STOCKTON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Resolution No. 19-69

Resolution to Promote Shared Safety for Stockton Students & Families and Defund the Stockton Unified School District Police Department

WHEREAS, the past four decades of research indicates that the “focus of public safety investments and attention has been imbalanced and ineffective,” and that communities have deprioritized essential investments in prevention and community health;¹ and

WHEREAS, the “Shared Safety” framework envisions a world in which “everyone can attain safety and everyone takes responsibility for fostering it,” and it recommends that governmental institutions promote safety via five guiding principles:
● Viewing safety via a public health framework
● Promoting holistic well-being
● Centering crime and trauma survivors
● Breaking the cycle of harm
● Making the system work; and

WHEREAS, more than half (57%) of children in California have experienced at least one Adverse Childhood Experience, defined as a traumatic event ranging from physical and emotional abuse, to neglect, poverty, interactions with the criminal systems, and exposure to violence²; and

WHEREAS, violence harms the well-being of students and families and creates barriers for educational and employment opportunities, and the prevention of violence through stable environments, supportive relationships, and mental health services plays a fundamental role in ensuring academic success; and

WHEREAS, the Stockton Unified School District has aimed to become a center for trauma-informed care and instruction, including through expanding access to social workers and other mental health counselors, training in and expanded access to restorative practices, and investing in positive, culturally-rooted instruction; and

WHEREAS, in the wake of a long history of the brutalization and killing of Black individuals, most recently symbolized by the brutal murders of Ahmaud Arbery in the City of Brunswick, GA on February 23, 2020, Breonna Taylor in the City of Louisville, Kentucky by Louisville Metro Police Department officers on March 13, 2020 and George Floyd in the city of Minneapolis by Minneapolis Police Department officers on May 25, 2020, local, national and international individuals and organizations have called for an end to anti-Black racism and over-policing practices; and

¹ Shared Safety, the Alliance for Safety & Justice, a Project of Californians for Safety and Justice
² A Hidden Crisis: Findings on Adverse Childhood Experiences in California, Center for Youth Wellness
WHEREAS, we acknowledge Stockton’s painful history of white supremacy, racism, segregation, state violence, police brutality, and zero tolerance policing tactics which have taken the lives of countless residents in our community; and

WHEREAS, only a handful of California school districts employ their own police agencies and only 36% of California public school students attend schools with police officers, the vast majority of state public schools have set a standard for safety that does not include armed police officers; and

WHEREAS, the Stockton Unified School District Police Department was founded to protect students in the aftermath of a shooting at Cleveland Elementary School in January 1989 by a white supremacist, but the ACLU finds "there is no evidence that increased police presence in schools improves school safety,” and furthermore, by discriminating against Black students and propping up the school to prison pipeline, the Police Department is effectively reinforcing white supremacist goals; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the persistent deaths of Black citizens in the United States at the hands of police officers, the Minneapolis, Denver, Portland and Oakland Unified School Districts, along with others across the country, are terminating contracts with police departments for the policing of schools and/or closing their district-run departments in an effort to redirect resources to healing-centered interventions; and

WHEREAS, under increasing budget pressure, with declining revenues, up to 10% in anticipated cuts to district budgets across the state, and projected local fiscal constraints, it is no longer fiscally possible or financially sustainable to invest in the current structure of safety practices with a police department within the District; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that funding of school police decreases high school graduation rates by approximately 2.5 percent and college enrollment rates by four percent, disproportionately affecting Black and Latinx students; and

WHEREAS, extending the findings of Michelle Alexander’s The New Jim Crow, research illustrates how punitive school system discipline models “(re)produce criminalization of Black youth,” thus depriving them of their right to learn; criminalization of Black children in schools begins as early as preschool (as an implicit, discriminatory gaze) following children in more explicit and direct ways over the course their academic histories, a trajectory now widely

6 http://go.boarddocs.com/ca/susd/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=BLY3QJ07B91A
7 Patrolling Public Schools: The Impact of Funding for School Police on Student Discipline and Long-Term Education Outcomes, Weisberst, 2018
8 Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools, Monique Morris; The trouble with black boys:... and Other reflections on race, equity, and the future of public education, Pedro Noguera
known as the school-to-prison pipeline, and the District has a long record of disproportionately suspending, expelling, involuntarily transferring and arresting Black students, thereby pushing them into a relationship with the carceral state while diverting students from important time in the classroom; and

WHEREAS, through having police in and around school buildings, the District exposes Black students and all students of color, who comprise 93% of the student body in the District, to early police contact, leading to increased risk of student criminalization; and

