Below is an assortment of research regarding police brutality and why to support defunding the police and the abolition of police, as we know it

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ACAB: What does it mean & why do we say it?

ACAB means “All Cops Are Bastards.” This phrase gets initially confused with “all cops are bad” which is *not* what ACAB means or stands for. ACAB means every single police officer is complicit in a system that actively devalues the lives of people of color. ACAB does not mean that necessarily every cop is a bad cop; it represents that any person actively participating in a corrupt system is bystanding the severe issue of police brutality towards marginalized groups. Police are thought to serve and protect, with media depictions glorifying the institution or white and wealthy areas scarcely seeing police, but unfortunately the police system has systematic racism written into it. Protect and serve also tends to refer to property and *not people*. The constant killing of Black people is no coincidence; staying silent and PARTICIPATING in such a system is a clear show of character that is not fit for a SAFE PLACE for MARGINALIZED GROUPS. Since low-income and physically displaced students tend to be people of color, it is essential that we create a safe space where they do not have to deal with fears and concerns regarding the police system -- having a police officer be a part of our schools completely undermines our initial intent of safety.

With this now understood, keep in mind that every single cop, officer, or anyone affiliated with the policing system has always been complicit. This did not begin a few months ago at the height of George Floyd, nor during the LA Riots, nor even prior to the 20th century. Since the founding of policing, the intent was never centralized on protection. This is why ACAB is stated: at this point, white people and those in privileged positions should know the harm policing does to marginalized groups. Let’s take a deeper look into exactly what this history looks like.

The History of Policing

Colonial Police Force:

Policing in colonial times was very lax; it wasn’t even referred to as policing, but more of “watch guards" looking out for people engaged in prostitution or gambling (who tend to be low-income and/or recent immigrants at the time). The first formal form of policing was not at all for the protection of the people but as slave patrols, in which white men would seek, chase down, and then turn over escaped enslaved people. **This began the first notion of what policing became known for in the US--protection for the privileged white and wealthy, not for the communities that needed it most.** Harking back to slave patrols, keep in mind what horrid punishment would occur to an enslaved person if returned; abuse or some cases murder. This notion shows another parallel in today’s corruption of policing: who is creating laws, who is enforcing them, and who are these laws impacting? As this changed, the military began to work as law enforcement during the Civil War, and during the Reconstruction Era--meant to

reconstruct the lives of previously enslaved people and African-American/Black Americans--the modern day Sheriff originated to prevent, abuse, and punish Black Americans to prevent any form of "reconstruction" at all. This police force--similar to today--forced on segregation and abuse of minority groups. However, when the US was receiving large immigration waves from groups of people they deemed dangerous and submissive to white Americans, there was a greater desire among the privileged for stronger law and order. The rest simply continues to shape itself in ways that we see with conflicts of the police today.

Now, how exactly have these historical implications shown their continuous pursuit today?

Consider the following: "Once you're labeled as a felon, the old forms of discrimination--employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of rights to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service--are suddenly legal...We have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it." The US, having the largest rate of incarceration in the world, proves its historical values continue to be ingrained in the system politically, economically, and socially in the system and in those upholding the system. In some cities, it's gotten to the point where ¾ young Black men--typically from low-income neighborhoods-- will be expected to serve time in prison in cities that are predominately BIPOC. This is not a coincidence at all; let's take a look at drugs and the racial prejudice attached to drugs. White youth are more likely to buy and use drugs, but **BIPOC youth are disproportionately being imprisoned and punished when they are less likely to buy and/or use drugs.** This isn't just a general national trend, but one particularly evident close to home. In Seattle, despite there being hundreds of drug transactions in white neighborhoods, the SPD focused on downtown (predominately Black and Brown) for mass investigations and arrests despite the frequency of drug transactions being much lower. SPD has historically focused on Black and Latinx communities, focusing on one drug (crack) most racially associated with these communities.

With this insight on the history of policing, it's essential to acknowledge how racist sentiments have been embedded into institutional racism and extended to modern day policing. With the intent of creating a safe school for marginalized groups, it's crucial to understand how policing affects them today.

The School-to-Prison Pipeline: BIPOC and Undocumented Youth

When BIPOC and undocumented youth commit offenses, they are often treated with extreme unnecessary aggression, and are often sent to prisons or juvenille detention centers. The offenses committed by these students are often very minor and nonviolent, like simply using a cellphone in class or talking back to a teacher. The zero-tolerance policy written into school handbooks in the 1990s condones consistent, specific, extreme punishment for these minor offenses, and this

policy was based on the “broken windows" theory of crime being a disorder that, if not eliminated and controlled in adolescence, increases the likelihood of patterns or serious crimes committed later on. The zero-tolerance policy disproportionately impacts people of color because racial stereotypes prompt staff to be quick to punish and “contain crime”, which further displays how BIPOC youth are often unfairly criminalized. Additionally, these harsh punishments disregard the hardship, trauma, or emotional obstacles youth in marginalized communities endure, crafting the everlasting assumption that youth are criminals because they are bad students--when in fact, it’s policing and racist instution that create issues in marginalized communities, and hold a higher presence for arrest and brutality because of the very institution itself.

