

WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
RESOLUTION NO. 104-1920
CONDEMNING POLICE VIOLENCE AND BRUTALITY AGAINST PEOPLE
OF COLOR

WHEREAS, on February 23, 2020, 25-year-old Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed black man going for a jog, was shot and killed by two white men (one a former law enforcement official) in Glynn County, Georgia; and on March 13, 2020, 26-year-old emergency medical worker Breonna Taylor was shot and killed by police inside her home after a “no-knock” raid; and on May 27, 2020, 46-year-old father of two George Floyd pleaded for his life and was ultimately killed by a police officer who pushed a knee into his neck for more than nine minutes, while Floyd lay handcuffed on the ground; and

WHEREAS, the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd are the just the latest in what has been a long and bloody history of police and extrajudicial violence against Black and Brown bodies; and

WHEREAS, police brutality and the use of excessive and militarized force are among the most serious ongoing human rights and civil liberties violations in the United States and have led to community destabilization, a decrease in public safety, and the exacerbation of structural inequities; and

WHEREAS, the system of policing in America, and its systemic targeting of and use of deadly and brutal force against people of color, particularly Black people, stems from the long legacy of slavery, lynching, Jim Crow laws, and the War on Drugs in the United States and has been perpetuated by violent and harmful law enforcement practices; and

WHEREAS, contemporary police practices that employ policing for low level offenses, as well as expanded and excessively militarized policing, has led to mass criminalization, heightened violence, and mass incarceration that disproportionately impacts Black and Brown people; and

WHEREAS, police use of force is among the leading causes of death for young men of color and Black people, including Black women and girls, Native Americans, and Latinos are killed by police at disproportionately higher rates than their White peers; and

WHEREAS, people with disabilities and other historically marginalized communities, including LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants, and those experiencing homelessness are significantly more likely to be criminalized and targets of police violence; and

WHEREAS, over the last two decades, the number of police killings has increased dramatically. Since 2013, police officers have shot and killed roughly 1,000 people each year; and

WHEREAS, police brutality and the use of excessive force have robbed countless communities of precious lives, have inflicted intergenerational harm and trauma to families, and are intensifying our Nation’s mental health crisis; and

WHEREAS, police in the United States, through acts of brutality and the use of excessive force, kill far more people than police in other comparable nations and have been historically shielded from accountability; and

WHEREAS, the killings of hundreds each year, and the demonstrations that followed have brought sustained national attention to the racially biased police violence against people; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley, along with U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar, U.S. Representative Karen Bass and U.S. Representative Barbara Lee have introduced legislation condemning police brutality, racial profiling, the use of excessive and militarized force and calling for systemic reforms necessary to stem the epidemic of police violence against marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, on November 15, 2017, the WCCUSD Board of Education passed Resolution No. 49-1718: Establishment of a Positive School Climate Policy, that a) recognizes that involvement in the delinquency system has a significant negative impact on its students, including a higher likelihood of dropping out and later involvement in the adult criminal system; b) students in the delinquency system often struggle to reintegrate into their school communities and make academic progress after arrest and incarceration; and c) WCCUSD has made strides to limit the role of law enforcement in addressing minor school-related behavior and begun to focus more resources on effective evidence-based supports; and d) WCCUSD considers referral of students to law enforcement a last resort; and e) funding for law enforcement should be re-directed towards the reduction of class sizes and total class loads to support restorative justice practices; and

WHEREAS, the belief that all students can achieve at high levels of proficiency and that the effects of institutionalized racism can be mitigated is central to how equity is viewed in West Contra Costa Unified School District.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the West Contra Costa Unified School District Board of Education strongly condemns the extrajudicial killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd and calls on the citizens of this district to join in peaceful protests to call for the adoption of sound and unbiased law enforcement policies at all levels of government that reduce the disparate impact of police brutality and use of force on Black and Brown people and other historically marginalized communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the West Contra Costa Unified School District Board of Education calls for the cities of Hercules, Pinole, San Pablo, Richmond and El Cerrito and Contra Costa County to end militarized policing practices; support strengthening efforts to eliminate instances of excessive use of force, and conduct stringent oversight and independent investigations into instances of police brutality, racial profiling, and excessive use of force, and hold individual law enforcement officers and police departments accountable; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the West Contra Costa Unified School District Board of Education directs the Superintendent to write a letter in support of the House Resolution introduced by U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley, along with U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar, U.S. Representative Karen Bass and U.S. Representative Barbara Lee that condemns all acts of police brutality, racial profiling, and the use of excessive and militarized force throughout the country; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the West Contra Costa Unified School District Board of Education directs the Superintendent and District staff to develop antiracist policies and procedures and provide training for teachers, staff, and administrators to understand race/racism and its impact on teaching, learning, and knowledge transmission, recognize differences between antiracism and multiculturalism in pedagogy, curriculum, and educational advocacy, and understand how place (geography) and institutional culture are uniquely important to the implementation of such programs

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Education of the West Contra Costa Unified School District on this tenth day of June 2020.

President of the Board of Education of the
West Contra Costa Unified School District

Clerk of the Board of Education of the
West Contra Costa Unified School District