Nebraska Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities

Final Report

Agency or Organization: <u>Lancaster County</u>

Project Name: <u>School Resource Officers Training</u>

Sub Award Number: <u>46709 Y3</u>

<div align="center">Sara Hoyle</div>

08/31/2020

Report Submitted by: _____   _____

                                Signature   Date
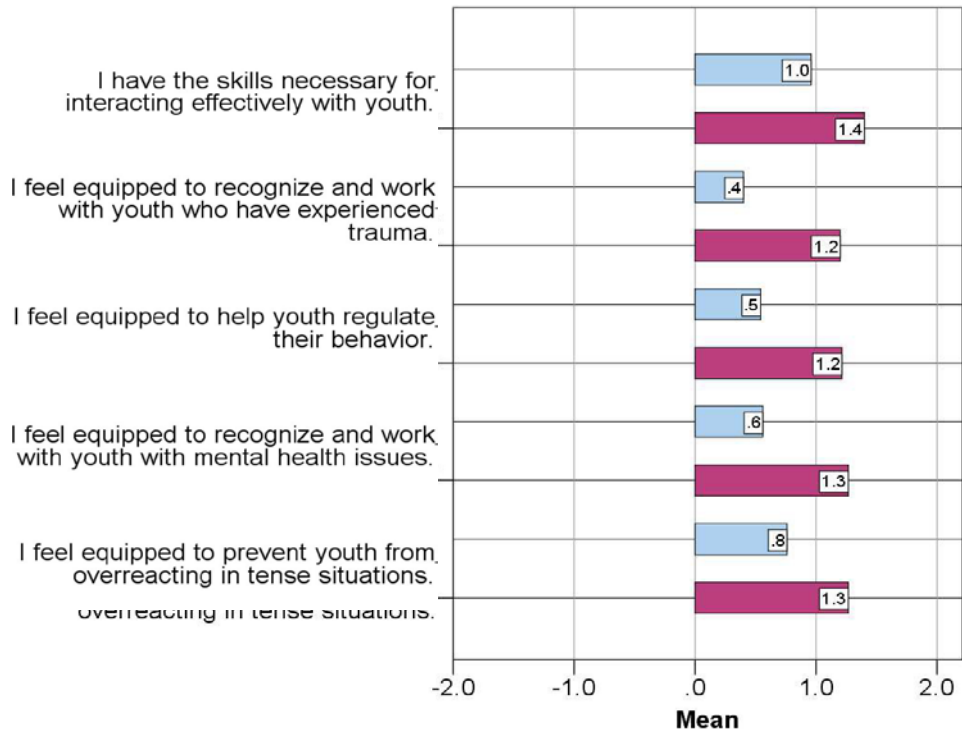
1.   Project Accomplishments and Results

In June 2019, Strategies for Youth trained 35 Lincoln, Nebraska Police Department, Sheriff Department and Lincoln Public School administrators in Policing the Teen Brain in School. Twenty-five of these individuals attended the two-day training targeted for SRO's. Ten school administrators attended the 3rd day of the training focused on schools. All sessions were aimed at improving police/youth interactions, advancing the cause of training public safety officers in the science of child and youth development, increasing their awareness of the most prevalent mental health issues in this age group, and supporting communities partnering to promote strong police/youth relationships.

