Local high school district puts cops on campus after a half-year removal

The San Jose Unified School District votes to remove police officers from high school campuses in the wake of the May 25, 2020 murder of George Floyd and the subsequent peak in social justice movements. The San Jose Unified School District covers a large portion of San Jose.

By Eva Martin

San Jose State alumni Carlos Escobar, who worked as a teacher for three years in the San Jose Unified School District, said he witnessed a Latina high school student facing aggressive behavior from a police officer in 2020. “When the police officer came, [he was yelling to [her]]. ‘You want to be arrested right now?’” Escobar said. Who worked in both high schools and middle schools within the district, in a phone call. He said that was the moment he realized how intimidating police officers could be for students, especially for those who are Black and Latinx.

“It’s not just because of their skin color . . . [or officers were] looking at them as suspicious people,” Escobar said. “That’s one of the reasons why I [have] always advocated for them.”

The San Jose Unified School District decided on Jan. 27 to hire 27 new police officers to be paid $8,000 each, totaling $217,000, according to the San Jose Unified School District website. All schools within the district, in a phone call. Among those requirements, officers should wear school uniforms on campus and no police officers are authorized for de-escalation, implicit bias, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Strategies.

The school district approves an agreement with the City of San Jose regarding SDPD officers on campus, outlining roles and responsibilities police officers have on campus.

The district’s removal agreement voted in June ended in August 2021 as re-introduced police officers on campus only for special events including football games and dance shows, according to an Aug. 12, 2021 San Jose Spotlight article.

On Dec. 9, 2021, the district announced an agreement with the City of San Jose regarding SDPD officers on campus, outlining roles and responsibilities police officers have on campus.

Among those requirements, officers should wear school uniforms on campus and be authorized for de-escalation, implicit bias, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Strategies.

After the Jan. 27 district’s decision, each school in the district can also request a police officer to work on campus during school hours, according to a Jan. 27 CBJ article.

The school district board members approved funding for the newly onboarded police officers to be paid $8,000 each, totaling $217,000, according to the same CBJ article.

The decision follows a months-long fight to keep and anti-campus police policies advocates and the district. Among those San Jose community members, including Escobar, who opposes campus-police presence.

Crystal Callahan, media spokesperson for the San Jose Unified Equity Coalition, said such feelings are common and students call her with other members of the coalition and ask: “Why are these cops here?”

The San Jose Unified Equity Coalition is an organization that promotes police-free campuses and an increased investment in student mental health, said Callahan.

Callahan, who has four grandchildren attending school in the San Jose Unified School District, said the $217,000 dedicated to the police officers’ return to the district’s high school campuses is a “waste of money,” that should be given to student mental health infrastructures.

“Police, money could be better served by hiring counselors and paying them a fair wage,” Callahan said.

Jennifer Maddox, San Jose Unified School District’s chief communications officer, said there’s no choice to be made between the two investments.

“We don’t look at these as [if] we’re either going to invest in mental health or we’re going to invest in safety,” Maddox said. “We need to invest in both because it is our job to maintain safe campuses for students.”

She said the district’s high schools never reported issues with police officers to its board members and they didn’t find better alternatives to their campus presence.

“I don’t mean that schools aren’t safe,” Maddox said. “What I mean is . . . our administrators were spending a tremendous amount of time dealing with emergencies [after police officers had been removed].” She said on-campus police officers allow a quick answer to “any emergency” happening on site.

Maddox added that most of the district’s high schools never worked with an officer to assisting student victims of crime in taking police reports, whether or not the crime happened at school.

“Students felt they were looked at just because of their skin color . . . [or officers were] looking at them as suspicious people. That’s one of the reasons why I [have] always advocated for them.”

Carlos Escobar, a San Jose Unified School District high school teacher.

“[Students] felt they were looked at just because of their skin color . . . [or officers were] looking at them as suspicious people. That’s one of the reasons why I [have] always advocated for them.”

Maddox added that most of the district’s high schools never worked with an officer to assisting student victims of crime in taking police reports, whether or not the crime happened at school.

“The district’s removal agreement voted in June ended in August 2021 as re-introduced police officers on campus only for special events including football games and dance shows, according to an Aug. 12, 2021 San Jose Spotlight article.

On Dec. 9, 2021, the district announced an agreement with the City of San Jose regarding SDPD officers on campus, outlining roles and responsibilities police officers have on campus.

