

HIGH SCHOOL

Arrested Learning

A survey of youth experiences of police and security at school

Clark County School District, Nevada

April 2021



Acknowledgements

This report was written by Kate Hamaji and Kate Terenzi (Center for Popular Democracy), in collaboration with staff and young people from Make the Road New York (MRNY), Make the Road Nevada (MRNV), Latinos Unidos Siempre (LUS), the Urban Youth Collaborative (UYC), and the the Research Hub for Youth Organizing at the University of Colorado Boulder.

We are deeply grateful to the organizers and youth leaders who shaped and fielded this survey and the young people who shared their powerful stories, experiences, and expertise. They are the true authors of this report.



The Center for Popular Democracy

The Center for Popular Democracy is a nonprofit organization that promotes equity, opportunity, and a dynamic democracy in partnership with innovative base building organizations, organizing networks and alliances, and progressive unions across the country.

www.populardemocracy.org



The Research Hub for Youth Organizing at the University of Colorado Boulder

The Research Hub for Youth Organizing supports young people's capacity to claim power and create more just communities through field-driven research. They advance youth participation and leadership by co-creating and sharing research and curriculum with youth organizers, teachers, education leaders and policy makers. Taphy T, Kathryn Wiley, Daniel Garzón, Joanna Mendy, and Ben Kirshner contributed significant research and writing to this report.

www.colorado.edu/education-research-hub



Make the Road Nevada

Make the Road Nevada (MRNV) builds the power of Latinx and working-class communities of color to achieve dignity and justice through organizing, policy innovation, and transformative education. MRNV's vision for Nevada begins with building a strong grassroots foundation in Las Vegas. It ends with elevating the power of working-class immigrant communities in every community around the state. They organize in Latinx and immigrant communities, and develop leaders who advocate for their families, their neighborhoods, and beyond.

www.maketheroadnv.org



The Urban Youth Collaborative

Urban Youth Collaborative (UYC) is a coalition of students from across New York City fighting for transformative education reform that puts students first, with a focus on replacing harmful policing in schools with restorative justice and trauma-informed care. The UYC coalition is made up of members from the Future of Tomorrow of Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, Make the Road New York, and Sistas and Brothas United of the Northwest Bronx.

www.urbanyouthcollaborative.org



Latinos Unidos Siempre

The mission of Latinos Unidos Siempre (LUS) is to work towards the educational, cultural, social and political development of youth of color, by empowering youth to take leadership roles in the community, advocating for social and political change and other forms of systemic and institutional oppression through grassroots organizing.



Make the Road New Jersey

Founded in November 2014 in Elizabeth, Make the Road New Jersey (MRNJ) builds the power of immigrant, working-class and Latinx communities to achieve dignity and respect through community organizing, legal, policy innovation and transformative education. Every week, hundreds of immigrant families - young people and adults - come together to fight for dignity and respect in their communities.

www.maketheroadnj.org

Clark County School District

Nevada



Recent survey data has demonstrated that the Clark County School District (CCSD) subjects Black and Brown young people to unrelenting racist and abusive policing at school. Young people experience a traumatizing environment in which:

- **50%** of Black students surveyed felt unsafe seeing police at school;
- **More than a quarter** of students surveyed have, or personally know someone who has, been pepper sprayed by school police—an act that would be considered a war crime in other circumstances;¹ and,
- School police constitute the second greatest source of referrals to the Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services, making the school-to-prison-and-deportation pipeline strikingly clear.²

CCSD has its own school district police force, which is both large and expensive. The current “command staff” in schools includes 16 sergeants, four lieutenants, two captains, and a chief of police.³ Students report that this police force is armed with guns. The most recently available district budget reports approximately 220 officers overall.⁴ CCSD funnels millions of dollars into school police each year: In 2018-2019, CCSD spent more than \$18.4 million on annual salaries and benefits for members of the district’s police department, an expenditure that has steadily increased in recent years.⁵ The district also uses federal funds to further entrench policing in schools.⁶

To uncover information about students’ experiences, interactions, and feelings about police and security at school, Make the Road Nevada (MNRV) fielded in-depth surveys with 138 young people during the end of 2020 and early 2021.

Survey findings in Clark County reveal that:



Police and security at school do not make students feel safe.

For example, when asked what makes respondents feel safe (when physically attending school),

88% selected friends

56% selected teachers

12% selected security guards



Overwhelmingly, students value more support and resources over police.