Pre and post training surveys were completed by attendees. These surveys provided evidence of distinctly positive change following the training. Notably, after the training, most participants considered themselves better equipped to:
- recognize and work with youth with mental health issues;
- recognize and work with youth who have experienced trauma;
- help young people regulate their behavior; and
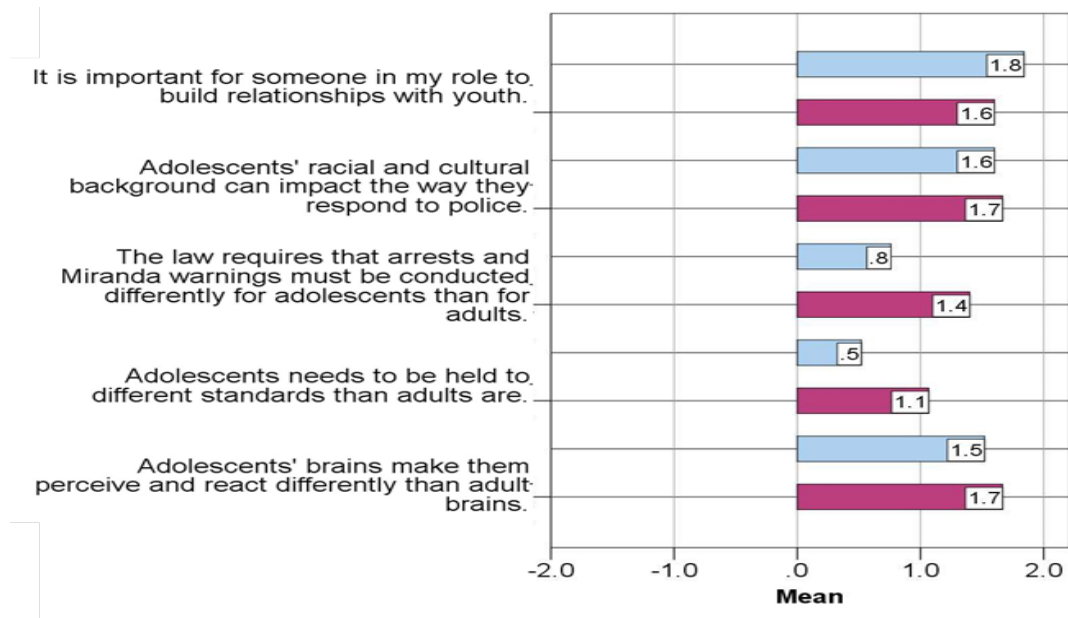- de-escalate tense situations.

In addition, after the training the survey demonstrated a positive change in participant awareness of the need to treat adolescents differently from adults with respect to arrests, Miranda warnings, and certain criminal justice standards.

Below are the survey results. The chart shows scores at Pre (blue) and at Post (red). Typically, an average Pre-Post difference of half a point is large enough to be meaningful; here we see that such a difference occurred for four of the five topics and nearly did so for the other.

Question	Pre	Post
I have the skills necessary for interacting effectively with youth.	1.0	1.4
I feel equipped to recognize and work with youth who have experienced trauma.	.4	1.2
I feel equipped to help youth regulate their behavior.	.5	1.2
I feel equipped to recognize and work with youth with mental health issues.	.6	1.3
I feel equipped to prevent youth from overreacting in tense situations.	.8	1.3

Mean

To express the results in more concrete terms, the first question – the one with the smallest change – drew strong agreement from 12% of participants on the pre-survey and 40% on the post-survey.

The next chart presents findings in a similar format for the five questions asked on the Pre and Post surveys about opinions on adolescents and criminal justice system. Again, the chart shows scores at Pre (blue) and at Post (red).

Mean

It is important for someone in my role to build relationships with youth. — 1.8 / 1.6

Adolescents' racial and cultural background can impact the way they respond to police. — 1.6 / 1.7

The law requires that arrests and Miranda warnings must be conducted differently for adolescents than for adults. — .8 / 1.4

Adolescents needs to be held to different standards than adults are. — .5 / 1.1

Adolescents' brains make them perceive and react differently than adult brains. — 1.5 / 1.7

The SRO's attended many school events as reported in earlier reports. However, SRO's found it even more meaningful to engage with students through "Take Pause". Take Pause is a program that meets weekly at the Malone Center. The program has students who have been identified as being high risk interact with police officers in a club setting. One week is spent at the Malone Center discussing topics in the news from how life expectancy is lessoned if you live in certain zip codes, to police brutality, to if SRO's should be in schools. The next week, the officers and the students do something fun together in the community. These events have included a bake off, laser tag, basketball, etc.

