INTRODUCTION

The Brothers Sons Selves Coalition (BSS) is a strategic alliance of nine community based organizations across Boyle Heights and the Eastside, South Central, Inglewood, and Long Beach, that work to decriminalize youth in communities of color and end the school-to-prison pipeline. Our organizational partners include InnerCity Struggle, the Weingart East Los Angeles YMCA, the Genders and Sexualities Alliance Network, the Labor Community Strategy Center, Community Coalition, Brotherhood Crusade, the Youth Justice Coalition, Social Justice Learning Institute, and Khmer Girls in Action. Since 2011, the coalition has worked to change public policies that directly affect boys and young men of color by building the leadership capacity of our youth to address systemic issues in our communities. It is our fundamental belief that it is necessary to grow the leadership of our youth and communities, because we believe those closest to the issues have the most to contribute in drafting solutions to our toughest problems. As such, in this report we present key findings from the BSS Safety and Youth Justice Survey along with three subsequent campaign pillars--Decriminalization NOW, Fund Youth Futures, and The People’s Education--that emerged out of the data and further informs our organizing and campaign strategies.

This report is of particular importance because young people of color are systemically targeted for criminalization and harm. They are uniquely impacted by state-sanctioned violence, anti-Black racism, anti-immigrant rhetoric, and queer and trans antagonism.

The COVID-19 pandemic, beginning in March of 2020, has both exacerbated many of these longstanding inequities and created rare opportunities to make significant gains in addressing them. While the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted deep health, economic, and social justice disparities in communities of color, the tragic murders of George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, and others helped to galvanize people around the Black Lives Matter Movement and more broadly against elements of systemic oppression rooted in anti-Blackness and white supremacy. This executive summary helps to center the voices of over 3,300 youth and further amplify their experiences and needs.
BSS SAFETY & YOUTH JUSTICE SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In 2018 BSS developed a survey to capture how safety and justice is experienced by youth of color across multiple contexts. We were committed to grounding our work in data that directly reflects the current experiences of youth in Los Angeles County. The survey questions were finalized at the end of 2018, and the survey was administered from January to June of 2019 by our partner organizations, their youth, and a small civic engagement team. 3,733 total surveys were administered, and N = 3,378 surveys made it into the final analysis. Duplicate and incomplete surveys (20% or less of the survey completed) were removed from our final analysis. We partnered with Dr. Charles Davis at the USC Race and Equity Center to clean our data, and add new data fields. The themes covered in the survey ranged from perceptions of law enforcement, how youth experience criminalization, policing, and incarceration, what youth experience in Los Angeles County and their schools, and the ways that youth want to invest public funds. Those themes formed our campaign pillars and areas of focus.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CAMPAIGN PILLARS

The following themes emerged from the survey findings after months of analysis and discussion with BSS youth leaders, organizers, and organizational leadership. Decriminalization Now, Fund Youth Futures, and The Peoples Education form three campaign pillars that frame our efforts to continue the fight against systemic oppression. The results of our research are consistent with deeply ingrained social and institutional inequities experienced by communities of color throughout their histories in this country. Furthermore, our findings revealed a stark reality that exists for Black, Brown, Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander youth regarding educational access, access to health and wellness supports, criminalization, and access to other material resources. In the following pages, we present the demographic make-up of our survey results, our findings, and a call to action for systems leaders, categorized by our three campaign pillars.

In 2019, LA filmmaker Ava DuVernay released a mini-series on Netflix titled, "When They See Us." The mini-series highlighted the ways that the five young men popularly known as the Central Park 5 were criminalized as teenagers, and well into adulthood. As our young people so eloquently put it, "that's what happens when they see us. What happens when we see us?" We offer this report and our data as a marker for what happens when our communities name issues most important to us, study our own conditions, and develop interventions to change our conditions.
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total Number of Youth</th>
<th>Total Percentage of Youth (excluding 'unknowns')</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female (Cis)</td>
<td>1,624</td>
<td>55.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (Cis)</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>39.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender non-conforming,</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>2.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Binary, Trans*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose not to disclose</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage of Youth (excluding 'unknowns')</th>
<th>Total Number of Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latinx (Hispanic)</td>
<td>64.82%</td>
<td>1,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>18.30%</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5.37%</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.01%</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asian</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1.02%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacfic Islander</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
<td>0.37%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 out of 5 YOUTH IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+
1,857 LAUSD STUDENTS & RECENT ALUMNI AS OF JUNE 2019
1 out of 7 YOUTH EXPERIENCE HOUSING INSECURITY

