“Adults See Everything as Dangerous Except Themselves”: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Safety, Policing, and Protection in Schools

by

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A dissertation accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Critical and Sociocultural Studies in Education

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Spring 2024

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: “Adults See Everything as Dangerous Except Themselves”: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Safety, Policing, and Protection in Schools

This study explores ideologies, discourses, and representations of school safety and policing within the United States educational system, motivated by the imperative to understand the transmission and impact of these ideologies on the broader societal constructs of safety, punishment, and mass incarceration. Drawing from the frameworks of corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), three central research questions guide the investigation: 1) How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) define school safety (safety for whom, safety from what)?; 2) How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) discursively produce police as safe or unsafe in schools?; 3) What do discourses of school safety and policing show us about the ways students are positioned as dangerous (and by whom), which students are positioned as dangerous, and who must be protected and from what within schools?

Analyzing multiple datasets, including school board meetings, online public comments, and conversations with students, the study uncovers both commonalities and tensions within educational communities regarding representations of policing, schools, and students. It identifies shared discursive strategies alongside ideological tensions, highlighting the perpetuation, privileging, and challenging of certain beliefs about policing and about young people that move across contexts and social histories.

A significant finding of the research is the central role of adultism in maintaining the interconnectedness between the school and prison systems, thereby perpetuating mass incarceration. This revelation prompts the introduction of YouthCrit as a framework to explicitly address adultism as a unique form of oppression intertwined with other institutional subjugations, and to disrupt carceral logics rooted in colonialism and heteropaternalism.

Ultimately, this study advocates for a deeper understanding of the school-prison nexus and emphasizes the importance of challenging deficit representations of students. It calls upon scholars, educators, and practitioners to center the voices and agency of young people in research, interventions, and social movements for community safety

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This section is the most important part of this entire document (maybe even this entire PhD journey). This was the first page I wrote – the first document in an ever-expanding folder of drafts. This whole project is me – I'm in every page and every line. And in turn – so are all the people that love me and that I love. There is a section in the first part of the book *Let this Radicalize You (*by Mariam Kaba and Kelly Hayes), where Kelly Hayes writes about getting a ride home after marches or organizing meetings, about the dialogues that happen in those cars; after people move and build together towards something. Conversations that create deep and beautiful places of learning, of encounter, creativity and curiosity. She calls any conversations that offer this sort of alignment, questioning, transformation and experience of belonging as "rides home". Not just to a physical destination, but home to what we value most.

There are so many people who brought me home during this study and the writing of this dissertation. So many people who held me before and will hold me after. So, in honor (and as is required of all great car trips home), I'm leaning into deep gratitude expressed through the art of the mix tape to guide this acknowledgement and to start this dissertation. This is, after all, a love story: to all of the people, all of the stories, and all of the places that have held me in the writing of this; to the students who inspired the questions and the learnings; and young folks who are and have always been the ones asking for the world to be deserving of their beauty and brilliance.

Side A: To my parents for holding home in ways that let me see and feel where I fit in the world – not half of anything, or from any one place, but whole in myself and deserving of whatever belonging I needed. To Tarik – one of my greatest goals in life has

been (since you entered the planet) that you know how deeply loved you are, and how much I want to make you proud. Thanks for thinking I'm so cool. Sorry it took me a while to notice. Tam Tam – we do so many dances my sweetest baby brother. I hope we keep finding our way to new dance floors, to new and old joys, and to a holding of all the memories and ways we love each other. I'm so proud of you. To Matt, look what we did! But you always knew...didn't you. I feel your love in my chest, buoyant and joyful – always present. Like you. Thank you for seeing all of this as possible before I could. For all the ways you are proud of me. For showing me how joy and safety and fighting like hell can all live and move together. Lily, you are my moon. You are every good thing from every line of mamas that have come before us – you are starlight, and fire, and have invited me into places of healing and of love that I will never be able to describe with words. Ben – my love. You are my greatest teacher, always. There is nothing more delicious, more important, and more powerful than getting to love you and to watch you move through the world. I hope you always lead from that place in your chest. I believe in a world that deserves you.

To CRYJ. For the Palmer Brothers. To everyone student that taught me in workshops on this project. To the ESD Student Voice Design team, to the people of Palestine and the children of Gaza; to the Arab and SWANA diaspora, and to the young people and students across the globe who ask for education to do the work of liberation, who move and model other horizons. To the Students for Justice in Palestine, and the faculty and staff who hold them.

Side B: To Kate – you are still the coolest girl I know. Our little selves would be so proud of us. To Jen, for finding and trusting me. To Roshelle: Sis, you are alongside

me in all of these pages, forever. To Nadia: Rides home until we die, inshallah. To the sisterhood (Rhonda, *ya habibti*, Ami, Marie) who made Eugene start to feel like home. Who have held my heart and my back through so many places of parenting, daughtering, wifing.... To Leah, for joy and celebration and brilliance. The disco ball of my heart. To Maddy, for moving from wanting to take me out to clearing trails and lighting paths for me – always. To Sue, for the way you hold refusal and possibility alongside each other, and for getting me back to kids. To the activists, and scholars, and student organizers who live and lead, and learn, and live at the shoals. My literature review is a love letter to you.

And last, but not least, to my committee. Leilani – for asking me and inviting me to locate myself inside texts and movements. For seeing me, my voice, and this work as needed. For always reminding me who my teachers are (always the babies), and asking me to step in. To Rhonda, for all the ways you move and stand up; for asking and reminding me to do more than problematize. For getting me done. Audrey, for the ways you modeled how do to the work of scholarship, and for making me feel like a peer and a teacher. For Joanna, your questions and permission brought me into the program, and they get to walk me to the end. I learn so much from the way you invite and question.

Like I started, I'm also returning to Let this Radicalize You, closing with the ending of Kelly Hayes' introduction: "I know these are frightening and even soul-shaking times. I cannot tell you that the tumult will relent, because it will not. But I can tell you that here, on the edge of everything, we are each other's best hope".

I hope this feels like a ride home

DEDICATION

To my grandma's: Lilian and Amal – for holding the biggest dreams for me, paired with the fiercest expectations and reminders of who we are and where we come from. To my parents, for reminding me we have choices in what we choose to carry and what we get to put down from inside all the legacies we carry. To Matt, for the ways you have always seen me. To Lily & Ben (ya hayati) everything for you always.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Prisons are not just physical representations of social policies and structures, but also serve as potent symbols of ideological control and power. Scholars such as Angela Davis (2003, 2023), Stovall (2016, 2017); Meiners (2016), Kaba (2012), Love (2019, 2023), and Annamma (2018) have written extensively about the intricate relationships between the material reality of incarceration and the abstract constructs that justify and perpetuate its existence. Within this framework and scholarship, the school-prison nexus emerges as a focal point, where the contours of safety, punishment, and mass incarceration intersect and intertwine through the transfer and (re)production of ideologies.

This study looks to analyze this discursive terrain, guided by the principles of corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and three pivotal questions: 1) How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) define school safety (safety for whom, safety from what)?; 2) How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) discursively produce police as safe or unsafe in schools?; 3) What do discourses of school safety and policing show us about the ways students are positioned as dangerous (and by whom), which students are positioned as dangerous, and who must be protected and from what within schools?

By looking across a variety of data sources, including transcripts of school board meetings, online public comments, and intimate dialogues and brainstorming workshops with students, this study uncovers patterns in the surfacing of discourses and discursive strategies used

in representations of safety, students, and policing by diverse groups of educational community members. Findings highlighted places of agreement and places of overlap among educational community members with opposing views of policing, educational spaces, and students, as well as places of ideological tension and incompatibility.

At the heart of these findings lies a central discovery that was so innocuous it could be missed: That adultism and adult supremacy are central to the existence and to the functioning of mass incarceration. This recognition serves as a catalyst for the introduction of YouthCrit, a potent framework aimed at naming and dismantling adult-centric paradigms in order to disrupt the school prison nexus, and in turn the prison industrial complex.

Ultimately, this study advocates for a paradigm shift—one that prioritizes the voices, experiences, and agency of all young people in shaping the discourse and practice of education and educational safety. It calls upon scholars, educators, and policymakers to heed the imperative of challenging deficit-oriented narratives and representations of students that allows, or extends, the existence of the school-prison nexus. In doing so, we move alongside the movement for prison abolition, in solidarity with the knowings and visionary insight of those most impacted by the unique intersection of adultism, racialized oppression, abelism, heteronormativity, and carcerality.

To begin, I center on the problem that motivates this study: How exclusionary discipline, school-based arrests, and the presence of police in school buildings continues to be normalized and experienced by thousands of students in the U.S, despite decades of research and public outcry that calls attention to the student's negative experiences of safety and wellbeing by these policies and school-police partnerships, specifically those of marginalized students. I then move

to introduce the study itself, describing the social context of policing and mass incarceration generally, and the context/site of research for this study that analyzes discourses of police, students, and safety within a particular geographic and sociopolitical context. This chapter articulates the research questions for this study and an overview of the research methods used, scope of the study, and rationale.

Statement of the Problem

On any given day in the U.S, there are nearly 60,000 children living in containment (Bernstein, 2014; Sawyer, 2019). Many of these young people are detained for offenses that do not constitute a crime for individuals over 18 - including status offenses such as running away, truancy, and being perceived as a risk to self or others (Beckett & Murakawa, 2012; Selman, 2017). Despite efforts for reform (which have led to a 60% reduction in the number of young people locked in prisons since 2000) the percentage of Black, Indigenous, and disabled youth who are currently detained or incarcerated continues to be overrepresented in juvenile facilities nation-wide (Smolkowski et al., n.d.).

Black and Native youth face significant overrepresentation in juvenile facilities compared to their white counterparts in the United States. This overrepresentation is particularly pronounced among Black boys and girls, with 42% of boys and 35% of girls in juvenile facilities being Black, despite Black youth comprising only 14% of the total youth population. Similarly, Native girls are highly overrepresented, constituting 3% of girls in juvenile facilities despite their small share of the overall youth population. Even excluding youth in Indian country facilities, Native youth still face disproportionate representation in juvenile facilities, with 1.5% of boys and 3% of girls confined, despite comprising less than 1% of the total youth population nationally (Sawyer, 2019).

Racial disparities also extend to decisions regarding the transfer of youth from juvenile to adult court. In 2017, while Black youth represented 35% of delinquency cases, they accounted for over half (54%) of youth transferred from juvenile court to adult court. Conversely, white youth, who comprised 44% of all delinquency cases, made up only 31% of transfers to adult

court. Notably, although the overall number of youth transferred to adult court decreased from 2005 to 2017, the racial disproportionality among these transfers has actually increased over time (Sawyer, 2019).

In 2015, nearly 300,000 young people came into contact with the juvenile justice system for the first time for incidents that occurred on school grounds. While rates of exclusionary discipline (i.e.: expulsions and suspensions) have decreased since 2015 when this data was collected, recently released data from the U.S Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights shows that school-related arrests, expulsions, and referrals to law enforcement have increased (US Department of Education, 2021). The 'school to prison pipeline' is a term coined by scholars and activists in the early 2000s (Kim et al., 2010; Potter et al., 2017) to call attention to the disproportionate use of suspensions, use of police, and arrests of Black and Brown students for low level offenses or violations of school code. Invoking the image of a pipeline or a chute, researchers and scholars have worked across academic disciplines (criminal justice and educational) to bring forward clear evidence of the reality and the impact that repeated use of suspensions and expulsions drastically increase the likelihood a student will be pushed out of school and towards probation or incarceration (Fasching-Varner et al., 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Sandler, Wong, Morales, & Patel, 2000; Wald & Losen, 2003). This research names how practices and policies work to funnel specific students from places tasked with equitable access to education towards prisons, and draws connections between the presence of school-based police officers, arrests for school policy violations, increased security, and use of containment/isolation on the impact to learning opportunities of Indigenous, Black, Latine, and poor students (Carter et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2010; E. R. Meiners, 2017; Nolan, 2015).

This research helped to generate critical momentum and public awareness, which led to the U.S Department of Education issuing guidance (paired with funding) in 2014 to help K-12 public schools identify and prevent discriminatory discipline on the basis of race, color, or national origin. This guidance also provided training, toolkits, and technical assistance to encourage the use of classroom-based behavior interventions and community-building practices that did not rely on police to handle routine discipline matters (Bahena et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2010). Yet, only four years later this guidance would be overturned by former U.S. Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos who ran on a political platform that claimed schools would be more dangerous if administrators and educators felt reluctant to discipline and to engage police on campus in response to non-white students because they feared federal discrimination investigations (Cantalupo, N. C., 2019).

Tensions and debates surrounding the practice of police in schools have existed for decades. However, the last several years have brought the presence of police on school campuses and the funding of police-school partnerships into greater public awareness within the context of racial uprisings that demanded action for the ongoing shooting and murder of unarmed Black people at the hands of the police (Green, 2018; Loveless, 2017; Turner & Beneke, 2020). In response to this most recent rise of the Movement for Black Lives (whose central demands included the funding of counselors and removal of police in schools), the American Federation of Teachers passed a resolution calling for the separation of school safety and policing (Charney, Hagopian& Peterson, 2021). Community-led calls to defund the police have resulted in an overhaul of budgets across several large school districts since 2020 but have also been met with

counter protests that position gun violence as inevitable and "situate school policing as the only solution" to protecting students (Nolan, 2015, p.904).

Largely, school districts have catered to these fears and conceptions of safety, even when confronted with data that shows most students do not feel safer with the presence of police officers, and further that School Resource Officers (SROs) are not effective in deterring school violence (Connery, 2020a). However, in the wake of 2020 community uprisings following a most recent wave of killings of unarmed Black people by police officers, several U.S public school districts brought forward motions to eliminate contracts and formal relationships with law enforcement. This study is situated within one such community – a district of 16,291 students in the Willamette Valley of Oregon that, in June of 2020, voted not to extend their contract with the local police department and to effectively remove 5 SROs from school buildings across the district.

Setting

Local Context

Eugene School District (4J) is a mid-size public school district located in the central Willamette Valley of Oregon. It is one of two school districts that serve the city of Eugene. Founded in 1854 (one year before treaties were formally negotiated with the Kalapuya peoples and ratified by Congress, ceding the Willamette Valley in exchange for promises that were never fulfilled), Eugene School district was numbered 4J because it was the fourth school district incorporated in Lane County and is a joint (J) district, meaning that its boundary includes a small part of Linn County to the north. The district spans about 155 miles, which includes about 85 percent of the City of Eugene (4J, E. S. D. (n.d.). In the 2021/22 school year, Eugene School District had 16,291 students across 41 schools (23 Elementary, 11 middle schools, and 7 High Schools) served by 900 staff and 64 administrators (ODE, 2022).

Demographically, 33% of Eugene 4J students identify as students of color (16% as Latine, 11% identify as multiracial, 3% of students identify as Asian, 2% as Black, and 1% as Indigenous). Fourteen percent of students receive services for disabilities, 43% access free and reduced lunch, and 7% are classified as Ever English Learners. In 2022, Eugene School District 4J had an overall graduation rate of 79% (compared with 81% at the state level). In 2018, data from the Office of Civil Rights showed that students with disabilities made up 30% of all students who received out of school suspensions, and 23% of students who were referred to law enforcement for school-related incidents. Twenty-one percent of students referred to law enforcement were identified as both Latine AND experiencing a disability.

Eugene School District 4J borders Springfield School district to the east. These districts are in close geographic proximity to each other, with students and families moving between districts and school building. Springfield was a site of one of the first mass school shootings in the United States. The lived experience and collective memory of the 1998 Thurston High School Shooting lives deep inside the families and communities of Springfield and Eugene, as well as in the forefront of the minds of policy makers and educators across the nation. It is a tragedy that was foundational in the creation of zero-tolerance policies, and the expansion of law enforcement in U.S public schools. Today, the Thurston Shooting is still invoked across the nation by those who maintain that SRO's are a critical first line of defense against active threats and school shootings (Canady et al., 2012; Dragoo et. al, 2022; Fisher& Fischer, 2023; Curran et al., 2021).

In the same community, 22 years later – school safety rose to headlines again. In June of 2020, following the murder of George Floyd and subsequent law enforcement clashes with students and communities of color in Eugene and around the nation, a series of community and student-led protests centering the Black Lives Matter movement called for the Eugene 4J School District to remove police officers from schools. These protests (both local and national) gathered enough public outcry that several Eugene School District School Board members brought forward a motion to discuss the termination of a long-standing contract with Eugene's Police Department. This contract (which was up for renewal in December of 2020) provided funding to maintain 5 full-time SROs.

On June 17, 2020, board members voted 6-1 not to renew this contract with Eugene Police Department, committing to a safety plan for school campuses that would not include

school resource officers stationed in school buildings. In the fall of 2021, Eugene 4J School District leadership announced a restructuring of their school safety and security program. The district website described this shift in programming and staffing as a response to expanding community needs, dedicating 8 full-time campus safety and security monitors split between the 3 high school regions. When this study was conducted, Eugene 4J had not renewed contracts with Eugene Police Department for the placement of SROs. Instead, the district now provides 8 full time Safety Monitors tasked with campus safety and security. This structural shift from SROs to uniformed 'Safety Monitors" (following public outcry and the school board's decision) inspired me to expand the reach of my research questions to look at school safety as a larger discourse beyond school policing. Questions capable of noticing places of tensions, places of ideological persistence across structures, and places rupture within discourses of safety and representations of students, schools, and policing.

Thus, I situate my research questions within this exploration of Eugene School District 4J's decision to explore the unique and complex experiences of educational community members navigating decisions and discussions about school safety and the role of police. In doing so, I hope to address critical questions in educational research around school safety by focusing on the movement of language between and among social movements, individuals, and institutions to notice places of tensions and places of discursive overlap in representations of students, safety, and police.

Cultural Context/Social Context

Despite the documented harm caused to students by school police, resource officers remain deeply embedded in many public schools and districts across the country (Gonzalez &

Epstein, 2023). The disproportionate removal from schools and criminalization of students from marginalized backgrounds has persisted across decades of educational reform, educational research, academic-led interventions, and waves of public outcry (Carter et al., 2017; E. R. Meiners, 2017; Losen & Skiba, 2010). It is this persistence of school-police partnerships and the everyday lived realities of marginalized students) that motivates this study.

The embeddedness of exclusionary discipline and reliance on police is illustrative of the ways schools and prisons are and have always been co-constructed under ideologies that emphasize control, discipline, indoctrination and the rehabilitation of particular bodies and identities (S. Annamma, 2016; Davis, 2003; Rodriguez, 2010). In turn, scholars suggest that relationships between schools and prisons might be more accurately defined as a "persistent nexus or a web of intertwined, punitive threads"(Meiners, 2007, p. 32). This web includes, but is not limited to, zero tolerance school disciplinary policies that merged the language of criminal law into interventions for classroom behavior, as well as the way language and discourses foundational to U.S schools serve to produce and to maintain specific students as dangerous, disposable, and un-teachable (S. A. Annamma, 2017; Horsford et al., 2019; E. R. Meiners, 2010) . Subini Annamma (2017) defines the convergence of these factors (language, policy, power, ideology, discourse) as the core pedagogy of schooling in the U.S: a "pedagogy of pathologization" that teaches hegemonic norms around which bodies and lives are deemed "normal" or "valuable" and deserving of protection – and in turn which bodies, and which lives and bodies are not.

Study Design & Research Questions

This study examines discourses about police and safety within and across three datasets: 1) public comments submitted to the Eugene 4J school board surrounding a decision to terminate contracts with Eugene Police Department, 2) the school board meeting transcripts where members voted on the contract, and 3) artifacts, recordings, and transcripts from a series of student workshops held with current and/or former Eugene 4J students.

I do this by bringing together a combination of Corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to illuminate areas of overlap and places of ideological or discursive tension within and among educational community members and within conversations about school safety and policing. This innovative, and multi-phased approach to critical discourse allowed me to analyze texts separately, and then together, bringing different methods of analysis and inquiry into conversations with each other as organized around three central research questions: 1) How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) define school safety (safety for whom, safety from what)?; 2) How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) discursively produce police as safe or unsafe in schools?; 3) What do discourses of school safety and policing show us about the ways students are positioned as dangerous (and by whom), which students are positioned as dangerous, and who must be protected and from what within schools?

Rationale

Research that is committed to the work of critical analysis of the embeddedness of schools and prisons invites a move away from a myopic focus on the practice of individual institutions, and instead, foregrounds an expansive view of the social, political, economic, and discursive processes that maintain police, isolation and imprisonment as community safety (Davis et al., 2022). In turn, educational research that moves with commitments to notice and dismantle these discursive processes aligns with methodologies that demand a deep scrutiny of everyday practices across and between institutions, a naming of social actors, and a view of language that illuminates ideological premises and power grounded in the lived experience of those who are most impacted by school policies (Halle-Erby & Keenan, 2022).

Many studies engage in the work of naming the disproportionate removal of students from marginalized backgrounds. And while there are numerous studies that track the effectiveness of behavioral interventions (on both students and educators), there is an urgent need for research that focuses on discourse, and specifically research that examines areas of overlap and places of ideological tension among and between educational community members (including students). To address this need, this study engages a multi-step process of critical analysis to illuminate how ideologies surrounding police and school safety are expressed and enacted discursively (through written and oral texts) within and across public comments, school board decisions, and student workshops. It is my belief that this sort of study (one that centers students, and tracks discourses of policing and safety across datasets and conversations) offers critical insight into how and why exclusionary disciplinary practices and the incarceration of young people as normal and effective has maintained across decades of educational reform,

educational research, and academic-led interventions (Carter et al., 2017; E. R. Meiners, 2017; Losen & Skiba, 2010).

This research project begins from the premise that practices of disposability are endemic to U.S schools, and that filling of prisons (i.e.: mass incarceration) relies on beliefs about children and punishment that are circulated through the discursive and non-discursive practices inside our schools. To understand current tensions and possibilities within a movement to dismantle the school to prison pipeline it is vital to understand the way patterns of language, policies, rationale and belief systems about young people, about safety, and about police are used to justify, defend, maintain, and also to rupture the normalizing of incarceration as a fate for those who disrupt the status quo (Ben-Moshe, 2018).

Research that centers the voices of young people in naming these tensions and incompatibilities alongside possibilities made visible by discourses of safety in schools, is both lacking and urgently needed. Inspired by Halle-Erby & Keenan (2022) to consider how educational research might serve collective movements towards the abolition of prisons, this research project seeks to: a) name how patterns of behaviors, language, and systems of control are repeated across time and across institutions to center police and to position specific students as deserving of protection and others as dangerous, b) understand how different educational community members reinforce or disrupt normative understanding of safety, and c) illuminate tensions, places of overlap, and possibilities expressed between and among these educational community members and discourses of school safety.

Structure of the Dissertation

This chapter introduced the study, describing the social context of policing and mass incarceration generally, and the context of school policing with the Eugene 4J school district specifically. This chapter articulated the research questions for this study, as well as an overview of the research, scope of the study, and rationale. This study uses a multi-phase critical discourse analysis to examine how and in what ways educational community members position police as safe and unsafe, and how discourses of school safety illuminate places of overlap and places of tension between representations of schools, students, and safety.

The chapters that constitute this dissertation continue as follows. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of prison abolition to center a sociohistorical understanding of school-police partnerships alongside an overview of findings and places of tension with the broader field of school safety research. This literature review closes with an orientation to student voice and critical youth studies as emerging fields with promising practice within the field of educational research.

Chapter 3 provides a discussion of my positionality as researcher and the methodology for this study, describes the role of textual analysis and discourse analysis in understanding normative assumptions about police, and places of rupture or ideological incompatibility among and within representations of students and schools. This chapter also provides a framework for how the study was conducted, including an overview of each of the three phases of analysis: Phase 1 (Textual Analysis); Phase 2 (Orders of Discourse), and Phase 3 (Clusters of Discourses).

Chapter 4 presents the findings from Phase 1 (Textual Analysis), identifying the social actors present in and across the three datasets in this study, and highlighting safety as a non-human social actor related to other social actors who need to be safe and from what they need to be kept safe from. Utilizing these associations between human and non-human social actors within the texts, Chapter 4 closes with a definition of school safety as offered by educational community members across data sets. Chapter 5 returns to representations of police within Phase 1 to respond to research question 2: How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) discursively produce police as safe or unsafe in schools? This chapter presents the key findings from an extensive orders of discourse analysis to investigate discourses and discursive strategies used by educational community members to position police as safe or unsafe.

Chapter 6 pulls from both Phase 1 (Textual Analysis) and Phase 2 (Orders of Discourse) to investigate the networking of discourse strategies and patterns used to represent students within and across the data sets in this study. Working between the previous two phases of analyses Phase 3 uses orders of discourse to investigate the networking of discourse patterns across documents to illuminate how students are discursively represented across two social and cultural domains that serve as the primary context of this research study: 1) Representations of school safety, and 2) Policing as safe or unsafe in schools.

Finally, Chapter 7 brings findings from each of the three phases of analysis together with prison abolition and discussions of carceral ideology to position the need for a theoretical framework capable of naming and disrupting the unique oppression of young people within and

across social institutions. This chapter also provides implications, limitations of this research, potential directors for future research and concluding remarks.

Chapter 1: Summary

A core goal of this study is to examine how discourses and language function to determine, disrupt, defend, and maintain beliefs about students, safety, and police in schools. While there are a great number of radical and brilliant scholars who guide us in the work and exploration of abolitionist futures within education – this research project takes up the invitations presented by Halle-Erby & Keenan (2022), Love (2019), Meiners (2017), Annamma (2018), and Kaba (2021) to contribute to educational research that moves in partnership with abolition, and with the brilliance of young people. This project moves from inspiration from these scholars and learnings from students to name the everyday ways schools are safe and unsafe as well as a vision for schools that operate beyond the reach of the prison industrial complex.

This study engages a multiphase Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) across three data sets (public comments and submitted to the Eugene School District 4J School Board, transcripts from the Eugene School Board Meeting where board members voted to terminate the contract with local law enforcement, and transcripts from student workshops). This approach combines elements of corpus-assisted discourse and critical discourse analysis to effectively examine the complex and contextual ways safety is narrated and enacted in schools; how and what discourses serve to maintain policing as safe, and from whom and in what ways do discourses about students serve to rupture or to normalize policing as effective.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is informed by critical scholarship and studies on policing, exclusion, and on relationships between language, power, and social change within educational contexts. Based on this research, I contend that in order to understand current tensions and possibilities within the movement to dismantle the school to prison pipeline we must understand the way patterns of language, policies, rationale and belief systems about specific young people have been used over time to justify, defend, and maintain the presence of law enforcement in school buildings. Just as critically, we must ensure that discourses produced from the lived experiences, voices, and insight of students who are most impacted by the school-prison nexus are present in our analysis and fuel our implications.

Grounding in Halle-Erby & Keenan's (2022) lessons from abolition, I situate this literature review as accomplishing one of the three critical themes of abolition-compatible research: Engaging the essential work of deeply interrogating prevailing social practices that serve to normalize the presence of police in schools. By doing so, I hope to contribute to what I see as a need in the more widely consumed base of literature on the school to prison pipeline which moves out from a narrow focus on contemporary instances of police misconduct in schools, technologies of surveillance, and exclusionary policies to a more expansive view of a social system of punishment whose functionality depends on the use of language and the role of discourse in normalizing the protection or the disposability of specific students.

In this chapter, I will review a body of applicable literature that informs my research and in turn my research questions, corresponding methodology, findings, and implications on which this study is grounded. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first offers a historical

reflection on mass incarceration and policing through an exploration of prison abolition and Critical Race Theory (CRT) as theoretical frameworks that ground this work. The second builds from this framing to present a survey of the historical relationships between police and schools in the U.S, and the third section provides an overview of the research on school safety and violence as well as public debates, tensions and promising practices as surfaced in the scholarship. This chapter closes with an overview of critical youth studies to build connections between prison abolition and the situating of student expertise and solidarity with students as an ethical, theoretical, and political commitment that motivates my study.

Section 1: Prison Abolition

In recent years, discussions surrounding school safety and the criminal justice system have intersected in critical ways, prompting a reexamination of the underlying structures and practices that shape both domains. As scholars and advocates grapple with the complexities of promoting safety and well-being in educational settings, there is a growing recognition of the interconnectedness between school policies, ideologies, and mass incarceration. Within this context, educational scholars have centered the radical tradition of abolition, and specifically the movement for the abolition of prisons as a provocative and compelling framework for reimagining safety, education, and accountability within schools and communities.

Prison abolition "as a tradition, a philosophy, and a theory of change, moves away from myopic focus on the district institution of the prison toward a more expansive vision of the social, political, and economic processes that defined the context within which imprisonment came to be viewed as the legitimate hand of justice (Davis et al., 2022, p.50). This critical orientation to the underpinnings of prisons and mass incarceration (as both material and ideological) is foundational to this study's research questions.

Abolitionist movements require collectivism and center connections, relationships, and mutual care within learning, within critical analysis, and within the work to nurture spaces for dreaming of futures beyond the control of oppressive systems (Ben-Moshe, n.d.; Karanikolas, 2020). In turn, educational research that moves with these commitments requires the use of methodologies that demand a deep scrutiny of everyday social practices; methodologies that notice insurgent practices and nuanced portraits of lived experiences; and methodologies capable of highlighting existing tensions and places of collusion with carceral hegemony within

educational and social justice research (Halle-Erby & Keenan, 2022). This section provides an overview and orientation to prison abolition and prison abolition as theoretical framework that informs my study.

Prison Abolition

Between 2000 and 2005, a new prison was built in the United States every 12 days (Stephan 2008). Who is harmed most by the expansion of policing in schools is not arbitrary, as those who are transferred from schools and warehoused in prisons and jails across the U.S are overwhelmingly "poor, mentally ill, under- or uneducated, non-gender conforming, non-citizens, and/or non-white" (Meiners, 2011, p. 549). In this way, the expansion of policing in schools has contributed to the expansion of prisons.

The expansion of prisons is more than building new spaces for containment; prison expansion is a central tool in the "(re)production and (re)invention of a robust and historically dynamic white supremacist state" (Rodriquez, 2010, p. 7).Prisons serve as a tool of social control that disproportionately targets marginalized communities, particularly Black and Brown individuals, while also sustaining economic systems reliant on the exploitation of cheap labor within and beyond prison walls (Wilson Gilmore, 2007). The prison regime, or the prison industrial complex (Davis, 2003), attempts to engage this more expansive understand of prisons as both material and ideological – a theoretical framework that names the ways in which overlapping interests of government and industry use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems. Additionally, this framework calls attention to the way that material arrangements at the site of imprisonment maintain routines of domination over those held captive by the state; routines that, in the U.S, rely upon those

established by the anti-black state violence of chattel slavery, "post-emancipation" white supremacy, and juridical racial segregation/apartheid" (Rodriguez, 2010, p.7). Rodriguez goes on to describe how anti-Black and anti-Indigenous ideologies central to the carceral state have served to create a standard of physical and physiological domination (strip searches, bodily invasion, state sanctioned torture, murder, and medical neglect) that is internalized, normalized, and unquestioned within our broader society.

It is this ideological work of prisons, as Rodriguez and Davis establish here, that understands state-ordained capture and surveillance as a "modality of social (dis)organization" (Rodriguez, 2010, p.8) that intentionally disrupt possibilities of collective resistance by producing interpersonal and systemic violence. Black feminist scholar Beth Richie's (2012) expands this orientation, arguing that carceral logics organized around patriarchal power and male supremacy maintain a 'male violence matrix' that creates vulnerabilities for women (and specifically Black women). She offers the term *prison nation* to refer not only to material existence and control exerted by the state through the presence and maintenance of prisons and detention centers but also to the ways ideologies of violence against Black women are passed between systems, individuals and institutions. This framing attests that it is the material, discursive, and spatial underpinnings of a prison nation that allow patriarchal and heteronormative power to circulate while maintaining that punitive and criminalized approaches are the only effective means of solving complex social realities such as mental illness, pregnancy, sex, violence, and drug addiction.

The framing of prisons as both material and ideological shows how prisons are held in the collective imagination as a space where "undesirables are deposited, relieving us of the

responsibilities of thinking about the real issues afflicting those communities from which prisoners are drawn" (Davis, 2011, p.16). Imprisonment becomes a fate reserved for those who have been constructed as furthest from the margins of ideal norms – e.g. white, cis gendered, able, heterosexual, upper class (Annamma, S. A., Ferri, B. A., & Connor, D. J., 2018; Annamma, S. A., & Handy, T. 2021).

Abolition as a Feminist Project

Central to the abolitionist perspective is the recognition of the entanglement between the prison-industrial complex and patriarchal systems of power and control (Davis et al., 2022). Through a comprehensive examination of interdisciplinary perspectives, the movement for prison abolition (including literature and scholarship) underscores feminist praxis as essential to the naming, challenging, and dismantling intersecting systems of oppression that allow the prison nation to exist. This base of scholarship names how feminist movements have engaged with the criminal legal system, coining the term carceral feminism (defined as reliance on punitive measures such as incarceration to address gender-based violence) to call attention to the ways 1st wave, second wave, and third wave mainstream feminist advocacy reproduces carceral logics, fails to address the root causes of gender-based violence and neglects the experiences of marginalized communities (particularly women of color and low-income women), and reinforces the expansion of the prison-industrial complex (Bernstein, 2007, Bumiller, 2008, Ritchie, 2017). This literature positions feminism and abolition as embedded in the work to dismantle prisons and prison culture around four commonly cited commitments: 1) A emphasis on intersectional identities and analysis, 2) naming gendered harm, 3) Challenging patriarchal and heteropaternal ideologies & structures, and 4) Centering marginalized voices in research and social movements.

The prison-industrial complex is deeply intertwined with patriarchal and heteropaternal systems of power and control. The concept of heteropaternalism or heteropatriarchy amalgamates heterosexism and paternalism, encapsulating a societal framework where heterosexual, cisgender men assert control and authority over others, particularly women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and non-conforming genders (Arvin, Tuck & Morrill, 2013; Kelley & Arce-Trigatti, 2021). Within heteropaternalistic systems, heteronormative ideals prevail, relegating non-heterosexual identities to the margins and reinforcing the dominance of heterosexual relationships and norms. This dynamic is further entrenched by patriarchal structures, which prioritize male authority and perpetuate traditional gender roles and expectations, limiting opportunities for women and non-heterosexual individuals.

The resulting power imbalance enables heterosexual men to regulate bodies and relationships, imposing restrictions that align with heteronormative and patriarchal norms while marginalizing those who deviate from them. Feminist praxis seeks to dismantle these structures by challenging the normative framing of male and institutional authority, and the positioning of punitive punishment as not only effective but as the only solution to addressing harm and violence in society. By centering the experiences of marginalized communities, particularly women, transgender, and non-binary individuals, a feminist approach to prison abolition acknowledges the intersecting forms of oppression faced by those within the criminal justice system, as well as the gendered dimensions of harm perpetuated by patriarchy and the prison-industrial complex (Davis, 1983; Richie, 2012).

Critical Race Theory Within the Discourse of Prison Abolition

CRT emerged as a response to traditional civil rights approaches, which were seen as insufficient in addressing systemic racism (Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2023; Crenshaw, 2011). It emphasizes that racism is not just individual prejudice, but also embedded in social structures and institutions (Matsuda, 1991). CRT scholars analyze how laws, policies, and societal norms perpetuate racial inequality. Key tenets of CRT include the understanding that race is socially constructed, that racism is systemic and ingrained in everyday practices, and that the experiences of people of color must be centered in discussions of race and inequality. Additionally, CRT emphasizes the intersectionality of race with other social identities such as gender, class, and sexuality, highlighting the complex ways in which various forms of oppression intersect and reinforce each other.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerges as a potent analytical framework within the discourse of prison abolition, functioning as a theoretical lens that unveils and critiques the racialized mechanisms underpinning the carceral state. According to Alexander (2010), the mass incarceration system in the United States operates as a contemporary form of racial control, perpetuating the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow segregation. CRT scholars assert that the prison-industrial complex is not a neutral institution but rather a site where racial hierarchies are reinforced and reproduced (Davis, 2003). Drawing on the works of Davis (2003) and Wilson Gilmore (2007), CRT exposes how law and legal institutions are complicit in racial oppression, highlighting the ways in which incarceration disproportionately targets Black and Brown communities. Moreover, CRT emphasizes the intersections of race, class, and gender within the carceral system, elucidating how these axes of identity intersect to produce differential experiences of punishment and surveillance (Crenshaw, 1989). By centering the experiences of

marginalized communities, CRT underscores the urgency of dismantling the prison-industrial complex as a crucial step towards achieving racial justice and liberation (Davis, 2003). Consequently, CRT serves as a vital theoretical framework that aligns with the principles and commitments of prison abolition, advocating for transformative justice approaches that address the root causes of crime and violence while challenging the racialized logics of punishment and control that maintain the prison nation.

The Role of Schooling in a Prison Nation

With the highest incarceration rates in the world (Gottschalk, 2015), U.S schools are already embedded in the prison nation. As Anderson-Zavala et al. (2017) writes, "Our schools have never been immune to the ideological and material reach of prisons and policing" (p.152). And despite decades of school disciplinary reform, state-sanctioned surveillance, policing and militarization of public schools continues to be normalized. Anderson-Zavala, et. al (2017) go on to name how the presence of police officers, the implementation of constant technologies of surveillance, and the use of excessive and punitive disciplinary policies has always been central to anti- Black, anti-immigrant, racist and heteronormative state-led efforts to stunt and control freedom and economic independence. Even as decades of research continues to shed light on an overwhelming amount of data and stories from students and over-policed communities that highlight the way zero-tolerance and disciplinary practices and policies disproportionately track young people of color into and towards prison (Meiners, 2016), school reform has not led schools away from threats or closer to safety or belonging.

Therefore, educational researchers and educators motivated by the movement for prison abolition and abolitionist scholars have brought forward studies, theories, and ethical

commitments within academic research to situate prisons and schools as co-constructed. The term school-prison nexus(Stoval, 2017) was constructed to move from the image of a pipeline (which conveys a linear progression) towards terminology that more effectively names the ways institutions of schooling and policing (fueled by carcerality and white supremacy) work together to create and maintain anti-Black, racist, ableist, xenophobic, transphobic, homophobic, and gendered logic that holds and maintains certain bodies as disposable (Annamma, 2018; Meiners, 2011; Davis et al., 2022). This more expansive view of the current context of policing and schools offers insight into the underlying rhetoric that motivates disciplinary reform. It also serves to illuminate the purpose or function these policies play in the day-to-day lived experience of young people and how patterns of behavior, language, and systems of control are repeated across time and across institutions (Garland, 1993).

In this framing of a *school-prison nexus*, school personnel serve as agents of the state, whom (regardless of their love or commitment to young people) are asked to participate under and within carceral logics that reward the maintenance of settler-colonialism, ideological management, and white ignorance (Davis, 2011; Duncan, 2000; Meiners, 2007; Mills, 2007;Wald & Losen, 2003). This naming of ignorance and denial within and perhaps *as* the project of schooling in the U.S (Green & Wortham, 2018) positions schooling distinct from education, and instead. as "a process intended to perpetuate and maintain the society's existing power relations and the institutional structures that support those arrangements" (Shujaa, 1994, p15 as quoted by Stovall, 2018). This assumption (or position) reframes the goal of public education as advancing hegemonic values through curriculum and in normalizing the disappearance of those that challenge the status quo. Moreover, conceptualizing the school to

prison pipeline as a nexus "allows us to understand how the criminalization of youth is a systemic problem that demands structural change and interventions across multiple levels of analysis and settings" (Fernández, J. S., Kirshner, B., & Lewis, D. G., 2016, p.93).

