement (Mallets, 2016; Snapp et al., 2015). There are representations of different classifications of individuals within the school setting that an SRO must interact with daily. Their interactions depend on the understanding, training, and unbiased behaviors associated with the individual officer and school administration. LGBT students face multiple intense criticisms from their social and family groups and are heavily prejudiced among the student population (Mallets, 2016). School policies are slow to reform the progressive need to respond to the need of the LGTB communities, and they hinder their school growth while funneling them toward the school-to-prison pipeline (Snapp et al., 2015).

Additionally, LGBTs face a higher level of bullying and suicide because of the isolation these individuals experience on campus and the inability to convey their thoughts in a robust and safe environment (Wozolek et al., 2017). This brings a significant challenge to school administration and law enforcement on campuses. The cornerstone of having a police officer in school is to build relationships with their community and bridge the gaps in which an adverse outcome exists. Police leadership in a school setting requires a holistic approach in working with

a multidiscipline team to develop a proper intervention and proactive response. This is contingent on the police chief's leadership quality in a school setting to assess law enforcement services properly.

School administration, law enforcement, criminal justice organizations, and students' families play a vital role in sustaining the school-to-prison pipeline narrative because of each party's actions or inactions. A law enforcement officer's action toward a student can affect the trajectory of a positive outcome and have a domino effect on the student's social, family, economic, and mental health outcomes (Hemez et al., 2020). The inability of young students to properly understand the consequences of their actions or misbehaviors can result in an arrest. School policies and law enforcement obligations to act on criminal matters result in a zero-tolerance approach in the guise of safety. The zero-tolerance approach toward crime control in a school setting has resulted in the criminalization of poverty, minority, and special education students in the criminal justice system (Fitzgerald et al., 2019).

Multiple authors have heavily researched the highly controversial notion that minorities are not given the same treatment. The criminalization of minority students for petty crimes shapes their livelihood (Fitzgerald et al., 2019). As a result, school campus leaders and law enforcement agencies have adapted to enhance the relationship with minority students and sustain a healthy relationship. To reduce the school-to-prison pipeline, the school administration has hired a diverse workforce, such as law enforcement agencies recruiting minorities in policing (Yang et al., 2019). Hiring a more inclusive workforce is aimed at enhancing relationship building while reviewing a more holistic approach to resolving misbehavior situations.

Within the past several years, law enforcement's legitimacy and accountability have been heavily analyzed through the lens of criminal justice reforms that have affected all law

enforcement levels. The school-to-prison pipeline is a social phenomenon that provides a small glimpse into a more significant discussion on the legitimacy of law enforcement duties and responsibility to the public and legal parameters (Bryan, 2017; Hemez et al., 2020). As a result of national attention after Ferguson, Missouri, the law enforcement community faced compounded problems associated with its interactions and resolution with minorities (Nix & Wolfe, 2016). Police officers have faced intense, volatile questions in their interactions with the public. They have resorted to de-policing, which reduces the statistical data on law enforcement leaders use to make evidence decisions (Decker et al., 2017). Thus, police leadership in school-based law enforcement needs to understand the consequences of its actions and inaction to improve its officers' accountability.

Police leadership must ensure safety for the community served and be responsible for its resources. In improving accountability in the public's eye, police leaders aggressively seek to recruit a diverse and inclusive workforce to enhance the organization's credibility, accountability, and legitimacy (Gibbs, 2019). Traditionally, law enforcement communities have been slow to adapt to changes and implement reforms, thus creating a vortex and barriers to recruiting minority groups in law enforcement and advancing their careers (Donohue, 2019). This is a critical issue in law enforcement and calls for implementing an effective police officer in a school setting.

The foundation of having a reflective workforce in law enforcement, extensively applied in a school setting, is a tremendous need for police officers to build a relationship on campus. According to Molina (2018), there is an immense aspiration to represent an inclusive and diverse public sector, especially in law enforcement. The goal is to expand community policing and build relationships with schools to be more involved in safety. Inclusivity in a school setting,

hiring individuals that reflect the student body, and having a police officer who understands the importance of building a relationship are vital to reducing the damaging pipeline's perception (Yang et al., 2019). This also means hiring more female representation in the workforce, which has tremendous benefits.

Traditionally, law enforcement has been a male-dominated profession with leadership positions often held by males; however, female leadership in police agencies is rising, resulting in a shift in perceptions and ideology (Silvestri, 2018). This ideology is used and provides a wide range of law enforcement services but is hindered because of several obstacles. Female officers face obstacles in progressing in their careers because of the limited opportunities and often face discrimination (Morabito & Shelley, 2018). The desire, dedication, and motivation for minorities and females to engage in a high level of service to the community are apparent. Female and minority groups are passionate about public service, serving their communities, and becoming role models for their families while positively influencing their community (Suboch et al., 2017). Police leaders in school-based law enforcement can capitalize on and strengthen the organization's credibility by understanding inclusive dynamics.

### **Use of Force**

The evolution of school culture and its correlation with violence have changed over the years, and recent attention has been given to school policies and law enforcement in school settings (Crawford & Burns, 2020). Law enforcement use has gained national attention throughout the years, and with advances in technology to capture visual depictions such as in-car and body cameras and cell phone videos, it increases negative and racial anxiety against law enforcement (Wade, 2017). A school-based police officer works in high-concentration areas of citizens from youth toward adulthood, which increases the possibility of scrutinization based on

the number of interactions (Vaughn & Johnson, 2021). School-based police officers work in complex, overlapping, and intertwined learning and juvenile justice systems (Javdani, 2019). As a result, the level of use of school-based officers is met with uncomfortable questions for police leadership.

School-based law enforcement agencies require a different approach toward using force than municipal law enforcement agencies. School-based police leaders need to understand compliance dynamics and the various tactics suitable for a school setting. In addition to understanding the intricacies of the utilization of force, police leaders in school settings need to be aware of the historical context of the different ethnicities and racial hierarchy. African Americans are the group that suffer most from oppression via the use of force by law enforcement, Latinos are second, and Whites are last (Weitzer, 2017). This is compounded by empirical studies that indicate the disproportionate number of African and Latino students introduced early to criminal justice for minor crimes (Bryan, 2017; Hemez et al., 2020).

Jacobsen (2015) stated that school-based police officers work in challenging conditions, balancing enforcing the laws while facing opposition based on their appearance of a “campus cop.” Police officers are usually classified with a type “A” personality; because of the work environment’s nature, one must be in charge. As a result, the correlation between ego and self-control is challenged when met with noncompliance or incidents that challenge their authority (Staller et al., 2019). An SRO has a wide range of duties and responsibilities that affect the campus atmosphere (Theriot & Orme, 2016). Within a school setting, law enforcement can be challenged by youth who do not know the full extent of a police officer’s authority.

The duties and responsibilities of an SRO can often be blurry, mainly taking law enforcement action when the initial contact violates a student’s constitutional rights (Chan et al.,



2019). An SRO is on a school campus to provide safety and security to internal and external stakeholders. School administrators often contact their SRO when a particular student becomes combative and aggressive, resulting in the SRO taking law enforcement actions and placing the student in handcuffs (Meade, 2019). Putting a handcuff on an individual is a routine police action; however, within a school setting it can bring additional questions and scrutiny. SROs are familiar with the campus populations within a school setting because of daily interactions and their role in liaising with community resources (Zhang, 2019).

The familiarity of SROs on school campuses helps them build relationships whereby they can understand students' background (Zhang, 2019). As a result, SRO training on the utilization of force emphasizes de-escalation. De-escalation has achieved a rising prominence in the restrictive use of force policy that has been implemented by police executives (Engel et al., 2020). The rise of de-escalation training and emphasis arises from national media on questionable police use of force. The school-to-prison pipeline faces more vigorous opponents and scrutiny on SRO programs (Count et al., 2018; Eklund et al., 2018).

De-escalation is one avenue that a school-based law enforcement police chief can go down to decrease force use. In carrying out their duties on campus, school-based police chiefs might seek resources from military surpluses to acquire low-cost equipment but face opposition because of the perception of a higher level of force used against minorities (Ramey & Steidely, 2018). Militarization has been associated with public schools within a school setting because of the enlistment age. According to Nguyen (2017), the concept of an educational pipeline toward national security is based on the strengthening of militarized education in the rise of military charter schools and disciplinary regimes. Additionally, military recruiters are given the flexibility to recruit high school-age students, indirectly exposing school-age students to force issues.

Police agencies participating in military surplus programs face opposition based on political and socioeconomic issues over law enforcement agencies' treatment disparities (Ramey & Steidely, 2018). These disparities can be unique on different school campuses, depending on the different ethnic makeup. Additionally, this fosters the argument over law enforcement's purpose and the challenges of a warrior-and-guardian mindset. The warrior-and-guardian mentality has a sense of a distinct separation of force in law enforcement duties and responsibilities. School-based law enforcement officers seek to build and install trust in students while being readily available to defend them from acts of violence (Kupchik et al., 2020). According to Bove and Garilova (2017), the effect of agencies that acquire military surpluses reduces crimes, additional resources readily available and is a valuable deterrent.

Law enforcement on campus aims to increase school safety and defuse the threat of violent crime, particularly from active shooters (Chan et al., 2019; Curran et al., 2019; "Trey" Marchbanks et al., 2018). As a result, this may require law enforcement agencies assigned to a school to have tactical equipment readily available as countermeasures in active shooter events. However, the notion that a police officer assigned to a school reduces the likelihood of an active shooter event is false and does not reflect prevention's primary focus (Livingston et al., 2019). The growing numbers of schools conducting functional shooting training as an avenue for law enforcement agencies show that their tactical purposes negatively affect the student population. Young children and teenagers' emotional and cognitive ability to look to law enforcement officers to prevent violence and actions is negatively affected (Jonson, et al, 2020; Moore-Petinak et al., 2020).

