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17 Programs and Practices to Promote a Safe Campus: Alternatives to School Policing and Punitive Practices

Tara Bartlett[1,2] · **Lara E. Law**[3,4] · **Daniel Schugurensky**[2,5,6] · **Marisol Juarez Díaz**[4] · **Wendy Wolfersteig**[3,4]

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Abstract

Increases in student experiences with social and mental health, acts of violence, and the school-to-prison nexus have prompted many schools to evaluate alternatives to safety that are equitable, inclusive, and student and family-centered. Punitive approaches to school safety have been shown to disproportionately affect underserved schools and students, especially racially- and ethnically-minoritized students, students with disabilities, LGBTQ + students, and students of low socioeconomic status. Building on an equity-based framework, we reviewed the literature on school safety alternatives that promote a safe, inclusive campus and foster students' overall wellbeing. In our scoping review, we identified 17 alternatives aligned with the equity-based framework. We then used an integrative review to organize these alternatives into four approaches: *Equity and Inclusion*, *Social-psychological*, *Community-based*, *and Self-governance*. Research findings of these approaches support the adoption of programs and practices across these four areas to enhance students' overall well-being and provide an equitable and safe environment for all within the school community.

Keywords School safety · School resource officers · School to prison pipeline · Violence prevention · Equity and inclusion

Introduction

The 2020 global coronavirus pandemic placed incredible demands on schools to transition to virtual instruction with almost no precedent, adversely affecting students' social and mental well-being. Since then, schools in the United States (U.S.) have continued to buckle under the challenges of teacher and staff shortages, limited resources for student and family support, and fear wrought by school and community acts of violence. At this same time, the U.S. continues to face systemic issues of racism, policing, and justice, most recently spurred by

Extended author information available on the last page of the article

the public murder of George Floyd by police and subsequent protests. The public outcry over Floyd's death prompted over 30 U.S. states to pass more than 140 new police oversight and reform laws, and several school districts (Seattle, Portland, Oakland, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis) voted to remove police from their schools (Eder et al., 2021). However, ongoing and high-profile school shootings, such as that in Uvalde, Texas, and the Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee, have blunted this turn from school policing, with several districts such as Denver, CO, and Montgomery County, MD, recently reversing course and reinstating officers (Belsha, 2023; Riser-Kositsky et al., 2022).

Schools in the U.S. have long grappled with the presence of law enforcement on campuses in relation to punitive discipline practices, which have perpetuated the school-to-prison nexus (Green, 2022). The 2015 fatal shooting of Michael Brown by a police officer in Ferguson, MO, prompted President Obama's task force on policing to generate three important recommendations relevant to schools: (1) review school policies and practices and advocate for early intervention strategies to minimize the involvement of youth in the criminal justice system; (2) collect data to monitor the use of school disciplinary practices, including demographic data on students and the nature of the offenses; and (3) review the use of School Resource Officers (SROs) to ensure that their presence was not increasing disparate discipline outcomes but providing practical alternatives to incarceration through constructive interventions (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015). These recommendations align with assertations made by previous studies: when schools commit to fair and consistent enforcement of rules, avoid over-labeling students regarding risk and referrals to the juvenile court to secure services, and strengthen relationships within the school community, schools are more likely to reduce exposure to violence and victimization and help students feel safer while boosting engagement and academic achievement (Fisher et al., 2018; Johnson, 2009). The recommendations, however, have not been widely adopted and, when adopted, have been slow to implement.

In this context, we built on our recent public-facing report (Bartlett et al., 2021) to complete both a scoping and an integrative review of prior research findings on school safety alternatives that do not rely on punitive approaches like SROs, surveillance, and zero-tolerance policies. We reviewed specific nonpunitive programs and interventions that address our working definition of school safety: the feeling students experience in a place that protects from bodily infringement and harm and incidences of harassment, bullying, violence, and substance use and provides physical, emotional, and social safety and wellbeing (American Institutes for Research, 2021; Díaz-Vicario & Gairín Sallán, 2017). Additionally, we drew upon a 10-point framework for equity in school safety and discipline to highlight 17 school safety alternatives that we organized into four approaches: *Equity and Inclusion*, *Social-psychological*, *Community-based*, *and Self-governance*. These alternatives emphasize preventive, proactive strategies and pedagogical principles that have been shown to improve school climate and reduce disciplinary incidents. This review aims to provide school leaders, researchers, and community members with research-based findings on equity-driven, nonpunitive approaches to school safety.

Literature Review

Punitive approaches to school safety, like SROs, surveillance strategies, and zero-tolerance policies, seek to monitor students and potential threats by deterring unwanted behavior and violence in schools and reinforcing punishment and criminal legal system entanglement. While the literature reveals some disagreement, most empirical research shows these approaches do not improve school safety nor positively impact school climate (especially for underserved schools and students) and instead may have harmful effects on racially- and ethnically-minoritized students, students with disabilities, LGBTQ + students, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Cuellar, 2018; Davison et al., 2021; Losen & Martinez, 2020; Palmer et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2018; Skiba et al., 2011). These student groups are more likely to experience exclusionary discipline for committing minor offenses, with increased measures like removals, arrests, suspensions, and expulsions that have long-term consequences and reinforce the school-to-prison nexus and the systemic disenfranchisement of education opportunities that lead to disparate social, health, and economic outcomes.

Punitive Approaches to School Safety

Despite SROs fulfilling various roles within a school community, prior research indicates that SROs do not reduce incidences of school violence (Devlin & Fisher, 2021; Javdani, 2019), have been associated with higher rates of exclusionary discipline and exacerbate the school-to-prison nexus (Fisher & Hennessy, 2016; Ryan et al., 2018; Weisburst, 2019), and cause students to feel less connected, safe, and supported in their schools (Pentek & Eisenberg, 2018; Shedd, 2016; Theriot, 2016; Theriot & Orme, 2016). Moreover, there is growing evidence that the presence of SROs does not prevent mass shootings, bullying, disorder, and disrespect (Na & Gottfredson, 2013; Peterson et al., 2021).

Similarly, the literature on surveillance measures reveals no conclusive evidence of impact on school safety or students' perceptions of safety in their school environment (Bachman et al., 2011; Bracy, 2011; Gastic, 2011; Lindstrom Johnson et al., 2018; Perumean-Chaney & Sutton, 2013; Reingle Gonzalez et al., 2016; Schwartz et al., 2016; Tanner-Smith et al., 2018; Tillyer et al., 2011). Other studies found that surveillance measures are associated with higher discipline rates and lead to lower levels of academic achievement, extracurricular participation, civic engagement, and parental involvement (Kupchik, 2016; Mowen, 2015; Mowen & Freng, 2019; Mowen & Manierre, 2017).

