For Education

Youth Mandate

A Mandate to Guide Us from Crisis to Liberation

And Liberation
ENDORSED BY YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR ALLIES

482Forward
50 Miles More
A Leadership Journey
A.C.C.E
Action Center on Race and the Economy
Activists With A Purpose
Advancement Project National Office
Alliance for Police Accountability-PGH
Alliance for Quality Education
Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools
Anti Police-Terror Project
ARISE
Arkansas Community Organizations
AROS-Prince Georges County
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Badass Teachers Association
Black Parallel School Board
Black Skeptics
Black Student of California United
Blue Future
Blue Hills Civic Association
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
Building Community Capacity, LLC
Californians for Justice
CASA
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Disability Rights
Center for Popular Democracy
Center for Youth & Community Leadership in Education (CYCLE)
Chicago Teachers Union
Chispa
Cia Siab, Inc.
Coastal Youth Media
Communities for Just Schools Fund
Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice
Critical Exposure
Critical Studies Working Group
Deep Center
Detroit Action
Detroit Area Youth Uniteding Michigan (DAYUM)
Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative at the NYU Metro Center
Edward W. Hazen Foundation
El Pueblo, Inc.
Elite Educational Consulting
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
ELYTE
End Mass Incarceration Georgia Network
EveryBlackGirl, Inc
Faith in Action - East Bay
Faith in New Jersey
Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children
Fannie Lou Hamer Center For Change
Fathers & Families of San Joaquin
Florida Student Power Network
Fort Collins Community Action Network
Freedom, Inc.
Fresno Barrios Unidos
Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing
Girls for Gender Equity
GO-HIGH CORP
Good Journey
Granite State Organizing Project
Hearing Youth Voices
Helping Hands Community Outreach Services
Hmong American Women's Association
HOMEY
InnerCity Struggle
IntegrateNYC
Journey for Justice Alliance
Justice Teams Network
JustLeadershipUSA
Juvenile Justice Coalition
Juvenile Law Center
Keller Williams Atlanta Midtown
Khmer Girls in Action
Latinos Unidos Siempre
Lawyers for Good Government (L4GG)
Leaders Igniting Transformation
Living United for Change in Arizona
Make the Road Connecticut
Make the Road Nevada
Make the Road New Jersey
Make the Road New York
Make the Road Pennsylvania
Manhattan Country School
Many Languages One Voice - MLOV
Marion County Commission On Youth, Inc
Maryland Communities United
MomsRising
New Georgia Project
New Jersey Parents Caucus
New Jersey Youth Caucus
NJ21United
Nollie Jenkins Family Center, Inc.
NY Working Families Party
NYC Coalition for Educational Justice
Ohio Student Association
OLÉ (Organizers in the Land of Enchantment)
One Pennsylvania
Open Society Policy Center
Our Future West Virginia - Young West Virginia
Pa’lante Restorative Justice
Padres & Jovenes Unidos
Parents Organized for Public Education
Parents Supporting Parents NY
Performing Statistics
Policing and Social Justice Project
Prevention at the Intersections
Project KnuckleHead
Project VOYCE
Providence Student Union
PrYSM (Providence Youth Student Movement)
Public Justice Center
Revere Youth in Action
Rights & Democracy
Rights4Girls
RISE Coalition Tri-City
RISE for Youth
Schott Foundation for Public Education
Sistas’ With Voices
Social Fabric Research
Social Impact Design Studios
Southern Coalition for Social Justice
SPACEs in Action
Special Education Advocacy Services of Luzerne, LLC
STEAM Box
Step Up Louisiana
Student Advocacy Center of Michigan
Student Voice
Teachers Unite
Tenants and Workers United
The Choice Program at UMBC
The Daniel Initiative
The Dignity in Schools Campaign
The Gathering for Justice
The Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy
The Telfair Lift Every Voice Organization
The Village Method
Together for Brothers (T4B)
Twin Cities Innovation Alliance
United Teachers of Los Angeles
Urban Youth Collaborative
Virginia Council on LGBTQ+
Wide Angle Youth Media
Women’s Leadership Project
Young Invincibles
Young Organizers United
Young Voices
Youth Alliance
Youth Everywhere Rising and Resisting (YERR)
Youth In Action
Youth Justice Project of the Southern Coalition for Social Justice
Youth on Board
Youth Pride, Inc.
YouthRise Texas
YVote/Next Generation Politics

Endorsed by youth organizations and their allies

Youth Mandate for Education and Liberation +++ www.youthmandate.com
INTRODUCTION

For more than three decades, Black and Brown youth, parents, educators, and communities have organized to dismantle the school-to-prison-and-deportation pipeline. As a core feature of that fight, Black young people have relentlessly called for police-free schools. Their experiences have made clear that police do not keep them safe.

