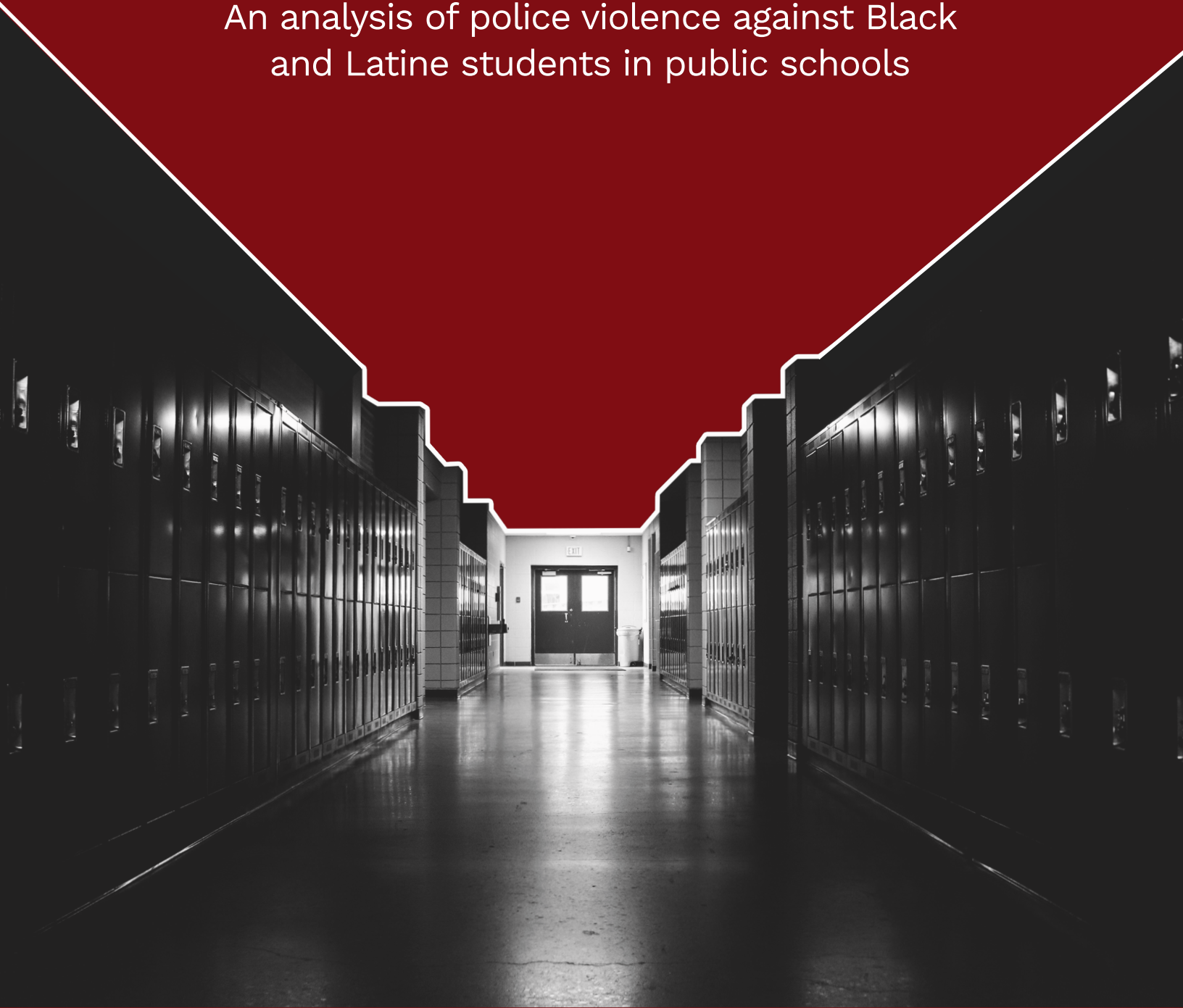


#AssaultAtSpringValley

An analysis of police violence against Black
and Latine students in public schools



