

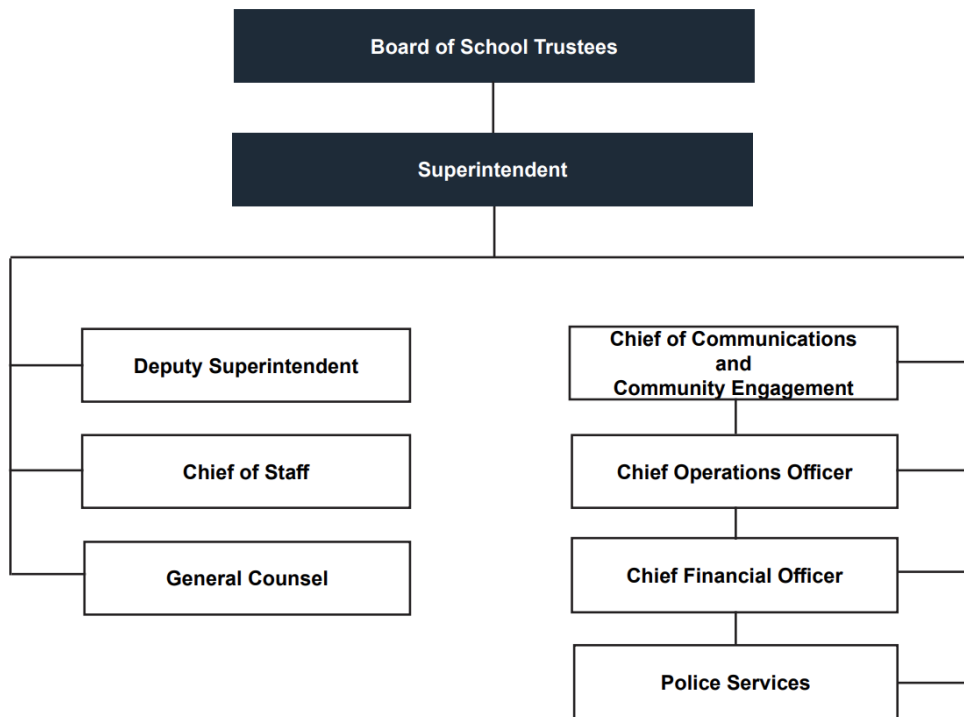
CCSD Police Department: Activities and Concerns

Structure & Overview

The [Clark County School District Police Department \(CCSDPD\)](#) falls under the direct purview of the CCSD Superintendent. Specifically, the Chief of School Police reports directly to the Superintendent of Schools. CCSD police officers are sworn police officers for the State of Nevada and have the authority to make arrests and issue traffic citations.

CCSDPD consists of approximately 41 civilians and 161 sworn officers. It receives an average of 25,000 school requests annually for police services.¹ The department is divided into 8 police Area Commands with 2 police officers assigned to each comprehensive high school and patrol officers assigned to patrol command areas.

Information contained in [CCSD's 2018-29 Comprehensive Budget Report](#) states that one 8-hour school police officer may be assigned to a middle school based on need as recommended by the Deputy Superintendent of Instruction. The diagram below reflects the structure of CCSDPD in relation to other CCSD departments and leadership:



¹ Clark County School Justice Partnership Data Reporting for Nevada Revised Statutes. Pg. 19. Available at: [07.09.20 Ref. 5.06 \(A\).pdf \(boarddocs.com\)](#)

CCSDPD Budget

In the [2018-19 budget](#), CCSD allocated over \$18.4 million to CCSD Police for police salaries and benefits. As of the 2018-19 school year, or earlier, CCSD Police has required all uniformed officers to wear body cameras to improve community relations, strengthen public trust in law enforcement, lower the number of citizen complaints, defend officers against false accusations, increase agency accountability, and improve officer training and evaluation. CCSD Police also works the Department of Juvenile Justice to minimize interrupted educational opportunities and provide alternative to punitive disciplinary practices through the School Justice Partnership.