This report articulates young people’s mandate to their government—local, state, and federal—to permanently end the school-to-prison-and-deportation pipeline and build a liberatory education system based on principles of inclusion, equity and racial justice.

At this moment, the federal government has a particular opportunity to change course, repair harm and act decisively to advance this goal. After providing our guiding principles for all levels of government, this document lays out specific actionable policy demands Black and Brown young people (and their allies) have for the federal government - both the Administration and Congress - to take right now to begin dismantling the school-to-prison-and-deportation pipeline.
The school-to-prison-and-deportation pipeline is one of the most egregious examples of systemic racism and state sanctioned violence in our country. The school-to-prison-and-deportation pipeline refers to the combination of policies and practices that punish, isolate, marginalize, and deny young people who are Black, Brown, Latinx, Indigenous, immigrant, LGBTQIA+, youth with disabilities, and young people at the intersections of those identities, from access to nurturing and supportive learning environments and instead funnels them into the criminal legal system. For immigrants and undocumented young people, school push-out can result in detention and deportation.\(^1\)

The national outcry following the police murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and many other Black people, has laid bare the urgent need to address the horrific police violence Black people face across this country every day. For youth of color, there is no escape. As young people navigate two worlds—their communities and their schools—they know one truth: that the police who are harassing and brutalizing them in the streets are the same as the ones doing so in their schools. In 2020, due to the longstanding work of young people of color, the country saw unprecedented progress towards police-free schools. As just a few examples, Oakland voted to dismantle its school police department,\(^2\) and places like Milwaukee,\(^3\) Minneapolis,\(^4\) Portland,\(^5\) and Madison,\(^6\) have all ended school district contracts with police departments. Nearly 40 districts have taken some action towards removing police from schools.\(^7\) Young people’s vision is possible and support for this vision is growing.

Over the last several years, the United States Department of Education (US ED) has encouraged and steered local school districts towards creating hostile learning environments for students of color and embedding the criminal legal system within public schools.\(^8\) Federal agencies such as the Department of Education and Department of Justice (US DOJ) have supported the exponential growth of charter schools,\(^9\) provided some school districts with military grade weapons,\(^10\) and established grant programs contributing over $1 billion to “school safety” funding that subsidized more than 7,240 school resource officers\(^11\) leading to the systemic criminalization of students of color.

The resulting disparities across race and disability are staggering. A 2018 report by the Government Accountability Office found that Black students are overrepresented in every disciplinary category, including arrests, referrals to law enforcement, suspensions, and expulsions.\(^12\) The disparities are widespread and persistent across the country. Nationwide, Black students were only 15.5 percent of all students, but accounted for nearly 35 percent of school-related arrests, according to the most recently available data.\(^13\) Furthermore, while students with disabilities were about 12 percent of all students, they accounted for 27.5 percent of the students referred to law enforcement or arrested in school.\(^14\) Indeed, in 2016, even the United Nations highlighted the disproportionate impact of school discipline in the United States and recommended changes to school discipline including the removal of police from schools and addressing the racial discrimination faced by Black students.\(^15\)
There is no substantial evidence that police and hardened security measures make schools any safer.\textsuperscript{16} However, there is evidence that placing law enforcement in schools makes it more likely that students of color will be arrested for low-level offenses, including disorderly conduct, disturbing the school, and other subjective offenses.\textsuperscript{17} Incidents that result in white students being referred to a principal or counselor end in Black students being referred to the police and prosecutors, despite no difference in behavior.\textsuperscript{18} These policies have an especially harsh impact on immigrant and undocumented students, who can face detention and deportation for even low-level offenses.\textsuperscript{19}

While the COVID-19 pandemic has created a health and economic crisis of epic proportions, for young people of color, and Black youth - youth with disabilities and Black youth with disabilities in particular - attending school with constant police presence has been an ongoing crisis of criminalization and discrimination they face daily. Thus, any plans for the safe reopening of schools, in this moment, must focus on dealing both with the health and economic impacts of COVID-19, and the scourge of police presence in schools, police brutality, and the criminalization of Black, Brown, and youth with disabilities at schools. When schools reopen, they must be police-free and there must be deep investment in young people’s education.