There is a contrast in school-based police officers' perception of their role in an active shooter event. Law enforcement officers perceive that their actions to educate and respond

appropriately in an active shooter event save lives (Phillips, 2020). Active shooter events prepare the student to respond to officers' responses toward the act of violence; however, a student's level of comprehension and understanding is still naive (Jonson, et al, 2020; Moore-Petinak et al., 2020). The element of active shooter training can be damaging and expose youth to the simulated act of violence. According to Whitney (2017), active shooter training also prepares young children and teachers to defend themselves, such as the motto, Run, Hide, and Fight, resulting in violent behaviors to achieve the goal. The atmosphere of active shooter training and the association of using violence to counteract violence require school-based police leaders to understand the dynamic of force utilization in school settings.

The possibility of an active shooter on campus is relatively low but is magnified because of media and law enforcement's desire to have tactical equipment readily available. This lifesaving equipment is necessary for the law enforcement agency to be operationally ready if a threat to life is received. According to Turner and Beneke (2020), a distinct movement is in place to soften the school resource role in policing school campuses by reinforcing the role of SRO as a guardian to racial groups and defender of constitutional rights. The role of an SRO in a school setting can be defined in three distinct categories: educator, community liaison, and law enforcement officer (Zhang, 2019). These main categories in developing the use of force policy and training tailored in a school setting define the purpose of school-based law enforcement officers. According to Theriot (2016), SROs influence the school environment and cultures to develop strategic relationships with the community, students, and teachers.

A law enforcement use of force policy outlines an officer's actions when faced with noncompliance. The variation of a law enforcement agency's use of force is contingent on the state's laws and the U.S. constitution. Empirical research has shown that proper documentation

reduces deadly force (Jennings & Rubado, 2017). A school-based police officer working in a school environment faces difficulties understanding youth socialization with law enforcement; youths develop different attitudes toward law enforcement based on several influences (Kupchik et al., 2020). Hence, the duty of an SRO is wide-ranging and reflects the difference in interpretation of their purpose.

The zero-tolerance approach toward crime on school campuses can increase criminal arrests with the presence of school-based law enforcement (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). Zero-tolerance on illegal activity can influence the utilization of force by a police officer assigned to school. A zero-tolerance approach is ineffective because it does not correctly evaluate the situations or individuals involved who might be suffering from a medical condition or inability to understand the problem (Monterastelli, 2017). Law enforcement officers working on school campuses are exposed to the same element as their municipal counterparts, but school-based law enforcement officers have the luxury of having school administrators familiar with the students' background. The relationship that school-based law enforcement builds with school administrators can assist them in performing their duties effectively without the utilization of force (Wolfe et al., 2017).

### **Community Policing**

The turn of the century and the threat of violent crimes led to increased law enforcement officers in school, commonly known as the SRO program (Theriot, 2016; Viano et al., 2021). With the implementation and variations of the programs nationwide, the role and duties have evolved over the years. The vital role of an SRO is the cultivation, prevention, and protection strategies and relationship building with internal and external stakeholders. The SROs' working conditions and their roles in school security enhance their status in the community, which is the

cornerstone of community policing. School-based police officers are the gatekeepers of the criminal justice system for youths and can divert children to other suitable programs (Glenn et al., 2019; Javdani, 2019).

SRO programs remain a popular crime prevention method to reduce crimes, build relationships with the community, and provide mentorship to youth (Devlin & Gottfredson, 2018). Police leaders leading a school-based law enforcement agency have the ability and opportunities to make indelible marks on, and forge positive interactions with, youths. School-based officers have a wide range of duties that might overextend their boundaries as police officers, but fundamentally, the representation is that their community is served (Zhang, 2019). Community policing has been recognized as an avenue for police leaders to repair relationships with the community and increase trust (Shupard & Kearns, 2019). As a result, police leaders need to understand the importance of proper deployment and appropriate police personnel on the school campus and the positive and negative effects.

The direction and effect of community policing have been uplifted throughout the years. According to Timpf (2017), two vital pieces of literature affecting law enforcement in the past few years are the *Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* and the *Police Executive Research Forum's Guiding Principles on the Use of Force*. This literature is focused on police reform and outlines the cornerstone of building police accountability and legitimacy through community policing and crime prevention. School-based policing plays a pivotal role in community policing and crime prevention through the different elements of policing and serving many community members and leaders. Community policing involves the proactive response by a police officer to effectively reduce crimes while maintaining a solid

foundation of a relationship that embodies trust, accountability, and legitimacy (Shepard & Kearns, 2019).

School-based law enforcement encounters the same individuals daily and has a solid working relationship with them over time. This relationship will assist in fostering a safe and secure environment for internal and external school setting members. The most polarizing trend affecting school-based law enforcement is undocumented students' legality and the ability of police officers to provide a haven in a school setting (Crawford, 2018). Police officers are sworn to protect, defend, and uphold the laws of their states and the U.S. Constitution while navigating political hurdles. The ability and function of school-based law enforcement officers can be augmented based on police department policies and procedures, school board mentality, and police leadership.

School-based law enforcement collaborates and works with a school administrator to provide a safe environment and privileged information to conduct their duties and responsibilities (Crawford, 2018). This confidential information is given to police officers based on their relationships in a building with students, staff, school administrations, and community leaders. Within the boundaries of community policing, a police officer has the authority and ability to protect in matters affecting decisions that may alter an organization's practices for the betterment of the situation at hand (Hancock, 2016). Community policing provides line officers with the freedom to conduct their sworn law enforcement duties effectively and minimize constraints. This freedom comes at the price of proper training, selection, and deployment of a school-based police officer on suitable assignments or campuses.

Community policing has three significant components: citizen involvement, organizational transformation, and problem-solving technique resulting in an arrest (Tillyer,

2018). School-based police officers have the authority to arrest on campus as a tool to reduce crime and to bring justice to the victim. The difference between a school-based police officer and a municipal officer making an arrest is that school-based police officers are well-versed in community engagement. School-based police officers are trained in various techniques and crime prevention techniques to interact with their community differently (Javdani, 2019). The ability of school-based law enforcement to engage with their community holistically is gained through their relationship with school administration and access to a multidisciplinary resource.

The rising popularity of restorative justice practices in schools engages law enforcement in community policing. As an alternative to criminal sanctions, healthy justice practices in school involve various parties in the decision-making to refer the individual for assistance based on the seriousness of their crime (Lustick, 2017; Payne & Welch, 2015). The various sanction levels are based on the severity of the offense and the level of enforcement needed to achieve the desired behavior. Although restorative justice is a method of having an alternative to an arrest, it does not affect or undermine the authority of a police officer on campus. Also, an alternative to arrest is an avenue for addressing youths' mischievous behaviors or bullying instead of imposing heavy criminal sanctions (Maynard et al., 2016).

A well-structured restorative justice program will create significant and trustworthy relationships while assisting juveniles to increase their self-worth and value in the community (McMahan, 2019). There are various cultures within a school-based law enforcement community because of multiple campuses, leaderships, and elements. As a result, an effective restorative justice program is most effective when school administration creates a customized program ideal for their campuses and includes other disciplinary teams, including law enforcement (Payne &

Welch, 2015). Though law enforcement duties on campus vary nationwide, the essence of having a law enforcement officer on campus is to reduce the fear of crime.

School-based law enforcement officers have numerous tools available to reduce the fear of crime through community policing by gathering information to assist their law enforcement duties. Threat assessment is a crime prevention strategy that school-based law enforcement can use and coordinate with different resources on campus to change a student's behavior (Maeng et al., 2020). Threat assessments help school-based law enforcement officers provide a quantitative approach to articulating the need for additional resources while incorporating the students' needs. A proper threat assessment can diffuse the strong correlation between the increase in school police officers and numbers of arrests (Homer & Fisher, 2020). The ability of police leadership to provide practical and quality training for school-based law enforcement officers can achieve multiple high-level goals.

### ***Threat Assessment***

The concept of a threat assessment has been a part of school-based law enforcement for many decades. The evolution of a threat assessment that is individualized, customized, and involves different elements has changed the dynamic of school-based law enforcement (Modzeleski & Randazzo, 2018). Threat assessment encompasses analyzing an asset's strengths, weaknesses, and vulnerability, while a behavior assessment is more applicable in a school setting. School-based law enforcement officers and school administration can find valuable information through proper behavior assessment and develop a custom action plan (Reeves & Brock, 2018). This action plan forms the foundation of community policing and upholds a strong relationship with all individuals involved in the process.



A multidisciplinary team conducts a behavioral assessment to gauge the severe actions manifested through students' misbehavior, writing, and attitudes (Reeves & Brock, 2018). Essentially, a behavioral assessment determines the likelihood of a student engaging in an action that can harm themselves and others. This assessment is usually completed by a psychologist or school counselor, which is valuable for school-based enforcement officers. The policing of behaviors is referred to a medical professional who induces a behavioral assessment on the possibility of future threatening behaviors to increase the school's security while maintaining support for youth growing up (Cox, 2016). The resources for school-based law enforcement are abundant but require them to understand and know how to reflect on their limitation on addressing youth behavior.

Community policing and school-based law enforcement go together because of the opportunities for law enforcement officers to have a more substantial impact on youth. School-based law enforcement engages with youth of all ages, providing them with the foundation of police legitimacy. A threat assessment of the student can provide a proactive response and intervention method to correct a misguided student from a lifetime of despair (Maeng et al., 2020). These intervention strategies include a holistic approach to defining and updating the behaviors observed and reshaping the students' mentality. Moreover, these intervention strategies can reduce the number of criminal sanctions imposed and enhance the ability of a law enforcement officer to foster a positive relationship with students. A positive relationship can be achieved through positive reinforcement and proper training, selection of police officers, and recruitment.