#POLICEFREESCHOOLS

**ADVANCEMENT
PROJECT**

Alliance for
Educational
Justice

FAR FROM MAKING SCHOOLS SAFER, SCHOOL POLICING ACTIVELY HARMS BLACK AND LATINE STUDENTS

The assertion that police are needed in schools to prevent and respond to violence is a typical response in the immediate aftermath of a school shooting. Existing research demonstrates, however, that school police do not make schools safer nor do they avert school shootings,¹ rather they negatively impact school climate and student safety.² Heavily policed atmospheres can increase anxiety among students, alienate students, create a sense of mistrust between peers, and result in adversarial relationships between students and school officials.³

Research has demonstrated that the presence of police in schools is a driver of the school-to-prison pipeline, increasing student arrests⁴ and exclusionary discipline⁵ while decreasing instructional time,⁶ student attendance,⁷ and on-time graduation.⁸ School policing disproportionately drives Black students into the youth and adult punishment systems⁹ despite the fact that Black students do not misbehave more than their white peers.¹⁰ School policing also comes with a host of collateral consequences for Black and Latine youth and

their families, including lost course credits, the burden of legal costs and court fees, the stress of family separation, and even serious threats to the student's or family's immigration status.¹¹

Our Analysis Adds to The Well-Documented Harms of School Policing By Shining a Light on Yet Another Peril of School Policing: Violence Against Students Perpetrated By School Police.

In this report, we present the findings of a combined quantitative/qualitative data analysis of 285 incidents of police assaults between 2011 and 2021. This analysis dramatically illustrates how school policing places students, especially Black students, at a significant risk of criminalization and assault, as evidenced by the heartbreaking, far-too-frequent videos of school police officers using physical force on children.¹² Our analysis of these #AssaultAt incidents helps us better understand the extent to which school policing jeopardizes the physical safety and health of Black and Latine students, girls, students with disabilities, and students attending predominately low-income schools.

¹ Livingston, M. D., et al. (2019). A descriptive analysis of school and school shooter characteristics and the severity of school shootings in the United States, 1999–2018. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 64, 797–799.

² Nance, J. P. (2015). Students, police, and the school-to-prison pipeline. *Washington University Law Review*, 93, 919.

³ Beger, R.R. (2003). The worst of both worlds. *Criminal Justice Review*, 28, 336–340.; Nolan, K. (2011). Police in the hallways: Discipline in an urban high school. *University of Minnesota Press*.

⁴ Owens, E. G. (2017). Testing the school-to-prison pipeline. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 36(1), 11–37.

⁵ Fisher, B.W., & Hennessy, E.A. (2016). School Resource Officers and exclusionary discipline in U.S. high schools: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Adolescent Research Review*, 1, 217–233; Weisburst, E., (2019) Patrolling public schools: The impact of funding for school police on student discipline and long-term education outcomes. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 38, 338–365.

⁶ Losen D. & Martinez, P. (2020). Is California Doing Enough to Close the School Discipline Gap? The Center for Civil Rights Remedies, *The Civil Rights Project at UCLA*. <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/school-discipline/is-california-doing-enough-to-close-the-school-discipline-gap>.

⁷ Brady K.P., Balmer S., & Phenix D. (2007). School-police partnership effectiveness in urban schools: An analysis of New York City's Impact Schools Initiative. *Education and Urban Society*, 39,455–478.

⁸ Weisburst, E., (2019).

⁹ Homer, E.M., & Fisher, B.W. (2020). Police in schools and student arrest rates across the United States: Examining differences by race, ethnicity, and gender. *Journal of School Violence*, 19, 192–204.

¹⁰ Contrary to some popular opinion, research in the area of office referrals, suspension, and expulsion has shown that Black students are not receiving disproportionate school disciplinary consequences due to higher rates of misbehavior. See Skiba, R. (2013). Reaching a critical juncture for our kids: The need to Reassess school-justice practices. *Family Court Review*, 51(3), 380–387.