Likewise, studies on zero tolerance policies show little to no improvement in school climate or safety but that they instead perpetuate the overrepresentation of minoritized racial groups in school punishments (Dunning-Lozano, 2018; Heitzeg, 2014; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Losen & Martinez, 2020). Further, zero tolerance policies widen the academic opportunity gap by "pushing out" students viewed as problematic in hopes of increasing a school's overall tests scores and public ratings, thereby transferring responsibilities (and costs) to other schools, the justice system,

and social services (Gregory et al., 2010; Na & Gottfredson, 2013; Novak, 2019; Simmons, 2009).

An Equity-Based Framework Approach to School Safety

The research on punitive approaches and school safety aligns with recent efforts to redress historical inequities and trauma in school discipline practices (National Education Association, 2022). Therefore, we drew on the principles of the Framework for Increasing Equity in School Discipline (Gregory et al., 2017) that are grounded in "culturally conscious implementation" (p. 254) and aimed at reducing discipline discrimination and disparities. This framework calls for a two-pronged approach to school discipline and safety through prevention and intervention principles. Prevention principles include supportive relationships (P1), bias-aware classrooms and respectful school environments (P2), academic rigor (P3), culturally relevant and responsive teaching (P4), and opportunities for learning and correcting behavior (P5). The intervention principles are data-based inquiry for equity (I1), problem-solving approaches to discipline (I2), the inclusion of student and family voices on conflicts' causes and solutions (I3), reintegration of students after conflict or absence (I4), and multitiered systems of support (I5). While this framework seeks to address inequities in discipline practices, we have repositioned this framework's principles to address inequity in school safety broadly since prior research integrates discipline into the broader conceptual framing of school safety (Astor et al., 2010). We build upon these principles to explore alternatives to exclusionary school discipline practices and provide tangible examples of programs and practices aligned with equitable approaches to school safety. Integrating these principles in our review is especially pertinent because while schools may be focused on reducing overall discipline rates, many do not appear to be adopting preventative approaches aimed at reducing intersectional disparities based on race, gender, ability, or socioeconomic status (Cruz et al., 2021).

Method

Our research team performed a two-phase review process that included a scoping and an integrative literature review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Whittemore & Knafl, 2005) to explore and analyze alternatives to punitive measures to promote school safety. We used JSTOR, EBSCO, ERIC, Social Services Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, PsycInfo, and Google Scholar to locate peer-reviewed journal articles, books, governmental and organizational reports, and news articles. The inclusion criteria were seminal reports or articles on the background of each alternative and empirical studies published in English during the last two decades that have shown promising evidence and positive effects on school climate and student academic achievement and wellbeing. We align our definitions of "promising evidence" and "positive effects" with the Institute of Education Science's What Works Clearinghouse (2022) in that the use of the terms "promising evidence" and "positive effects" means we found no overriding negative effects from a well-designed and

well-executed experimental or quasi-experimental study conducted in a single site or across multiple sites..

We began the scoping review of school safety alternatives with preliminary search terms like "school safety," "school safety alternative," "school safety programs," "school discipline," and "school discipline alternative." Our team analyzed titles and abstracts that fit the criteria to begin compiling a list of school safety alternatives. As patterns of alternatives emerged, we conducted an additional search of the specific terms using distinct words and phrases combined with Boolean search techniques (i.e., "restorative justice AND school*," "conflict resolution AND school discipline," "community schools AND safety," "teen* court"). This was followed up with an ancestral search of the emergent literature on the different alternatives to further broaden the scope of studies and findings. The scoping review resulted in 152 publications from which our team identified 17 nonpunitive school safety alternatives that showed promising results regarding epistemological roots, design and guiding philosophies, and outcomes.

The integrative review focused on the research outcomes of each of the 17 alternatives and their impacts on school safety and student wellbeing. After analyzing the epistemology, design and guiding philosophies, and outcomes of each alternative, we then aligned each alternative with the principles in the Framework for Increasing Equity in School Discipline (Gregory et al., 2017). Lastly, we grouped the alternatives based on their similar themes and findings into four approaches: *Equity and Inclusion*, *Social-psychological*, *Community-based*, *and Self-governance.* We have organized the alternatives by approach, alignment with equity principles, and outcomes typically associated with each approach in Table 1.

Findings

Equity and Inclusion

Recently, school districts across the U.S. have taken measures to increase equity across various fronts, including equity-based and inclusive approaches to school safety. The equity and inclusion approach aims to address the societal inequalities that exist in schools due to historical and current policies and practices related to factors like race, gender, and class. The alternatives in this section have been shown to increase student feelings of safety, school connectedness, academic achievement, and self-esteem while improving classroom management and decreasing instances of bullying.

Safe Spaces and Inclusive, Enumerated Policies

Many students report being subjected to sexist and racist remarks and "frequently" or "often" experience homophobic comments in school (Diaz & Kosciw, 2009; Kosciw et al., 2020; Sadowski, 2017). Likewise, research has revealed parallel consequences of homophobic incidents, including decreased academic outcomes, school belonging, and increased truancy (Moyano & Sánchez-Fuentes, 2020).

Table 1 School safety: approaches and alternatives

Approaches	Alternatives	Equity principles	Outcomes
Equity and inclusion	Safe spaces and inclusive, enumerated policies	P1, P2, I6, I1, I5	Increased feelings of safety, school connectedness, academic achievement, and self-esteem for students Improved classroom management Decreases in bullying incidences
	Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP)	P1, P2, P3, P4	
	Anti-bias training	P1, P2, P4, I1, I2, I4	
	Anti-bullying	P1, P2, P5, I1, I4, I5	
Social Psychological	Positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS)	P1, P3, P5, I1, I4, I5	Improved relationships among all school community stakeholders (staff, students, and families) Increased coping abilities and academic achievement for students Reduced discipline incidences and infractions
	Social emotional learning (SEL)	P1, P2, P5, I1, I2, I3, I4, I5	
	Trauma-informed programs	P5, I1, I5	
	Mindfulness	P2, P5, I2, I4	
	Targeted mental health services	P1, I1, I2, I3, I5	
Community-based	Community schools	P1, P3, P5, I2, I3, I5	Increased student and family engagement, academic achievement for students Stronger, more resilient school communities Reduced dropout rates, discipline incidences and infractions, and overall suspensions
	Parent and family engagement	P1, P3, I2, I3	
	Positive youth development (PYD) programs	P1, P3, P5, I2	
Self-governance	Democratic schools	P1, P2, P5, I2, I3	Increased academic achievement and self-esteem for students Decreased anti-social behaviors, aggression, and bullying Reduced discipline incidences and infractions and overall suspensions Improved school climate and connectedness
	Conflict resolution and peace education (CRPE)	P1, P2, P4, P5, I3, I4	
	Restorative practices	P1, P5, I2, I3, I4, I5	
	Peer mediation	P1, P2, P5, I2, I3, I4	
	School-based teen courts (SBTC)	P5, I2, I3, I4	