### **School-Based Law Enforcement Training and Recruitment**

In 2015, new federal policies, such as the No Child Left Behind Act, transformed the school education process with different criteria and metrics, changing the dynamic of school-based law enforcement (McCurdy et al., 2019). The most substantial change was the decentralized process of the federal government controlling how local leaders manage school districts. Thus, each school district has the authority to transform its academic achievement based on these needs. The No Child Left Behind Act requires an effective teacher in the classroom, like an effective police officer on campus. Because of the school atmosphere, SRO programs have evolved and require more in-depth training, recruitment, and policing systems (Javdani, 2019).

The most significant contrast between municipal policing and school-based law enforcement is the considerable time that SROs have for crime prevention, proactive response, and building relationships. Though different SRO programs in the nation have their own criteria, the common link is that SROs spend time developing relationships, fostering a positive environment, and forging a proactive approach to identifying areas of concern and weakness (Hancock, 2016). Relationship building takes time and effort, as well as meaningful conversation with internal and external school community members. The challenge that SROs have is maintaining, sustaining, and bridging gaps of relationship building with a minority. The student perception of SROs on school campuses is to bully, make arrests, and disregard the concept of the rule of law (Pentek & Eisenberg, 2018).

The school-to-prison pipeline is a concept and perception that has wreaked havoc on the school-based police officers and their relationship with minority students. School-based law enforcement is a specialized service to the community because of the complexity and the intense training involved. School-based police officers work in an environment with administrative and

criminal violations but need to understand youth misbehavior and misconduct (Broll & Lafferty, 2018). Also, policies-driven violations refer to school rules defined in the student code of conduct rather than state law criminal statutes. The ability and experience to analyze, evaluate, and conclude the criminal act is malicious and requires criminal prosecution to rest on the police officer's authority.

The concept of adding more police officers in school does not reflect a safer campus or reduce the fear of crime. The increase of police officers in school has led to a rise in arrests, unlawful activities, and increased fear of crimes against minorities (Chan et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2018). However, a well-trained police officer with specialized training in handling and resolving youth-related issues can reduce arrest numbers. The interaction with and prosecution of juveniles in a criminal justice system are greatly different from with adults, requiring a school-based police officer to understand juveniles and family code (Chan et al., 2019). Also, officers must continually evaluate the level of force imposed on youth, due to the scrutinization by internal and external stakeholders.

The court case *Gottlieb v. Laurel Highlands School District* provides the framework on what is categorized as excessive force, which is a stricter interpretation that consists of justification of force, whether the force was necessary, whether it was applied in good faith, and whether there was significant harm against the student (Chan et al., 2019). School-based police officers will have to interact with youth, and without proper training, use of force incidents can escalate because of the inability of youth to understand their actions and police officers not understanding the environment. In addition, only a few states have allocated specialized mandatory training for police officers assigned to the school (Ryan et al., 2018). Police officers who are not appropriately trained face legal issues such as handcuffing children because of their

inability to control the situation and reacting instead of responding to the incident (Shaver & Decker, 2017). The nature of police officer-involved confrontation with individuals requires the police officer to resolve the incident effectively and efficiently.

School-based police officers have various tools and resources available because of the school environment. The two practical tools are the alternative to arrest and discretion; both allow school-based police officers to reduce the likelihood of criminal infractions and resolve situations holistically (Devlin & Gottfredson, 2018). School-based police work in a dynamic setting, which requires them to specialize in community policing. The strengths and weaknesses of the police officers' training and expertise are related to the numbers of arrests and reporting crimes on their assigned campus. The correlations between arrests and reported crimes can be evaluated by the police officers assigned to the school campus.

In a study by Devlin and Gottfredson (2018), they found a strong correlation between individuals reporting crimes and the number of police officers on campus. School-based police officers' duties and responsibilities have changed over the years, moving from warrior toward more guardian mentality. Although their duties and responsibilities have changed, debate continues on the effectiveness of school-based police officers. An empirical study in Texas reveals that federal grants for police officers saw a rise in student discipline, minorities experiencing the most discipline, and a reduction in high school and college graduation (Weisburst, 2019). The statistical data on school-based police officers are damaging and reflect the need for appropriately trained law enforcement on campus.

The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing outlines the fundamental need of having, as a police officer, an individual who is qualified to do the job (Hilal et al., 2017). School-based law enforcement can be perceived as a retirement spot in which to place an officer

to finish their career. Law enforcement recruitment has changed, and the selection of school-based police officers on campus is paramount to the success of the school district and law enforcement agency. The recruitment and selection of school-based police officers have become competitive, like teacher recruitment, with a solid need for qualified applicants with educational backgrounds. In addition, within a school-based law enforcement environment, there is a substantial push to be more diverse and inclusive to be more reflective of their community.

The dynamic of working in a school environment requires a school-based police officer to understand the utilization of force, juveniles and family codes, effective communication, and the different populations that exist in school. A school-based police officer is responsible for ensuring the safety and security of all internal and external members on campus. Thus, school-based police officers need to have a wide range of understanding and knowledge of interacting with different populations and special interest groups. Special needs children, or individuals with learning disabilities, often interact with police as victims, witnesses, and suspects (Gardner et al., 2019). The police officer's ability to positively engage with specialized groups legitimately requires them to understand how to communicate appropriately.

Law enforcement officers are given little training on interacting with special interest groups and lack the proper avenue to conduct their duties and responsibilities with no bias (Gardner et al., 2019). In addition to interacting with students with disabilities, school-based law enforcement needs to have a strong understanding of federal immigration laws. Although occurring on a national level, the political issue of immigration affects school districts because of funding and prevents undocumented students from achieving the next level in their academic careers. School-based police officers have the sworn duty to uphold the laws and the U.S. Constitution, which may cause conflict because school-based law enforcement police officers are

school district employees or help federal law enforcement (Dee & Murphy, 2020). School districts receiving funds from the federal government may hinder the process, forcing law enforcement officers to intervene.

Undocumented students in school settings can be victims of crimes and bullying and may have valuable information for law enforcement to solve crimes but cannot confirm their legal status (Ee & Gándara, 2020). As a result, this will create a domino effect on the campus's ability to provide equal access and treatment and, most importantly, the ability for all individuals to have a voice in their educational environment. The most significant and most devastating crimes for school-based law enforcement to investigate are sexual assaults on campus. Sexual assault on campus is important because of its trauma and the difficulties in gathering evidence and statement (Smith et al., 2016). Sexual assault is a severe crime and requires the most delicate approach to defining and analyzing the facts of the case.

School-based police officers must be well-versed in multiple avenues of policing and different expertise. The ability, pieces of knowledge, and skills of a school-based police officer are paramount to the safety of all individuals in a school setting. The role of a school-based police officer has changed along with its mentality. School-based police officers need to have a warrior mindset when dealing with active shooter situations but require a guardian mindset (Berglund, 2017). School-based police officers' ability to switch mentality is contingent on their training and exposure to a campus that fits them. As a result, school-based police chiefs need to understand the different elements that school-based police officers encounter daily.

### **Summary**

The literature review included studies focused on the different elements associated with policing, use of force, school-based law enforcement, school-to-prison pipeline, and community

policing. Though there are numerous studies related to policing, there are limited studies associated with the independent school district police department's specialization. Many studies emphasize an SRO program, but there are not many on independent school district policing. The dynamic of policing has changed throughout the years and requires a different mentality to move forward. School-based law enforcement is a specialized law enforcement agency requiring skills, knowledge, and interactive personnel to succeed. School-based law enforcement involves multiple components and integration for success and requires unique qualities vastly different from those needed in municipal policing.

## CHAPTER THREE: PROPOSED METHODS

### Overview

Chapter 3 outlines the research method chosen in response to the research question: whether a police chief needs specialized training in school-based law enforcement, juvenile law, family code, and leadership training to lead a school-based law enforcement agency. As mentioned in Chapter 2, multiple studies are focused on the negative impacts caused by the relationship between police officers in school and minorities (Turner & Beneke, 2020; Weisburst, 2019; Zhang, 2019; Zirkel, 2019). However, there is limited research on the unique leadership qualities needed to lead a school-based law enforcement agency successfully. With active threats of school shootings and expectations of police officers running toward the dangers instead of running away, the police chief role is a demanding job that requires robust leadership qualities (Martaindale & Blair, 2019; Phillips, 2020). School-based law enforcement needs leadership that promotes accountability, transparency, credibility, and trust. This research would be mixed-method qualitative and quantitative, using existing data to discover any correlation between leadership training and turnover rate among school-based police chiefs.

### Design

This research is developed as a mixed-method design, consisting of a qualitative and quantitative research study. According to Watson (2015), quantitative analysis is used to systematically investigate social phenomena utilizing statistical or numerical data. This research method is focused on measurement between variables and the relationship that exists. This research will consist of a quantitative approach with limited interaction from police agencies, thus reducing ethical issues. Additionally, there would be limited interaction with law enforcement chief administrators, preventing a sensitivity of disreputable behaviors in survey



responses. This design is suitable because the data collected would be existing data and used to conclude the relationship between two variables.

### **Research Questions**

The central research question is “should a police chief need specialized training in school-based law enforcement?” This specialized training should include juvenile law, family code, and leadership training to successfully lead a school-based law enforcement agency toward positive engagement with internal and external stakeholders. School-based law enforcement has multiple complexities that require specialized training and unique leadership qualities. However, there are various leadership training and development opportunities for a police chief that improve a chief capabilities of leading any police organization properly. This researcher’s primary goal is to ascertain the relationship between leadership training in school incidents and the effective handling of a critical incident, which can be analyzed through the police chief’s tenure in the organization. This author explores the dynamic environment in which school-based law enforcement must operate and the fundamental need for school-based law enforcement police chiefs to succeed.