¹¹ Burrell, S. & Rourke, S. (eds.) (2011). Collateral consequences of juvenile delinquency proceedings in California: A handbook for professionals. *Pacific Juvenile Defender Center*. <https://njdc.info/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/PJDC-CA-Collateral-Consequences-Handbook-2011.pdf>

¹² Advancement Project/Alliance for Educational Justice. (2021). #AssaultAt Map. <https://policefreeschools.org/map/>.

WHAT IS AN #ASSAULTAT?

On October 26, 2015, a 16-year-old Black girl attending Spring Valley High School in Columbia, South Carolina was placed in a headlock, flipped over in her desk, then dragged and thrown across her classroom by a school police officer.¹³ While many of her classmates lowered their heads in fear, others recorded the attack on their phones. One of these videos went viral, exposing many to the shocking actions of Deputy Sheriff Ben Fields (referred to by students as “Officer Slam” even before the incident) which would later be known as the *#AssaultAtSpringValley*. The 16-year-old survivor and a Black girl classmate who recorded the incident were arrested, sent to juvenile detention, and charged with “disturbing a school function.”

The Alliance for Educational Justice (AEJ), a national network of over 30 youth-led and intergenerational grassroots organizations fighting to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline, responded to the *#AssaultAtSpringValley* by collecting data to bring attention to the frequent

and widespread abuse endured by Black and other students of color at the hands of school police and the school policing infrastructure.¹⁴ AEJ member organizations and Advancement Project later formed the National Campaign for Police Free Schools (the Campaign) in 2017. Today, the Campaign includes more than two dozen local youth organizing groups fighting to achieve a liberatory education system.

The Campaign continues to track and chronicle *#AssaultAts*, which are defined **as acts of violence (including sexual violence) by police against Black and Latine students, other students of color, students with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ students.**

The National Campaign for Police Free Schools tracks incidents of police violence against students as reported in the news and on social media and publishes these incidents on the Campaign website:

POLICEFREESCHOOLS.ORG

#ASSAULTAT EXAMPLES

- **November 2013 | #AssaultAtCedarCreek** (*Cedar Creek, Texas*): A 17-year-old Texas student spent 52 days in a medically induced coma after police used a taser on him at school, while he was attempting to break up a fight between two peers. The student fell to the ground, striking his head on the floor, rendering him unconscious. He was then placed in handcuffs. School officials did not immediately call paramedics. He ultimately underwent surgery to repair a severe brain hemorrhage and was placed in a medically induced coma.¹⁵
- **September 2016 | #AssaultAtEstillMiddle** (*Hampton, SC*): A school resource officer was found guilty of third-degree criminal sexual conduct against a middle school student and engaging in a lewd act with a minor and misconduct in office.¹⁶

¹³ Yan, H. (2015). *South Carolina school officer fired, but more fallout possible*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2015/10/29/us/south-carolina-school-arrest-videos>

¹⁴ This analysis specifically refers to school resource officers (SROs), police officers on school property and at school-related events, and school security guards, as part of the school policing infrastructure.

¹⁵ Elliott C. McLaughlin, *Texas Student Tased by Police Exits Coma, Enters Rehabilitation*, CNN (Feb. 2, 2014), <https://www.cnn.com/2014/01/31/us/texas-taser-high-school-student-coma/>.

¹⁶ See <http://www.thestate.com/news/state/south-carolina/article103401947.html>.

- **January 2020 | #AssaultAtEastSilverSpringElementary** (*Silver Spring, MD*): A police officer berated, detained, and handcuffed a 5-year-old Black boy who wandered off campus. When the boy was found, the officer placed the child in the back of the police car after an attempt to walk him back to school. While crying, the boy was taken to the school office, where the officer referred to the boy as “a violent little thing” and a “beast.” Another officer said to the 5-year-old, “I hope your mama lets me beat you.”¹⁷
- **October 2021 | #AssaultAtMillikan** (*Long Beach, California*): Eighteen-year-old Manuela “Mona” Rodriguez, the mother of a 5-month-old boy, was taken off life support one week after being shot in the back of her head by a school resource officer. Mona was a passenger in a car driving away from a fight in a parking lot near Millikan High School when the school resource officer chased the car and fired at least two shots through the car window, ultimately killing Mona.¹⁸

METHODOLOGY

The National Campaign for Police Free Schools partnered with Professor Emeritus and former Director of the Equity Project at Indiana University Russell Skiba and Indiana University PhD Candidate Britany Beauchesne to analyze the #AssaultAt database to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the extent, type of, and harms caused by school police violence against Black and other students of color, especially girls.