Training and Cultural Competency

All CCSD police officers attend the Southern Nevada Law Enforcement Academy in Las Vegas for 20 weeks. Officers also receive anti-bias, communication skills, and mental illness training. More than 50 officers have received Crisis Intervention Technical Training.²

Additionally, [140 CCSDPD staff](#) received Cultural Competency training from 2016-17:

Equity and Diversity Education Department Number of Employees Trained in Cultural Competency	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
School Site Administrators	1,092	1,423	-
Central Office Personnel	750	939	-
New Teachers	720	1,610	1,060
CCSD School Police	-	140	-
EDE Liaisons	-	-	1,034
Bennett Cadre Certification	30	30	29
Licensed Contracted Staff	-	-	7,837

Student Attitudes Toward CCSD Police

A 2021 survey of CCSD students about their attitudes toward school police indicated that a substantial portion of students felt a level of discomfort with school police.³ More than half of respondents who have police stationed at their school reported having experienced or knowing someone who has experienced at least one type of negative interaction with school police.

That rate of negative experiences was higher for Black or Latinx respondents, two-thirds of whom reported having negative experiences or knowing someone who had. Moreover, nearly a quarter of survey respondents reported feeling targeted by police based on race, language, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Indeed, 50 percent of Black students surveyed felt unsafe seeing police at school.⁴

² Clark County School Justice Partnership Data Reporting for Nevada Revised Statutes. Pg. 21. Available at: [07.09.20 Ref. 5.06 \(A\).pdf \(boarddocs.com\)](#)

³ Arrested Learning: A survey of youth experiences of police and security at school. April 2021. Available at: [Police-Free+Schools+Final+V4+\(1\).pdf \(populardemocracy.org\)](#)

⁴ *Id.* at 15, 22.

The negative experiences mentioned by students included anything from verbal harassment to restraining or arresting students. Some 37 percent of respondents report that CCSD police officers have prevented young people from learning by taking students out of a classroom. Another 29 percent of respondents reported they had experienced or were aware of police pepper spraying students.⁵

Indeed, survey authors said a FOIA request revealed that CCSD police officers had used pepper spray against young people nearly 180 times between 2012 and 2020. The two schools with the most pepper spray incidents – Canyon Spring HS and South Continuation – have a student population featuring over 90 percent students of color.⁶

In addition to pepper spray, some 29 percent of survey respondents had experienced or knew someone who had experienced being arrested by CCSD police, while 23 percent had experienced restraint or knew someone who had.⁷

At schools with police on campus, officers were a visible presence. Some 61 percent of students at schools with police reported seeing officers at least once a day. At such schools, 34 percent reported that police at school were armed with guns.

Students largely did not see police as a high priority for investment at school. When students were asked to rank what school investments were important to them in order of priority, 51 percent listed teachers first while 30 percent prioritized mental health supports. Some 75 percent of students ranked police investment as their lowest priority.

In terms of minimal behaviors, [Black students accounted for 40 percent of written warnings](#) issued by CCSD police during the 2019-20 school year, while white students only accounted for 10 percent.

Disproportionate Police Referrals

When students misbehave in school or are suspected of criminal activity, school employees may contact school police about individual students. When that happens, it is considered a law enforcement referral. Some, but not all, of those referrals result in arrests. Nationwide, black students and students with disabilities are subject to law enforcement referrals at rates disproportionate to their share of the population. The same is true in CCSD.