The school district approves an agreement with the City of San Jose regarding SDPD officers on campus, outlining roles and responsibilities police officers have on campus.

The district’s removal agreement voted in June ended in August 2021 as re-introduced police officers on campus only for special events including football games and dance shows, according to an Aug. 12, 2021 San Jose Spotlight article.

On Dec. 9, 2021, the district announced an agreement with the City of San Jose regarding SDPD officers on campus, outlining roles and responsibilities police officers have on campus.

The school district approves an agreement with the City of San Jose regarding SDPD officers on campus, outlining roles and responsibilities police officers have on campus.
An audience for Ye’s rampage
We’re enabling West’s abusiveness and struggle with mental illness on social media

Joaquín De la Torre
Staff Writer

If you asked anybody in the early aughts what they thought about rapper and producer Kanye “Ye” West, they might say he loves creating a spectacle and is a known social provocateur. But a decade later, the “All Falls Down” singer came forward publicly about being diagnosed with bipolar disorder in a 2018 interview with talk show host Jimmy Kimmel and released his eighth studio album, “Ye” with artwork stating “I hate being Bi-Polar its awesome.”

This diagnosis contextualizes his recent actions and is a challenge to consumers of pop-culture to not misinterpret his unhinged harassment of other celebrities for entertainment. Ye has posted on Instagram and exclaimed his way back into the media spotlight as he navigates through a very public and, although seemingly self-inflicted, painful divorce with Hollywood royalty Kim Kardashian.

In a series of Instagram posts starting in February, Ye began harassing Kardashian with his grievances including allowing their daughter, North West, to have a TikTok account, Kardashian’s rumored relationship with Saturday Night Live comedian Pete Davidson and even her decision to divorce him.

The harassment from West and his fans has been so bad Davidson opted to deactivate his Instagram completely. These posts, usually featuring captions written in all caps with no punctuation, have included photos of private text conversations with Kardashian, memes targeting Davidson and posts targeting artists who are friends of or work with Davidson, who he calls “Skete.”

As consumers of pop culture, it’s easy to get lost in the spectacle of this divorce, so much so that we start to forget these are real people who are experiencing public traumas. Ye, although the source of frustration for the divorce, is a person living with bipolar disorder, a mental illness that causes poor decision making and a heightened sense of self-confidence, according to the Mayo Clinic.

His words say one thing but his actions say another. All we have to do is look at his past actions and recognize the pattern that shows he’s unable to keep his word.

We absolutely cannot absolve his behavior just because he is unwell, but it’s important to consider it when we try to talk about this situation because it is a part of who he is. In the same vein, we cannot silence Ye because he is unwell.

As current actions are going to have lifelong ramifications for his relationship with his ex-wife, his children and his future endeavors, but that doesn’t mean we should silence him.

This situation reminds me of the recent dissolution of pop star Britney Spears’ conservatorship. For 13 years following a public breakdown, Spears was under a court-appointed conservatorship in which her father, James Spears, controlled her personal and professional life, finances and medical decisions, according to a Sept. 22, 2021 New York Times article.

I don’t want that fate for Ye just like I didn’t want that for Spears. I think he is a great artist who’s struggling with serious, life-altering circumstances. This is one of those moments in which the audience has to decide for themselves whether they can separate the artist from the art.

As consumers of pop-culture, we get to pick and choose what our media diet consists of and his harassment of the new couple is boring, tired and unfortunate. We can do better than eagerly watching one poor man unraveling.
'Euphoria,' dizzy and dazzling

By Madilynne Medina

"Euphoria," an HBO-origin drama directed by Sam Levinson, concluded its second season on Sunday. The show details the intertwining lives of high school teenagers as they experience addiction, trauma and love.

Many viewers have anticipated the show's season finale after sex scandals were revealed and characters hit their breaking points.

The majority of the second season featured main character Rue, played by American actress Zendaya, spiraling through her drug addiction. During the second half of the season, Rue experiences a gut-wrenching relapse, learning her feeling hopeless and broken.

Zendaya acting throughout the entire season was phenominal, showing the unfathomable feeling of hitting rock bottom as a substance abuse.

As a viewer, I've always supported Rue – not because addiction should be romanticized, but because the show unravels the real-life journey of someone who falls into the dangerous cycle of drug abuse.