Moreover, self-harming behavior and suicidality are exceptionally high for sexual and gender minoritized students: one in six high school students considered suicide in the past year, but lesbian, gay, and bisexual students are almost five times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual counterparts (The Trevor Project, 2021). These trends have prompted schools to implement safe spaces or safe zones (often signaled with stickers or posters), student-centered clubs such as Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), and anti-bullying programs and policies designed to protect students based on specific traits and characteristics like race, disability, ancestry, gender identity, and sexuality (Sadowski, 2017), however, a limited number of schools enumerate sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression as protected categories in bullying and harassment policies.

There is evidence that GSAs contribute to feelings of school safety, peer acceptance, and connectedness for LGBTQ + students (Truong et al., 2021). A recent meta-analysis of 15 primary studies with 62,923 participants found that the presence of a GSA on a school campus significantly lowered self-reported homophobic victimization, fear for one's safety, and the hearing of homophobic remarks (Marx & Kettrey, 2016). Likewise, an enumeration of specific populations in school policies contributes to lower rates of student victimization and increases the likelihood of teacher intervention in targeted students (Bishop et al., 2021; Sadowski, 2017).

However, despite the gains made by safe spaces and zones, GSAs, and inclusive school policies, students are calling for more prevention interventions and codified policies. In a school-based needs assessment, 180 racially and ethnically diverse LGBTQ + students articulated a need for broadly safe schools (and communities) that go beyond the "pockets of safety" created by GSAs and safe zones by nurturing supportive peers and adults who consistently "have their back," and developing supportive, culturally sound resources for their families (Craig et al., 2018). Although many of the programs and practices to support LGBTQ + and other underserved student populations are currently in place as targeted interventions, truly affirmative policies, programs, and activities should be preventive and universal in scope, further developing a sense of inclusivity and affirmation of all students and celebrating their differences.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)

Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), which in our review includes culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002), culturally competent teaching (National Education Association, 2008), and culturally responsive school leadership (Khalifa, 2020), focuses on the congruence between the culture of students, on the one hand, and the curriculum, relationships, and school climate, on the other. CRP tenets include affirmation of one's identity, expectations of equity and excellence for all, cognitively appropriate content, whole child development, an emphasis on building relationships, and access to emotional supports (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Morrison et al., 2008). CRP emphasizes the need for schools to recognize and address the "hidden curriculum" and stigmatizing language and experiences many students are subjected to in schooling (Apple, 1971; Giroux & Penna, 1979; Kayama et al., 2015; Skiba et al., 2006; Timoll, 2017), and asserts that when

schools center and embrace students' cultural experiences and ways of knowing and thinking (funds of knowledge), academic achievement heightens and disengagement and harmful behaviors lessen (Gay, 2002; Gonzalez et al., 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995b).

Most research on the effects of CRP consists of small case studies and meta-reviews of those studies (Hill, 2020), while others emphasize the need for preservice teachers to be trained on CRP (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Sleeter, 2001). One study of 274 teachers found that when schools provided ongoing teacher and staff training in CRP, educators approached students and classroom practices through more equitable lenses and were better equipped with diverse learning and behavior management strategies (Larson et al., 2018). A synthesis of over 40 studies on teachers and schools using CRP showed increased students' overall academic achievement (both skills and knowledge), critical thinking and reflection capabilities, and cultural competencies (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Other studies found that when school programs, curriculum materials, and instructional strategies were culturally relevant, inclusive, affirming, and student-centered, students exhibited a heightened sense of belonging, felt more validated in being seen and heard, and had increases in overall engagement and achievement, self-identity, and self-esteem (Byrd, 2016; Dee & Penner, 2017; Wah & Nasri, 2019). Pointedly, in a study of Oakland public schools, Black males enrolled in an African American Male Achievement (AAMA) program and class had a reduced high school dropout rate of 43 percent (Dee & Penner, 2019). CRP has also been shown to reduce bullying and behavioral disengagement: in one study involving over 150 middle and high schools that implemented LGBTQ-inclusive curricula, students reported increased feelings of safety and decreased instances of bullying (Snapp et al., 2015), and in another study wherein 1046 high school students across five schools experienced a racially inclusive and social justice-oriented curriculum, the results showed a significantly increased intention to intervene in situations of bullying (Wernick et al., 2021).

Anti-Bias Training and Interventions

The creation of inclusive classrooms and schools is predicated on recognizing multiple forms of diversity that include, inter alia, racial, ethnic, gender identity, sexuality, linguistic, cultural, socio-economic, body size/type, religion, trauma-history, ability, age, and neurodiversity. In addition to ensuring diversity on display (Martínez-Bello & Martínez-Bello, 2017), inclusive communications and materials (DeMatthews et al., 2021; Woo et al., 2022), and enumerated policies (Bishop et al., 2021), schools are increasingly providing anti-bias training and interventions, with an emphasis on staff who set the tone for the school environment (Sparks, 2020). Competency to respond to bias is essential as students report hearing degrading language related to diversity multiple times a day (Wessler & De Andrade, 2006). Moreover, research suggests that anti-bias training related to race is crucial for white teachers in multicultural environments: a recent study found that teachers only reactively allowed dialogue about race instead of fostering and facilitating it (Hazelbaker & Mistry, 2021).

The limited research on the effectiveness of anti-bias training suggests that many approaches to changing implicit bias (e.g., positive thinking about stereotyped groups, making decisions with more thought and attention to implicit biases to avoid stereotyping, and addressing inadequacies in curriculum and practices -all often one-off professional development opportunities) may change "short-term knowledge," but are failing to make lasting changes in behavior (Sparks, 2020; Woo et al., 2022). However, some strategies are proving more effective than others. For example, targeted teacher intervention techniques (e.g., increased classroom management training, training teachers on improving and displaying more empathy) are more promising than general anti-bias training (Okonofua et al., 2016; Sparks, 2020). Moreover, engaging teachers in efforts to revise schools' policies and set targets to improve discipline related to diversity measures can lead to increased engagement and ownership over the outcomes (Sparks, 2020).