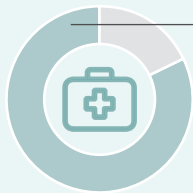


When asked to rank investments in order of priority, most respondents ranked teachers and mental health supports as the highest priorities



(51% and 30% ranking these options as #1, respectively).

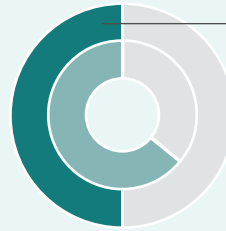
By contrast, more than three fourths of respondents ranked police as the lowest priority (75%).



Although the majority of respondents value other school personnel over police, 83% of respondents (with police at school) reported that there are more police at school than school nurses.



Interactions with and sightings of school police are common, frequent, and often harmful.



More than **half** of respondents who have police stationed at school reported having experienced, or having known someone who has experienced, at least one type of negative interaction with school police.

Among those with police at school, **61%** saw police at least once per day.

Respondents (with police at school) have experienced a pattern of disturbing behavior in which police:*

- Prevent young people from learning, for example by taking students out of a classroom (37%)
- Bully, abuse, and traumatize young people, for example by:
 - Pepper spraying students (29%)
 - Verbally harassing or making fun of students (10%)
 - Physically assaulting students (8%)
- Force young people into the criminal legal system and advance punitive techniques, for example by arresting students (29%)
- Invade young people's physical autonomy, for example by restraining students (23%)
- Sexually harass students (2%)

“ There’s something that I think is so deeply wrong about the fact that a person on campus gets to just walk around with a gun on them. From the past year you can obviously see that cops have a power dynamic issue and I don’t feel comfortable with cops on campus having a gun and being able to use it.

* Percentages refer to respondents who reported having experienced, or having known someone who has experienced, negative interactions with school police.

Background

District Demographics

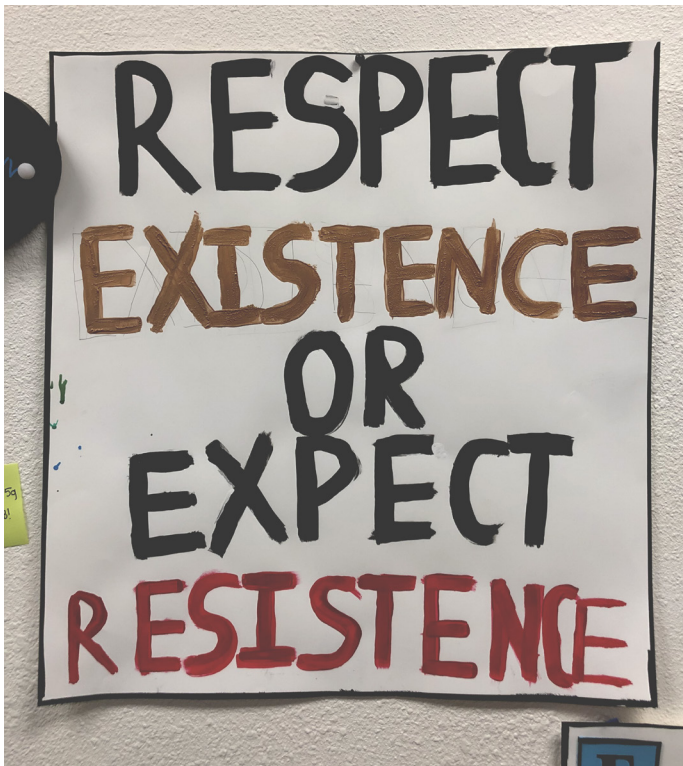
Clark County School District (CCSD) is the fifth largest school district in the US, accounting for approximately **75%** of all students in the state of Nevada.⁷ CCSD serves 323,787 students across 387 schools. As of 2019, the student body is **47%** Latinx, **24%** white, **15%** Black, and **6%** AAPI.⁸

Policing in Clark County

The issue of policing in schools exists within the broader context of police abuse in the community. Law enforcement in the Clark County area is conducted by the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD), the City of North Las Vegas Police Department, the City of Henderson Police Department, and the Boulder City Police Department.⁹ In recent years, the LVMPD has killed several community members and been involved in multiple wrongful death lawsuits.¹⁰ In 2011, Rafael Olivas was killed by the LVMPD after a 911 call made by his mother, after which the officers received paid administrative leave.¹¹ In 2017, Tashii Farmer was killed by the LVMPD when police purportedly thought he was attempting to steal a vehicle.¹² In September 2019, Byron Williams was arrested for riding his bicycle without a safety light and killed while in LVMPD custody.¹³

Tensions around racial discrimination and police violence erupted in May 2020 after the murder of George Floyd, when a number of protestors in the Las Vegas area filed a lawsuit against the LVMPD on the basis of excessive force, violations of constitutional rights, negligent officer training, and emotional distress.¹⁴

For Black and Brown young people, there is no escape from police abuse, whether in their communities or at school. Youth see no difference between the police who harass, oppress, and surveil them in the streets from those doing so at school.





