

June 10, 2020

Dear Denver Public Schools Board of Education Directors,

We represent 11 organizations, many of which work with students, parents, and teachers in the Denver metro area, and we are writing to express our unwavering support for the Black Lives Matter Resolution. In this historic moment, spurred by the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police, we urge you to embrace the moral call of your colleagues, Tay Anderson and Jennifer Bacon, and vote in support of the resolution to terminate Denver Public School's (DPS) contract with the Denver Police Department (DPD), to remove all school resource officers (SROs) from our K-12 schools, and bar the staffing of law enforcement in DPS schools in the future. In alignment with the "End the School-to-Prison Pipeline" and "Counselors Not Cops" campaigns that Padres y Jóvenes Unidos has been pushing for nearly 20 years, the resolution calls for DPD officers to be removed, and for DPS schools to be police-free by the end of 2020.

For years, students, community members, and community-based organizations have been calling on leaders in our district to remove SROs from our schools. Black and brown students do not feel safe. Furthermore, recent actions by the Denver Police Department, such as using tear gas, rubber bullets, and pepper spray on peaceful protestors have made this trauma even worse for young people. An ongoing contract between Denver Public Schools and the Denver Police Department only further perpetuates those biases that need to be dismantled.

When the district follows the lead of students, community members, and community-based organizations, meaningful progress is made. Despite this progress, the school-to-prison pipeline remains intact in Denver Public Schools, and it disproportionately impacts our Black and Latinx students. In the 2018-19 academic year, police in schools issued almost 750 tickets and arrests of DPS students. Black students were nearly 2.5x as likely to be ticketed or arrested as white students. We know that removing 18 school resource officers will not end the school-to-prison pipeline, which is perpetuated by police in schools, but also by culturally biased textbooks, implicit bias in the classroom, and inequitable funding, to name only a few. However, removing SROs from schools, and focusing on providing vital services like mental health counselors, nurses, restorative justice coordinators, and social-emotional wellness measures is a pivotal step in addressing the problem.

The decision to introduce this resolution was born out of a recognition of the harm to Black and Latinx students when police are in schools. We must reckon with the reality that these harms will not be ended by removing SROs alone. We must reexamine the discipline matrix that calls for the escalation of police intervention, and initiate a wider discussion of classroom removals, suspensions, and hidden suspensions. We must address the use of a culturally biased curriculum, lack of staff diversity, and student pushout practices. This is why we are calling on the DPS Board of Education to not only pass this resolution, but to look deeper, and commit to identifying and uprooting all vestiges of structural racism in DPS.

This is not the first time our community has called upon you to make the right decision when it comes to police in our schools. DPS leaders have the opportunity to set a standard in Colorado and encourage other districts across the state to divest from police in schools - and invest in supporting holistic wellness measures, as many students and community members have been demanding for years. The time is now.

We implore you to take this step to break the cycle of oppression that has been perpetuated through our school and prison systems for centuries. Serve and protect students of color by passing this resolution, and ending your partnership with the Denver Police Department this Thursday, June 11.

In solidarity,

Student Organizers of Our Turn Denver

Equity Network United for Metro Denver

Stand for Children Colorado

Transform Education Now

Project VOYCE and the Youth Leaders of Student Voice, Student Vote

Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy, & Research Organization (CLLARO)

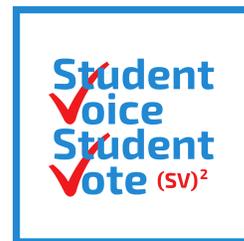
Young Aspiring Americans for Social and Political Activism (YAASPA)

Colorado Youth Congress (CYC)

DSST Public Schools

Denver Public Schools District Accountability Committee

Teach Plus Colorado



EQUITY NETWORK  
UNITED FOR  
METRO DENVER



DSST  PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Colorado Youth Congress

CLLARO  COLORADO LATINO LEADERSHIP,  
ADVOCACY & RESEARCH  
ORGANIZATION