School-based enforcement is based on zero-tolerance and broken-window theory, reformed owing to the shift in mentality (McKenna et al., 2016). A qualified police chief specializing in understanding the diverse components of school-based law enforcement is needed to lead. The central research question branches out to critical areas for this research.

- 1. Is there a correlation between an experienced school-based law enforcement police chief successfully leading an agency and a nonexperienced police chief?*
- 2. Does specialized training in school-based law enforcement play a critical role in the tenure of a police chief?*

3. *Does specialized training in school-based law enforcement promote positive engagement with the public?*

### **Setting**

The researcher selected the State of Texas for this research study based on several critical factors: several school-based law enforcement agencies, standardized training, a diverse pool of small to large law enforcement agencies, and documented training hours. TCOLE provides the administrative data for all law enforcement professionals who are peace officers in the state and keeps track of executive actions taken against a license holder (Li & Brown, 2019). TCOLE provides mandated training requirements for the chief administrator distributed through a centralized training facility, the Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT). LEMIT provides two required training courses for police chiefs in the State of Texas, New Chief Development and Texas Police Chief Leadership Series, both of which involve 40 hours of training (LEMIT, 2021). These training courses are designed to assist police chiefs in successfully leading their agencies and are universally applied to all law enforcement agencies without distinction.

This researcher focused on data from TCOLE and three prominent police chief associations in Texas. TCOLE is the administrative office for all peace officers' licenses, standards and training, and continuing education. The function of TCOLE is to provide a system of checks and balances on all peace officers' licenses, which include chief administrative training and requirement for all law enforcement agencies in the state (TCOLE, 2021). TCOLE is the gatekeeper of all peace officers' training records, service history, and education hours and provides specialized mandated training for school-based law enforcement officers. The three prominent police chief associations are the Texas Police Chief Association (TPCA), Texas

School District Police Chiefs' Association (Texas ISD Police Chief), and Texas Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy Associates (FBINAA Texas).

These three police chief associations are voluntary membership organizations created for chief administrators and command staff to have continuing education to advance their skills and knowledge. These police chief associations have distinct membership requirements and specialized training designed to provide continuing education as leadership training for organizational improvement. The TPCA consists of active members currently in the police chief position or retired police chiefs in the State of Texas (TPCA, 2021). The Texas ISD Police Chief consists of active members who are current police or retired police chiefs in Texas, created to promote and provide standardization of school-based law enforcement in the State of Texas (Texas Independent School District Police Chief Association 2021). The FBINAA Texas consists of senior management law enforcement professionals of the Federal Bureau Investigation National Academy and senior law enforcement positions in the State of Texas (FBINAA Texas, 2021).

The data pulled TCOLE are from 2015–2020, the period of significant law enforcement administrator challenges owing to substantial scrutiny by media and the post-Ferguson era (Nix & Wolfe, 2016). The significance of this time led to major changes in law enforcement in leadership, policies, and procedures (Mills, 2017). These data allowed proper analysis of fluctuation and changes in police chiefs' positions across Texas and provided firm knowledge of the tenure, training, and education of current and former police chiefs. The surveys sent out to three police chief associations had 20 questions to extract data from current and former police chiefs on their perspective on their readiness, suitability, and success in leading a school-based

law enforcement agency. Additionally, the survey provided analysis and measurable data on the difficulties of leading a school-based law enforcement agency.

### **Participants**

This applied study is aimed at solving the problem of police chiefs lacking the leadership qualities needed to lead a school-based law enforcement agency. The qualified participants are former and current police chiefs who have led school-based and municipal law enforcement agencies. The study was conducted through a survey sent to different police chief associations. The responses were collected and analyzed via the current qualifications of police chiefs in major cities and school districts with school-based law enforcement. The focus of the research was to elicit responses from former and current school-based police chiefs to analyze their qualifications. These qualifications consist of training, education, and skills—the capabilities of major cities and large school districts with school-based law enforcement.

The researcher screened, selected, and vetted qualified participants systematically to prevent personal identifiers from being disclosed. The association president was given a letter outlining the purpose, parameters, and goal of the study. The letter sought permission from the association president to send the survey electronically to their memberships, and participation was voluntary. The letter outlined the opening and ending dates of the surveys. Participants could submit the study discreetly without personal information, including their date of birth, agency, social security number, driver's license, and peace officer license number. Participants had the option to contact the researcher directly through the contact information on the letter given to the association president.

The research data was focused on the State of Texas owing to the diversity of school districts, centralized peace officer license agency, and TCOLE that governs the specific training

for school-based law enforcement officers and police chiefs. TCOLE oversees all peace officer licenses in Texas. It can take administrative actions on peace officer licenses and revoke a police agency based on training and administrative law (TCOLE, 2021). The surveys would be sent to multiple police chief associations: the TPCA, Texas School District Police Chief Association, and FBI National Academy of Texas. These three associations provide an in-depth analysis of the police chief's skills, qualifications, and knowledge to succeed.

Longstanding law enforcement perceptions of a solid male figure as the ideal police leader have slowly been replaced with an independent female leader (Silvestri, 2018). The transformation of female police leaders emerging and facing past discrimination, overlooked for crucial leadership positions, remains (Morabito & Shelley, 2018). Additionally, female police leaders are faced with a significant challenge in the male-dominant profession but have served as role models for their families and made positive impacts on the community (Johnston & Houston, 2018; Suboch et al., 2017). The sample pool and population are anticipated to be male dominant, reflecting the law enforcement industry.

### **The Researcher's Role**

This researcher is a current law enforcement officer employed by the largest school district in Texas and has held a supervisory role for most of their tenure. This researcher has experience working in a school-based law enforcement agency and experienced significant legislative changes in school-based law enforcement. This researcher has attended several prominent leadership courses designed to improve leadership skills and proper management and team development knowledge. Additionally, this researcher has family members who have worked in the same school district and children who attend secondary education. This researcher

has experiences and familiarity with juvenile and family codes that pertain to juveniles' criminal justice system.

This researcher believes that the selection process to become a law enforcement officer is long and grueling, with several phases of hiring designed to recruit the most qualified applicants. This remains true for the police chief because the selection process gets more stringent with a small pool of applicants. The researcher intended to conduct this study to promote professionalism in law enforcement, especially in school-based law enforcement. With active threats of school shootings and expectations of police officers running toward the dangers instead of running away, the police chief role is a demanding job that requires leadership qualities. The school-based setting is in dire need of leadership that promotes trust.

### **Procedures**

The surveys were electronically created and consisted of 20 quantitative and qualitative questions that assisted in extracting empirical data. The surveys were composed of multiple-choice questions that participants could select. The multiple-choice questions consisted of years of service, educational level, and type of leadership training. Additionally, the questions included data associated with leadership qualities that are important to succeed in leading school-based law enforcement agencies. The survey collection period consisted of 2 weeks, providing ample time for police chiefs to send in their responses. The electronic surveys were sent to the police chief association president, who did an email blast to their members. The survey did not contain name, rank, or agency identifiers.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The participants responding to the survey were unknown to the researcher, and there were no incentives to recruit individuals for this study, along with no compensation for the

participants. The briefing and debriefing for the participants were not needed; face-to-face interactions were limited because surveys were electronically sent. The data collection was conducted after approval from IRB was obtained to ensure the study's integrity and proper participants' treatment. The data were gathered through surveys that consisted of 20 questions.

### *Surveys/Questionnaires*

The surveys have been electronically created that consist of twenty quantitative and qualitative questions that will assist in extracting empirical data. The surveys will consist of multiple-choice questions that participants can select. The survey would be broken into four categories: leadership training, school-based law enforcement, years of service, and educational level. The multiple choices answer are comprehensive. Participants would be asked to choose a solution that best details their responses. The survey would be created and have IRB approval for the participants.

### *Document Analysis*

The documents analyzed came from TCOLE statistical information on the numbers of police chiefs, school-based law enforcement agencies, service history, and education. Utilizing government and state data poses a threat to internal validity because no data can be manipulated and assumed to be correct. This research was quantitative and necessitated reduced collaboration from police leaders. Additionally, the limited interaction prevented the perception of unethical behaviors by the researchers and participants. The data gathered were from the Freedom of Public Information Act and did not involve utilizing the researcher's position as a law enforcement officer. This prevented any perceptions of the researcher's bias.

Because the data were established and submitted to the central administrative governmental database, they were held to be accurate. Consequently, the reliability of the

information did not sway the researcher's bias. Further, the data breakdown consisted of using Microsoft Excel, which is easily accessible. Consequently, the data can be traced and repeatedly explored in the same format. The software is accessible to any researcher, and the operating system is easy to navigate and interpret.

The research topic has an external validity that exists because another researcher reproducing this research topic might use different datasets and organizations. The survey could be redesigned with further questions, resulting in a different outcome. These variables can cause an altered conclusion and interpretation. Internal validity was associated with this research because the various school-based law enforcement agencies in Texas are different in size and qualifications for police chiefs. The organization's structure for school-based law enforcement varies among agencies, along with the number of student populations served. Additionally, the command staff structure of each organization differs, affecting the influences of the police chief's authority.

### **Ethical Considerations**

There are minor ethical concerns related to this research topic because data collected were from 2015–2020. The assumption and belief are that the data have been appropriately vetted by the agency's public information officer and properly categorized for the governmental record. The data were obtained through the Freedom of Public Information Act, thus reducing compromised personal identification concerns. Government agencies responding to the Public Information Act reduces the assumption of personal privacy violation because there is a specific period for dissimulation. The data were kept on a password-protected hard drive, documented, and protected from editing.