While to many it may not seem realistic, the themes are relevant to the ongoing drug crisis among youth in the US. Illicit or injection drug trafficking and heroin were used by 13% of high school students, and 14% of students reported misusing prescription opioids, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention adolescent and school health webpage last updated Oct. 2020.

Rue's father also has in her early teens she experiences angst and sorrow, which the show alludes to being a contributing factor to her addiction.

The harrowing effects of Rue's addiction hurt the people around her, specifically her mother and sister, as they endure the traumatic effects of just trying to keep her alive.

The show also addresses portrayals between friends in the model of a drug withdrawal. Rue reveals that her friend Cassie played by American actress Sydney Sweeney, has been sleeping with her best friend former boyfriend,奈, who is played by Jacob Elordi.

This jaw-dropping moment occurs during an intervention for her addiction and she runs away as the chaos erupts.

Rue's actions in this episode show how some suffering from addiction go to extremes to satisfy their unbearable withdrawals, even if it means hurting others.

The final episode of "Euphoria" had fans itching to see how the intervening plots would resolve, but many fans were left disappointed because of the tumultuous conflicts.

Early in the season, Rue collaborates with chillingly quiet drug dealer Laurie, played by Martita Kelly, but soon Rue's mother drumps the drugs her daughter acquired down the toilet. Rue becomes manic, as she finds out about the disposed drugs and suddenly owes thousands of dollars to a drug lord.

We never find out what happens in this storyline. Laurny just disappears from the show and Rue goes about her merry way.

While "Euphoria" tells multifaceted stories of people of color, women, and LGBTQ individuals the show doesn't have a writers room, according to a Monday New York Times article. Levinson wrote every episode solo, which could explain the inability to develop the complex stories of these characters.

The final episode's premise occurs during the play created by Lexi Howard, which is played by Maude Apatow. 

The play consisted of the last events of her friends and family, including Rue, Cassie, and Maddy. At one point, Lexi's play reveals Cassie's sex scandal, prompting Cassie to run on stage and have a tantrum similar to a toddler who didn't get what they want.

From the audience, Maddy then says "Somebody needs to pull this bitch down," and runs on stage, in front of the whole school, to slap Cassie in the face.

This moment had fans, including myself, rooting for Maddy, who didn't even break a nail.

Despite the plot holes the artistic choices in the season, especially in the season finale, was memorable.

The finale was ultimately focused on Levinson's play at its surface, but viewers were able to connect to the deeper stories of characters as the scenes changed from present to past.

In the play, Lexi portrays Rue as a proclamed as a real person in her life that moves her to take on the role of a author for her friend.

Despite such phenomenal actors and meaningful themes, the setting was mostly disappointing, but I was pleased with Rue's journey at the end of the final episode. During the entire series, Rue despairs herself for her addiction because she lost control of her life and hurt those around her.

Viewers can empathize with Rue and realize she's a victim of a mental health and drug crisis. This is ultimately why so many fans love Rue despite her actions.

Levinson's breakthrough is beautiful, as she starts to recover from the complicated addiction phase that we've witnessed through the entire season.

The latest season of "Euphoria" was widget-inducing, unsettling and dazzling all at once.
Asteroid is just visiting, experts say

By Madilynne Medina

An asteroid, 1.3 kilometers in size, or the size of the Golden Gate Bridge, will pass close to Earth on Friday.

Thomas Madura, SJSU associate professor of physics and astronomy who also worked at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center, said the asteroid is bigger than about 97% of other asteroids.

However, the asteroid, formally known as 2021 CB21, is just 0.012 Astronomical Units or more than 1.4 million miles from Earth’s orbit at its closest point, according to the Space Reference webpage.

This distance is 10 times as far as the moon is from Earth.

Giuliana Maia, an astronomer at the Virtual Telescope Project in Italy, captured an image of the asteroid on March 1, showing it 21.5 million miles away, according to a Feb. 2 Newsweek article.

Madura said most asteroids, including CB21, are leftover materials from the original formation of the solar system.

CB21 is predicted to pass by Earth at 3:00 a.m. EST on Friday, traveling at 26,800 miles per hour, according to a Feb. 2 Newsweek article.

Curtis Asplund, SJSU assistant physics professor with a specialization in high-energy theoretical physics, said the speed of the asteroid is not concerning.

“It’s not unusual for things in space, including planets like the Earth, to move at thousands and thousands of miles per hour,” he said in a Zoom call. “So the asteroid is not unusual in that sense, things in the solar system move that fast.”