This body of literature suggests that educational reforms that are embraced as more humane (or more effective) forms of punishment implemented without any commitment to ending associations with policing perpetuate the co-optation of radical community-based movements committed to the abolition of prisons and policing (Hereth et al., 2012; E. R. Meiners, 2017; O'Brien & Nygreen, 2020). Recent works by educational scholars and activists (Meiners, Davis, Annamma and Love) urge other scholars and educators to consider how and if a perpetuation of policy reforms and behavior interventions are enough to disrupt the embedded white-supremacist and ableist rhetoric that dominates a framing of school safety.

Section 2: Policing and Schools in the U.S

The emergence and evolution of police presence in American schools have been subjects of extensive scholarly inquiry, particularly within the framework of the school prison nexus. While widely consumed references to the school to prison pipeline often attribute the inception of formalized school policing to the advent of zero-tolerance policies in the 1990s, a nuanced examination reveals a deeper sociohistorical backdrop. A deeper analysis of this historical context underscores the discursive relationship societal anxieties, racism, xenophobia, and the proliferation of police presence in educational settings. This section explores a broad base of literature to provide a sociohistorical timeline of policing and U.S schools, motivated by a desire to name the complex interplay of ideologies, discourses, policy interventions, and societal perceptions of young people that have allowed for the normalizing of police presence in schools.

There Were Police in Schools Before 'Zero Tolerance' Policies

Most research on the school-to-prison pipeline positions the emergence of police in schools within the late 80's and early 90's. However, a deeper sociohistorical analysis of school policing shows that the roots of this partnership move far beyond the introduction of zero-tolerance policies in the 1990s. The attempted assimilation and colonization of Indigenous youth in the United States moved the boarding school model to towards the network of zero tolerance and school discipline policies, paving the way for formalized school-police partnerships in the 1940s (Chin, J.A., Brayboy, B.M.J., Bustamante, N., 2019).The emergence of school policing models (in its modern form) can be traced directly back to rising fear and hostility from white parents and teachers surrounding the desegregation of public schools (Connery, 2020b; Weiler & Cray, 2011; Whitaker et al., 2019).

Using Los Angeles public schools as a case study, Kafka (2011) and Sojoyner (2013) trace the history of police in schools to 1948 and the formation of a specialized security unit charged with patrolling and protecting newly desegregated schools (Mitchell, et. al, 2022). Their analysis highlights how white teachers, parents and administrators responded to an increasingly racially and socioeconomically diverse student population in Los Angeles Public schools with a "moral panic about juvenile delinquency" (Turner & Beneke, 2020, p.223). The movement of police into Los Angeles schools was made after a direct request to the school board from white educators attributed problems in classrooms to individual student's behavior (specifically to Black, immigrant, and poor students) – describing the need for control and order as beyond the expertise of classroom teachers.

In Detroit, similar calls and rising tensions surrounding desegregation of primarily white schools led to the formation of the first School Resource Officer (SRO) unit. In 1958 the first SRO position was established, and later popularized by targeted media campaigns around Chicago and the nation that promoted the image of "Officer Friendly" across urban neighborhoods and schools (Weiler & Cray, 2011; Whitaker et al., 2019). The Officer Friendly campaign was an attempt to de-stigmatize police in communities where adults held distrustful opinions of policing, acquainting children with law enforcement as part of a community relations campaign that targeted schools in urban neighborhoods with high concentrations of Black and Brown students (Connery, 2020a).

The timing (and location) of these school-police partnerships also serves as an important turning point in the evolution of police immunity and protection in the U.S – marking the emergence of powerful unions, legal protections, and contracts that instead of empowering

officers to protect the public were instead protected from the public (Barker et al., 2021). While it is beyond the scope of this chapter (and this study) to provide a historic sociological analysis of the larger system of U.S policing, it is important to note that similar calls for order, danger, and safety were invoked in support of the formation of police unions and the foundations for immunity present today.

The image of the friendly neighborhood police officer (as well as the model of public-private funding partnerships that brought private foundations into a funding of school policing) served as a precursor to other programs launched in alignment with the war on drugs policies and federal acts of the late 1980s. These programs included the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program and G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) which (in addition to promoting and normalizing the role of students in community surveillance efforts (Felker-Kantor, 2024) threatened expulsion and on campus arrests for use or distribution of illegal substances on school grounds. In 1994, the Federal Gun Free Schools Act was passed and launched a new era of police-school partnership and funding. This new language created loopholes for individual states (and in turn individual schools) to look at expulsion and criminal charges on a case-by-case basis and to normalize the threat of criminal charges for school-based incidents (Mallett, 2016; Potter et al., 2017; Smith, 2020). Additionally, federal policies created new language and new political platforms for government officials to require school boards to adopt rigid exclusionary practices and to require an expansion of police partnerships by threatening a removal of federal and state funding if they did not comply (Kim et al., 2010).

While Detroit served as the model that provided both a marketing campaign and a funding structure to formalize the presence of police officers in schools, it was large-scale public

outrage and grief surrounding the 1998 Thurston High School Shooting in Springfield, Oregon and the 1999 Columbine school shooting in Columbine, Colorado where funding for the large-scale placement of SROs in schools took hold nation-wide (Krueger, 2010; Lee, 2011; Turner & Beneke, 2020b). These partnerships were supported by an amendment to the Ominbus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, which provided dedicated federal funding for SROs in schools through the COPS in Schools grant program (Connery, 2020b; Whitaker et al., 2019). Between 1999 and 2005, the COPS in Schools grants program awarded more than $823 million in grants to school districts for the hiring and training of SROs, funding more than 7,242 positions across the nation (Brock et al., 1990). In 2010, new data emerged that surfaced the realities and effects of school funded police partnerships as responsible for increases in school-based arrests and on racial discipline gaps.

In response, the Obama administration named the school to prison pipeline as one of the most urgent civil rights challenges currently facing our nation. In 2014, the U.S Department of Education issued guidance and funding to K-12 schools to prevent discriminatory discipline based on race. However, in 2018, former U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos rescinded this guidance, expressing concerns about potential reluctance to discipline non-white students. Despite national outcry following a school shooting, DeVos advocated for expanding school-police partnerships, despite evidence of ineffective intervention by School Resource Officers (SROs).

Tensions in Policy and Reform of School Policing, Discipline & Safety

Looking at the broader history of disciplinary reform and police partnerships in U.S schools offers important insights into a variety of factors, including the existence and rise of

complex networks of public-private networks that serve to co-opt more radical, system-level demands to dismantle the school to prison pipeline. This analysis shows how these networks coordinate interests across social structures (especially law enforcement). While the Obama Administration's Supportive School Discipline Initiative in 2014 served as a catalyst for public attention and outcry surrounding the school to prison pipeline, it also served as a catalyst for an expanded commodification and privatization of school discipline reform (Koon, 2020).

Since the early 2000's, educational research on the school to prison pipeline has led to a coordinating of "initially disparate interests of civil rights groups, community-based organizations, school-based law enforcement, and behavioral psychologists" (Koon, 2020 p.374) that has led to a co-opting of school discipline reform efforts away from communities and parents and towards private partnerships. Through a detailed analysis of policy reform over the past 20 years, scholars Koon (2020) and Crooks (2019) found that this broad network of private and/or university funded projects rely on the deficit framing of students and perpetuate narratives of achievement gaps. This privatization and commodification of school disciplinary reform results in "surveillance abuse, particularly in minoritized communities" (Crooks, 2019 p.495). This includes maintained police presence in schools with higher proportions of students eligible for free or reduced school lunches (Wang et al., 2020).

Despite a history of reforms, the prevailing presence of exclusionary discipline practices and the engagement of law enforcement on school campuses around the U.S remains the norm. According to a 2020 report from the U.S Department of Education, on-campus arrests for children younger than 15 increased in areas where the federal government made grant money

available for school resource officers (Owens, 2017), totaling more than 60,000 students in the 2015-2016 school year alone (Whitaker et al., 2019).

Section 3: School Safety Research in the United States

As has been demonstrated in the previous section, the promotion and perpetuation of policing relies on a complex interplay of public fear, and deficit beliefs and representations of community members and safety (Meiners, 2016). Fear, whether instilled through media representations, political rhetoric, or personal experiences, serves as a potent catalyst for the expansion and reinforcement of policing practices and institutions (Davis, 2003, 2024). Simultaneously, safety is invoked as a response to fear, framing policing as the only and a necessary measure to protect individuals and communities from perceived threats and dangers (Meiners, 2007). This interplay of discourses of fear and safety (as well as who should be feared, and who should be protected) are central to the functioning (or rupturing) of mass incarceration and the school to prison pipeline. Therefore, to understand more about how school policing is maintained (or disrupted), it is important to understand how safety in schools is framed and studied within the broader field of educational research.

In recent decades, concerns about school safety have garnered increasing attention from educators, policymakers, researchers, and communities across the United States. Overall, the literature on school safety reflects a multidisciplinary approach, drawing from fields such as psychology, education, criminology, public health, and policy studies to understand the complexities of school safety issues and to identify effective strategies for prevention and intervention. A meta-analysis of three decades of research shows that, generally, school safety research focuses on five core areas: 1) risk and protective factors; 2) prevention strategies; 3) policy interventions; 4) crisis response, 5) the promotion of positive school climates, and 6) collaboration with students and educational community members (Astor et. al; 2005). This

section of the literature review summarizes key findings across these six research areas and closes with an overview of debates and tensions within the field.

A central focus of school safety research is to examine historical and current trends in school safety incidents, including school shootings, assaults, bullying, and other forms of violence (Astor et. Al, 2005). These studies analyze incidence rates, and work to name patterns and factors that scholars see as contributing to the presence, reduction, or increase of these incidents over time. Similarly, school safety research works to name and investigate **risk and protective factors** that contribute to safe or unsafe school environments (such as community violence, socioeconomic status, family dynamics, mental health resources, access to firearms and strong social support networks, as well as effective conflict resolution strategies) (Kutsyuruba, 2015).

School safety research that focuses on prevention and intervention strategies highlights prevention and intervention programs designed to mitigate risks and promote safe school environments. These programs include threat assessment protocols, violence prevention curricula, peer mediation initiatives, mental health services, and crisis response plans. In recent years, research within this field of prevention and intervention also explores the role of technology and security measures in enhancing school safety. This research includes studies on the use of surveillance cameras, metal detectors, access control systems (Turner-Musa, T., Ryan, A., Owen, J., 2019), anonymous reporting mechanisms (Messman, E., et. Al, 2024), and emergency notification systems (Payton, E., et. Al, 2017).

The literature on school safety includes scholarship that analyzes the effectiveness of policies and legislative initiatives aimed at enhancing school safety, such as gun control

measures, school security enhancements, anti-bullying laws, and funding for mental health services in schools (Mayer, M. J., Nickerson, A. B., & Jimerson, S. R., 2021). This area of school safety research examines the impact of these policies on reducing violence and creating safer learning environments using both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Research that focuses on crisis response within the broader field of school violence and safety concerns pulls from the expertise of different areas of study including Risk and Threat Assessment; Preparedness and Planning; Communication and Coordination; and the presence of Trauma-Informed Supports for students and staff. This body of research investigates and emphasizes comprehensive crisis response plans that outline clear procedures for preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies such as natural disasters, accidents, and acts of violence. This body of research positions threat assessment protocols as essential for identifying and mitigating potential risks of emergencies or violence in schools. Studies emphasize the importance of conducting thorough risk assessments, implementing early intervention strategies, and collaborating with mental health professionals to address concerning behaviors and prevent acts of harm (Hirshfield, P.J., 2008). When crises do occur, this subfield of school safety research emphasizes the importance of effective communication and coordination among educational community members.

These studies highlight the need for clear communication channels, timely dissemination of information, and collaboration with law enforcement, emergency services, parents, and community organizations to facilitate a coordinated response and ensure the safety of students and staff (Redlener, I., Reilly, M. J., & Ferris, W. B., 2006). Research on school crisis response also emphasizes the effectiveness and importance of trauma-informed supports and services as

well as recovery and resilience following a crisis. This body of research positions the importance of imbedded supports such as counseling, mental health resources, and crisis intervention teams to support students and staff in the aftermath of crisis (Wong, Mr., Oberst, N.A, Schorr, P.J., 2013).

There is growing recognition within school safety research on the importance of trauma-informed supports and proactive mental health services in cultivating and promoting positive school climates. Research in this subfield of school climate and social and emotional learning (SEL) examines the impact of SEL programs on empathy, emotional regulation, conflict resolution skills, and the fostering of positive relationships among students and staff (Corcoran, R. P., Cheung, A. C., Kim, E., & Xie, C., 2018). Key findings name the ways an investment in supportive and inclusive school climates is effective in preventing incidents of violence (Allen, K. et. Al; 2018).

Relatedly, literature on school safety increasingly emphasizes the importance of student voice in research, policy development, and implementation efforts. Broadly this research emphasizes the need to center the unique insights and perspectives of students in naming the dynamics and realities of school environments, while actively empowering students in the brainstorming and implementation of effective solutions and proactive investments in positive school climate and culture (Nese, R. N, et. Al, 2022). This body of school safety literature underscores the importance of centering student voice in school safety research and practice as a means of promoting empowerment, inclusivity, and student-centered approaches to addressing complex safety challenges in educational settings. By prioritizing student perspectives and

experiences, schools can create more responsive, equitable, and sustainable solutions that prioritize the well-being and success of all students (Furjanic, D., et al; 2021).

Tensions & Debates Within the Field of School Safety

Within school safety research in the United States, several debates and tensions persist, reflecting diverse perspectives and complex considerations. Some of the key debates and tensions include: a) the balance of security measures with needs for a supportive physical environment; b) gun control and second amendment rights; c) Mental health interventions vs. security measures; d) School discipline policies and equity. e) Community policing and School Resource Officers (SROs); and f) Privacy and surveillance concerns.

In this section of my literature review, I pull from the broader field of school safety research to offer a brief introduction and overview of each of these areas of tension.

Balancing Security Measures with a Supportive Environment: There is ongoing debate regarding the appropriate balance between implementing security measures (e.g., metal detectors, surveillance cameras, armed guards) and fostering a supportive, nurturing school environment. While enhancing security measures may help deter threats, some argue that an overemphasis on surveillance and control measures can contribute to a punitive atmosphere and erode trust between students and staff (Johnson, S.L, et. al, 2018).

Gun Control and Second Amendment Rights: The issue of gun control is a deeply contentious topic within school safety research and policy discussions. Debates center on the interpretation of the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees the right to bear arms, and the effectiveness of various gun control measures in preventing school shootings and reducing gun-related violence in communities (Zundel-Davis, H.M, 2003).

Mental Health Interventions vs. Security Measures: There is debate over whether to prioritize mental health interventions and support services or invest in additional security measures to address school safety concerns (Eisman, A.B., et. Al, 2020). While proponents of mental health initiatives argue that addressing underlying emotional and psychological issues can help prevent violence and promote student well-being, others advocate for increased funding for security measures to enhance physical safety and deter potential threats.

School Discipline Policies and Equity: The implementation of school discipline policies, such as zero-tolerance policies and suspensions (which have been defended or justified as necessary responses to school threats and violence), has sparked debates about their impact on equity and disproportionality in disciplinary outcomes (Smolkowski, K., et al, 2016). Critics argue that strict disciplinary measures disproportionately affect students of color, students with disabilities, and other marginalized groups, perpetuating inequities and contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline.

Community Policing and SROs: The presence of law enforcement officers, such as school resource officers (SROs), in schools has generated debate about the role of policing in promoting school safety and fostering positive relationships between students and law enforcement (Weisburst, E.K., 2019). Some scholars advocate for increased police presence as a deterrent to violence and as a means of building trust and collaboration with the community, while others raise concerns about the potential for racial profiling, excessive use of force, and criminalization of minor infractions.

Privacy and Surveillance Concerns: The use of surveillance technologies, such as cameras, electronic monitoring systems, and social media monitoring tools, in schools raises

concerns about student privacy rights and civil liberties (Cook, 2019; Koon, 2020). Debates center on the appropriate boundaries for surveillance practices, the potential for misuse or abuse of surveillance data, and the need to balance security concerns with respect for individual autonomy and privacy.

Overall, these debates and tensions reflect the complexity of addressing school safety issues in a manner that promotes inclusivity, equity, and respect for students' rights and well-being. Effective approaches to school safety require thoughtful consideration of diverse perspectives, evidence-based practices, and collaborative efforts among educational community members to create safe and supportive learning environments for all students.

Section 4: Student Voice, Critical Youth Studies & Indigenous Education

Student voice surfaces as a central theme across the base of literature on school safety best practices, and in alignment with prison abolition's commitment to name expertise as lying with those most at risk of state capture or impacted by carceral logics. While an emerging field in educational theory and practice, student voice emphasizes student agency within educational contexts (Cook-Sather, 2018), recognizes students as active participants in their own learning (Bahou, 2011), and advocates for opportunities for youth to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes in schools and communities.

Broadly, the literature on student voice in educational research recognizes the importance of involving students in decision-making processes and valuing their perspectives, experiences, and contributions to their own learning. Student voice initiatives aim to empower students, promote student agency, and create more inclusive and democratic learning environments (Irizarry & Welton, 2014; Quijada Cerecer et al., 2013). Studies emphasize the necessity of including marginalized youth in decision-making processes at the school and district levels to challenge systemic oppression related to white supremacy, systemic racism, classism, anti-LGBTQ practices, language and religious exclusion, anti-immigrant practices, ableism, and other forms of discrimination (Fine, 2008; Owens & Jones, 2004; Quijada Cerecer et al., 2013). This scholarship suggests that fostering youth involvement in decision-making within educational settings is crucial for advancing equity, necessitating a concerted commitment from researchers and practitioners in education.

Student voice is often defined as more than just students' opinions or ideas; it encompasses their perspectives, experiences, and contributions to shaping their educational

experiences. Theoretical frameworks that inform the study of student voice include theories of democratic education, youth participatory action research (Fine, 2016; Fox & Fine, 2013; Tuck, 2009; Tuck & Wayne Yang, 2010), and critical youth studies (Quijada Cerecer et. al, 2013), and critical pedagogy (McInerney, 2009). Research indicates several benefits of integrating student voice into educational decision-making processes. These benefits include increased student engagement, motivation, and sense of ownership of learning; improved school climate and culture; enhanced academic achievement; greater equity and inclusivity; and the development of critical thinking and leadership skills among students (Pearce & Wood, 2019).

Despite the potential benefits, there are also challenges associated with incorporating student voice in education. These challenges include addressing power dynamics between students and adults, ensuring diverse representation and inclusivity, overcoming logistical barriers, and navigating ethical considerations related to informed consent and confidentiality (Bahou, 2011). The literature calls for further research to explore the long-term effects of student voice initiatives on student outcomes, school improvement efforts, and broader societal change. Future studies should also examine best practices for incorporating student voice across diverse educational contexts and populations, as well as strategies for overcoming barriers to implementation (Cook-Sather, 2020).

Student voice is recognized as holding profound implications for addressing critical issues within the educational landscape (Gonzalez et. al, 2017). For example, the emerging field of Critical Youth Studies uniquely centers the voices, experiences, and agency of youth within research processes, positioning them not merely as subjects, but as co-creators and drivers of knowledge generation and social change (Ibrahim, et. al, 2014).

Critical Youth Studies

Scholars in critical youth studies employ various theoretical frameworks, including critical theory, poststructuralism, feminism, and postcolonialism, to analyze the ways in which power operates in shaping young people's lives. They investigate how social institutions such as family, education, media, and the state influence youth development and identity formation, as well as how young people actively resist and negotiate these structures.

Key themes explored in critical youth studies include youth agency and empowerment, youth subcultures and resistance, youth and globalization, youth and digital media, youth and education, and youth and social justice movements. Researchers in this field are particularly interested in amplifying the voices of marginalized youth and advocating for policies and practices that promote their well-being and social inclusion.

Critical youth studies offers a critical lens through which to understand the complexities of youth experiences in contemporary society and to envision more equitable and just futures for young people. Within the realm of school safety, Critical Youth Studies emphasizes opportunities for youth to mobilize for policy reforms, to challenge exclusionary practices, and to advocate for systemic and institutional change rooted in student-centered visions for equity, social justice, and community-building (Cook-Sather, 2020). As such, Critical Youth Studies emerges as a potent tool for not only critiquing the status quo but also catalyzing tangible shifts toward more just and equitable educational systems (Quijada Cerecer et. al, 2013).

Overall, the literature on student voice in education underscores the importance of recognizing students as valuable stakeholders in the educational system and highlights the potential benefits of integrating student voice into decision-making processes to promote student

engagement, empowerment, and positive educational outcomes. Critical youth studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines the experiences, identities, and agency of young people within the context of broader social, cultural, political, and economic structures. Emerging from the intersections of sociology, education, cultural studies, psychology, and anthropology, this field challenges traditional understandings of youth as a homogeneous group and instead emphasizes the diversity of youth experiences shaped by factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and ability.

Indigenous Education

Within this framing of Critical Youth Studies, it is critical to name the intersections of Indigenous education literature and research – specifically the critiques of educational paradigms rooted in settler colonialism and indigenous erasure while participating in transformative, collective commitments to research with young people and learning/education. Leanne Simpson's work epitomizes the alignment of Critical Youth Studies and Indigenous education through her emphasis on the sacredness of childhood and the communal, culturally embedded methods of education practiced within Indigenous communities. In her writings, Simpson articulates the spiritual and communal dimensions of Indigenous education, emphasizing the role of storytelling and community involvement in nurturing children's inherent knowledge and gifts. This perspective aligns with Critical Youth Studies' critique of adultism, which views traditional schooling as perpetuating representations of young people as deficient and reliant on hierarchical, coercive structures (Simpson, 2014, 2016, 2017).

Simpson also discusses the importance of land-based education and the holistic integration of cultural teachings into the learning process, validating the experiences and

identities of Indigenous youth and resonating with Critical Youth Studies' emphasis on intersectionality. Both fields advocate for educational practices that affirm the dignity and agency of all children while challenging the protocols and policies maintaining adult hierarchies. Simpson critiques colonial educational systems and calls for the decolonization of childhood, emphasizing intergenerational solidarity and reverence for young people as integral to community resilience and resistance. This aligns with Critical Youth Studies' vision of youth as active agents of change with critical insights and solutions for collective care and safety beyond state control (Simpson, 2014, 2016, 2017).

Chapter 2: Summary

This chapter offers an in-depth review of literature from across disciplines to offer a comprehensive view of school policing and the school prison nexus. This base of research underscores the need for research that begins from the premise that practices of disposability are endemic to U.S schools (and therefore central to maintaining mass incarceration and a prison nation). Pulling inspiration from the movement for the abolishment of prisons, and a framework for considering how educational research might move in alignment with the movement for the prison abolition, this literature review further positions the need and invitation for research on the school to prison pipeline to a) situate police-school partnerships beyond the emergence of zero-tolerance policies, b) analyze places of ideological tensions surrounding discourses of school safety, c) notice who, where and how educational community members have utilized language in the rupturing or maintaining of institutionalized connections between policing and schools.

In the following chapter, I build from this foundation of literature on prison abolition, the school prison nexus, school safety research, and critical youth studies to describe how a combination of Corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can address this gap within the field of educational research on the school to prison pipeline.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Disrupting the school prison nexus means that educational researchers and scholars must examine areas of complacency with policies that perpetuate or justify deficit framing of students and communities but also invites research to center students in: 1)a naming of the everyday experiences of the school prison nexus and 2) in the naming of solutions that expand a social imagination of justice beyond prisons and policing. Abolitionist compatible methodologies demand that research "attend carefully to the epistemic terrains we inhabit as well as to the epistemic resources we summon to make our lived experiences tangible to one another" (Bailey, 2020, p.667). Prison abolition as a theoretical framework for educational research also invites scholars to see the way resistance always moves in relationship to power (Davis, 2003; Fairclough, 2003, Medina, 2012); centering abolition as an epistemology of resistance and of survivance that ruptures structural and ideological oppressions that " underwrite the colonial project" (Ruíz, 2020, p.689).

Abolition Compatible Methodologies in Educational Research

Recognizing schooling (including higher education) as sites of ideological management that maintain the prison state invites those of us engaged in the field of education and educational scholarship to consider how we might end the conditions that sustain and support the dehumanization of young people, and in turn how educational research can align with and advance the larger movement for prison abolition (Love, 2019; Stovall, 2018; Meiners 2011).

Halle-Erby and Keenan (2022) explore this question and invitation for educational researchers, emphasizing the urgent need for methodologies that align with abolitionist principles. This includes prioritizing and centering marginalized voices, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, conducting intersectional analyses, engaging in community-driven research, critiquing traditional methods, upholding ethical standards, and promoting pragmatic action. By framing the discussion around these key principles, Halle-Erby and Keenan highlight the imperative for researchers to adopt approaches that do not layer reforms but work to name the transfer of ideologies across institutions in order to actively challenge and transform oppressive systems. Emphasizing a paradigm shift, their framework delineates six core principles: 1) Centering Marginalized Voices; 2) Interdisciplinary collaboration, 3) Intersectional analysis, 4) Community-driven research, and 5) a Commitment to Actionable Outcomes.

By foregrounding the voices and experiences of marginalized voices, Halle-Erby and Kennan (2022) name abolitionist-compatible methodologies as prioritizing the perspectives, experiences, and research interests of those most impacted by oppressive systems, including incarcerated individuals, communities of color, and other marginalized groups. They attest that without this prioritization, researchers cannot uncover nuanced insights into the multifaceted

dynamics of oppression that lie at the heart of the function of the criminal legal system. In the same way, researchers must engage in interdisciplinary collaboration and intersectional analysis to recognize the intertwined nature of oppression and offer holistic insights and innovative solutions that transcend binary or disciplinary boundaries. Moreover, the framework underscores the necessity of critiquing research methods that perpetuate harm or reinforce existing power dynamics by holding abstract objectivity above lived experiences. These commitments move alongside reflexivity, collaboration, and creating actionable outcomes that interrogate the everyday and the larger systemic ways language functions to normalize and rupture the positioning of police as safe and to conflate incarceration as justice.

Halle-Erby and Keenan's (2022) framing of abolitionist compatible methodologies motivated me to consider not only how prison abolition might guide the selection of an existing methodological or analytical practice, but to consider how and where I might bring together research questions, methods for data collection, and multiple phases of analysis. To help showcase this process, I organize this chapter around three sections. The first section clarifies my motivation for this study by situating the context of the research, my position as researcher, and ethical considerations. The second section describes the qualitative methods used for this study and includes sections on data sources, data collection procedures, and document analysis. The third section details critical discourse analysis and describes how the critical discourse analysis of texts grounds the procedures and phases of analysis used in this study.

Overview of the Study

Within the context of Eugene 4J's decision to terminate contracts with local law enforcement surrounding the placement of School Resource officers (SROs) the research questions for this study are: How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) define school safety (safety for whom, safety from what)? How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) discursively produce police as safe or unsafe in schools? What do discourses of school safety and policing show us about the ways students are positioned as dangerous (and by whom), which students are positioned as dangerous, and who must be protected and from what within schools?

To address these questions, I engage a blend of Corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze school board transcripts and public comments surrounding a decision to terminate contracts with local law enforcement in Eugene 4J School District. I analyze these documents alongside interviews with junior high, high school and former high school students within Eugene 4J (and surrounding districts) about how they experience and envision safety in schools. Understanding the ways different discourses of safety and students are produced, as well as how these discourses serve to maintain or disrupt connections between schools and policing requires an approach that can attend to the nuances of language, and the movement of discourses among and between society, policy, and text (Rogers & Mosley, 2008). It also requires an approach to analysis that considers how a focus on discourse makes visible places of incompatibility between assumptions and ideologies within school spaces.

Therefore, in this study, I use a multi-phase approach to CDA to better understand not only what is explicitly said by educational community members about SROs, but also what can be known about the identities, assumptions and power relations that underlie various language choices about police, policing and safety. Looking to the work of Fairclough (1989, 1992, 2003), Rogers (Rogers & Mosley, 2008), and Van Dijk (2017) I utilize a framework for analysis that examines the ways ideologies are enacted by language. This framework allows me to explore discourse as a network of social practices, or, as a means of examining the social organization, use, and control of language within certain settings and topics.

Researcher Positionality

My research questions come from my own experience within schools and prisons. To date, I have spent close to two decades working directly with young people and communities most impacted by overpolicing and mass incarceration. My work has been both within educational and community organizing spaces alongside youth and adults returning to communities with conviction histories. When I began this work, I did not consider myself a prison abolitionist. However, years of work within carceral spaces has compelled me to see there is no other choice. As an abolitionist I continue to work in highly regulated and carceral spaces because of my commitment to support those most impacted by incarceration as a way of refusing the normalizing of disposability that mass incarceration relies on. In turn, I experience an ever-present tension between the pressing need to reduce harm (to interrupt the narratives of disposability our schools and communities place on children and people with conviction histories) and the understanding that creating more humane forms of punishment within state institutions helps to prolong the life of the prison industrial complex. The tensions between my desires to reduce harm and my complicity within these spaces is discomforting, but also a source of generative questions that are central to this study.

As a mama and a practioner, I have noticed how discourses about students and student behavior have shifted to greater frustration, fear, and blame directed towards young people since the return to in person learning following the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. These discourses feel reminiscent of what I saw surface and take root inside school spaces in the early 2000's (which were critical in a social shift that allowed for the rise of zero tolerance legislation and policies). At the same time, I hear (almost daily) the ways students, educators, and parents

express heightened concerns surrounding their sense of safety and belonging inside classrooms and school spaces. At times this safety is described as belonging, being seen and protected within their identities. Other times, safety is invoked as connected with what some students and staff feel is an ever-present reality of mass shootings. I have worried for the wellbeing of young people in our schools in new ways in the last several years. I have worried for the safety and wellbeing of my own children in new ways in the last several years.

I have also worried about the way this fear (our fear) invokes a definition of safety that justifies the removal and disposability of specific students and maintains (or deepens) relationships between police and schools. Inside this generative tension, I hear the urging and cautioning of scholar activists and practitioners to pay careful attention to the way that reforms within our school and justice spaces create new carceral practices; the ways in which reforms change the face of the state without having to name or dismantle the insidiousness of the ways narratives of disposability circulate and are encountered/enacted in school spaces (Annamma & Handy, 2021; Davis et al., 2022; Hereth et al., 2012; Meiners, 2010) . As a practitioner, an emerging scholar, a light skinned Egyptian-American, the daughter of immigrants and educators, and as a mama I experience and recognize both the dangers and impossibility of asking schools alone to fix social harms, yet also hold a vision of education as a site of possibility and of social transformation.

I think back on moments of change, of policy and trainings I helped write and push forward through hours of my life and years from my soul. I think of how fast policies shifted upon an election, or re-election. I see moments where a focus on palatable reform held us at arms-length from getting to listen, to dream, and to imagine the possibility of something

radically different. This research is motivated by my experience, and also by these questions: How do we balance the 'short-term' wins of reform with a sustained willingness to transform the conditions that have created the harm, dysfunction, and deficit-fed urgency that moves rampant within our schools? Can we move within the both/and of a transformative reform that does not cheapen the dreaming outside of what is and refuses to center (or perhaps more appropriately promises to unsettle) dominant culture of carcerality/carceral society? What does it look like to engage in work that dismantles systems while transforming conditions that center and uplift the beauty and genius of our young people?

Over the last several decades I have witnessed an incredible speed in the shift-in of school policing policies in communities I grew up in and in schools I have worked for. I have also found myself ill-prepared for the speed with which divestment and defunding of School Resource Officer positions and contracts with law enforcement have become real/viable possibilities. Inside these moments of feeling ill-prepared for the possibility of transformation I am reminded of the ways oppressive structures hold a certain reality as immovable – and what happens when we forget to dream beyond them. This recognition is also central to my study: A reminder to pay attention to ruptures in what has become a normalized vision of safety and justice. To engage those who are most impacted by school policing beyond telling us (again) what isn't working, but in the naming of structural and ideological possibilities beyond what has been presented as normal.

When I was nineteen, I had the gift of working alongside elders in community gardens and urban farming spaces. As we weeded or planted, I would share about rallies I had attended, about protests in motion, about un-ending frustrations with the way things were, those that let us

get here, and those that I felt had little interest in paying attention to truth. I vividly remember one day, lost in a rant while sitting on the ground harvesting root vegetables with an Elder I worked with often (an OG in the community with decades of activism under her nails). She didn't interrupt me, but in the most loving of ways reached for my leg and put a hand on my knee. Without dismissing me, my anger, or my voice she cupped her hand around my kneecap and said "Yes. And right now…we are harvesting this carrot."

I think back on that moment often. How her gesture reminded me of hope and of 'something beyond' without dismissing my rage or critique. Her words, and her work reminded of the necessity to build, to plant and to harvest while also dismantling. She reminded me of the work of roots, of tending, of feeding people you love. As I age into whatever phase of adult or activism I find myself in (closer to elder than not), I find myself holding these words in a different way. Today, I think about the gift this Elder offered me through her invitation to stay grounded and I also find myself reflecting on what it might have felt like for her (and what it feels like for me) to be trusted to witness the rage, the questions, the possibilities, and the way young people care for each other. The way they move, and fight. As a researcher and someone inspired to tend to the Elder I am and will become, I hope my work engages students not only in naming the problem (or only in sharing their pain) but also trusts them to know and to name what else is possible, places where they have seen and felt liberation as a reality. I hope I continue to create spaces to listen to young people about where and how we can feed them, and what flavor of hope they need us to cultivate and hold alongside them.

Ethical Considerations & Commitments

I worked closely with my advisor, and with the University of Oregon's Institutional Review Board (IRB) review committee to obtain ethical approval for research with human subjects as part of this research project. Several rounds of revisions were submitted to ensure that this study adheres to ethical guidelines that safeguard the rights and well-being of my research participants. As part of this process, I advocated for electronic collection of consent/assent signatures to ensure accessibility (offering read-aloud and/or translation options for students and caregivers). As this research looks to include students and families who have felt dis-enfranchised from schools, removing as many barriers as possible (e.g., couriering hard copies of forms, reading/writing, etc.) supported the greatest participation. This was an important ethical consideration moved forward in my application and approval by the IRB.

However, my conception of ethical considerations goes beyond the protocols of the IRB. As Mariame Kaba (2021) writes, the pursuit of a world beyond oppression is critical to our movements, to our research, and to the survival of our communities. My research moves with these commitments as ethics, guided by abolition as praxis. Within the pursuit of a world beyond prisons, we must engage in research and scholarship that offers a "political vision, a structural analysis of oppression, and a practical organizing strategy" that includes not only critique but also "a vision for a restructured society" in which everyone's needs are met (Kaba, 2021, p. 2). Abolition is a "tradition, philosophy, and theory of change" (Davis et al., 2022, p. 50) that refuses to privilege professional expertise and prescriptive solutions over learnings that center the lived experiences and the knowledge making of those who are the most affected by state violence and capture. Abolition is an ethical position, and political action that centers fugitive

knowledge and is rooted in commitment to marronage solidarity- requiring collaborative and intersectional frameworks in the pursuit of justice (Ben-Moshe, 2018).

Centering fugitive knowledge fugitive knowledge refers to forms of knowledge production and resistance that challenge dominant power structures and systems of oppression (Myers, 2018; Patel, 2019). It draws upon the historical concept of fugitivity, which originated in the context of enslaved people fleeing bondage. Fugitive knowledge encompasses various forms of subversive knowledge production, resistance, and survival strategies employed by marginalized communities to navigate and resist oppressive conditions. This knowledge often exists outside of mainstream institutions and can include oral traditions, alternative histories, grassroots organizing, and cultural practices that challenge dominant narratives and systems of control.

Maroonage solidarity or maroonage pedagogy builds upon the concept of maroonage, which historically referred to communities of escaped slaves who through the community and knowledge of Indigenous communities formed autonomous settlements beyond the control of colonial authorities (Nelson, S. L., 2022; Patel,2016). Maroonage solidarity extends this idea to contemporary struggles for liberation and resistance against systems of oppression. It emphasizes the importance of building alliances and solidarity among marginalized communities to challenge structures of power and achieve collective liberation.

Thus, to engage in emancipatory research guided by fugitive and abolitionist logics, as scholars we must look for methodologies that are open-ended, emergent, informing, and grounded in everyday realities (Coles et al., 2021); premised on a deep respect for the intellectual and political capacities of the dispossessed and deliberately silenced. It is my belief (and an

attempt of this project) that CDA, and specifically, the holding of student voice as critical text within conversations about school safety and policing, meet this call. Beyond centering student voice, abolition as praxis also motivated me to consider the way I engaged and recruited students, as well as the curriculum protocols (created with student insight) to respect young people, their knowledge, experiences, and ideas for change.

Therefore, it was critical to center student identity and agency throughout the recruitment process and inside the workshops. This meant building relationships with students through a series of pre-study meetings and allowing them to see and create their own meaning and take-aways from peer responses in the workshop. Ethically, it was imperative to protect the identities of students who were willing to participate in this study. I did this by building relationships with student advisory committees that brought students together from different campuses in and around the Eugene 4J School District to be able to create more room between the feedback and insight offered and any specific school buildings. These relationships, which were built before and with no obligation to participate in my study, allowed me to better understand student concerns about the ways demographics might be obtained, excitements about workshop elements, and questions surrounding my study design broadly and student engagement more specifically. This commitment to position students as holding agency and wisdom in their individual experiences of school safety, but also as interested and knowledgeable in research design and analysis was an ethical commitment that was foundational to

Qualitative Methods

This study is centered around three data sources: a) public comments submitted to the Eugene 4J School board regarding the decision to terminate a contract with law enforcement to provide SROs; b) transcripts from the school board meeting where board members discussed and voted not to renew this contract with Eugene Police Department; and c) transcripts and artifacts created from a series of workshops facilitated with students from Eugene 4J and the broader Eugene-Springfield area.

I analyze this data alongside my research questions using a multi-phase process that combines elements of CADS and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This process blends Fairclough's (1992, 2003) and Rogers (2004) framework to: (1) analyze the linguistic descriptions and formal properties of the text; (2) record the orders of discourse or semiotic resources utilized by different stakeholders to make meaning, and finally, to (c) explore the relationship between discourses and broader social and cultural realities. In this next section, I will detail my data sources, the process by which I obtained this data, and my methods for analyzing it.

Extant Data & Texts for Analysis

Public Comments Submitted to the 4J School Board

Five-hundred and nine public comments were analyzed for this study. All public comments were submitted to the Eugene 4J school board prior to the board's June 20, 2020 meeting. In this meeting, the board was scheduled to discuss and to move on a motion to either extend or terminate a historic contract with local law enforcement to place five SROs within Eugene area schools. Public comments were made available on the School District's website,

alongside meeting materials (agendas, reports) and eventually accompanied by an audio recording and minutes of the meeting. Comments ranged from 40-2000 words, with most being between 500-800 words.

These comments were analyzed separately, and then together with the board hearing transcripts. The purpose of including public comments in this study was to gain greater insight into the local and historic social context and positionality invoked and presented by different community members surrounding the topic of school policing and school safety. Public comments were submitted from a variety of community members, and often referenced an affinity with a role (parent, teacher) or positionality (student, former, student). Using a query to search for key words within the 509 public comments, I pulled a count of the number of comments that directly referenced an affinity or positionality. Table 3.1 provides an overview of these demographics.

Table 3.1: Public Comments as Grouped by Affinity with Educational Community Member Positionality

Positionality/Affinity with Role Referenced in Public Comments	Number of comments
Parent	184
Current Student	12
Former Student	5
Teacher	9
Law Enforcement or Former Law Enforcement	3
Unknown	296

Eugene 4J School Board Transcript

Written transcripts were created from the school board hearing on June 20, 2020 made available through a public recording on the school district's website. This transcript does not include any public testimony, just conversations between board members. These transcripts were

analyzed separately and then together with public comments. The purpose of including school board hearing transcripts in this study was to see how an analysis of the hearings (and interactions of board members) as text might offer additional insight into the functioning and movement of discourses among and between texts and between data sets.