LA County Board of Supervisor Representation

Top Zip Codes
- 90022 - 262 respondents
- 90063 - 231 respondents
- 90023 - 204 respondents
- 90033 - 202 respondents
- 90044 - 138 respondents
- 90032 - 114 respondents
- 90003 - 91 respondents
- 90813 - 78 respondents
- 90037 - 73 respondents
- 90806 - 66 respondents
Decriminalization Now is concerned with reducing youth contact with the justice system and police, promoting alternatives to police and policing in our communities, and shifting deficit based frames that lead to the overcriminalization of boys and men of color. For far too long, masculine identified people of color have been subjected to harsh criminalization, from disproportionate police stops to police murders. Instead, we assert the need for a reimagined public and school safety rooted in community care, not punishment. The data for this pillar further highlights the ways youth experience criminalization, and more specifically, the ways that Black youth experience targeted anti-Blackness.

- Black youth made up 17% of our survey, but 37% of all youth harmed by law enforcement
- 1 out of every 13 youth in our survey had been arrested before
- Black youth, and youth from LA County Supervisor District 2, were 2 times more likely to experience arrests
- 1 out of every 4 Asian and Pacific Islander masculine identified youth have been stopped and questioned by police
- 1 out of 4 youth harmed by law enforcement identified as LGBTQ
- 1 out of every 3 systems impacted youth (youth who indicated that they have been arrested) have experienced housing insecurity
- 57% of youth feel somewhat or not at all safe when interacting with law enforcement
- 65% of youth agree or strongly agree that adding law enforcement to a community or school issue escalates the situation
Funding Youth Futures seeks to increase investments in the livelihood of young people and their positive health outcomes. This includes increased investments in mental health, youth development, housing, jobs and employment, and divesting from harmful systems such as law enforcement and policing. As resources are denied to Black, Indigenous, and people color (BIPOC) communities, California continues to spend on tools of control (policing, state supervision, and incarceration). For BSS, funding youth futures adds to ongoing collective efforts demanding that local and statewide public dollars are directed back into our communities. Data in this pillar further highlights the ways that youth want to prioritize public dollars.

- Nearly 80% of queer and trans youth have little to no access to mental health resources
- 69% of Southeast Asian youth have little to no access to mental health resources
- 61% of Black youth and systems impacted youth have little to no access to mental health resources
- 44% of youth reported having little to no access to clean, safe, and reliable public transportation
- 1 out of 5 youth before the pandemic had little to no access to a place to use technology
- 1 out of every 3 youth do not have access to a youth or community center near their home
- 86% of youth want to see investments in after school programs
- 90% of youth want to see increased investments in youth and community centers
- 90% of youth want to see increased investments in college and career access
- 92% of youth want increased investments in youth-based job and employment opportunities
- Prior to the murder of George Floyd in 2019 and the national uprisings and Black protests, nearly 50% of youth did not want to invest resources in law enforcement. Youth indicated that we should not invest or prioritize resources for juvenile courts, school police, and other forms of community law enforcement.
The People's Education

Our third and final pillar, the People’s Education, calls for policies and practices that seek to transform education in Los Angeles County. Our schools have not had the resources that they need in order to adequately educate our communities, and in turn, they have turned into places where youth of color are pushed out and not protected. In order to change this, we demand a complete transformation of our public school system. This includes changing curriculum, improving school climates, integrating cultural practices within educational spaces, establishing youth as decision-makers, ending inequities in access to resources, and moving away from oppressive and punitive practices rooted in racism, sexism, ableism, and homophobia.

