

School Suspension & The Unintended Consequences

GREGG ZAIRE

**Alcohol and Other Drugs Prevention Partnership
Sequoia Union High School District
Redwood City 2020**

**Health Equity Now!
How Place, Race, & Health Connect in San Mateo County
April 22, 2019**

School Suspension & The Unintended Consequences

“ Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 5,000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental. ... The freedom to learn ... has been bought by bitter sacrifice. And whatever we may think of the curtailment of other civil rights, we should fight to the last ditch to keep open the right to learn.”

—*W.E.B. DuBois, The Freedom to Learn*

Student X File:

- Agenda:**
- Acknowledgement
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Acknowledgement

Analysis

21st century education and schooling is not plagued by a singular “thing.” There are no quick-fix remedies that can be plugged into existing education and school environments; there are no easy upgrades that might immediately ameliorate existing practices.

Educating young people, helping them become active, contributing members of society is a process with deep philosophical underpinnings operating within historic, economic, and cultural dynamics that often frustrate the effort to create a system that aids the health and vitality of the commonweal.

Education AND THE PATH TO Equity

Analysis

Preparing all students to meet 21st century expectations requires an accompanying commitment to allocate sufficient money, people, and time to the challenge.

Systems must ensure that funds are equitably distributed based on student and school need. Local and state-level officials, working with their communities, must also become responsible for the wise and efficient use of limited financial resources.

Education AND THE PATH TO Equity

Analysis

A commitment to equity must encompass the range of opportunities and resources critical to student success.

- Ensuring all students are **taught by educators who are fully prepared and supported** throughout their academic careers.
- **Providing students with access to a range of supportive services** that ensure their health and well-being.
- **Funding schools in a way that is equitable, stable, and adequate** to provide all students with a 21st century education.
- Providing all students **access to a high-quality college- and career-ready curriculum and up-to-date instructional materials and tools**, including computers and related technology.

Suspension: Cause for Concern?

Consensus is growing among researchers and school administrators across the country. They are concerned that many public schools suspend too many children.

Why should we be concerned?

1. The Role of Schools?
2. In/direct Social Impacts & Costs
3. The Health & Vitality of the Commonwealth
4. Civil Rights: Questions of Equality/Equity

Suspension & Discipline

Analysis

Until the 1960s, corporal punishment was the most prevalent form of intervention in schools.

Eventually, as corporal punishment fell out of favor, zero-tolerance suspension and expulsion practices became the “go-to” disciplinary strategies for school administrators.

Those zero-tolerance practices drove suspension and expulsion rates, and continued largely unassessed until fairly recently.

In-School
Suspension

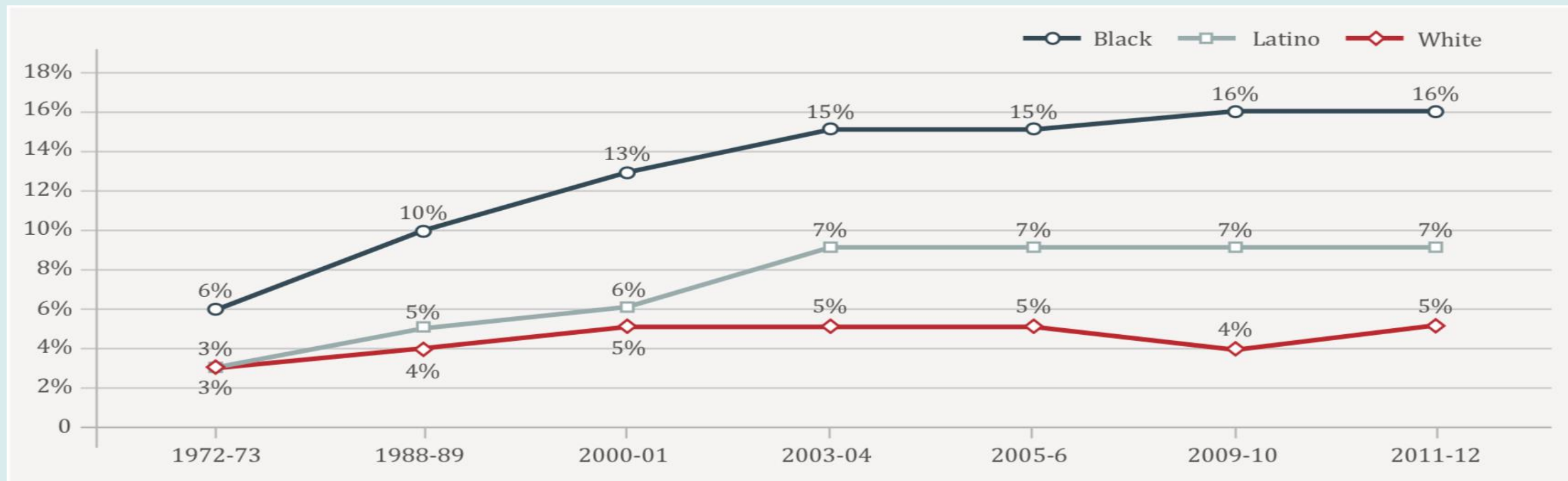
Out-of-School
Suspension

Expulsion

Suspension & Discipline

Analysis

Today, zero-tolerance, out-of-school suspension practices have become the most common administrative response to student disciplinary infractions.