Data Collection

Student Workshops

A central desire of this study is to center the experiences and knowledge of those most impacted by the social problem of school policing and school safety. To address this, I collected data from through a series of workshops with students who were currently or formerly enrolled in schools in the Eugene-Springfield area. Three student workshops were held in person and over zoom with youth and young adults between the ages of 13 and 24. These workshops were collaboratively designed with students through a series of pre-workshop meetings, and then facilitated by me.

Recruitment & Participant Selection Procedures. Student voice was a critical aspect of this study, as such efforts were made to consider how best to engage students from within and around the Eugene 4J School District (and broader metropolitan area). It was similarly important to engage students who historically have been the most impacted by policing and school push out, specifically students historically marginalized (i.e.: students of color; students with disabilities; emerging bilingual students; LGBTQIA+ students, students navigating poverty, returning to communities after detainment or incarceration, those experiencing homelessness, engagement with foster care; as well as other students who have historically experienced disparities in our schools). To do this, I engaged existing relationships I held with Youth

Advisory Council Coordinators and student leaders in the Eugene-Springfield area to share about the project, and to provide an electronic informational flier to share with their Advisory Council members.

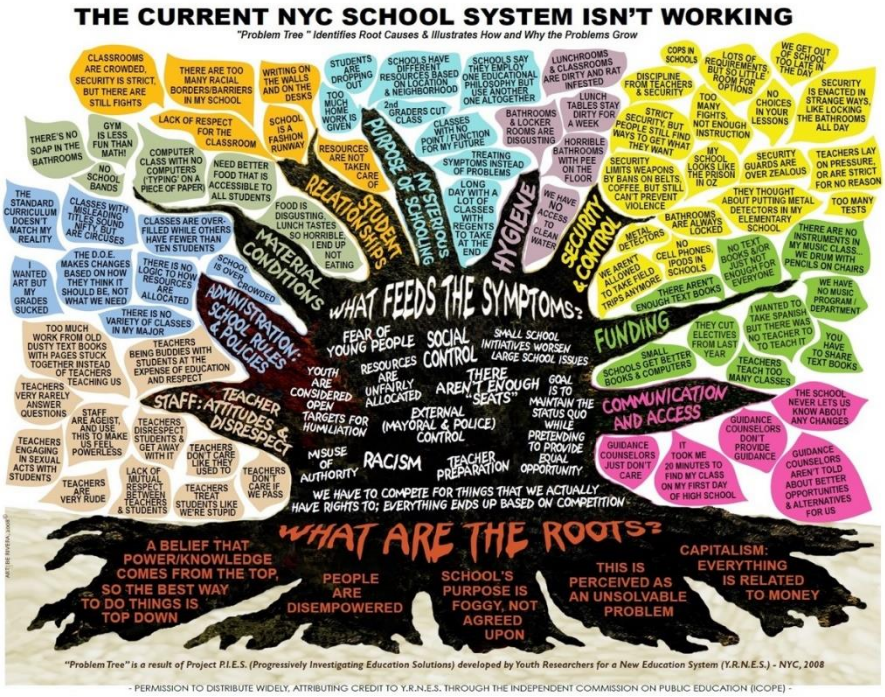
I presented to each of the youth advisory committees through pre-study visits. These pre-study visits allowed me to better understand student interest and concerns about participating in research, excitements or reservations about workshop elements, and questions surrounding my research design and commitments to student engagement. Three Youth Advisory Councils were approached about participation in the study, and all agreed to participate

Curriculum protocols. I designed the workshops to explore central themes that surfaced in public comments and school board hearings – specifically the concept of student safety. In the workshops, we began by collectively defining safety, and then by comparing and contrasting how and if definitions of safety were different when we thought of community safety, school safety, and how adults/those in positions of power in schools defined safety. Next, I invited students to engage in a series of interactive questions centered on the question: What makes schools unsafe? To invite input from young people on this question, I organized student workshops around an emergent engagement protocol called the Problem Tree. The Problem Tree is a youth engagement and research activity inspired by Freire (1970) and adapted by Eve Tuck (Unangax) (2012) in her participatory research with youth.

Tuck's adaptation utilizes the Problem Tree as a qualitative method of collaborative conceptual mapping inspired by Indigenous theories of interconnectivity alongside Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) theories of the rhizome – allowing for the metaphor of the tree to be more expansive and to build connections and collaborations to other natural systems, ideas, and

structures. In Tuck's adaptation of this activity, students are invited to map the symptoms, underlying beliefs, structural forces and root ideologies of a problem that they experience or see in their everyday experiences using the tree as a guide for organizing ideas and discussions (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Sample of Tuck's Problem Tree (2012)



In this activity, the leaves of the tree represent the symptoms of the problem. For example – in this research study the problem we were addressing was "Schools aren't safe", so students were invited to consider and name everyday symptoms of the problem, or how we know the problem exists. Students were then asked to group the leaves by any emerging themes they saw, and to think of branches and the trunk of the tree as systems, structures, attitudes or beliefs in school buildings that allow the leaves to flourish. In the final step of the problem tree, students

are invited to think about the roots of the tree as the ideas, political structures, beliefs and ideologies that allow this tree to stand up.

I built from Tuck's adaptation of the Problem Tree and Tuck's foregrounding of desires and possibility to create a protocol/research activity with students called the possibility tree. The possibility tree builds from this naming of the problem, towards a vision of what could be possible if the beliefs, and ideologies that feed structures and policies were addressed. I asked students to move through the tree metaphor in reverse, thinking about what beliefs might create/hold up a new tree – and what structures, systems, beliefs, and daily experiences in schools would look like if grounded in these beliefs.

Student Workshop Structure. Workshops were arranged with Council members and with the help of Council Coordinators. One Youth Advisory Council requested that the workshop be held on zoom, so that several former council members who lived out of the area could participate. Three workshops were held with two different Youth Advisory Councils comprising individuals who attend schools within and near Eugene 4J School District. All participants (and parents/guardians for those under 18) were invited to provide consent/assent before their participation in the study. Workshops lasted approximately an hour to an hour and a half.

Data Collection: Workshop Transcripts & Artifacts. Workshops were audio recorded and transcribed. Artifacts including posters of the problem and possibility trees, as well as post-it notes from the workshop were saved and documented through photographs and memos were generated for each workshop.

Participants. A total of 26 students and young adults between the ages of 13 and 24 participated in workshops. All participants currently or previously attended schools within

Eugene 4J School District. As a central commitment of this study was to engage meaningfully with students most impacted by school push out and overpolicing, I choose to include a question in the demographic survey that let students share which social identities they held that most informed their responses and expertise within discussions of school safety. I selected for this process of obtaining demographic information based on initial conversations with youth action councils about the study. In our pre-study conversations, students shared that check-box demographic profiles failed to consider the intersectionality of identities and experiences, the realities of colonialism, and questions around areas of expertise surrounding specific topics and fear of repercussions in critical school-centered discussions. I worked with several students from one of the Youth Advisory Councils following our pre-study conversation to discuss ways students in workshops might be able to share demographics in ways that highlight what identities they felt were most central to their understanding of the topics discussed in the workshops. Appendix A shares the handout created from student feedback. Table 3.2 below shares student's information, including the selection of social identities and ages it pertains to this demographic prompt.

Table 3.2: Overview of Key Demographics Offered by Student Workshop Participants

Total Participants	**26**
Age	# of participants
13	3
14	1
15	2
16	5
17	2
18	7
20	1
22	1

23	3
24	1
Social Identities Selected by Participants (25 Submitted)	# of Participants
Gender	18
Social Class	18
Race	14
Ethnicity	9
Age	7
Sex	5
Religion/Spirituality	5
Sexual Orientation	3
Body Size/Type	3
Disability	2
Nation(s) of Origin and/or Citizenship	2

Gender, Social Class, and Race were the three social identities most consistently selected as 3 social identities that informed student's experiences and places of expertise with school safety. Within conversations that took place within the student workshops, it was determined (through student's naming of a social identity associated with an experience in schools) that twenty-one (or 81%) of participants identified as BIPOC, two identified as Trans, and six identified as gender queer or gender fluid. Many students expressed multiple elements and angles of their identities (i.e.: Queer Latina, Disabled and Trans). While this presentation of demographics does not create the ability to directly attribute student responses to one specific identity, it does illuminate the social identities students articulated as most important to their experiences and perspectives as related to school safety.

Data Analysis: Corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) & Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) is an interdisciplinary field that combines corpus linguistics and discourse analysis to investigate language patterns across various contexts (Baker, 2023). Utilizing large collections of texts (corpora), CADS examines how language constructs meaning in real-life situations (Wodak, 2011). CADS bridges the gap between linguistics and other disciplines, such as communication studies, sociology, psychology, and literary studies. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach, CADS offers insights into the multifaceted nature of language in social, cultural, and institutional contexts (van Dijk, 2017)

CADS employs both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine linguistic patterns and discourse structures. Quantitative techniques, such as frequency analysis and collocation studies, provide statistical insights into language use, while qualitative approaches, including critical discourse analysis and narrative analysis, offer in-depth interpretations of discursive phenomena (Baker, 2023).

Similarly, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is also an interdisciplinary method to analyze text, but instead of focusing on empirical analysis of linguistic features, CDA places greater emphasis on critically examining the construction of social realities (i.e.: the role of language in power relations, ideology, and social structures). CDA examines the social, historical, and hierarchical contexts in which a text is produced and reproduced, naming dominant and subordinate discourses in an exploration of resistance and appropriation of discourses among different social actors (Fairclough, 1995, 2003; van Dijk, 2001). In doing so, critical discourse analysis captures something important about the social world and is motivated to take on an ethical and political role in showing how social phenomena and policies are

discursively constituted. A critical focus and analysis of social discourses thus "demonstrates how things come to be as they are, that they could be different, and thereby that they can be changed" (Hammersley, 2003, p. 758).

CDA in educational research is interested not just in how discursive structures show up and play out in the everyday interactions, rituals, and traditions of classrooms and school spaces, but also in the way different educational community members utilize language to present and to represent different beliefs about students, learning, and the institution of schooling. Given this framing, this study blends core tenets of CDAS and CDA to linguistic, ideological and political investments that are embedded in the discourse of police and schools, but also to notice where and how (and positioned by whom) visions of students, schools and safety are offered that rupture policing as normal or necessary. This innovative blend of CADS and CDA alongside my research questions make visible the movement of discourses between educational community members and policy decisions (i.e.: public comments to school board decision), as well as highlighting places of incompatibility within and among discourses and discursive strategies used to position schools, police, and students as safe and unsafe.

Core Assumptions and Foundations of CADS

Corpus-assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) is grounded in several key assumptions and foundations that underpin its interdisciplinary approach to investigating language in context. The first is a focus on interdisciplinary perspectives. CADS recognizes the complex nature of language and its role in shaping social, cultural, and institutional practices, and in turn draws upon the insights from linguistics, discourse analysis, sociology, psychology, and other disciplines to explore the multifacted dimensions of language, text and discourse. This

integration of linguistics and discourse analysis is central to CADS. Where corpus linguistics provides empirical data in the form of large electronic collections of texts (enabling systematic analysis of linguistic patterns and variations across different discourse types), the integration of discourse analysis offers theoretical frameworks and analytical tools for examining how language constructs meaning within specific contexts. This integration allows for a focus on the socio-cultural and interactional aspects of discourse (citation).

CADS employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze linguistic data. Quantitative techniques, such as frequency analysis, collocation studies, and concordance analysis, provide statistical insights into patterns of language use, while qualitative approaches, including critical discourse analysis, narrative analysis, and genre analysis, offer in-depth interpretations of discursive phenomena and their socio-cultural significance (Baker, 2023).

CADS acknowledges the socio-cultural and ideological dimensions of discourse, recognizing that language is not neutral but shaped by power relations, social structures, and cultural norms (Wodak, 2009). This is a core foundation of the work of CADS, which is to explore how language reflects and reproduces social identities, ideologies, and discourses of power, specifically how the study of text contributes to understandings of the construction of social reality and the negotiation of social meaning (Fairclough, 2003). In turn, CADS emphasizes the empirical investigation of language use in real-life contexts (Wodak, 2009). By analyzing authentic language data from corpora, CADS seeks to uncover recurrent linguistic features, discourse structures, and communicative practices embedded within various genres, registers, and social settings (Baker, 2023).

Overall, CADS provides a systematic framework for studying language in context, facilitating interdisciplinary research on the dynamic relationship between language, society, and culture. In my study, CADS offers a way to examine structures, practices, and ideologies within and across different bodies of text, specifically large quantities of text (as represented in public comments).

Core Assumptions and Foundations of CDA

Fairclough (2001), defines CDA as "a form of critical social science geared to illuminating the problems which people are confronted with by particular forms of social life, and to contributing resources which people may be able to draw upon in tackling and overcoming those problems" (p.125). In contrast to other paradigms in discourse analysis and text linguistics, CDA focuses not only on texts (spoken or written) as objects of inquiry. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) but names texts as sites where discursive differences are negotiated and governed by differences in power. In turn, CDA requires a theorization or description of both the social processes and structures that give rise to the production of a text AND the social structures and processes within which individuals or groups create meanings through language and in their interaction with texts (Kress, 2011). Hence, the concept of power, history, and ideology serve as three fundamental concepts in all Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Concept of power

In CDA, the concept of power involves the recognition that language is not neutral and operates as a site of power relations (Van Dijk, 2017). CDA examines how language is used to construct, reinforce, or challenge power dynamics in society. It emphasizes that discourse is a

means through which power is exercised, shaping individuals' perceptions, social structures, and ideologies. At the same time, CDA's emphasis on power makes visible the way some discourses are more readily accepted as mainstream, why others are not (Foucault, 1975). The concept of power helps to understand how language contributes to the reproduction or transformation of power relations within various contexts, unveiling structures and representations that come to be claimed as universal (Fairclough, 2003). It is important to identify how power is exercised in the discourse of policing and school safety to understand the ways social actor groups claim representations of police as safe or unsafe as assumed or normative within and across public comments, board transcripts and student workshops.

Concept of history

Another central concept in CDA, is the recognition of historical context in understanding language and language use (Wodak, 2011). Analyzing discourse requires an understanding of the historical conditions that shape language, including social developments and historical perspectives. This emphasis on historical perspectives helps reveal how language contributes to the construction of social identities and power structures over time and how historical conditions and social movements contribute to the development of particular discursive practices. This concept provides insight into the movement of certain terms across and between texts and between social groups or identities. In this study, recognition of historical context is critical in seeing and understanding not just the movement of language from public spaces into policy but the way that June 2020's racial uprising and public calls to defund the police following the murder of George Floyd played a role in rupturing normalized assumptions about police and safety.

Concept of Ideology

Ideology refers to the set of beliefs, values, and norms that shape and reflect the interests of specific social groups (Annamma et al., 2013; Hill, 1984). Central to CDA is the concept that discourse does ideological work (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). As described by Fairclough (1992), discourse produces and reproduces ideology as constructions of reality (the physical world, social relationships, identities, history) which in turn reproduces or transforms conditions for and relations of domination. Ideology is deeply rooted in language use, and as such, through constant reproduction becomes normalized or naturalized, whereby particular representations of the world, systems of ideas and values are insensibly imposed as universal or rational. Thus, ideology becomes a tool for hegemony and the legitimization of power from and of dominant groups in society; mind control as a central strategy of dominant discourse (van Dijk, 1998, 2017).

The examination of ideology, and the way positions and perspectives are presented in discourses about policing and schools is central to my study. As such, I analyze how power relations and ideologies are enacted through language, paying equal attention to the discourse strategies that aim to challenge or resist dominant ideology as to the discourse strategies that aim to maintain or normalize a dominant ideology of policing and safety.

Concept of Ruptures and Resistance

Because of my desire to pay equal attention to the places of rupture in dominant ideology surrounding policing (as well as the discursive moves used to do so) I rely on van Dijk's framing of ideology as well as what has been termed a *positive* (Wodak, 2011) or *reconstructive* (Luke, 2002, 2018) approach to critical discourse analysis. While both Positive Discourse Analysis

(PDA) and CDA share a foundational understanding of discourse as a social practice, they diverge in their central focus, analytical stance, and intended applications specifically around agency and a focus on how individuals actively shape and give meaning to their worlds. Reconstructive discourse analysis or PDA views discourse as dynamic and constantly evolving. It is interested in the processual aspects of language use, examining how meanings are negotiated, revised, and reconstructed over time. The incorporation of PDA into my analysis helps me to explore issues related to identity, power, and social change while emphasizing how and in what way language indicates areas of learning, unlearning, and a rupturing of dominant ideologies present in moments of social change (van Dijk, 2017; Wodak, 2011).

Tracing CDA to Responding to Research Questions

Grounded in critical realism, Fairclough (2003) argued that although "aspects of the social world such as social institutions are ultimately socially constructed, once constructed they are realities which affect and limit the textual (or 'discursive') construction of the social" and while "we may textually construe (represent, imagine, etc.) the social world in particular ways….whether our representations or construals have the effect of changing its construction depends on various contextual factors" (p.8). Contextual factors include who is construing the social reality (for example different individuals or social actors), social events, social structures, and social practices performed by social actors.

Guided by this framing of the social world, I first conducted an in-depth textual analysis across all data sources to identify and locate social actors, as well as their relationships with other words using two tools: collocation and lexical choices (defined below). I then utilized van Dijk's ideological square strategy combined with Fairclough's orders of discourse to identify the

ways different educational community members constructed SROs as safe or unsafe, coding for dominant or oppositional ideologies. Both analytic methods are described in more detail in subsequent sections. The third phase of analysis brought together elements of the textual and critical discourse analysis to identify networked patterns of discourses across the data. Drawing on Rogers' (2004) cross case analysis, I analyze clusters of discourses and patterns within and across domains to make present where and how educational community members leverage different representations of students, and what representations of Student occur across data set or domains.

Taken together, this multi-step analysis allows greater insight into how SROs are discursively produced in ways that maintain police in schools as normalized or needed and how school safety is represented (and by whom) in ways that rupture or challenge this narrative. In this section, I will provide an overview of the process I established to engage my research questions utilizing this multi-level analysis to understand how different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) define school safety (safety for whom, safety from what), as well as how these educational community members discursively produce police as safe or unsafe.

Phases of Analysis in This Study

This study engages three distinct, yet related phases of analysis situated around each of my research questions.

Figure 3.2: Tracing Analytic Concepts to Research Questions

Phase 1: Textual Analysis

In the first phase of my analysis, I engage the research question: How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) define school safety (safety for whom, safety from what)? In Phase 1 I conducted a Textual analysis (using CADS) across public comments and school board hearing transcripts for social actors and their relationships with other words using three methods of analysis: social actor representation, lexical words/choices, and collocation. This process was carried out across all three data sources. The following section names each of the methods of analysis used in my first phase of textual analysis.

Social Actor Representation Social actors are participants in sections of text, appearing as either nouns, pronouns, or reference groups. Social actors can be human or non-human. Social actors' participation is made visible through their inclusion and through their exclusion in a text (Fairclough, 2003; Van Leeuwen, 1996). An analysis of social actor representation within a text provides insight into the representation of self and others (both individual and collective). Analysis can be focused on possessive adjectives and passive or active verbs in social actor naming.

Social actor identification served as a first step in my analysis, providing an entry point to engage with a large amount of data (i.e.: public comments). In this phase of analysis, I conducted a word frequency search across all three of the texts/documents collected for analysis to determine not only a list of social actors, but the importance of these social actors as indicated by the frequency of their mentions in the texts. I analyzed the list of the most frequently referenced words for social actors – using Fairclough's (2003) framing of social actors as participants in text. In this study, social actors included both human and non-human actors as both were positioned as acting in some way within the texts. Human social actors were readily identifiable given terms like student, board, teachers, parents, and police. Non-human social actors in this study included safety.

In this phase of analysis, I identified nine human social actors, and four non-human social actors. I then coded all references to the social actors listed in Table 3.4 across each of my data sets.

Table 3.3: Frequency of Social Actors

Total Tokens Per Dataset	Public Comments	School Board Meeting	Student Workshops
	294,092	22,847	16,372
Human Social Actors			
Police	2811	108	11
Student	2367	73	95
Board	1962	47	6
Community	506	43	17
District	401	23	0
Teacher	222	7	109
Counselors	217	19	9
Parent	213	7	6
Family	97	9	1
Non-human Social Actors			
Safety	468	26	125
System	139	11	32
Racism	46	9	7
Space	16	1	31

To address the research question that guided this level of analysis (Safety for whom), I narrowed my analysis to focus on the human social actor Students1.

Collocations refer to the patterns of co-occurrences between words throughout text and transcripts. Collocations identify patterns and frequency of repetitions of words in text. Fairclough (2000) emphasizes collocation in critical discourse analysis not just as a powerful

tool in identifying relationships between words, social actors, and the authors in texts – but also as a means of questioning the logic of collocations and to take notice of the work that they do to imply relationships and/or to represent and make meaning.

In this study, collocations were identified by using a query that extracted concordance lines of +/- 5 words where nonhuman social actor Safety was collocated with human social actors Student. This analysis showed which words, and the frequency of words collocated with the three social actors selected for further analysis. At this stage of analysis, I returned to my research question 2 to code thematically within the extracted concordance lines to see what words and concepts were most referenced alongside social actor Safety guided by the questions: Safety for whom, and safety from what?

Phase 2: Orders of Discourse

In the second level of analysis, I analyzed how different groups produced discourses of school safety utilizing Fairclough's orders of discourse (1989, 1992, 2003) and van Dijk's ideological square (1998) as a coding framework. In this level of analysis, I ran a query across all three data sets for instances where the social actor Safety was referenced. This created a list of 325 quotations for analysis. I began the second level of analysis by labeling the selected quotations using the first two quadrants of van Dijk's ideological square strategy: *Dominant Ideology* which represents prevailing or dominant ideology in the discourse – including perspectives, values, and beliefs that are presented as normative or mainstream and *Oppositional Ideology* which represents the opposing or alternative ideologies to the dominant one – including perspectives that challenge or resist the dominant ideology. For this study, I coded responses that supported the continuation of SROs and the presence of police in schools as critical to school

safety as Dominant Ideology. I determined if responses supported the continuation of SROs based on statements made in comments that referenced a request of the board to maintain the contract with Eugene Police Department. Similarly, I coded quotations that requested, demanded, or proposed alternatives to policing and the placement of SROs in schools as Oppositional Ideology. This analysis resulted in 120 instances of extracted quotes.

This process allowed me to sort the selected quotations into two quadrants, from which I could engage in a deeper analysis of the discourse strategies employed to either promote and legitimize an ideology that police and policing keeps communities safe or those discursive strategies that challenge or resist this ideology. To do this deeper analysis, I utilized Fairclough's orders of discourse (2003). Orders of discourse provide a framework for analyzing the linguistic and rhetorical devices used to promote or legitimize a dominant perspective OR those used to deconstruct or critique a dominant perspective. Orders of discourse looks at a social structuring of semiotic difference at three levels: genres (*socially recognized ways of interacting*), discourses (*ways of representing and making meaning of the social world*), and styles (*ways of being through specific textual elements*).

In this phase of analysis, I created an initial list of codes based on observations and emergent themes across the two quadrants of selected quotations referenced above. I cross referenced this list with categories from Rogers and Mosley (2008) to create an initial code book, and then began the process of coding text for genre, discourse, and style using Fairclough's (2003) orders of discourse. In this study, the most salient genres were emailed public comments, Robert's Rules of Order (used in school board discussions/decision-making), and student workshops.

Through previous participation in public comment processes, community members (including parents, teachers, and students) likely brought expectations about what ways of interacting or communicating would be most effective and appropriate. In public comments, this looked like individuals stating their first and last name in an introduction line or stating their positionality or role as geographically or relationally connected to Eugene 4J. In student workshops, this might have looked like students being more willing to write down their thoughts or to discuss them in small groups as opposed to share them directly or out loud with me as the researcher.

When coding for discourses, I looked for places in the texts where assumptions circulate widely in society (as well as those that seek to rupture or offer opposing views or beliefs to that of dominant ideology). Through this level of analysis, I noted the assumptions or representations that undergirded statements that speakers and authors offered about police, policing, students, and schools. An example of a dominant discourse of policing is that police protect students from violence. An opposing discourse would be that the presence of police increases the likelihood of harassment experienced by marginalized students.

Finally, styles were coded to take note of the ways individuals used vocabulary, verb choice, and chose to name or not name race. For example, public comments that chose to name race explicitly (for example: "the murder of unarmed Black men at the hands of police", and public comments that evaded race ("what happened in Minneapolis"). Coding for style also allowed me to take note of which individuals and within which settings these textual elements were most common (looking at areas of cross over between style and genre).

Phase 3: Clusters of Discourses

CDA investigates how language is used to construct and perpetuate ideologies, often by influencing the way issues are framed or by promoting certain perspectives while marginalizing others. The third level of my CDA brought together elements of the textual and critical discursive analysis from Phases One and Two to identify discursive networks and clusters as they emerged from the data, as well as to show how these discourses illuminate broader insights into the ways students are positioned as dangerous (and by whom), which students are positioned as dangerous, and who must be protected and from what within schools. I do this by analyzing lexical choices made to produce and/or position Student.

Lexical choices are words selected by the writer/speaker to express or develop a topic**.** As opposed to words that express grammatical functions, lexical words include nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. An analysis of lexical words within a text unveils the choices authors of a text or educational community members utilize to enact or to represent meaning. In turn, better understanding how and why particular lexical choices were selected helps to understand the ideological roles, identities, and social power of social actors and agents being represented (Abdul Ghani & Sabboor Hussain, 2021; Kaur et al., 2013; Vellos, 2017).

Focusing on Student as the social actor under investigation, I returned to the three data sets to determine what words were frequently selected and associated with Student. I then created parent and child codes, creating the possibility of combining Student as a human social actor with associated terms/words associated with student, while also retaining the ability to search, sort, and extract quotations by lexical choices (such as child, kid, youth). This analysis allowed me to see how Student as a social actor was represented within and across text, as networked clusters of dialogue.

Table 3.4: Lexical Choices Used to Represent Student Across Data Sets

	Public Comments	Board Meeting	Student Workshops	Totals
Lexical Choices				
Child	107	1	0	108
Children	430	1	9	441
Kid	241	2	24	281
Student(s)('s)	1259	46	81	1386
Youth	83	5	21	109

While the use of this words to describe or define Student may be traced to the colloquialisms that occur in oral and written speech, this selection of words (and change among and between data sets) can also signal a difference in the way "students" were represented in that genre, grammatical moves that the authors used, and assumptions or ideological beliefs about the way the world works (Fairclough, 2003) .

Clusters of Discourses I employ Rogers (2004) framework for analyzing the networking of discourses of Student across different domains of data to determine how Students are positioned differently within clusters of discourses about school safety. I then present these findings using Fairclough's concept of cruces to highlight places of ideological tension and/or contradictions among and between discourses of student safety in schools.

The examination of ideology, and the way different participants present their positions and perspectives about policing and schools is central to my study. As such, the combination of Rogers' (2004) networking of discourses and Fairclough's (2003) cruces to analyze public comments and board discussions surrounding a decision to remove SRO's from schools, alongside and compared with student's experiences of school safety allowed me to direct equal attention to the discourse strategies that position students (and which students) as needing

protection in schools as well as illuminating the underlying power relations and ideological tensions made salient within and across domains or clusters of discourses.

Chapter 3 Summary

In the context of the decision by Eugene 4J School District to terminate contracts with local law enforcement regarding SROs, this research project aims to address key questions. These include how different educational community members (students, policy makers, and the community) define school safety and how they discursively produce police as safe or unsafe. The study also seeks to understand how language is used (and by whom) to normalize or to rupture assumptions about police and safety. To answer these questions, I employ a multi-phase discursive analytic approach, influenced by CADS and CDA and specifically the work of Fairclough (1995, 2003), van Dijk (1998), and Rogers & Mosely (2008) to delve into explicit statements about SROs while also uncovering the underlying identities, assumptions, and power relations reflected in language choices about police, policing, students and safety.

CDA studies the relationships between texts, narratives, and social practices, offering a framework that includes the careful analysis of language, interactions, and social practices within and across local, institutional, and societal levels (Rogers et al., 2005). Rather than concerning itself just with the textual production and reproduction of ideology, CDA sets up a systematic theoretical framework that relates textual features to the situations in which those texts are produced and consumed, as well as to the larger social processes and society under investigation (Schrøder, 2006). The analytical frameworks used in this study view discourse as a network of social practices, allowing for an exploration of the social organization and control of discursive choices within the specific context of school safety and policing.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF TEXT (PHASE 1)

This chapter presents an examination of public comments, transcripts (including a school board meeting and student workshops) and artifacts created in student workshops to respond to the research question #1: What does an analysis of discourses in Eugene 4J's School board's decision to terminate contracts with law enforcement reveal about how different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community members via public comments) define school safety (safety for whom, safety from what)?

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section examines how safety (and whose safety) is defined across the three units of analysis (public comments, board transcripts, and student workshops). The second section presents a discourse of safe schools as presented in the data (as a way of categorizing analysis in response to the question safe for who and safe from what).

Defining Safety in School

Understanding how various participants defined school safety was the intended conclusion of this level of analysis. As such, this chapter presents analysis and findings organized into three sections. The first responds to the question: whose safety is being addressed or centered in these data sets? The second section addresses the question: from whom and what must these social actors be made safe from in schools? The final section describes how participants define a safe school based on text analysis within and between the three data sets included in this study.

Whose Safety?

Answering whose safety is important in schools (as framed by different members within the educational community) begins with identifying social actors present in the text. Social actors are defined as being present and/or acting in some way within the texts and data under analysis. Social actors encompass both the participants within a text and the entities involved in shaping and being shaped by social occurrences and behaviors (Fairclough, 2003). In this study, social actors included both human and non-human actors as both were positioned as acting in some way in each of the texts. Human social actors were identifiable by common terms associated with schools including students, teachers, as well as terms associated with the context of the study including board and police. Non-human social actors in this study included: safety, for example, "safety wants people to have boundaries around what you share"; system, "system excuses violent and inappropriate behavior"; space, "space where students are safe", and racism "racism

that permeates law enforcement". In the sections that follow, I will go into greater detail on the process of analysis as well as the social actors included and emphasized within these two categories.

Identifying Human Social Actors

Answering whose safety is being addressed in schools begins with identifying human social actors. Human social actors were identified in the texts through a search of word frequencies. The importance of human social actors was then assessed by counting the frequency of mentions within and across the texts. Human social actors were named within the data sets as being present, having duties, responsibilities, and rights in schools (Fairclough, 2003). Social actor identification served as a first step in my analysis, providing an entry point to engage with a large amount of data (i.e.: public comments). In this phase of analysis, I conducted a word frequency search across all three of the texts/documents collected for analysis to determine not only a list of social actors, but the importance of these social actors as indicated by the frequency of their mentions in the texts. I analyzed the list of the most frequently referenced words for social actors – using Fairclough's (2003) framing of social actors as participants in text. Through this process, ten human social actors were identified and analyzed: Police, Student, Board, Community, District, Teacher, People, Counselors, Parents, and Family. These human social actors are presented by their frequency totals (starting with public comments) in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Frequency of Human Social Actors Within Study Data Sets

	Public Comments	**School Board Hearing**	**Student Workshops**
Total Tokens	294,092	22,847	16,372
Human Social Actors			
Police	2811	108	11
Student	2367	73	95

Board	1962	47	6
Community	506	43	17
District	401	23	0
Teacher	222	7	109
People	213	53	91
Counselors	217	19	9
Parent	213	7	6
Family	97	9	1

The human social actor Student made up 27% of all references to human social actors in public comments, 22% of human social actor references in school board hearings, and 37% of human social actors referenced in student workshops. Students appeared ten times more frequently than Teachers but slightly less frequently than Police across public comments. What is particularly striking is that the human social actor Teacher appeared more than references to Student within student workshops but appeared twelve times less often than Police or Students in public comments. This suggests that Teachers are present and seen as having a strong role in school safety according to students and might suggest that Teachers are seen as having less connection to student safety by other educational community members such as policy decision makers or community members.

Police were the most directly referenced human social actor within public comments and school board transcripts. However, Police were only referenced eleven times by students in workshops. It is worth noting that the frequency of the human social actor Police most likely occurred at higher rates within public comments and school board hearing transcripts due to a central agenda item present in the June 20th, 2020 board meeting which sought to come to a decision or motion on the termination of continuation of a contract with Eugene Police Department to provide SROs in Eugene 4J district schools. The placement and discussion of this agenda item was largely motivated and impacted by the number of public comments received by

the board before the meeting. While the frequency of Police is of interest to my larger study, the focus on this level of textual analysis is more concerned with understanding whose safety is being addressed, and what social actors are present and positioned as dangerous to those in need of protection. I return to an analysis of Police as a social actor in Chapter 5.

The sections below share a more detailed examination of human social actors present in public comments and board hearings and in student workshops as a way of addressing the goals of this study, which is to better understand the ways different educational community members position who holds power, responsibility, and priority regarding protection from and within schools. These sections are organized by data set and offer an overview of findings as well as a presentation of the significance of these findings as they relate to Research Question 1: What does an analysis of discourses in Eugene 4J's School board's decision to terminate contracts with law enforcement reveal about how different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community members via public comments) define school safety (safety for whom, safety from what)?

Public Comments & School Board Meeting. Student, Police, and Board were mentioned more than any other human social actor in public comments. Police, Student, and People were referenced with the highest frequency in the school board meeting transcripts (followed closely by Board and Community). The numbers suggest that Students are the focus of these texts, and the context of the board agenda and decision before the board (which inspired the large submission of public comments) provides background to the high rates of reference to Police and Board.

A notable finding from further analysis of human social actors across public comments and the board hearing transcripts shows that in addition to the ten human social actors referenced in the table above, several specific individuals and one geographic area were referenced across both data sets. These individuals include: Kari Skinner (who at the time of the board meeting served as the Eugene 4J Safety Officer); George Floyd (a Black man murdered by police in Minnesota in May of 2020), and Kip Kinkle (incarcerated at the age of 15 in 1998 for opening fire with a semi-automatic rifle in the cafeteria of Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon, that resulted in the death of 2, and the wounding of 25 of his classmates), and Stefan Nicholas Zeltvay (a former police officer stationed in 4J Public Schools who pleaded guilty in 2013 to 5 counts of sexual harassment and 1 count of third degree sex abuse). Table 4.2 shares these results, organized in alphabetical order by social actor's first name.

Table 4.2: Frequency of Named Human Social Actors in Public Comments and the School Board Hearing Transcripts

Human Social Actors: Represented by Proper Nouns		
	Public Comments	School Board Hearing
George Floyd	8	1
Kari Skinner	21	0
Kip Kinkle	6	1
Stefan Nicholas Zeltvay	6	0

The analysis of discourses surrounding Eugene 4J's School Board's decision to terminate contracts with law enforcement offers valuable insights into how various educational community members, including students, policymakers, and community members via public comments, conceptualize school safety and its underlying dimensions of safety for whom and safety from

what. Findings from this phase of analysis highlight narratives and thematic emphases within public comments and board meeting transcripts that help to unpack nuanced understandings and positioning of safety within the educational context.

For example, frequent mentions of "Student," "Police," and "Board," underscores these human social actors as inhabiting central roles in school safety. These findings reveal not only how different educational community members articulate their perspectives on safety within the school environment but also call attention to the movement of social actors and terms across and between sites of institutional power (aka the Board) and community engagement. Moreover, the inclusion of specific individuals and symbolic references, such as George Floyd and Kip Kinkle, contextualizes broader societal issues of police brutality, racial injustice, and gun violence within the discourse of school safety.

Student Workshops. Human social actors that were most referenced in student workshops included: Teachers, Adults, Staff, Student, People, Kid, Youth, Child, Community, Parent, Boy, and School Board. Table 4.3 shares the list of human social actors and frequency of mentions referenced in student workshops organized from most to least frequent. Worth noting in this dataset is the frequency of the human social actor People.

Table 4.3: Human Social Actors & Frequency Counts in Student Workshops

Human Social Actors:	**Student Workshops**
Student	95
People	93
Teachers	57
Adult	52
Staff	23
Kid	23
Community	17
Youth	14

Child	9
Parent	6
Boy	5

In student workshops, human social actors Teachers, Adults, and Staff made up 33% of all social actors named. These numbers would suggest that these adult human social actors are given comparable weight by students in schools. The human social actor People was also present at a high frequency rate in student workshops. As a social actor, People was used in combination with words such as "young" or "people with different backgrounds". This suggests that People might refer to students, staff, or community members/individuals outside of the school building itself. Human social actor Boy appears more than 5 times across student workshops. In comparison, Boy was only referenced 3 times in public comments, and was absent from the school board meeting transcript. Boy was named as a specific human social actor in student workshops in comments or artifacts that presented beliefs about students that resulted in a lack of safety experienced by students (such as: "beliefs like 'Boys will be boys'", or "they believe that all teen boys are sex crazed").

These findings highlight how Teachers, Adults, and Staff emerge as prominent human social actors within student workshops. This suggests that students attribute comparable weight to adult figures within the school environment, reflecting a recognition of their roles and influence in shaping perceptions of safety and the well-being of students. This is a significant finding from within student workshops that illuminates a notable gap between the positioning of human social actors referenced by board members and educational community members in public comments.

The frequency of references to "People" in student workshops, often in conjunction with descriptors such as "young" or "people with different backgrounds," underscores a broader inclusivity in the discourse of schools, possibly encompassing students, staff, and community members as holding shared experiences, as well a referencing of individuals beyond the physical boundaries of the school campus. This highlights the interconnectedness between school communities and the broader societal context within which discussions of safety and inclusivity occur.

Additionally, the presence of "Boy" as a specific social actor, referenced more frequently than in public comments or board meeting transcripts, signifies a notable focus on gender dynamics and stereotypes within the student workshops. Instances where "Boy" is mentioned in relation to beliefs perpetuating unsafe environments, such as "Boys will be boys," indicate the role societal norms and attitudes (as circulated or enacted by adults) impacts student's experiences of safety.

Identifying Non-Human Social Actors

In CDA, non-human social actors refer to entities or objects that are treated as if they have social agency or influence within discourse, despite not being human. These non-human social actors play a significant role in shaping discourse and can include institutions, technologies, policies, and even abstract concepts (Fairclough, 2003). Using frequency counts across all of the datasets, twelve non-human social actors were identified: Safe, System(s), Mental Health, Decision, Violence, Abuse, Racism, Home, Bullying, Discrimination, Space, and Drugs.

Table 4.4: Frequency of Non-Human Social Actors Within Study Data Sets

Non-Human Social Actor	Public Comments	School Board Meeting	Student Workshops
Safe	468	26	125
System	139	11	32
Mental Health	130	2	8
Decision	119	8	0
Violence	109	0	6
Abuse	48	0	5
Racism	45	2	9
Home	41	0	5
Bullying	21	0	10
Discrimination	20	0	2
Space	16	9	7
Drugs	10	0	10

The concept of school safety (Safe) was critical to this study, and as such served as an important non-human social actor. To understand how "safe" is conceptualized in the data, it is necessary to analyze the frequency of safe, and words related to safe such as: harm, violence, threat, danger, terror, bullying, incident, and derivatives of the word safe like safety, safely, and unsafe. While these words appeared across data sets, the word Safe was used most frequently. It should also be noted, as will be examined in the next section, that Safe occurred within the same sentences as many of the other words included in the list above. This led to an analysis of

extracted concordance lines where non-human social actors and Safe were present, as well as relationships between Safe (as the non-human social actor) and human social actors.

Safe for Whom? Collocating Human Social Actors & Safety

The human social actors most frequently referenced within the same paragraph as Safe varied depending on the data set (see table below). In public comments, Police, and then Students were the human social actors most often positioned within concordance lines alongside Safe. As a reminder, ***Collocations*** refer to the patterns of co-occurrences between words throughout text and transcripts. In this study, collocations were identified by using a query that extracted concordance lines of +/- 5 words where nonhuman social actor Safety was collocated with human social actors Student. This analysis showed which words, and the frequency of words collocated with the three social actors selected for further analysis.