Identification and Entry of Cases

A comprehensive search for all news reports on assaults against students by school-based police was conducted by Advancement Project and AEJ staff, identifying all such cases reported in the news media between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2021. All assaults included in this analysis were documented in local and/or national news outlets, including newspapers, broadcast news, and online news sources. The Huffington Post’s 2018 tracker of the use of tasers, pepper spray, and physical abuse by school police against students was used as a reference against which to check the completeness of coverage of our database.¹⁹ Because many assaults by police on students are never reported in the media and there is no agency that systemically tracks such assaults, the data presented here are most likely an underestimate

of the total number of police assaults against students in and around K-12 schools.

Based on this research, 285 incidents involving an assault on a K-12 student were identified. Of these incidents, 222 are cases that were originally placed on the #AssaultAt map on the www.policefreeschools.org website to track the occurrence and location of police assaults against students nationwide. To ensure this analysis was comprehensive, those original cases were re-entered and an additional 63 cases were found and added to an Excel database.²⁰

Coding and Analysis of Cases

Indiana University research staff developed a code-book to catalogue the characteristics of each assault in six areas: a) characteristics of students assaulted; b) trends in police assaults over time; c) location of assault within the school; d) types of assaults committed; e) harms to students; and f) consequences, if any, to the assaulting officer. Once all 285 cases were coded, analyses of the data were conducted using SPSS 28. All analyses in this report are descriptive in nature, providing an initial snapshot of the characteristics of such assaults. Future analyses will explore relationships among the variables describing the characteristics of police assaults.

¹⁷ Caitlynn Peetz, *Updated: Lawsuit Alleges Police Harassed, Assaulted 5-Year-Old Boy*, Bethesda Beat (Jan. 22, 2021), <https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/courts/lawsuit-alleges-police-harassed-assaulted-5-year-old-boy/>.

¹⁸ *Fatal Shooting of 18-Year-Old Mother by Long Beach School Safety Officer Investigated as Homicide*, CBS News (Oct. 8, 2021), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mona-rodriguez-killed-school-safety-officer-homicide-investigation/>.

¹⁹ Rebecca Klein, *The Other Side of School Safety: Students are Getting Tasered and Beaten by Police*, Huffington Post (Sep. 8, 2018), https://www.huffpost.com/entry/school-safety-students-police-abuse_n_5b746a4ce4b0df9b093b8d6a?ct=t%28EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_4_6_2018_COPY_01%29 (tracker available at <https://onedrive.live.com/view.aspx?resid=A6E84B607DC2E33110&ithint=file%2cxlxs&authkey=!AK5VvBX5OPFMLs>).

²⁰ The original web-based database contained only assaults against Black and Latino students, LGBTQ+ students, and students with disabilities. To ensure accurate assessments of the distribution of assaults across racial and other population categories, the second round of incident collection sought to identify *all* cases of police assault against students, regardless of race, sexual orientation or gender identity, or disability status.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Over **80%** of victims* of police assaults since 2011 have been Black students. Over **one quarter** of those assaulted by police have been students with disabilities or students with mental health concerns.
- While most incidents take place in high schools, a significant number of police assaults were against students **8 years old or younger**.
- The most frequent type of assault included *multiple forms of police force* used in the same incident.
- Over **60%** of police assaults on students resulted in serious injury to the student, many involving hospitalization, broken bones, or concussions.
- **Five** students have been killed by school police since 2011.
- The fourth most frequent assault type—in almost **10%** of cases—was *sexual assault*.
- Police faced no consequences in *well over half* of the incidents of assault on students.

