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## School-Safety Union Head: Arrest Stats Not Product of Bias

*JAMES HARNEY*



‘LOOK AT THE ENTIRE PICTURE’: Contending that the disproportionate number of black and Latino students being arrested in schools is reflective of behavior, not bias, Teamsters Local 237 President Greg Floyd noted that 70 percent of School Safety Agents were women and 90 percent were black or Latina, then asked, ‘Do you think that School Safety Agents want to arrest more African-American and Latino students? The answer is no.’

Crime prevention in New York City schools, says the head of the union representing School Safety Agents, should begin at home.

### **‘Parents Must Play Role’**

Reacting to last week’s report in the Daily News that black and Hispanic students were far more likely than their white counterparts to be arrested, restrained, or given summonses in public schools this past school year, Teamsters Local 237 President Gregory Floyd said there’s plenty of blame to go around.

“What needs to change is we need to find out why these students are being arrested and what their parents are doing at home to correct their behavior,” said Mr. Floyd, whose local represents more than 5,000 School Safety Agents in city schools. “Parents cannot just send their kids off to school and bear no responsibility for what they do once they get inside their schools.”

The Daily News analysis of NYPD statistics released on July 21 showed that for the period of January through March, black and

Hispanic students in city schools were arrested or issued summonses in 1,118 out of a reported 1,208 incidents, about 93 percent. In comparison, only 38 reported arrests and summonses—just 3 percent of the total—involved white students.

## **Disparity in Cuffings**

There was a similar disparity in incidents in which students were handcuffed, with 627 involving black and Hispanic students, and only 14 involving white students.

An NYPD Assistant Chief said the department was “very concerned that the racial disparity still exists,” and a Department of Education spokeswoman said the agency spends \$47 million a year “to improve school climate.”

But while activists like Zakiyah Ansari of the Alliance for Quality Education told The News that “black and Latino students continue to suffer the most dehumanizing...contact with the police,” Mr. Floyd said it would be a mistake to depict the problem as merely a black-and-white issue.

Noting that 68 percent of the city public-school population is black and Hispanic, and only 15 percent is white, he said it should not be surprising that a greater number of incidents would involve black and Hispanic students.



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“Activists like to take statistics and run with them; they don’t like to look at the entire picture,” the union leader said. “No one is looking to arrest black students or arrest white students; they’re arresting students who are committing crimes.”

Mr. Floyd cited a statistic of his own, pointing out that “70 percent of School Safety Agents are women, and 90 percent are African-American and Latina.

### **No Motive for Bias**

“So given those statistics, do you think that School Safety Agents want to arrest more African-American and Latino students? The answer is no.”

“The numbers are what they are; you can’t fudge those numbers. You can’t manipulate those numbers unless you’re going to allow crime to be rampant,” Mr. Floyd said. “But given [the de Blasio] administration’s record of allowing crime to go unpunished, I suspect that now there’s going to be a push not to arrest anybody

[in the schools] for doing anything.”

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