Creating a liberatory education system is possible. It requires local, state and federal officials to follow the vision of youth of color and support their education, creativity, joy and ultimately their dignity. When young people close their eyes and think about what they need when they are learning something new, want to laugh or feel creative, are feeling bullied, need to solve conflict, or want their learning environments to be inclusive, they do not imagine metal detectors and police officers. They imagine safe spaces where they can receive support from staff trained in culturally responsive social and emotional development. When schools allow students to lead efforts to transform school culture and climate, they develop fairness committees, expand peer mediation, build restorative justice teams, and create safe spaces where peers who feel isolated or need to repair harm can build strong and trusting relationships. Youth are changing the paradigm of discipline and punishment and advocating for schools to respond to the needs of all young people, but especially the most vulnerable, by drawing every young person into systems of support and refusing to implement practices that treat them as disposable.\textsuperscript{20} Rather than creating a pipeline to police, prisons, and jails, young people want to build pipelines to knowledge, supportive relationships, and into bright futures as fully capable members of society, whether that be in and through college, or careers, or any of the other bold and inspiring paths.

Our society and our government have an opportunity to shift the course of history, now. Data shows that Black and Brown young people turned out in record numbers for the 2020 election which led to President Biden’s victory.\textsuperscript{21} Among all age groups, young people were the most likely to say that racism was a serious problem in the United States, and for many, this issue motivated their voting choice. For example, 45 percent of Black youth named protests over police violence as the single most important factor determining their vote.\textsuperscript{22} Through voting, protesting, going to community meetings, showing up at school board meetings and outside the White House, young people have delivered their mandate: begin by permanently ending the school-to-prison-and-deportation pipeline. We want education and liberation, not police and incarceration.
A MANDATE TO GUIDE US FROM CRISIS TO LIBERATION

OUR VISION AND MANDATE BEGINS WITH POLICE-FREE SCHOOLS.

We believe in police-free schools. To achieve police-free schools, every level of government must, to the fullest extent of their power, dismantle school policing infrastructure, culture, and practice; end school militarization and surveillance; and build a new liberatory education system.  

To accomplish this end we must shrink the power police have over Black youth, students of color, immigrant youth, youth with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ students; return power and control over schools and safety to communities; and, build a liberatory education system that reflects the society we want to create.
I FUND EDUCATION NOT INCARCERATION.
A Remove police from schools and divest all funds from police and criminalizing infrastructure in schools.
B 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.
C Invest in effective non-punitive culturally responsive school climate strategies like restorative justice, mental health supports, and hiring counselors and social workers.
D Fully and equitably fund public schools, including programs for students with disabilities and schools in low-income communities.
E Support a pipeline to college, including by providing free access to college and universities and eliminate barriers to entering higher education.

II 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.

III 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.

FOR THE YOUTH MANDATE TO BE REALIZED, LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL OFFICIALS MUST TAKE DECISIVE ACTION NOW.
TO ADVANCE THESE PRINCIPLES, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST IMPLEMENT SEVERAL POLICIES. WITHIN THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF THE ADMINISTRATION, PRESIDENT BIDEN MUST:

- Direct his appointed Secretary of Education and Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights within the Department of Education to publicly commit to police-free schools. These officials must take immediate action to uplift the civil rights of young people in schools, commit to a systemic review and investigation of civil rights violations, and state that they will apply a disparate impact analysis to claims of discrimination, as appropriate.

- Support and drive budget actions that:
  - End, to the extent allowed by law, all federal funding for police in schools;
  - Fully fund the Office for Civil Rights within the Department of Education, including the cost necessary to restaff the office;
  - Cut funding to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE);
  - Fully fund Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
  - Provide state and local governments with sufficient funding for K-12 public education, specifically to prevent education budget cuts and address funding shortfalls caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;
  - Invest in expanding the sustainable community schools model; and,
  - Increase funding to grant programs that provide culturally responsive supports and resources to schools including more teachers, guidance counselors, and restorative justice practitioners.

- Issue an executive order that immediately and unequivocally ends the 1033 program and order any recipients of equipment to return and/or dismantle all weapons, vehicles, and equipment received under the program.

- Take immediate action to forgive all student loan debt. Provide free access to college for all students, including undocumented students.