Dan Werthimer, physics researcher at UC Berkeley, said CB21 is a particularly interesting asteroid because it crosses the orbit of the Earth.

“Every time [CB21] comes around, it’s genius cross the orbit of Earth,” he said in a phone call. “And that could be, you know, far away, it could be a couple 100 million miles away, or occasionally comes close.”

Werthimer said there are days every few years in which CB21 passes close to Earth, including this Friday.

This asteroid is predicted to have 14 close approaches to Earth throughout the current century, the next instance occurring on Sept. 29, 2020, according to the same Space Reference webpage.

Werthimer said asteroids of this distance are categorized as “potentially hazardous.”

A potentially hazardous asteroid is defined based on parameters that measure its potential to make “threatening close approaches to Earth,” according to NASA’s webpage.

“What [a potentially hazardous asteroid] simply means is that it’s an asteroid whose orbit crosses the orbit of the Earth, and it’s predicted to get close to the Earth,” Thomas Madura said.

Madura said about 15,000 to 16,000 of these potentially hazardous asteroids cross the Earth’s orbit.

While potentially hazardous asteroids are not always detrimental to Earth, NASA is working on projects to defend the planet against near-earth objects, including the Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) Mission, according to the DART Mission webpage.

The asteroid system is designed to intentionally crash a spacecraft into an asteroid to change its course and prevent a collision with Earth, according to the same webpage.

DART launched on Nov. 24, 2021 and is the world’s first full-scale mission to test deflecting Earth technology against asteroids. The double-asteroid redirection test (DART) Mission, according to the DART Mission NASA webpage.

The DART mission is designed to intentionally crash a spacecraft into an asteroid to change its course and prevent a collision with Earth, according to the same webpage.

Professor Asplund said DART is an “interesting mission” and an effective way to prevent a collision.

“That is probably our best bet in terms of, you know, avoiding an impact if it ever comes to that, he said. “It’s all about changing the momentum and applying force.”

Asplund also mentioned that the DART mission is a “good reminder” of the benefits of investing in astronomy, NASA and science.

“One of the reasons that it’s good to [invest in science] is so that we can know about things of this kind of stuff,” he said. “So it’s NASA, but its also just government funding, like the National Science Foundation and other federal agencies , that is in a major benefit to society.”

Madura said while CB21 is a relatively large asteroid, an asteroid would have to be comparable in size to another planet to completely shatter the Earth, “it’s too small to strike the planet.

There are currently no known asteroids larger than 140 meters with a significant chance of hitting Earth for the next 100 years, but only 40% of these asteroids have been discovered as of October 2021, according to NASA’s webpage.

Madura said there is “a lot of uncertainty” when, regarding asteroid preparation and prevention because the system is still being tested.

“We definitely wouldn’t want to blow [an asteroid] up, because that would just send a lot of smaller pieces potentially at us,” he said.

“But one of the things we probably try to do is probably try to make it - to knock it off course.”

He said with developing technology, CB21 provides an opportunity to study near-Earth asteroids in more detail.

“Our telescopes and our technology has gotten more powerful over the years,” Madura said. “Now when these things come close, we can study them in more detail and understand them more so that we can prepare for any future ones that may come closer or make it that way that we have more information and we can better prepare ourselves.”

By Madilynne Medina

By Madilynne Medina

Thomas Madura

SJSU associate professor of physics and astronomy

---

Letters to the Editor may be placed in the letters to the editor box in the Spartan Daily office in Dwight Bentel Hall, Room 209 or emailed to (spartandaily@gmail.com) to the attention of the Spartan Daily Opinion Editor.

Letters to the Editor must contain the author’s name, year and major. Letters become property of the Spartan Daily and may be edited for clarity, grammar, length and brevity. Only letters of 300 words or less will be considered for publication.

Letters to the Editor must contain the author’s name, year and major. Letters become property of the Spartan Daily and may be edited for clarity, grammar, length and brevity. Only letters of 300 words or less will be considered for publication.

Letters to the Editor may be placed in the letters to the editor box in the Spartan Daily office in Dwight Bentel Hall, Room 209 or emailed to (spartandaily@gmail.com) to the attention of the Spartan Daily Opinion Editor.

Letters to the Editor must contain the author’s name, year and major. Letters become property of the Spartan Daily and may be edited for clarity, grammar, length and brevity. Only letters of 300 words or less will be considered for publication.