Again, understanding the context of public comments (as positioned to provide comments on the topic of the continuation or termination of contracts with local law enforcement for the placement of 4 SROs) explains the high frequency of social actor Police within and across these data sets. What is of interest within these concordance lines is the way Police are positioned differently, as either connected with Safe/Safety or as an example of a lack of safety (i.e.: what students needed to be protected from). Chapter 5 explores the way language is used (and by whom) to position Police as safe or unsafe.

Table 4.5: Human Social Actors Collocated with Safe

Safe	Public Comments	School Board Hearing	Student Workshops
Police	237	8	3
Child/Children	107	2	2
Community	67	23	5
District	63	13	0
Kid	57	14	0
Student	44	6	38
Board	35	20	3
Staff	33	0	7
People	28	37	43
Counselor	28	2	0
Parent	17	0	3
Public	17	13	0
Teacher	14	0	4
Family	5	1	0

In the school board meeting transcript, Community and Board appeared most often (nearly four times references to Student). However, the lexical choice of "Kid" was used twice as often as Student. In student workshops, Students were overwhelmingly the most referenced social actor within the concordance lines of Safe. A notable observation was the difference between the number of times Teachers (or Staff) occurred within concordance lines of Safe/Safety within student workshops as opposed to the number of collocations present in school

board hearing transcripts or public comments. This suggests that while Teachers and Staff are present within the school building (arguably far more often than Police), educational community members in public comments did not position Teachers and Staff as directly connected or responsible for the safety of students. In contrast, Board was collocated with Safe across each of the three data sets, suggesting that the Board was more responsible for the safety of Students than Teachers or Parents. This casts an interesting role for the social actor Board and surfaces the framing that decision makers are both responsible for and hold power in the day-to-day experiences of Students.

Table 4.6: Concordance Excerpts: Safe for Whom (Public Comments)

Kid
and allow these kids the opportunity to learn in a **safe** and protected environment.
Student
learning, it is your responsibility to create environments that are **safe** and welcoming to everyone, including and especially black *students;*
help all of our *students*, especially students of color, be **safe** and have the opportunity to learn
I believe SRO's are the best way to provide **safety** and support for our *students;*
I feel our *children's* schools and are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring the **safety** of our school *communities* doing this in the effort to focus on the physical **safety** of *students*, they may be sacrificing *students*' emotional **safety**
please make a decision that puts our *student's* **safety** first, and to not sever the relationship that 4J
Staff
We must commit to ensuring the **safety** specifically of Black *students*, *staff*, and faculty at 4J
Police
Not to mention the preventative **safety** they [*police*] offer against school shootings that plague this country.

Public Comments

The word pairing of "feel safe" and "keep safe" identified Students as the objects of and for school safety. What is noteworthy here, is that Safe collocated most often with Kids and Children in the text of public comments (lexical choices associated with social actor Student, but not the term or word choice of "student"). These word choices (and the use of these word choices by different educational community partners) suggest that the use of different terms associated with Student is used to invoke or to reflect different beliefs, expectations and positionality. This

word choice or lexical representation of Student is further explored and discussed in Chapter 6, as part Level 2 and Level 3 of my analysis (connecting with my research question 3 that looks at the ways students are positioned and by whom).

School Board Meeting

In board hearings, Safe occurred within the same sentences as Board, and Community. Interestingly, human social actor Police (which was a topic/actor of focus in the meeting) only occurred in collocation with Safe eight times. Student is only collocated with Safe 6 times across the transcript. However, social actor Kid(s) (a lexical choice associated with social actor Student) occurs 12 times (or twice as frequently). Safe and social actor Student occurred alongside statements that combined "feel" and non-human social actor Safe. The pairing of words "school safety", "safety programs" occurred often within the school board hearing transcript. Table 4.7 shared excerpts from these collocations.

Table 4.7: Excerpts: Safe for Whom (Board Hearing)

Students
move forward. So my goal is that all *students* feel **safe** and in our welcoming in schools, and we don'
training our staff and ensuring our *students* are and feel **safe** and supported in schools.
Building a comprehensive program to meet our *students* and school **safety** needs
the needs of our *students* in our schools, or school **safety** programs are no exception. It is important for the
Staff
question we need to ask is, who gets to feel **safe** now in the *system* as it exists? national data
our *students, staff ,* a*dministrators* and *volunteers* in our buildings are **safe;** physically and emotionally to carefully consider and think about
compare physical **safety** *in a building* with mental and emotional **safety** of institutional *racism.* I wish I had an answer

Also of note is the collocation of the human social actor Staff with Safe. This collocation and word pairing suggests that while Students are an object for school safety, (a surfaced goal that students "feel safe", referencing both emotional and physical safety), Students are not the

only human subjects that serve as a population of priority for school safety. Other social actors collocated with Safe included Staff, Administrators, and Volunteers.

Student Workshops

Students positioned Safe most often in connection with social actor Student. In student workshops, Safe was also collocated with social actors Community, as well as Staff and Teacher (although these two social actors were only found in connection with derivatives of Safe referencing a lack of safety – such as "unsafe", or "not safe"). This co-occurrence suggests (or could imply) that Staff and Teachers are social actors who students see as physically present in schools and who might contribute to student's experiences of safety and a lack of safety. Interestingly, the social actor People (used broadly) shows up in concordance lines within student workshops. What is interesting is that the term People seems to refer both to social actor Student, and social actor Staff.

Also of note is the word pairing of "more safe", "not safe", or "would be safe" (which occurs frequently across student data). While this collocation of other words with Safe relates to the questions and workshop protocols used in the workshops with students, the implication is that Students (positioned as objects of school safety within the other texts) do not currently feel safe in schools. The frequency of social actor Student within student workshops suggests that Students are human social actors whose safety in schools needs to be prioritized, but also potentially that Students are also a social actor to be protected from.

Table 4.8: Excerpts: Safe for Whom (Student Workshops).

Students
If schools were **safe** *students* would feel safe to express themselves in whatever
Schools aren't **safe** because LGBT/POC *students* can't express
People
Like **safety** is you want *people* to have boundaries around what you share

make schools more **safe** are actual accountability measures for actions - actually making *people* **safe**
actually making *people* **safe** and listening to them
People in power define **safety** – it feels like they define it like there is no immediate danger.

In summary, across the three data sets, both the frequency of occurrences and collocations suggest that Students are the social actors who need to be safe in schools. Additionally (as seen in the student workshops), Students are also positioned as a human social actor who is named as being responsible for threats to school safety. This tension within the analysis is explored further in Chapter 6.

Safe from Whom & From What?

Through frequency counts and concordance lines across the data sets it was determined that Students needed to be kept safe in schools. Further analysis of public comments, the school board hearing transcript, and student workshops artifacts shows the way certain social actors are positioned as responsible for making schools unsafe, and how and under what conditions non-human social actor Safe and human social actor Student co-occur. If Students need to be kept Safe, then it makes sense to ask, from whom? Safe from what? The following sections present this analysis as organized first by which social actors are implicated as responsible for making schools unsafe, and then how and within what contexts non-human actors represent what Students should be kept safe from in schools.

Safe from Whom

Across the three data sets, Students were positioned as needing to be protected from three categories of human social actors: Police, Teachers (or Staff), and other Students. **Police** was the social actor most referenced as contributing to a lack of student safety in public comments and was present in both the board meeting transcripts and student workshops (although in student workshops actor Police was not collocated within the extracted concordance lines of Safe but

found present within the paragraph containing social actor Safe). The prevalence or focus on social actor Police as an entity/individual that social actor Student would need to be protected from aligns, again, with the larger sociocultural context of police violence, but also within the local context of the Eugene 4J Board's decision to continue or to terminate the existing contract with local law enforcement for the placement of SROs in Eugene 4J school buildings. The focus on keeping Students safe from Police aligns with the board agenda item under review at the June 20th, 2020 board meeting, and in turn the desire to share claims and requests either in support of Police (in relationship to school Safety) or in opposition to Police presence in schools.

Table 4.9: Excerpts: Safe from Police (all data sets)

Police
[public comment] *Police* officers in schools do not increase **safety** in the school environment; they do the opposite.
[public comment] Our *students* don't need armed *police* officers in schools. Our *students* need more mental health services, college and career counseling, and diverse,
[public comment] *Police* officers in the schools were an instrument of **terror**.
[public comment] when I was going to Roosevelt Middle School there was a scandal with one of the *police* officers where he was harassing middle school aged girls. He wasn't making anyone feel **safe**
[school board hearing] disabilities often not always very different. Know from national research that there's no statistical correlation between, *police*, in schools and the physical **safety** of *students*, but that there is a negative correlation with
[school board hearing] And that does affect what it's like for them [students] to face *police* officers in school. So I think the question of SROs has to be separated
[school board hearing] of them were completely nonviolent and could have been directed home with a simple conversation. Instead, multiple *police* cars surrounded them from all sides so there was no escape
[student workshops] *Police* as signs that something bad is happening in a space - that there is **danger** or something to avoid
[student workshops] I don't know if you all like know that [district name] doesn't have the *school resource officers* anymore, but they have like the **safety** cars and whenever I see those, like parked I feel like you're always like, Oh, no, something bad's happening

Further analysis of terms associated with the social actor Safe, show tensions between public comments that construct Police as a social actor capable of perpetuating harassment and bullying (acts that make schools unsafe) and comments that name Police as having a critical role or responsibility for protecting Students. This place of tension is a central focus of Chapter 5 and CDA in this study.

Teachers were the next most referenced human social actor associated with a lack of safety for Students. Interestingly, the framing of Teachers as dangerous or a threat to student safety only surfaced in student workshops. Students refer to 'inappropriate teachers', "teachers ignoring student issues" and "targeting students". The human social actor Adult was also referenced frequently in student workshops – referring not just to Teachers but also to other Staff. Also of note is the high frequency of references to Teacher in public comments. However, these references are either a naming of positionality on behalf of the author (i.e: "as a Teacher"), or as a social actor in need or deserving of protection in schools.

Table 4.10: Excerpts: Safe from Teachers (student workshops)

Staff/Teachers
Schools aren't **safe**, because there is bullying, *teachers* ignoring *student* issues, not
we know schools are not **safe** because *teachers* teach personal beliefs over what they are supposed to
Not **safe** because of *staff* that doesn't care. Yeah, judging *people* based on their looks for sure
Schools aren't safe because of bullying due to racism, homophobia. Staff ignoring students or blatantly targeting students for multiple reasons"
they don't think it is their job – that taking care of us or helping us live isn't part of learning

Also of interest across data sets is the presence of human social actor People. Words associated with this human social actor positioned People as representing a variety of individuals and identities including "People of color", "People with disabilities", and "Indigenous People". Social actor People was also associated with words that positioned or other named social actors (such as Police, or Community) such as: "people who have relationships with students" (in a statement referring to Police), or "young people" (referring to Student), or "people who have become so reactionary (referring to Community). This presence of the social actor People suggests that People serves as a stand-in for other human social actors and is used in different ways and by different educational community members.

Student was named human social agent who posed a threat to other Students and as the primary target of protection in schools occurred across all data sets. The social actor Student as something students in schools needed to be protected was named directly in both public comments and in student workshops (see Table 4.11 below). In these extracted concordance segments, it is interesting to note the different lexical choices associated with Student within different settings and discourses of school safety. For example, the use of the term "kid" as paired with their in public comments articulating the threats to students in schools as other students, and the use of the term "kids' by students in workshops. "Kid" in the public comments shared below position 'their kid' as deserving protection, and 'another student' as being dangerous. In student workshops, students ("kids") are named in a way that moves focus away from Teachers/Adults or Systems (non-human social actor) as dangerous and towards other students as the primary source of a lack of safety experienced in schools. Concordance lines of Student in the school board transcripts did not generate any instances where Student was directly positioned as something other Students needed to be protected from in schools, but references to bullying suggested an indirect reference to Students as being both needing to be protected and needing protection from.

Table 4.11: Excerpts: Safe from Students (all data sets)

[public comment] an *SRO* was not there to prevent their **kid** from being sexually assaulted at school by another **student**, or bullied
[public comment] even as "mundane" as OD'ing on drugs they bought from another **student.**
[public comment] incidents ranging from having homeless *persons* removed from the playground area, high school aged **students** drinking nearby, to canvasing the area as an armed **studen**t had hidden in a nearby track shed and was known to have issued a threat on **another student's** life.
[student workshop] its not the system. its the **kids**.
[student workshop] its not the school's fault. Its the **kids** in the school.

However, a collocation analysis that looked for instances where social actor Safe was co-located with non-human social actors indicated that 'bullying' was frequently named as 'what' Students in schools needed to be protected from.

Safe from What

Two phases of analysis were conducted to identify who and what students in schools needed to be kept safe from. The first phase was a textual analysis that identified words across the data sets that appeared related to collocations between non-human social actor Safe and human social actor Student. The second phase of analysis looked for instances where these words and word combinations co-occurred with the social actor Safe (+/- 5 words). This was done to extrapolate from "what" students needed to be kept safe from in school.

In the first phase of this analysis, words that appeared across the data sets that referred to the 'what' (non-human social actors) Students experience that make schools unsafe included: "violence", "bullying", "drugs", "racism", "discrimination", "justice system", "mental health", "home", and "environment". The second phase of analysis collocated these words with social actor Safe to look both at frequency (see Table 4.12) and concordance lines. Table 4.12 provides an overview of the frequency of collocations of these ten words within student workshops. I make this shift here in the presenting of findings not only because Students is the social actor most referenced as needing to be protected in schools, but also because my ethical commitments and considerations place student voice as significant and central to findings about school safety.

Table 4.12: Collocation of Safe and "what" Student should be safe from in School

Collocation: SAFE	Student Workshops	Public Comments	School Board Meeting
Racism	14	63	2
Bullying	13	21	0

Mental Health	12	154	2
Drugs	10	39	0
Decisions/Policies	10	25	9
Abuse	9	89	0
Home	4	42	0
Violence	3	147	0
Justice System	0	19	0

In student workshops, the words "racism" and "racist" was present slightly more often than "bullying" or "mental health". In collocations of Safe and racism in student workshops, **Racism** appeared in concordance lines with other words such as "racist stuff" or "bullying due to racism". In public comments and school board meeting transcripts, the words that frequently occurred in concordance lines with Racism included "systemic racism". In student workshops, Racism was present in concordance lines with phrases such as "discrimination" or "homophobia". This suggests that students were more likely to position Racism as a non-human social actor AND a motivator for human social actors (Police, Staff, Adults, and Teachers), and in turn a central threat to Students.

Table 4.13 Excerpts: "Safe from What": Racism (all data sets)

Racism
[public comments] one facet of the systematic **racism** that has been present in this country
[public comments] been victims of systematic **racism**. It is important to hear everyone's voice
[public comments] I have NEVER seen nor experienced overt **racism**! Certainly not from our police officers!
[public comments] revealing how **racist** and dangerous our policing system is
[board meeting] It's a fault of system and the systemic **racism** that we see in our schools
[board meeting] and practices that support institutional **racism** for our students and staff of color
[student workshops] Adultism lets this happen, and **racism**, and policies, lack of knowledge and budgets
[student workshops] bullying due to **racism**, homophobia. Staff ignore students

Bullying was referenced 13 times as collocated with safe in student workshops, 21 times in public comments, and was absent from the school board hearing transcript. In public comments, bullying appeared most often in concordance lines with the social actor Police and

social actor Student. In student workshops Bullying appeared most often in concordance lines with human social actor Student.

Table 4.14 Excerpts: "Safe from What": Bullying (all data sets)

Bullying
[public comments] *SRO* was not there to prevent their *kid* from being sexually assaulted at school by another *student*, or **bullied**
[public comments] school violence, such as fights, arguments, **bullying**, or religious teasing, tend to report feeling less *safe* in schools, even though *SRO*s are present
[student workshops] retaliation because even when *people* do feel comfortable to like go to their *teacher* about *somebody* **bullying** them
[student workshops] Open **bullying** to those that have impairments or disabilities
[student workshops] homophobia and transphobia amongst *students* and *staff*, *students* and *staff* **bullying** others due to being LGBT/POC/Etc

As Table 4.14 shows, public comments construct bullying as both perpetuated by social actor Student, and as a process not directly attributable to any one human social actor (implied that the act of bullying as conducted by more than one human social actor in schools).

Mental health appeared 12 times in student workshops, 154 times in public comments, and 2 times in the school board meeting transcript. Mental Health was found collocated with Safe in combination with words such as "services", "crisis" and "mentally ill". Mental Health was referenced as something Students needed to be protected from in schools in two ways: The first, to describe an experience or state in need of additional support or services (i.e.: "crucial mental health services that our students sorely need"). This occurrence or representation of mental health occurred across all data sets. The second way Mental Health was present in collocations of Safe, was in combination with words such as "mental health diagnosis", or "mentally ill", which was used within texts or by authors when referring to individuals who presented a risk to student safety.

Drugs showed up 10 times in student workshops, 39 times in public comments, and not at all in board transcripts. Drugs were often referenced in the same sentences or in association

with terms and/or social actors “bullying”, “police”, and “students”. A striking finding in this phase of analysis was that in concordance lines for Safe (when collocated with the words bullying, drugs, and discrimination), there was rarely a human social actor identified as causing or contributing to these actions. The results, therefore, is that bullying, drugs, and discrimination, are constructed as activities or a process that was not directly related to any one human social actor. These actor-less incidents create ambiguity around the ‘who’ Students need to be protected from and invite further examination and inquiry.

Decisions/Policies were referenced across all data sets as both responsible for the safety of students, and responsible if a lack of safety was experienced by students. This positioned policies and decisions as a non-human social actor that Students needed to be protected from. Policies (or decisions) occurred most frequently in concordance lines with human social actor School Board. For example, public comments shared that a School Board decision to eliminate police would result in danger to students, and board members themselves shared that those decisions made at the board level impacted student safety. However, student workshop participants did not collocate human actors with social actor Policies/Decisions (see Table 4.14). This suggest that students see Decisions/Policies as central to experiences of student safety but also implies that students see Decisions/Policies as held or perpetuated by multiple human social actor groups.

Table 4.15: Excerpts: Safe from Decisions/Policies as collocated with human & nonhuman social actors (all data sets)

Human Social Actors
[public comment] search for "school **board** member arrested" also brings up a vast number of articles detailing crimes school, board, members have been accused of in just the last year.
[public comment] a result of both zero tolerance policies and our use of **police** officers in schools
[public comment] The message that the 4J school, **board**, would be sending by removing **SROs** from our schools would be that the safety of **students** doesnt matter

[school board hearing] the safety of schools is one that I think it's really clear we all on this, **board**, and probably all as **community** share and in particular that's important to schools because schools
[student workshops] If schools did feel safe, there would be **teacher**s who care and listen to all of their **students**, and school **board** thinking of the s**tudents**, safety and enforcing rules based on that
Non Human Social Actor
[student workshops] throw you under the bus, 'zero tolerance' **policies**, 'speak up and speak out'
[student workshops] grades, attendance and truancy policies, zero tolerance **policies**, and dress codes
[student workshop] attendance **policy**, including tardiness
[student workshop] **Racism**, and **policies**, lack of knowledge and budgets

Abuse was referenced by both students in workshops and in public comments. In public comments, Abuse was most frequently collocated words like 'sexual' or 'harassment', and human social actor Police. In fact, Abuse occurred in 6 extracted collocation lines with human social actor Police and named Police Officer Stefan Nicholas Zeltvay who was positioned in Eugene 4J schools and accused and convicted of sexual harassment. Abuse was also positioned with Police in statements that suggested that Police were a critical protector for social actor Student who had experienced Abuse outside of school. Student workshops also positioned Abuse as both something that happened outside of school ("schools are unsafe because you can't talk to every teacher about abuse if you need help – sometimes they make it worse", but also within schools "verbal abuse"). In both of these instances, Teachers are positioned as the social actor responsible for protection, but also the perpetrator. As referenced above, Abuse and Home were often present within the same concordance lines and collocated with human social actor Parent and Police.

Violence appeared at high frequency rates in public comments, less frequently in student workshops, and was absent from the board meeting transcript. Words associated with Violence such as "fights, "threats", "guns", "shooting" or "bombs" appeared in higher numbers than non-human social actor Violence throughout student workshop transcripts and artifacts. Across the data, the presence of these associated words (as well as direct references to social actor Violence)

occurred as collocated with named human social actors such as Thurston, and Kip Kinkle (included above in Table 4.2), as well as human social actor Police.

Table 4.16: Excerpts: "Safe from What": Violence (all data sets)

Violence
[public comments] shot in a school *shooting*
[public comments] My husband lived through the shooting at *Thurston High School*, so for me the thought of **violence** in our schools is
[public comments] *Thurston High School* and was directly involved with the horrific *shooting* that took place at our school
[public comments] our frequent lockouts (meaning there is **violence** near the school)
[public comments] Unfortunately, **violence** on campuses has been on the rise in recent years.
[public comments] Online **violence** is real and the SRO team is who responds
[student workshops] We've had multiple bomb *threats*, and we were like playing soccer and playing chess
[student workshops] it was someone paying someone to *threaten* the school.

Justice System was a non-human social actor that was referenced 19 times in public comments, but not in student workshops or the board meeting (although other terms related to the justice system such as "school to prison pipeline" did occur in school board transcripts). Human social actors Police and Students were often found collocated with Justice system, and the term "justice system" was often used or positioned by individuals that saw the justice system as a threat to students that originated from or through interactions with Police inside and outside of schools.

Describing a Safe School

A need for addressing Student safety was present across all data sets, as was the implication that safety in schools needed to be improved or was at risk. While it can be implied that a safe school would be absent from the social actors (both human and non-human) named as responsible for a lack of safety for Students, further analysis was needed to understand 'what' (non-human social actors) would be present within a school that made a school ***safe*** for Students. For this phase of analysis, the social actors Safe, Student and the word "school" were collocated. These analyses led to a list of words that co-occurred with a "Safe School" and with what students were assumed, or expected, to be able to do because a school environment was Safe. This analysis is further organized according to the spaces/genre these comments were offered (i.e.: public comments, school board hearing, or student workshops) as well as instances where the author of the text (either as naming a role or positionality) was referenced within these genres.

Features of a safe school: Safe

The social actor Safe was collocated with words that described a "safe school". These words are presented in Table 4.16. Words that were identified at the student workshop level, like "respect", "caring", and "welcoming" were then traced across each of the data sets.

Table 4.17 Words collocating with social actor Safe

	Respect/ful	Care(ing)	Comfort/able	Accountable	Environment	Welcome(ing)
Student Workshops	10	8	4	3	3	2
Public Comments	7	11	2	0	45	4
School Board Transcript	2	1	0	1	1	0

What this analysis revealed was that "respect" or "respectful" occurred most frequently in association with safe schools in student workshops (suggesting respect as a central point of emphasis for students). Respect was also present in the school board meeting transcripts, often in association as an action directed to social actor Student (e.g.: "a place where all students feel seen and respected"). Similarly, in student workshops, "respect" was positioned , as a right students held, and that all students would experience inside a safe school. Student workshops also positioned "respect" as something adults associated with policies or compliance, suggesting that 'respect' in this way is seen or associated with curriculum or school building rules in some ways. This is highlighted in the quote in Table 4.17 ("adults define safety as "RESPECT", it's our PBIS). PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. It is a framework used in schools to promote positive behavior and improve overall school climate. PBIS is based on the idea that by explicitly teaching and reinforcing positive behaviors, schools can create a more supportive and effective learning environment for all students (Nese et. al, 2020) Critiques of PBIS include concerns about its overemphasis on behavior modification through rewards and consequences, limited attention to systemic issues such as institutional racism, and the potential for exclusionary practices and overreliance on extrinsic rewards (Beyl, S., 2020; Losen, 2016). Critics also highlight the need for individualized support, deeper understanding of students' needs, and adequate training and implementation to ensure equitable and effective outcomes (Bornstein, 2017).

Table 4.18: Excerpts: Respect(ful) (student workshops)

Respect(ful)
"*safety* in school is providing consistent **respect** and support for every *youth*
If schools were *safe youth*'s cultural/religious backgrounds are **respected**
Adults define *safety* as "**RESPECT**", its our PBIS

Interestingly, PBIS is referenced 3 times in public comments, but collocations of "respect" and Safe occurred only once in public comments and was found in association with something that human social actor Police provided or offered to human social actor Student.

In student workshops, collocations of words "caring", "welcoming" and "comfortable" alongside social actor Safe and descriptions of schools less than Respect, but at similar rates to each other "Care" or "caring" was described both as something provided to students ("*teachers who care"*), as well as something students provided themselves (*"if we felt safer in schools we wouldn't need mental health and other networks to help us take care of ourselves and others"*). In contrast, "care" or "caring" appeared most often in public comments as associated with descriptions of safe schools that included human social actor Police. "Caring" was associated with Safe and as a central feature of school Police (*"they truly care about the children in our schools and not only keep our schools safe but are a vital social service link"*).

"Comfortable" (or "comfort") occurred once as collocated with social actor Safe in public comments, and in 4 instances in student workshops. "Comfort" was associated with words such as "feel", "being" or as experiencing "comfort". "Comfortable" occurred in the same extracted sentences with other words found in Table 4.16, such as "caring", "welcoming" as well as the term "calm". Interestingly, in the one reference to "comfortable" in public comments, the author of the text named and positioned themselves as a former student of Eugene 4J. Which means that all references to "comfort" or "comfortable" as a feature of a safe school came from students.

The term "welcoming" also appeared in both student workshops and public comments. Interestingly, the description "welcoming" was used by students in workshops to describe safe schools as being safe for "everyone" (implying all social actors present in schools).

"Welcoming" also occurred in public comments alongside requests to remove social actor Police (stating that Police presented a threat to "welcome"). This suggests that students (and other educational community members such as those that submitted public comments to the school board) see a core function of a safe school as having adults present in the building who are welcoming, comfortable, and caring towards all students (positioning Police as both a threat to those goals, as well as a social actor responsible for protecting those goals). This is a point of tension further explored in the following chapter (Chapter 5).

In contrast, the frequency of co-occurrences of the word "environment" with Safe and School in public comments appeared more than 4 times than of any other co-occurring features of Safe and School. In these instances, other words or phrases that occurred frequently within these cooccurrences included terms such as 'secure' or "space" and "physical safety". Other instances showed collocations of social actor Safe and Student with the word combination of "learning" and "environment". In student workshops, "environment" was only referenced once in association with safe schools. In this instance ("If schools were safe there would be lots of availability for youth to remove themselves from bad *environments* – there would be good support systems and understanding staff"), the use of the word environment does not make it clear if the student is referring to spaces outside or within the school (or both). Thus, it appears that both public comments and student workshops position a focus of safe schools as associated with the physical space, or cultural/emotional environment of the school (i.e.: secure entrances, safe space). However, students named school safety as connected with protections that must be provided by adults in the schools (as being able to intervene and "remove" students from unsafe spaces or experiences). In this way, students positioned the "environment" as a physical location

both inside and outside of the school, whereas public comments name "environment" as within/part of the school building.

This analysis shows that different social actors present in the text name or prioritize features of a safe school differently. This phase of analysis also shows that while these instances of co-occurrence gesture to places of overlap in terms of what educational community values feel are important in safe schools, it also shows variance in how and where features (such as "comfort", "welcome", and "environment") are defined.

Features of a Safe school: Student

Having discovered the words that co-occurred with a "Safe School", the next phase of analysis moved to expand to see how students were positioned inside "Safe Schools". Specifically, how different texts and authors named what students were assumed, or expected, to be able to do, access, or experience because a school environment was Safe. As seen in Table. 4.18, what this phase of analysis showed was that while there were places of overlap surrounding what students were believed (or assumed) to be able to do (and to have access to) in a safe school, representations and prioritization of those features also differed by texts and by the positionality of educational community members.

Table 4.19: What students should be able to do or access (in safe schools)

texts	Feel	Free(dom)	Learn	Support(s,ed)	Relationships	Services
Student Workshops	23	10	6	4	3	3
Public Comments	11	18	58	203	135	129
School Board Transcript	7	0	2	1	7	3

Across all data sets, it was expected that students should be able to "feel" in a safe school. "Feeling" occurred four times more than other words in student workshops. "Feeling" (as a verb representing what students should be able to do in a safe school) was also referenced frequently in the school board hearing transcript and public comments. "Feeling" also occurred in combination with words uncovered in this phase of analysis (presented in Table 4.18) including, "learn" and "belong"

Additionally, "feel(ing)" was paired with non-human social actor Safe across the data sets (such as "feeling safe", "feel safe") as well as collocated with human social actors Student and Teacher (as those who "feel", or whose "feelings" were critical). In public comments, Student frequently appeared in concordance lines with the term "feeling", and interestingly was often paired with descriptions of specific groups of students as represented by identity located descriptors (*"students of color"*, *"women", "African-American students", "nuero-diverse students", "students with disabilities"* and *"students who have experienced various forms of school violence"*). This was also true in the school board hearing transcript (*"safe for kids that are black", "indigenous kids"* or *"kids of color or LBGT kids or disabilities"*). In student workshops, "feel", and "feeling" occurred more than two times as many as other words or description of expectations. However, this word was only found to co-occur with a reference to any specific identity(s) of students once (which occurred as a reference to "LGBT/POC students").

The frequency of "feel" within collocations with Safe across data sets signifies that feeling safe is something students should be able to experience at school. However, "feel" also occurs in extracted concordance lines with features of "safe schools" referenced earlier

(including “environment”) and expectations of students in safe schools (such as “services” and “supported”). This suggests that emotional well-being is a feature of a safe school and something students would experience.

The second most frequent word associated with safe schools for students was the term “free”. “Free” was found in connection with other social actors Police (human social actor) and Bully (a representation of a human social actor associated with the non-human social actor Bullying), and drugs (non-human actor), such as: Police-free, Bully-free, and Drug-Free. Other word combinations found across both public comments and student workshops infer that safe schools are schools in which students are free from fear, from police, from bullies, from drugs, and from guns. However, in student workshops, free(dom) was found in connection with different word combinations including “freedom of thought” and “freethinkers”. These statements suggest that safe schools are places that “encourage creativity” and “critical thinking”. In one extracted line of collocated text, a student names an expectation that safe schools wouldn’t just teach students to listen, but “to learn to critically think and have freedom of thought”. This framing suggests that “free” is both a physical experience (such as a space or person who is drug free or a school that is gun free) but also a way of learning, an intellectual state or way of thinking.

This phase of analysis also surfaced “learn’ as something students should be expected to be able to do in a safe school. Referenced across each of the three data sets, “learn” occurred frequently within extracted concordance lines and in direct combination with other words referenced in previous sections (such as “environment”), as well as both human and non-human

social actors Student and Safe. Table 4.19 shows several examples of concordance lines associated with the term "learn".

Table 4.20: Extracted text: Safe Schools (Student): Learn (all data sets)

Learn
[public comment] Where *students* of all races, sexuality's and backgrounds come to **learn** feel safe, & develop positive relationships with peers and *teachers*.
[public comment] we stand up for ALL OF OUR *STUDENTS* and provide a *SAFE* ENVIRONMENT for them to interact and **learn**
This is not the **learning** environment *students* should be faced to experience.
[school board] It is of the utmost importance that all of our *students* have a *safe* **learning** environment in which they can thrive and grow.
[students] everyone like **learns** at a different pace
[student workshop] *Adults* would need to believe in acceptance, and consistently **learning** and evolving for the *youth* they serve

We can see from these selections, that "learn" and "learning" are associated as something students do. However, "learn" was also positioned as something that adults would engage in or experience in safe schools (specifically, in service to students). This presents an interesting framing of a "learning environment" in a safe school as applying not only to students.

"Support", "Relationships" and "Services" appeared less frequently in student workshops, but at high frequency counts in public comments. For example, "support" or "supports" occurred only 4 times in student workshops but was found in collocation with social actor Safe and the search term "schools" 203 times (by far the highest count of any of the associated terms represented in Table 4.18). The term "support" was found in combination with "mental health" in public comments, as well as in connection with social actor Teacher in student workshops. "Support" was also associated with actions that support, as well as with social actors "counselors" and "environment" (see Table 4.1). This clustering of words suggests that Students would be expected to have access to spaces, people, and programs that support (and or protect

from) mental health. Further, concordance lines also show a collocation with “funds”, “funding”, which suggest that safe schools dedicate money to student mental health support.

Table 4.21: Extracted text: Safe Schools (Student): Support(s,ed) (all data sets)

Support(s,ed)
[public comments] school *counselors* and other programs that fundamentally **support** students
[public comments] That money should instead be allocated to student **support** and education services
issues better be addressed by emotional and *mental health* s**upport? R**esearch finds the answer is yes
[public comments] We should divert our scarce educational funds from resource *officers* to programs that **support**
the social, emotional, behavioral and *mental health* of our students. Data shows that the presence of school-based
[public comments] Rather than devoting resources to **support** the *mental*, emotional, and educational *health* of
students, *SROs* spend at least half their time on law enforcement
[public comments] workers, guidance *counselors*, and school psychologists, our *students* would have access to long-
term, foundational **support** that would help them *learn*, grow, and heal in a *safer environmen*t. Our *students* do not
need to be punished and scared into
[public comments] HOOTS as well as any other programs that help *students* with *mental health*, their wellbeing, and
having a place to feel **supported** not policed for their "behavior".
[student workshops] not being practical, **support** for *students* is not equal or equitable
[student workshops] if schools were *safe* there would be good **support** systems and understanding *staff*
[student workshops] *Teachers* paid more and **supported** to be an actual **support** for *students*

Interestingly, while the term “support” was found most frequently within public comments that also included an ask to terminate contracts with school-based policing, the term “relationships” was discovered most often in sentences that also included a request to maintain School Resource Officers. Additionally, in these same extracted concordance lines, “relationship’ was found paired often with “positive” (i.e: “positive relationships”). This suggests that in safe schools students should be able to have access relationships with Police, but specifically to “positive relationships” with Police.

Table 4.22: Extracted text: Safe Schools (Student): Relationships (all data sets)

[public comments] in Eugene schools. Not only does it provide *safety* for our *students*, it provides an opportunity for
officers to build **relationships** with *students*, *staff* and the community.
[public comments] Their interaction within the schools serves to BUILD positive **relationships** with the *police*
while also providing protection for our children. The very idea of "defunding" what we've all worked so
[public comments] A friendly *officer* is great and can stop by schools here and there to create positive community
relationships
[public comments] I have watched **relationships** between *SRO*s and *students* develop. I believe this contact and
positive **relationships** with *students* prevent juvenile delinquency and promote positive choices. They are *securing*
football games, dances,

[public comments] helped several *students* and provides an opportunity for a positive healthy **relationship** between *students*, *teachers*, Eugene Police Department, and the community

[public comments] evidence to suggest that positive, welcoming, non-punitive **relationships** with school *staff* have a greater impact on the *safety* of a school than a police presence.

"Services" was another term found often as collocated with Safe and Student across public comments, but less frequently in student workshops and school board transcript. The term "service(s)" was often paired with other words like "supportive" or "mental health" and "counseling" and was positioned as something Students would have access to in safe schools that would keep them safe from "mental health" the social actor. This assumption or positioning of "services" was further emphasized through the pairing of words such as "preventative" or "social" with the search term "services". While a search for the term "services" across the data sets did not occcur frequently, the places within datasets where services was referenced provided some of the most tangible descriptions of what Students would have access to in a safe school. often described as being implemented or offered by staff who were not teachers (such as counselors)

Chapter 4 Summary

This phase of analysis engaged CADS to discover patterns and frequencies of words within and across the three data sets as a foundational entry point for CDA, and to address research question 1: How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) define school safety (safety for whom, safety from what)? Through this analysis, it was discovered that Students (as a human social actor identified within the data sets) needed to be kept safe from a variety of human and non-human threats including identifiable actors such as Teachers and Police, as well as actor-less threats such as People, or "racism", "harassment", "bullying".

Analysis suggested that some educational community members believed that Students needed to be protected from other Students. This was explicitly stated in comments made by community members, and by students in workshops, as represented in Table 4.22. However, most references to threats to Student safety in schools (such as "violence", "bullying", "harassment", or "drugs") were not associated with a specific human social actor.

Table 4.23: Summary: "Safe from What": Threats to Students (all data sets)

Naming other Students as Dangerous
[student workshop] Its not the systems, it's the **kids**
[student workshop] Probably **kids** fighting in the hallway\
[public comment] an SRO was not there to prevent their kid from being sexually assaulted at school by **another student**, or bullied
[public comment] even as "mundane" as OD'ing on drugs they bought from **another student**.
Actor-less Threats to Student Safety
[student workshop] **Racist and hateful symbols** in schools
[public comment] African American students, neuro-diverse students, students with disabilities and students who have experienced various forms of **school violence** such as **fights, arguments, bullying**, or religious teasing, tend to report feeling less safe in schools
[public comment] The **drug problem** schools are currently facing, the **fights** that break out, just your average **break into vehicles** that happen at our schools
[public comment] Who's going to engage students in **drug** education and enforcement? Who will be there to protect students when **evil** walks in to destroy our precious children?

[public comment] We might not have as many **race issues** in Eugene, but we certainly have youthful minds who are derailing because of **drugs and alcohol**. Everyone can see that.
[school board hearing] **sexual assaults** involving our students when they happen off campus outside of school time, and even outside the school year.

It could be implied or assumed that these incidents or threats are perpetuated by other students, as most bullying and anti-drug prevention programs in schools focus on peer-to-peer interactions.

Interestingly, the American Psychological Association (2018) defines bullying as:

a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort. Bullying can take the form of physical contact, words, or more subtle actions

This definition does not name any specific social actor as responsible for the behavior.

Another threat to Students was found in word clusters or combinations or phrases such as "school shooting" and "school violence". However, these descriptions of what make schools unsafe, or what Students need to be protected from in schools also occurred within the text as an actor-less threat. Similarly to the definition of bullying, a search on the characteristics of school shootings in the U.S (Government Accountability Office, 2020) suggests that less than half of school shootings were perpetuated by students (either former, or current). Therefore, key finding in this phase of analysis is that the connection between the 'what' makes schools unsafe, and who is responsible for those actions is often absent or ambiguous.

Utilizing text analysis to build a description of safe schools (according to different educational community members) showed commonalities across texts and authors that placed an emphasis on secure and welcoming physical and emotional places for student learning. Emotional well-being, and access to mental health, staff beyond teachers, and services appeared

across public comments, the school board transcript, and student workshops through the frequency of words and word combinations such as “social services”, “feeling”, “welcoming”, and “environment”. Further, the frequency of collocations of mental health and student safety position mental health as both an actor-less threat to Student (something to be protected from), as well as services that are critical to student learning and student safety It was further identified that access to “learning” and “feeling safe” are things students should have access to in schools. Interestingly, “learning” in student workshops was referred to as something that all social actors in a school (specifically teachers) should have access to for schools to feel safe; something that surfaced as unique to students as educational community members and student workshops as a data set.

Findings from this phase of analysis also brought forward places of ideological tension as surfaced by the text, specifically how and in what ways Police (as a social actor) are named as a threat to student safety as well as critical to the protection of students in schools. The next chapter focuses on how different educational community members utilize language to position Police as safe or unsafe for students. Chapter 5 further analyses how, by whom, and in what ways and spaces discourses of Police in schools unveil ideologies or beliefs about school and community safety. This analysis is foundational to understanding how the association of Police and Safe are normalized and ruptured, thus providing insight into the ways representations of students and safety maintain or challenge the school-prison nexus.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE (PHASE 2)

This chapter presents an examination of the data in response to research question #2: How do educational community members discursively produce police as safe or unsafe in schools? The goal in this phase of analysis was to search for the way different educational community members used language to position police as safe or unsafe in school, and to find connections between their use of language and: a) expectations surrounding methods of interacting, b) societal and individual beliefs about the policing, and c) their positioning or positionality in relation to those they are interacting with (i.e.: other members of the public, board members, researchers)).

