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## **Newly Discovered 1033 Military Surplus Records Show School Districts Around the Country are Receiving Advanced Military Equipment**

*Education and Civil Rights Groups Call for an End to Militarization of K-12 School Police*

WASHINGTON — Grenade launchers, M16 assault rifles, and other weapons intended for military combat are making their way onto K-12 campuses for use by school district police.

A letter to the Department of Defense's Defense Logistics Agency, which more than 20 education and civil rights advocacy organizations from across the U.S. have signed onto, has revealed newly discovered data which shows that 22 school districts in Texas, California, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Michigan, Nevada, and Utah are participating in the 1033 Program, which provides military surplus to local law enforcement organizations.

Texas school districts dominate the list of those participating in the 1033 Program, with at least 10 districts reportedly participating. Altogether, these 10 districts have received 64 M-16 rifles, 18 M-14 rifles, 25 automatic pistols, extended magazines, and 4,500 rounds of ammunition. Some of these Texas districts received armored plating, tactical vests, and military vehicles. In California, at least half a dozen school districts reportedly allow campus officers to carry high-powered rifles.

"We saw in Ferguson how the use of military equipment intensified interactions between community members and police. Those same tensions are playing out in our schools between students of color and school police where implicit bias, broad discretion, and little accountability are resulting in excessive use of force, expulsions and suspensions for minor offenses, and referrals to the juvenile justice system," said Janel George, Education Policy Counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. "Adding military weapons will only exacerbate existing tensions and negatively impact students most vulnerable to overly punitive discipline — especially students of color."

"Military grade weapons have no place on our public school campuses," said Deborah Fowler, deputy director of Texas Appleseed. "We have already seen the way that much more common weapons – like Tasers and pepper spray — can be misused in school settings, and know that excessive use of force in schools is often targeted at young people of color and students with disabilities. We're simply calling for a return to common sense when it comes to the way our schools are kept safe."

The groups also call on the DLA to release a comprehensive set of data around this lending campaign to school districts detailing the type of equipment received and its stated intended use.

In the letter, the groups write: *“The investment of tax dollars must be re-prioritized to focus on ensuring that educators and other staff in schools are trained to de-escalate conflict, employ alternative less punitive (culturally and community-responsive) discipline practices, like Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and learn and implement developmentally-appropriate discipline responses.”*

#### **About Texas Appleseed**

Texas Appleseed is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote social and economic justice for all Texans by leveraging the skills and resources of volunteer lawyers and other professionals to identify practical solutions to difficult, systemic problems. [www.TexasAppleseed.net](http://www.TexasAppleseed.net)

#### **About the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.**

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the country’s first and foremost civil and human rights law firm. Founded in 1940 under the leadership of Thurgood Marshall, LDF’s mission has always been transformative: to achieve racial justice, equality, and an inclusive society. LDF’s victories established the foundations for the civil rights that all Americans enjoy today. In its first two decades, LDF undertook a coordinated legal assault against officially enforced public school segregation. This campaign culminated in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the a unanimous landmark Supreme Court decision in 1954 that overturned the “separate but equal” doctrine of legally sanctioned discrimination, widely known as Jim Crow. We have been a separate organization from the NAACP since 1957. Please refer to us as “LDF.”

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