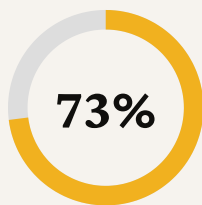


Safety In Schools

Two of out three high school students in the United States attend a school with a police officer present. Reports show that police officers in schools are linked to increased arrests for noncriminal behavior, exacerbating the school to prison pipeline. Conflicts that arise in school buildings are escalated when police intervene and arrest students. These zero tolerance policies disproportionately target Black students, who experience criminalization and adultification for typical adolescent behavior. Police in schools create unwelcoming school environments by failing to address root problems.

2/3

of high school students attend school with police



of all students arrested are Black

Police officers, including Student Resource Officers (SROs) or Student Safety Officer's (SSO's), do not actually make students safe in school. Studies show that factors such as school size and academic opportunity are stronger indicators of school safety than the presence of police officers.

Police officers disproportionately arrest Black students. 73% of all students arrested are Black. Rather than serving students, police in schools are often forced to serve a racist and violent system that targets Black students. Furthermore, the police presence is contradictory to creating positive and mutually respectful school environments for all students.

Police officers are not trained in mental health counseling or assistance, nor are they trained in helping students with disabilities. Trauma-informed schools and educators are better equipped to prevent random acts of violence from occurring than police officers, who are not trained in preventative measures.

Instead of investing in police, school districts should redistribute those funds to create trauma-informed education environments. By ending their contracts with police departments, school districts across the country will prioritize students and justice. Here are a few things we can demand:

- Reinvestment of funds for more counselors and support staff and fewer SROs
- Reinstatement of Federal guidance related to school discipline disparities - Reimplementation of civil rights guidance from the Department of Education
- Expansion of school-based mental health resourcing
- Successful passage of bills like Counselors not Criminalization
- **Reinvent** violence interruption model that is school based, ensure gender equity lens
- **Expansion of school based mental health programs and resources**

To truly prioritize students and justice, school districts must redirect funds to the critical support staff students need to thrive.

Ready to demand better for and with students?
Visit www.letachild.org and get involved.