For this phase of analysis, I began by running a query across all three data sets for instances where human social actor Police and non-human social actor Safety were collocated. This created a list of 120 instances of extracted text. Interestingly, all 120 instances occurred within public comments. I then ran a query within these lines of text to search for statements from educational community members that positioned police as safe and quotations that positioned police as unsafe in schools. I grouped these selected quotations using the first two quadrants of van Dijk ideological square strategy: Dominant Ideology (which represents prevailing or dominant ideology in the discourse – including perspectives, values, and beliefs that are presented as normative or mainstream) and Oppositional Ideology (which represents the opposing or alternative ideologies to the dominant one – including perspectives that challenge or resist the dominant ideology). For this study (and in service of my research questions), I coded collocated quotations that positioned police as safe as Dominant Ideology (presenting police are safe as a normative or privileged assumption, as determined by the literature) and statements that

positioned police as unsafe as Oppositional Ideology (which counters or resists the belief that policing is safe or the presence of police is normal).

I then conducted an orders of discourse analysis across the quadrants of the ideological square: Police as safe and Police as unsafe. Orders of discourse (as a phase of analysis) follows Fairclough's (1989, 1992, 2016, 2023) and Rogers' (2004, 2006) framework for naming and examining "the semiotic dimension of networks of social practices" (Fairclough, 2016, p. 90), which make visible internal (individual) as well as external (social) reflections and constructions of the social world. This framework analyzes the construction of social words at three different levels: genre, discourse, and style. *Genres* can be thought of as socially recognized ways of interacting within different spaces or individuals. For example, in this study, the most salient genres were public comments, a school board meeting, and adult-researcher facilitated workshops. Through previous participation in these different genres, educational community members likely brought their own expectations, and attempted to match what they considered to be the expectations of the genre, such as stating their positionality as a parent or resident of the Eugene 4J school district when addressing the school board through public comments, or by repeating statements made by other board members in the school board meeting.

Discourses on the other hand, indicate how speakers and writers use language to represent the world as it is, or as they would like it to be. In this study, one prevalent discourse was that schools without the presence of police would be more dangerous. A contrasting discourse was that the institution of policing is imbued with violence, bias, and racism, and therefore relationships between schools and police should be severed because of a belief that schools should be free from these very threats. Unpacking where and how these discourses

appeared, how and why they were shared among different educational community members, as well as tensions within representations was the goal of this phase of analysis.

The final level represented in Fairclough's framework for assessing the orders of discourse is *style*. Style refers to the linguistic features, choices, and patterns that characterize a particular text or discourse. Said another way, styles are ways of enacting individual identities using specific textual elements, such as vocabulary, use of possessive pronouns, and high modality language. In this study, educational community members made different lexical choices to refer to students and/or for police based on the school board decision they were arguing for or against in public comments. For example, a comment that strongly urged the school board NOT to terminate contracts with law enforcement referred to police only as SROs (never using the terms police, officer). Another comment uses the word "children", accompanied by the possessive pronoun "our" when urgently requesting that the school board do "everything they can" to ensure campus safety by maintaining partnerships with the Eugene Police Department.

Fairclough's orders of discourse (genre, discourse, and style) offer critical interpretation of language as always mediated by social and institutional contexts. In turn, an analysis of the orders of discourse illuminates how language is used to normalize or to privilege some meanings or ideologies over others (1999). In this phase of analysis, CDA offers a way to untangle different aspects of language that allow for an exploration of the way policing is normalized, and how language is used (and by whom and in what settings) to notice and to see ruptures in societally normalized assumptions about policing and safety.

To share these findings, this chapter is organized around three central discursive themes that surfaced within and across the data sets. The first section explores how educational

community members position police in schools as safe or unsafe using discursive moves to describe and/or to establish the distinction (or lack of distinction) between School Resource Officers and Police. The second section presents how these representations present different beliefs about the benefits and threats police pose to students, and the third section looks at interpretations and tensions surrounding institutional responsibilities and views of education. I close this chapter by naming core tensions in discourses of policing as presented within this analysis.

School Resource Officers Are Different/No Different than Police

One of the central discursive themes that emerged through the critical analysis of discourses in Phase 2 was the way authors used language to position SROs as either different than other police officers or SROs as an extension of police. The section below highlights different quotes and discursive strategies used by authors to communicate their ideological stances.

"It would be left to another police officer": SROs as different/better than police

The discourse that SROs are different than police officers surfaced only within statements that positioned police as safe, and specifically identified police as critical to school and student safety. In one representative sample of text, a community member writes:

> When a police report needs to be made about a child that is experiencing trauma at home, it is the school resource officers that are there to be with the child. It would be left to another police officer that has no relationship with the school and has not had the opportunity to be trained to deal with the students.

In this comment, the author uses a cause-effect construction as part of a persuasive argument (genre) to share information with board members. As part of this positioning, the author moves between different lexical representations of students (*child and student).* Instead of possessive pronouns (which are used as a common discursive practice across the quotations under analysis), this author uses both the definitive article "the" and the indefinite article "a" when referring to "child", and then the definitive article "the" again when making a lexical shift to the term "student". This utilizes a style of communication that distances the author from both the students and the school resource officers while also positioning them as having expertise or insight into the day-to-day interactions of SROs and students. As opposed to using urgent or

rhetorical language that positions an immediate or specific threat (a stylistic move other authors of public comments utilize, as will be highlighted later), this author uses neutral talk (genre). The author of this text might see public comments as a type of interaction or social space where factual arguments are prioritized or valued by board members.

This quote also demonstrates how word choice and descriptive language are used as stylistic and discursive moves to position SROs as different than other police. For example, the lexical shift or choice to refer to "school resource officers" and then to shift to the term "police officer" (*style*), and then the use of descriptive language to further create a distinction ("another police officer"). This quote serves to illuminate an interesting place of rupture (or maybe more appropriately, a place of overlap) between the first two quadrants of van Dijk ideological square (dominant and oppositional) - positioning SROs as both safe and police in schools as less safe for students. For example, the argument presented by the author relies on a belief or assumption that if the school board votes to remove SRO from schools, students might be less likely to report abuse at home, and in turn schools would fail to protect students. The emphasis on "another police officer" and reference to training distinctive to SROs also suggests that the school board should be motivated to maintain SROs because of a desire not to have less trained and student-centered police officers interact with children (i.e.: students do not feel safe with police).

In another quote, an educational community member (who identifies themselves as an educator in their comment to the board) writes: *"We've also had students do things that we would've been justified to just call the police to come "haul them away", but we've been able to instead call the high school SRO".* This framing (the use of the term "justified", the lexical use of police and "haul them away" used in quotations) communicates to the board that without the

presence of SROs on campus, teachers and staff would be justified in calling the police and to have students hauled away. Discursively, this serves to position SROs as an intermediary capable of intervening or protecting students from the dangers of policing and criminalization. What is interesting in the emergence of this discourse is that the positioning of SROs as different than police (as a persuasive argument) relies on an assumption that the school board wouldn't want untrained police in schools, and that an investment in student safety requires the presence of trained adults to intervene or to prevent police from being called.

"Armed police officer watching them and potentially criminalizing them": SROs are Armed Police in Schools

Relatedly, another discursive theme that emerged in this phase of analysis was used in the positioning of police as unsafe, and specifically the discourse that SROs in schools are a threat to students because they serve as an institutional and ideological extension of policing. Authors of public comments who positioned SROs as unsafe also relied on a cause-effect construction as part of a persuasive argument (*genre*), but instead of referring to SROs or "officers" as distinct from policing, these comments refer to "police officers" (embedding the term "police" as a descriptor with "officer") or "armed officers". For example, one educational community member writes: "*Children in our schools are not made safer by having an armed police officer watching them and potentially criminalizing them".*

In fact, out of the total number of references to "officers" or "police" in quotes that produce police as unsafe, more than half included the pairing of "armed" with the lexical choice of either "officer" or "police". This discursive move suggests that armed police as a threat to students by emphasizing the presence of weapons (*style*). This choice to pair which can serve to

play on board member's own personal/internalized opinions or fears about guns as a strategy to invoke concern for constituents the board has an obligation to protect (*genre*).

Similarly, the use of identifiers or descriptors to convey additional information about human social actors was a discursive strategy used by many of these same educational community members to define and describe students. For example, the use of identity-based descriptors such as "Black students", "students with disabilities", and "children of color" is used only in public comments that position police as unsafe, and suggests that educational community members see a commitment to historically marginalized students and/or equity as core aspect of the board's responsibility (genre).

> Our students of color (and their families) are already experiencing fear, trauma and violence in their interactions with police in the community at large; it is imperative that we at least provide a safe space for them within our walls.

Relatedly, across all extracted quotations only those that positioned police as unsafe referenced race (style). Comments submitted to the board did so by racializing others (i.e.: Black students, "children of color" vs naming themselves as racialized). Given the social and cultural context of the time of public comments (and the circulation and consumption of equity and anti-racism language moved between different sources of media), this movement of the discourse of race as central to conversations about policing across genres might be seen an anticipated phenomenon and one that educational community members may see critical to name in interactions with board members. Naming race served as a central discursive strategy used by those presenting an oppositional ideology of policing. This discursive strategy (style) paired with other discursive strategies (such as intertextuality, and lexical choices used to refer to police assigned to schools as police officers as opposed to SROs) serves to accomplish two aims:

1) create connections between police and racialized discrimination and violence, and

2) to situate police in schools as embedded or inseparable from this system of violence

What is interesting, is that even in anticipation of this movement of the discourse of race and policing across and between genres given the cultural and social climate, the naming of race is absent from comments that defend dominant ideology (positioning police as safe). Roger's (2006, 2008) names how discursive moves (like euphemisms, generic language, or framing issues in terms of individual behavior rather than systemic structures) serves to perpetuate racial inequality by avoiding meaningful discussions about race and its impacts. As such, Roger's emphasizes the need to critically examine how (and which) educational community members engage, evade or minimize the explicit naming of race. Based on this framing and invitation, I went back to analyze all extracted quotes from within the dominant ideology quadrant specifically looking for how race was named or avoided). Out of 43 quotations sorted into the dominant ideology quadrant, only one comment appears to reference race or to name others as racialized: *We can support the Black Lives Matter movement and be allies in our community without taking SROs away.*

As exemplified in this quote, the reference to race is offered within the context or as connected with a social movement ("the Black Lives Matter movement") as opposed to an identity or description associated with oneself or others. The discursive move to evade or to avoid naming race might have been used by educational community members to move discussions of policing and SROs away from discourses of policing that center racialized discrimination and violence (style). It could be seen as a genre move to appear neutral, to center conversations in local events vs national discourses, or to avoid topics that are deemed political

or contentious. However, comments that position SROs as extensions of armed policing (oppositional ideology) rely on the naming of race (*style*) and reference racialized discrimination (*use intertextuality as genre*) as core discursive strategies. The use of intertextuality as a discursive strategy is explored in greater detail within the next section.

Discursive Strategies Used in the Framing of Police as Protection and Police as Threats to Students

As referenced earlier, discursive strategies used in the positioning of police as unsafe relied on the use of language to convey to the school board that a) police pose a threat to specific individuals who hold racialized or marginalized identities, b) policing is a system that is inseparable from racialized violence and harassment and therefore, c) individual police officers (including SROs) present/represent a threat and/or are more likely to engage in racialized violence towards students. Discursive strategies that were used most often by authors to communicate the discourse that policing is unsafe (oppositional ideology of policing) included: Use of intertextuality (*genre*); use of personal storytelling, name dropping & the naming of proximity to schools/positionality (*genre & style*); use of possessive pronouns and lexical choices (*style);* and the use of rhetorical devices (*genre & style*). Interestingly, authors who discursively represented police as safe (reflecting dominant ideology of policing) utilized these same discursive strategies. Therefore, I use these strategies to organize findings from both dominant and oppositional ideologies, spending extra focus on the way rhetorical strategies are used to position a negative and positive evaluation of policing.

Use of intertextuality

Intertextuality (*genre*) was a central discursive strategy that was used heavily by community members to represent these three points and to position an oppositional ideology of policing (police as unsafe). References to "studies" and/or the inclusion of direct links to articles were used in more than 27% of quotations representing oppositional ideology (police as unsafe). In some cases (as represented in the quote below), educational community members reference

evidence: *"...there is evidence that armed police in schools do not make them safer."* In other instances, educational community members reference articles by name and offer links for board members: *"former police officer about how the culture of the police trains them to be toxic and violent: https://medium.com/@OfcrACab/confessions-of-a-former- bastard-cop-bb14d17bc759."*

The use of intertextuality by those communicating oppositional ideology is an interesting finding. The incorporation of external texts as a genre move involves the deliberate incorporation of texts (quotes, references, data) within a discourse. Within this data set, we can see that external texts come from a variety of sources – including media (i.e.: the reference to the medium article), academic research (i.e.: "evidence-based" or "studies", or terms associated with scholarship such as "school to prison pipeline"), or cultural artifacts such as the use of social media hashtags (i.e.: #blacklivesmatter). The use of intertextuality as genre demonstrates how authors of text contribute to the construction of meaning within a discourse by drawing on the meanings, associations, and the contexts provided by external texts. This may be done to add layers of significance, depth, or to find resonances with board members who they believe might be interacting with the same media or external texts.

This use of intertextuality creates echoes between current discourses and external texts and media (Charteris-Black, J, 2004; Van Leeuwen, T., 2008), which educational community members may see as bolstering their position to the school board by providing additional context, authority, or rhetorical effect. For example: "*Student arrests and court referrals of students of color tend to increase, and schools with more students of color have a more militarized police presence, bolstering the school to prison pipeline".* In this quote, the author uses intertextuality to signal to external text in the form of academic research or scholarship.

While the quote does not reference a specific study, the use of terms such as "militarized police presence" and "bolstering the school to prison pipeline" replicates language one might expect to see in academic settings (*genre*). The author of this text might see the use of academic language in a public comment to the school board as conveying a sense of authority of expertise.

Conversely, public comments that positioned police as safe (representative of dominant ideologies of policing) were less likely to engage intertextuality as a discursive strategy. In quotes where a reference was made to external texts or discourses, authors gestured briefly and broadly such as: "these times of unrest", or "*our children and grandchildren are facing a very troublesome time in our Country*" or "*new "threats" that continue to plague our world".* As demonstrated in these three excerpts, authors signal to external discourses, but without the level of detail to know what discourses they are signaling to.

The use of this vague reference to external or social discourses may imply that the authors of the text assume that board members know what they are referencing (i.e.: a belief that board members know what they know, share an identity or an inside understanding, or feel how they feel about national events). It might also be used as a discursive strategy to reference, "unrest", "threats" or "troublesome times" without wanting to name specific topics that authors might see as divisive or contentious (i.e.: race, or possession of guns). Perhaps this suggests an expectation that public comments are effective or appreciated if they stay away from naming divisive or contentious topics. Or perhaps this discursive strategy communicates an internalized belief or expectation on behalf of the author that explicit reference to social events/discourses in public comments (such as incidents of police violence, social unrest after the murder of George

Floyd, or mass shootings in schools or public spaces) might inspire doubt or unease on behalf of board members (which would impact their decision).

Use of storytelling, personalization & positionality

While quotes representative of dominant ideologies about policing (policing as safe) were less likely to use intertextuality, they were far more likely to state their positionality or proximity to schools in the opening lines of their submitted comments (genre). Thirty eight percent of quotes coded as representative of dominant ideology utilized this discursive strategy. These statements include phrases such as: "As a parent", or "I am a teacher", or less directly but referencing positionality or proximity to schools through statements like "my daughter", or "both my children attend 4J schools", or "in my classroom".

The naming of oneself in proximity to schools was a discursive strategy used by authors across public comments (including those who represented dominant ideologies about policing and those who represented oppositional ideologies about policing). The use of formal structures of speech (such as "To whom it may concern", "Dear Board Members", or "I am writing this evening to ask and implore you") were used across public statements. This suggests that even if the discourses or positions circulated by authors differed, there was a consistent structure in the ways authors utilized language to interact with those seen as holding positions of power, or in communicating a stance on a social issue (*genre*).

Personal storytelling often accompanied or followed formal addresses and a stating of positionality or proximity to schools in statements made by those who positioned police as safe and those who positioned police as unsafe. While personal storytelling was more likely to be used by educational community members who wrote to board members to advocate for the

continuation of the SRO program, storytelling was also a discursive strategy used by educational community members who positioned police (and therefore SROs) as unsafe and advocated for the removal of the program. Interestingly, personal storytelling was a discursive strategy used most often by educational community members opposing relationships between police and schools who identified themselves as a student or former student. This includes the only quote within this phase of analysis that did not come from a public comment, but from the transcript of a student workshop. In this quote, the student offers the following story to describe how police in schools did not make her feel safe in response to a question posed in the student workshop around what safety does or does not look like in schools:

> So like my school, they have like assigned cops for our campus, but they didn't really like get on campus that much. And so whenever I would pass by a couple of cops I'd be like, "Oh, something is going on. I'm going to stay away from them".

This quote, the student combines personal experience as a student in schools, with experiences with police in schools, in the form of a story that moves between internal dialogue and external observations. In another example of storytelling as a discursive strategy used by students in public comments to the board, a student writes:

> When I was a high school student in 2017, I saw firsthand the consequences of having funding allocated to police officers instead of school counselors. No one felt safe when the officers were in our hallways, and we didn't know their names or their stories. All I saw as a high schooler was someone with a gun in a place where I was supposed to be safe. However, everyone knew our counselor's names and faces.

In this quote, student relies on personal narrative and proximity to schools as a student to hold meaning and significance to board members (invoking power dynamics as a representative of the population/geographic region the school board is responsible in serving). Additionally, the

reference to the year places the student's experience as recent (which they may view as more relevant), and the use of storytelling bolsters the request presented to the board: That funding for SROs be replaced with funding for counselors.

The prevalent use of storytelling as a discursive strategy combined with a naming of positionality/proximity to schools used by students and other educational community members across public comments indicates a socialized beliefs or normalized assumption that: a) narrative and personal connections to schools are compelling for board members, and b) that narrative and personal statements offered by those in close proximity to schools (students, police, and students) hold high value in decision making processes at the board level.

Interestingly, the presence of storytelling as a discursive move associated with dominant ideologies often occurred alongside another stylistic move which was to name officers by name, or to cite a personal relationship or familiarity with individual officers. For example, in one public comment submitted by an educational community member who identified as an administrator the author writes: "*On a personal level, Officer Savage has helped me multiple times in many capacities.*" In another public comment, an educational community member states *"I personally know each and every one of them and am proud that the work that they do every single day*". Both statements use language to position familiarity or expertise ("*on a personal level"* or "*I personally know*").

From a genre framing perspective, the invoking of a personal connection to SROs emphasized by the use of specific names of officers ("Officer Savage"), or by claiming personal relationships ("I know each of them personally") appears to serve three purposes: 1) humanizes SROs as individuals, 2) generalizes goodness of SROs based on personal experiences with

individuals, and 3) serves to distance (or to locate) Eugene 4J School Resource Officers and Eugene Police as distinct from national conversations about police violence. I demonstrate where and how these different functions appear in public comments using several quotes from educational community members:

Discursive Function: Humanizing SROs as Individuals

As an example of the ways educational community members use the names of officers to humanize SROs as individuals, a selected quote from one public comment shares: "*Sgt, Ryan Nelson, is the best person to lead this group and it would be a complete disservice to the community and our children to disband his team".* In this quote, we see the use of a first and last name (as well as title – "*Sgt*"), which serves to humanize this specific officer while also referencing training/power via the inclusion of rank ("*Sgt*" and use of the possessive descriptor "his" before "team").

Discursive Function: Generalizing Goodness based on Personal Experience

In another set of quotes, educational community members emphasize personal experiences and expertise to vouch for the goodness of police: *"I know them all personally and cannot speak highly enough of them as honorable men and outstanding citizens of our community."/"I personally know each and every one of them and am proud that the work that they do every single day."* These quotes rely on the belief that the sharing of a personal endorsement of SROs would be valued by board members (conveying a sense of expertise). The use of phrases such as "*I know them all personally"/ "I personally know each and every one of them*" in these quotes, coupled with descriptors such as "honorable", "outstanding", and "proud" position a positive evaluation of policing through persuasive framing.

Discursive Function: Distances Local SROs from National Discourses of Police Violence

In another section of quotes, educational community members rely on personal storytelling, naming officers, and the use of personal experience/expertise to position SROs in Eugene as different than officers represented in national discourses of police violence. In one quote, an educational community member (who does not state positionality or proximity to schools) states: "*Officer Wolgemott and Officer Savage have both been or are currently coaching youth sports in their regions. Again, they have relationships with students that go beyond what is being represented in other parts of our country".* In this statement, the author relies on several layers of assumptions about board members understandings and references to external texts including: 1) that board members agree coaching youth sports is an admirable trait, 2) that board members would be familiar with discourses about police "in other parts of our country", and 3) that the representations of officers in these national discourses are negative.

Interestingly, educational community members who voice opposition to police in schools (a framing of police as unsafe), also relied on several of the same discursive moves, specifically naming in personal experiences, connections, and individual names of officers (style). However, these educational community members utilized these stylistic moves to position SROs as representative (or participants) of a history of violence, racism and bias endemic to policing in the U.S. For example, in one public comment an educational community member writes:

> In 2013, Stefan Nicholas Zeltvay of the EPD, who had been stationed at South Eugene High School as a resource officer for ten years, was convicted of sexually harassing three female coworkers at the Eugene Police Department.

In this comment, the author names a specific officer (Stefan Nicholas Zeltvay) not to offer personal familiarity but to personify (and localize) national discourses of policing (*style*). In

this selected quote Stefan Nicolas Zeltvay is referenced as both a resource officer "stationed at South Eugene High School" as well as "of the EPD" (Eugene Police Department). This discursively serves to refuse a separation between police and SROs, but also to imply or suggest connections between Zeltvay's conviction of sexual harassment towards co-workers and the threat he posed to students. Additionally, this author use of a localized example (personified by the naming of an individual) signals an invocation of power by alluding to a threat they (as a decision-making agency responsible for partnerships with EPD) were responsible for placing into schools.

The use of the term "convicted" in this quote also signals to external texts in the form of intertextuality to systems (i.e.: court) and a documented legal decision as opposed to a suspicion or personal story. The author may have selected to use this framing because they believed that their recommendation to the board to remove police from schools would be bolstered by a reference to legal documentation in the form of a conviction by a court of law. The naming of the individual here (style) also creates the opportunity and invites the possibility that board members could engage in further research (the use of first and last names, reference to location of employment, and the use of the legal terms "convicted of sexually harassing" provide breadcrumbs for). This seems to be both a genre move (assumptions about ways of interacting, or ways individuals may interact with text) as well as a style move with Fairclough's orders of discourse.

Use of Possessive Pronouns & Lexical Choices

The goal of personification achieved by naming individuals and personal storytelling was a discursive strategy used by authors representing both dominant and oppositional ideologies.

Similarly, the use of possessive pronouns as a stylistic move within discourses of school policing was used by authors who positioned police as unsafe and those who positioned policing as safe. Analyzing the use of possessive pronouns helps consider how authors construct ownership, identity, power dynamics, intimacy, and persuasion in public comments. For example, in one public comment that argues for the removal of SROS, the author writes: "*We do not need armed officers in our schools".* In this comment, the use of the possessive pronoun "our" might signal that the author is emphasizing a shared responsibility ("our schools"), which could suggest that the author has learned or been socialized to see as invoking responsibility as an effective means of persuasion. Alternatively, the use of "our" could indicate power and agency. "Our schools" as a positioning of who the board serves, and a reminder that educational community members have a voice and power within school spaces.

This is a discursive strategy used by others positioned within dominant ideologies and discourses of policing as safe. For example, in another quote an educational community member writes: *"In developing positive interactions and trust with first responders we are supporting the safety of our community in the future".* In this quote, the author engages the use of possessive pronoun "our" but does so to invoke a broader responsibility (not just "our schools" but "our community"). This positions the board's role not only in relationship to schools, but to the entire community.

Ownership and power dynamics are invoked in other ways through the pairing of positionality ("as a parent") and the use of possessive pronouns "my" and "our", and "yours". For example, a parent of Eugene 4J students addresses the board through the following public comment:

> Removing funding and their presence in the schools leaves our children without a layer of protection and an ally of support when needed during the hours they are out of our care and in yours. I want my children to feel protected and safe when arriving at school.

In this quote, this educational community member utilizes possessive pronouns to signal their positionality as a parent (*"my children")* and to invoke a shared sense of responsibility with the board while simultaneously leveraging power as a key constituent ("out of our care and in yours"). The use of possessive pronouns as a stylistic move in this way also connects to how and in what ways authors engage and interact with the board through public comments (*genre*). This comment represents the way ownership (signaled by possessive pronouns) was used by educational community members across public comments to invoke power over the board.

Another example (from an educational community member that positions police as unsafe), shows how possessive pronouns ("*our children*") are used to convey ownership and to persuade board members by referencing power/service relationships. This author writes "*Instead of paying EPD to police our children, we should be investing in programs that will actually promote their well-being and growth".* Similarly, the use of the term "their" in reference to students highlights a syntactic function that occurs alongside possessive pronouns and different lexical representations of students and police. Here, "their" serves as a possessive determiner, modifying a noun (children, "our children") to indicate possession of and therefore responsibility within and for a group of people (i.e: wellbeing & growth as experiences of students that board members as responsible for providing). Similarly, educational community members who positioned policing and school partnership as a benefit to students were more likely to refer to SRO's as 'our SRO's" or "these officers" (*"These officers are dedicated and caring to support and protect our children"*).

In public comments that advocate for the continuation of school police partnerships, the choice to use the term SRO (as opposed to police, or cops for example) in combination with the verb "protect" and use of possessive pronouns and lexical representation of students as children (for example: "my children", "our children") conveys an innocence and vulnerability. In contrast, comments that advocated for the removal of police from schools were more likely to favor the term "police" instead of "SRO" (as referenced earlier), as well as to use the term student without the addition or placement of possessive pronouns (i.e.: "all students", "students of color"). The use of these lexical choices associated with student seems to imply a desire on behalf the authors to invoke a sense of responsibility and/or to remind the board that a central focus of their decision making should be to prioritize educational access and to center their commitment to equity. These choices (combined with naming proximity and/or positionality in systems of education) reflect a normalized/socialized expectation that elected board members are beholden to the requests and expertise of their constituents.

Similarly, the prevalence of the term "student" in public comments that advocate for the removal of SROs (or the positioning of police as unsafe) establish a different shaping of meaning or construction of identity. These lexical choices (such as an intentional reference to SROs as officers, or the use of the term children instead of students) play a crucial role in the shaping of meaning, power dynamics, identity construction, and stylistic features of discourse (Fairclough, 1998, 2003). As a central finding in this phase of analysis, the patterns and combination of possessive pronouns, possessive determiners, and lexical representations of students and police is explored in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Use of rhetorical devices

Rhetorical devices are analyzed within CDA to uncover how language is used strategically to shape discourse, construct meaning, and influence the attitudes and behaviors of the audience (Charteris-Black, 2018). Broadly, rhetorical devices refer to linguistic or discursive strategies employed by speakers or writers to achieve specific persuasive or communicative goals. These devices are used to shape the interpretation and reception of discourse, often by influencing emotions, attitudes, or beliefs of the audience (Fairclough, 2003). In this phase of analysis, rhetorical devices are a central discursive strategy utilized by authors across both quadrants of dominant and oppositional ideology. In this section I focus on how rhetorical devices function across both genre and style to communicate power relations, to emphasize the frequency or magnitude of something, to claim authority, and to persuade action by positioning either a negative or positive evaluation of a specific social actor (police).

Communicating Power Relations: Politeness conventions and the use of formal language (as opposed to academic language) within the genre of public comments suggests that educational community members believe that the way a request or demand is presented to the school board matters. For example, some public comments use phrases such as "I demand" to invoke a sense of power over the actions and decisions of board members. In other comments, educational community members use softer phrases offered as a recommendation or a request such as: "I encourage the board to consider". These two phrases offer different examples of how rhetorical devices are used by authors within public comments to shape the communication and reception of discourses of policing (*genre*).

Emphasizing frequency or magnitude: Other examples of rhetorical devices used by educational community members within the genre of public comments include the use of phrases

such as “I cannot begin to count the number of times”, or universal statements such as “no one” or “everyone”. The use of the phrase “I cannot even begin to count the number of times” relies on hyperbole (a rhetorical device characterized by exaggeration) to emphasize the frequency or the impact of an event. In this instance, the author uses this rhetorical device (hyperbole) to communicate the effectiveness and positive impact of SROs in schools to board members and others that might engage with their statement. Through the statement (“I cannot not even begin to count the number of times") this educational community member uses language to convey the idea that the event (positive interactions with SROs and students) has occurred so frequently that it is beyond enumeration. Additionally, this phraseology evokes a sense of frustration, exasperation, or incredulity on the part of the speaker, which emphasizes the event's significance or impact. Phrases like “I cannot even begin to count the number of times” utilize a style of discourse that relies on personal narrative (as explored earlier) but incorporates emphasis and intensity in order to leave a vivid and memorable impression for the audience (board members). Further, the use of hyperbole positions the author as having experienced a significant (even overwhelming) number of occurrences of the event while remaining concise (perhaps a requirement of a word or time limit associated with public comments).

Claiming Authority/Universal Experiences: Similarly, the use of universal statements of claims (i.e.: “everyone” or “always”) appeared in several quotes aligned with oppositional ideology of policing. Interestingly, this use of universal statements appeared most often in comments submitted by students or former students. For example (returning to an extract from a public comment submitted by a former student):

No one felt safe when the officers were in our hallways, and we didn't know their names or their stories. All I saw as a high schooler was someone with a gun in a place where I was supposed to be safe. However, everyone knew our counselor's names and faces.

Orders of discourse as a method of analysis seeks to name how language constructs social reality and power relations. Therefore, analysis of this quote highlights the way this author positions authority on the topic of SROs and police contracts by positioning their experience as a student. The author uses universal statements ("no one" and "everyone") to construct their experience as universal or generalizable to all students (positioning their experience with police and counselors in schools as a norm or the default).

Persuasive Evaluation: One of the most utilized discursive strategies used in public comments was the use of rhetorical devices to represent policing and police as either positive or negative (discourse). Rhetorical questions are questions posed by speakers or writers not for the purpose of soliciting information or eliciting a direct response, but rather to make a point, assert a claim, or engage the audience in a form of rhetorical dialogue. Unlike interrogative questions, rhetorical questions are intended to convey a message or prompt reflection rather than to seek an answer (Fairclough, 2003; Rogers, 2008; van Dijk, 2017).

Rhetorical questions occur as a discursive strategy used by those who position policing as safe (dominant ideology) and policing as unsafe (oppositional ideology). In one example, an educational community member closes their public comment with a question to the board: *"What does that say about how Black students feel with armed officers in their schools?".*

In another example, an educational community member who advocates for the continuation of the SRO program does so by stacking a series of rhetorical questions together in a statement to the board:

> Kids need to know they are safe in school and the resource officers are trained to do just that. With school shootings on the rise, who will be around to protect them? With bullying on the rise, who will be around to protect them?

In this example, the author does not offer an answer – but instead uses rhetorical questions to provoke thought or to emphasize their point that police in schools results in greater safety for students. Another example of rhetorical questions as a strategy in the positive evaluation of SROs, an educational community member combines the placement of questions with immediate answers. For example: *"Why did our SRO's attend? Because they CARE about our students".* Or, as represented in another quote:

> Who brought your staff ALICE Training? The SRO. Who is there at a moment's notice when the 8 year old is kicking his teacher and the teacher is not allowed to try and restrain the child? The SRO. Who is there when your 14 year old daughter needs somebody to talk to about a possible sex abuse? The SRO.

In these two examples, the use of rhetorical questions serves as a rhetorical device to engage the board as a central audience (provoking thought, emphasizing the positive evaluation of policing), while the delivery of a subsequent answer serves as an additional strategy to reinforce their intended message. While rhetorical questions are used by educational community members on both sides of conversations about school policing, the combination of questions and the move to provide an answer occurred only within public comments that sought to guide the board towards a particular conclusion or viewpoint that SROs in schools offer critical protection to students and staff.

Further, public comments that urged the board to maintain a contract with local law enforcement to provide SROs in school buildings relied on the following discourses of school policing: 1) Without police in schools there will be violence/dangerous consequences; 2) Students' behavioral needs are more than teachers/staff can handle; 3) Relationships with SROs offer positive and critical supports for students and teachers; 4) Having police in schools help staff and parents feel that their children/students will be more protected from known and unknown threats; 5) Police are the only effective deterrent to threats in schools (drugs/bullying/outside threats); and 6) Without SROs students are more likely to experience police who are untrained in working with young people (and therefore more likely to experience negative consequences).

Those authors that positioned policing as unsafe (and requested that the school board eliminate relationships and funding of SROs) relied on fewer discourses and tended to center one primary discourse: That individual police officers (including SROs) are part of a system of policing that is imbued with ideologies of anti-Black racism and discrimination. Secondary discourses that relied on this representation of policing included: 1) A discourse/representation of students (and specifically students of color) as experiencing negative associations with police, which in turn impacts their ability to feel safe in their presence, and 2) a representation of learning as negatively impacted by fear/a lack of safety, and 3) a representation of learning as a central responsibility and outcome of the system of schooling and therefore a focus of the school board. A further analysis of these discourses reveals how authors use language to represent and to position different beliefs about the responsibilities and institutional accountability of schools and the school board.

Representations of Institutional Accountability and Responsibility

An analysis of discourses of policing brought forward different (and often competing) beliefs about the responsibilities of board members, and vision of public education. Broadly, discourses that were found across both quadrants of the ideological square (dominant and oppositional) represented assumptions that schools are spaces where students should be safe. Additionally, community members across both ideological domains of policing offered discourses and representations of schooling as more than the learning of academic content. These discourses position the role and responsibility of school board members as accountable to these education representations and beholden to teachers, parents, and students in their decisions. The next section explores these representations of institutional obligations and accountability in greater detail.

School are places where students should be safe

Educational community members across both dominant and oppositional ideologies of policing described a central role of education as protecting students and prioritizing their safety. However, the definitions of what students need to be protected from (representation of threats), and the roles of schools in how to provide that protection differed greatly between the different ideologies of policing. For example, in public comments that positioned police as safe, educational community members position one of the primary responsibilities of schools as investing in student safety through the continuation of the SRO program. These comments urged school board members to maintain the partnership with EPD and represented schools as less safe without the presence of SROs. In one public comment, a teacher writes: *"Removing our SRO's will put our kids at risk, and leave them vulnerable to violence"*.

In another public comment offered by a teacher (representative of oppositional ideologies about policing), they write: "There are measures that can be taken in schools to create a safe environment besides a police presence. In fact, research has been conducted that suggests that a police presence in school does more harm than good". There are discursive moves at work in both statements. For example, a reference to external text via research in the teacher's comment aligned with oppositional ideology and the use of sensationalized and highly committed language in the comment aligned with dominant ideology about policing. Yet, both comments rely on the representation of safety as a student right, and positioning language to represent the school board as responsible for protecting this right. Further, discourses across both ideological orientations implied the institution of public schooling (and in turn the school board) as beholden to listening to the expertise and requests of parents and teachers in decisions about student safety.

To do so, some of the public comments that positioned policing as unsafe relied on a representation of school policing as a financial and ideological investment of the school board that threatened student safety. These comments were more likely to represent or to refer to funding (i.e.: *"Police officers in schools constantly is completely unnecessary and a waste of resources that could be used towards programs that actually help students*"). These comments positioned the presence of SROs as an investment on behalf of the school board that would be pulling away from investments in other services or supports for students (*"The annual expense of providing police officers in schools is too large and should be reallocated to services such as CAHOOTS, White Bird, or school counselors"*).

Public comments that represent police as unsafe named officers as a threat to student safety (see Chapter 1). In these comments, educational community members frame a central

responsibility of schools and the school board as acknowledging and protecting students from systemic racism and discrimination. Comments do this through a variety of different discursive strategies, namely: intertextuality (signaling to outside studies/research), use of personal narrative, and cause-effect construction.

Interestingly, comments across both ideological squares (dominant and oppositional) emphasized relationships with adults as an integral need for and investment in student safety. Public comments that advocate for the continuation of the SRO program and partnership with Eugene Police Department do so by representing relationships with police in schools as a core strategy of protecting students from abuse at home. For example: "*When a police report needs to be made about a child that is experiencing trauma at home, it is the school resource officers that are there to be with the child".* Comments also named relationships with SROs as central to providing protection for threats that occur in school buildings ("*I take great comfort knowing that if we have any security issues, we have our officer on standby and close by, ready to help us").*

Similarly, the assumption or suggestion that safety is not something all students get to experience was referenced by educational community members who positioned police as safe as well as those who positioned police as unsafe. These comments suggest that the presence of police inside schools signals to marginalized students that educational spaces are not designed or safe for them (as these students are more likely to experience negative interactions or encounters with police). As one educational community member writes: "*Our students of color (and their families) are already experiencing fear, trauma and violence in their interactions with police in*

the community at large; it is imperative that we at least provide a safe space for them within our walls"

Another public comment attests: "Student arrests and court referrals of students of color tend to increase, and schools with more students of color have a more militarized police presence, bolstering the school to prison pipeline".

In contrast, those educational community members who argue for the continued and expanded presence of police in schools suggest that schools without police are less safe, and therefore do not offer students the same protection as schools with access to SROs). In one comment, a parent represents this belief by stating that as a family they have decided to keep their child in a school who has committed to maintain the presence of SROs (*"I have decided to keep my sophomore in Springfield after verifying that Springfield will maintain their SRO program").* In another comment, an educational community member combines personal narrative (genre), and reference to incidents/events (genre/style) to position a discourse of schools without police as "helpless" (*"Experiencing the Thurston shooting first hand, I am sickened that my own kids will potentially attend a school as helpless as ours was, without a designated officer specially trained to educate, deescalate, protect, and work alongside our teachers, students and families")*

Representations of the goals of schools/schooling

Another area of discursive overlap between different ideologies of police was surrounding the view of schools (and education) as obligated to provide more than academic content. For those educational community members that positioned police as unsafe, comments relied on discourses that schools should be free of violence and discrimination, and that schools

and educational settings had an obligation to protect students from the realities of the outside world while demonstrating how to transform unequitable social conditions. In a representative quote, an educational community member calls on the board to divest from the Eugene PD, and to instead "commit to being on the right side of history". This quote closes with "#blacklivesmatter". In another comment, an educational community member makes a similar move reference to social theory or social movements as a source of motivation for the board. They write: "As a society we've invested way too much in thinking uniformed police officers are the answer to every social problem--be it school safety, drug addiction, homelessness, or social "unrest" in general." Instead, they offer, we should divest from policing and put resources toward preventing these problems, which includes the investment in mental health and racial equity in schools.

One of the most salient findings that emerged from this phase of analysis, was the prevalence of a discourse that schools have a responsibility to expose students to positive interactions with and representations of police. This discourse occurred only within comments representing dominant ideology (police as safe) but was a consistent point of reference (present in more than 48% of dominant ideology quotations). This includes comments submitted to the school board from various positions or roles within the educational system (including teachers, parents, and former students). In one comment, a teacher positions SROs as a critical "bridge" to building "better relationships between police and the community". Another teacher writes: "Just as crucially, developing trust and respect for law enforcement at a young age leads to more responsible and civic minded adults later. In developing positive interactions and trust with first responders we are supporting the safety of our community in the future". This discourse relies on

a belief that exposing and training students how to engage with first responders and police is an investment in community safety, and in turn a central function of the institution of schools.