### **Summary**

This research study was based on a mixed method consisting of exploratory and correlation studies. The foundation of this study was to analyze the dynamic environment in which school-based law enforcement chief administrators must operate and the fundamental need for them to be successful. Furthermore, the data used for this study were preexisting data from 2015–2020. Chapter 4 will consist of a detailed analysis of the data gathered and a conclusion.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

### Overview

This research was developed as a mixed-method design, consisting of a qualitative and quantitative research study. The data were extracted from the archival data from TCOLE and entered into Microsoft Excel. TCOLE provided, in Excel form, the number of independent school district police departments created between 2015 and 2020, along with the personal status report on police chiefs appointed in the period 2015–2020. The personal status report consisted of career/professional training, service history, peace officer certification level, education level, and professional continuing education hours. The data were extracted and placed in different categories, consisting of years of law enforcement, chief of police experience, length of chief position, leadership training, amount of leadership training, type of leadership training, and highest education.

The central research question was “does a police chief need specialized training in school-based law enforcement, juvenile law, family code, and leadership training to successfully lead a school-based law enforcement agency toward positive engagement with internal and external stakeholders?” The working hypothesis was “does a police chief need specialized training to lead and operate within a school-based law enforcement setting?” Texas was chosen as the state for this research owing to the diverse structures of school-based law enforcement agencies within the state in urban, suburban, and rural areas. This researcher’s primary goal was to establish the relationship of leadership training in school incidents with the effective handling of a critical incident, which could be analyzed via the police chief’s tenure in the organization.

School-based enforcement is based on zero-tolerance and broken-window theory, reformed owing to the shift in mentality (McKenna et al., 2016). A qualified police chief

specializing in understanding the diverse components of school-based law enforcement is needed to lead. The central research question branches out to critical areas for this research.

1. Is there a correlation between an experienced school-based law enforcement police chief successfully leading an agency and a nonexperienced police chief?
2. Does specialized training in school-based law enforcement play a critical role in the tenure of a police chief?
3. Does specialized training in school-based law enforcement promote positive engagement with the public?

### **Participants**

The researcher created the surveys through Survey Monkey and sent out a link to qualified participants with the permission of the Police Chief Association president. The surveys were sent to the TPCA, Texas Independent School District Police Chief Association, and the Federal Bureau Investigation National Academy of Texas. The TPCA declined to participate along with the FBI National Academy of Texas. Texas Independent School District Police Chief Association participated, but only 12 answers were received. The majority of the data for this study came from archived data from TCOLE. The data were obtained through the Public Information Act, whereby data were requested from 2015–2020.

According to the TCOLE data provided, within the period January 2015 to December 2020, there were 100 school-based law enforcement agencies created with the appointment of police chiefs in those positions. Within the time frame of the date, there were 11 created in 2015, 6 created in 2016, 7 in 2017, 34 in 2018, 23 in 2019, and 19 school-based law enforcement agencies in 2020. The creation of the school-based law enforcement agencies is throughout the State of Texas, which consists of urban, suburban, and rural areas. Furthermore,

each agency's chief of police position varies and is not universal. However, the chief of police position qualification meets the minimum qualification for a police officer in Texas, which requires a high school diploma.

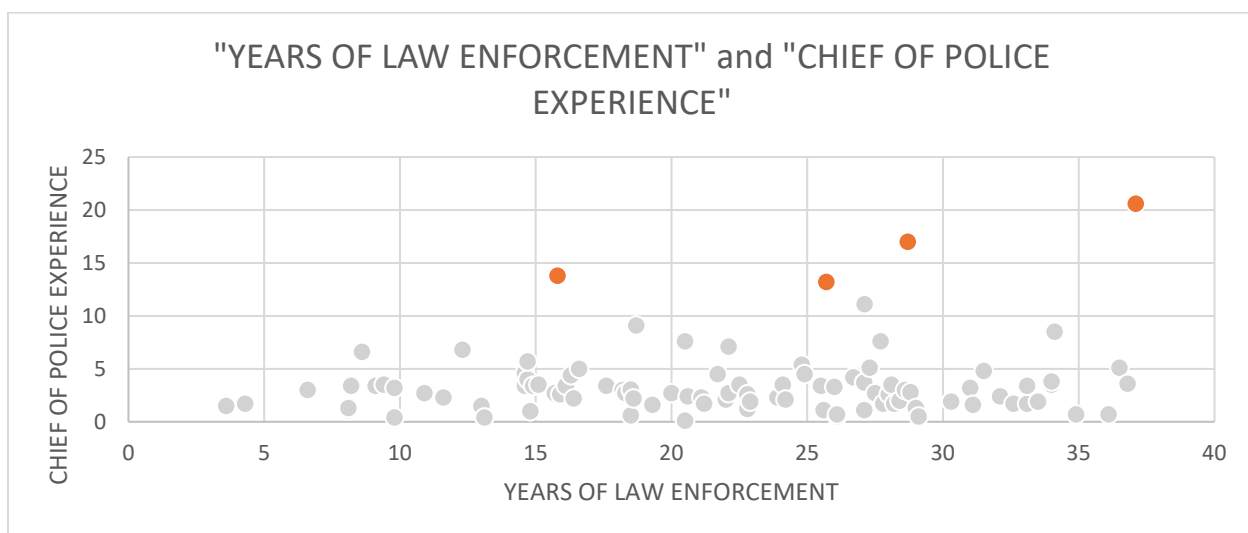
TCOLE does not provide a set of guidelines for the qualification for a police chief but requires a new police chief to attend mandatory training in Huntsville at the LEMIT at Sam Houston State University. Additionally, the data provided the education level, law enforcement experiences, police chief experiences, leadership training, and amount of leadership training hours each police chief had. The data were analyzed and separated into seven categories: years of law enforcement, chief of police experience, length of chief position, leadership training, amount of leadership training, type of leadership training, and highest education level. The breakdown of the data into these seven categories allowed insight into the level of training, experiences, and education to define and analyze any relationship that might exist. Separating the data into these categories allowed for a streamlined assessment of each chief position and the tenure, leadership training, and experiences of a police chief.

### **Results**

The categories of the year of law enforcement, chief of police experiences, and length of position were based on numerical data, which list the actual number of experiences in years. The result was either "yes" or "no" in the leadership training categories if there was any type of leadership training. In the category of leadership training, durations were less than 50 hours, 51–100 hours, 101–150 hours, 151–200, and 201 and upward. The data were analyzed using the personal status report provided by TCOLE and entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The personal status report provided the different leadership trainings. The type of leadership training was FBI NA, LEMIT, military, other, combination, and none. These leadership trainings are

recognized by TCOLE, which entered them in each peace officer training hour by their peace license number.

There were high school diplomas in the highest education categories, some college, bachelor's, master's, and doctorates. The data were analyzed using the personal status report provided by TCOLE and entered into the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The personal status report provided the academic education level of each police chief; all police chiefs had a high school diploma. TCOLE recognizes academic achievement and provides continuing training hours based on the number of college hours or degrees. The higher the education level, the faster a peace officer can achieve master peace officer certification status with TCOLE. In addition, some police chief positions require an education level instead of experience and vice versa. It is up to each organization to create its qualification for the chief of police position. However, based on the data provided on TCOLE, the years of experience as a police officer played a critical role in evaluating a candidate.

*Years in Law Enforcement**Table 1*

The average years of law enforcement experience that a police chief had was 22 years, with the lowest number being 3.6 years and the highest being 37.1 years. The data extracted from the TCOLE archival data indicated that all these participants held the police chief position in a school-based law enforcement agency. The data were entered into Microsoft Excel and gathered through the personal status report provided by TCOLE. The personal status report provided the different levels of peace officer certification and experience in years and months.

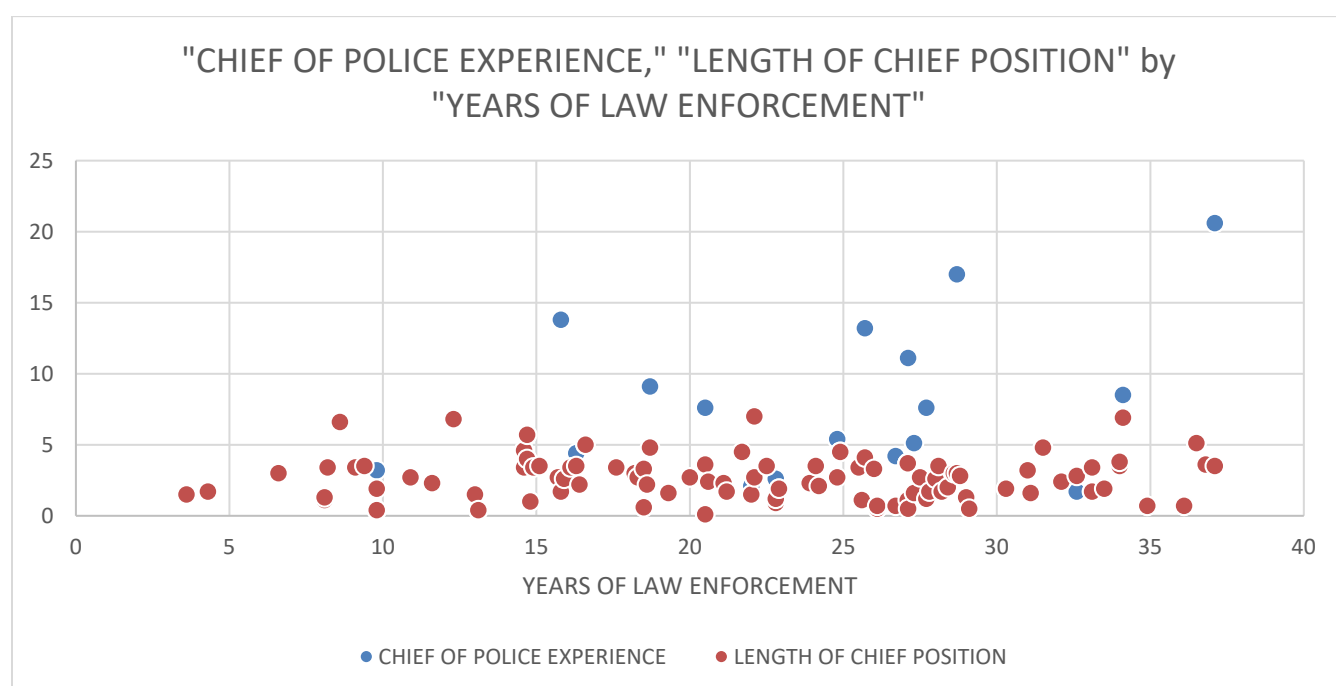
The participant with the least amount of law enforcement experience had had the police chief position for approximately 1.5 years, with no leadership training and with the highest education level of a high school diploma. The participant with the highest amount of law enforcement had over 20 years of police chief experience and had held a police chief position for approximately 3.5 years with leadership training and a bachelor's degree. The differences between these two participants were leadership training, educational level, experience, and police chief position.