WHICH STUDENTS ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE VICTIMS OF SCHOOL POLICE VIOLENCE?

Although we collected data on police violence against all public school students, #AssaultAt tracking shows that police violence is much more likely to impact Black and Latine students, especially girls. Prior research has demonstrated that Black students are arrested at higher rates when police are present in schools.²¹ Outcomes are even worse for Black girls in schools:

research has shown that Black girls are four times more likely than their White peers to be arrested, three times more likely to be referred to police, and two times more likely to be physically restrained.²² This research builds on those findings by ascertaining that racial disparities in school discipline extend to acts of police violence against students.

FINDINGS:

THE STUDENT VICTIMS OF POLICE ASSAULTS ARE OVERWHELMINGLY BLACK. POLICE ASSAULTS ALMOST NEVER TARGET WHITE STUDENTS.

- **Racial Category:** In cases where race was identified, **84.4%** of the assaults were directed against Black students and **11%** against Latine students. Only **3.2%** of all reported assaults were against white students.
- **Gender:** Boys were victims of **63.1%** of assaults, while girls were the victims in **36.9%** of police assaults.
- **Intersection of Race and Gender:** In cases where both race and gender were identified, Black boys represented over half (**56.9%**) of all assaults, while Black girls represented nearly a third (**30.7%**) of all police assaults.
- **Age:** The vast majority of students assaulted were between 13 and 17 years of age. There were **10** instances of police violence in which the victim was between 4 and 8 years old.
- **Disability Status:** Over a quarter of police assaults were on students with disabilities or students with reported mental health concerns. Specifically, **14.8%** of police assaults involved students with disabilities, while students with mental health concerns were identified in **13.7%** of cases.

²¹ Homer, E.M., & Fisher, B.W. (2020). Police in schools and student arrest rates across the United States: Examining differences by race, ethnicity, and gender. *Journal of School Violence*. 19, 192–204.

²² Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. (2018). *2015–2016 Civil Rights Data Collection, School Climate & Safety*. Washington, DC: Author.

* The term "victims" is used to describe the full universe of students assaulted by police, as tragically some of the students did not survive their assaults

HAVE POLICE ASSAULTS ON STUDENTS INCREASED OVER TIME?

Many state and local policy makers continue to call for increasing police presence in public schools despite a lack of evidence that school police actually promote school safety or prevent school shootings, and mounting evidence of the harms created by the presence of school police officers, especially for students of color.²³ Three notable incidents resulting in increased calls for school policing followed the Sandy Hook Elementary

School shooting in 2012, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting of 2018, and the Robb Elementary School shooting in Uvalde in May, 2022. Such reflexive and ill-considered reactions have led to policy decisions that have expanded funding for, or even required the presence of police in many public schools, increasing both the number of police in schools and the incidents of police violence against students.

FINDINGS:

THE NUMBER OF POLICE ASSAULTS:

- **2011-2014:** On average, **10** assaults per year.
- **2014-2015:** **23** assaults for that school year.
- **2015-2020:** An average of **33.4** police assaults on students per year, *representing one school police assault on a student every week.*²⁴
- **Fall 2021:** **20** instances of police violence against students were recorded in the first half of the 2021-2022 school year (1.25 per week). Projecting this out to a 36 week (9 month) school year results in an estimate of **45** police assaults on students for the entire 2021-2022 school year, an average of *more than one police assault on a student every week.*

These findings suggest that the rate of police assaults has not diminished, and may even have increased, since students have returned to school following COVID pandemic school closures.

²³ The presence of school resource officers has led to more students being involved in the criminal legal system for minor violations of school behavioral codes. See e.g., Nance, J. (2015). Additionally, the presence of school police leads to greater use of exclusionary discipline for Black and Latine students when compared to their White peers. Crosse, S., Gottfredson, D. C., Bauer, E. L., Tang, Z., Harmon, M. A., Hagen, C. A., & Greene, A. D. (2021). Are effects of school resource officers moderated by student race and ethnicity? *Crime & Delinquency*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/001128721999346>

²⁴ Due to the pandemic, police assaults on students dropped substantially, to 11 cases in the 2020-21 school year. This analysis only extended until February, 2022; however, the 24 cases through February, 2022 would result in a total of 38 assaults in 2021-22 if projected forward.