WHEREAS, according to a study by the American Civil Liberties Union and Stockton Educational Equity Coalition (SEEC), from 2012 - 2016, Black students in SUSD were more than twice (2x) as likely as white students to be arrested or cited by school police, and more than three times (3x) as likely to be arrested or detained for the vague and subjective offense of ‘disturbing the peace’ than every other student group in the District; and

WHEREAS, according to the Local Control Accountability Plan and staff reports, from 2018-2020 the district made significant investments in positive student support, including

- Hiring 30 Mental Health Clinicians
- Hiring 40 new Counselors in K-8 and HS
- Increasing in Social Service Case Managers and Community Assists
- Expanding Wellness Centers to all 4 Comprehensive sites
- Growing the PLUS Program

which have resulted in 27 schools decreasing their rates of chronic absenteeism, suspension, and expulsion; and

WHEREAS, in the 2016-17 academic year the Stockton Unified School District spent at least $3 million of funds designated to meet the unique needs of English Learner, Low-Income, and Foster Youth (LCAP funds) on the SUSD Police Department, and its annual operating budget -- supporting 32 sworn and 11 civilian personnel, excluding non-uniformed campus security -- is approximately $8 million; and

WHEREAS, the perpetuation of the school-to-prison pipeline is incompatible with our goal of creating safe, healthy, and equitable schools for all District students; and

WHEREAS, a strength-based approach for safety that underscores resilience and diversity must be incorporated, and the District is committed to the creation of a positive, supportive school climate for all of its students, and to promoting educational opportunities for all students on an equitable and non-discriminatory basis; and

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14 https://www.stocktonusd.net/LCAP
15 https://www.stocktonusd.net/Page/757
WHEREAS, about 30% of SUSD students feel they do not have a trusted adult on campus who cares about them; and

WHEREAS, there is data that teachers of color and school-based mental health providers improve student achievement and social-emotional well-being including by reducing the likelihood of chronic absenteeism and suspension; and

WHEREAS, SUSD has entered into a consent decree with the Department of Justice to right years of documented concerns, mis-behaviors, and failed policies and oversight of the SUSD Police Force, resulting in improvements but also resulting in annual costs of legal fees, employee time and work, and hours of public meetings, advisory groups, reports, and the like; and

WHEREAS, the entirety of these efforts and costs should be redirected to protective services such as the mental health and care of our youth; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education (the “Board”) directs the Superintendent to take the steps necessary to eliminate the Stockton Unified School District Police Department prior to the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, or as soon thereafter as legally permissible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board directs the Superintendent to ensure that henceforth the District will no longer employ law enforcement or armed security presence of any kind within District schools and immediately begin work to develop a revised District Student Shared Safety plan, which accommodates for emergency situations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board directs the Superintendent to launch, by no later than August 31, 2020, an inclusive, community-driven process involving parents/guardians, students, teachers, school administrators, student support staff, and other community partners for completing a revised District Student Shared Safety Plan, which shall include (at the minimum):

- An inventory of our current student-centered safety considerations,
- Research on practices and programs to promote holistic student safety, including an analysis of neighboring schools and/or districts from which Stockton USD can learn,
- A summary of the feasibility and impact of implementing this new Safety Plan, including:
  - An estimated timeline,
  - Proposed staffing,
  - Projected cost savings from the disinvestment in policing (including in staff time and other expenses),
  - Recommended allocations for these cost savings, and
- A plan to ensure that this Safety Plan is implemented by a diverse team that reflects the demographics of our student body, specifically ensuring that it involves staff members proficient in serving Black, Latinx, Indigenous/Native American, and/or LGBTQI students;

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16 PLUS Program School Climate Data, Winter 2020
17 Diversifying the Teaching Profession Through High-Retention Pathways, Learning Policy Institute, 2018
18 Cops and No Counselors: How the Lack of School Mental Health Staff Is Harming Students, ACLU, 2019
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board directs the Superintendent to reallocate funds previously used for sworn police officers to implement the strategies named in the revised Shared Student Safety plan including but not limited to the expansion of a positive Ethnic Studies program to combat systemic racism, the expansion of transformative and/or restorative justice programs, the hiring of mental and behavioral health professionals, wellness centers, ongoing support for and expansion of music and art classes, and basic needs assistance, as the budget supports, to meet the needs of students; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Superintendent or their designee shall provide at least two reports to the Board during the 2020-21 school year on the progress of the community-driven process in creation of a District safety plan, with adoption no later than December 31, 2020.

ADOPTED by the Governing Board of Education of the Stockton Unified School District on this 23rd day of June, 2020 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Brian Biedermann, Interim Superintendent
Governing Board of Education, Stockton Unified School District, San Joaquin County, State of California