

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/reinforcing-positive-student-behavior-to-prevent-school-violence-enhancing-the-role-of-school-safety-agents>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

In 1998, when New York City transferred responsibility for its 3,500 school safety officers from the Board of Education to the police department, it was part of a nationwide trend. The U.S. Department of Justice, through its office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), was encouraging officials across the country to place law enforcement personnel inside schools in order to improve student safety. Police and school officials in New York believed they could work together to refine the school safety agents' role and effectiveness. They asked Vera to explore how safety agents could be better marshaled as a resource to reduce school violence. This report proposes a specialized training for school safety agents that recognizes the value of positive reinforcement in improving student behavior. It is the initial design for Affirm, a demonstration project Vera launched in 2002, in partnership with the New York City Department of Education and the New York Police Department.

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