

Police Reform Task Force Meeting #7

July 27, 2020

Attendance

Task Force members: Brandi Fisher, Joy LeViere, Bobbi Watt Geer, Dr. Quintin Bullock (co-chair), Angela Reynolds, David Harris, Nathaniel Yap, Patricia Leftwich, Richard Garland, Sharon Werner, Sylvia Fields (via telephone), Valerie McDonald Roberts (co-chair), Tim Stevens, Tony Beltran, Amanda Green-Hawkins

Guests: Kathi Elliot (CEO of Gwen's Girls, founder of Black Girls Equity Alliance), Sara Goodkind (Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh), Ghadah Makoshi (community advocate on school policing, ACLU Pennsylvania), Minister Darnell Drewery (community advocate)

Staff: William Lamar, Hersh Merenstein (Local Gov. and Community Relations Coordinator), Lindsay Powell (Assistant Chief of Staff), Alaa Mohamed (Policy Coordinator), Rebecca Glickman (Intern)

Presentation

- Gwen's Girls (Gwendolyn J Elliot Institute)
 - 2016: call to action created four work groups for issue areas surrounding school to prison pipeline
- Black Girls Equity Alliance
 - Juvenile Justice Workgroup
 - Co-conveners: Kim Booth (Asst. Chief Juvenile Probation Officer), Sara Goodkind (PhD, University of Pittsburgh, SSW)
 - Reduce rates of referral for black girls by collaborating with local law enforcement, local diversion programs, community members and policymakers
 - Policy changes advocated for black girls will ultimately affect all youth
 - Review of data (Sara Goodkind, PhD)
 - US sends young people to juvenile justice system at much higher rates than any other country, large part motivated by institutionalized racism
 - Allegheny County referral rates to juvenile justice (JPO)
 - Black boys referred at 7x the rate of white boys
 - Black girls referred at 11x the rate of white girls
 - This is not accounted for by differences in behavior, they show same amount of drug use
 - 2019 City Policy Juvenile Arrest Trends
 - About ½ of arrests on black girls and boys by PPS Police are for disorderly conduct
 - 87.5% of youth arrests made by city police were of black youth even though they account for 40% of Pittsburgh population

- Summary Citations (Ghadah Makoshi)
 - Considered adult criminal offenses and youth are not provided legal counsel
 - Usually result in fines, failure to pay these results in referral to juvenile justice (this accounts for 1/3 of all referrals)
 - 86% of disorderly conduct charges were issued to black youth
 - Recommendation: place moratorium on issuing summary citations to youth
- MOU Between PPS District and City Police
 - Pennsylvania State Law requires all school districts to have an MOU with Law Enforcement
 - May 2020 draft proposes adding new 7 infractions that aren't required by state law
 - Recommendation: implement a pre-arrest diversion program
 - Ex: Philadelphia
 - In first year, arrests dropped more than 50%

Q&A

- Where do PPS officers come from? What does the MOU cover?
 - They are police officers (have the same training), but are only under jurisdiction of the school district
 - MOU establishes what city police can do on school grounds, when they should enter situations to arrest a student
- Does each school district have to put in a safe schools report? What about other diversion programs already in existence in Pittsburgh?
 - Other diversion programs in Pittsburgh are a part of this collaboration, not trying to duplicate what is already being done well
 - PPS does have records, but the way that it is collected is just in raw numbers (cannot be used, has not been categorized)
 - They are working to get a researcher to look at this info and get a report that breaks it down
- Do we want PPS police for the serious stuff? Do we want them to be replaced by city police once abolished? How rare are police called for actually serious issues?
 - It is the teachers making these calls, they get too comfortable with just calling the police
 - People use the tools that they have in front of them, we need to make different resources available so they will call this instead
 - Pennsylvania Department of Education tracks some of this info (arrests, etc.), DHS has some data about which schools call the most
 - Officers employed by city police would be the same if not worse as a replacement
- Could you provide a background information about how these conversations have gone with PPS school board, etc.? What are their reservations?
 - Some teachers want police no matter what, some are fine with getting rid of police if there is another resource for them in their place
 - 5 out of 9 school board members not willing to budge, probably will not get rid of school police this year

- We need to find a common ground in the meantime, maybe reforming the roles of school police, establishing their purpose
- Who is pushing for the 7 additions to the MOU?
 - Depends on who you ask. Many say its city police. City police say they aren't sure
- Will there be efforts to collaborate with health organizations in Pittsburgh to deal with mental health issues? Will there be a recommendation for a school based health clinic?
 - A specific recommendation about a clinic wasn't made but ones about other supports
 - We need to have all kinds of groups at the table (child welfare, probation, etc.)
 - UPMC already does offer some mental health programs in PPS, we need to make better use of social workers
- Has there been any involvement from the parents? What is their response?
- Why hasn't there been an MOU in ten years? We need to be pushing for clarity in this...
 - School district was out of compliance
 - PBP and school board have to agree to have this work
 - We need to push for city police to agree to remove the addition of the 7 new infractions
- If you are taking something out, you have to put something in. Have you talked to current social workers about extending their responsibility? Or are you looking to hire people that are more mediators (someone between social worker and officer)?
 - It might not be a trained mediator but rather coaches, other community members, etc. that have influence on the students; we need to bring these people into the equation
 - There is a mediator model happening at Brashear. The problem is it's not used across the district, not all resources being considered

Minister Darnell Drewery

- Senior Community Specialist at Center for Victims
- Goal to bring leadership of all faiths into this conversation; train them on types of trauma
 - Wants to address not only legal rights but moral rights
 - Hopes that faith based groups are added to this conversation, not omitted
- Questions
 - What relationship do these faith based groups have with the PBP? What role has the faith community held in recent events?
 - Role has been mediation between community and police, how can they de-escalate and provide neutral space for people
 - Have been meeting with Reverend Cornell Jones & GVI as well as police chief and officers
 - Does the church have the same impact even though there is less youth attendance?
 - Recommendation (from Tim Stevens): create Faith Based De-escalation Team in partnership with Pittsburgh Police
 - Would probably garner support from the faith based community (Mr. Drewery will reach out to Rabbi Ron Simmons)
 - Do PPS police have any of the type of trauma training that you mention?
 - No, but it is needed
 - We need to think of trauma and PTSD in terms of children and school

Closing Remarks/ Subcommittee Updates

- Tim: special presentation on Wednesday (@ 11 or 4) with Commander Jason Landeau about hiring training, etc.
 - Shout out to Maureen Hartwell for taking committee minutes
- David: nobody from LGBTQ community has been asked about speaking
- Bobbi: accountability, transparency committee will be meeting at 8:30 tomorrow
- Reminder that committee leaders are responsible for scheduling their own committee meetings
 - need to communicate with staff if they want intern to take meeting minutes
- Amanda: relations with FOP committee will be having first meeting tomorrow at 2pm
- Angela: had very informative meeting with Laura Drogowski and Lindsay Powell which helped to inform recommendations, meeting this Friday with DHS
- Next week we will be focusing on police interactions with people with disabilities (20 minute presentation)