From the data, there are four outliers, which are caused by some of the participants having prior police chief experience with another agency. In addition, out of the two who had

previous police chief experience with other school-based law enforcement agencies, two were former constables. They were elected officials in a precinct within a county. Constables serve a 4-year term and have to run for reelection every 4 years. Constables in Texas also have to attend mandatory training that consists of civil nature along with constable leadership with LEMIT. These four individuals had different experiences than the other individuals with no prior chief administrator experience.

### *Chief of Police Experience*

*Table 2*



Law enforcement experience provides a baseline for evaluating a police chief's tenure in their position and their skills and knowledge. From the TCOLE archival data, there is a disparity between law enforcement experience and the individual's length of tenure in a police chief position. The participants with the least amount of police chief experience of less than 1 year had over 20 years of law enforcement experience, with no leadership training and with the highest education level of a bachelor's degree. The data extracted from the personal status report and

entered into Microsoft Excel provided an in-depth analysis of the disparities between experience and tenure as police chief.

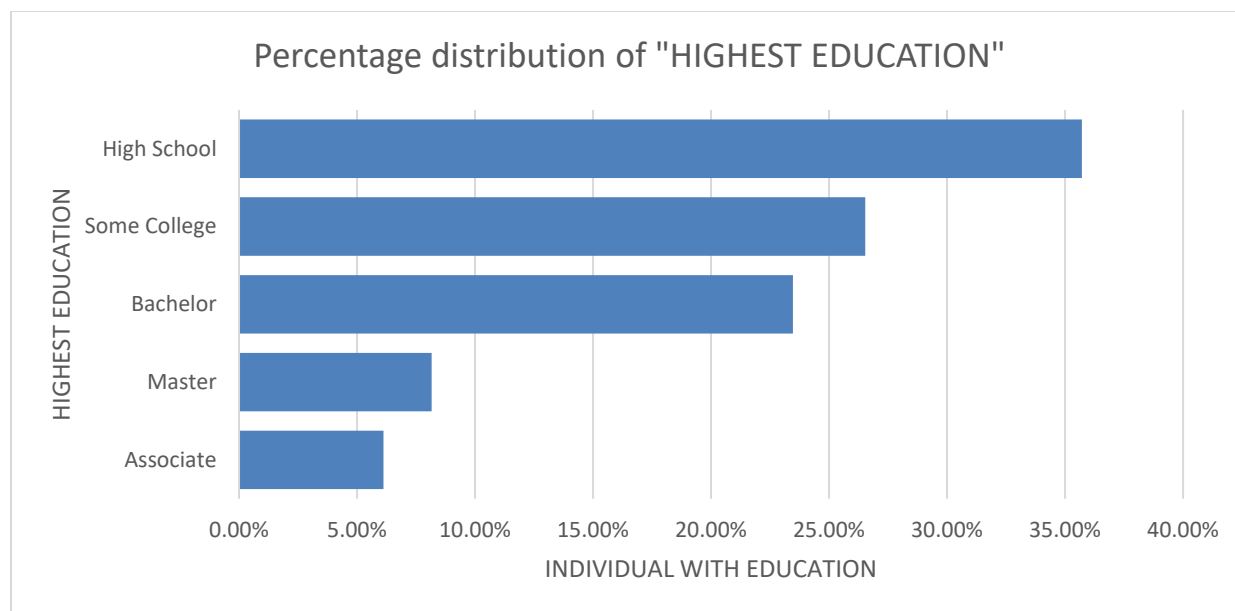
The participants with the longest police experience of over 20 years had been in the police chief position for approximately 3.5 years, with over 37 years of law enforcement behind them and leadership training with the highest education level, a bachelor's degree. However, the participant who had been in the position of police chief had been in that position for 7 years, with 22 years of law enforcement experience and a significant amount of leadership experience, with the highest education level of a master's degree. However, a school-based police chief's average tenure is approximately 2.7 years. The data extracted from the personal status report and entered into Microsoft Excel provided an in-depth analysis. In addition, the average police chief experience was about 2.9 years, and the average law enforcement experience was 22.65 years.

***Education Level***

***Figure 1***

<b>EDUCATION LEVEL</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL WITH EDUCATION</b>
High School	35.71%
Some College	26.53%
Bachelor	23.47%
Master	8.16%
Associate	6.12%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>





From the TCOLE data, 35.71% of participants had their highest form of education as a high school diploma, 26.5% had some college hours, 6.12% had an associate degree, 23.47% had a bachelor's, and 8.16% had a master's degree. There were no participants with a doctorate degree in the data obtained from TCOLE. TCOLE recognizes college hours and degrees and adds training hours to a participant's training file.

The following is the table for **Master Peace Officer Certification** from TCOLE.

**Figure 2**

Hours	OR	Education	OR	Military Service Training Credit	AND	Years
1200						20
2400						15
3300						12
4000						10
		Associate degree		2 Years		12
		Bachelor's degree		4 Years		9
		Master's degree		5 Years		7
		Doctorate/JD		8 Years		5

In addition, to obtain certification, different law enforcement agencies may require master peace officer certification for consideration for a police chief position. Thus, it is highly

advantageous for an individual with a high academic background to quickly obtain a master peace officer with minimum law enforcement experiences. Furthermore, an academic degree can increase the training hours that an individual has on files with TCOLE, which can elevate their training hours to obtain other certifications quickly. Additionally, law enforcement agencies often reward certification pay for advanced degrees and peace officer certification to provide incentive pay for law enforcement officers.

### *Leadership Training*

*Figure 3*

<b>AMOUNT OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING</b>	<b>INDIVIDUALS WITH LEADERSHIP TRAINING</b>
LESS THAN 50 HRS	24
51–100 HRS	21
201 PLUS HRS	16
151–200 HRS	5
101–150 HRS	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>70</b>

From the TCOLE data, there were a total of 70 participants who had formalized police leadership training and 28 individuals without any leadership training. Most police chiefs had some leadership training and almost all fell into two categories, less than 50 hours and 51–100 hours of leadership training. The median level of leadership training fell within 201 plus hours. Leadership training requires an individual to be away from their duties and responsibilities. Thus, leadership training is usually limited and challenging to arrange. However, it is mandated that an individual attend training in person for TCOLE credit.

In-person training requires individuals to be in class for its duration. For example, if the course is eligible for 40 hours, the participants must be in stay for 40 hours. In addition, for this research study, leadership training did not include mandatory classes that an individual must attend for their class. The leadership training encompasses classes or training beyond their scope

of duties and responsibilities to enhance their current skills and knowledge. TCOLE has mandated training for individuals working for school-based law enforcement agencies, such as 20 hours of school-based law enforcement training, school-based active shooter training, and another requirement contingent on their current peace officer certification.

The individual with less than 50 hours of leadership training had a median tenure of police chief of 9 months. Individuals with 51–100 hours of leadership training had a median tenure of 1.75 years. Individuals with 201 plus hours of leadership training had a median tenure of 1.25 years. Individuals with 151–200 hours of leadership training had a median tenure of 4 years. Individuals with 101–150 hours of leadership training had a median tenure of 2.3 years.

Those without leadership training were in police chief positions ranging from 11 months to 6.8 years and had at least a high school diploma, with the highest education level of a master's degree. Ten individuals had a high school diploma, nine had a bachelor's degree, eight had some college, and only one had a master's degree. From the data provided, although some individuals had leadership training, approximately 28.5% of police chiefs did not have additional leadership training beyond the mandatory training that TCOLE requires. In addition, for participants without leadership training, the average tenure of a police chief was 3.45 years.

### **Sub-Question**

Within the result that was analyzed, two sub-questions arise. The first question is, “were the data an accurate depiction of the entire state of Texas school law enforcement?” The second question is, “is school law enforcement an inferior law enforcement agency?” These two crucial questions have dramatic effects on school-based law enforcement; this type of agency is rather complex to lead and requires specialized training. The role of the police chief in municipal and school-based law enforcement is significantly different.

A school-based police chief must understand and balance law enforcement and community relationships. School-based law enforcement has a negative perception owing to the challenging role a police chief must navigate (Crawford & Burns, 2020). A police chief's leadership is vital to the success of school-based law enforcement. This places tremendous stress on the police chief to relinquish their authority and power to the line officers to build sustainable relationships with the community without hesitation (Hassan et al., 2019).

The requested and analyzed data were from TCOLE and were from the period of 2015–2020, with the accuracy of the information contingent on governmental data. Within that period, there were 100 school-based law enforcement agencies created. Since then, other agencies have been created. Based on the data analysis, police chiefs appointed from 2015–2020 lack specialized training to lead a school-based law enforcement agency. Although most of the police chiefs appointed during the time had extensive law enforcement experience in the municipal agency, they did not have the specialized training to operate in the complexities of school-based law enforcement. Some appointed police chiefs had less than 10 years in a law enforcement environment and yet led school-based law enforcement agencies.

