

To: Toronto Police Services Board

From:

Lauren Schaffer

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To all involved,

I am Lauren Schaffer; an artist, educator, concerned citizen, first-generation Canadian and mother of two queer children. I have worked in over-policed communities as an artist-educator for the TDSB, the YMCA and downtown community-centres for over 30 years. I have seen how well-trained social workers, mental health workers and educators can de-escalate very difficult-violent scenarios. I believe you should remove police from schools. I believe we need to consult with existing community-groups and particularly the Black population of the GTA to figure out who or what organizations can best serve the safety of our many varied communities.

I have heard from queer and BIPOC students & friends that they feel unsafe with the police in the GTA. According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, between 2013 and 2017, a Black person in Toronto was nearly 20 times more likely than a White person to be involved in a fatal shooting by the Toronto Police Service. Despite making up only 8.8% of Toronto's population, Black people were grossly over-represented in police use of force cases (28.8%), shootings (36%) and deadly encounters (61.5%). I do not see a community-building approach by the police with, for example, the militarized "stealth-grey" cruisers circling the blocks or hanging back at the edge of the Moss Park camps. Dropping 'carding' practice was overdue, dropping streaming-practice in our schools is long overdue and supporting a community-based approach to dealing with the violence, systemic-racism and poverty-related issues is also overdue.

Take that money from the band-aid, tech-saviour measure of body cams (and from most of the policing budget) and implement newer, community-based, community mediated, anti-violence groups. This refunding and larger shift needs to start now.

Thank you.

Lauren