WHERE DO POLICE ASSAULTS AGAINST STUDENTS USUALLY OCCUR?

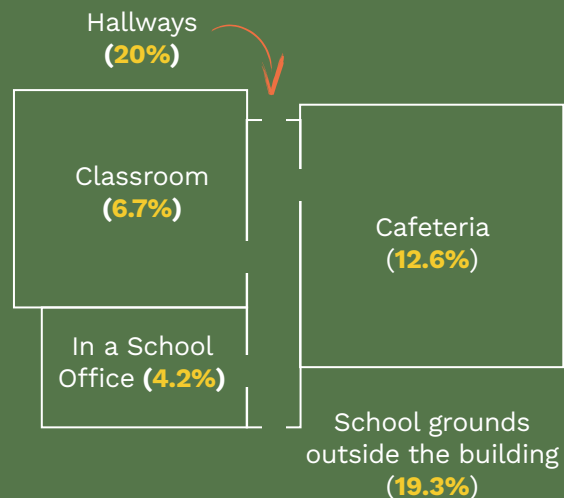
School policing is an extension of the same harmful policies and practices that have created the racially disparate status quo. They echo other racist initiatives – Jim Crow, the War on Drugs, and broken windows policing – that have saturated low-income Black and Latine communities with

police, increasing rates of criminalization and incarceration.²⁵ The data from this study reflect a similar dynamic, demonstrating that schools with higher populations of Black and Latine students and low-income youth experience more #AssaultAts.

FINDINGS:

SCHOOLS WITH HIGHER POPULATIONS OF BLACK AND LATINE STUDENTS AND LOW-INCOME YOUTH EXPERIENCE MORE POLICE ASSAULTS.

- **School racial composition:** Police assaults on students occurred in schools with a higher percentage of Black and Latine students (**60.3%**) and a lower percentage of white students (**31.2%**).
- **School socioeconomics:** Police assaults are more likely in schools with a higher percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch (**62.1%**).
- **School level:** The vast majority of assaults on students (**67%**) occurred at the high school level, while **16.1%** of cases occurred in middle schools, and 13 cases (**4.6%**) at the elementary level.
- **Locale:** The largest proportions of police assaults were in city (**41.8%**) or suburban (**34.7%**) schools.
- **Location in school:** The largest proportion (**20%**) of assaults took place in school hallways.



²⁵ Alexander, M. (2012). *The New Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of color-blindness*. New York: The New Press.

WHAT TYPES OF ASSAULTS DO SCHOOL POLICE COMMIT?

Viral videos like the #AssaultAtSpringValley depict adults inflicting violent harm on children and youth at all school levels. Middle schoolers are tased, elementary school students as young as 5 are placed in handcuffs, children are sexually

assaulted,²⁶ and youth are shot dead – all by police officers whose self-proclaimed purpose is to protect and serve.²⁷ Our analysis provides a clear picture of the types of harms inflicted upon students by school police.

FINDINGS:

BY FAR THE MOST FREQUENT TYPE OF ASSAULT (37.5%) INCLUDED *MULTIPLE FORMS OF POLICE FORCE IN A SINGLE INCIDENT*.

For example, in a single incident a school resource officer threw items at the student, pushed the student against whiteboard, slammed the student on desks, threw the student to the ground, and shoved his knee into the student's neck.

- Of the **285** cases, **5** students died, three of those killed by gunshot.
- Sexual assault was the fourth most frequent type of assault by school police on students—occurring in **24** or **8.4%** of cases.
- The other most frequent types of assault included:
 - Tasing: **23.9%**
 - Pepper spray: **10.2%**
 - Student slammed against the floor or wall: **5.3%**
 - Choked, or Knee on Neck: **2.4%**
 - Student punched or beaten: **2.4%**

WHAT HARMS ARE DONE TO STUDENTS BY POLICE ASSAULTS?

