

## Legislators

I am a retired Asst Principal from the Mpls Public Schools and was in Roosevelt High School two years, Emerson School which had an Alternative High School programs for students who were removed from High Schools. I was there for two years, and we had many of our tough kids and Willarene Beasley and I were the administrators, and we had no police. I went to Washburn for 6 years and last three years at South High. In each High School I developed ways to intervene with troubled students and prevent the prison pipeline. We had Liaison Officers in each school and many off duty officers that were paid to be at all our big events. Dances, all athletic events, the theater and music concerts, and they were there every day. Our Principals and Asst. Principals and educational assistants were in charge of our security. No principal would allow the Liaison officer to step in to a situation unless they determined we needed that.

Only at South High, in the third precinct from 1999 to 2002 did that change. I was in charge of security at the school, and we had locked doors, and all students came in with their passes. In each high school I developed a student support group team made up of the school clinic staff, the social workers, the counselors, the nurse, school psychologist, special education teachers, chemical dependency counselors of course an administrator and we met weekly to intervene on students at risk. Our school secretaries, the coaches, the teachers, lunch ladies, and any staff person could refer students. We met and intervened so that our students, mainly our kids of color would not get in the prison pipeline. Your own colleague, Aisha Gomez, now a significant legislator, was one of our students who led protests.

We helped so many students to cope. We had so many refugees from Vietnam first and other countries and we even worked with traumatic situations our refugees experienced. at South High did the Liaison officer acted aggressively with our students of color, Special education students in the behavior program were all Students of color and the other Asst. Principals and I could not protect them. The principal at the time chose to believe in him rather than his supervisor who came to tell me he was calling our students the N Word out in the community. The principal kept this man on, and I was admonished for not wanting him. We don't need School Liaison officers to come in and walk the halls and be in uniform and intimidate our students, 70 percent students of color. Our Mpls schools were just so great at accepting all students, low income, refugees, students of color, and we were so successful.

I retired in 2002 and have been in the LWVMN for 54 years. For 16 years I was part of the League action team and became a volunteer lobbyist following education finance and policy. Mpls was always criticized by suburban and rural legislators and were all white until Sen. Champion and very few others were elected. This is not a Hennepin County issue but a statewide issue. St. Cloud where our Commissioner of Education, Willie Jett is from has more students of color than white.

I am an elder and live in Richfield but am very active and I always run into parents and students that are very warm with me and thank me and the team that did interventions, Last session I participated in League, in Isaiah, and passionately we have worked to change our state's racial injustice.

In 2014 I cochaired the Interrupting the Prison Pipeline Forum at Plymouth Church with 70

second chance coalition members. The League of Women Voters adopted Michigan's Restore the Vote and it took 10 years to pass Restore the Vote. We planned the forum at the Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center with the staff including Brenda Johnson, who is on the NEA national board and also a member of the prison pipeline efforts. In 2014 a thousand students pass through and 98 percent students of color. This year, nothing has changed. 98 percent students of color and I wonder why everyone does not realize how unjust this is in Minnesota.

We don't need Liaison officers to be aggressive in our schools. If schools have adequate support staff like drug counselors, mental health, nurses', social workers, we are very strong at caring for our students.

I want the legislature to bring back Chemical Dependency counselors and adequate mental health workers. Our at risk youth for two years during covid were not being supervised in schools and we have this increase in violence. Our public schools wrap their arms around students, but they need support from the community, If we are going to have liaison officers, please do not quibble about their fears but hire liaison officers like we had in Mpls Public Schools who cared about our students.

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