2. Impact of Project Activities on Target Population
Data was sent quarterly to the project manager for this grant. Data tracked youth's involvement in the juvenile justice system, school discipline, and if they had an IEP. LPS has 42,297 students. From 2015-2018, LPD responded to an average of 1,356 calls for service annually at LPS middle and high schools. In 2019-20, LPD responded to 957 calls at LPS middle and high schools. There were differences between calls at middle and high schools. From 2015-2018, LPD responded to an average of 330 calls at LPS middle schools. In 2019-20, LPD responded to 306 calls. From 2015-2018, LPD responded to an average of 1,026 calls at LPS high schools. In 2019-20, LPD responded to 651 calls at LPS high schools. Given that schools were out due to COVID-19 in March and did not return, we would expect the number of calls for service at LPS schools to decease for 2019-20.

If calls for service continued their same trend as August through mid-March, LPD would have responded to *more* calls for service at LPS middle schools in 2019-20 and *fewer* calls for service at LPS high schools compared to the four-year averages.

It is important to remember, not all calls for service end in a citation/juvenile referral. From 2015-2018, LPD issued approximately 89 citations/juvenile referrals from calls for service at LPS middle schools and 379 citations/juvenile referrals from calls for service at LPS high schools. In 2019, LPD issued 53 citations/juvenile referrals from calls for service at LPS middle schools and 214 citations/juvenile referrals from calls for service at LPS high schools.

Based on these figures, LPD would have issued fewer citations/referrals at both middle and high schools in 2019-20 compared to the four-year average.

More specifically from 2015-2018, LPD officers issued at least one citation/referral in approximately 25% of the calls for service at LPS middle schools and 33% of the calls for service at LPS high schools. In 2019-20, LPD officers issued at least one citation/referral in approximately 21% of the calls for service at LPS middle schools and 30% of the calls for service at LPS high schools. The 5 types of calls for service that compose the majority of incidents that resulted in a citation/juvenile referral: assaults, narcotics, disturbing the peace (i.e., two students fighting in the hallway), larceny, and vandalism.

When examining who initiated a call for service that resulted in a citation/juvenile referral, we found that in both middle schools and high schools, the administrator was the person initiating the call for service (46% of the time for both middle and high schools), followed by teachers/staff (25%) and students (23%). This is in slight contrast to the prior four-year average, which shows that teachers/staff initiated the greatest percentage of call for service resulting in a citation/juvenile referral. SROs initiated approximately 1% of calls for service occurring at both LPS middle and high schools.

The Strategies for Youth training suggested a call for service should not be initiated prior to LPS administration being notified. This is also outlined in the subsequent MOU. In 2019-20, we found that administrators were notified 100% of the time in both middle and high schools (this data was not tracked prior to 19-20).

It is also important to note, very few youth are lodged in the youth detention center as the result of a school based referral. On average, LPD annually issues approximately 468 citations/juvenile referrals for incidents occurring at an LPS middle or high school. Of these, only approximately 3-4 students are lodged in the youth detention center.

During this grant cycle, Lancaster County Human Services entered into an agreement with the University to analyze juvenile justice system point data. The University found when there is an SRO referral, the incident is likely to be sent to Human Services for a school-based diversion from the formal system. This diversion process involves a restorative approach with mediations often occurring between the parties impacted. If youth successfully complete this program, their record is sealed and the offense is coded as Restore in the police data system.