School policing, and the associated assaults on children, can cause physical, emotional, and psychological harm that is potentially irreparable. Even students who are not arrested or assaulted are harmed by the stress and trauma created by attending schools where they observe assaults and misconduct and therefore

may fear for their safety. Previous research has found that both Black and Latine students reported feeling less safe in the presence of school police. Similarly, parents of students of color have been found to be less likely than White parents to believe their child was safer in a school with a police officer.²⁹

FINDINGS:

SCHOOL POLICE ASSAULTS RESULTED IN STUDENT INJURY OR DEATH IN NEARLY TWO THIRDS (61.3%) OF THESE **285** INCIDENTS. AMONG THE HARMS TO STUDENTS OCCURRING AS A RESULT OF POLICE ASSAULT:

- Almost one third of the victims were reported to suffer serious injury (includes broken bones, hospitalization, concussion, taser prongs left in their body, long term effects, or urination/defecation as a result of tasing): **91** students (**31.9%**).
- Death: **5** students.
- Reported side-effects of sexual assault or from officer sexual misconduct: **27** students (**9.5%**).
- Over **10%** of the hospitalizations as a result of police assaults involved removing prongs left in the students' skin after being tasered.

²⁶ A 2014 national study found that SROs are significantly more likely than other police officers to be arrested for sex-related crimes. Most arrests of SROs are for sex-related crimes in which the SRO targeted a victim enrolled at the school where they were employed. Stinson Sr, P. M., & Watkins, A. M. (2014). The nature of crime by school resource officers: Implications for SRO programs. *Sage Open*, 4(1), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2158244014521821>

²⁷ Advancement Project/Alliance for Educational Justice. (2021). #AssaultAt Map. <https://policefreeschools.org/map/>

²⁸ Pentek, C. & Eisenberg, M. E. (2018). School resource officers, safety and discipline: Perceptions and experiences across racial/ethnic groups in Minnesota secondary schools. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 88, 141–148.

²⁹ Bui, A.L., et al. (2021). Association of child race/ethnicity with parent and guardian feelings of safety from school security practices. *JAMA Pediatrics*. Published online June 21, 2021. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.1580

WHAT CONSEQUENCES, IF ANY, DO OFFICERS FACE FOR ASSAULTING STUDENTS?

Another similarity between policing in communities of color and school policing is the widespread lack of accountability following acts of violence against Black, Latine and LGBTQIA+ people.³⁰ School police officers are often only accountable to the head of the police department or sheriff's office that employs them, not the democratically elected school board or the

parents who send their children to school to learn. Students and parents often do not know whether a complaint against a school police officer should be filed with the principal, school district, or police department – or even whether such a formal complaint system exists. This lack of accountability is also reflected in our analysis of the #AssaultAt data.

FINDINGS:

IN NEARLY 60% OF THE POLICE ASSAULTS, THERE WERE *NO REPORTED CONSEQUENCES TO THE OFFICER* (ALTHOUGH 2 SUCH CASES RESULTED IN A CIVIL LAWSUIT).

For example, in Rolesville, North Carolina in March, 2017, School Resource Officer Ruben De Los Santos was merely placed on paid administrative leave after video footage showed him body slamming a 15-year-old Black girl and then dragging her limp body out of the camera view.³¹ Wake County declined to press charges against De Los Santos and he quickly gained new employment at the Wake County Sheriff's Office.³² When he resigned, the local police department celebrated him as a former "Officer of the Year."³³ This type of treatment and lack of accountability is by no means uncommon in cases of police assault.

