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June 17, 2020

Madison Board of Education
545 West Dayton Street, Room 110
Madison, WI 53703

Transmitted electronically only: board@madison.k12.wi.us.

RE: Terminating the Contract with Madison Police Department

Dear Madison School Board President Gloria Reyes and Board of Education Members:

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin, I am writing to encourage the recent proposal to pursue a viable alternative to school resource officers, and going even further to end the contract with Madison Police Department before the September 15th date.

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 Freedom Inc., and concur with and support their long term vision for a supportive school district that isn’t policing Black children while they are trying to learn.

Again, we strongly urge the Board to end the contract with Madison Police Department and expand its work to ensure that Black and Brown students in the 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.