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June 15, 2020

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Milwaukee Board of School Directors
5225 W. Vliet St.
Milwaukee WI 53208

Transmitted electronically only: governance@milwaukee.k12.wi.us

RE: Divestment from Milwaukee Police Department

Dear Pres. Miller, Vice Pres. Baez, and School Directors:

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin, I am writing to strongly support Resolution 2021R-003, terminating the Milwaukee Public Schools contract with the Milwaukee Police Department and developing a plan, in conjunction with organizations from affected communities, to reallocate those funds to better serve student needs.

The ACLU has long advocated and litigated against the “School to Prison Pipeline” – a discriminatory, destructive system exacerbated by putting police into schools. The ACLU’s 2019 report, “Cops and No Counselors,” made clear that Black students in Wisconsin are much more likely than white students to be arrested in schools.ⁱ More than 90% of Wisconsin schools do not meet recommended student to counselor ratios.ⁱⁱ And we know that these disparities and lack of access to supportive resources exist within MPS.

We commend those who have advocated for shifting the paradigm from policing to supporting students, especially Leaders Igniting Transformation, and concur with and support their May 2020 “Youth Mandate for Milwaukee Public Schools: A Vision for Thriving Black and Brown Students.” Resolution 2021R-003 appropriately relies on that Vision.

Again, we strongly urge the Board to support the Resolution and continue and expand its work to ensure that Black and Brown students in our city can thrive.

Sincerely,

Molly Collins
Advocacy Director
ACLU of Wisconsin

ⁱ See, https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/030419-acluschooldisciplinereport.pdf at 53-55.

ⁱⁱ See, https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/030419-acluschooldisciplinereport.pdf page 52.