Policing in CCSD

Police Presence in CCSD

CCSD has had a dedicated police force in some form since the 1960s,¹⁵ a period in which many districts began school policing as a backlash to desegregation efforts and student organizing.¹⁶ The current Clark County School District Police Department (CCSDPD) command staff includes 16 sergeants, four lieutenants, two captains, and a chief of police.¹⁷ The 2018–2019 budget reports 220 CCSDPD personnel overall. According to the district, the CCSDPD

is divided into eight police Area Commands with two police officers assigned to every high school and patrol officers assigned to patrol each command area, primed to respond to the needs of all District elementary, middle, and high schools. In addition, CCSDPD police officers patrol 24/7 covering all property and buildings belonging to the School District. The CCSDPD also has a Detective Bureau, a Training Bureau, and a Communications Bureau consisting of a Fingerprint Unit, a Records Unit, and a Dispatch Center composed of 24 civilian employees.¹⁸

The most recent Annual Statistical Report released by the Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services shows that the CCSDPD was the second highest referrer of all juvenile cases. The CCSDPD referred more than 3,782 cases to the Department of Juvenile Justice Services in just one year, accounting for nearly one third of all referrals in 2019.¹⁹

Between 2012 and 2020, CCSDPD pepper sprayed young people in schools nearly 180 times.²⁰ The two schools with the most incidents of pepper spray had over **90%** students of color.²¹ According to CCSD records, pepper spray has been used against children of all ages, with pepper spray used in elementary schools annually for the past eight school years. Pepper spray can cause coughing, gagging, blistering or scarring of the eyes, persistent and debilitating pain around the eyes, chemical burns, lung inflammation, and severe asthma attacks.²² For children with asthma or a similar underlying health condition, the use of pepper spray could quickly become fatal. Asphyxiating and poisonous gasses are prohibited under the law of war,²³ and at least 35 states have banned the use of pepper spray on young people due to their toxicity.²⁴ What is considered inhumane and illegal in war is certainly inhumane to use against young people in schools.

The Criminalization of Black and Brown Young People in CCSD

CCSD police referrals reveal strikingly different treatment between students of color and white students by the district police force. In 2019, **Black students were 5.7 times more likely than white students to be referred to the Department of Juvenile Justice Services, and Latinx students were 1.4 times more likely.**²⁵ According to data from the Clark County School Justice Partnership, Black students also accounted for “about 46 percent of students committed to long-term detention facilities from 2017 to 2019, while white students accounted for 12 percent.”²⁶

Based on the most recently available data, **Black young people represented 18% of students with disabilities, but were 62% of students with disabilities referred to law enforcement.**²⁷ In contrast, white young people represented **29%** of students with disabilities, but were **12%** of students with disabilities referred to law enforcement.²⁸

At a 2019 school board meeting it was revealed that in one month (May 2019), CCSD police referred 257 students to the criminal legal system. Of those students, 215 (or 84%) were Black or Latinx.²⁹ The vast majority of these referrals were dismissed. In discussing these cases, the District Attorney’s office (DA) said, “most of these cases are for marijuana or fighting”—offenses that were not serious enough for the DA to pursue charges.³⁰

While the district has started a “School Justice Partnership”—a partnership between CCSD, the Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services, and the District Attorney’s Office³¹—this effort revolves around a critical and incorrect assumption that police are needed for safety. Since the inception of the program, the district has seen modest reductions in referrals to court.³² However, thousands of young people each year are still funneled directly from schools into the criminal legal system.³³ For immigrant and undocumented young people, school push-out (punitive discipline practices that push young people out of school) and interactions with police can result in detention and deportation.³⁴



Money Spent on Policing in CCSD

The latest available budget data shows that CCSD spent \$18.4 million on salaries and benefits for members of the district’s police department in 2018–2019.³⁵ While the district has 161 sworn law enforcement officers and 41 civilian officers, they are vastly under-staffed when it comes to nurses, social workers, psychologists, and school counselors.