A handful of promising training programs and techniques have been highlighted in the literature. "Safe Schools" training for school counselors increases knowledge, awareness, and skills around homoprejudice and sexism (Byrd & Hays, 2013). "Positive Space" training (with a focus on sexuality and gender identity) has shown positive results with pre-service teachers in Canada (Mitton-Kukner et al., 2016). Participants who underwent anti-bias training that recognizes and accepts linguistic diversity outside of a monolingual norm demonstrated positive lasting results (Wiese et al., 2017). Another study found that interracial training teams were impactful in response to the combination of defensiveness, guilt, fear, and anxiety that may arise in participants in such training (Ngounou & Gutiérrez, 2019). Overall, three crucial elements of anti-bias training were noted in the literature: (1) to be systemic and ongoing, (2) to move participants from "cultural competence" to "structural competence" (analyzing the systemic causes of oppression), and 3) to honor and affirm participants and their perspectives (Craig et al., 2018; Shelton et al., 2019).

Anti-bullying

Bullying is common on both school grounds and in online interactions: in 2019, one in five high school students reported being bullied at school, and one in six reported being cyberbullied (CDC, 2020). A meta-analysis of 82 studies spanning 22 countries found that over half of youth play a role in bullying as a bully, a victim, or both (Cook et al., 2010). Many schools have adopted policies and programs to address bullying, often paired with other initiatives like surveillance measures and mental health supports (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2015). By 2015, 98.5% of elementary, middle, and high schools had adopted anti-bullying policies for implementation on school property, and at least 85% of schools had adopted policies related to off-campus and electronic bullying (CDC, 2015; Kann et al., 2016).

It is important to note that the adult interpretations of bullying may influence which preventative practices are adopted and implemented with specificity and fidelity and unintentionally create "systems of intimidation based on race/ethnicity, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, social class, physical ability, and sexual orientation" (Peguero, 2012). Likewise, intimidation based on intersectional identities may

be excluded from the school staff's definition of bullying but may be most important to the students (Peguero & Bondy, 2020).

In an influential report, the American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force (2008) identified anti-bullying programs as effective prevention strategies, particularly when multi-tiered. More recently, a systematic literature review by Luiz da Silva et al. (2017) found that the most effective anti-bullying programs were delivered as a multi-component or schoolwide approach through curricular approaches and programs for social skills development. An examination of empirical studies found that similar anti-bullying programs reduce bullying perpetration by 19–20% and victimization by 15–16% (Gaffney et al., 2018).

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) is one of the more cited options for a school-wide, comprehensive anti-bullying prevention program. Several studies on OBPP found that the program decreases bullying, delinquency, and violence (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, 2021; Olweus & Limber, 2010). A large-scale longitudinal study involving more than 30,000 students revealed success in reducing rates and forms of being bullied and bullying others (Olweus et al., 2019). Other research, however, reports inconsistent findings. Critiques of the OBPP program include its inability to address all forms of student-perceived bullying since the definition of bullying and perceptions of bullying injuries are nested in adult language, contextualized definitions, and inconsistent understandings (Hong, 2009; Peguero, 2012; Peguero & Bondy, 2020; Swearer et al., 2010). For example, a 5-year evaluation on the impacts of OBBP in urban middle schools found reductions in teachers' ratings of student aggression, but students reported no intervention effects (Farrell et al., 2018).

Social Psychological Approaches

Social psychological approaches seek to deter violent or risky behaviors and address student needs through various instructional interventions such as teaching social skills, behavioral management, and managing school climate (Astor et al., 2010). These approaches often exist on a continuum from universal to targeted, wherein universal efforts aim to enhance the well-being of all students through collaboration with students, staff, and parents and at a myriad of intervention points (e.g., curriculum design and behavior policy), while at the same time, targeted programs focus on student-specific services (O'Reilly et al., 2018). The social psychological alternatives have proven to increase student coping mechanisms and academic achievement, improve community stakeholders' relationships, and reduce discipline infractions.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

PBIS is a data-driven support system that relies on social and academic interventions to guide student behaviors and outcomes (Alter, 2018; Lewis & Sugai, 1999). PBIS draws from behavioral psychology, social learning, and organizational design research focusing on students with emotional and behavioral disorders (Gresham,

1991; Sugai & Horner, 1999). PBIS uses a variety of evidence-based tiered interventions to enhance academic and behavioral outcomes for all students and draws on a continuum of best practices for collecting and using data and teacher professional development (Center on PBIS, 2021; Horner et al., 2010; Sugai et al., 2000).

The research literature considers PBIS a promising practice addressing issues related to school climate, student discipline, and bullying. Studies have found that PBIS reduced office discipline referrals for violent and general offenses, out-of-school suspensions, and teacher-reported bullying in elementary and middle schools (Bradshaw, 2013; Sprague et al., 2007; Waasdorp et al., 2012). Moreover, a recent meta-analysis of 29 studies found that PBIS resulted in statistically significant reductions in student discipline and improvements in academic achievement (Lee & Gage, 2020). There is relatively less research available on the impact of PBIS in high schools. Still, some studies found that it decreased student office discipline referrals and increased attendance, both of which have been associated with reductions in drop-out rates (Flannery et al., 2014; Freeman et al., 2015, 2016). Although high schools have been adopting this approach at a slower rate than elementary and middle schools, a recent systematic review of 16 studies found that student outcomes at the high school level can be improved in PBIS efforts by engaging students in planning efforts, providing developmentally appropriate reinforcements, and partnering with other schools (Estrapala et al., 2020; Freeman et al., 2016).

The popularity of PBIS has grown considerably; in the last decade, its implementation has doubled. It is estimated that more than 21,000 schools across the U.S. utilize PBIS to support student social and emotional needs. However, the level of implementation is uneven. Low-income schools face more significant challenges in implementing PBIS due to teacher and school administrator attrition, as trained school personnel are vital to the success of PBIS programs (Childs et al., 2016; Horner et al., 2010; Peguero & Bondy, 2020).

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social-emotional learning (SEL) programs have been employed in schools to respond to student mental well-being and safety concerns (Kress & Elias, 2006). With rising interest in SEL, it is essential to recognize that while nearly one in six U.S. adolescents suffer mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders, only 40% of schools provide mental health or social services (CDC, 2015; Whitney & Peterson, 2019). SEL programs aim to strengthen communication skills, self-control, and collaborative problem-solving to reduce aggression, increase social competencies and develop positive relations between students as well as students and teachers (CASEL, 2020). While some SEL programs (e.g., Open Circle, Second Step) are more formal, others are less structured. Research recommends that SEL programs be implemented school-wide with consistency, target specific skills, and use flexible strategies (Bailey et al., 2019; Berg et al., 2017; Weissberg et al., 2015).