- Strengthen and re-issue civil rights guidance for students of color, students with disabilities, immigrant students, female students, students who are transgender, and all LGBTQIA+ students. Immediately rescind all guidance that limits the civil rights of these groups.

- Create a comprehensive plan to address the educational loss and changed educational trajectory, reduction in college graduation, unfair disciplinary practices, and other education related harms caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
The Administration must act with the urgency this ongoing crisis requires. Young people of color have suffered under the violence of a police state in their schools - schools the government has failed to adequately and equitably invest in - for far too long. The new Administration must quickly seize the opportunity presented by the youth mandate delivered during the election to fully invest in schools so they can be thriving places of learning, growth and creativity for young people.

While the Administration has a responsibility to act swiftly, the path towards fulfilling the Youth Mandate for Education and Liberation will require deep commitment and dedicated action from all parts and levels of government. At the federal level, both Congress and the Administration hold significant responsibilities. What follows are the specific policy changes young people demand of their federal government.
I FUND EDUCATION NOT INCARCERATION

END ALL FEDERAL FUNDING FOR POLICE AND CRIMINALIZING INFRASTRUCTURE IN SCHOOLS.

ADMINISTRATION:

• End all funding for police in schools and re-prioritize all available agency grant funds towards culturally responsive supportive services.
• Call on local education agencies to end police presence in schools.
• Close the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Program.
• Support and drive budget action that remove all funding for the Department of Defense 1033 program.
• Abolish Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). In the meantime:
  – Prohibit all cooperation - including information sharing - between immigration officials and schools;
  – Institute an immediate moratorium on ICE arrests, detentions, and deportations; and,
  – End all agreements that allow local law enforcement, including school police, to participate directly in federal immigration enforcement, including 287(g) agreements.
• Prohibit the use of strip searches, corporal punishment, restraints (chemical or physical), and seclusion in and around schools. Require states to report on any and every use of such measures.

CONGRESS:

• Repeal the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (’94 Crime Bill) and replace it with a community driven reimagination of public safety.
• Pass the Counseling Not Criminalization in Schools Act.
• Pass legislation that:
  – Ends all federal funding for police in schools and campuses.
  – Ends all federal funding for the purchase and/or maintenance of surveillance equipment in schools such as metal detectors, cameras, facial recognition software, social media tracking, and other forms of invasive surveillance.
  – Prohibits surveillance of young people including removing metal detectors, cameras, facial recognition software, social media tracking, and other forms of invasive surveillance.
  – Bars the use of strip searches, corporal punishment, restraints (chemical or physical), and seclusion. Require states to report on the use of such measures.
  – Prohibits sharing student information with all law enforcement personnel, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and other immigration enforcement officials.
  – Ends funding for the Department of Defense 1033 program.
**INVEST IN EDUCATION.**

**ADMINISTRATION:**

- Support and drive budget actions that:
  - Fully fund Title I and IDEA.
  - Provide state and local governments with sufficient funding for K-12 public education to prevent education budget cuts and address state and local funding shortfalls caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Increases funding to grant programs that provide culturally responsive support and resources to schools including more teachers, guidance counselors, psychologists, and restorative justice practitioners.

**CONGRESS:**

- Pass a budget that:
  - Fully funds Title I and IDEA.
  - Provides state and local governments with sufficient funding for K-12 public education to prevent education budget cuts and address the state and local funding shortfalls caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Create grant programs that provide culturally responsive support and resources to schools including more teachers, guidance counselors, psychologists, and restorative justice practitioners.

**SUPPORT A PIPELINE TO COLLEGE, INCLUDING BY PROVIDING FREE ACCESS TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, AND ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO HIGHER EDUCATION.**

**ADMINISTRATION:**

- Provide free access to college for all students, including undocumented students.
- Take immediate administrative action to forgive all student loan debt.

**CONGRESS:**

- Ensure access to all levels of education for young people impacted by the criminal legal system. Develop a grant program to provide access to re-enter educational institutions for people denied federal grants because of their involvement in the criminal legal system.
- Prohibit colleges and universities who receive federal funding from:
  - Requiring students to report disciplinary infractions during the admissions process.
  - Having a campus police force.
II  RESTORE AND STRENGTHEN THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

STAFF AND FUND CIVIL RIGHTS OFFICES THAT UPHOLD THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

ADMINISTRATION:

• Direct the appointed Secretary of Education and Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights within the Department of Education to publicly commit to police-free schools. These officials must take immediate action to uplift the civil rights of young people, commit to systems review of civil rights violations, and state that they will apply a disparate impact analysis to claims of discrimination, as appropriate.