In addition, the appointed police chiefs had minimal education, such as a high school diploma, and very few had a bachelor's degree or higher. Additionally, the majority of the appointed police chiefs had less than 2 years of service with their current agency as a police chief, with only two appointed police chiefs having prior significant leadership experience leading a constable agency. The majority of school-based law enforcement created during 2015–2020 had considerable turnover in police chiefs, with police chiefs lasting less than 2 years. In conclusion, this creation of school-based law enforcement requires specialization training. This deduction can be made because school districts decide to create their police department

instead of contracting municipal agencies for law enforcement purposes.

### **Discussion of Research Question**

Does specialized training in school-based law enforcement promote positive engagement with the public? This research shows a relationship between experienced school-based law enforcement and nonexperienced police chiefs leading school-based law enforcement agencies. Based on the data analysis, there was a significant turnover in school-based law enforcement agencies, where police chiefs were appointed. Those who had limited training in leadership training or high academic degrees such as a bachelor's or master's degree left an agency after less than 2 years. Those appointed to the police chief position in 2015–2020 with a high level of training and academic degree had a longer tenure at a law enforcement agency than an individual with a low level of professional training. From the data, a trained police chief intends to have a longer tenure with an organization than a nonexperienced one. In addition, an experienced police chief wants to have leadership training along with a higher education level than a nonexperienced one. However, a skilled and trained police chief tends to not last long at an agency owing to many factors that were not part of this research. This researcher only focused on the leadership training and the specialized training needed to lead a school-based law enforcement agency.

This research has provided valuable data on the inconsistency of school districts in hiring police chiefs, which is apparent in the organizations' level of education. A total of 28 individuals were employed without a higher education level and school diploma, and the majority of participants did have at least some college education. Furthermore, years of law enforcement played a critical factor in hiring a police chief within a school-based law enforcement agency. An outlier was where individuals with less than 5 years of law enforcement experience were

employed as police chiefs. Still, most police chiefs were hired or appointed with at least 8 years of law enforcement, leadership training, and some college. In addition, there was a significant correlation between leadership training and law enforcement experience.

Individuals with longer law enforcement experience had more leadership training and a higher education level. Thus, a conclusion can be reached that experienced law enforcement officers understand the value of leadership training and education and invest time and effort in moving up the ranks or seeking position incentives. As a result, the longer individuals stay in law enforcement, the more valuable they become. From the data, the value of experienced law enforcement officers is that they bring shared leadership, training, and a high education level. Thus, the specialized training can promote positive citizen engagement in school-based law enforcement.

### **Summary**

Chapter 4 provides an in-depth analysis of police chief training, education level, tenure in law enforcement, and police chief position. This research has proved that my hypothesis is correct but requires additional studies in areas that have not been addressed as part of this study. This study was focused on leadership training and the specialized training a police chief needs to lead a school-based law enforcement agency. However, other factors during the analysis brought additional questions, such as factors resulting in police chiefs' in-school-based law enforcement leave and the work environment that a police chief has to work in. This research provides the foundation of future study on school-based law enforcement along with the complexities that exist.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **Overview**

Based on the research study, there is a need for a school-based police chief to have specialized training on the complexities of leading a school-based law enforcement agency. The data indicated that more individuals are interested in becoming police chiefs for a school-based law enforcement agency. Still, no standardized training exists for police chiefs to attend. Although the LEMIT is the clearinghouse for all police chiefs to participate in mandatorily as a new police chief, this course is generalized and not geared toward school-based law enforcement. School-based law enforcement requires in-depth training on juvenile law, family code, budgeting, operating and working with the school board, and learning the school board policies and procedures.

With the recent focus on procedural justice and criminal justice reform, school-based law enforcement agencies have been the target of eliminating them in the school system (Fisher et al., 2022). The perception and mentality of a law enforcement officer in a school setting bring a negative concoction of police brutality and violating individual civil rights. However, the evolution of the role of school-based law enforcement has turned toward prevention and relationship building, which bridges the gap between youth and law enforcement (Viano et al., 2021; Zhang, 2019). This research was focused on the leadership qualities and skills a police chief needs to lead a school-based law enforcement agency. School-based law enforcement agencies require a skilled and knowledgeable police chief with specialized training to lead, manage, and navigate multiple complexities.

### **Restatement of the Problem**

There are limited studies on the unique leadership qualities needed for a school-based

police chief to obtain and successfully lead a school-based law enforcement agency. Although there are many research data and studies on the impact of having law enforcement in a school setting, there are minimal studies on the leadership qualities needed to lead them (Wolfe et al., 2017; Zhang, 2019; Zirkel, 2019). School-based law enforcement agencies operate in extreme and volatile complexities that include changing juvenile and family laws and a law enforcement agency's unique policies and procedures. School-based law enforcement police officers are actual school district employees who must adhere to the school district policies and procedures, which often contradict the law enforcement authority (McKenna et al., 2016). A police chief managing and leading a school-based law enforcement agency needs to have the skills and wisdom to be diplomatic and learn to operate within an educational environment.

### **Proposed Solution to the Central Question**

This research study has indicated that a police chief needs specialized training that encompasses school-based law enforcement complexities such as juvenile law, family code, and leadership training to be successful. In addition, this research study also reveals additional hurdles in evaluating the broad challenges of navigating and managing a school-based law enforcement agency and the turnover rates among school-based police chiefs. Furthermore, the role of law enforcement within a school-based setting evolves and changes dramatically. School settings are prime opportunities for white-collar crimes such as money laundering, organized crimes, and human trafficking, thus requiring a skilled police chief to understand and implement strategies to combat them (Talbot & Suzuki, 2021). Additionally, a police chief needs to utilize all their available resources to ensure a holistic approach in reducing, deterring, and mitigating criminal activity within a school setting.



### ***Mandatory Training***

There should be mandatory juvenile laws, family codes, and leadership training for any police chief interested in working in a school-based law enforcement agency. According to Li and Brown (2019), Texas requires compulsory training of a new police chief who has been appointed, and these courses consist of leadership and managerial activities. However, these courses are generic and not specific to school-based law enforcement environments. TCOLE mandates thorough training for school-based law enforcement officers, such as active shooter, school-based law enforcement operation, and de-escalation. In contrast, these classes provided a fundamental foundation but were not geared toward executive leadership. Based on this research study, police chiefs need specialized training to lead a school-based law enforcement agency. School-based law enforcement agencies require an in-depth understanding of juvenile law, family codes, school district policies and procedures, budgeting, and working with school administrators and board members. This research study indicates high turnover in a school-based law enforcement agency, with most police chiefs leaving their position within 2 years. As a result, mandatory courses specific to school-based law enforcement can better prepare the new police chief to operate and have solid fundamentals in serving, leading, and managing a school-based law enforcement agency.

These mandatory classes should be geared toward police executive-level operations, management, and strategic planning. The juvenile law training should be adapted to the impact of the school-to-prison pipeline and the alternative arrest. The family code training should include the proper inclusion of outside criminal justice agencies, such as child protective agencies, threat assessment, and behavioral specialists. In addition, leadership training should

encompass school operation procedures such as budgeting, funding, the authority of each senior cabinet member, and interacting with school board members.

A school-based police chief working in a school setting is faced with various situations that require them to assess them quickly and accurately. The inability to identify and support children exposed to violence dramatically affects their growth and the long-term impact on them into adulthood (De la Fontaine et al., 2022). Thus, a school-based police chief needs to be aware of a police officer's engagement with youth to properly assess a situation that may have a negative impact. A municipal police chief focuses on statistical information to make a decision, while a school-based police chief may have limited statistical data to make a decision. These decisions must be well-thought-out and based on a solid foundation.

### ***Proper Assessment of Police Chief Candidate***

The proper assessment of a candidate to be a school-based police chief needs to be systematic and requires an evaluation of the candidate's ability to lead, manage, and be aligned with school goals and objectives. An individual interested in leading a school-based law enforcement agency needs to be familiar with operating in a school-based law enforcement setting and have prior police chief experience, an academic degree, and formalized leadership training. These requirements do not forecast the actual ability of the police chief to be successful, and they do provide a foundation to be built on and a reduction of time needed to "learn on the job." The proper assessment of the candidate will require a formalized interview panel with the school administrator, human resources, independent party, and an evaluation exam.

The evaluation includes the competencies other than leadership styles that require skilled and knowledge-based candidates along with a personality test (Cunningham, et al. 2011). The decision to hire a police chief is a daunting task and requires a systematic approach to identifying

the best-qualified and most suitable candidate. This is especially true for school-based police chiefs owing to the added volatile situation involving juveniles and concentrated areas of youth. The identified candidate with an institutional knowledges or foundation of knowledge may reduce the turnover rates of police chiefs within a school setting. In addition, the organization structure and processes would be more streamlined and benefit the external and internal stakeholders of the school district.

### **Resources Needed**

Based on the findings of this research study, within the realm of school-based law enforcement agencies, there is no uniform training unless required by the state. A school-based law enforcement agency does not operate its police academy; thus, the training is contracted, or applicants obtain their peace officer training or additional training with outside training providers. Additionally, with the growth of school-based law enforcement, there is little effort to standardize training for school police officers owing to the complexities of their role, responsibilities, and influences (Javdani, 2019). As a result, the resources needed to establish leadership training for school-based law enforcement police chiefs will come from state, municipal, and organizational funding. These three entities will have the means and influences to ensure that a school-based police chief has the skills and standardized training to lead a school based-law enforcement agency successfully.

TCOLE is the primary agency that compels law enforcement to attend mandatory training, especially new police chiefs, at LEMIT (Li & Brown, 2019). Like the compulsory training that a new police chief has to participate in at LEMIT, a separate course should be designed to lead a school-based law enforcement agency. The training should be taught by a prior police chief who has experience managing, coaching, and operating within a school-based

setting. In addition, the training should consist of a school administrator who works at the executive level to provide training on critical issues that a police chief needs to be aware of. Furthermore, the training should also encompass juveniles and family code laws and restorative justice practices.