The research on SEL consistently reports positive results. An international meta-analysis of 356 research reports indicated positive behavioral and academic benefits (Mahoney et al., 2018). SEL's impact on academic achievement has been confirmed in other studies (Schonfeld et al., 2015; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013). Another

analysis of 213 SEL programs found improvements across an array of social skills, attitudes, and behaviors (Durlak et al., 2011). Other studies reported that social-emotional and mental health programs and strategies assist students with coping skills, self-esteem, resiliency, and emotional management in curbing aggressive or violent behaviors (Bierman et al., 2010; LaBelle, 2019; Merrell et al., 2008). A recent study that included 30,462 students, 4,273 teacher respondents, and 12,216 parents found that SEL programs focusing on self-management might have the most potential for improving student outcomes (Kautz et al., 2021). Additionally, 178 empirical studies on SEL confirmed lower levels of violent activity and increased desire among students to participate in community service and extracurricular activities (Gottfredson et al., 2002).

Trauma-Informed Schools

Many schools have adopted trauma-informed training and practices in response to the prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and rising clinical diagnoses of post-traumatic stress disorders (ACEs Connection, 2016; Anda et al., 2006; Felitti et al., 1998). It is estimated that about half to two-thirds of all K-12 students experience some form of trauma during their childhood (Copeland et al., 2007; Listenbee et al., 2012), and those in urban settings experience even higher rates of violence (Wade et al., 2014; Zimmerman & Messner, 2013). Trauma-informed interventions recognize this reality and aim to address the negative impact of traumatic experiences on the academic, social, and emotional dimensions of students' lives, including adopting risky behaviors (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). Some trauma-informed frameworks also consider culturally appropriate care and academic instruction strategies for students who have experienced trauma (Beehler et al., 2012).

Studies on trauma-informed interventions reveal specific aspects of the approach effectively addressing student mental health, academic performance, behavior, and socioemotional functioning (Herrenkohl et al., 2019). Moreover, recent research found that trauma-informed care in schools is most effective when implemented alongside families and key community partnerships to offer expanded resources for students with specific needs (Beehler et al., 2012; Fondren et al., 2020; Thomas et al., 2019). Additionally, an evaluation by the American Institutes for Research on a project to promote trauma-sensitive practices in five schools found positive changes in the school climate. Teachers from these schools reported fewer crises, decreased office referrals and disciplinary incidents, better communication, more social cohesion, consistent implementation of policies, greater parental engagement, increased feelings of safety and calm, and improved relationships between staff, students, and families (Jones et al., 2018). The study also found that the program built a sense of shared ownership for school climate and culture change and produced changes in practices and long-lasting shifts in the school culture.

Amidst the growing adoption of trauma-informed interventions, some studies have pointed to a greater need to assess the effects of these practices. Several have called for the field to address the variance of programming approaches and implementation and realignment since the current focus of studies concentrate more on

adult outcomes than on student outcomes (Berger, 2019; Cohen & Barron, 2021; Fondren et al., 2020; Maynard et al., 2019; Perfect et al., 2016). These aspects include providing staff with the tools and training necessary to implement culturally sensitive trauma-informed practices through a systems-wide, multi-tiered, transdisciplinary approach (Dorado et al., 2016; Purtle, 2020; Thomas et al., 2019; Zakszeski et al., 2017). Related work has critiqued the purported connection between social justice and the initial trauma-informed schools' wave and called for equity-centered trauma-informed education which contextualizes trauma within its systemic roots and solutions and avoids a deficit-oriented approach to students (Gherardi, 2022; Gherardi et al., 2021). These and other scholars (Petrone & Stanton, 2021) call for use of SAMSHA's socio-ecological trauma model or a socio-*historical* (italics in original text, p. 540) model which recognizes the complexity of trauma for specific populations of students within wider social and historical contexts (e.g., genocide, boarding schools, and enslavement)—including harm caused by educational institutions. In sum, these relational, reciprocal and restorative approaches seek to reduce trauma through developing a contextual understanding and commitment to addressing systemic trauma across the school community (Gherardi, 2022; Petrone & Stanton, 2021).

Mindfulness Programs

Mindfulness programs draw on health and wellness and focus on an awareness of the mind, the body, and emotions to foster the development of the whole individual (Ager et al., 2015). This approach stems from a reflective practice guided by ancient meditation techniques rooted in various religious traditions that provide coping mechanisms for mental and emotional health problems (Albrecht et al., 2012). In school settings, mindfulness includes prescribed characteristics, activities, and programs at an individual level in place of detention or isolation from others or at the classroom level with students engaging in breathing exercises, reflective walks, yoga, or thought activities (Ager et al., 2015; Burnett, 2011; Sapthiang et al., 2019).

While the implementation of school-based mindfulness programs for children in grades K through 12 is becoming more popular, with examples such as Inner Resilience, Mindful Schools, Learning to Breathe, and MindUp, empirical research on the benefits of mindfulness is only beginning to emerge. More rigorous analysis will be needed over the coming decades. However, two meta-analyses on mindfulness interventions found significant improvements in mental health, cognitive performance, and resilience to stress (Carsley et al., 2018; Zenner et al., 2014). A study of high school students practicing Transcendental Meditation found similar results (Valosek et al., 2019). Krein (2021) reported improvements in students' attitudes, engagement, academic achievement, and an overwhelming decrease in suspensions. Additionally, in a study on the MindUp program, students were found to have increased compassion and abilities to regulate emotions, while at the same time, teachers exhibited stronger perceptive skills and viewed themselves as more caring (de Carvalho et al., 2017).

Targeted Mental Health Services

Targeted mental health services consist of intensive interventions for students needing consistent mental health or acute behavioral support. These include individual and group therapy with connected support systems at school and within the community and are provided by counselors, community mentors, social workers, and advisors, among others (Cowan et al., 2013). Although the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2022) recommends a 250:1 ratio of students to school counselors, the average in 2019–2020 was 430:1. The ASCA reports that more mental health supports have led to increased attendance, graduation rates, and academic achievement, and decreased reliance on retributive practices like suspensions and expulsions.