Support personnel	#	Recommended Ratio	Current estimated student ratio
Nurses	180 ³⁶	1:750 for a healthy student population; 1:225 for student populations requiring daily service; 1:125 for student population with complex needs; 1:1 for students that require daily, continuous care ³⁷	Approximately one per 1,778 students ³⁸ At a minimum, this is less than half as many nurses as are necessary.
Social workers	200 ³⁹	1:400 ⁴⁰	Approximately one per 1,600 students. ⁴¹ This represents four times the recommended ratio.
School psychologists	145 ⁴²	1: 500-700 ⁴³	Approximately one for every 2,200 students. ⁴⁴ The district would need, at a minimum three times the number of psychologists to reach the recommended ratio.
School counselors	800 ⁴⁵	1:100 ⁴⁶ for high-needs districts 1:250 for general education students	Counselors are budgeted to each high school on the basis of one counselor for each 400 students; in elementary and middle schools it is one counselor for every 500 students. ⁴⁷ The district should be budgeting for 1.6 to 4 times as many counselors.

Policing expenditures have risen steadily over the last five years, increasing by 9.3% from 2015 to 2019.⁴⁸ In addition to salary and benefit costs coming out of the school district’s general operating fund, CCSD also spends an unspecified amount of money on policing equipment (e.g., vehicles, technology, firearms, and K9 officers), and holds additional contracts with law enforcement agencies to provide patrols and support for schools in rural communities.⁴⁹

CCSD also reports that it receives federal funding from the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) to “prevent terrorism and other catastrophic events and to prepare the communities for the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to the security of the United States.”⁵⁰ These funds are used to “establish an interoperable communication system that connects every school directly to CCSD Police Department, first responders, and other schools.”⁵¹

Another stream of federal funding comes from the Department of Justice’s Bulletproof Vest Partnership program, which is used by CCSDPD for “advancing the safety of officers through purchasing bulletproof vests.”⁵²

Source: Conducted by the Research Hub for Youth Organizing at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Community Organizing Context



MRNV is a membership-led and membership-driven organization whose membership reflects Black and Brown young people directly impacted by the presence of school resource officers (SROs) in the Clark County School District. MRNV and its members have been in the fight to dismantle the school-to-prison-and-deportation pipeline. The Youth Power Project (YPP) Youth Council was formed in 2019 by young people who wanted to create more opportunities for youth leaders to engage in local grassroots organizing. The YPP Youth Council fights for issues that build the power of Latinx and working class communities of color to achieve dignity and justice through policy innovation and transformative education. In 2020, the YPP Youth Council decided to launch a campaign for police-free schools in Clark County. They proposed a school board resolution, testified at the school board, and have worked to implement critical state legislation.

MRNV fielded in-depth surveys with 138 young people between November 2020 and January 2021. The survey was designed to uncover information about students' experiences, interactions, and feelings about police and security at school. Findings show that police and security guards at school do not make students feel safe; that interactions and sightings of school police and security guards are common, frequent, and often harmful; and that students would overwhelmingly favor additional supports and resources over police and security at school.



Youth Survey Results



Police and security at school do not make students feel safe.

Security guards at school do not make students feel safe, especially compared to other people they interact with at school, like teachers and friends.

When asked what makes respondents feel safe (when physically attending school),

88% selected friends

56% selected teachers

12% selected security guards



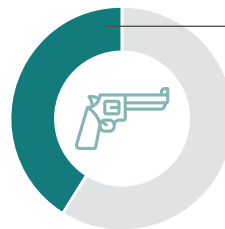
Of respondents with police at school (83% of all survey respondents), 40% reported feeling unsafe or very unsafe when seeing police at school.

The percentage of Black respondents who reported feeling unsafe or very unsafe was even higher (50%).

“The first thing I see entering school is police with weapons around their belt. I feel extremely uncomfortable when I enter because it almost seems as if they’re looking for a problem or something wrong that I did. I get very anxious even though I know I haven’t done anything. The intimidation tactics seem unnecessary. And I’ve seen them take violent actions on my peers.”

“I do not feel safe because I’ve witnessed their abuse of power and refusal to help me when I asked two times because they did not take me seriously. They also ridicule the students and try to make them feel small.”

Both security guards and school police are often armed with guns.



