

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Urgent - Protect Our Students HWDSB!

From: Hannah Duckworth

Sent: Monday, June 8, 2020 3:35 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Fwd: Urgent - Protect Our Students HWDSB!

To the HWDSB Community,

I am emailing to demand the suspension of the Police Liaison Program in the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) and demanding that the HWDSB end their relationship with the Hamilton Police. With the recent termination of police partnerships in [Minneapolis](#), [Portland](#) and in the [Toronto District School Board \(TDSB\)](#), I believe that this is entirely possible and must be done to protect the safety and lives of Black students not only when Black death is viral, but rather at all times. Black, Indigenous and Racialized students deserve to be safe in their schools and the removal of police presence is the first step towards this. I was a student in the HWDSB for 14 years of my life and I have seen how dangerous the Hamilton Police are for our students across the board first hand. My friends and family who are teachers within the board can attest to this as well.

Although the Police Liaison Program is different from the TDSB SRO program, they result in the same type of intimidation tactics. Officers are not *stationed* at schools, but rather they are called into schools at the discretion of the administrators. There is no regulation for how often officers enter schools, and they are often used as the muscle of principals/ teachers. The HWDSB Kids Need Help coalition recently released a [report](#) with HCCI that details student experiences of discomfort, intimidation and racism at the hands of police. The group also released demands for the school board to terminate this program on June 2nd with a [coalition of Black and Racialized organizers across Hamilton](#).

The Ontario Human Rights Commission has previously described Hamilton Police as engaging in a ["textbook description of racial profiling"](#). It is deeply concerning to me that students are exposed to these practices in their schools and in Hamilton.

I want to be clear: I am not asking for the regulation of this program -- I am asking for the termination of this program and the termination of the HWDSB's relationship with the Hamilton Police Service.

Organizers in Hamilton and across Ontario have been advocating for the termination of student liaison programs across the entire province. Just as anti-Black racism has been found to be [pervasive in the Peel District School Board](#). I am confident that the same issues and struggles exist in the HWDSB today. If the HWDSB is serious about protecting their Black, Indigenous and Racialized students, then the HWDSB must terminate this program immediately.

We will be tuning in to both the June 8th and June 22nd board meetings to hold you accountable on your decisions.

Thank you,

Hannah Duckworth