Another comment engages discourse to represent that "dropping a program that exposes children to very dedicated Police Officers...would set us back for all of the positive things accomplished over the past fifty years". While it is not clear from this quote what the author is gesturing to with the use of the phrase "positive things" it can be assumed that the author believes that the current placement of SROs and therefore what is in place in schools is working and of benefit to students and communities. Similarly, another quote from a community member expressed a hope that the school board would play a role in ensuring that "our families and students believe in the positive motives of those that chose to specifically serve and protect our children instead of the community as a whole". This comment uses discourse to communicate an expectation that a key function of schools (and therefore the school board) is to maintain a positive public image of police.

Chapter 5 Summary:

This chapter utilizes Fairclough's and Rogers' framework for analyzing discourses of policing across the three data sets included in this study (public comments, board meeting transcripts, and student workshops). In this phase of analysis (Phase 2), I engage orders of discourse to illuminate how different educational community members (students, parents, and teachers) use discursive strategies to position police as safe or unsafe. Findings from this phase of analysis revealed a spectrum of discourses and discursive strategies. Those who advocate for the indispensability of police in school safety articulate their stance by emphasizing that the presence of police allowed for critical intervention needed on school campuses. Their discourses underscore the need for reactive and responsive measures, particularly in addressing known or potential threats within the educational setting. This perspective aligns with a dominant ideology of policing as a necessary mechanism for maintaining order and security.

Conversely, individuals who view police presence as unsafe did so by positioning police in schools as counterproductive to educational and community safety goals and did so by adopting a contextual and visionary approach for education and institutional accountability. These educational community members drew attention to the complex history of policing, highlighting its historic role in surveillance and the criminalization of marginalized communities. This discourse conveys a sense of responsibility within the education system to challenge and reform societal structures, advocating for preventative measures and systemic change.

Discursive strategies that appeared across both ideological representations of policing included the use of intertextuality, personal narrative, and descriptive and high commitment language. Intertextuality played a significant role in shaping these discourses, with references to

academic articles proposing alternatives to traditional policing models and advocating for the reallocation of funds towards violence prevention programs. Other educational community members used intertextuality differently, referring to specific incidents of school violence (i.e. Thurston) as well as police-related tragedies.

Those who positioned police as unsafe in schools referenced recent and historical incidents of police violence (particularly against Black or People of Color) to illustrate cause-effect between police presence and violence or discrimination against students of color in educational settings. Similarly, educational community members representing both dominant and oppositional ideologies of policing employed personal storytelling to assert their authority and expertise within the conversation on SROS, as well as descriptive and high-commitment language. While discourses portraying police as unsafe tended to utilize academic and neutral language, those positioning police as essential to safety often employed personal anecdotes and individual officers' names to reinforce their authority or expertise on the topic of school policing.

Overall, this chapter illuminates the complexities of discourses surrounding policing and safety in educational communities, highlighting the way rhetorical strategies and discourses are positioned to center authority and to advocate for or against the presence of police within school environments.

CHAPTER 6: DISCOURSE PATTERNS IN THE REPRESENTATION OF STUDENTS (PHASE 3)

Chapter 6 presents an examination of the lexical representations of St~~t~~udent used within and across each of the data sets, as well as the mapping of discourses about students across different contexts or topics to respond to research question #3: What do discourses of school policing show us about the ways students are positioned as dangerous (and by whom), which students are positioned as dangerous, and who must be protected and from what within schools?

This chapter shares the findings from Phase 3, which returns to key findings from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 to investigate the networking of discourse strategies and patterns used to represent students within and across the data sets in this study. Working between the previous two levels of analyses, Phase 3 uses orders of discourse (Fairclough, 2003; Rogers, 2008) to investigate the networking of discourse patterns across documents to illuminate how students are discursively represented across two social and cultural domains that serve as the primary context of this research study: 1) Representations of school safety, and 2) Policing as safe or unsafe in schools.

This chapter is divided into two sections organized by these two phases of analysis: 1) Lexical Choices & Discursive Strategies used to Represent Students Across Domains, and 2) Clusters of Discourses About Students. In the first section, I present a summary of the different lexical choices and discursive moves educational community members use to refer to social actor Student within each data set. These findings present a) what lexical choices were used and within which data series, b) how often different lexical representations of students occurred (and in what genre or setting), as well as c) what discursive strategies were used (genre, discourse, style)

and by whom (educational community members) within and across conversations about school safety and school policing (domains). The second section of this chapter presents four core clusters of discourses about students which surfaced from these findings.

Students As: Lexical Choices & Discursive Strategies Used to Represent Student Across Domains

This section presents an overview of the different lexical choices and discursive strategies used by educational community members to position or represent students within conversations about school safety and school policing. In the context of CDA lexical choices refer to the deliberate selection and use of words or phrases within discourse to convey specific meanings, perspectives, and ideologies. Lexical choices are not arbitrary but are shaped by social, cultural, and political factors, reflecting and perpetuating power relations, social structures, and ideologies. As referenced in Chapter 4, lexical word choices (and the use of these word choices by different educational community partners, and within different genre settings) suggest that the use of different terms associated with Student is used to invoke or to reflect different beliefs about young people, expectations of schools, and power. I examined lexical choices through two phases of analysis. The first phase looked at the presence and frequency of different words used to represent students within and across data sets. The second phase of analysis used this query of terms to go back through the findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 to locate where and how different discursive representations and strategies were used (and by whom) across domains. These 2 phases used within are described below.

Phase 1: Lexical Choices By Data Sets: For this phase of analysis, I returned to the human social actor queries from Level 1 to examine the presence and frequency (or rates of occurrence) of the different lexical choices associated with human social actor Student across the three data sets. This phase of analysis generated a list of five terms consistently found within the

data series: Child/Children, Kid, Student(s), and Youth. Frequency rates of these terms as organized by data sets can be found in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Lexical Choices Used to Represent Student Across Data Sets

	Public Comments	**Board Meeting**	**Student Workshops**	**Totals**
Total # of References to Social Actor	2120	55	135	2310
Lexical Choices				
Child(s)/Children	537	2	9	549
Kid	241	2	24	281
Student(s)('s)	1259	46	81	1386
Youth	83	5	21	109

Perhaps not surprisingly given the context of the study, "student" was the lexical choice used most often by educational community members across all three data sets. The use of the term "children" occurred frequently in public comments (13% of all references to students) but was used less by board members or students in workshops (found in only 1% of references to Student by board members, and 4% across all references in student workshops). Interestingly, "kid" was used across data sets at similar rates, and "youth" was more likely to be used by students in workshops than in other dataset (or genres).

Phase 2: Lexical Choices & Discursive Strategies by Domain: Having generated this count of lexical choices used to represent Student across data-sets, I then ran a keyword search for each of these terms across the query results from Level 1 and Level 2 to select and then extract lines of text found in relationship to each of these lexical representations of students across conversations about school safety and policing. This query generated a list of 236 lines of

text, which I then sorted by data type (i.e.: public comments, board meeting transcripts, or student workshops) and analyzed using Fairclough's orders of discourse.

The following sections present an overview of findings organized by each of the three data sets in this study. These findings present a summary of the lexical representations of students and the primary discursive strategies employed by different educational community members within these representations.

Public Comments

As congruent with findings from Chapter 5, authors of public comments were more likely to use personal narratives, storytelling, high commitment and persuasive language, as well as to state their role or identity in connection to schools/students/geographic area (i.e.: parent of a student, teacher, student or former student, Eugene resident) across both domains. As previously mentioned, this signals socialized expectations (either explicitly named, or learned through experience/media) of how to operate in board spaces or to provide public testimony. However, when I brought this analysis together with a scan of lexical choices associated with Student, results showed that educational community members used different discursive strategies based on the different lexical choices used to refer to young people in schools. The sections below share examples and highlights from this finding.

As Child or Children

For example, the use of the term "child" accompanied by the presence of possessive pronouns (*style*) were most often used by educational community members positioning students as vulnerable and in need of protection (*discourse*). This was true for educational community members who positioned police as safe and educational community members who positioned

police as unsafe (see Table 6.2). The use of the term "child/children" in combination with possessive pronouns "our" (*style*) occurred most often in public comments submitted by educational community members (namely parents) as a discursive strategy to invoke innocence (and therefore the burden of responsibility on behalf of the board) as a persuasive technique to maintain SROs.

Table 6.2: Example of Lexical Representation of Student as Child/Children in Public Comments

Possessive Pronouns (Style)
"Having a person onsite who is equipped and trained to run into the face of danger allows our teachers, counselors and other staff to focus on evacuating & otherwise protecting **our children**"
"Who will be there to protect students when evil walks in to destroy **our precious children**?"
"If you sever ties with EPD and cut any SROs in Eugene, I will not feel safe sending my babies to your schools. I will immediately withdraw **my child** from your district"
"**My child** feels afraid when they see a uniformed police officer in the halls or on campus"

Several educational community members who submitted public comments used "child/children" when revoicing (*genre*) or revisiting their own experiences as students in schools (*style*) to advocate either for or against the removal of school policing.

Table 6.3: Examples of Revoicing: Student as Child/Children in Public Comments

"Growing up **as a child** with ADHD, I was always getting into accidental trouble due to impulsive behavior that I had not yet learned to control"
"While I never feared a school shooting **as a child**, my kids have grown up with it being a reality"

Similarly, the use of rhetorical questions (*genre*/*style*) was found associated with the presence of the term "child/children" across domains. This discursive strategy was used by educational community members (specifically parents and teachers) as a persuasive argument for the continuation of the SRO program, as well as the removal of police from schools (naming police as a threat to student safety).

Table 6.4: Use of Rhetorical Questions (style) in Representations of Student as Child/Children

[Public Comments]
"Who is there at a moment's notice when the 8 year old is kicking his teacher and the teacher is not allowed to try and restrain the **child**?"
"Who will be there to protect students when evil walks in to destroy our precious **children**?"

The use of rhetorical questions in connection with the lexical choice "child/children" illuminates several places of discursive tension including children positioned as dangerous (*"kicking his teacher"*) and as innocent children vulnerable to unavoidable violence (*evil*). In these different representations, child as dangerous positioned students as active participants or actors in schools, and child as innocent, or vulnerable positioned students as passive participants or social actors. Interestingly, in congruence with findings from Chapter 5, the use of the term "child/children" was located alongside the use of descriptive terms to locate individuals as racialized (see table 6.5).

Table 6.5: Naming Others as Racialized (Style) in Representations of Student as Child/Children [Public Comments]

"Why would **a child of color** see that and then want to go to school to walk past a policeman everyday? A man of color was murdered at one of your schools in front of his own children by a cop last year."

This quote from a community member uses intertextuality (genre) to bring in a local incident from 2019 in which a Eugene Police Officers were responsible for the fatal shooting of Charles Landeros in front of their child's middle school (and their child).

As Kid(s)

Many of the same findings occurred within queries into instances where the term "kid(s)" was used by educational community members in public comments. While the use of the term "kid(s)" in reference to students was used more frequently than the term "child/children" in public comments, similar discursive strategies were used alongside "kid(s)" as a lexical choice for student including: Naming others as racialized (*style*), use of rhetorical questions (*genre*), and pairing of possessive pronouns (*style*) (Table 6.6).

Table 6.6: Discursive Strategies in Representations of Student as Kid(s) [Public Comments]

Naming others as racialized "This forces on kids a conditioning that the color of their skin means institutions have the right to abuse them. That is not a lesson kids need to learn, but one QTBIPoC/BIPoC kids face every day."
Use of Rhetorical Questions "What good are officers who can do nothing to help a kid so they pass his care along to another?"
Pairing of Possessive Pronouns "School resource officers are a non threatening presence with our kids. The kids know who they are, and love their presence in the school."

While the representation of students as dangerous/unsafe occurred alongside the term 'child/children" in public comments (*discourse*), the positioning of "kid(s)" as associated with threats to school and student safety occurred more frequently in public comments (Table 6.5). It is worth noting here that in several instances where "kid(s)" were represented as threats to school and student safety, this discourse of "kid(s)" as dangerous was more likely to reference the Thurston High School's shooting, or Kip Kinkle (*intertextuality as genre*) to persuade or threaten board members (*style*) with cause and effect (*genre*) rationale that positioned school violence as a) perpetuated by students, and b) an unavoidable outcome without police on campus. Table 6.7 below shares examples of each of these discursive strategies.

Table 6.7: Kid(s) as Dangerous/Unsafe in Representations of Students [Public Comments]

Cause-Effect Construction
"Removing our SRO's will put **our kids** at risk, and leave them vulnerable to violence."
"They'll sue because an SRO was not there to prevent **their kid** from being sexually assaulted at school by another student, or bullied to the point that they committed suicide, or were shot in a school shooting, or even as "mundane" as OD'ing on drugs they bought from another student."
Intertextuality
"My oldest daughter went to Sheldon and their SRO helped us numerous times with issues such as **kids smoking weed** on school grounds and bullying my daughter based on the color of her skin...We need SRO's to help ward off future **Kip Kinkle's**."
"Experiencing the **Thurston shooting** first hand, I am sickened that **my own kids** will potentially attend a school as helpless as ours was, without a designated officer specially trained to educate, deescalate, protect, and work alongside our teachers, students and families"

An interesting finding presented here, is the reference to the phrase "color of her skin". While this does not explicitly name race, this comment serves to position the author's daughter

as experiencing bullying because of a racialized or perceived racialized identity. This is one of two instances across domains where references to race occur within comments that position policing as safe, and police presence on school campus as integral to school safety.

As Student(s)

The use of the term "student" in public comments was more likely than other lexical choices to be presented alongside discursive strategies that positioned authority or expertise using academic or formal language (*genre*), high commitment language (*style*), naming others as racialized (*style*), and stating demands or use of hostile language (*style*) to position power over the target reader (i.e., school board).

Interestingly, the use of the term "student" occurred more frequently than other lexical choices proceeded with the pronoun "your" (as in "your students"). This signals an aspect of socialization, where authors of public comments have learned (or have internalized messages) that invoking a power/service relationship with board members is an effective persuasive strategy when it comes to policy or school decisions. The prevalence of this term (and the accompaniment of "your") suggests that the term student relates to education and is therefore a responsibility of the school board.

Table 6.8: Use of Possessive Pronouns in Representation of Student as Student(s) [Public Comments]

Possessive Pronouns
It is not the time to defund this program and put **our students** at risk
It is time for me to stand up for **our INNOCENT AND VULNERABLE students**!
This generation of Eugene's youth will determine the future of the city, and continue to allow a body that uses violent and racist tactics in our schools will further oppress **our most vulnerable students** and those with the most diverse perspectives
Please do the right thing by **ALL your students** and cut ties with EPD.
You owe it to **your students** show an example of community collaboration between police and schools. The presence of SROs normalizes the police interaction and trust

Another discursive technique that was likely to accompany the lexical choice "student" was the use of cause-and-effect construction to situate expertise, as well as the use of analogy (*genre*) (comparing two things to strengthen a position or point). As you can see from Table 6.9 below, authors of public comments employed these discursive techniques across domains to position police as safe and essential to school safety, as well as to invoke personal power and expertise in naming police as unsafe for students. Interestingly, across all of these statements (Table 6.9), authors used the same lexical choice associated with police: EPD (which is an acronym for Eugene Police Department).

Table 6.9: Discursive Strategies in Representations of Student as Student(s) [Public Comments]

Analogy
"Ending a relationship with EPD is like shutting down schools because there are **dangerous students** or bad/corrupt teachers across the country."
Cause-and-Effect Construction/Cognitive
"There is nothing more important than **students** feeling safe in school. A frightened brain cannot learn. Please continue the relationship you have with EPD to keep SROs in our schools"
"I have reason to believe that **students** are less safe with EPD on their campuses"

Perhaps the use of the term EPD was used by authors in public comments to show a more localized or informed understanding of the topic at hand (as opposed to using a broad term such as police or SROs). Relatedly, authors also employed discursive strategies that offered or pulled in global or national statements about policing and SROs, often through more academic or formal language (*genre/style*). In Table 6.10 below, you can see how authors who name students as racialized (i.e.: "students and staff of color", "our students of color") do so to position their own authority and to repositioned authority on the topic of school policing to communities and students of color. In line with findings from chapter 5, the presence of reference to others as racialized only occurs within comments that position police and policing as unsafe.

Table 6.10: Naming Others as Racialized in Representations of Student as Student(s) [Public Comments]

Naming others as racialized
"I would ask that you spend time listening to the **students and staff of color**."
"Women, **African-American students**, **neuro- diverse students**, **students with disabilities** and **students who** have experienced various forms of school violence, such as fights, arguments, bullying, or religious teasing, tend to report feeling less safe in schools, even though SROs are present."
"Lastly, it has been shown time and time again that police officers escalate situations when interacting with people of color. What about **our students of color**?"

In addition to positioning which students should be prioritized by the board, these comments also serve to suggest that racialized students have rights, experience schools and police differently that non-racialized students, and in turn hold expertise on topics of school safety and policing.

As Youth

"Youth" was the lexical choice least likely to be used in public comments to represent students (slightly behind the use of "child/children"). In alignment with findings from other lexical representations of students, the use of the term "youth" was used alongside other discursive strategies such as possessive pronouns (*style*), use of rhetorical questions (*genre*), and invoking power/service relationship to the school board (*genre*).

Broadly, three distinct goals seem to be accomplished in the pairing of these discursive strategies alongside use of the term "youth" (or what authors of the public comments may have hoped/intended in this pairing). The first is to invoke partnership or shared ownership in the board's decision to either retain or terminate contracts with police. The use of the term "youth" and specifically the use of the term in proximity to the pronoun "our" suggests that the authors feel a shared responsibility while also threatening or positioning power over the board as held by parents/community members.

Table 6.11: Use of Possessive Pronouns in Representations of Student as Student(s) [Public Comments]

Use of Possessive Pronouns
I appreciate your work and hope that you take this pivotal moment as an opportunity to do the right thing for **our youth** and the Eugene community at large.
If you believe **criminalizing our youth** solves the issue rather than addressing the systemic issues in our community and in the greater U.S. you are part of the problem
And **our youth**, and their parents are watching
our schools will further oppress **our most vulnerable students** and those with the most diverse perspectives

The second goal associated with the pairing of discursive strategies and the term "youth" was the positioning of students as deserving safety and support. This representation of "youth" crosses domains, as well as across representations of police as safe and needed in schools and representations of police as a threat to student safety. Here we see terms like "at risk youth" or "troubled youth" appear (situated within comments that position police as safe), as well as the pairing of racial, identity, and geographic identifiers in comments that position police as a threat to school safety (Table 6.11).

Table 6.12: Use of Descriptors in Representations of Student as Student(s) [Public Comments]

Use of Descriptors: Geographic & Racial
This generation of **Eugene's youth** will determine the future of the city
I want **Eugene youth**, particularly **BIPOC, LGBTQ+, low-income, neuro-diverse youth** and those with disabilities, to feel safe and not be treated like criminals
While they're in school at the very least, **youth of color** deserve to be treated as learners— not threats.
What matters is that our young men and women, **youth and children at 4J**, every one of them go to a safe school.
As my son was a **troubled youth** who graduated in 2006 I cannot tell you the # of times the police on campus helped build his self esteem & be good to him.
The SRO's have been an asset to 4J working tirelessly to keep the schools safe, provide education to the students, mentor **at risk youth**, and support the staff.

Summary of Findings: Public Comments

The analysis of public comments indicates a consistent use of personal narratives, storytelling, and persuasive language across domains, with particular attention to the representation of students using various lexical choices such as "child/children," "kid(s),"

"student(s)," and "youth." When referring to students as "child/children," the discourse often emphasizes vulnerability and the need for protection, especially when coupled with possessive pronouns. Conversely, the term "kid(s)" tends to evoke perceptions of threat to school safety, often citing past incidents like the Thurston High School shooting.

Furthermore, the term "student(s)" is found associated with authoritative language and the presence of demands directed towards the school board, reflecting a power dynamic in the discourse that connects the term student with responsibility or an obligation of service or action. Notably, references to race (specifically others as racialized) are intertwined with discussions of policing, occurring almost exclusively as a discursive strategy used in comments arguing for the removal of police presence from school buildings. The term "youth" is less frequently used in public comments, but the lexical choice of youth was used in comments that conveyed a sense of shared community responsibility and advocacy for the well-being of young people in schools.

School Board Meeting

School board members were more likely to refer to students as “students”, and more likely to use neutral talk or formal/politeness conventions (genre) as discursive strategies implemented to talk about school safety and policing than in public comments or student workshops. This was likely due to: 1) the difference in genre and interactions among and between individuals in spoken conversations as opposed to written comments, and 2) aligned expectations and ways of interacting that are typical of individuals participating in a publicly facing governing body. Differently from public comments, the discursive moves used by school board members in the school board meeting did not differ or shift across domains or between different lexical representations of students.

As Child or Children

Interestingly, the term "child/children" was only located once in the school board transcript, and that was in reference to the phrase "child abuse". This reference was made by a staff member invited to speak (a request from board members) and who described current SRO services. This staff person positioned support of the SRO program by emphasizing a primary role of the SRO was to support other child service agencies (i.e.: DHS) and children by reporting child abuse.

The current school resource officer program is not focused on arrests or enforcement action to support a wide and growing range of critical needs in our schools for the last year and a half, the SRO program expanded services to 4J have witnessed additional support due to change in service with DHS leading to long wait times for staff who are mandatory reporters and need to fill their duty to report child abuse

As Kid(s)

The term "kid(s)" appears in the school board meeting several times, accompanied by discursive moves that signal compassion and position kid(s) as a population of students are different than other members of the community in their capacity and in what they should experience (Table 6.13). This is similar to moves and choices made by other educational community members, such as the use of possessive pronouns (our, my) or lexical representation that position students as vulnerable or innocent.

Table 6.13: Representations of Student as Kid(s) [School Board]

"With automatic rifles raised and pointed at his were yelled out with one officer telling **a kid** that if you took anything out of his pocket, he'd be shot and forced to lay flat on the ground handcuffed and arrested"
"Too many families are unhoused too many violent acts are around us, too many acts of racism that go un-checked, income inequality, and a need for too many resources for **our kids**."

"That that brings with it so much baggage that we're **asking kids to unpack** in school, right hundreds of years of racial baggage that **we're asking kids** to unpack when what they should be doing is learning"

As Student(s)

As referenced earlier, school board members were far more likely to use the lexical choice "student" than other representations (more than 50% of references to students were made with the term "students"). Interestingly, the use of the term "student" was also more likely to occur combined with other social actors, and specifically staff (Table 6.14). This suggests that school board members believe their service and/or oversight as being responsible for multiple entities in and connected to schools (not just students). This was also where the use of possessive pronouns appeared the most (as in "our students" and "our students and staff").

Table 6.14: Presence of other social actors in Representations of Student as Student(s) [School Board]

"And we need to support our staff of color ideas the equity tool and making decisions and we need to do the hard work of deconstructing bias training our staff and ensuring **our students** are and feel safe and supported in schools"
"The district review this fall of **our student discipline policies** and data for School Safety and school resource officer programs intended and unintended impacts for **students**, staff and families. What changes and improvements are warranted to continue to improve and ensure that our schools are a place of safety and support all of **our students** and staff?"
"It's critical that **our students**, staff administrators and volunteers in our buildings are safe, physically and emotionally to carefully consider and think about those risks that exist today"

As Youth

School board members used the lexical choice "youth" to position students as social actors having different needs and in turn different skill sets or models required to best serve them (as part of policing and representations of school safety). As you can see in Table 6.15, youth are also represented by one board member as different than children (*"our youth and our children of color"*)

Table 6.15: Representations of Student as Youth [School Board]

"Been in dialogue with Eugene police leadership, about working to evolve from our long standing school resource officer program to a **youth service model** to serve our students needs."

"Our, **our youth** and our children of color"
"Respectfully with Gordon, that it is compelling to me that if we just call and I know we will be making calls, and we're making the problem worse by having someone come to the schools that don't have any idea about how to work with **youth**."

Summary of Findings: Board Meeting

The analysis of school board discourses offers a nuanced glimpse into the linguistic patterns and lexical choices shaping discussions around student safety and wellbeing within educational policy decisions. The prevalence of use of the term "student" suggests that within the formal setting of the school board meeting, individual board members associated this term with interpretations of their roles and areas of oversight. This stands in contrast to the more varied lexical landscape observed in public comments, where terms like "child/children" were more present and occurred alongside persuasive strategies that intended to invoke emotional resonance. The lexical choice "kid(s)" and "youth" were used several times in the board meeting, serving as linguistic marker that positioned "youth" as different than children, and "kids" as representative of a population that holds different lived experiences than adult community members. It's worth noting that the discursive strategies employed by school board members in their meeting remained consistent across the two domains (i.e.: policing, and school safety) and regardless of the lexical choices used to refer to students.

Student Workshops

Students were more likely to engage terms such as "kid(s)", "student", and "youth" to represent social actor Student across domains. While students in workshops engaged some of the same discursive moves (namely personal storytelling and use of high commitment language) as other educational social actors across data sets, student workshops also utilized a variety of discursive strategies that did not appear in other data sets. This includes revoicing (*genre*),

hedging (*genre*), use of cognitive statements *(style*), offering alternatives/solutions (*style*), and representation of students as needing protection from teachers and staff (discourse). Similarly, student workshop students did not use some of the discursive strategies that were consistently used by educational community members in other data sets or settings. This included use of possessive pronouns in reference to any human social actor.

As Child or Children

The use of the discursive strategy of revoicing (*genre*) appeared in both instances where child/children was used by students. In both statements, students offered what adults believed, or a revoicing of adults. In the first statement, a student says: "*They [adults] believe kids don't know what they need or want – and believe that we are children*". This comment seems to offer a distinction between kids and children, marked by the use of the pronoun "we" in reference to children. In this statement, it appears that students identify with the term "kid" but feel that children perhaps is a term that minimizes their agency or contributions. This seems to be supported in the second statement in student workshops that utilizes the lexical choice "child/children". In this statement (which was offered as a written statement), another student shared that "*Adults believe that children lie to get their way*". This positions children as not knowing, unbelievable, or untrustworthy.

Table 6.16: Representations of Student as Child/Children [Student Workshops]

"They believe kids don't know what they want or need - and believe that we are **children**."
"They believe that **children** lie to get their way"

As Kid(s)

Interestingly, the use of the term "kid(s)" in student workshops was used to represent students as threats or as dangerous to other students (which was a consistent finding within the use of "kid(s)" by educational community members in other data sets).

Only one instance of the term "kid(s)" was used alongside discursive moves that positioned kids as students who were victims or recipients of threats to safety in schools, positioned as helpless or in need of support. Table 6.17 below shares these statements.

Table 6.17: Representations of Student as Kid(s) [Student Workshops]

"Its not the school is the **kids** in the school"
"Get **kids** the help they need for drugs and other stuff - don't just give up on them (it makes our schools less safe)"
"Probably **kids** fighting in the hallway?"
"Because a lot of teachers make trauma inducing comments that can be triggering a lot of **kids** who don't have anything else to do but sit there and take it"

As Student(s)

The use of the term "student" was by far the favored representation of student used in workshops. This is consistent with the ways researchers represented students in interview questions and workshop protocols. As student workshops were conducted as live conversations and interactions, the terms that the researchers used to represent students were likely to appear across statements from workshop participants.

Table 6.18: Representations of Student as Student(s) [Student Workshops]

"Some **students** get to feel completely safe and others never get to feel safe."
"If it doesn't happen to lots of **students** - it didn't happen."
"We need accountability for adults - we tell them all the time what the problems are, but they just ignore **students"**
"schools aren't safe because of bullying due to racism, homophobia. Staff ignore **students** or blatantly target **students** for multiple reasons."
"Schools are unsafe because low attendance rates and high rates of depression and anxiety among **students** (that is how you know schools aren't safe, because students don't want to come, or don't show up because they aren't doing well and school and teachers makes things worse)."

What is interesting in student's representations and/or use of the term Student over other lexical choices, is that "students" are represented as less valued, silenced, or victims of adults.

This is referenced targeted by individual adults ("*bullying*" or "*targeted*", "*they just ignore students*"), as well as adults ~~as~~ implicated in the system of school (*"students don't want to come, or don't show up because they aren't doing well and school and teachers makes it worse"*).

Discursively, student workshops presented a representation of students as having rights, desiring freedom of expression, representation and identity, and deserving of protection. This was a discourse that surfaced in other data sets and across domains but was particularly present in student workshops and within representations of Student as "student".

Table 6.19: Representations of Student as having rights, deserving of protection and freedom of expression [Student Workshops]

"Schools are unsafe because there is harassment of **female identifying students**"
"Adults have the belief that "they'll grow out of it" in reference to **LGBT students**"
"Schools aren't safe because **LGBT/POC students** can feel unsafe due to other students and staff being uneducated"
"Schools aren't safe because there is bullying, teachers ignoring student issues, not being practical, support for **students** is not equal or equitable"
"Systems that let these things occur is a lack of good environment - people are only there to learn or worse"
"The outside political environment creates the inside environment of schools. It shifts all the time, and it always targets the same **students (Trans, BIPOC, LGBTQIA, poor students**)"
"Belief that **students** have a voice, and let us use it. Believing that **all students** deserve to get an education because the ability to critically think lets people criticize and understand their world."

Interestingly, this discourse (alongside the representation of student as "student") also occurred in statements where racial or identity descriptors were used (*style,* i.e, naming others as racialized). This positions specific students ("Trans, BIPOC, LGBTQIA, and poor students") as those most susceptible or like to experience to individual and systemic violence in schools (*discourse*). The surfacing of this discourse runs across datasets and domains yet is most often present in discourses of police as unsafe, and representations of school safety as absent of police presence and presence of emotional and mental health supports for students.

As Youth

In addition to being more likely to be used by students in workshops, the use of the term "youth" occurred alongside discursive moves revoicing (*genre*) and offering a vision or

presenting solutions/hopes (*style*). These discursive strategies, while present or represented by a small number of statements across public comments and by school board meeting was largely unique to student workshops. This could be attributed to the workshop protocols used to invite student voice in solutions to school safety, as well as a finding that highlights student's visions of safety generally.

The sub-discourses present in student workshop statements that incorporate the term "youth" carry forward the discourse that students have rights and representations of safety schools and the role of education to provide spaces where students have freedom of expression, representation and identity.

Table 6.20: Representations of Student as Youth [Student Workshops]

"Adults would need to believe in acceptance, and consistently learning and evolving for the **youth** they serve"
"adults would know that youth are kinder, can be kinder than they think, that we are are allowed to be more emotional without feeling like they are taking something not deserved"
"If schools were safe, **youth** would feel safe to express themselves in whatever way they deme."

Summary of Findings: Student Workshops

Across different domains, students employ a variety of discursive strategies to discuss school safety, including the use of lexical terms "kid(s)," "student," and "youth" as common descriptors for students in schools. Notably, students in workshops utilized the greatest number and variety of discursive techniques out of the three datasets and were more likely to use revoicing *(genre*) and critique (*style*) paired with an offering of solutions (*style*). The term "kid(s)" emerges in student workshops to depict students both as threats and victims, reflecting a important nuanced understanding of the complexity of safety dynamics within schools. Similarly,, the prevalent use of "student(s)" in workshop discussions signals a focus on systemic issues such as bullying, harassment, and signals to the role of adults in a) participating in these systemic harms, and b) critical players in addressing student needs. In student workshops,

students articulate discourses of school safety as centering student rights, ensuring freedom of expression, and the importance of awareness, care and protection for marginalized students.

Clusters of Discourses about Students

In this next section I present an analysis of the ways students are positioned differently within and across two different domains of discourses: 1) Representations of School Safety, and 2) Police as safe or unsafe. By extracting text from previous levels of analysis presented in this study (Phase 1 and Phase 2), I was able to analyze how a specific word, phrase, or discursive strategy was used within a given context (i.e.: discussions of school safety and community conversations about police in schools), within the dataset or a genre (i.e.: public comment, board meeting, or student workshop), and by different educational community members. This analysis showed that representations of students shifted based on the text, genre and authors (educational community members). However, findings also showed that ideas or representations of students also carried/transferred across different contexts, genres, and conversations.

I present these findings (representations of students across datasets and domains) as clusters of discourses to highlight patterns of language use, variations in representations or meanings, and recurring themes or topics from across both domains represented in this study (representations of school safety and policing as safe/unsafe). These clusters of discourses of students include: 1) Kids as uncontrollable & dangerous 2) Children as vulnerable and needing protection 3) Students as educational community members with rights 4) Youth as Future Adults,

Kids as Uncontrollable & Dangerous

Kids as uncontrollable, dangerous, or a threat to school and student safety was a discourse that existed across both domains, and all data sets. Representation of students as kids (lexical choice) was most likely to occur within these discourses of students as threats to school safety. In fact, students or kids were the only social actors named in public comments that

positioned the need for police in schools as a critical element of school safety. This was done either through direct reference, or as implied. For example, an educational community members offers a direct reference to students as a threat to school safety in a public comment to school board members: *"being sexually assaulted at school by another student, or bullied to the point that they committed suicide, or were shot in a school shooting, or even as "mundane" as OD'ing on drugs they bought from another student" or "kids fighting in the hallways").* Public comments, as well as statements from board members also implied students were dangerous through cause-and-effect construction (genre) that positioned or threatened the likelihood of student (such as the Thurston High School shooting), or "future Kip Kinkle's" (the perpetrator responsible for Thurston High School shooting) as being preventable through the inclusion of police on campus.

Across all of these references to students as a source of danger or a threat to school safety "kid(s)" are discursively positioned as active (as opposed to passive). This occurs through the pairing of verbs or of a "doing" associated with the social actor ("*kids smoking weed*", "*kids fighting in the hallways*", "*inappropriate behavior that students unleash in their hallways*"). These representations of kids as unmonitored, out of control, or engaging in illegal activities was found across data sets, educational community members (including students) and across domains. This includes educational community members who positioned police as safe (and school safety as requiring their presence), as well as those who advocated for the termination of a contract with EPD (and represented school safety as expanded access to supports and services beyond policing).

Table 6.21: Discourse Cluster (Kids as Uncontrollable & Dangerous) Active Representation

Student as Active
"inappropriate behavior that **students unleash** in their hallways can and should be dealt with by mental health professionals"
"Probably **kids fighting** in the hallway?"
"kids smoking weed on school grounds and **bullying** my daughter"
"The vast majority of inappropriate behavior that **students unleash** in their hallways can and should be dealt with by mental health professionals, not people who use physical force."

In the domain or context of school policing, educational community members utilized the lexical choice of "kid" paired with discursive strategies such as possessive pronouns (our kids) when persuading board members to maintain relationships or the presence of SROs on campus. These strategies were often invoked by educational community members who positioned themselves as parents, grandparents, or constituents to the board. As referenced in Chapter 5, this may indicate that educational community members believe that naming one's proximity or positionality to students and/or schools in public comments may hold greater power or influence over school board decisions.

In the domain or context of school safety, some educational community members (parents, teachers, students) represented kids as dangerous to the safety and wellbeing of other students as a strategy to justify requests/demands that the school board focus on increasing and maintaining the presence of police in school buildings, and specifically school's access to armed responses to on-site violence. These educational community members were more likely to refer to local instances of school violence (i.e.: Thurston shooting, Kip Kinkle, or specific instances where guns were brought to local elementary or middle school campuses). However, these same discursive moves and representations of kids as threats to safety were also used by educational community members across data sets to justify requests, demands, and solutions to school safety that re-allocated funding away from policing and towards more supports and services for students. Even in student workshops where "kids" were referenced as a threat to safety ("i*ts not*

the school, it's the kids"), students did not ask for increased security nor did they refer to police as safe/effective in facing this threat, but did offer the vision and request that teachers and staff pay greater attention and maintain greater accountability (for themselves and for students) in regard to making schools safe for all students.

Clusters of discourses that position kids as dangerous or beyond control highlighted two interesting representations of students that moved across domains and lexical choices. The first is the association of danger or threats as connected with pronoun "he" or in connection with the term boy (positioning an assumption that boys are dangerous). And the second is the belief or assumption that student's needs are beyond what teachers can accommodate. I highlight these two findings to show how discourses and representations of students carry meaning and impact policies, actions, and attitudes within and across institutions.

Assumption that Dangerous Students are Male/Boys

The presence of the pronouns "he/him" or the gendering of students as male in representation of students as violent positions those that present as male or identify as male to be threats to student safety. This assumption that dangerous students are male could be informed by past events (i.e.: the reference to Kip Kinkle, who was a male identifying student who shot and killed multiple people in the school shooting at Thurston High School in 1998, or reference to another local incident where a student brought a shotgun to school), by media representations of dangerous students, through data or reports, or through personal experience (see Table 6.22).

Table 6.22: Clusters of Discourse: Representation of Boy/Male Students as Dangerous

Reference to Past Events/Individuals
"We need SRO's to help ward off future **Kip Kinkle**'s."
"A year ago a student came into his school with a shotgun and no one died and no one was hurt. Kenan Lowe who disarmed **him** said he was more worried about the police arriving on the scene than the armed child"

Gendered Representations of Students as Threats (masculine pronouns)
"What good are officers who can do nothing to help **a kid** so they pass **his care** along to another?"
"Who is there at a moment's notice when the 8 year old is kicking **his** teacher and the teacher is not allowed to try and restrain the child?"
"Schools are unsafe because there is a lot of **machismo**"

Regardless of the source, the positioning of boys as dangerous in schools presents male identifying or presenting students as more likely to engage in dangerous or threatening behavior, which can serve to 1) justify and/or perpetuate biased actions against male students and 2) re-enforce and/or restrict the movement, actions, and access of students as a whole population (i.e.: If male students are likely to be dangerous, then all students must be restricted from access to spaces, items, actions, or ideas that are perceived as dangerous by adults). This circulation of a fear of boys as dangerous is an example of a discourse that moves across and between spaces to produce certain students as deserving of protection and others as students as needing to be protected from.

Student Needs Exceed the Skills/Capacity of Teachers

Another primary finding from a cluster of discourses that represent kids as dangerous or uncontrollable was found in the positioning of students as having needs that exceed the capacity and training of teachers. This framing of students occurred across data sets and across domains. In the context of policing, those who positioned police as safe referenced incidents of child abuse, or threats on campus that were beyond what teachers and administrators had time to report or respond to (see Table 6.23).

Table 6.23: Student needs as Beyond Teacher's Capacity & Skills Across Domains

"Each time something new arises, they [SROs] begin discussions and planning for the "what if" so teachers can continue teaching and **students** can continue learning and hopefully know they are in good hands"
"The vast majority of inappropriate behavior that **students** unleash in their hallways can and should be dealt with by mental health professionals"
"By contrast, schools that invest in social workers and conflict de-escalation teams have better student outcomes and operate with demonstrably more equity."

Some alternatives to staffing police in schools could be hiring more counselors or behavior interventionists, hiring a restorative justice coordinator and/or enacting a peer mediation program.
"We need specialized psychological and behavioral professionals to identify **these children** and help them find a better path. We do not need violent shoot-outs, more juvenile arrests, or pat-downs and searches."

Additionally, those that offered representations of school safety that included expanded services and supports for students (alongside the removal of police from campus) relied on similar discursive representations and strategies that positioned the needs of students and a vision of school safety as access to specialized services or professional titles beyond teachers.

Children as vulnerable and needing protection & guidance

Across discourses of policing and school safety, the use of lexical representations of students as children was used by educational community members to convey a sense of innocence, vulnerability, or limited ability. In public comments, educational community members combined possessive pronouns such as "my" and "our" to position themselves as parents or educators with ownership of and investment in students. Paired with demands (genre/style), educational community members represented possession or proximity to students as signaling expertise and exerting power over school board decisions. This combination of discursive practices and the lexical choice of child/children brings forward two important patterns. The first, is an observation on discursive moves educational community members use in persuasive arguments within the genre of public comments in school board decisions, and the second is how different educational community members across documents and domains position students as needing to be protected from individuals as well as systems.