Statewide in Nevada, about 4.4 students out of every thousand are referred to law enforcement, just below the national average of 4.5. But students with disabilities are referred to law enforcement at nearly double that rate – or 8.3 students out of every thousand students. For Black students, the number was even higher, at 9.1 per thousand students.⁸

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.* at 17.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ USA Today. *School policing falls hardest on Black students and those with disabilities, study shows*. Available at: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/investigations/2021/09/08/police-schools-black-and-disabled-children-face-harsher-discipline/5436023001/>

Hundreds of referrals yearly from middle and high schools

In CCSD specifically, roughly 360 high school students were referred to law enforcement from comprehensive, non-rural schools in 2017, according to an analysis of data from the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Some 138 faced school-related arrest. The vast majority of those students came from schools that have police officers posted to the campus.⁹

Similarly, more than 330 middle school students were referred to law enforcement in the same period, while more than 70 faced arrest. The numbers drop off substantially in elementary school, with just a handful of arrests, although several dozen elementary students were still referred to law enforcement.¹⁰

The numbers looked sharply different at schools that did not have a police presence on campus. No students were arrested or referred to law enforcement at any of the district's seven selective high school technical academies or at the Las Vegas Academy of the Arts. None of those schools had police posted on campus despite student populations of between 800 and 1,800 students.¹¹

Black and disabled students referred disproportionately to police

In CCSD more specifically, Black students and disabled students were both referred to law enforcement and arrested at rates disproportionate to their population, according to OCR data from 2017, the most recent year for which data is publicly available. That difference was compounded for students who were both disabled and Black.

Just over a quarter of CCSD students referred to law enforcement, or 26 percent, were students with disabilities under IDEA, meaning students with IEPs. That is more than double the 12 percent rate of CCSD students overall who have IEPs.¹²

Likewise, Black students were also referred to law enforcement at disproportionate rates. Overall, roughly 46 percent of non-disabled students receiving referrals to law enforcement were African American even though Black students comprise only 14 percent of the non-disabled CCSD population. Another 34 percent were Latinx and 12 percent were white (Latinx students make up 47 percent of the district population, while white students make up 24 percent).¹³

When race and disability status were combined, the disparity was starker. Indeed, students who were both Black and disabled had an even more disproportionate rate of referral to law enforcement. Nearly 62 percent of students with IEPs who were referred to law enforcement were African American, even though Black students comprise just 18 percent of students with IEPs.¹⁴

⁹ Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights data collection. Available at: [Civil Rights Data Collection \(ed.gov\)](#)

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

By contrast, white and Latinx children were underrepresented among students with disabilities referred to law enforcement. A breakdown by disability category was not immediately available.

Disproportionate Arrests

More than 200 CCSD students, mostly in high school and middle school, were arrested in what were deemed “school-related arrests” in 2017, the last year for which OCR data is available.¹⁵ A school-related arrest means an arrest that either happens at school, at a school-related event that may be off-campus, or as a result of a referral from a school official.

Black students with and without disabilities were disproportionately represented in that group. Of the non-disabled students arrested, 54 percent were Black even though Black students comprise just 14 percent of the non-disabled student population.¹⁶

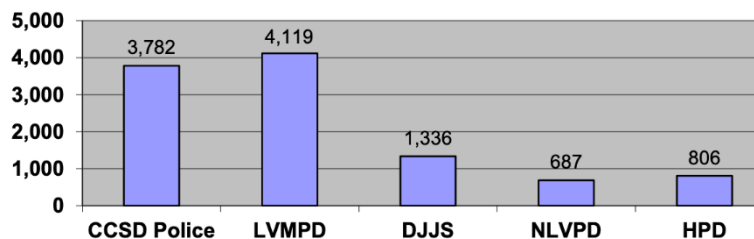
For students with IEPs, the racial disparity was higher. Some 68 percent of students with disabilities facing arrest were Black, more than three times the rate expected based on their proportion of the population. Just 18 percent of CCSD students with disabilities were Black.¹⁷

Referrals to Juvenile Justice System

CCSD police refer several thousand students to the juvenile justice system each year, including 3,782 students in 2019.¹⁸ That makes CCSD police the second greatest source of annual referrals to the Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJS), behind only the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police, according to a [2019 statistical report](#).

That number, reported by a DJJS statistical report, is far greater than the annual number of referrals to law enforcement reported by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. This discrepancy needs explanation.