Of respondents with police at school, 39% reported that police are armed with guns.

Of respondents with security guards at school, 29% reported that security guards are armed with guns.

Some students feel targeted by police based on an aspect of their identity.

Nearly a quarter (24%) of respondents have felt targeted by police based on race, primary language, sexual orientation, or gender identity, including identity as transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex.

19% of respondents have felt targeted based on race.

2

Interactions with and sightings of school police and security guards are common, frequent, and often harmful.

Of respondents with police at school, more than half (54%) reported having experienced, or having known someone who has experienced, at least one type of negative interaction with school police.

The share of Black and Latinx respondents who reported having, or knowing someone who had, a negative experiences was even higher—**roughly two thirds of both Latinx respondents and Black respondents.**

“The police make me uneasy and unsafe, as many of them are around before and after school. One time when I was attending school with some of my friends, during lunch in the quad, the police body slammed and pepper sprayed someone. . . Those practices shouldn’t be used on students at all.”

Respondents (with police at school) have experienced a pattern of disturbing behavior in which school police:*



Bully, abuse, and traumatize young people, for example by:

- Verbally harassing or making fun of students (10%)
- Physically assaulting students (8%)
- Pepper spraying students (29%)
- Responding to a mental health crisis (6%)**



Prevent young people from learning while at school, for example by:

- Taking students out of a classroom (37%)



Invade young people’s physical autonomy, for example by:

- Physically searching students (other than walking through a metal detector) (23%)
- Restraining students (23%)



Force young people into the criminal legal system and advance punitive techniques, for example by:

- Arresting students (more than one in four respondents; 29%)
- Responding when a student misses school (11%)
- Issuing juvenile reports (13%)†
- Issuing tickets to go to court (8%)



Sexually harass young people (2%)

These types of interactions can have devastating impacts for young people. One study found that experiencing an arrest for the first time in high school nearly doubles the odds of a student dropping out, and a court appearance nearly quadruples the odds of a student dropping out.⁵³ A series of recent studies reveal that biased treatment caused youth of color to lose more trust for school officials compared with their white peers, which was further correlated with reduced college attendance.⁵⁴

* Percentages refer to respondents who reported having experienced, or having known someone who has experienced, negative interactions with school police.

** We believe it is always inappropriate for school police to respond to mental health crises.

† In Nevada, a juvenile “report” likely refers to a juvenile “referral.”

Students see police at school regularly, and the majority see police at school on a daily basis.



Of respondents with police at school, **99%** saw police at school at least once in an average month. Of these, **61%** saw police at least once daily.

Sightings and interactions with school security guards are also common and frequent.

Of respondents with security guards at school, over a third (**35%**) reported at least monthly interactions with security guards in an average month.



92% of respondents saw security guards in and around their schools at least once in an average month, with over a third of respondents (**37%**) reporting sightings multiple times per day.

Research shows that over time, the **mere presence** of police may have psychological effects on students' "nervous and immune systems that may result in anxiety, restlessness, lack of motivation, inability to focus, social withdrawal, and aggressive behaviors."⁵⁵ Community studies suggest these adverse consequences are compounded when a person perceives that the negative interaction is motivated by race.⁵⁶

“ There was an incident where a student was targeted at school by 5+ officers saying he looked like he had something on him. The student kept repeating that he didn't have anything on him. All 5+ officers used unnecessary force to search him down and he didn't have [anything]. Other students started to “boo” at the officers and that's when the officers decided to pepper spray the whole crowd of students nearby.





Overwhelmingly, students value more support and resources over police and security.

Students would rather increase funding for resources like teachers, nurses, social workers, and mental health supports over police.



When asked to rank investments in order of priority, most students ranked teachers and mental health supports as the highest priorities (51% and 30% ranking these options as #1, respectively).

By contrast, more than three fourths of respondents ranked police as the lowest priority (75%).

