



**Statement: May 18, 2017**

Please find a statement from attorney Morgan Craven, director of Texas Appleseed's School-to-Prison Pipeline Project, regarding these two recent incidents in Dallas ISD schools by district police: a 12-year-old girl who was body slammed by a police officer at Piedmont G.L.O.B.A.L. Academy and a 7-year-old elementary school student at Gabe P. Allen Charter School who was handcuffed and then forced into a behavioral health care facility without parental consent.

"We continue to see police officers called into schools to respond to situations that should be addressed by trained school staff and administrators. This inappropriate police presence creates school environments that are contrary to what they should be – a safe place to learn and thrive. A young girl being body slammed and a seven-year-old being handcuffed are two outrageous incidents that are sadly becoming too common. Behavior that used to result in a trip to the principal's office can now end in a trip to the hospital because school police officers use unnecessary, extreme force and weapons on children.

It's time for the leadership at Dallas ISD – and school districts across Texas – to realize that this type of behavior by officers creates only chaos and harm, not safety for students and teachers.

Earlier this year, Texas Appleseed, Texas Organizing Project (TOP) and ACLU of Texas were instrumental in championing a policy, authored by DISD Trustee Miguel Solis, that will equip school staff with the skills needed to support students and, if necessary, address the root causes of their behavior, instead of suspending our youngest children and disciplining them in ways that harm and dehumanize them.

On a statewide level, the 84th Texas Legislature passed legislation that's now in effect that requires school districts with an enrollment of 30,000 or more students to adopt youth-focused education and training programs for school resource officers and school district police officers.

While a great policy and law have been put in place, they're not enough – not when we brace ourselves for the next viral video that shows gross misconduct and poor judgment on behalf of district police officers. And too often, children of color and children with disabilities are targeted.

We join TOP in their demand that Dallas ISD trustees and Superintendent Hinojosa investigate these incidents and hold staff accountable. We also ask for a meeting with Dallas ISD to develop long-term solutions to prevent overuse of school police and harsh discipline to help benefit parents, students, teachers and the entire school environment."

**About Texas Appleseed**

Texas Appleseed is a public interest justice center, and our nonprofit works to change unjust laws and policies that prevent Texans from realizing their full potential. [TexasAppleseed.org](http://TexasAppleseed.org)