- Youth who have been suspended off campus are 5 times as likely to have also reported being arrested
- 30% of all youth who took the survey have been sent out of class for disciplinary reasons
- 48% of Black youth have been sent out of class for disciplinary reasons
- 40% of youth have little to no access to inclusive or relevant education (LGBTQ history, Ethnic Studies, etc.)
- Nearly 1 out of every 6 youth experience negative interactions between their families and school staff
- 30% of LGBTQ youth feel somewhat or not at all safe in their schools
- 47% of youth reported having little to no access to a restorative justice coordinator on their campus
- 1 out of 3 youth have little to no access to a parent and family center in their school
- Nearly 1 out of 3 youth have little to no access to a wellness center at their school
A CALL TO ACTION

Based on initial findings, we know that our young people have important and pressing needs. In our call to action, we highlight some key policy interventions based on our survey findings and engagements with our youth leaders.

Decriminalization NOW!

There has been recent shifts in policy relating to how the public thinks about and legislates public safety. We believe this move away from strict punitive practices should also include polices that call for preventative mechanisms that completely eliminate youth contact with the carceral system all together, beginning with youth’s interaction with law enforcement. We advocate for much stronger guidelines that govern when a law enforcement officer is allowed to engage youth, what interactions are allowed, and stronger repercussions for not adhering to such guidelines. Examples include:

- Reduce or eliminate contact between law enforcement and communities of color (i.e. traffic stops, youth arrests, etc)
- Expanding diversion services to include more offenses
- Institution of restorative/transformative justice frameworks in all youth serving entities
- Systematic reallocation of dollars marked for punishment, and reinvested into mental health supports, social emotional development, professional development, and academic enrichment.

Fund Youth Futures

One of the most important reflection of an institution’s values is in its budget allocations. It is essential for the county to continue to identify and allocate consistent funding to the expansion of institutions, programs, and services dedicated to youth development. Furthermore, this process must be rooted in a concerted effort to divest from punitive institutions and practices and redirect those funds toward community-based solutions.

- Invest in fully funded youth development departments
- Incorporate youth voice in financial decision making
- Earmark funds to secure material resources for youth, including free public transportation, jobs, and technology
- Prioritize funding for youth well-being, including funding for mental health, wellness, and job access
A CALL TO ACTION

The People’s Education

Our youth deserve an educational experience that is responsive to the full scope of their day-to-day realities. Public education should prepare them academically for future professional endeavors, but should also provide them the tools necessary to navigate and ultimately change the various social and economic challenges they have to endure. Policy in this area must continue to prioritize the integration of mental health, social justice, and racial equity frameworks into the curriculum, instructional practices, and administrative practices of institutions of public education. Examples include:

- Work towards re-allocating all resources from school police departments to alternatives for school safety, especially in schools with high concentrations of Black students.
- Smaller student-to-counselor, student-to-teacher, and student-to-nurse ratios to ensure more meaningful and regular access.
- Required coursework that includes more full and accurate portrayals of human history that centers the experiences and cultures of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)
- Consistent and rigorous anti-racism training for all school staff and personnel
- Strict accountability for faculty and staff that exhibit trends of racial-bias
- Funding Equity for LA’s highest needs schools
Youth deserve an ability to meaningfully influence systems and services that directly impact them. In order to effectively build power, our coalition will continue to work with our youth member bases and networks to develop a county-wide campaign for youth rights, reduced contact with law enforcement, and increased investments in our communities. Our ongoing strategy to build youth power includes:

- Engage partners in the landscape to solidify post-pandemic policy interventions
- Educate youth from our partner organizations and in our communities around our initial policy recommendations and research findings
- Support Youth leaders in developing a LA County Youth Bill of Rights to center the demands of LA County Youth
- Organize youth delegation visits with key elected officials about our policy recommendations

Beyond this, we believe it is essential for youth voice and decision making power to be more deeply embedded into the institutions that serve them. We must continue to push the bounds of our governing bodies to ensure that our communities have a voice!