$X^2(1) = 330.41, p = 0.00*$
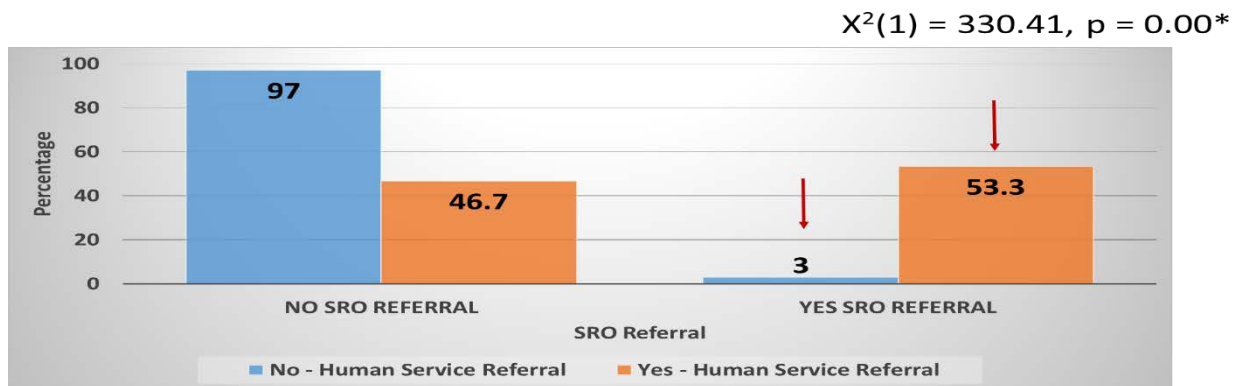
When considering the disproportionality of the youth entering the juvenile justice system, the disparity index is used in law enforcement. This index provides a measure of the over- or

underrepresentation in a particular category, such as being a victim or suspect. A disparity ratio of 1.0 indicates no disparity. A ratio of above 1 indicates overrepresentation in a particular category. A ratio below 1 indicates underrepresentation in a particular category.

It is important to note that the disparity index can be subject to large changes due to small population sizes. For example, if a population is very small in LPS and a handful of students received a referral for a single incident, then the disparity index for this group may change dramatically simply because of the small sample size. Hence, it is best to look at the disparity index over time using averages of multiple years.

Among suspects/persons responsible in LPS middle and high schools in 2019-20, Native American and African-American students are overrepresented (1.4 and 4.3, respectively), while Asian students are underrepresented (.5). Students who are English-Language Learners are underrepresented as suspects/persons responsible (.8), while students who receive free or reduced lunch are overrepresented (1.5).

In relation to race, the following were also found:

IEP by Race
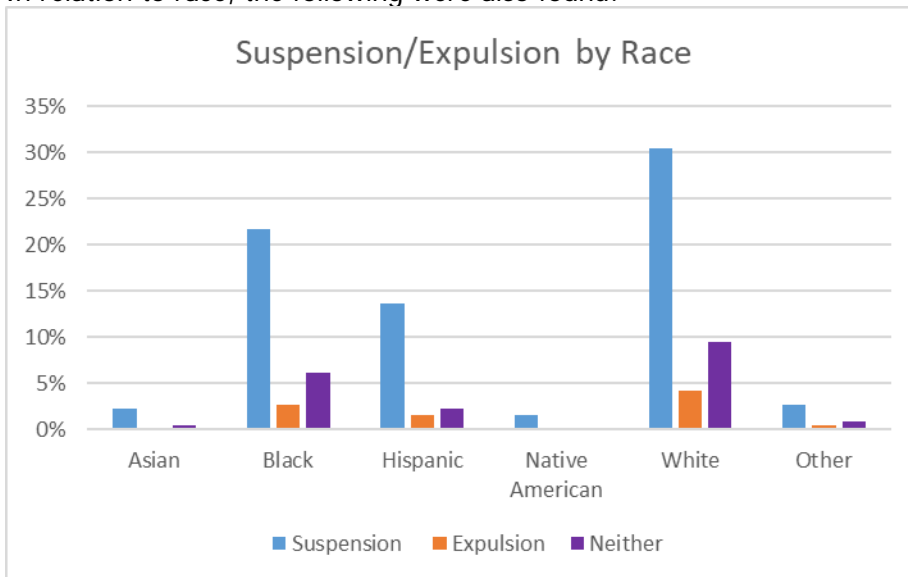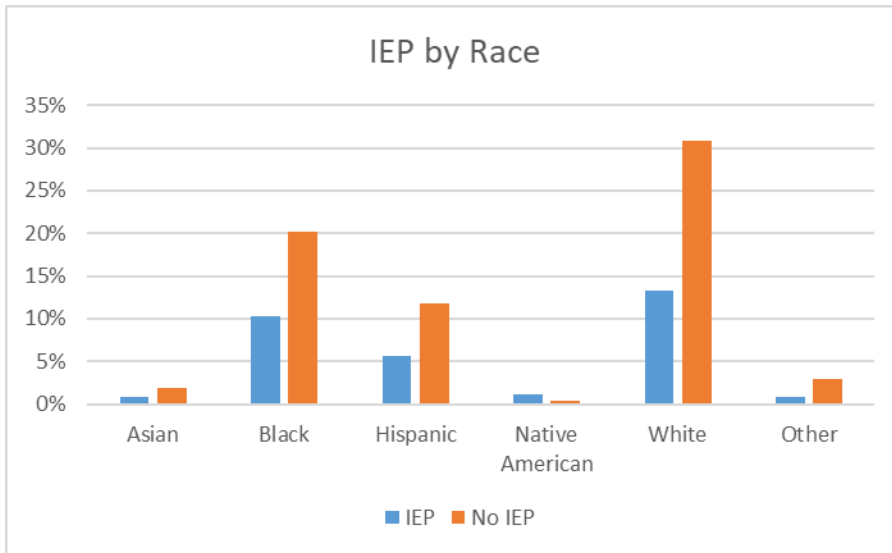
Data was collected specific to outcome measures identified in this grant for a year prior to the training (18-19) and a year after the training (19-20). However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 19-20 data set doesn't have the last quarter of school. Below is what we found when looking at students with IEP's entering the juvenile justice system as part of the Classroom to Courtroom Pathway.

