THE TIME IS NOW TO DISMANTLE THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE SO ALL KIDS CAN THRIVE!

The "school-to-prison pipeline" is a troubling national trend where children are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. It starts when kids are pushed out of the classroom, typically for nonviolent offenses, effectively reducing valuable learning time, and making it harder for struggling students to keep up. With increased police presence in schools student challenges or disputes are turned over to police instead of being addressed by school staff and administrators. This sends too many students, who would be better served by social workers and a range of evidenced based supports, spiraling into a juvenile and criminal justice system that follows them into their adult lives.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN AMERICA SERVE MOSTLY CHILDREN OF COLOR

Every year, 2.8 million students in the U.S. are suspended from school, causing them to miss critical learning time.

Black students are almost 4X more likely to be suspended and expelled for the same infractions as white students.

THERE IS NO EVIDENCE that students of color exhibit higher rates of misbehavior.

Students with disabilities are 2X MORE LIKELY to be suspended.

HUNDREDS OF PRESCHOOLERS are suspended every day too often for age appropriate behavior.

Students miss more than 11 MILLION DAYS OF SCHOOL BECAUSE OF SUSPENSIONS!

In a single school year, 11 million days translates to:

- 60,000+ SCHOOL YEARS
- 60 MILLION LOST HOURS OF EDUCATION
- BILLIONS OF WASTED MONEY

Studies show: Teachers view black girls as LESS INNOCENT than white girls.

Black girls lost 1.7 MILLION DAYS 2X THE NATIONAL AVERAGE FOR ALL STUDENTS.

The number of police in schools has increased over time. There's no evidence to show that expanding police presence actually results in safer schools.

“\nMy son is 7 yrs old and suffers from ADHD. I do realize it’s hard on the teachers but pulling him out of class is just as hard. He misses valuable lessons, which makes him fall behind his classmates. He then gets teased for not knowing the info which makes him misbehave.” — Asha from Texas

1] https://www.aclu.org/issues/ juvenile-justice/school-prison-pipeline
We know what works! It is time to shift this practice of investing in the criminal justice system instead of schools and supports for students.

**SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. When integrated into schools strategic plans, staffing, professional learning, and budgets it guides their curriculum choices and classroom instruction and many of their schoolwide practices and policies. Most importantly it informs how adults and students relate with each other at all levels of the system, creating a welcoming, participatory, and caring climate for learning. [1]

**POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT (PBIS)**

PBIS is a set of strategies and techniques based in behavioral psychology and implemented by all staff throughout a school. A positive approach is taken to create specific behavioral expectations for all students, and desired behaviors are explicitly taught. More intensive strategies are used for the children who need the most support. Data are kept and monitored to allow for more effective and targeted implementation. [2]

**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

Restorative justice empowers students to resolve conflicts on their own and in small groups often called peace circles or peer mediation groups. The idea is to bring students together when conflict or harm arises to talk, ask questions, and air their grievances. For the growing number of districts using restorative justice, the programs have helped strengthen campus communities, prevent bullying, and reduce student conflicts, data also shows a drastic reduction in suspension and expulsion rates, and students say they are happier and feel safer. [3]

**TEACHER TRAINING & TEACHER SUPPORTS**

Instructors can hold assumptions about students’ learning behaviors and their capability for academic success which are tied to students’ identities and/or backgrounds, and these assumptions can impede student growth. Teachers should be trained in classroom management, conflict resolution and how to recognize and provide support for children with of all backgrounds and abilities. Additional “bias and sensitivity training” for teachers should highlight the cultural contexts of their students. [4] Studies show that teacher begin to show bias toward students as early as preschool.

**END THE REGULAR PRESENCE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN SCHOOLS / RESTRICT THE ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT THAT ARE CALLED IN TO SCHOOLS**

There is no evidence to show that expanding police presence in schools actually results in safer schools. In fact the data we do have shows that this is a failed approach. [5] By devoting a significant amount of resources into cops and increased security in schools, schools are not safer and critical services are let under funded or left out all together. Best practices for improving school climate and discipline are being used as alternatives to police in schools all across the country. Use of these interventions can reduce suspensions by up to 50%, improve school climate, increase teacher effectiveness and support better educational outcomes for all students. [6]

“I've had students who cause trouble in class and when I pull them aside to talk, they tell me they’re just “a bad kid” and that's why they act that way. We can’t have kids growing up thinking they’re bad and perpetuating that self-image. I consistently have students reflect, discuss conflict in class, consider the impact their choices have, and almost never send a kid to the principal. Suspending kids does not get to the root of an issue and becomes a burden on parents who often already have enough burden. I hope more schools and teachers work to find ways to coach kids rather than sending them away feeling like “the bad kid.” – Annie from Washington

Together we can break the school to prison pipeline for ALL students.

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