• Support and drive budget actions that fully fund the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR), including funding to re-staff and expand the office to fully meet the civil rights enforcement needs of the country.

• Ensure that those who are hired in OCR and companion agency offices at the US DOJ believe in disparate impact analysis and evaluating systemic violations of civil rights. Those hired must also have a demonstrated commitment to acknowledging and upholding young people’s civil and human rights.

• Ensure appropriate and thorough investigation of all cases brought to the OCR.
ENSURE THAT ALL SCHOOL POLICIES, INCLUDING ONES RELATED TO DISCIPLINE, IMMIGRANT STUDENTS, LGBTQIA+ STUDENTS, STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, AMONG OTHERS, ARE INCLUSIVE, NON-PUNITIVE, AND TRAUMA-INFORMED.

ADMINISTRATION:

• Strengthen and re-issue civil rights guidance for students of color, students with disabilities, immigrant students, female students, students who are transgender, and all LGBTQIA+ students. Immediately rescind all guidance that limits the civil rights of these groups.
• Call on local education agencies to end police presence in schools.
• Issue guidance that clearly states that local school districts should not use surveillance technology, including facial recognition software, social media or email monitoring, surveillance cameras, metal detectors, or similar technology.
• Significantly strengthen and re-issue the Federal Guidance for Improving School Climate and Discipline.
• Recognize and affirm young people’s right to organize and protest.

CONGRESS:

• Pass legislation that:
  - Prevents the use of zero tolerance policies, and vague and discriminatory offense types such as disorderly conduct, willful defiance, vulgarity, truancy, tardiness, chronic absenteeism, or a violation of a grooming or appearance policy.
  - Bans suspensions and expulsions.

SUPPORT MAXIMUM LOCAL DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM.

ADMINISTRATION:

• Champion and protect local democratic control of school systems and counsel against state takeovers of school districts.
• Support youth suffrage in federal, state and local elections.

CONGRESS:

• Pass legislation that supports youth suffrage in federal, state and local elections.
• Lower the voting age to 16 years old.
III UPLIFT PUBLIC EDUCATION; END THE PRIVATE TAKEOVER OF SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATION:

- Completely defund the Federal Charter School Program.
- End funding for charter schools, charter school authorizers, and charter school management companies (especially those not authorized or operated by local school districts) and voucher programs. Prioritize all grant dollars for traditional public schools and the expansion of community schools.
- Implement a moratorium on Charter Expansion.
- Support and drive budget actions that fund the expansion of the sustainable Community Schools model.

CONGRESS:

- Clarify throughout education funding programs that funding must be prioritized for traditional public schools, not charter schools.
- Pass The Full-Service Community School Expansion Act to fund the expansion of the sustainable Community Schools model.
NOTES


7. Tracker on file with author.


13. Id. at 12 (noting population of Black students is 15.5%), 14 (showing the 19.4% overrepresentation of Black students in arrests).

14. Id. at 7, 17.


19. By arresting or citing immigrant students for offenses like marijuana possession, fighting, and disorderly conduct, police place undocumented students, as well as lawful permanent residents, at risk under aggressive deportation policies. Students who are in the United States lawfully but are not American citizens may be subject to deportation if they plead guilty to even minor charges levied against them in school. For example, the New York City Council stated that “[i]mmigrants, including lawful permanent residents, are automatically eligible for deportation if they have two convictions for marijuana, even when charged as noncriminal municipal violations.” Government Affairs Division, “Briefing Paper for the Committee on Courts and Legal Services and the Committee on Immigration: Evaluating Attorney Compliances with Padilla v. Kentucky and Court Obstacles for Immigrants in Criminal and Summons Courts;” (2015) 10, available at https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2478720&GUID=B1C86913-6ED6-495F-95C4-1CF931D087&AA&Options=&Search= citing Heidi Altman, Prosecuting Post-Padilla: State Interests and the Pursuit of Justice for Non-Citizen Defendants, Georgetown L.J. (2012) 1-43, available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2031151.

20. Vision developed by Urban Youth Collaborative.


23. Definition created by the National Campaign for Police Free Schools convened by Advancement Project and Alliance for Educational Justice.

24. Id.

