
THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE: ELIMINATING SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PRACTICES THAT PUSH CHILDREN INTO THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

For over three decades, expansive penal codes, an overreliance on incarceration, and failure to examine the root causes of crime have created the overarching removal of people from our communities and into the prison system. Now, the trend towards removal and often permanent expulsion has extended into our schools. **Today, many children are removed from their educational environments and placed onto a one-way path towards prison.** The public school system and the criminal justice system have merged, and collectively, these systems have cultivated one of the most notorious civil rights issues of this generation: **the school-to-prison pipeline.**

ENTRY POINTS:

School-based suspension
Out of school suspension
Expulsion
Alternative education program placement
Court Charging

END POINTS:

Juvenile justice system
Juvenile detention
Delinquency adjudication
Criminal prosecution
Bound-over prosecution in the adult penal system
Incarceration in the adult penal system

FACTS ON JUVENILE CRIME IN SCHOOLS:

- ◇ Over the last two decades, there has been a decline in youth crime.
- ◇ Schooling is the largest factor in reducing criminal activity.
- ◇ Children are much more likely today to be arrested at school than their parents were.
- ◇ Public school students are perhaps the most policed group in the country right now.
- ◇ From 1974 to 2000, the number of students suspended from school each year doubled.
- ◇ Exclusionary disciplinary practices have been shown to contribute to delinquency.
- ◇ Exclusionary discipline practices neither deter nor correct problematic behaviors.
- ◇ Exclusionary discipline practices have significantly increased minority representation in the juvenile justice system.

The increased presence of law enforcement in schools contributes to more juvenile arrests made at schools for infractions that, a generation ago, would have been handled by teachers or administrators. **There is an urgent need to eliminate the discipline practices that involve penal sanctions and push children into prisons.**

¹ Michelle Alexander, THE NEW JIM CROW: MASS INCARCERATION IN THE AGE OF COLORBLINDNESS, The New Press, New York: 2010.