MANNING & KASS
ELLROD, RAMIREZ, TRESTER LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

International Municipal Lawyers Association
2020 Virtual University Cities Summit

Policing In University Cities

School Policing

Eugene P. Ramirez

Los Angeles, CA

©2020 International Municipal Lawyers Association. This is an informational and educational report distributed by the International Municipal Lawyers Association during its 2020 Virtual University Cities Program held July 27-31, 2020. IMLA assumes no responsibility for the policies or positions presented in the report or for the presentation of its contents.

MANNING & KASS
ELLROD, RAMIREZ, TRESTER LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

School Policing

Eugene P. Ramirez
epr@manningllp.com | 213-624-6900 Ext. 2622

Among the calls for police reform, students and communities are demanding schools re-evaluate their relationship with campus police and local law enforcement. As a result, there is a current trend among school administrations to defund campus police and cut ties with local agencies. Provided below is information on universities participating in this trend, consequences of eliminating campus police, and possible responses your agencies may have going forward.

Schools Cutting and Eliminating Campus Police

Most universities have its own police force, as well as an agreement with the local law enforcement agency. Colleges frequently contract with local police to "provide security for athletic events, graduations, concerts and other large events and for specialized services like K-9 units that can detect explosives and illicit substances."[1] In early education: high schools generally have one armed officer, an unarmed officer is typically assigned to middle schools, and elementary schools "rely on roving patrol."[2]

Recently, the Los Angeles Board of Education approved a thirty-five percent cut to school police force—reducing the budget by twenty-five million dollars.[3] This equates to a layoff of sixty-five officers within the department, limiting law enforcement presence in schools.[4] The Board further barred schools from contracting with LAPD to secure a private force to replace the cut in

---

[1] Emma Whitford & Lilah Burke, *Students Demand Campuses Cut Ties With Police*, INSIDER HIGHER ED (June 5, 2020), https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/06/05/students-demand-universities-break-ties-local-police-few-have.
[2] Howard Blume & Sonali Kohli, *L.A. Unified police chief resigns after district slashes department budget*, LOS ANGELES TIMES (June 30, 2020, 3:30 PM), https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-06-30/lausd-unified-budget-school-police-reopening.
[3] *Id.*
[4] *Id.*

officers.[5] The advocate groups are continuing to push for a complete elimination of police presence on campus.[6]

Likewise, University of California, Los Angeles, formed a faculty collective, demanding that campus police be replaced with "anti-carceral forms of accountability"—for example, transformative justice. Additionally, the collective is pushing for the University to cut all ties with external law enforcement departments.[7] In response, the administration announced its intent to review the University's relationship with outside law enforcement, as well as establish a Black Resource Center.[8]

Following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota announced its intent to limit its relationship with Minneapolis Police Department.[9] The university will no longer use the city police force during large events or specialized services, including football games and concerts.[10] The administration limited the relationship to "joint patrols and investigations."[11] Since the announcement, at least forty-four other universities have circulated petitions to withdraw police from their campuses.[12] These petitions demand that funds be reallocated toward other resources.[13]

---

[5] *Id.*
[6] *Id.*
[7] *Id.*
[8] *Id.*
[9] Mahita Gajanan, *University of Minnesota Ending Contracts With Minneapolis Police Department After George Floyd's Death*, TIME (May 28, 2020, 1:54 PM), https://time.com/5843911/george-floyd-death-university-of-minnesota-police/.
[10] *Id.*
[11] Emma Whitford, *University of Minnesota Reduces Ties to Local Police*, INSIDE HIGHER ED (May 29, 2020), https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2020/05/29/university-minnesota-reduces-ties-local-police.
[12] Julia Barajas, *At some U.S. universities, a time to rethink cops on campus*, LOS ANGELES TIMES (July 9, 2020), https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-07-09/amid-nationwide-calls-to-defund-the-police-universities-rethink-ties-to-police-dept.
[13] *Id.*