The resources needed to identify, allocate time for, and organize the training would be complex. Identifying qualified individuals to teach the class can be difficult owing to the differences in school district sizes and authority. Furthermore, the problem can be compounded by the workforce within the school setting that can prevent school personnel from being away to attend or teach the course. Additionally, there are differences in how each county operates, and the prosecution of juveniles in various counties differs along with the available resources. These resources encompass the workforce, monetary help, facilities, and outside assistance.

The operation of school-based law enforcement is vastly different from municipal law enforcement agencies. Police in school dramatically affect students' discipline and operate on an academic calendar instead of the calendar year, focusing on the interaction between law enforcement and youth in a 10-month setting (Weisburst, 2019). As a result, there is downtime when summer vacation occurs, when there are limited opportunities for law enforcement and students to interact. This is a prime opportunity for school-based law enforcement officers, including the police chief, to obtain training. However, the delay in receiving emerging trend training or immediate training can affect the ability of a school-based police chief to lead and manage.

### **Funds Needed**

Throughout Texas, public school districts play a critical and vital role in their community. The school district can be considered the lifeblood of the community. It includes

employers and educational institutions and is involved in all facets of the community as leaders and contributors (Bigham et al., 2014). In addition, the school district provides the foundation whereby students achieve academic success and teachers' careers can progress. As a result, a skilled and knowledgeable school-based police chief is needed to ensure that protection and security are paramount to school district goals.

Based on this research study, funding can be allocated through private and public funding. Private funding can be through an individual's investment in their training and skills. Additionally, private financing can be through committed organizations and partnerships with school districts. Private organizations contributing to a school district's academic success and student achievement can contribute to safety and protection. The safety and security of students, teachers, and staff within a school setting can contribute to a school district's education quality. Furthermore, the private organization can offer incentives for training school personnel, such as school-based police chiefs.

Texas funds public school districts based on the allocation of students in classrooms and additional funding for the smaller school district (Bigham et al., 2014). The primary distribution of financing in a school district is budgeted on student academic achievement, with minimum allocation toward security and maintenance. However, school resources officers have gained more prominence in student success, which requires an influential school-based police chief with sustainable funding. Thus, the school district will need to allocate proper training for the school-based police chief to succeed. The fund's distribution is required to develop a school-based police chief in all phases of their career.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

For an individual seeking a school-based police chief position, the school districts and

state-mandated training have the role and responsibility to ensure the proper development of a school-based police chief's career. In addition, there needs to be a legislative mandate to provide mandatory training and minimum qualification to be a school-based police chief. Significant disparities in school funding resulted in legal changes in the school funding formula; the main argument is over the disparities in funding for small to large school districts (Weiss, 2020). As a result, the school funding model needs to be changed to allocate additional funding for school-based law enforcement agencies and to have the budget to have a professional agency. Furthermore, the grant can ensure that school-based law enforcement agencies have a qualified police chief to lead them.

The school district leader is a superintendent hired by the school board to lead and provide guidance. A superintendent plays a critical role in leading the school district but must meet the minimum requirement to be a superintendent required by the state. In Texas, a superintendent must have a solid academic background with a superintendent certification and experience to be considered or hired as one (Davis & Bowers, 2019). Additionally, a school-based police chief needs to have the training and leadership to adapt their law enforcement experiences to be successful. This requirement can be similar for a school-based police chief, with continuity in leadership and additional classes for the school-based police chief to speak the same language as their academic peers.

### **Timeline**

The Texas legislative meets for allocated funding for state organizations and school district funding every 2 years. However, school funding is a critical topic, wherein student achievement is a top priority, along with the effectiveness of teachers in the classroom. Furthermore, the disparity of funding for small to large school districts can result in political

influences that may affect the leadership and direction of school districts (Kreisman & Steinberg, 2019; Weiss, 2020). Consequently, state funding has a critical influence on school district leadership, especially in funding unique projects and other directions. Therefore, school districts rely on outside funding to achieve their goals and grants to fill in the gaps.

Like school district funding, TCOLE has a 2-year and 4-year cycle of mandatory training for peace officers in the state. This timeline coincides with Texas legislative budget meetings for state organizations and new laws created and passed. Therefore, to implement changes for the school-based police chief position, the movement to have mandatory training and requirements needs to be immediate. The provision can be drafted and reviewed by prior and current school-based police chiefs to be reviewed by Texas legislators and approved as law. Once authorized by law, there can be mandatory training for school-based police chiefs similar to a school superintendent requirement.

The greatest obstacle to gaining traction for a stable timeline is Texas's economy. Texas's economy is tied to the oil and gas business, the strength of which increases funding and flexibility for school funding (Marchand & Weber, 2020). Thus, school funding relies on the flexibility of state funding to allow additional funding for critical areas. However, this can also influence the timeline to achieve the priority of the Texas legislature to move its political agenda and requirement. The impact of political leaders' political agenda can affect school funding based on the strength of their election.

### **Research Conclusion Implications**

The implication of this solution can have a dramatic effect in the realm of school-based law enforcement and the school district community. Three positive implications can directly engage students, staff, and community members toward a positive relationship with school-based

law enforcement agencies. The first implication is that a school district community has a qualified and skilled police chief leading the school-based law enforcement agency. Based on the conclusions of this study, an influential police chief can guide and lead school police officers toward positive engagement with the community, resulting in transparency, positive citizen relationships, and trust. The measurement of faith can be analyzed through accountability toward police misconduct, reduction of the use of force, and active engagement with community leaders.

The second implication is standardized requirements and training for a school police chief. The school district's foundation has standardized expectations for student achievements that can be met through academic achievement and goals. A school-based police chief works in an educational environment that requires them to understand literary terms and the complexities of the school environment. By having standardized requirements and training, a school police chief can operate, streamline, and understand the obstacles they face, such as school policies and procedures, school budgets, juveniles' and family laws. Furthermore, school districts operate with student achievement in mind; therefore, everything is tied to preparing students for academic achievement.

The third and final implication is the effect of the school-to-prison pipeline and the reduction of the number of students involved in the juvenile criminal justice system. By having a qualified and well-trained school-based police chief, police chief will understand alternative arrest methods and restorative justice practices. Alternatives to arrest procedures allow police officers to understand and work with school administrators on the holistic approach to resolving misbehaviors instead of criminalizing them. Furthermore, an option to arrest enables law enforcement to intervene in severe criminal matters while referring minor infractions for a school administrator to handle. Additionally, restorative justice practices allow law enforcement to



embrace positive engagement with students instead of criminalizing school rules' infractions.

### **Evaluation Plan**

Although this research study is focused on school-based police chiefs needing specialized training, there exists an additional need for further research on the school-based law enforcement agencies throughout the State of Texas. A future study on the short- and long-term effects of a police chief receiving specialized training to lead a school-based law enforcement agency is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the technical training. Based on this research study, there is high turnover for school-based police chiefs with less than 2 years of tenure. This can negatively affect the leadership, morale, and culture of the law enforcement agency in terms of being an effective school-based law enforcement agency. Furthermore, with the high turnover in school-based law enforcement agencies, the ability to attract highly qualified applicants to change the school-based law enforcement culture is limited.

The evaluation of this solution model will require a short- and long-term effects approach. In addition, in the review I will assess different school districts within Texas along with the similar sizes of student populations and school-based law enforcement size. The evaluation will consist of three significant school districts in a substantial city and three small school districts in Texas. This will provide a base model for evaluation purposes to gauge the level of performance of a school-based police chief. Evidence-based practices would be the cornerstone of the evaluation plan that will adequately assess the effectiveness of a school-based police chief.

A survey would be implemented to gauge the school district community on the effectiveness and expectations of a school-based police chief. The survey would be mixed questions to gauge the qualitative and quantitative approach to gathering data on the purpose of

the police chief. The survey is sent before the appointment of a school-based police chief to gauge the school district's environment properly. Another survey would be sent 1 year after the police chief's appointment, and another survey would be sent after the police chief leaves. This will provide an in-depth analysis of the school district police chief's effectiveness regarding the school district's needs.

Surveys are just one facet of evaluating the effectiveness of a police chief; a metric system similar to a municipal agency will need to be implemented. The metric system would be based on the number of students who have been arrested in a school calendar year, criminal infractions at each campus, and the outcome of the criminal offenses. This is necessary to properly gauge the numbers of illegal activities on each campus and the law enforcement approach to handling them. School-based law enforcement relies on positive engagement with the school district community, requiring them to interact with members of the community. As a result, the metric system will allow community members and school-based police chiefs to evaluate the need for an alternative to arrest methods or additional restorative justice practices.

### **Summary**

School-based law enforcement is a specialized law enforcement agency that requires a police chief who needs leadership and technical training. The professionalism of school-based law enforcement is critically dependent on influential police leaders who understand the dynamics of a school setting. Furthermore, school-based police chiefs need to realize that their performance is not focused on arrests but on the relationship they build with the community and the reduction of criminal activities on campus. The school district is an integral part of the community and provides the foundation of everything in it. A school-based police chief provides invaluable responses, and the effect on youth interaction with law enforcement can be assessed

toward adulthood.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A- IRB Approval Application**

**Appendix B- Archival Permission Letter**

**Appendix C- Consent Letter**

**Appendix D- Recruitment Letter**

**Appendix E- Survey**

**Appendix F- Texas Commission Law Enforcement Request Letter**

**Appendix G-Texas Commission Law Enforcement Data- ISD Police Chief**

**Appendix H-Texas Commission Law Enforcement Data- Copy of ISD Established Between  
January 2015- December 2020**

**Appendix I- Microsoft Excel Data Analysis**

**Appendix J- Microsoft Excel Data**

