

Opinion: Why does the media ignore high school activism?

By Aaron G. Fountain Jr., Al Jazeera America

Student activism has made a comeback. With recent campus demonstrations against alleged racial discrimination and in favor of free college tuition, America may be facing a wave of student protest to a degree not seen since the 1960s. But while the media focuses on college campuses, very few journalists are acknowledging the activism that has been occurring at the high school level. Just in the past year, high school students across the country have protested against racist police brutality, curriculum changes, budget cuts, the expansion of charter schools, standardized tests and other youth-related issues.

After the white police officers responsible for the 2014 deaths of unarmed black men Michael Brown and Eric Garner were not indicted, high school students across the country organized solidarity protests in Seattle; New York; Denver; Oakland; Minneapolis and Boston. In February, about 250 high school students in Santa Fe, New Mexico left school to protest constant testing and the state's new mandated exam. In June, Milwaukee high school students walked out of class to protest against the county executive takeover of low-performing schools. And this fall, high school students in Allentown, Pennsylvania, organized a district-wide student walkout demanding the resignation of the superintendent, the inclusion of a student representative on the school board and summer youth employment opportunities. There were also student walkouts in Chicago; Berkeley, and Philadelphia that occurred this fall.

High school activism is not limited to disruptive activities. Numerous youth organizations operate around the country to

tackle issues concerning school closures, at-risk youth and the school-to-prison pipeline, among others.

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