The Dangers of Prison and ICE for Undocumented Youth

As mentioned before, minor offenses committed by BIPOC and undocumented youth can often force youth in juvenile detention centers and local jails; see ISD’s local “high-security” juvenile detention center from grades K-12: Echo Glen. Looking at undocumented youth first, consider the following: if an intake officer suspects that a student is undocumented, they can refer these students to ICE. A cycle of events occurs, placing families in ICE detention centers or even beginning the process of deportation. When undocumented youth are in the presence of police, **there is a constant fear of deportation, putting the safety of themselves and their families at risk.** This isn’t even just true with policing, but also teachers, staff, and other public officials who may respect the affiliation of ICE and police, believing them to protect society. A study by the Pew Research Center found that in 2014, 725,000 students in public and private schools were undocumented, while 3.9 million had a parent who was an unauthorized immigrant. This means that there are many students who could be at risk, and SRO’s are only making their situation worse.

Present Day Policing with POC and Homelessness

Black Students & Police

Just last year, a survey conducted by Tulane University showed that 69% of white students said they felt safer in the presence of police, while only 40% of Black students said the same. The majority of Black students, including kids as young as sixth grade, do not feel safer when police are present. This is the opposite of how children are *supposed* to feel towards police (an institution supposedly for the security and protection of the people) -- and yet, the fear of Black youth towards the police system is understandable and inevitable considering the history of police and how they have discriminated against BIPOC both in the past and modern day today.

Officers also pointed their weapons at people of color disproportionately more often than white people. Considering that most minority groups in the country experience homelessness at higher rates than white people, and that police officers also tend to target those who are physically displaced, there is a harmful connection between the police and such minority groups.

The criminal legal system targets people of color and youth of color experiencing homelessness. Even after kids have served their time the legal system continues to make it hard for them by making it harder for the youth to access resources and then just release them back into homelessness. To add, it's hard for the youth to find jobs or housing because they have a criminal record. This can also cause a result in the youth having discrimination trauma at such a young age.

POC Experiencing Homelessness

"America's poorest neighborhoods, and neighborhoods with the greatest number of non-white residents, are the most likely to see deadly police encounters". Therefore, low income and poc students in our community will feel threatened and unsafe with the involvement of police officers, since some of them may have harmful memories and or experiences with the police force that could steer away students from what is supposed to be a **safe space.** Studies have found that police brutality can reduce school attendance from black students and increase depression. For the students that have had these experiences they will clearly have traumatic memories with police force, seeing one in a school is a trigger and can cause learning to do more harm than good.

Considering they make up a proportionately smaller amount of the population, people experiencing homelessness are arrested (for nonviolent crimes) far more. The trauma that police create for communities of people experiencing homelessness cannot be understated.

Blue Wall of Silence

The blue wall of silence refers to the unofficial oath of silence within departments. Cops have to swear they will not report other cops for their misconducts and even murder. They protect each other from being held accountable, allowing them to commit police brutality and other crimes freely. The blue wall is not easy to break. It runs deep in each police officer, to the point where after they are no longer cops, they still feel a loyalty to their former colleagues, even in the instance of racially-charged murder. Often when police break the wall of silence, they are seen as disloyal and are fired or demoted. This is why there are no "good cops." The good cops, the ones who speak out and report others, get fired. There are only the "bad cops", the ones doing the harm, and the ones who are silent and complicit.

American Police : Throughline

Kalil Muhammad's personal experience with police as a Black student in Philadelphia: "So things went from being treated like I was a black man from West Philadelphia from the hood who didn't belong on campus who was stealing university property to now being treated very gently as a student who they needed to make sure was OK." First police systems in America were to control enslaved black people (slave patrols). SC & VA saw police enforcing brutal slave

codes “the United States was born as one of the most inegalitarian societies in the world.” Early emphasis on “superior” individuals policing the “inferior.” In 1840, Anglo-Saxons/Germans policing Irish/Poles/Black people. Police specifically targeted those at the most economically disadvantaged to ensure they were doing their jobs (ex. immigrants building infrastructure) Including, minimal economic or political freedom and “Police officers were built to police the poor no matter who they were.” Black people targeted during prohibition (WWI) because there were too many people breaking 18th amendment

Will Reforming The System Fix These Issues?

Reform does not work

Police abolition is the only solution- No, we are not saying that America should not have law enforcement, that is needed. While “abolition” sounds scary, we mean we need a new system to replace the current oppressive one because reforming it will not work. But why? The Minneapolis police department, the people that killed George Floyd, was under immense pressure for their history of killing black and unarmed people. In response, the leaders implemented a series of reforms--trainings on implicit bias, mindfulness, de-escalation, and crisis intervention; diversified the department’s leadership; created tighter use-of-force standards; adopted body cameras; initiated a series of police-community dialogues; and enhanced early-warning systems to identify problem officers (and A LOT more) and **none of it worked.** You cannot reform a system that was created with the intention to work the way it is working now. The individual cops are not the problem. Black Lives Matter did not start last june. It started in 2013, and other groups have been around for years before that, and reform has never worked and it never will.

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