

Youth Policy Task Force

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Intro: Why Are We Here?

You are here because you **care about your future** and want to make real change in your city. The Police Accountability Board (PAB) is all about **transparency, fairness, and making sure the community has a voice** in public safety. And guess what? That includes YOU.

A lot of decisions that impact young people are made **without young people at the table**—and that’s what we’re here to change. So let’s talk about some ways you can **step up, take charge, and make a difference**. But first—let me ask you some questions...👁👁

1. Create a Youth-Led Public Safety Advisory Council

 Let’s be real—how many of you have actually been asked for your input on school safety, policing, or community violence?

👁👁 Why This Matters:

- Young people **experience the most interactions with law enforcement**, but **who’s actually listening to you?**
- Instead of adults assuming what you need, **you should be making recommendations on policies that affect your schools and neighborhoods.**


What We Can Do:

✓ **Create a Youth Public Safety Advisory Council** where YOU meet with city officials, police, and community leaders to share what’s really happening in your schools and communities.


✓ **Get a seat at the table** for youth in public safety discussions—because **decisions about you should include you.**

✓ Work with the **PAB to collect real data** on how young people are impacted by law enforcement policies.

Question for You:

 If you could change **ONE** thing about how public safety works for youth in Rochester, what would it be?

2. End the School-to-Prison Pipeline with Restorative Justice

 *Raise your hand if you know someone who has been suspended for something that should've been handled differently.*

Why This Matters:

- Schools should feel like **safe places to learn**, not like **mini-courtrooms** where students are constantly punished.
- **Black and Brown students are suspended & arrested in school at much higher rates than others—this has to stop.**
- Instead of pushing students out, schools should be **investing in conflict resolution, mental health, and peer mediation.**


What We Can Do:

- ✓ **Expand Restorative Justice programs** that help students **solve conflicts without police involvement.**
- ✓ **End unnecessary school arrests**—shift the focus to **mental health counselors, social workers, and peer support.**
- ✓ **Push for policies that track and reduce racial disparities in school discipline.**

Question for You:

 *What do you think would make schools feel safer without relying on police?*

3. Invest in Mental Health & Crisis Response for Youth

 *How many of you know someone who's struggled with their mental health but didn't feel like they had support?*

Why This Matters:

- When youth are in crisis, **calling the police shouldn't be the only option**—we need **trained mental health professionals** to step in.
- Right now, many youth in mental health distress **end up arrested instead of getting the help they need.**
- Having **youth-led crisis teams** could be a game-changer for students who need help.

What We Can Do:

- ✓ **Push for a mobile youth crisis response team**—staffed with **mental health experts, not police.**
- ✓ **Expand 24/7 mental health hotlines** that youth actually feel comfortable using.
- ✓ **Train school staff and community workers in de-escalation**—so fewer students are arrested for simply needing help.

💡 Question for You:

👉 *If you had a crisis, what kind of support would you want—besides police?*

🔥 4. Make Law Enforcement Interactions with Youth More Transparent

👉 *Have you or someone you know ever been stopped by the police and felt it was unfair?*

🗨️ Why This Matters:

- Young people need to know **their rights**—period.
- Right now, **there's little public data on how often young people are stopped, searched, or arrested**—we need **more transparency**.
- Without data, it's easy for problems to get **ignored or dismissed**.

💡 What We Can Do:

- ✓ **Push for mandatory data collection** on ALL youth-police interactions.
- ✓ **Expand 'Know Your Rights' workshops** so you understand **what to do in a police encounter**.
- ✓ **Advocate for better tracking of racial disparities** in how young people are treated by law enforcement.

💡 Question for You:

👉 *Do you think more transparency would make a difference? Why or why not?*

🔥 5. Fund & Support Youth-Led Violence Prevention Programs

👉 *What if I told you that in some cities, people who used to be involved in street violence are now leading the charge in stopping it?*

🗨️ Why This Matters:

- **Violence doesn't just come out of nowhere**—it's connected to things like **poverty, lack of jobs, and feeling unheard**.
- **Cities that invest in youth violence prevention** see fewer crimes, more jobs, and **stronger communities**.

💡 What We Can Do:

- ✓ **Push for more funding for youth employment & mentorship programs**—because a **summer job can change a life**.
- ✓ **Create 'Safe Spaces for Youth'** where young people can chill, get resources, and be in a **positive environment**.

✓ **Support community-led violence interruption programs** that use **credible messengers** to stop conflicts before they escalate.

💬 **Question for You:**

👉 *What would it take to make Rochester a place where young people feel safe and supported?*

🔥 **Closing: What's Next?**

💬 *This isn't just talk. If we want change, we have to make it happen. So what's next?*

✓ **Develop a policy idea**—What's one issue from today that you'd like to focus on?

✓ **Present it to City Council & school officials**—They work for YOU.

✓ **Get involved with PAB & community organizations**—Policy change starts with young voices.

✍️ **Final Challenge:**

"If you had the power to change ONE thing about public safety or education for young people in Rochester, what would it be? And how would you make it happen?"

🔊 **Let's take these ideas and turn them into action.** Rochester's future belongs to YOU—so let's build it together. 💡 🔥 🤝 🏘️