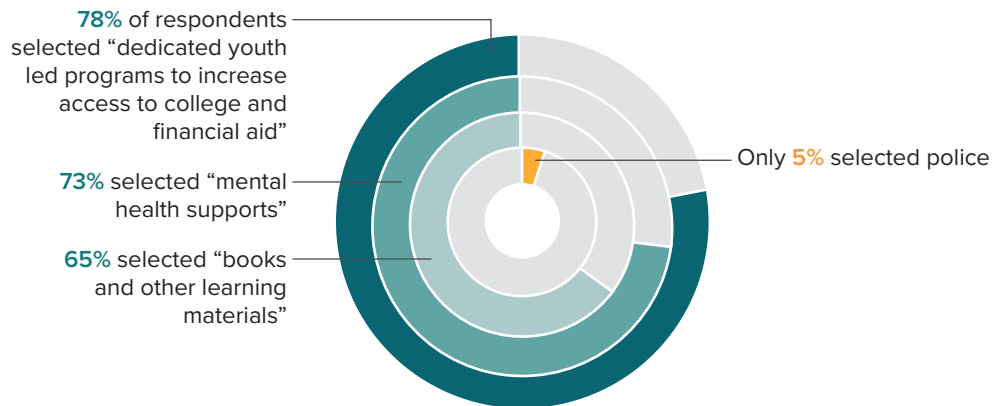
Although the majority of respondents value other school personnel over police, most respondents reported that there are more police at school than school nurses.



Of those with police at school, 83% of respondents reported that there are more police at school than school nurses.

Studies show that investments in counselors,⁵⁷ mental health resources,⁵⁸ and restorative justice⁵⁹ contribute to school safety, yet there is no substantial evidentiary support for the proposition that police presence in schools and suspensions create safe learning environments.⁶⁰

When asked what they would like to see more or better quality of at school, students overwhelmingly selected resources, programs, and supports—not police or security.



“The first thing I see entering school is police with weapons around their belt. I feel extremely uncomfortable when I enter because it almost seems as if they’re looking for a problem or something wrong that I did. I get very anxious even though I know I haven’t done anything. The intimidation tactics seem unnecessary. And I’ve seen them take violent actions on my peers.”

Recommendations

The young people who are the most at risk of harm due to harsh policing policies are uniquely situated to re-imagine school environments. This report highlights the vision for safe, supportive, and inclusive schools developed by youth leaders with MRNV.

This is Our Youth Mandate: Fund Education, Not Incarceration

I Divest from criminalization:

- A Immediately remove all police from schools and close the Clark County School Police Department. Do not expand in any way the security force in CCSD.
- B Terminate all contracts with the local police and sheriff's departments that police in and around Clark County Schools.
- C Immediately end the use of pepper spray and other chemical agents against young people.
- D Remove CCSDPD from responding to mental health crises in schools and from entering schools for any school related matters.
- E End surveillance of young people including by removing metal detectors, surveillance cameras, banning facial recognition software, prohibiting social media tracking, and ending all other forms of invasive surveillance.
- F Stop soliciting federal and state funds used to police, surveil, and criminalize young people. Seek waivers to redirect funds from the federal Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office, Department of Homeland Security or similar federal or state programs to be used on support services instead of policing and criminalizing infrastructure in schools.
- G Fully implement AB490, which requires public schools to collect and report on data on the discipline of all students in Nevada that the State Board of Education will analyze.
- H Direct all schools in the district to not call police into schools unless there is an extreme emergency that threatens the life or safety of other students.
- I End all zero tolerance policies and practices in policing and discipline. End all arrests or citations in schools. Expunge students' discipline records.

II Invest in Our Education

- A Fully fund and implement restorative justice practices at all schools.
- B Fully fund and increase culturally competent school support staff, including teachers, guidance counselors, nurses, social workers, restorative justice coordinators, and academic and social support staff.
- C Ensure all students have access to College Access supports, including Student Success Centers.
- D CCSD must build an anti-racist district by creating a committee of parents, students, educators, union leaders, youth development experts, administrators, and community leaders to evaluate CCSD's educators training, curriculum and district practices to ensure they are anti-racist, anti-adultist, and trauma informed best practices.
- E Create a culturally relevant curriculum.
- F Fully and equitably fund public schools, including programs for students with disabilities and schools in low-income communities.
- G Support a pipeline to college, including by providing free access to college and universities and eliminate barriers to entering higher education.

III Restore and strengthen the civil rights of young people in education

- A Provide maximum local democratic control of the education system. Support youth suffrage, especially on elections impacting their education.
- B Ensure that Black and Brown young people have meaningful input into the process to select educational leaders who have a proven track record of working to dismantle the school-to-prison-and-deportation pipeline.
- C Fully fund and staff civil rights and equity offices.
- D Ensure that all school policies are inclusive, non-punitive, and trauma-informed, including ones related to school discipline, immigrant students, LGBTQIA+ students, and students with disabilities, among others.