An appraisal of systematic reviews and meta-analyses around school-based mental health services showed the most significant effects for targeted intervention (Sanchez et al., 2018) and the efficacy of a targeted intervention to be 'extremely promising' for several pertinent youth outcomes (Wolpert et al., 2013). Our review of the literature finds 1) that schools with qualified personnel available to educate students and facilitate lessons on bullying situations, coping skills, emotions management, and self-esteem have shown to help students to make less risky choices, constructively regulate emotions, and consider peaceful alternatives to conflicts (Paolini, 2015); and 2) elementary school-age children who receive both targeted and curriculum-integrated mental health treatments in school show decreased mental health issues and externalizing behaviors (Sanchez et al., 2018). These findings are supported by a recent study of 40 schools implementing an Emotional and Behavioral Health–Crisis Response and Prevention (EBH-CRP) intervention, which reported significant effects on decreasing bullying, referrals, and suspensions (Bohnenkamp et al., 2021). However, school-based mental health services are prone to implementation challenges and unsustainable outcomes due to inadequate funding and minimal administrative support; moreover, as much of the research is limited to efficacy trials as opposed to effectiveness studies with real world application, research findings on these interventions vary greatly (Massey et al., 2005; Teich et al., 2008; Wolpert et al., 2013).

Community-Based Approaches

Since schools play a central role in most communities, community-based approaches seek to include all stakeholders (students, parents, families, community organizations, agencies, and policy experts) in school and district decisions concerning students' academic, social, and mental well-being. These approaches have demonstrated increases in student and family engagement and student academic achievement, more resilient school communities, and a reduction in dropout rates, discipline incidences, and suspensions.

Community Schools

Community schools, sometimes called "full-service" schools with "wrap-around services" or communal learning centers, frame the school community as a bonded ecosystem beyond traditional school fences and walls (Oakes et al., 2017; Serrette & McGuire, 2016). Community schools function within an inclusive and participatory framework for community and family involvement, emphasizing comprehensiveness, community collaborations, coherence, and commitment (Fehrer & Leos-Urbel, 2016; Lubell, 2011). In community schools, the entire community holistically addresses safety as an intervention team and drives the school's decision-making processes and authority structures in establishing school rules, setting the discipline code, and handling rule enforcement (Gottfredson et al., 2002; Richardson, 2009).

Research reveals that community schools have positive outcomes for school climate and relationships, student engagement and attendance, and teacher retention and morale (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Gottfredson et al., 2005; Payne, 2008; Payne et al., 2003). Including community stakeholders in addressing school safety measures has increased trust among diverse community groups and members, fostered parent and family engagement, and streamlined access to social services (Cowan et al., 2013). Moreover, a meta-analysis of studies on community schools found the inclusion of community organizations, parental involvement, and extracurricular activities in schools to correlate positively with academic achievement and reduce the dropout rate and risky behavior (Heers et al., 2016). Additionally, a study on the cost-benefits of community schools found that community partnerships and wrap-around services yield positive long-term social outcomes and economic benefits (Maier et al., 2017).

Parent and Family Engagement

Many schools emphasize early and regular engagement of parents and family members in developing students' well-being. Enlisting the engagement of parents and family members as partners in school-based decision-making opportunities is a promising strategy that has arisen in recent literature to not only address academic achievement and school community engagement but also increase feelings of safety and belonging and reduce violence at schools (Cuellar & Theriot, 2015; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Ishimaru, 2019; Weiss et al., 2009).

Several studies found that early interventions of parental support and partnerships, such as fully funded preschool and kindergarten programming like Head Start and programs for elementary schools like Project ACHIEVE, reduce risks of violence and crime later in life (Higgins & Katsipataki, 2015; Ma et al., 2016). Additional studies show that offering parental and community involvement opportunities in K-12 schools reduces violence, increases academic achievement, and improves attendance and behavior (Afkinich & Klumpner, 2018; Jeynes, 2012, 2017; Simon, 2001). Other studies have also found a negative association between parent involvement and out-of-school suspension rates for incidents like physical attacks or fights (Cuellar, 2018; Mendez et al., 2002). There are still challenges, however, surrounding parent and community engagement as a practice of school safety, particularly for

immigrant families, families of English language learners, families from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and populations long subjected to disproportionate school discipline procedures and outcomes (Mowen & Freng, 2019; Peguero & Bondy, 2020). Furthermore, numerous barriers may inhibit or foster family involvement in school, including teacher (mis)perceptions and beliefs, school friendliness and communication, and school policies and leadership (Kim, 2009).

Positive Youth Development (PYD) Programs

Positive Youth Development (PYD) programs seek to prevent risky behaviors and build positive, relational frameworks and experiences between students and adult role models like teachers, coaches, counselors, and club advisors (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). PYD programs provide strategies for youth to build upon existing positive qualities and strengths to avoid dangerous, risky, harmful, or violent situations (Lerner et al., 2009). They also create awareness of social issues and influences while developing skills like personal self-management, social competencies, and peer resistance (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003), with many using the Five Cs framework: competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Lerner et al., 2005). PYD programs exist in the form of clubs and extracurricular activities, as well as in partnership with community organizations, with some examples being 4-H, Americorps, Promise Neighborhoods, and YouthBuild (Eccles & Appleton-Gootman, 2002).

Studies have found that PYD programs provide viable alternatives to risky behaviors and bring together student groups, adult role models, and community systems to collaborate on shared goals and positive relationships (Beier et al., 2000; Hamilton et al., 2016). PYD programs have positively impacted student self-esteem, school community building, and school safety outcomes (Durlak et al., 2007). In a meta-analysis of twenty PYD programs, Catalano et al. (2004) found that student participation in a PYD program improved behavior, including academic achievement, interpersonal skills and relationships, and aggression and violence. A study with 1,700 fifth graders and 1,117 of their parents revealed that PYD programs positively impact the Five Cs and foster an increased propensity for youth contribution within their communities (Lerner et al., 2005). Another review of the literature on PYD programs reported improvements in academic achievement and graduation rates, increased empathy and efficacy, and a decline in risky and violent behaviors (Campbell et al., 2013).

Self-governance

Self-governance design and approaches to school safety promote student voice, equity, and engagement and emphasize the inclusion of students in deliberation and decision-making processes. Including students alongside family participation in school decision-making has been shown to positively affect student academic achievement and self-esteem, school climate and community connectedness, as well

as decrease anti-social behaviors, aggression, bullying, discipline incidences, and suspensions.

