

POWER U CENTER FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

2024 COMMITTEE CAMPAIGNS

AGAINST THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

WHAT IS THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE? The school-to-prison pipeline is a term used to describe the phenomenon where disciplinary policies and practices in schools contribute to the likelihood of students entering the criminal justice system. This pipeline typically affects marginalized groups disproportionately, including students of color, students with disabilities, and those from low-income backgrounds.

COMMITTEE PURPOSE: The ASPP Committee exists to fight the school-to-prison pipeline, end the criminalization of youth in the classroom, and implement an affirmative vision of safety and transformative justice. Last year, we focused on strengthening the implementation of Restorative Practices in our schools, and we won a one-time report evaluating the Restorative Practices program in middle schools conducted by researchers at the University of Miami.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES (RP) are approaches used to build community, address conflict, and repair harm within a group or community. Originating from indigenous traditions and the restorative justice movement, these practices emphasize healing, accountability, and rebuilding relationships rather than punitive measures.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MIAMI?

In March, a 14-year-old student was body-slammed by a Miami-Dade school resource officer, dislocating her shoulder. This incident exhibits how police interact with students in MDCPS and is relative to many other mundane run-ins students must have with in-school police, such as dress code, tardiness, and in-classroom behaviors.

According to their website, the Miami-Dade Schools Police Department is the largest School Police Department in the nation, with a \$67 million budget, employing over 500 personnel. This reality exists alongside the reality of our schools not being up to standard to the recommended ratios of social workers, counselors, and psychologists to students in our schools. We must move away from outdated forms of dealing with student discipline and criminalizing normal student behaviors and instead look to investing in alternatives that truly keep us safe and foster stronger communities.

SCAN HERE TO



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CURRENT CAMPAIGN GOALS

1. Our Committee wants to see school district policy created by our School Board that keeps School Resource Officers (SRO) from having firearms, pepper spray, or electronic restraints/tasers in our schools, except when responding to an active shooting or similar life-threatening emergency. Weapons have no place in our schools, which are meant to be sites of learning and education, not warzones or prisons.
2. We would like our School Board to commit to an annual evaluation of the Restorative Practices program for elementary, middle, and high schools. Consistent evaluation would be a step forward in collecting data to inform what investments need to be made in order to improve the RP program for all constituents in our school district.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE? "Environmental justice" means ensuring the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of ALL people in the decision-making that impacts our environment. It is a human and civil rights issue in which working-class communities of color have been historically and disproportionately negatively affected by environmental harms. Environmental Justice aims to raise the living standards for us all, in which a healthy, safe, clean, and economically viable environment is not a privilege but an expectation.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MIAMI?

Climate change is primarily attributed to greenhouse gases (GHGs) being released into the atmosphere. Due to the dangers of climate change, Miami is rated as one of the most vulnerable U.S. cities for natural disasters. This means we will be experiencing more extreme heatwaves, intensified hurricanes, and increased rainfall, leading to flooding. It is important to note that individuals who live in marginalized communities are responsible for a relatively low volume of GHG emissions but are the most impacted by natural disasters. Also, depending on the area's demographics and income, different resources are allocated to fund its preservation and maintenance.

CURRENT CAMPAIGN GOALS

1. **Debris Free Communities!** - Inadequately disposed trash pollutes our air, water, and soil quality, clogs storm drains, which promotes flooding, attracts pests and harms wildlife, and negatively impacts residents' well-being. Our committee envisions communities with more accessible public trash cans to dispose of waste, proper signage and information provided to community members detailing how to resolve waste-related issues, and a designated paid staff to pick-up street waste three times per week in the Allapattah, West Little River, and Little Haiti neighborhoods.
2. **Planting Trees!** - Trees are extremely valuable to our ecosystem. They reduce GHG emissions, mitigate the effects of flooding, and protect us from extreme heat. In Miami, wealthier neighborhoods tend to have more trees, while disinvested neighborhoods have little to none. We envision communities with an equal distribution of tree canopies, in which more budgetary funds are allocated to make this a reality.

REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

WHAT IS REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE? Reproductive Justice is a comprehensive framework that extends beyond the traditional focus on reproductive rights to encompass a broader spectrum of social justice issues. Coined by a group of Black women in 1994, it integrates the right to have children, not have children, and parent in safe and supportive environments. This framework acknowledges and addresses the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, and immigration status, emphasizing the need for equitable access to reproductive healthcare, freedom from violence, and the economic, social, and political conditions necessary to make meaningful choices about one's reproductive life. Reproductive Justice thus advocates for systemic change to ensure that all individuals have the power and resources to make informed decisions about their bodies, families, and futures.

COMMITTEE PURPOSE: The RJ Committee focuses on issues that support us in feeling safe in our bodies, schools, and communities and how we will reproduce this safety now and for future generations

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MIAMI?

Currently, MDCPS only has one nurse on staff, Brenda Wilder, and it would cost between \$21 to \$27 million to provide every school with a full-time nurse, which there is budget for. The lack of in-school nurses has left a burden on other staff to fill in, leaving students to navigate health and safety during crucial years alone.

MDCPS students have received no sex education for the 2023-2024 academic year due to disagreements on the curriculum. This lapse in education has led to students being vulnerable to many harms, such as: higher risks of STIs, including HIV, higher risk of unplanned pregnancy, increased stigma and shame around the spectrum of gender and sexual identity, less awareness of appropriate/inappropriate touch and lower reporting of child sexual abuse and more.

CURRENT CAMPAIGN GOALS

1. Use funds from the Stronger Connections Grant and referendum to address the safety concerns of students and parents to support the sustainability of a full-time nurses program in MDCPS, make these positions mandatory, and ensure that students' physical health is also a priority.
2. To stand in solidarity with students and issue a request to the Department of Education to approve the Health Education Curriculum for the 2024-2025 school year to ensure students receive adequate and comprehensive sex education.
3. MDCPS will create a community advisory board or support group to produce school pantries that provide non-toxic hygiene products essential to all students' safety and effective learning environment. Nearly one in five students miss school due to experiencing their cycle alone.

HOW FOLKS CAN GET INVOLVED:

If one or more campaigns connect with you, Power U is seeking Miami residents to support Power U's efforts by lending your time and your voice:

1. Connect with A Power U Member or Staff and set up a time to talk 1:1
2. Come to one of our summer meetings to learn more about our campaigns and participate in research actions.
3. Join us for the MDCPS Budget Hearing on July 31st and share your testimony about why our campaigns are essential to you.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BUDGET

MOBILIZATION

SUPPORT OUR 2024 CAMPAIGNS
BY JOINING US AT THE MDCPS
ANNUAL BUDGET HEARING &
SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY

TESTIMONY WORKSHOPS
7/23 & 7/25
PEP RALLY & BUDGET HEARING
7/31

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