IV Uplift public education; end the private takeover of schools

- A End state and tax-payer funding for charter schools and voucher programs.
- B Implement a moratorium on the expansion of charter schools.
- C Fund the Sustainable Community Schools model.



Storybook

General Feelings about Police and Security

As a Black man, we all feel a tension living in America and every time I see a police officer all I can think is how can I make sure that I don't look suspicious or intimidating, a sad reality.

I feel unsafe because even though I have done nothing wrong, I feel as though they would target me for no reason at all.

Seeing police [is] associated with crime and it doesn't feel good having to see cops everywhere. It feels like I'm somewhere I wouldn't want to be. Not a good burden on the environment.

I feel like something bad will happen when there [are] police there.

Typically when I see a police officer or a security guard at school I do not feel very safe.

Police have always made me uncomfortable because I am a minority.

I feel like they are more likely to cause trouble and are very aggressive towards students.

As a Black student who sees the prejudice in [the] media and has been educated [about] the school-to-prison-pipeline, I know that police are only holding [back] my community and are not contributing to the success of Black students.

I feel very threatened and as if I'm always doing something wrong when I see police. It feels like it makes school a hostile environment rather than a safe place. I've seen the way students have been treated at the hands of police and it's something that truly disgusts me.

They just make me feel uneasy because I don't really know what they are there for.

The first thing I see entering school is police with weapons around their belt. I feel extremely uncomfortable when I enter because it almost seems as if they're looking for a problem or something wrong that I did. I get very anxious even though I know I haven't done anything. The intimidation tactics seem unnecessary. And I've seen them take violent actions on my peers.

I went to a predominantly Black and Brown school and felt that I was being watched by police daily. I also had seen my friends searched and heard stories of them being physically assaulted by the police at school. I personally never had any harsh interactions directed at me, but I was very uncomfortable with their presence.

I do not feel safe because I've witnessed their abuse of power and refusal to help me when I asked. . .because they did not take me seriously. They also ridicule the students and try to make them feel small.

There's something that I think is so deeply wrong about the fact that a person on campus gets to just walk around with a gun on them. From the past year you can obviously see that cops have a power dynamic issue and I don't feel comfortable with cops on campus having a gun and being able to use it.

I noticed how uncomfortable other students were and I also noticed they had at least three dogs with them on every floor. It felt less like school and more like being monitored.

When I see police at school it makes me feel unsafe because it makes me think of how at any moment they could pepper spray us or it makes me think our school is unsafe.

The police at my school are white males at a predominantly Black/Brown and other BIPOC school and they make sure to intimidate us every chance they get.

I am uncomfortable around police. . . I have seen them wrongly accuse classmates.

. . .I'm Black and they target Black people.

Personally I've experienced some biasness due to the color of my skin during times when the police have been involved in something that happened to my friend and someone else. I was barely present when the incident happened and only arrived after it, with no connection whatsoever yet the police continuously asked me questions as if I was. . .

They once carried big guns and I felt uncomfortable that they brought that to a school full of kids.

Sometimes I do feel unsafe because of an incident resulting in students getting pepper sprayed because of a fight that occurred. There wasn't a need to endanger everyone's health, but because they had access to it they abused their power.

Their tendency [is] to inflict harm. I feel like there is a power imbalance and I feel afraid that I might be doing something wrong that I'm unaware of, and then get physically assaulted for it.

The police officers have a tendency to be aggressive or stand-off-ish which gives me the feeling that they are waiting to catch one of us doing something wrong.

I do not feel safe because I've witnessed their abuse of power and refusal to help me when I asked two times ever because they did not take me seriously. They also ridicule the students and try to make them feel small.

Police always target the Black and Brown students at my school . . . having them pepper spray and handcuff and watch over them all the time is unnecessary and racist.

The police are an intimidating force and I've seen their interactions with other students, I avoid them as best as I can.

As a white, cis woman, I don't feel targeted by police. However, I don't feel that they will protect others who are unlike me.

Rather than responding to specific incidents or "protecting" students, they feel like the intimidating force. Additionally, rather than making the students feel safe they just harass people in the parking lot, which is already very poorly designed.

I feel unsafe around police at my school because they have weapons such as guns [and] pepper spray.

They had guns bigger than their torso.

Negative Interactions with Police and Security

I have seen a video of a police officer at my school body slam another student, who was not visibly fighting back. Additionally, the police are allowed to pepper spray students, which can be a health issue for those with asthma. I have seen this happen in a crowded area, exposing it to multiple students.