"My Children/Child/Kid": Possessive Pronouns as Positioning Power/Responsibility & Relationships

The use of the lexical choice to refer to students as "child" or "children" (specifically when accompanied in concordance lines with possessive pronouns) was consistently used by educational community members within public comments to represent Student as vulnerable, and to invoke proximity to students as a source of expertise and power over school board actions. The use of possessive pronouns next to "children", "child" and "kid" were used by parents in public comments across both domains (representations of school safety, and representations of police), and were often paired with discursive moves such as politeness conventions (*genre*), stating demands (*genre*) or use of hostile language (*style*) to convey to the target audience (i.e.: board members) a vested interest in the board's decision about the contract with EPD and a belief that naming a personal connection to schools/students will hold greater impact on board decisions surrounding student safety.

Children as Needing to be protected from Individuals and Systems:

Educational community members across data sets and domains aligned in the representation of schools as responsible for student safety. However, clusters of discourses about student's safety and representations of what students needed to be protected from varied greatly between educational community members and between data sets (as was referenced in Phase 1 & Chapter 4). What is interesting in this analysis, is that while the discourse of students remained similar across domains and data sets (child/students as needing protection), the discursive strategies used to persuade and/or to present threats to student safety varied greatly by ideological beliefs about police and by educational community members (specifically, students).

For example, educational community members who positioned police as safe (largely parents, teachers, and community members who live within the 4J school district boundaries)

were more likely to position students as children, to use possessive pronouns, and to name individuals and actor-less threats (specifically, 'home', and 'violence'), and the school board's decisions as the greatest threat to student safety in schools. These discourses of children as needing protection utilize descriptive yet vague language (i.e.: "*when evil walks in*") to invoke a sense of impending danger to students that would occur without the presence of police in schools, and engaged personal connections, storytelling, and names of officers to distinguish SROs as individuals as opposed to associated with larger systems (or national discourses) of policing. These discourses and positioning of students as vulnerable did not rely on a reference to or naming of race (either authors racial identities, or student as racialized). These comments and representations of students as vulnerable referenced the board as a source of danger or threat to student safety if they voted to remove police officers, but outside of this positioning did not refer to institutional and systemic violence as a threat to students.

In contrast, the same educational community members (again, largely parents and teachers) who advocated for the *removal* of police officers (oppositional ideology) in public comments consistently named race (*style*), referenced SROs as connected with larger systems of policing (*discourse*), made direct reference to incidents of police violence (both locally and nationally - *genre*), referenced reports or data (*genre*), utilized academic language (*genre*), and positioned student vulnerability as connected with identity (*discourse*). Educational community members (including students) across data sets (board meeting, student workshops) also relied on these same discursive techniques (naming race/identity and positioning identity as creating different experiences) to name students of color, trans, LGBTQIA and disabled students as populations of students whom the board is beholden to protect, and whose safety required the

school board to act. Similarly, educational community members across data sets relied on assumptions that students with racialized identities other than white, and students with identities other than cis, straight, and able-bodied or neurotypical were at greater risk of violence from individuals (teachers, police officers, SROs) *as well as* systems of beliefs (racism, discrimination), and institutions (police, school discipline). These comments held the board and school leaders as implicit and culpable to all of these threats and were less likely to use the lexical choice of "child" and more likely to use the lexical choice of "student" (as seen in the selection of quotes below).

Table 6.24: Cluster of Discourses of Students as Needing to be Protected from Individuals, Systems of Beliefs & Institutions:

Protection From Actor Less or Unknown Threats

"The SRO program is invaluable to help prevent **school shootings** and protect our vulnerable youth I do believe eliminating this position would put vulnerable students **at greater risk**." [public comment]

"Removing our SRO's will put our kids at **risk** and leave them vulnerable to **violence**."

"Our children need all the **protection** they can receive." [public comment]

"Who will be there to protect students when **evil** walks in to **destroy** our precious children?"

"Think about this in terms of when a child is **being abused at home** and needs a safe person to help navigate the dangerous environment." [public comment]

"When a police report needs to be made about a child that is e**xperiencing trauma at home**, it is the school resource officers that are there to be with the child." [public comment]

"Having a person onsite who is equipped and trained to run into **the face of danger** allows our teachers, counselors and other staff to focus on evacuating & otherwise protecting our children." [public comment]

"I have personally seen this happen and have been called on by SROs to report **child abuse** as students have disclosed to them" [public comment]

Protection from Individuals

"schools aren't safe because of **bullying** due to racism, homophobia. **Staff** ignore students or blatantly **target** students for multiple reasons" [student workshop]

"Because a lot of **teachers** make **trauma inducing comments** that can be triggering a lot of kids who don't have anything else to do but sit there and take it "[student workshop]

"While **SRO**s do not have a measurable impact on decreasing the possibility or outcome of a school-shooting, they do have a measurable impact when it comes to **discriminating** against and intimidating students of color, LGBTQ+ students and students receiving special education services." [public comment]

"the lack of knowledge from **teachers**. And **school boards**, and budgets" [student workshop]

Protection from Systems/Institutions

"Please do the right thing by ALL your students and cut ties with **EPD**." [public comments]

"national data which has been shared with the public and the board in a variety of ways, has demonstrated that school **policing** can lead to some negative consequences, it can lead to the increased likelihood that the most vulnerable students will become entangled in a **criminal prosecution system**". [school board]

"This forces on kids a conditioning that the color of their skin means **institutions** have the right to abuse them." [public comment]
"That that brings with it so much baggage that we're asking kids to unpack in **school**, right hundreds of years of **racial baggage** that we're asking kids to unpack when what they should be doing is learning" [school board]
"**Adultism** lets this [a lack of safety at schools] happen. And **racism**. And **policies** [student workshops]

This cluster of discourses (of children as vulnerable and needing protection) presents two key places of tension within and across representations of students within the study data. The first, is the reference to staff/teachers as threats to student safety by students in workshops (or perhaps more interestingly, the absence of staff/teachers named as threats to students across all other data sets). The second is the naming of individuals as threats vs systems or institutions as threats to student safety.

Youth as Educational Community Members with Rights

The use of the term "student" was used across domains and by a variety of educational community members to present students as members of a school, and community who hold rights. Specifically: a) the right to be safe, and b) the right to learn. In this cluster of discourses, many of the same strategies and representations found in other clusters surface (i.e.: the use of race and descriptors to position the rights of specific students, or to position the board as responsible for the rights of specific students or ALL students). However, comments that directly referred to students as having agency, having rights, and deserving to be included in decisions and discussions of school safety a) tended to use the lexical term "youth", and b) occurred almost exclusively within student workshops (with the exception of several public comments offered by teachers and community members who did not position themselves as parents or having children in the district).

Additionally, student workshops positioned students as the focus of schools, as having rights. Discursively, students in workshops paired a critique of current practices (style) with an

offering of solutions (genre/style). These comments position students as having rights, as holding and having agency and deserving of dignity and respect. Interestingly, these student comments also position and offer roles for adults embedded within critiques of the system. I highlight these responses here for two reasons: 1) living into the methodology and ethical commitment I bring to this study by doing more than including students in the collection of data, but holding their voice as central in the presentation, and 2) showcasing how students representations of adults offer a different view of students as future adults (and how the structure of schools and beliefs about students impact futures).

Table 6.25: Clusters of Discourses from Students: Youth and Young People as Having Rights in Schools [Student Workshops]

"people ain't built like that they need some extra help - and schools don't want to offer that. They don't think it is their job. That taking care of us or helping us live isn't part of learning"
"there is a lack of importance of personal mental and physical wellbeing rather than attendance and grades. These are the things that schools value - not who we are. And they don't see the connection to why we don't want to be there."
"If schools were safe, there would be teachers who care and listen to all of their students, and school board thinking of the students, safety and enforcing rules based on that"
"Feeling like the structure at which they base the school off of is for all of the students and not just certain groups"
"Counselors that know about mental health and how to support us"
"Less conforming and more community and unity. Teachers and adults would have to belief that students should be allowed to not be scared at school"
"Adults would need to believe in acceptance, and consistently learning and evolving for the youth they serve. They would have to believe students - that students are believed."

Interestingly, "Youth" as a broad term was used across domains to refer to students and did so in ways that suggested that "youth" held rights and deserved to be safe, protected, and listened to. This is a different representation of student that does not rely on a positioning of student as vulnerable (as we saw with the term(s) "child/children"), but instead appears to position students as members of the educational community, with their own rights. As opposed to the use of the term "student" (which invokes the power or responsibility of the board in

connection with a student's proximity to learning), the use of the term "youth" suggests that students hold a certain agency and whose experiences and desires should be prioritized.

Students as Future Adults

The last cluster of discourses pulls from representations of students from across domains and datasets that presents students as holding societal value in their role as future adults. This is a different than the positioning of student as educational community members with having rights (as outlined above), as this cluster of discourses illuminates the ways educational community members use language to frame students not as holding power or value in their current state, but in a future state or role as adults in society.

This representation of students appears to be leveraged across different lexical representations, domains and combined with discursive strategies to accomplish two different outcomes. The first: to position a core function of schooling as the need to expose students to existing systems and realities to curb criminality (*"the presence of SROs normalizes police interactions and trust*"). The second: to position schools as sites of societal change (working to transform oppression by investing in the next generation of leaders). Both strategies rely on an assumption or belief that childhood experiences impact individual and social trajectories.

Table 6.26: Clusters of Discourses about Students: Students as Future Adults

"These kids need guidance to become better individuals more than the influence of being treated like criminals and written off" [public comments]
"You owe it to your students show an example of community collaboration between police and schools. The presence of SROs normalizes police interaction and trust [public comments]
"This generation of Eugene's youth will determine the future of the city, and continue to allow a body that uses violent and racist tactics in our schools will further oppress our most vulnerable students and those with the most diverse perspectives" [public comments]
"I would like to urge you to retain school resource officers, for the youth's safety, and so they will have a positive impression of law enforcement as adults." [public comments]
"Don't the statistics show that youth that have positive experiences with police officers have less chance of making crime a career later in life?" [public comments]

In student workshops, students shared that a representation of safe schools would present the learning of topics and skills that are meaningful to their life and allow them to be independent. These discourses or representations of students and a vision for school's that hold students as holding value and insight in school decisions. These comments utilized different discursive techniques to weave together discourses of students and schools through the belief that schools are responsible for listening to students' interests, trusting to know about and care for themselves, and helping students to become independent and informed adults (see table 6.x).

Within discourses about students as future adults, some educational community members expressed concerns about the future prospects of marginalized youth. These educational community members (including parents, school board members, educators, students and community members across data sets) relied on discursive strategies such as academic voice (*genre*), intertextuality in the form of reports or research (*genre*), and naming others as racialized (*style*) to demand that teachers, schools leadership and school boards first acknowledge the societal impacts of historic and ongoing subjugation and criminalization of young people (and specifically young people of color) and then to invest in a vision of school that creates different outcomes for marginalized students. Students in workshops and across public comments ask for an investment in mental health support for students and increased accountability and attention to discrimination and harassment in school buildings. They argue that investing in support systems and positive interventions in schools that do not include police is crucial to help students experiencing poverty, trauma, and discrimination.

While relying on a similar discourse of students as future adults, other community members positioned the role of schools as training future adults by building positive images of

the institution of policing as a strategy for community safety (*discourse*). These educational community members advocated for the retention of SROs in school buildings, relying on the assumption that SROs foster collaboration between police and schools, and representing SROs as positive models for students through personal storytelling (*style*), and referring to individual offers by name (*style*). These educational community members were often parents and teachers and used their proximity to students and schools (genre) to highlight specific instances with specific SROs (*style*), sharing examples of when they personally witnessed or experienced SROs engaging with students through educational activities and building trusting relationships with students. These same educational community members were likely to utilize discursive strategies (such as demands, the use of rhetorical questions, and hostile language) to position that a central responsibility of the school board was to build bridges between law enforcement and to maintain positive student and community perceptions of law enforcement. These comments positioned that exposure to police in schools is effective in deterring future criminal behavior (i.e.: "*a life of criminality*", "*arrested as adults*").

Interestingly, educational community members across public comments and ideological representations of police positioned youth as future adults as a way of invoking the board's responsibility to act (i.e., "*that they will be future voters*", they "*will remember your decisions*", that the decision to terminate or retain SROs "*is a historic moment that our community will look back on*"). This was a discursive strategy that asked board members to consider the long-range impact of their decisions (cause-effect construction, threat) while communicating a sense of urgency (*style*) through word choices and through text and punctuation choices in written comments (i.e.: the use of all capital letters, or the use of exclamation marks).

Chapter 6 Summary

This chapter presented the findings associated with the final and cumulative phase of analysis which brought together discourses of students from across data sets and domains to answer research question #3: What do discourses of school policing show us about the ways students are positioned as dangerous (and by whom), which students are positioned as dangerous, and who must be protected and from what within schools? Overall findings showed that while there were areas of discrepancy and even places of tensions within the way students were represented within and across data sets and domains, there were also clusters of discourses that highlighted recurring themes and/or trends that help to identify underlying structures, beliefs about students, and insights into societal dynamics and context that in turn provides insights into the ways discourses of police and safety are produced, transferred, and ruptured.

In the following chapter, I present a discussion of the areas of overlap and places of ideological tension surfaced in this study, pulling back towards the literature to showcase how the focus on language and discursive practices in conversations about school policing offers critical insights into the functioning and disruption of the school-prison nexus.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

The expansion of prisons (and the functioning of mass incarceration) in the U.S relies on the transfer of ideologies and the representation of groups of people to be passed between individuals and institutions (Davis, 2003; Meiners, 2009). These ideologies function as assumptions or representations embedded in language (policies, conversations, online comments). In turn the study of text and discourses of school safety and policing addresses a critical need within the movement to abolish the school-prison nexus by paying attention to the ways different individuals represent safety and protection, as well as how different community members utilize language to disrupt and/or maintain policing as normal and effective.

Motivated by this invitation, this study analyzed three data sets using a multi-phase discursive process that pulled from both corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to align different methods of investigation with each of my three research questions.

1. How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) define school safety (safety for whom, safety from what)?
2. How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) discursively produce police as safe or unsafe in schools?
3. What do discourses of school safety and policing show us about the ways students are positioned as dangerous (and by whom), which students are positioned as dangerous, and who must be protected and from what within schools?

This chapter begins by examining the areas of overlap and areas of divergence within and among the different phases of analysis, research questions, and discursive strategies used by

educational community members to represent beliefs about students, safety, and police in schools. This is followed by a discussion of these central themes as they pertain to implications, both in terms of the emergence of a theoretical framework that I believe offers critical insight into the scholarship surrounding mass incarceration as well as practical implications for educational researchers, practitioners, and educational community members. I conclude by describing the limitations of my research as well as invitations for further research.

Key Findings

This study presents multiple phases of analysis that point to the complex and multifaceted construction of discourses of school safety and policing, including areas of intersection (or overlap) and areas of incompatibilities within intersections of student identities. I argue that a multi-phase analysis is needed to navigate the intricate dynamics of language and discourse circulation across societal, policy, and textual realms (Rogers & Mosley, 2008). Furthermore, such an approach should underscore the significance of scrutinizing discursive shifts and their implications for perpetuating or challenging the nexus between educational institutions, law enforcement, and incarceration systems. By adopting this analytical lens, my study illuminates the fissures and power dynamics within educational communities, shedding light on the areas of overlap as well as places of ideological incongruency that underlie assumptions and belief systems that perpetuate or disrupt the presence of police in schools.

In the following sections I offer a summary of central findings in my study, moving between areas of overlap among and between educational community members and areas of tensions or ruptures among and between clusters of discourses of schools, students, and police. These sections call attention to discursive strategies (how, and in what way language was used, and by whom) and discourses (representations of central social actors: students, schools, and police).

Areas of Overlap & Areas of Tension: Discourses & Discursive Strategies

Examining the convergence of discursive strategies and narratives about students, police, and safety among educational community members offers a novel vantage point that helps to notice and unravel ideologies, assumptions, identities, and power dynamics that shape

educational environments and policy decisions. This focus on areas of overlap not only unveils the complex interplay between institutional policies, societal perceptions, and student experiences but also uncovers latent tensions and potential avenues for transformative interventions within the broader discourse on school safety.

Similarly, exploring these places of divergence and tensions between discursive strategies and the formation of narratives about students, policing, and safety unveils crucial insights into the underlying complexities of power dynamics and ideological contestations within educational settings. Fairclough refers to these places where contradictions and tensions appear within discourses as "cruces" (1992, 1995). Defined as pivotal moments that reveal underlying power dynamics and social structures, these junctures (places of rupture of ideological incompatibility) serve as important sites of inquiry that help researchers gain insights into hegemonic processes as well as moments of social resistance and social change.

Inspired by Fairclough's emphasis on cruces, I bring forward places of tension or divergence in strategies and discourses as they occurred across the study's phases of analysis to shed light on the discrepancies between institutional agendas, societal perceptions and assumptions, and the lived experiences of students. This critical examination not only highlights areas of potential conflict and discord but also underscores the places of overlap and places of rupture between students positioning of safety, and hegemonic views of school safety held and circulated by adults. Thus, a focus on areas of discursive overlap and places of cruces offers insights into places where student voice and solidarity with marginalized students serves to address systemic disparities and to foster more equitable and inclusive approaches to school safety.

Discourses of Students, Police, and Schools

Discourses of Students. There was one primary discourse of students that occurred across all texts and educational community members/contexts: Students as needing protection in schools. However, within these discourses there was substantial divergence in the discursive strategies used, as well as places of ideological tension among educational community members about what students need to be protected, how students needed to be protected, and from what students needed to be protected from in schools.

Students As Needing Protection. Representations of students as needing protection and current conditions in schools did not provide adequate protection was a central discursive theme that surfaced across each of the three phases of analysis. In chapter 4 (Phase 1) textual analysis of public comments, school board meeting transcript, and student workshop transcripts and artifacts showed that Student was the human social actor in need of protection in schools. In Chapter 5 (Phase 2), textual analysis was combined with orders of discourse to analyze discussions of police, policing and school safety in public comments (across different positionalities of authors, and across opposing ideologies), which also situated the protection of students as a central responsibility of the school board and as a societal/social expectation of schools. This phase of analysis also surfaced tensions within the discursive strategies and representations used by different educational community members to name which students needed to be protected, and beliefs about how students should be protected in schools.

Which Students Need Protection. Searching for areas of overlap among discursive strategies that represented WHICH students needed to be protected in schools brought forward possessive pronouns and the positioning of oneself in relationship to students and schools as a

place of ownership and expertise. For example, across public comments and within the board meeting, adult educational community members utilized possessive pronouns to name “our children”, “my children”, and “our kids” as students in schools that needed to be protected.

The presence of possessive pronouns (e.g., "our students," "our children") can foreground a relationship, a connection and can also signal power dynamics surrounding responsibility. In this study, the presence of possessive pronouns across data sets signaled to both functions. For example, in public comments dominant educational community members (such as educators and parents) in public comments employed possessive pronouns to assert authority and control over school policy decisions by positioning proximity and guardianship as places of power, authority, and expertise on issues facing students. Educational community members’ utilization of possessive pronouns (e.g., "our" vs. "their") was used to persuade or shape perceptions of belonging and inclusion, discursively establishing boundaries between insider and outsider groups to either reinforce or challenge societal norms around policing while also signaling to legal frameworks that uphold adults' votes/voices as privileged over those of students.

In this same way, the presence of possessive pronouns elucidates relational perspectives and care dynamics within discourse about students or children. Educational community members' linguistic choices (e.g., "my students," "our children") reveal not only their affiliations and responsibilities but also their attitudes towards nurturing, support, and accountability in educational and caregiving contexts.

However, while the use of possessive pronouns served as an area of overlap across public comments and board meeting transcripts, the pairing of possessive pronouns with other discursive strategies (specifically the naming of race or student positionality and the sub

discourse that those with racialized and oppressed social identities hold different experiences in schools and society) was a place of notable divergence among educational community members and representation of students. This included discourses and discursive strategies used to name race and position the experience of racialized and socially marginalized students as needing to be protected in schools.

Naming others as racialized (style) was a discursive strategy used by educational members across public comments, board meeting transcripts, and student workshops. This was a central discursive strategy used by educational community members who positioned police as unsafe (as shown in Chapter 5). At the same time, these findings also highlighted a notable absence of references to race or naming others as racialized (style) from those educational community members who positioned police as safe. This was true for all public comments that positioned police as unsafe except four instances. In one such instance, an author of a public comment names their own race as a means of countering narratives of police as racist and violent (*"Yes, I am a black woman, and a proud police officer")*. The other three examples named race (style) alongside narrative/personal storytelling (genre/style) to position themselves in relationship with racialized people AND supporters of police (*"Yes, my daughter was bullied for the color of her skin"; We can support the Black Lives Matter movement and be allies in our community without risking my children's safety").*

Worth nothing in this cluster of discourses of police as safe is the use of the term "Yes" across two of the four instances where naming self/others as racialized appeared. As a declarative statement affirming the speaker's identity (or proximity to the racial identity of another), the placement and use of the statement "Yes", followed by an racialized identity

suggests that a) the speaker or the author is asserting that their experience as racialized (specifically identifying as Black) is unique, b) and that this experience offers a perspective that is different from dominant or hegemonic views. This signals an important and interesting place of rupture or cruces in the data – one that signals a place of social change, where the swell and movement of discourses about race, oppression, and police violence (as oppositional discourses) are seen as overwhelming dominant discourses about policing and safety. I explore this further, as ways discourses of police and school safety offer tensions in how and what students need to be protected from in schools.

What Students Need Protection From. In Chapter 6 (Phase 3) representations of students as needing protection and support in school spaces surfaced across all texts and educational community members – however the positioning of what students needed to be protected from, and the representation of students as vulnerable (versus having rights and agency) differed greatly between students (and student workshops) and other educational members. Using revoicing (genre), personal storytelling (style), rhetorical questions (genre), critique (style), and the pairing of critique with solutions (style) students in workshops represented teachers, adults (at home and at school), and policy makers/school boards as threats to student safety.

For example, student workshops positioned students as needing protection from adults in the building and outside the building (including "home" or "home life"). When students were referenced as a threat to safety in student workshops (i.e.: "*It's not the system, it's the kids*", or "*kids saying racist stuff*") students did not situate responsibility on the students, but instead on the lack of awareness, willingness, or skills of adults in the space to intervene. In this way, students (even when referencing other kids as a source of unsafety) positioned an adult crafted

system (i.e.: disciplinary polices, classroom management strategies) as at fault or as culpable in experiences of harm. As an example, after writing "students" and "kids bringing drugs to school" as responses to what make schools feel unsafe, the same student defined safety in schools as adults helping to *"get kids the help they need for drugs and other stuff - don't just give up on them or come down on them - it makes our schools less safe for everyone".*

Educational community members who positioned police as safe utilized "child/children" and "kids" as lexical choices for students and engaged intertextuality (*genre*), rhetorical questions (genre) cause-effect construction (genre) and personal storytelling (style) to represent the absence of SROs in schools as a threat to student safety and protection. This was done both by referencing past events and personal connections to incidents where school violence occurred in the absence of a police officer ("*Experiencing the Thurston shooting first hand, I am sickened that my own kids will potentially attend a school as helpless as ours was, without a designated officer"*), as well as positioning violence as an inevitable consequence of removing SROs from school buildings. These educational community members (including parents and teachers) used rhetorical questions as a method of persuasion (*"Who will be there to protect our precious children when evil walks in?"*).

On the other hand, educational community members who positioned police as unsafe and advocated for the removal of SROs named police (as both individuals and as an institution) as a threat to student safety and wellbeing. These educational community members utilized intertextuality (genre), use of academic language (genre/style), and naming race (style) to name students of color, and marginalized students as needed to be protected from bias, discrimination, and violence perpetuated and represented through the presence of police in schools.

In other public comments (also offered by educational community members that identified as teachers and as parents), rhetorical questions were used in connection with the use of academic language. This seemed to serve the purpose of posing a sort of intellectual challenge or to center the attention of school board members (*"When you look back on this decision, will you know you acted in the best interest of our most vulnerable students?"*). Board members employed this same discursive strategy in similar ways: as a technique used by individual board members to introduce a rupture in dominant ideologies of policing by asking other board members to consider who and how safety is defined and used as a place of leverage in decision making (*"I think a central question for me, and one we heard from our community is: who gets to feel safe?"*).

Rhetorical questions were also used by students in workshops but associated with a different outcome or discursive function. In these statements, students used this discursive strategy when accentuating the absurdity, frustration or disbelief in a situation they were describing (*"What the hell?" or "What do they think is going to happen?"*). This appeared in student workshops as part of conversation and discussions, and in written submissions collected as artifacts during the workshop.

The use of rhetorical questions across data sets and employed as a strategy by multiple educational community members in discourses of students calls attention to how similar discursive moves can appear across different genres (ways of interacting) and offer insight into the ways different individuals position societal perceptions or attitudes as absurd or beyond rationality. In this study, the use of rhetorical questions across different conversations and contexts illuminates how (and what) individuals assume are common sense beliefs about safety,

police, or students as well as what structures and beliefs are unquestionable, or alternatively, those that are beyond reproach.

Discourses of Police

Across data sets, educational community members referenced police as both individuals (in connection with discursive strategies such as personal storytelling and naming individuals), as well as policing as an institution or a system. In fact, it was common that educational community members across both public comments and the school board transcripts moved back and forth between referencing police as a human social actor (as individuals) and nonhuman social actor (system). As referenced in Chapter 5, educational community members who positioned police as safe utilized discursive strategies including: personal storytelling (style), narrative (genre/style), reference to personal connections (style), and naming positionality/proximity to schools (genre) to name SROs as safe, and to position Eugene 4J SROs as different and separate from national conversations about police and police violence. In the same section of analysis, educational community members who positioned police as unsafe utilized personal storytelling, narrative, and the naming of individuals and positionality in proximity to schools as a means of drawing attention to the actions of individual and local officers and positioning police-school partnerships as essential to student and community safety.

The use of personal storytelling across data sets and conversations about policing and safety reveals important power dynamics within discourses of students and safety by illuminating the way individuals use language to a) construct identity and positionality, and b) to leverage identity and positionality to represent oneself as holding expertise and power. Further, the

prevalence of personal storytelling across domains (topics) and genres (ways of interacting) in this study suggests that power structures within society support a belief or assumption that personal narratives assert authority, establishes credibility, and is an effective means of centering, marginalizing, or questioning the perspectives of others who do not share the same lived experience. In this way storytelling is not neutral. For some educational community members (students, those who have experienced police violence), this could be personal storytelling as a form of resistance or means of asserting agency. For others, storytelling might be used as a means of positioning themselves as holding critical insight and power (stories as a means of claiming proximity to students such as parents or teachers in public comments, as well as storytelling that builds personal connection to the Thurston shooting in the late 90's).

As an example, public comments and educational community members who positioned police as safe utilized intertextuality combined with personal storytelling to provide direct references to historical incidents of school violence ("*Experiencing the Thurston shooting first hand, I am sickened that my own kids will potentially attend a school as helpless as ours was, without a designated officer"*). These educational community members also used intertextuality to make indirect or vague references to national events of policies ("*what is happening in our nation*"). In contrast, public comments and educational community members who positioned police as unsafe utilized intertextuality and personal storytelling together to make direct references to the murder of George Floyd, to local incidents of police violence and murder, as well as direct references to academic studies and social justice movements/media (#blacklivesmatter).

This use of direct and indirect references to events or threats was associated with another key finding that emerged across datasets: invoking or referencing threats that were not clearly connected with an individual or a human social actor. This reference to actorless threats appeared most often as a persuasive technique employed by those who positioned police as safe and SROs as integral to school safety. This was done in combination with other discursive techniques (namely cause-effect construction as named in Chapter 5, as well as threatening language). Therefore, beliefs unveiled by this data suggests that some parents, educators, and community members a) find comfort in the presence of police to protect against unknown or unnamed threats to themselves and to their children, and b) assume that police are prepared to respond. These beliefs may tie into other social discourses, assumptions or associations between being armed and being safe, or alternatively (or concurrently) the representation of guns and shootings in schools as an inevitable or unquestionable reality.

Interestingly, references to non-human social actors as threats to school safety surfaced as a discourse and discursive strategy employed consistently by three key groups of educational community members across data sets: 1) students, and 2) educational community members who positioned police as unsafe, and 3) school board members. The presence of non-human social actors across data sets shows that educational community members believe and position threats to students and school safety as rooted in systemic or social practices that move across and beyond the actions of individuals. These threats include racism, discrimination, bias, and bullying. Yet, while a reference to systemic threats (such as racism, discrimination and bias) positioned non-human social actors as threats to student safety, it was clear from these comments what human social actors these educational community members saw as representative of the

systemic threat. For students, this was adults or teachers, and for public comments this was police.

Discourses of Schools

Discourses about the role of schools in society, in communities, and in service to students was a central theme that surfaced across all datasets and domains of discourses (police, students, and safety). However, assumptions and representations about the responsibilities and purpose of schooling differed greatly among educational community members. This is a critical place of overlap and place of tension (cruces) surfaced in this study. In this section I examine two sub discourses that emerged as places of overlap among datasets, educational community members, and clusters of discourses. This includes 1) the representation of schools as responsible for more than academic content, and 2) the representation that schools are not equipped to meet the current needs of students. Within each of these sections I call attention to the areas of overlap in discourses, as well as places of divergence and tension in the use of discursive strategies and the positioning of police as safe or unsafe.

Schools as responsible for more than academic content. Tension between representations of schools. On one hand (largely presented by those promoting relationships between police and schools), schools are represented as responsible for creating safe and responsible citizens. For preparing students for engagement with the systems and structures that have existed and that currently exist (i.e.: legal system, police) as well as threats that were positioned as inevitable (such as child abuse and school shootings).

In contrast, educational community members that positioned police as unsafe in public comments as well as student in workshops framed the responsibility of schools differently: as

social spaces with an obligation to know and to name what isn't working or is inequitable in society and to create and model different systems, structures, and experiences as a means of challenging and changing those inequities in society.

The needs of students exceed the current capacity of schools. Another central theme and area of overlap among data sets and representations of students offered by educational community members worth noting is the positioning of students as having needs beyond what schools currently offer or have the capacity to offer. This came up across all data sets, and in representations of students offered by all educational community members (including students).

For those who positioned police as unsafe (and who advocated for the removal of SROs from Eugene school buildings, this discourse of schools was presented through the presence and emphasis on counselors and mental health (as social actors), as well as the offering of solutions (style) for school safety as shifting funding and ideologies away from policing (public comments) and compliance (student workshops) but towards care and support represented through the presence of counseling, mental health supports, and access to community services for students.

In public comments (across both dominate and oppositional ideologies of policing), educational community members (including parents, teachers, and students) described the need for more staff to be able to both preventatively (through relationship building) and in response to/intervention with behavior. Those who positioned police as unsafe requested the presence of mental health professionals, counselors, and restorative justice coordinators, while those who advocated for police in schools positioned SROs as trained and effective in responding to student behaviors and needs. These educational community members relied on personal storytelling

(style) and the naming of individuals (style) as discursive strategies to position the goodness of local SROs alongside representations of student experiences that normalized child abuse, violent outbursts from students, drugs and bullying.

Students (from across both workshops and public comments submitted to the school board) also referenced that the current structure of schools (including the beliefs and practices held by most teachers) as ineffective or unwilling to meet the current needs of students. As referenced in Chapter 6, students positioned young people as having rights in schools and did so by critiquing practices in schools or actions from teachers/adults that threatened these rights (style) paired with an offering of solutions (genre/style). Examples of these critiques and solutions offered in student workshops, include:

> "Less conforming and more community and unity. Teachers and adults would have to belief that students should be allowed to not be scared at school."

> "Adults would need to believe in acceptance, and consistently learning and evolving for the youth they serve. They would have to believe students - that students are believed."

> "Adults prioritize making cookie cutter robots and not being aware humans - its ok to make mistakes just stay accountable and move on. Adults don't do that."

These statements offered by student illuminate two important findings: 1) that the use of a discursive strategy to pair solutions alongside critiques was central to students and those who positioned policing as unsafe, and 2) that beliefs and assumptions about students and schools maintained, upheld, or disrupted by adults in school buildings create different experiences of school safety.

Connection of Findings to Literature & Implications

While educational community members differed in how and if they presented students as dangerous (as discussed earlier) within conversations of student needs and behaviors, there was a consistent narrative across data sets that student behaviors in school were more than teachers could or wanted to address. This finding is significant, in that it a) intersects with literature on the emergence of formal school police partnerships in the late 1940's (a call from teachers following the integration of schools and the movement of Black students, Brown students, poor students, and immigrants into predominantly white public schools) (Kafka, 2011; Sojoyner, 2013), and b) indicates an area of agreement across educational community members and contexts (policing, safety, the role of schools). This finding is directly connected with the problem that motivated this study – that despite decades of research, student/community outcry, and declarations of school boards on the impacts of school policing on marginalized students, formal partnerships with police and schools continue to exist and expand (NCES, 2019).

What these findings highlight are the ways assumptions, beliefs, and representations of students lie at the heart of the expansion, maintenance, and rupturing of the school prison nexus. In the following section, I explore this interpretation in greater detail and move from the presentation of findings in this study towards theoretical and practical implications and recommendations.

Implications and Recommendations

By paying careful attention to discursive dynamics within conversations about school safety, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of how language is employed to construct and negotiate narratives about students and police, as well as notions of learning, control, and safety within educational settings. Such insights are critical in naming the ways language functions to maintain (and to rupture) the school prison nexus.

One of these central insights is that while clusters of discourses about students, police, and safety surfaced across data sets and across educational community members, the area of greatest divergence or tension between and among data sets and educational community members was around the central question: What do students need to be protected in school buildings and what does protection looks like? Looking at a specifical local context (Eugene 4J's board review of and subsequent decision to remove SROs from district buildings), we can assume that the discursive strategies employed by educational community members who advocated for this outcome were successful. This finding suggests that the strategies and representations that were positioned and utilized by these educational community members (intertextuality, naming race, use of formal and academic language, the use of a central question "who gets to feel safe") were effective in transforming policy and/or social change by rupturing or challenging dominant ideologies of policing (policing as safe).

While a relevant finding, and one that opens further exploration into the transfer of community voice across policy decisions via public comments, I position the central finding of this research as something different. I suggest that while the answer to the question "who gets to feel safe in schools" was answered by educational community members within and across the

data from this study (i.e.: not marginalized students), the findings from this study (and specifically the centering of student voices and experiences in discussions of school safety) offer another, perhaps more insidious or complex answer: Not young people.

This returns to the problem that motivated this study – despite public outcry, despite findings from decades of research, students of color, queer and trans students, and disabled students continue to feel targeted and unsafe in schools.

While this study's central findings contribute to the base of scholarship that explores the everyday ways carcerality and oppression are discursively and materially constructed, maintained and challenged, this research also illuminates how discourses about school safety and policing expose ideologies that are so pervasive or embedded with institutional and societal norms become unquestioned. In particular, ideologies and discourses circulated by educational community members that represent young people and children in schools as dangerous, irresponsible, and in need of supervision and control. These discourses normalize the marginalization of student voices, restrictions on their autonomy, and the invalidation of their experiences and perspectives even in spaces where they are the majority (i.e.: schools). The privileging of adults over young people solely based on age, reinforces adult control over resources and decision-making in institutions and across society. This set of beliefs, attitudes, and practices that grant undue authority and control to adults over young people has been named and described as adultism (LeFrançois, 2014; Liou & Literat, 2020; Rombalski, 2020; Rubin & Hayes, 2010).

Theoretical Implications

Adultism as an Overlooked Pillar of the Prison Nation

"Adultism lets this [a lack of safety at schools] happen. And racism. And policies, and the lack of knowledge from teachers. And school boards, and budgets" - Student in Workshops

Adultism operates on the premise of adult authority and control, often at the expense of youth rights, agency, and well-being (Oto, 2023; Bell, 1995). Based on the findings from this study, I position adultism as the central threat to student safety in schools and that discourses of and about young people normalized by adultism is central to the functioning of exclusionary punishment, mass incarceration and the prison nation.

Returning to Beth Richie's examination of the "prison nation" (which delves into the intricate interplay between societal structures and the prison industrial complex), I situate this claim alongside Richie's naming of the U.S prison system as not merely as an apparatus of punishment, but also as a tool for disciplining and regulating populations perceived as posing a threat to prevailing social norms and power structures. I build from Richie's framing (as well as the work of Meiners, Davis, and Rodriguez) to not only position schools as an institution that is central to the functioning of the prison nation (through the transfer and normalizing of punishment and norms), but schools as sites where adultism intersects with other forms of subjugation to normalize disposability and the silencing, removal, and disappearance of those who pose a threat to dominant social norms and power structures.

This study highlights how adultism functions to create safety and belonging as conditional in schools and in communities. This study also highlights the ways students conceptualize safety, and positions how and what beliefs about young people are central to student's experience of safety. Therefore, the framing of adultism as central to the functioning of mass incarceration and the school prison nexus calls for transformative action at both the individual and systemic levels to create a more just and equitable society. It asks for a

transformation of educational scholarship, pre-service education, and social practices and policies, and holds implications for researchers, practioners, as well as parents, elders and community members. Further, I contend that 1) by recognizing the interconnectedness of various systems of oppression, 2) naming age as a social identity and axis of difference often ignored within positionality for young people, and 3) centering the voices, dreams and experiences of impacted communities (students), attempts at school safety are more likely to be effective as well as culturally and identity affirming.

In this next section, I pull from an emerging base of scholarship to provide a definition and overview of adultism, followed by a positioning of the need for a theoretical framework that allows for the analysis and centering of the unique experiences of young people and children. I close by presenting YouthCrit as capable of meeting this need, describing how an offshoot of critical race theory (CRT) rooted in the experience of young people is capable of naming, confronting, and dismantling the ideological and structural entanglement of adultism and mass incarceration.

Adultism. Adultism refers to the systemic discrimination and prejudice against young people, often perpetuated by adults who hold positions of power and authority in society (Alderson, 2020; Bell, 1995, Oto, 2023). Prejudiced assumptions about young people are enacted and in various forms, such as the marginalization of youth voices, restrictions on their autonomy, and the invalidation of their experiences and perspectives (Smith, 2024).

Functioning as a systemic form of oppression, adultism intersects with other societal injustices like settler colonialism, hetero-paternalism, racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia, compounding the marginalization experienced by youth of color in economically disadvantaged

communities (Bertrand et al., 2017, 2020). Adultism appears across educational spaces present in ideological, relational, and structural forms (Bertrand et al., 2020; Bettencourt, 2020; Liou & Literat, 2020; Zeldin et al., 2013). Left unnamed or unchallenged, adultism indoctrinates youth of color and other marginalized students into accepting and internalizing additional forms of oppression, subjugation and erasure as normal (DeJong & Love, 2015; Gillen, 2019; Love, 2019, Love, 2023).

Adultism, as illuminated by scholars such as LeFrançois (2014), Liou and Literat (2020), Rombalski (2020), and Rubin and Hayes (2010), is deeply rooted in developmentalist theories of human growth, notably exemplified by Piaget's work. These theories perpetuate the notion that adults are inherently developed, mature, and rational, contrasting with the portrayal of youth as underdeveloped, immature, and irrational (LeFrançois, 2014). This dichotomy positions young people as dependent on adults for guidance and growth (Bell, 2010; Bertrand et al., 2020; Bettencourt, 2020; LeFrançois, 2014; Liou & Literat, 2020; Zeldin et al., 2013), disregarding their perspectives and agency. Consequently, youth experiences, knowledge, and capacity for action are often marginalized and overlooked within adultist frameworks (Oto, 2023).

