

June 11, 2020

DPS Board Members,

As diverse school leaders in DPS, we want to thank you all for your leadership in these challenging times and your commitment to equity for our students. As leaders of our diverse communities, we are all committed to equity as well and truly want to work in collaboration with the board so that racial injustice can end and we can have safe and supportive environments for all students.

The purpose of this letter is to share the collective, and unified voice of the diversity of school leaders who have SROs on their campuses. The board resolution that we are aware of calls for SROs to be eliminated from schools as a part of examining discipline in DPS.

We are opposed to the board resolution, in its current form.

We are disappointed that you did not seek school leader input prior to releasing a draft BOE resolution to the community. We want to be co-conspirators to end racism and racist systems, but there cannot be a “co” if we are not given a seat at the table.

As school leaders, we believe that a resolution that calls to eliminate SROs is premature. It is solutions focused instead of root cause focused. Instead, we believe that DPS needs to re-examine its discipline policies and academic structures in order to eliminate racial injustice. As we engage in a review of the current disciplinary processes, it may be determined that the role of the SRO needs to be revised, that SROs would be eliminated, that the discipline matrix needs revision, or other outcomes that may be identified. A review process would allow us to get to the root of the systemic changes that we, as leaders, are committed to making.

The current resolution calls for eliminating SROs from school campuses with no plan for moving forward. Given this resolution, here are some of the outstanding questions that we have as school leaders:

- 1) We have been told to refer issues to DPD because of the legal components involved. What does this look like without an SRO on campuses?
 - a) Student(s) brings a weapon on campus
 - b) Student(s) sexually assault another student
 - c) Student(s) sexually assault a staff member
 - d) Student(s) selling drugs on campus? Not just marijuana.
 - e) Staff member sexually assaults a student?
- 2) What is the commitment from DPD to response times if there are not SROs on campus?
 - a) DPS Safety and Security says “maybe 90 seconds, but that is if there are no cuts by the city to DPD.” - Chief Eaton on call with Tay and Jen
- 3) SROs have great relationships with students and have context on how to respond to situations. In our experience, when other officers respond to the school context, they do not enter situations with a “students-first” lens. How will we ensure that when DPD does need to respond, that students are being put first?

In order to move forward, we require the following:

- 1) Involve school leaders in a collaborative process honoring the DPS value of Collaboration
- 2) Form a working committee to propose recommendations for adjustments to the discipline approach for DPS comprised of the following stakeholders:
 - a) SROs
 - b) Deans
 - c) School Leaders
 - d) Students
 - e) Parents
 - f) Community Members
- 3) Provide opportunities for school leaders who have SROs on their campus to experience other campuses without SROs to see how those campuses function
- 4) Collaboratively generate a plan to ensure the safety of every student on our DPS campuses
- 5) Collaboratively work together on all future decisions so that school leaders are a part of decisions proactively

We stand for justice. We are stronger when we stand up for justice together.

Thank you for working in collaboration with the diverse school leaders in Denver who work tirelessly with our students on a daily basis!

Sincerely,

Tiffany Almon, Principal John F. Kennedy High School
Melissa Boyd, Principal Bruce Randolph School
Amy Bringedahl, Principal Northfield High School
Mike Christoff, Principal Thomas Jefferson High School
Ann Cobb, Principal, Respect Academy High School
Antonio Esquibel, Principal Abraham Lincoln High School
Joe Glover, Principal Manual High School
Jose Martinez, Interim Principal Noel Community Arts School
Mia Martinez Lopez, Succession Principal West Early College
Lindsay M. Meier, Bear Valley International School
Ana Mendoza, Principal West Early College
Suzanne Morris-Sherer, McAuliffe Manual Middle School
Teresa Steele, Principal North High Engagement Center
Bobby Thomas, Principal, Denver South High School
Kristin Waters, Principal, George Washington High School
Scott Wolf, Principal North High School
John R. Youngquist, Principal, Denver East High School