...They stormed into the classroom I was in during a hard lockdown and it was scary.

Police were trying to break up a fight and suddenly used mace on a large crowd of students (including those who were spectating), resulting in a lot of students waiting outside the nurse's office to receive help for their eyes.

The police make me uneasy and unsafe, as many of them are around before and after school. One time when I was attending school with some of my friends, during lunch in the quad, the police body slammed and pepper sprayed someone... Those practices shouldn't be used on students at all.

I've seen officers using unnecessary force in certain situations.

Students have been handcuffed and treated poorly by the officers and it's a shame our school has more officers than mental health resources.

There have been times where students have been tackled and pepper sprayed on multiple occasions as the police's way of diffusing a situation.

There was a time last school year when some kids got into a fight and the campus police pepper sprayed them and you could smell the pepper spray throughout the campus.

There was an incident where a student was targeted at school by 5+ officers saying he looked like he had something on him. The student kept repeating that he didn't have anything on him. All 5+ officers used unnecessary force to search him down and he didn't have [anything]. Other students started to "boo" at the officers and that's when the officers decided to pepper spray the whole crowd of students nearby.

I heard a story about a cop going undercover in schools to arrest kids doing drugs. In the end, she intimidated a kid (who would not have done it otherwise) to do it, ruining his life. I think that cops hurt students more than they help us because they only know how to respond with violence, and when it comes to kids with drugs, all they can do is arrest them, which only makes things worse.

In one fight between two students of color, the Black female in the dispute was body slammed by a police officer. In another fight tear gas was used to "deescalate" the situation and many student and faculty bystanders were affected. Police officers at schools do not work to discourage students to get into physical altercations and therefore it is necessary for schools to consider implementing restorative justice practices.

In the 7 something fights that did happen in my 3 years of being in that school, I always end up hearing about innocent students who were standing by getting pepper sprayed. I also have seen two Black students get body slammed by police... one is from I think last year of a boy who I think was in a fight. People had recording of it on their phones, mostly Snapchat. Last I recalled both students were disobeying rules but that does not justify such violence. I saw two white boys get in a fight and I didn't see them get body slammed. I'm really not sure of this but it seems as if people of color more specifically Black students tend to get bigger punishment for the same actions as their peer counterparts.

I saw multiple male cops come into a female locker room and man handling a 14-year-old girl who had just been jumped. We were all crying and extremely infuriated.

Students are met with physical restraint, pepper spray, body slammed, etc., when there's an issue which is unnecessary. It's traumatizing.

When I was in high school, I really never had an interaction with a School Police Officer, but I always saw how wrong they would treat other students. The way they would talk in the school offices. They would use a lot of inappropriate words that no one should use in front of students.

Methodology and Survey Sample

Clark County School District

Survey findings were the result of a 55-question survey conducted by MRNV staff from November 2020 to January 2021. The survey sample included 138 young people living in Henderson and Las Vegas, Nevada. To take the survey, respondents had to be 21 years old or younger and have attended public school within the last year and a half. Incomplete responses were removed from the sample, except responses that were complete except for the demographic questions (12 respondents).

Respondents were asked to answer questions based on their experiences prior to COVID-19 school closures.

Student Demographics

Respondents identified as: Latinx (40%), white (26%), Asian or Pacific Islander (26%), Black (22%), Native American (2%), and other (2%). (Note: respondents were able to “check all that apply.”)

Respondents’ most commonly spoken languages were English and Spanish. For the majority of respondents English was their primary language spoken at home (63%), followed by Spanish (27%).

Respondents identified as female (71%), male (28%), non-binary/gender non-confirming (3%), and transgender (2%).

Respondents were in 6–12th grade or currently not in school (but had attended school within the last year and a half). The majority of respondents were in 11th or 12th grade (37% and 39% of respondents, respectively).

School Demographics

43% characterized their schools as having an “equal mix of students of color and white students,” 25% of respondents characterized their schools as having “majority Black and Brown students,” 14% as having “majority Brown students,” 13% as having “majority white students,” less than 1 percent as having “majority Black students,” and 4% as “other.” 54% of respondents characterized their schools as having an “approximately equal mix of students from households with low, middle, and high incomes” and 47% of respondents characterized their schools as having a “majority of students from homes with low incomes.”

This data reflects respondents’ assessment of their schools. The report authors did not validate this with demographic data provided by schools or the district.

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