As an emerging field, research that examines adultism names how "beliefs, attitudes, policies, practices that construct adults as developed, mature, intelligent, and experienced, based solely on their age" serves to normalize and to institutionalize the control of resources and decisions by adults in society. Writing about adultism, Bell (1995) contends that, "except for prisoners and a few other institutionalized groups, young people are more controlled than any other group in society." As adults decide what is "wrong" and "right" for youth from the time they are born, Bell argues that "the opinions of most young people are not valued; they are

punished at the will or whim of adults; their emotions are considered 'immature'" (Bell, 1995). Such understandings of adultism are useful for calling attention to the ways in which power shapes or informs social structures and relations between young people and adults, as well as how adultism intersects or is parallel with other forms of oppression (McClellan, 2020; Hall, 2021; Sutherland et al., 2023).

The conceptualization of adultism as structural and discursive allows for an examination of how the subjugation of young people is spatially reproduced, reasserted, and resisted. Additionally, the emergence of scholarship and frameworks capable of capturing the nuanced analysis of adultism allow research to consider the ways in which the participation or activism of young people and adults who work together can interrupt, challenge, or trouble adultism (Bertrand, Brooks, & Domínguez, 2020; Liou & Literat, 2020; Oto, 2023). Thus, recent literature on adultism demonstrates how it operates in different spaces, it relates to domination across power, and it can be confronted to work towards social change.

CRT & Adultism: A Need for YouthCrit. The understandings produced from this study coupled with this framing of adultism and the need for theoretical frameworks that center the experiences and on the framing of adultism, I position of adultism, (experienced amidst other layers of subordination as experienced through the intersection of other identities and forms of oppression such as colonialism, heteropaternalism, ableism, racism, gendered violence, and anti-trans and anti-queerism) as endemic to schooling. I take the stance that the pervasiveness and presence of adultism (as present and circulated across and between all levels of social institutions) invites the need for a theoretical framework that explicitly centers the unique

experiences of young people in the examination and challenging of social structures, practices and discourses of community protection and of learning.

I came to YouthCrit through the learnings of students and young people engaged in this study, and I offer it here not to claim ownership, but in the imperfect, iterative, and sometimes messy attempt to find the edges of a framework that can honor and examine the intersection of adultism and mass incarceration. I join others, such as Greer (2024) in the craving and in the weaving together of a theoretical framework from which we (as educational researchers and educators) can name and center the unique intersection of parallelled oppressions that young people experience in schools and across institutions. Because of my commitment to prison abolition, I am particularly interested in the ways a positioning of YouthCrit as theoretical framework would confront, disrupt, and envision education beyond: a) representations of young people as incomplete and that perpetuate deficit framing and surveillance, b) practices and policies in educational and community settings that normalize the removal of disappearance of young people from spaces of learning and play for non-compliance, and c) the existence and expansion of the prison industrial complex. To introduce YouthCrit, I begin by offering a quick orientation to the offshoots of CRT (specifically DisCrit), spending time to name how this legacy of scholars and activists help to justify and invite the emergence of YouthCrit tenets.

Since the 1980's several offshoots of Critical Race Theory (CRT) have emerged, each expanding upon the foundational principles of CRT to address specific intersections of race with other social factors. These offshoots represent a diversification of the CRT framework, allowing for more nuanced analyses of how various forms of oppression intersect and impact marginalized communities (citation). These offshoots include: LatCrit (extends CRT to focus specifically on

the experiences of Latino/a/x individuals and communities within the legal system) (Arriola, 1997, 1998; Stefancic, 1998) ; TribalCrit (centers on the experiences of Indigenous peoples and their interactions with legal and political systems. It explores the impacts of colonialism, land dispossession, and legal frameworks on Indigenous communities, highlighting the ongoing struggles for sovereignty and self-determination) (Brayboy, 2001, 2002); QueerCrit (explores how race, sexuality, and gender intersect to shape individuals' experiences of oppression and privilege) (Teman, 2019), and DisCrit (which applies CRT principles to analyze how race intersects with disability and ableism) (Annamma, 2013) . I explore DisCrit in greater detail in the following section, as I see the goals of DisCrit as foundational to the emergence YouthCrit.

DisabilityCRT or DisCrit applies CRT principles to analyze how race intersects with disability and ableism. It examines the ways in which racialized stereotypes and discrimination affect disabled individuals from diverse backgrounds, advocating for greater inclusion and accessibility within social justice movements (Annama, 2013, 2018) As an emerging field within educational researcher, DisCrit emphasizes both the material and spatial construction of and labeling of students - specifically the ways "by which race and disability coalesce at the intersections of gender identity, sexuality, and class that enable the fatal dis-location of certain marked bodies as matter out of (White) (normative) place" (Adams & Erevelles, 2016, p. 132).

Using analytical tools and thinking from two academic fields, Critical Race Theory and Disability Studies, DisCrit scholars (most notably Annamma, Connor, and Ferri) bring this theoretical framing primarily into the field of education and educational research in an attempt to recognize the ways disability is used as a tool for removal while also a valued and core identity of many students that carries with it a strong history of resistance (S. Annamma, 2016; S. A.

Annamma, 2017; S. A. Annamma & Handy, 2021). DisCrit frames dis/ability as not a thing to be fixed (S. A. Annamma, 2017), but as a process – always about the ways in which environment or social spaces are constructed (and maintained) to support or hinder access for particular bodies. Central to DisCrit is the recognition that conventional approaches to understanding disability and race often fail to account for the complex ways in which these social categories intersect and shape educational experiences, as well as the ways disability positions individuals as holding homogenized experiences, as being without voice, expertise, or agency.

Core tenets of YouthCrit. This study invites scholars and practitioners to consider how language, social and legal categories and classifications work in the same ways to position young people and children as without knowledge, without agency, autonomy, and without rights. The intersection of adultism and other forms of oppression mean that young people of color experience paralleled and compounded subjugation, and that young people (and in particular young people of color, and those with other marginalized social identities) hold critical insight and understanding of the systems, structures, and ideologies that maintain exclusion, violence, and disposability as normalized outcomes for those that threaten the status quo.

Inspired by the work of scholars to apply CRT principles to understand the unique experiences of young people (i.e: DisCrit, TribalCrit, QueerCrit), and from my learnings with young people I offer YouthCrit as theoretical framework capable of naming the unique intersection of adultism and other experiences of oppression. I see this framework as guided by 10 core tenets:

1. Adultism is endemic to schooling,

2. Adultism perpetuates and legitimizes representations of young people as deficient and infantile.
3. Rooted in colonialism, heteropaternalism, racism, and abelism, adultism forms the basis of compulsory schooling models which normalize silence, compliance, individualism, and hierarchical systems of rewards and punishments as priorities for learning.
4. Ideologies and practices that normalize the removal, disappearance, and confinement of students also normalize and perpetuate state violence and mass incarceration.
5. Adultism moves across cultures, identities, and social structures, yet is rarely invited to be named.
6. Young people hold multiple social identities (such as race, gender, disability, class) that intersect and interact to shape unique experiences of subjugation and oppression.
7. Research and teaching rooted in consensual relations that affirms the dignity and agency of all children and all young people requires the challenging of protocols, policies, and practices that maintain adult hierarchies and rely on coercion.
8. All young people have inherent brilliance, the innate capacity to learn, and critical insights and solutions for collective care and community safety beyond policing and state control.
9. Inter-generational solidary with young people is essential to challenge colonial narratives that undermine the sacredness of childhood and self-determination.
10. Reverence for young people as sacred is critical to the work of liberation.

Practical Implications

"How might educational policy look different if it was informed by a strengths-based approach to working with, not for, youth? And what would policy look like if young people were

at the table participating in the decisions that impact their lives as active contributing members of society? Through this inquiry, policy makers and educators might consider how their perspectives values a type of knowledge that is created through collaboration and in action" (Quijada Cerecer, Cahill & Bradley, 2013, p.221)

Based on the findings from this study I content that it is adultism the feeds and allows the school prison nexus to function. Adultism in schools (experienced among other layers of oppression and marginalization) normalizes exclusion, removal, and positions those in power as unquestionable and in charge of definitions and experiences of safety. Adultism and adult supremacy (as a foundational to the functioning of prison nation) is a form of oppression that is perpetuated and normalized in schools and experienced across institutions and social spaces. It is not something that individuals consciously perpetuate (while there are some that do), but rather an insidious presence with roots in colonialism, heteropaternalism and white supremacy.

Similarly, Leanne Simpson's work on the sacred nature of childhood directly challenges the pervasive issue of adultism in schooling, as discussed in YouthCrit. Simpson's emphasis on children as spiritual beings with inherent knowledge counters the adultist view that sees young people as deficient and in need of shaping by adults (Simpson, 2014). Her advocacy for community-based child-rearing practices and storytelling underscores the importance of recognizing children's dignity and agency, which is often undermined by schooling models rooted in colonialism, heteropaternalism, racism, and ableism (Simpson, 2016). These models normalize hierarchical structures, silence, compliance, and the marginalization of young voices, perpetuating state violence and mass incarceration.

Simpson's call for decolonizing childhood and reclaiming its sacredness resonates with the YouthCrit tenet that challenges protocols maintaining adult hierarchies and coercion. By affirming the sacredness of childhood, Simpson's work aligns with the view that all young people

possess inherent brilliance and critical insights essential for community safety and collective care beyond state control. Her writings advocate for intergenerational solidarity to resist colonial narratives and uphold the sacredness and self-determination of young people, which is crucial for liberation and dismantling oppressive systems (Simpson, 2017).

I move from Simpson's invitations, from the framing of adultism and the positioning of YouthCrit as a needed theoretical framework to offer a number of practical implications. I organize these strategies into two key categories that emerged from this study, referencing different implications and invitations for different educational community members including: scholars, pre-service teacher education programs, educators, parents, activists and students. In the sections below I speak to these implications broadly, and then offer explicit recommendations organized by the following systems or levels of impact: Policy, District, School Building, Classrooms.

Implications and Invitations for Educational Community Members.

Interrogating & Challenging Beliefs about Young People: A Focus on Language. Adultism as an ideology with material reality, positions a focus on discourse and language as critical to rupture of the school prison nexus. In turn, language operates as a mechanism through which dominant ideologies and discourses about young people, and disability are co-constructed and intersect with discourses about race, legal status, and gender or sexual identities. YouthCrit underscores the significance of language as a site of power, resistance and meaning-making within educational and community spaces. By engaging aspects of critical discourse analysis alongside the foundational commitments of CRT, I contend that YouthCrit serves as a framework for scholars, educators, parents, and students to name and to notice a) how language

is used to marginalize and to stigmatize people who are perceived as children or students, b) how this marginalization is normalized across individuals and institutions, c) how naming and challenging discourses of and about young people is critical in the transformation of education.

For example, the presence of deficit-oriented language, such as labeling students as "at-risk", "innocent", or "in harms way" perpetuates narratives that undermine young people's wisdom and agency and construct a sort of certainty or limiting of potential. Alternatively, amplifying the voices (stories and solutions) of young people navigating adultism and intersecting identities holds potential to disrupt hegemonic narratives that limit social imaginings of safety and justice, and lead to more inclusive and equitable educational environments.

This holds implications for **educational researchers** in the positioning of students and in the naming of problems in schools, challenging scholars and those conducting research in and about schools to consider the ways deficit descriptions and pathologization of students (and specifically marginalized students) are normalized across fields of study. In alignment with abolition compatible methodologies that aim to disrupt narratives and structures that privileges or makes intelligible certain types of knowledge over others, researchers and scholars may find the tenets of YouthCrit as a helpful guide and critical companion in study design and in the analyzing and presentation of study findings.

For those in higher education who work within **teacher education programs**, this focus on language and the interrogation of internalized beliefs about students and young people is particularly salient as the way undergraduate and master's students are treated in preparation for their own classroom holds potential to disrupt power discrepancies and deficit narratives between students and teachers. This might be offered both in an examination of policies and practices in

grading, communication, and in expectations for coursework, as well as through regular opportunities for feedback, and activities that ask students to share through storytelling or through reflection about what and how they experience and have seen adultism at play in educational spaces.

Furthermore, work within teacher education holds opportunities to disrupt oppressive discourses about young people and children through counter-narratives that challenge prevailing notions of ability, autonomy, and the intellectual and empathetic capacity of students. This invites and emphasizes pre-service educators and pre-service education programs to consider the way their coursework engages or resists stagist views of child development, behaviorist theories that disregard the inherent gifts and intuitive curiosity children already have, as well as behavior management techniques that conflate physical stillness and compliance with learning. This also invites teacher educators and teacher candidates to notice where and how play and connection are essential to learning across all ages and communities and how to center the voices, ideas, and experiences of young people in all aspects of the classroom community.

Findings from this study also offers insights to **those in classrooms**, and to **those who parent** to interrogate the ways in which innocence narratives are withheld or deployed (and towards which students) to either justify punitive responses to developmentally appropriate behaviors (narratives that position young people as manipulative, deviant, or disruptive). YouthCrit as a framework from which to name and disrupt adultism through the discursive and material pathologization of young people helps to see how individual actions, polices, and practices deny certain children (those from marginalized backgrounds) the presumption of innocence. Racism, classism, and ableism intersect and run parallel to the work of adultism and

work to justify the criminalized of children through policies like zero-tolerance and exclusionary discipline and community policing models that create additional categories for criminal charges based on age (i.e.: curfew, runaway, status, truancy).

By interrogating the ways in which language shapes and co-creates perceptions of young people, of disability and race, **scholars, practitioners, parents, and students** can work towards disrupting deficit centered narratives, to center the voices and experiences of marginalized students, and in turn to create more just and inclusive learning environments that affirm the identities and experiences of all students.

Reflect On Our Own Internalized Beliefs. *"Trust Children. Nothing could be more simple – or more difficult. Difficult, because to trust children we must trust ourselves – and most of us were taught as children that we could not be trusted" (Holt, 2017, pxii-xiii)*

Adultism is present across all social and political spaces. Embedded withing heteropaternalism and colonialism, Adultism transfers and is present across cultures, institutions, and geographic boundaries through compulsory schooling, which then exports and reproduces adultism as a unique form of oppression that moves across multiple social and racialized identities. Therefore, one of the greatest places of practical implications inspired by this study is the invitation for **adults (across multiple roles and fields that intersect with students)** to engage in reflection about our own experiences as young people, and the internalized messages we learned about ourselves, about adults, about compliance, belonging, about childhood, and about being a good student. This internal works of interrogating the normalized beliefs and assumptions of adultism is supported by the framing of YouthCrit, and is something that can be presented, discovered, and re-discovered by people at all ages. Reflection of our own experiences

as young people, in partnership with young people allows **those in an adult or in a leadership role** to move in solidarity with young people to name and notice where power discrepancies and deficit framing exist, and to dismantle beliefs about ourselves, about students, children, and young people.

Listening and Solidarity with All students. *"For schools to be safe, adults would have to belief that students have a voice, and let us use it. Believing that all students deserve to get an education because the ability to critically think lets people criticize and understand their world." [student workshops]*

Solidarity naturally ruptures normative and material realities of oppression (Bayertz, 1999; De Lissovoy & Brown, 2013; Gaztambide Fernández, 2012; Scholz, 2008). In this way, I position that listening to and moving with the needs and solutions of young people as solidarity is both disruptive and normative. Solidarity is disruptive in that it negates the impacts of oppression by naming and refusing power discrepancies. At the same time, it is also normative, as solidarity brings into material and discursive form another way of being.

Oto (2023) names this commitment to relational solidarity as a pedagogy, and the work of intergenerational relationship as guided by a new way to imagine being in community (including educational communities) that are not bound to systems of oppression. Taken together, the intentional inclusion of student voices alongside a pedagogy of solidarity demands that **both adults and young people are willing to unlearn** the conventions of "self, action, and culture so that anti-oppressive ways of being, knowing, acting, and creating can take hold" (OTO, 2023, p.536).

In alignment with this commitment, and the commitments and questions from which I engaged in this research study, I close this section with solutions offered from students across my datasets. My hope is that these findings, questions and solutions inspire more conversations, listening to, and movement with **students (including those in elementary school, life skills classroom, state facilities and juvenile detention classrooms)**. My hope is that the brilliance and insight in these student's solutions to school safety will invite an interrogation of the way we (as adults, educators, parents) have been conditioned by schooling to dismiss our own brilliance, our knowing, and autonomy. For students, I hope that closing in this way honors your experiences and allows your knowledge a platform that doesn't just elevate your voice but provides you a vantage point from which you can see all the angles of your wisdom, the texture of hope and possibility your critique and solutions present our world.

Table 7.1: Student Led Solutions and Implications for Adults in Schools

If Schools Were Safe...
"youth aren't quieted by every move they make"
"there would be lots of availability for youth to remove themselves from bad environments - there would be good support systems and understanding staff"
"there would be good communication to all students"
"we would be able to just show up and just be rather than complete tasks to meet and end"
"youth's cultural/religious backgrounds are respected"
If schools were safe...
"there would be student led activities"
"there would be teachers who care and listen to all of their students, and school board thinking of the students, safety and enforcing rules based on that"
If schools were safe...
"People wouldn't be scared to talk to each other because of differences"
"Teachers would know that as young people we are consistently learning and growing, so we aren't perfect and we will make mistakes"
"Adults would believe we can make good changes and decisions"
"Adults would believe we don't want violence"
"Adults would believe that we all have the potential to do great things. And they would talk to and treat us like that. Like they believed that".

Recommendations: Practices

Policy Level

The recognition and naming of adultism as a form of discrimination, and the acknowledgment of children as holders of rights, represent crucial steps towards creating more equitable educational policies. Utilizing frameworks such as YouthCrit can aid in recognizing adultism within educational settings, and this understanding can prompt a critical examination of how existing policies and conceptions of child protection might limit student agency. For instance, policies intended to ensure safety might inadvertently reinforce adultist practices by restricting children's autonomy and treating them as passive recipients rather than active participants in their own lives. Therefore, social service organizations and educational policymakers must reframe child protection policies to avoid perpetuating adultism, ensuring that these policies empower rather than constrain students.

The enactment of anti-adultism legislation, which explicitly recognizes and addresses adultism similarly to racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression, is another significant policy implication. Such legislation would align with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), emphasizing the need to treat children as rights-holders. This shift could facilitate the framing of access to education not as compulsory or managed through carceral of punitive actions, but education and educational environments as grounded in respect and promotion of the rights and agency of young people.

Inclusive curriculum mandates represent another vital area of policy change and action. These mandates would require curricula that reflect the diverse experiences and histories of young people, particularly those marginalized by race, gender, disability, and class. An inclusive curriculum would not only support the adoption of ethnic studies, Black/African American Studies, and Tribal History/Shared History but also advocate for student agency in curricular

decisions. Policies should challenge the traditional prioritization of parental consent over student interests in matters such as health, wellness, sexuality, and ethnic studies, thereby extending students' rights to choose and participate in educational content that resonates with their identities and experiences.

This study also highlights the need for policy changes to help support a shift in accountability, specifically surrounding instruction and student wellbeing. Developing and implementing alternative assessment methods that go beyond standardized testing is critical to provide a more holistic evaluation of student learning. De-siloing student surveys and standardized testing to show connections and to develop common language surrounding educational success that incorporates student experiences of safety, belonging, and identity offers a more comprehensive understanding of student abilities, but also different level of accountability for districts, administrators, and educators centered in student experiences and requests.

In addition to inclusive curriculum and expanded framings of accountability, policies supporting community-based education models can and should be influenced by YouthCrit. Supporting policies that fund and promote educational models emphasizing community involvement, collective learning, and non-coercive pedagogy can create more inclusive and supportive educational environments. For example, initiatives like Grow Your Own Teacher programs, which leverage the brilliance and resources of local communities and students, exemplify how policy can foster community-centered educational approaches.

Furthermore, establishing and enforcing comprehensive student rights policies can protect against bias and discrimination in disciplinary actions implemented within school

buildings under the guise or pressure from state and federal policy mandates. This disciplinary ensure students are involved in understanding and naming due process and promotes student agency in understanding and navigating their rights in regard to disciplinary and academic actions. These policies contribute to students being recognized as active participants in their own education, in community safety, and in conceptions of and movement towards justice and accountability within educational contexts.

Finally, the framing and findings of this study offer critical insight for educational research policy and implementation. For example, in addition to IRB ethnics, research boards, departments, and governing entities within the field of educational research might consider how the involvement of students incorporates both guardian and student consent and engagement, including where and how young people as participants are invited into the learnings obtained from their insights. Creating policies that provide guidance on approaches to work with people under 18 that invites questions and reflections on consent, deficit framing, and mutuality not only respects the contributions of young participants but also ensures that research outcomes are relevant and actionable within their communities. By incorporating young people's perspectives into research analysis, policymakers can identify community-specific opportunities for change and improvement.

District Level

District-level practices are essential for operationalizing anti-adultism policies and fostering a more equitable educational environment. Key practices include student-led professional development, inclusion of student voice within and alongside existing governance

models (including school boards, advisory councils), ensuring data transparency and accountability, and expansion of holistic support services.

Implementing student-led professional development can provide ongoing training for teachers and administrators on recognizing and combating adultism. These programs should address the intersections of adultism with other forms of oppression, fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational environment. Additionally, reserving seats for student board members with equal voting rights can ensure that students' perspectives are integral to school board decisions. This inclusion promotes policies that are more attuned to students' needs and experiences, fostering a more democratic and responsive educational system. Student perspectives, voice, and ideas should be incorporated into existing governance structures as opposed to alongside or on the outside of decision-making processes, resisting a framing of listening without placing action or power. In addition, students with direct experience with school push out, and those who have been historically silenced or erased in school governance should be prioritized and supported in their role in these spaces. Students would provide input on where and how governance processes, policies, and culture replicate adultism, and governing councils would engage in student-led workshops and training that name adultism, and work to create agreements and inter-generational cross-identity mentorship opportunities for students and adults to learn and un-learn practices together.

Similarly, commitments to data transparency and accountability surface as essential district practices informed by this research. This includes moving beyond a definition of accountability to state and funding requirements, but towards students not only as recipients and therefore critical voices about the quality and relevance of services, but also as holding critical

insights and solutions on areas of success and areas of growth as associated with state and federal targets. This includes sharing of any and all student collected data back with students are regular intervals, and working with student voice and governance committees across buildings to determine areas of concern, places of interest, and actions and goals as informed by student articulated areas of need. regularly collecting disaggregated data on disciplinary actions, academic outcomes, and other relevant metrics can ensure accountability and drive improvements. Regular reports should incorporate student input and feedback, making data-driven decisions more transparent and inclusive to the student body and community.

And finally, findings from this study highlight the need to expand access to more holistic student support services, including mental health services and social workers. The prioritization, funding, and integration of mental health services name students' well-being and success academically as intrinsically connected.

School Building Level

Many of these district-level practical implications translate to changes and possibilities at individual school building levels. In addition to district level governance structures that include students in significant roles, this research points to the need to include student voice in decision making and accountability at each grade level – noticing and resisting rhetoric and discourses that position some students as able to conceive or and offer insight.

For example, directly involving students in conducting regular equity and safety audits could be a starting place for building-level practices. These audits can identify and address discriminatory practices and policies within schools, using frameworks like YouthCrit to set student-informed benchmarks and to analyze student input. Anonymous reporting systems can

provide students with spaces to express concerns and seek support without fear of retribution. Reporting systems could be monitored by students and incorporated into regular safety and equity audits. Input from these reporting systems would then be factored into professional training for staff, school-based and student resources, and community engagement opportunities.

Student input on funding of priorities based on access to data and reporting would also help to ensure that equitable funding is supported for student-led initiatives, clubs, and events. Schools should support and fund student-led initiatives and clubs that promote student voice, community engagement, cross-affinity collaboration and solidarity building. Ensuring that funding models do not perpetuate inequalities, adultist and racist frameworks that create standards around 'professionalism' or engage in favoritism is critical to meaningful student engagement and belonging.

Classroom-Level

In the classroom, co-created learning environments can enhance student engagement and ownership of their education. Teachers should collaborate with students to develop classroom rules, norms, and learning objectives, fostering a sense of responsibility and investment in the learning process. Regular invitations to see where and how students connect the learning back to objectives, to their identities, communities, and priorities is essential. This supports differentiated instruction that is co-led and collaboratively held by both teachers and students. Looking to inclusive educational models that center rightful presence (Cervantes-Soon, et. Al, 2017) as a framework alongside YouthCrit would support educators and students in working together across identities to build learning environments that are culturally sustaining, invogorating, and relevant while recognizing students inherent brilliance and capacity to learn.

Finally, creating and maintaining spaces where students can define and discuss their experiences of safety both within and outside of the classroom can normalize and formalize ways of caring for each other, and can broaden definitions and experiences of success within school buildings.

Limitations:

While this study has provided valuable insights into the discourses surrounding school policing and safety within educational communities, there are several limitations that must be acknowledged. Firstly, the online system for submission of public comments creates barriers to knowing the positionality (including position as a student) within the educational community. Information such as race, gender, economic status, and proximity to schools (via being a parent, student, former student, etc) was only able to be discovered through a word search of documents. Given a focus on student voice and the tenets within Youthcrit, the limitation of knowing or being able to more effectively sort through positionality created limitations surrounding knowing where and how student voices were invited, and to attend to that balance within the public comment data sets. This was one of the reasons for ensuring student voice was included through the facilitation of student workshops.

Additionally, in Phase 2 of the study, it was observed that lines of text where "police" and "safe" were collocated only occurred in public comments. This limited the diversity of genres and broader contexts analyzed within Phase 2, potentially constraining the depth of the findings. Furthermore, conversations with students did not center on police or school policing but on broader notions of school safety, particularly in the context of School Resource Officers (SROs) being removed from schools. This limitation suggests a need for future research to explore student perspectives on policing and safety within educational settings more explicitly, and to combine these conversations with critical discourse analysis to determine where and how overlap and divergence occurs within clusters of discourses about police, safety, and students. Overall, while this study offers valuable insights, these limitations underscore both a caution in

generalizing the interpreting the finding surrounding school policing and highlight avenues for further exploration and refinement in future research endeavors.

Suggestions for Future Research

Potential avenues for further investigation based on the gaps or unanswered questions revealed by these findings include:

Exploring Gender Intersections in Discussions of School Safety

There is a need for research that examines the intersections of gender within discussions of school safety. Investigating how gender identities shape perceptions of safety and experiences of policing could inform interventions that address the unique needs of different gender groups within educational settings.

Students as Collaborators in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Future studies could explore the active involvement of students as collaborators in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Investigating how students contribute to the analysis of discourses surrounding school policing and safety could enhance the validity and relevance of research findings.

YouthCrit as a Theoretical Framework

Further investigation is warranted into the application of YouthCrit as a theoretical framework in various educational contexts. Research could delve into how YouthCrit can inform educational policies and practices that move in solidarity with young people and challenge adultist structures.

YouthCrit, Palestine, Student Voice and State Violence

The ongoing genocide and human rights crisis inflicted on Palestine by the Israel and the U.S brings forward the urgency to name the ways adultism, settler colonialism, and imperialism have intersected to justify and normalize the death of Palestinian children, condoning state

violence against student activists, and tensions within social movements surrounding the use of intentional escalation to call attention to global solidarity. Grounded in YouthCrit, this analysis would also elevate student voice and student-led activism as an example of collective solidarity, as a rupturing of islamophobia and antisemitism, as both the promise and the failure of social justice education.

Understanding the Intersectionality of Adultism and Colonization

Future studies could explore the interconnectedness of adultism and colonization, particularly in the context of educational systems. Examining how these systems reinforce each other and are foundational narratives of young people allow for erasure and disposability, as well as how young people resist this erasure could provide valuable insights for addressing systemic oppression. Further, this research could examine Indigenous knowledge in the movement for prison abolition and YouthCrit, particularly in the ways a centering young people as sacred, and critical to the culture and community as a foundation for challenging the carceral logics.

Conclusion

This study sought to understand how and why policing in schools continues to be normalized in the U.S despite decades of research, student testimony, and public outcry that names the ways the presence of police on school campuses negatively impacts the wellbeing and academic access of students of color and students with and from marginalized backgrounds and identities. Informed by emerging scholarship that extends the metaphor of the school to prison pipeline to look at the ways ideologies about students are passed between institutions to maintain specific students as disposable or dangerous, this study engages Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate discourses of police, students, and school safety as they emerged in public comments and board meetings surrounding a decision to maintain or terminate contracts with law enforcement for the placement of School Resource Officers (SROs) in the Eugene 4J School District. As a commitment to centering the knowledge and experiences of young people was central to my theoretical framework and to my study, I ensured that the voices of students most impacted by the school prison nexus were present in my findings. I did so by pairing public documents from the board meeting (submitted public comments and board meeting recordings/transcripts) alongside transcripts and artifacts gathered during a series of student workshops with students who were currently, or formerly enrolled in Eugene 4J (or neighboring) schools.

Through a multi-phase study design that looked at text, discourse, and clusters of discourses across data sets this research project sought to answer three central questions: How do different educational community members (students, policy makers, and community) define school safety (safety for whom, safety from what)? How do different educational community

members (students, policy makers, and community) discursively produce police as safe or unsafe in schools? What do discourses of school safety and policing show us about the ways students are positioned as dangerous (and by whom), which students are positioned as dangerous, and who must be protected and from what within schools?

This project surfaced several key findings. The first, is a focus on discourses and the circulation of language among and between educational community members revealed places of common understandings, representations, and use of shared discursive strategies (use of possessive pronouns, use of lexical choices to refer to students) as well as areas of ideological incompatibility. These places of ideological tension surrounding representations of policing, schools, and students occurred within the same educational community groups (i.e.: parents), as well as within the same data sets (i.e.: public comments) or discursive strategies (i.e.: intertextuality). The second key finding is that an examination of discursive strategies employed by various educational community members sheds light on the ways in which certain ideologies or beliefs about policing are perpetuated, privileged, and challenged within different contexts and moments in social history. This study shows how the transfer of language and beliefs across contexts and genres maintains or ruptures and shifts dominant representations of policing. And the third key finding highlights the differing perceptions of threats to student safety between students and adults.

These findings motivate a series of implications and learnings founded on a central discovery and claim: that adultism is central to the interconnectedness of school and prison systems, and foundational in the maintenance of mass incarceration. In turn, this study brings forward YouthCrit as a potential framework that meets the urgent need for theoretical

frameworks that explicitly names the way adultism functions as a unique experience of oppression that runs parallel to other forms of social and institutional subjugation, as well as how a focus on adultism serves to rupture carceral logics. Overall, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexity of the school prison nexus, as well as underscoring the importance of interrogating and disrupting language and practices that pathologize and marginalize young people. In turn, this study invites scholars, educators, students and those engaged in work with young people to consider the ways we contribute to or disrupt deficit representations of students, and to center the contributions and brilliance of all students in research, interventions, and visions for school and community safety.

APPENDIX A

Student Workshops Curriculum Protocols

Student Workshop Protocol

Investigator Script: I want to begin by thanking you for taking the time out of your schedule to meet with me today. I just want to remind you that participating in this focus group is completely voluntary and you may stop participating at any time. To ensure that I remember everything that you tell me, this interview will be recorded and transcribed. If you would like to see a copy of the focus group once it is transcribed, you are more than welcome. All identifiers will be removed from the recording and transcript and only myself and the Co-PI on this project will have access to the transcripts. If desired, once your interview transcript has been completed, you can look over it to ensure that you are comfortable with everything that is included. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Activity: Individual & Collective Definitions: Safe and Unsafe at School

To get us started today, we are going to engage in an activity called emotional mapping. The goal of this activity is to think of how we feel in different spaces throughout our school. To start – I want you to draw, write, or silently just think about how you define the idea of feeling 'safe' at school. What does that look like, feel like for you? For those of you who might be willing to share – what did you write/come up with? (Collectively record students' responses – engaging the participants to name patterns or themes that might emerge from the sharing). Based on these answers – it seems that we could also then define 'un-safe' as…(using participant responses offer a definition of "un-safe" and then check-in with the group for confirmation).

Now lets's take a few minutes to talk about what we notice in these definitions(Discussion.) Is there anything else anyone would like to add?

Problem & Possibility Tree: Activity Description & Protocol

Overview: The Problem Tree is a youth engagement and research activity inspired by Freire (1970) and adapted for this research project inspired by the work of Indigenous scholar Eve Tuck (Unangax̂), and specifically her use of the protocol within The Collective of Researchers on Educational Disappointment and Desire (CREDD) work with Youth Researchers for a New Education System (YRNES) (2012) .

Tuck's adaptation utilizes the problem tree as a qualitative method of collaborative conceptual mapping inspired by Indigenous theories of interconnectivity alongside Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) theories of the rhizome. I adapt Tuck's Problem tree to also engage youth in a naming of possibilities – looking at opportunities to name existing and envisioned opportunities to rupture and/or build beyond what student's see and experience as the problem.

I plan to use the problem/possibility tree as a tool of data collection in youth focus groups and to facilitate my own (and student's) collective analysis of data.

There are three interrelated questions or stages that guide this activity. Each of these stages build from each other (as well as other activities in the sequence of activities within the focus group model). I have delineated the problem tree from the possibility tree to showcase how these activities build from each other.

Problem Tree

Step 1: Problem

The activity begins by exploring and then identifying a problem (or issue) the problem tree will address. For this research project, I will introduce a statement (problem) to the youth participants in the focus group as a starting place for the activity based on either: A) students definition of safety, and who gets to experience safety in schools and who doesn't (Emotional Mapping Activity – Focus Group Model 1) or B) through a quick facilitated discussion that introduces the questions from the Emotional Mapping activity (Focus Group Model 2).

From this discussion – statements would be generated, revised, and then affirmed by the group. Statement's might include: "The current school system isn't working" or "Schools push some students out" or "Rules aren't applied the same for all students". If needed, I will introduce one of these statements help generate a discussion or honing in of a problem statement that feels true and meaningful for the group.

Step 2: Symptoms:

I will then pass out small bits of paper that will serve as the "leaves" of the tree – representing the symptoms of the problem or statement.

I will describe and ask focus group participants to think of the leaves as what they see or experience as everyday occurrences of the problem.

Participants will then fasten their leaves to a sheet of big paper and/or a white board and the group will discuss what has been written on the leaves, adding extra leaves as they come up in conversation.

We (collectively) will then code and name any emergent patterns we see in the leaves. We record these emergent themes on the paper and/or the whiteboard. We name these larger themes as the branches.

Step 3: Attitudes/Beliefs

From these patterns uncovered in the symptoms (leaves), I will then ask focus group participants: "What do you think feeds the leaves? Or – another way of thinking about that might be – What do you think are attitudes, beliefs, language that allows these symptoms or realities to exist?".

Students are given another color of paper for this step – and are asked to place them as the trunk of the tree.

The group collectively discusses and codes these responses – looking for patterns, for divergent ideas, adding other notes or words to the emerging image of the tree. From here, we might find a narrower set of themes – which we might see as the roots of the trunk.

Step 4: Systemic/Structural Forces

I will then ask: "What do we see here that roots the trunk? That allows the symptoms, the beliefs, the structures to exist?" – introducing the roots as the systemic, culturally, and structural sources that feeds the trunk, and in turn feeds the leaves.

Collectively, we then circle and name what we see as the roots based on responses.

Step 5: Analysis of the Problem

The group them reviews the Problem Tree as a whole – looking back through the emerging themes, concepts, and reviewing the discussion.

Possibility Tree

Overview: The Possibility Tree builds from the Problem Tree – replicated the same series of questions and analysis but focuses instead on moving beyond the problem to generate

and/or to notice solutions or remedies that either might exist and/or are not yet present. This protocol follows 5 steps and utilizes (i.e: physically builds from) the problem tree.

Step 1: Possibility

The activity begins by exploring and then identifying a statement that offers the opposite of the problem explored in the problem tree. For example, if the problem established was: "Schools push some students out", the possibility we might want to experience or see would be "Schools are places where all students feel safe and connected".

Step 2: Experiences

I will then pass out small bits of paper that will serve as the "leaves" of the tree. These pieces of paper will be the same shape but will be a different color from those bits of paper used in the problem tree activity.

Leaves here, represent what we might see, feel, hear in schools if this statement was true. What would schools look like? Feel like? Sound like?

Participants will then fasten their leaves to the existing problem tree (beginning the process of transforming the problem tree).

The group will discuss what has been written on the leaves, adding extra leaves as they come up in conversation. Noticing what feel and looks different in the leaves between the problem tree and the emerging possibility tree.

We (collectively) will then code and name any emergent patterns we see in the leaves. We record these emergent themes on the paper and/or the whiteboard. We name these larger themes as the branches.

Step 3: Attitudes/Beliefs

From these patterns uncovered in the futures we imagine, I will then ask focus group participants: “What do you think are the beliefs, language, attitudes we would need to feed the leaves? Or – another way of thinking about that might be – What do you think are attitudes, beliefs, language that would allow this reality to exist?”.

Students are given another color of paper for this step – and are asked to place them on the existing trunk of the tree.

The group collectively discusses and codes these responses – looking for patterns, for divergent ideas; adding other notes or words to the emerging image of the tree. The discussion might focus on what we notice to be different between the problems and the vision we are creating/dreaming.

From here, we might find a narrower set of themes – which we might see as the roots of the trunk.

Step 4: Systemic/Structural Forces

Following this discussion - I will then ask focus group participants: “What do we see here that roots the overall vision we have for schools? What allows for the experiences, the beliefs, the structures to exist?”

We return to the definition of roots as the systemic, culturally, and structural sources that feeds the trunk, and in turn feeds the leaves. Collectively, we then circle and name what we see as the roots based on responses.

Step 5: Analysis of the Problem

Participants consider and discuss the roots - and then are prompted again to look at their collective responses and to consider which aspects (leaves, trunk, roots) exist currently. They

might consider who might experience this reality, or might consider where (inside the school, inside their community/world they see elements of this vision.

The group then reviews the Possibility Tree as a whole – looking back through the emerging themes, concepts, and reviewing the discussion.

Appendix B: Orders of Discourse Code Book

Genre	Discourse	Discourse1 Discourse2sub	Style
Narrative	Views of Police	Police as safe	Strong Affective Statements
		Police keep people safe	Cognitive Statements
Naming position or role in education system		protect from drugs and smoking	high commitment language
Metaphor		exposure to police in schools is good for com. safety	Pronouns (first, third, reflective, indefinite, possessive)
Intertextuality (reference to articles, journals, books, social media, social movements)		Police are role models	Naming self (racialized, or other identity)
social justice: "Defunding Police" Language		without police violence will happen in schools	Naming others as racialized
Cause-effect construction		SROs provide protection from threats on campus	Hostile Language/Confronting
Allegory (moral or policital interpretation revealted)		good relationships with police reduce community violence	Demands
		Police as unsafe	Naming individuals
Analogy (comparing two things for the point of clarification)		police are needed to handle extreme behaviors	Lexical choices with student: Child, Kid, Children
Repetition		Police in schools and relationships with police create a greater connection to the school to prison pipeline	persuasive language
Offers question (open ended/closed)		Schools rely on police when relationships should be inside schools	Lexical choices: Police (Law enforcement, police, cop)
Revoicing		System of policing is inherently racist	Urgency
Critique/Attack		Police perpetuate discrimination and bias	Concise

Hedging	SROS are different than police	police are armed	Personal Connection to Officers
Invoking Power/Service relationship to board		SROs prevent interactions with more dangerous police/systems	Vague
		SROs care about students	Critique/Reference to National Politics
		SROs support teachers and staff	personal storytelling
		SROs are role models	offering alternative
		SROs care about students	
		Its not fair to judge a whole system or all people by "a few bad apples"	
	Police in Schools	Police in schools is essential to the protection of children and staff	
		Policing is not necessary in schools (other approaches are better)	
		Policing in schools impacts students of color and other marginalized students the most	
Asking rhetorical questions	View of Education	schools have an obligation to expose students to police	
Neutral Talk		schools are places where students should feel safe from police	
Truncated speech		schools are places where students should feel safe from racism & discrimination	
Rhetorical/Hyperbole	View of School Safety	schools are not safe unless police are present	
Academic language		Police don't belong in schools	
Formal or Politeness		Education includes safety	

Persuasive/Argumentative				

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