1. Top Five Referral Sources by Percentage of Overall Referrals



However, the DJJS data shows that of the students referred to the juvenile justice system in 2019, 46 percent were African American and 36 percent were Latinx. The students ranged in age from

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights data collection. Available at: [Civil Rights Data Collection \(ed.gov\)](#)

¹⁸ Clark County, Nevada, Department of Juvenile Justice Services Statistical Report, Calendar year 2019. Available at: [2019 Databook.pdf \(clarkcountynv.gov\)](#)

10 to 17. The most common referrals were of 15-year-olds, at 23 percent. However, 42 10-year-olds were also referred.¹⁹

Students referred to juvenile justice faced charges ranging from Loitering and Trespass to Drug or Alcohol possession, to Threats and Battery. The most common charges included Fighting, Marijuana possession, and Battery.²⁰

The overall number of referrals to juvenile justice showed a declining trend, with a 9 percent decrease in referrals to DJJS between 2015 and 2019 led by a precipitous decline in referrals for Habitual Truancy.²¹

The chart below was taken from the 2019 DJJS statistical report regarding referrals:

a) Historical Statistics (2015-2019)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	15-19%
CCSD Police	4,159	3,984	5,229	3,920	3,782	-9%
LVMPD	4,212	4,021	4,301	3,873	4,119	-2%
DJJS	1,666	1,586	1,678	1,301	1,336	-20%
NLVPD	967	873	728	843	687	-29%
HPD	749	856	707	802	806	8%
District Court	498	336	281	347	219	-56%
Nevada Youth Parole	172	140	130	139	143	-17%
Mesquite Police Dept.	137	185	109	157	115	-16%
City Marshall's Unit	183	112	120	128	84	-54%
BCPD	98	99	93	76	134	37%
DCFS	73	60	28	35	33	-55%
NHP	37	59	31	39	48	30%
Clark County Park Police	59	22	28	34	18	-69%

Often, the referrals to juvenile justice are not serious enough for the District Attorney’s office to pursue charges. For example, CCSD police made 257 referrals to the criminal legal system [in May 2019](#), of which [215 students were Black or Latinx](#). The District Attorney’s office said at the time that “most of these cases are for marijuana or fighting;” thus, [not serious enough](#) for the District Attorney to pursue charges.

Conclusion

CCSD police appears to be accountable to the District (i.e. Superintendent of Schools) as a whole, rather than any single individual school in which officers are assigned. Students of color and students with disabilities are more likely to face serious discipline via CCSD Police than their white peers. Furthermore, while CCSDPD referrals to Juvenile Justice have gone down in recent years, the numbers are still high and continue to reflect racial disparities. The issue of

¹⁹ Clark County School Justice Partnership Data Reporting for Nevada Revised Statutes. Available at: [07.09.20 Ref. 5.06 \(A\).pdf \(boarddocs.com\)](#)

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.*

DJJS referrals doesn't begin to address issues of arrests, restraints, and the use of pepper spray against students.

Outstanding Questions

1. There is an apparent discrepancy between the OCR data and the DJJS data regarding the number of referrals to law enforcement versus the number of referrals to juvenile justice. (25,000 school service calls versus 3,782 DJJS referrals versus 700+ individual law enforcement referrals from schools) Logically, there should be more school referrals to law enforcement than law enforcement referrals to juvenile justice. But the opposite is true. Why?
2. Perhaps to answer the question about the discrepant data, we need clearer definitions of precisely what constitutes a law enforcement referral and whether all the CCSDPD referrals to juvenile justice begin with a law enforcement referral or not. There is also the question of CCSDPD reporting 25,000 annual service calls. So clearly not all the service calls resulted in referrals to law enforcement.
3. What are the disability categories of the students referred and arrested? We know that Black students are disproportionately found eligible for the Emotional Disturbance IEP category. Are those the same students who are being disproportionately arrested? Is there a disproportionate number of students with ED being referred and arrested?
4. What about students in foster care? Are they also disproportionately represented in the number of students referred to law enforcement and arrested?