- In 28 cases (10%), the assaulting officer received only minor consequences (e.g., internal review, docked vacation days, removed or reassigned, placed on leave).
- The assaulting officer was arrested or charged in less than one sixth of the cases (13.5%).
- The officer was suspended or fired in less than 10% of cases.
- Consequences were much more likely and severe in the case of sexual assault: There were no penalties in only three of the documented cases of sexual assault.
- Outside of sexual assault, severe consequences are rare: Only 6.9% of assaulting officers were suspended or fired, and only 7.4% were arrested or charged.

³⁰ Advancement Project. (2022). #HowCopsGetOff Narrative Animated Series. <https://secure.everyaction.com/9Nt-KXgp5UW4SRIFHyesQg2>

³¹ Derek Hawkins, *Video Shows N.C. Police Officer Slamming Student to Floor*, The Washington Post (Jan. 4, 2017), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/01/04/video-shows-n-c-police-officer-slamming-student-to-ground/>.

³² *Wake County Grand Jury Declines to Charge Officer Seen Slamming Student to Ground*, ABC 11 (Mar. 7, 2017), <https://abc11.com/rolesville-high-student-body-slammed-by-officer/1789045/>; Ruben De Los Santos, LinkedIn, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ruben-de-los-santos-9341b91a6>.

³³ Jeff Reeves, *Rolesville High SRO Resigns After Video Shows Him Slamming Student*, CBS17 (Mar. 3, 2017), <https://www.cbs17.com/news/rolesville-high-sro-resigns-after-video-shows-him-slamming-student/1016919833/>.

CONCLUSION

In contrast to widespread claims, previous research has provided little to no evidence that school police contribute to school safety or the prevention of violence.³⁴ This study amplifies that understanding, demonstrating that the presence of police in schools actively jeopardizes the safety of Black and Latine students, tainting learning environments with the same punitive practices and discriminatory outcomes that plague America's youth and adult legal systems.

Every stage of the youth punishment system (e.g., school exclusion, arrest, secure detention, probation) is counter-productive to healthy adolescent development. Youth development is harmed, not promoted as:

- (1)** Officers use intimidation and physical force to arrest or physically restrain students against their will;
- (2)** Students are removed from a familiar educational environment and isolated from their support systems while detained; and
- (3)** Youth are stigmatized and alienated from their peer groups upon returning to school.³⁵

To create equitable and nurturing school environments, educational policy and resource allocation must be focused on practices that promote care and compassion, not coercion and control.

School policing siphons funding from resources and practices (e.g., mental health services and transformative and restorative justice models) that can proactively prevent conflict and teach prosocial skills without the threat of physical harm or youth criminalization. If we continue to place police in schools, we are ensuring that every week, somewhere in our nation, more students, especially Black students, will suffer the physical scars and emotional trauma associated with police brutality while attending school.

IT IS TIME FOR A CHANGE.

Young people know what they need to feel safe and supported in schools. For more information about the National Campaign for Police Free Schools and the #AssaultAt initiative please visit the website and #AssaultAt map at:

POLICEFREESCHOOLS.ORG

³⁴ Livingston, M. D., et al. (2019). A descriptive analysis of school and school shooter characteristics and the severity of school shootings in the United States, 1999–2018. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 64, 797–799.

³⁵ Southern Coalition for Social Justice. (2022) *Invest in Our Children, Invest in Our Youth: Ending Youth Criminalization in North Carolina*. <https://southerncoalition.org/justice-system-reform/youth-justice-and-safe-schools/investinouryouth/>

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We thank the organizations that make up the National Campaign for Police Free Schools and all of the young people and community members fighting for a liberatory education. Special thanks are also extended to Jonathan Stith, National Director of the Alliance for Educational Justice, Maria Fernandez, Managing Director of Campaign Strategy at Advancement Project, and all others who contributed to the organizing that made this report possible.

The #AssaultAt concept and database was created by the Alliance for Educational Justice, a national network of over 30 youth-led and intergenerational grassroots organizations fighting to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline. The Alliance for Educational Justice and Advancement Project continue to collect this data and support the National Campaign for Police Free Schools, which includes more than two dozen local intergenerational organizing groups fighting to achieve a liberatory education system.

For more information, please visit the National Campaign for Police Free Schools website at:

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