Democratic Schools

Democratic schools build on progressive education traditions, experiential learning, student-centered pedagogies, and shared governance (Andersson, 2019; Apple & Beane, 1999). Operating on principles of participatory democracy, school community stakeholders (especially students) are involved in deliberation and decision-making processes concerning issues traditionally reserved for school administrators like discipline, safety, and conflict (Benner et al., 2019; Gutmann & Porath, 2014; Korkmaz & Erden, 2014). Some twentieth century examples of this approach include Summerhill (England), Sudbury Schools (U.S.), Citizen School (Brazil), school participatory budgeting, and youth councils (Albornoz-Manyoma et al., 2021; Augsberger et al., 2018; Fischman & Gandin, 2016; Sadofsky, 2000).

Research has found that democratic schools enhance psychological health, increase a myriad of skills (leadership, problem-solving, communication, and organization), improve discipline and academic achievement, and have positive outcomes in student behavior and perceived school safety (Conner et al., 2022; Fernandez et al., 2021; Kahne et al., 2022; Osberg et al., 2006; Voight, 2014; Weiss, 2018). Moreover, studies have concluded that school climate improves when schools center students on reform efforts to create anti-racist, inclusive, and equitable practices (Friend & Caruthers, 2015; Mitra & Gross, 2009; Osler, 2002). Furthermore, an examination of 32 empirical studies on the impact of student participation in school decision-making processes found positive effects on life skills, academic achievement, self-esteem, social status, democratic skills and citizenship, student–adult relationships, and the overall school ethos on the part of student participants (Mager & Nowak, 2012). However, a study of 22 urban high schools implementing school safety programs that included student voice and participation highlighted that the effectiveness of these approaches to be highly dependent on the fidelity, reach, quality, and school context (Giraldo-Garcia et al., 2021).

Conflict Resolution and Peace Education (CRPE)

Rooted in progressive education and human rights, conflict resolution and peace education (CRPE) strive to disrupt socially constructed barriers among diverse populations and foster interpersonal relations, conflict resolution, forgiveness, and violence prevention skills (Carter, 2010). CRPE develops coping skills and social competencies to provide students with alternatives to violence and violent problem solving and fosters cooperation, creative problem solving, tolerance, communication, and positive emotional expression, while addressing school safety concerns and disciplinary practices through a lens of social justice (Bickmore, 2011; Bodine & Crawford, 1998; Caulfield, 2000; Harris, 2008). CRPE curricula nurture a conflict management approach without coercion or alienation. They are designed to develop

competencies in building a peaceable climate, developing collaborative problem-solving skills, and creating an understanding of conflict, peacemaking, mediation, and negotiation (Askerov, 2010; Crawford & Bodine, 2001).

The research on CRPE programs reveals positive impacts on developing conflict resolution skills. One meta-analysis conducted in eight different schools in two countries found that when versed in CRPE, students effectively apply the practices to school and non-school settings and more frequently engage in collaborative problem-solving (Johnson & Johnson, 2001). Another meta-analysis of 36 studies with 4,971 students who participated in CRPE showed improvements in antisocial behaviors (Garrard & Lipsey, 2007). Other research found that approximately 85 to 95% of conflicts mediated through CRPE resulted in longer-lasting agreements and referrals to administrative personnel for inappropriate student behavior and antisocial behaviors such as bullying, physical aggression, and fights (especially among adolescents) declined (Lane-Garon et al., 2005). These programs also positively impacted turn-taking behavior and students' disposition and ability to apply mediation skills in conflict situations at school and home (LaRusso & Selman, 2011).

Restorative Practices

Restorative practices can be traced to indigenous conceptions and traditions of justice that value human dignity and respect, emphasize healing and accountability, and strive to repair relationships and promote safer communities (Van Ness & Strong, 2014). Restorative practices utilize dialogical and relational pedagogies to orient the wrongdoer with the person or people harmed to humanize the injury committed and emphasize justice and forgiveness (Gregory & Evans, 2020; Pranis, 2007; Strelan et al., 2011). Schools using restorative practices frame misconduct as a violation of institutional rules and an act of disrespect unto others in the school community (Cameron & Thorsborne, 2001; McCluskey et al., 2008).

Research on restorative practices shows they successfully promote dialogue and accountability, create a stronger sense of community, improve relationships, reduce exclusionary discipline referrals, and increase equity in discipline practices (Gregory & Evans, 2020; Gregory et al., 2016a; Karp & Breslin, 2001; Osher & Berg, 2018). Likewise, DePaoli et al. (2021) concluded that restorative practices contribute to safe learning environments and the development of positive, supportive, and authentic relationships. Moreover, the restorative practice of relational pedagogy builds a listening culture and positively impacts student practices of respect, empathy, trust, critical thinking, problem-solving, and shared leadership in addressing changes across school campuses (Gregory et al., 2016b; Hollweck et al., 2019; Hopkins, 2015).

School districts implementing restorative justice practices as an alternative to traditional school discipline measures have cited overall drops in both in- and out-of-school suspensions. In a recent evaluation of ten studies, schools that implemented restorative practices reduced the use of office disciplinary referrals and suspensions, lowered rates of bullying behavior, and saw increases in social skills and self-esteem (Katic et al., 2020). Rich et al. (2017) found that the use of restorative practices led to a decrease in out-of-school suspensions (30% lower than comparison school) and

in-school suspensions (14% lower than comparison school). In another example, the Dallas Independent School District experienced a 70% decrease in in-school suspensions, a 77% decrease in out-of-school suspensions, and a 50% cut in the number of students sent to an alternative place of learning (Long, 2016). However, research shows that restorative practices, including peer mediation and student conferences, have not been implemented equitably across schools. In a nationally representative sample study, Payne and Welch (2015, 2018) found that schools with more low-income and minoritized students are likelier to use punitive disciplinary practices and less likely to use restorative approaches.

Peer Mediation

Peer mediation programs are similar to restorative practices (both use facilitated dialogue in conflict situations), but peer mediation focuses on finding solutions rather than recognizing the harm's impact to repair relationships. The peer mediation process brings together disputing participants, alongside the assistance of a neutral person(s) (including peers), to analyze the issues, develop options, consider alternatives, and reach a settlement (or agreement) between participants (Cohen, 2005). This process allows participants to build mutual understandings, explore alternative options, and formulate a consensual agreement to move forward.

Studies on peer mediation have revealed overall declines in school violence and student suspensions (Bickmore, 2002; Churchill, 2013; Schellenberg et al., 2007). Peer mediation strategies have been shown to foster safer school environments and increase positive skills like problem-solving, collaboration, and leadership and reduce student "obliging" and "avoiding" behaviors (Ay et al., 2019; Powell et al., 1995). A meta-analysis of peer mediation and CRPE programs combined revealed a substantial effect on students' conflict resolution skills (Turk, 2018). Also, students who play the role of peer mediators show enhanced social-emotional skills, consistent attendance, and a heightened sense of connection with their schools (Devoogd et al., 2016).

