

# Center for *Children's* Advocacy

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## S.B. 54: AN ACT CONCERNING COLLABORATION BETWEEN BOARDS OF EDUCATION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL

### What problems does this Act address?

- **Many schools have police stationed in them without any formal guidelines governing daily interactions.**
  - Schools and police **need guidance on how to manage day to day operations.**
  - Rather than promoting safety in schools, police presence often leads to the unnecessary **criminalization of students.**
- **Because of police presence in schools, Connecticut children, especially children of color, end up in the juvenile justice system.**
  - Many arrests of students at school occur for non-violent, non-dangerous offenses, such as breach of peace or disorderly conduct, conduct that likely could have been managed within the school's own disciplinary system.
  - Students of color are more likely to be arrested at school.
  - Once arrested, this student is much more likely to reoffend
- **Arresting children at school harms both children and communities.**
  - Keeping children in school is crucial to improving their long-term opportunities. Students who feel connected to school are **less likely** to use illegal substances, become pregnant, attempt suicide or engage in violent behavior.

### What would passing this Act accomplish?

- Promote and facilitate **collaboration and communication** between schools and the police (school resource officers or SROs) stationed within them.
- Require the creation of formal written **memorandums of agreement (MOAs)** and/or policies detailing the roles and responsibilities of police stationed in schools.
  - Similar agreements have been used nationally and in Connecticut (e.g. Bridgeport, Hartford, Manchester, Stamford, Willimantic, Windsor and others) to **reduce inappropriate arrests.** (For example, Hartford has experienced a **44% reduction** and Bridgeport a **31% reduction** in school based arrests from the 2011-12 to the 2012-13 school years as a result of these agreements.)
  - Agreements would require the use of graduated response models to ensure student and police interactions are handled in a consistent manner.
- Provide communities with better data about school-based arrests of students in each school through the well-known format of the strategic school profiles. This data will help Connecticut communities **keep kids in school and out of the juvenile justice system.**

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### This act is supported by:

- AFCAMP
- Connecticut Court Support Services Division, Judicial Branch
- Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance
- Connecticut Legal Services
- Connecticut State Department of Education
- Connecticut Voices for Children
- Connecticut Youth Services Association
- Office of the Public Defender
- Keep the Promise Coalition, Children's Committee

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