

5/25/2021

The Boys to Men Students of McKinleyville Middle School, McKinleyville High School, and HCOE Court and Community School, would like to thank the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, Juvenile Probation Department, and Bear River Tribal Police for engaging in the Conversations on Justice Dialogue. There were several key themes that we pulled out of this panel. Some of them that stood out to us were:

1. Racial Profiling Exists, and needs to be addressed.
2. Incarcerated people truly struggle when they are released and work hard to stay out of the system.
3. We need to reform our criminal justice system.
4. Youth are like a blank canvas, and need to be protected from entering the criminal justice system.
5. We need more services in our smaller communities, and better communication with tribal police.
6. All parties need to work on body language, and being more inviting to one another. (Communities, and police officers.)
7. There is sincerity in police work.

One idea that was mentioned by a panelist is that we need to walk the walk, and not just talk the talk. This inspired us to ask our local law enforcement agencies to read our accountability statement we have developed in this letter. **We would like our ideas shared with your entire department.** We are the next generation in this community, and we are grateful that you are willing to partner with us to show us that our voices matter.

Cops know who the bad cops are. They know who is violent. They know who is prejudiced. Yet far too many in law enforcement say nothing, protecting the "blue wall of silence" where police won't report on a peer's misconduct, racist views, crimes, or even police brutality. Leaders from within must decide to make truth more important than power. They must create practices that drive a culture of accountability.

We hope that you can commit to the following:

1. We're asking that each officer stands up and reports any misconduct toward any community member, or fellow officer.
2. We would like each law enforcement station to acknowledge that: we are still developing adolescents who do not always make the best choices. You were once one of us. We should not be judged or be assumed to be under the influence.

3. We want each department to support early interventions within our community. Specifically, come hang out with us at the park, or in school.
4. We are requesting that our police officers are boots on the ground. We want to see you during strategic times, and spend time with us. Please don't show up just when things are bad. Feel free to come to our sports events, get to know us as people, and bring pizza!
5. We want to feel like we will not die just by interacting with law enforcement.
6. We want to feel like our officers protect and serve our whole community, not just white cops protecting the white community.
7. We ask that our officers are trained in: implicit bias training, being trauma informed, community resources, and how to collaborate with social and mental health workers.
8. Treat our loved ones with respect.
9. That you celebrate our resilience.

We would like you to know that our work is twofold, if we are going to be asking you to change and amplify things within your department; we are willing to meet you in the middle. **We commit to the following:**

1. Treating cops as people. We're all human, and we all make mistakes.
2. Reaching out when we need help.
3. We want to give cops another chance; we feel like we have given up and want to try again.
4. We will stay calm when you talk with us.
5. We won't make assumptions without knowing the full story.
6. We will treat police as we expect to be treated. We can lead by example too.
7. We will utilize all of our resources especially in a moment of crisis.

Thank you. We look forward to working together.
In community and solidarity,
Boys to Men Empowerment Group Students