School-Based Teen Courts

School-Based Teen Courts (SBTC) are alternative programs to suspension, expulsion, and juvenile justice referral. Student participants determine consequences for offending youth through a courtroom-like process using restorative justice principles (Cotter & Evans, 2018). According to Smokowski et al. (2020), SBTC is a viable alternative to routine discipline practices and uses measures to address the school-to-prison nexus and improve school safety.

Studies on SBTC have found positive impacts like reduced recidivism and fewer students committing disciplinary infractions and receiving suspensions, along with an increase in academic behaviors (e.g., attendance, participation, being organized), social skills (e.g., interpersonal skills, cooperation, empathy, and responsibility), and a sense of attachment or belonging to the school community (Bodenhorn & Lambert, 2012; Norton et al., 2013). Although a recent review of SBTCs by Cotter & Evans (2018) found heterogeneity across program components and practices

and few rigorous evaluations, Smokowski et al. (2020) completed a randomized trial with 24 middle and high schools and found that students at SBTC schools reported higher school satisfaction, fewer antisocial friendships, and a perceived decrease in violent behavior. However, the wrongdoers reported increased feelings of peer rejection and lack of support. Smokowski et al. (2020) suggest this may be a result of the offending youth losing contact with peers, but this could also be the result of alienation the wrongdoer feels from peers who serve as part of the courtroom.

In an evaluation of 15 studies of Teen Courts (taking place in non-school settings) that assessed the statistical significance of recidivism, Gase et al. (2016) noted that four studies found significant results favoring Teen Courts, while one study found significant results favoring the traditional justice system, and ten found null results. It was also pointed out that these findings should be interpreted with caution considering weak study designs, lack of description and assessment of intervention components, unclear and inconsistent outcome measures, and little examination of pathways or differential intervention effects. Moreover, further research is needed into SBTC effects on young "offenders," including whether using legalistic language and procedures in the school setting is beneficial for young people and school safety.

Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

Presently, many school communities are at a critical juncture in exploring alternative programs and approaches to school safety that emphasize prevention over punishment and are more pedagogically informed, inclusive, and cost-effective. Likewise, students and school communities across the country are demanding schools be more inclusive and equitable safe places for learning. There is mounting evidence that punitive measures have long-lasting negative impacts, especially on historically marginalized student racial groups, students with disabilities, LGBTQ + students, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Specifically, there is a growing consensus among researchers and educational leaders that SROs are not the most cost-effective strategy to promote school safety. However, unremitting school shootings and guns found in the possession of students elicit tremendous fear and have led some districts to reverse course and reinstate officers, despite the evidence against them (Belsha, 2023; Riser-Kositsky et al., 2022). In this current climate, educators, students, parents, administrators, researchers, and community members are interested in exploring promising alternative programs, yet they are also laser-focused on improving school safety and protecting children from violence (Belsha, 2023).

Due to limited findings on some alternatives and the possibility of adopting or adapting multiple programs, future research is needed on each of these alternatives, paying particular attention to the quality of implementation for creating and sustaining school safety and the impact on historically marginalized students. Likewise, more meta-research is needed to update the information on the most effective approaches currently available to schools. Robust research designs (i.e., quasi-experiments or randomized control trials longitudinal in nature) can

also help establish a more explicit causal relation between programs and their effectiveness.

Additionally, we recognize the need to further analyze the significant overlaps among programs and interventions that promote school safety. Schools may implement these programs or interventions at different levels and intensities or modify and tailor them to fit within their existing priorities, values, and structures. For example, while restorative practices are a critical component of disciplinary reform, these practices are often embedded within other approaches, such as trauma-informed education. Some programs and interventions are frequently paired together, like community schools with democratic schools and school-based mental health supports. On the other hand, however, some of these programs and interventions are not complementary and may champion practices that run counter to one another. One example is PBIS and the essentials of trauma-informed practices. Because school safety is a complex paradigm, more research is needed to better understand the imbrication and effects of intersecting school safety programs and interventions.

We also note that a handful of the promising school safety interventions highlighted in this paper are prescriptive and often applied in a "top-down" fashion. Instead, schools have opportunities to implement democratic, inclusive processes that bring together all school stakeholders, including students, in shared decision-making spaces to adopt and adapt the best programs and interventions for their school communities. In essence, schools can consider and prioritize school campus dynamics such as relationships, school climate, students' sense of belonging, and the climate of equity when selecting safety interventions for the school community.

This review recognizes that school safety is a complex, multilayered concept that includes the physical, social, and emotional welfare of all members of the school community and impacts the overall school climate. Therefore, schools may adopt and adapt a combination of initiatives and programs, creating a nested or layered system of school safety and discipline measures. Further, when determining how to invest limited resources to promote health and safety for *all* students, accessible, equitable, and evidence-based school safety alternatives should be considered. Additionally, an intersectional equity lens must be applied when implementing school safety initiatives and programs to reduce disparities and address systemic bias and educational trauma (Cruz et al., 2021; Gregory et al., 2017; National Education Association, 2022). We hope this compilation and analysis of 17 school safety alternatives provide these considerations and add valuable input to current school community deliberations on equitable and effective school safety alternatives.

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Authors and Affiliations

Tara Bartlett[1,2] · Lara E. Law[3,4] · Daniel Schugurensky[2,5,6] · Marisol Juarez Díaz[4] · Wendy Wolfersteig[3,4]

✉ Tara Bartlett
tbartlet@asu.edu

Lara E. Law
lelaw@asu.edu

Daniel Schugurensky
dschugur@asu.edu

Marisol Juarez Díaz
marisol.j.diaz@asu.edu

Wendy Wolfersteig
wendy.wolfersteig@asu.edu

[1] Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, Arizona State University, H.B. Farmer Education Building, 1050 S Forest Mall, Tempe, AZ 85281, USA

[2] Participatory Governance Initiative, School of Public Affairs, Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions, Arizona State University, 411 N Central Avenue, Suite 400, Phoenix, AZ 85004-0687, USA

[3] School of Social Work, Arizona State University, University Center, 411 N Central Ave #800, Phoenix, AZ 85004, USA

[4] Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center, Arizona State University, 400 E. Van Buren, Suite 800, Phoenix, AZ 85004-2262, USA

[5] School of Public Affairs, Arizona State University, 411 N. Central Avenue, Ste. 450, Phoenix, AZ 85004-0687, USA

[6] School of Social Transformation, Arizona State University, 777 Novus, Suite 310AA, Tempe, AZ 85287-4308, USA