



# SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE

K-12 Discipline Gaps and How to Address Them

## WHAT IS THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE?

A SYSTEM BY WHICH PUNISHMENT OF BLACK STUDENTS IN SCHOOL LEADS TO A **DISPROPORTIONATE OVERREPRESENTATION** OF BLACK AMERICANS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.

(8)

## ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY:

A SCHOOL OR DISTRICT POLICY THAT MANDATES **PREDETERMINED CONSEQUENCES** FOR PUNISHMENTS FOR SPECIFIC OFFENSES.(3)



**Zero Tolerance**

"Black Students were **three and a half times more likely** to be suspended or expelled than their white peers."(4)



## WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

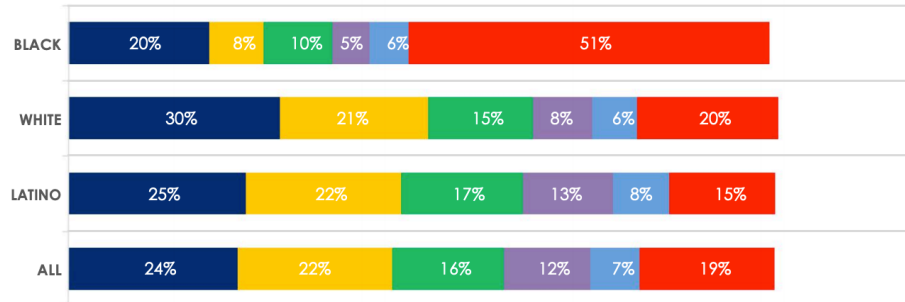
THE LOSS OF INSTRUCTIONAL TIME DUE TO UNFAIR DISCIPLINE PRACTICES IS **MORE HARMFUL** TO BLACK STUDENTS DUE TO THE VARYING QUALITY OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS DURING SUSPENSIONS.(1)

DISCIPLINARY/PUNITIVE ACTIONS OFTEN CAUSE BLACK STUDENTS TO **FEEL MORE OSTRACIZED** AND CAUSE THEM TO PUT **LESS TRUST** IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND TEACHERS. (1)

EDUCATION SHOULD BE **FAIR AND EQUITABLE** FOR ALL STUDENTS

### PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY NUMBER OF DAYS

- 0-4.99 Days Lost
- 5-9.99 Days Lost
- 10—14.99 Days Lost
- 15-19.99 Days Lost
- 20—24.99 Days Lost
- 25+ Days Lost/High Amount



## School District Distribution of Days of Missed Instruction (per 100 enrolled) by Black, White, and Latino Students (6)

## POLICY SOLUTIONS

### 1. INCREASE TEACHER DIVERSITY

- When the race of a teacher matches the race of a student, individual students are 1 percentage point less likely to be faced with punitive action than students with a non-matching race teacher. Overall the “effect of teacher-student race match represents a 12% decrease in the number of students experiencing exclusionary discipline.” (5)

### 2. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAMS

- Restorative justice programs practiced in schools’ districts like Oakland Unified School District in California (a 1/3 Black and 70% low income district) has caused suspensions rates to drop from 34% in 2011-2012 school year to just 14% in the next two academic school years (NPR). Restorative justice programs as replacement for the zero-tolerance policy discipline in schools effectively removing zero tolerance policy. (9)

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF IMPLICIT BIAS TRAININGS

- Many workplaces have begun implementing some form of implicit bias training in order to reduce racial discrimination in the workplaces. The institution of this practice for school staff may help ensure equitable disciplinary treatment of all students regardless of race. According to a study published in the University of Hawaii law review, there is plausible reason to believe that implicit bias trainings help to reduce racial biases. (7)

“Furthermore, **abdicating responsibility** for providing a free and appropriate public education for students who behave badly does not serve the public interest. Rather, it **kicks the can down the road** to future public agencies that will end up dealing with citizens whose education has been **significantly disrupted** in the name of “consistency” and “get tough” and “no excuses.” (3)

## Myths and Misconceptions

1. “ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES ARE FAIR BECAUSE THERE IS A MANDATED RESPONSE TO BEHAVIORAL ISSUES.”

IN THEORY THESE POLICIES **SHOULD BE EQUITABLE**, HOWEVER DISCIPLINE OFTEN COMES DOWN TO THE **DISCRETION OF INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS.** (2)

2. “ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES AFFECT ALL STUDENTS THE SAME WAY.”

**BLACK STUDENTS ARE OFTEN TARGETED** WITH THESE POLICIES AS ATTEMPTS TO “**FIX THEIR BEHAVIORAL ISSUES**” AND ADDRESS THEIR “**DEFICIENCIES**” IN BOTH PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOR. (3)

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