Similarly, Whitman College in Washington announced its plan to cut all ties with the city police force, Walla Walla Police Department.[14] This decision came shortly after a photo of an officer's 'SS' tattoo circulated, resulting in community outrage.[15] Subsequent to the officer's refusal to issue an apology, Whitman College presented its plan to revoke multiple privileges provided to city officers.[16] Law enforcement are no longer permitted to train in Whitman facilities nor use the college's fitness center.[17] Whitman College also announced its decision to discontinue the practice of hiring off-duty Walla Walla officers for security at Whitman events, including commencement and sport games.[18] In response, the Walla Walla police chief released a statement in which he expressed his regret at the school's actions, acknowledging that if needed, the department would continue to be available and responsive.[19]

Consequences of Defunding School Police

This recent trend must consider "the potential impact on surrounding communities."[20] Decreasing and eliminating funding for school law enforcement limits officers' ability to provide comprehensive security to the school. With less funding, agencies will be forced to lay off officers.[21] Subsequently, after-hours security will nearly be eliminated—police will no longer be able to supply security for adult and night school.[22] A lack in patrolling officers may likely result in an increase in burglaries, vandalism, and trespassing.[23] Without officers on

---

[14] Allison Snell, *Whitman College ends relationship with Walla Walla PD*, KOMO NEWS (June 30, 2020), https://komonews.com/news/local/walla-walla-pd-responds-to-whitman-college-ending-relationship.
[15] *Id.*
[16] *Id.*
[17] *Id.*
[18] *Id.*
[19] *Id.*
[20] Julia Barajas, *At some U.S. universities, a time to rethink cops on campus*, LOS ANGELES TIMES (July 9, 2020), https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-07-09/amid-nationwide-calls-to-defund-the-police-universities-rethink-ties-to-police-dept.
[21] Howard Blume & Sonali Kohli, *L.A. Unified police chief resigns after district slashes department budget*, LOS ANGELES TIMES (June 30, 2020, 3:30 PM), https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-06-30/lausd-unified-budget-school-police-reopening.
[22] *Id.*
[23] *Id.*

campus, school shootings and violent altercations could escalate more quickly.[24] Additionally, agencies may have to terminate intervention and prevention efforts.[25] Overall, it is believed that budget cuts "destroy the infrastructure of the police department."[26]

Responding to These Cuts

Having campus police provides several benefits to the school and community. These programs allow students to forge trusting relationships with law enforcement, provide on-site security, and are equipped to handle criminal complaints.[27] Instead of eliminating campus policing or terminating university relationships with local law enforcement, university administrations may consider: ensuring the campus police is the lead law enforcement agency on campus, reducing the need for local law enforcement at large events, providing de-escalation and cultural sensitivity training to all officers, and develop and teach social justice curriculum at the university.[28] A better approach may be to ensure that police are properly equipped, have non-lethal options available, and are accurately trained.[29] Administrations should focus on holding all on-campus officers accountable—in an attempt to rebuild trust with students while still providing necessary resources.

The current climate is about defunding and abolishing law enforcement. Yet, one only has to think of the active shooters on school campuses to realize that law enforcement is needed to help protect students, employees and faculty

---

[24] Laura Edghill, *Rethinking police on campus*, THE WORLD AND EVERYTHING IN IT (June 18, 2020), https://worldandeverything.org/2020/06/rethinking-police-on-campus/.
[25] *Id.*
[26] *Id.*
[27] Laura Edghill, *Rethinking police on campus*, THE WORLD AND EVERYTHING IN IT (June 18, 2020), https://worldandeverything.org/2020/06/rethinking-police-on-campus/.
[28] Emma Whitford & Lilah Burke, *Students Demand Campuses Cut Ties With Police*, INSIDER HIGHER ED (June 5, 2020), https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/06/05/students-demand-universities-break-ties-local-police-few-have.
[29] Julia Barajas, *At some U.S. universities, a time to rethink cops on campus*, LOS ANGELES TIMES (July 9, 2020), https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-07-09/amid-nationwide-calls-to-defund-the-police-universities-rethink-ties-to-police-dept.

members. It should not take another Columbine or Virginia Tech tragedy for the public to appreciate the presence of law enforcement.

The key is communication between the schools and local law enforcement. Both sides need to work as one and determine what is the best way to provide safety for everyone and yet allow law enforcement to act when it is appropriate to do so.