



For Immediate Release: Aug. 12, 2015

Contact: [Kelli Johnson](#), 512.473.2800

[Nyasha Laing](#), 212.965.2235

[Amy Saltzman](#), 301-656-0348

School Police in McKinney, Texas, Arrest and Ticket African-American Students at Excessive and Unequal Rates

School Resource Officers in Dallas Suburb Where Officer Used Extreme Force at Pool Party Found to Receive No Special Training in Working with Children

AUSTIN, TEXAS – A new data analysis shows that a Dallas suburb, where a police officer was videotaped at a pool party in June shoving a teenage African-American girl to the ground, has extremely high and unequal arrest and ticketing rates of African-American students by school police officers.

These school police are chosen from the ranks of the McKinney, Texas, police department – the same department that employed Eric Casebolt, who later resigned after tackling a 15-year-old girl to the ground and pulling his gun on several bystanders. The case is one of a series across the country that has triggered a national uproar over harsh police tactics against African-Americans, including youth.

The data, compiled by Texas Appleseed, show that from January 2012 to June 2015, African-American students in the McKinney Independent School District (ISD), who make up less than 13 percent of the student population, accounted for 39 percent of arrests made by school police, also known as “school resource officers” (SROs), and 36 percent of misdemeanor tickets.

Most of these law enforcement interactions were for minor offences. For example, African-American students received approximately 46 percent of tickets for “disruption of class,” a vague and subjective offense that research shows leads to the disproportionate punishment of students of color.

Although issuing criminal citations to students in Texas for disruption of class has been prohibited since Sept. 1, 2013, the proportion of tickets issued to African-American students for the similarly subjective offense of “disorderly conduct” increased from 47 percent (in January 2012 until the change in law in September 2013) to 61 percent (from September 2013 to June 2015). Overall, ticketing of all students was down during that entire period, but the drop was driven almost entirely by white students whose citations fell from 28 percent to 15 percent.

“McKinney’s extreme and inequitable school discipline measures mirror the larger problems sweeping communities throughout the nation where inadequate training and racial bias have led to inappropriate and even deadly responses by police in response to minor incidents,” said Deborah Fowler, executive director of Texas Appleseed. “This new data, combined with the recent incident involving Officer Casebolt, make one thing very clear – the McKinney Police Department does not adequately train its officers to interact with children.”

In [a letter to McKinney ISD Superintendent Rick McDaniel](#), Texas Appleseed and several other groups, including the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., noted the current Memorandum of Understanding between the school district and police department does not require any student-focused training or prior experience with students as a prerequisite for employment as a school resource officer.

In June 2015, Texas Governor Greg Abbott (R) signed into law legislation that requires youth-focused training for law enforcement officers serving in school districts with more than 30,000 students. Although McKinney ISD has slightly fewer students (approximately 25,000), the letter calls on Superintendent McDaniel to “follow Governor Abbott’s leadership and proactively adopt a comprehensive training policy” for SROs serving in the school district.

“We would like to see schools that choose to employ police officers implement training on de-escalation techniques, child development, implicit bias and other measures to deter the use of excessive force by police in schools and end the disproportionate targeting of African-American students for arrests and expulsions for minor offenses,” said Janel George, Senior Education Policy Counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Using data from the Texas Education Agency, Texas Appleseed also found that in the 2013-14 school year, African-American and Hispanic students in McKinney ISD were suspended at a much higher rate than their white classmates. African-American children received approximately 30 percent of in-school suspensions, 38 percent of out-of-school suspensions and 31 percent of placements in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP). Hispanic children, who make up approximately 27 percent of the student population, received approximately 33 percent of in-school suspensions, 32 percent of out-of-school suspensions and 40 percent of DAEP placements.

“Racial disparities in the use of these exclusionary punishments often coincide with racial disparities in the rates of referrals to school police—a fact that further underscores the need for comprehensive school discipline reform, including SRO training,” according to the letter.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: [Data Fact Sheet](#)

#

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.org

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is America's premier legal organization fighting for racial justice. Through litigation, advocacy, and public education, LDF seeks structural changes to expand democracy, eliminate disparities, and achieve racial justice in a society that fulfills the promise of equality for all Americans. Although LDF was founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights, since 1957, LDF has been a completely separate organization. Please refer to us in all media attributions as the "NAACP Legal Defense Fund" or "LDF". www.naacpldf.org.