	18-19	19-20 (incomplete data set)
Percent of youth with IEP's who received a law enforcement referral	28%	29%
Percent of youth with IEP's who were suspended or expelled as a result of the law enforcement referral	31%	38%

While the numbers immediately above don't reflect success, these numbers are representative of a much smaller data set. A majority of referrals for SRO's and suspensions and expulsions occur in the last quarter of school (the data set missing). With a smaller base number, any analysis ran will be skewed to show increased disparity due to the smaller sample size.

3. Barriers or Problems Encountered and Actions to Overcome
During the 2nd year of the grant, the Coronavirus Pandemic hit. This prevented a full second year of data collection. As a result, LPD data was used dating back to 2015 to generate a better overview of the system.

The Pandemic also prevented the 2020 summer training of the officers and school administration trained as train the trainers in the Strategies for Youth training. This training is a hands-on training due to many roleplays and interactions making it delivered through zoom impractical. The Human Services Director did deliver a presentation on adolescent brain development for the SRO's during this time.

4.   Project Sustainability
     Funding for this training proceeded the establishment of the Safe and Successful Kids
     Interlocal Board. This Board is a partnership between the Lincoln Police Department, Lincoln
     Public Schools, and the Community Learning Centers. This collaborative provides a venue for
     data sharing and public accountability. Most importantly, this provided for a data structure to
     collect and analyze data. The first presentation of data is planned for October 2020.

     After this training, the Lincoln Police Department and Lincoln Public Schools entered into an
     MOU as recommended by Strategies for Youth. This MOU clearly delineates the roles and
     responsibilities of the school versus the police department. It clearly defines student
     misbehavior in school as behavior addressed by the school, unless there is a clear criminal
     code violation. This MOU also outlined the data to be collected and who submission of said
     data. The Lincoln Police Department is also working with the University to extrapolate a
     larger SRO data analysis as it relates to the classroom to courtroom pathway.

     There have been meetings with the City Council and Lincoln and Lancaster County Joint
     Budget Committee concerning the Strategies for Youth Training and continuing it. Since this
     grant was written, LB 390 passed in the Nebraska State Legislature. This requires 20 hours
     of training for all SROS as well as at least one staff in every school building with an SRO also
     receiving this training. It also requires data be collected similar to the data collected for this
     grant application. The Nebraska Unicameral has ensured this training and project goals will
     continue.

5.   Please share one or two personal success stories from sub award recipients.
     The below is a quote from one of the officers who attended the training:
     "The most helpful takeaway from the training was learning to step back and look to see
     if there is a mental illness or other reasons why students are behaving as they are"