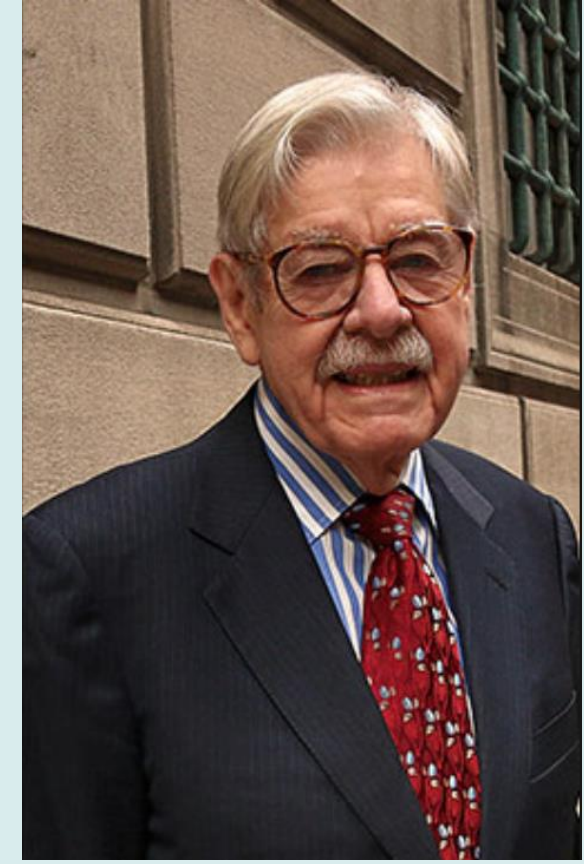
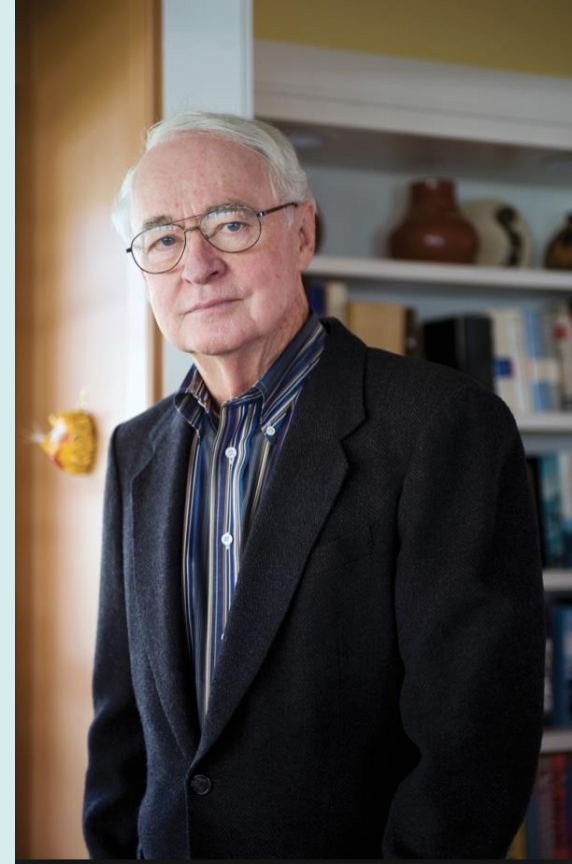


Data Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights

Zero-tolerance: Broken Windows

Zero-tolerance policies

“Broken Windows” Theory claim that crime is a disorder that, if not eliminated or controlled early on, increases like likelihood of committing a more serious crime later in life.



James Q. Wilson & George Kelling

Zero-Tolerance: An Overview

Zero tolerance prescribed harsh punishment for any amount of behavior regardless of the circumstances

- Based in 1980's drug programs
- 1990: Gun-Free School Zones Act (GFSZA)
- Picked up in schools 1989-1990
- 1994: Gun Free Schools Act (GFSA)—which the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994
- 2000's: Zero tolerance policies include a wide range of behaviors and offenses



Zero-Tolerance: Common Punishments

The common punishments that warrant suspension and expulsion:

- Bringing any weapon to school
- Having any alcohol or drugs on campus
- Fighting
- Threatening other students or teachers
- Insubordination
- Any behavior considered disruptive

Zero-Tolerance: Criminology & Schools



- In 2012, 6-year-old Salecia Johnson was handcuffed and taken from school to the police station after throwing a temper tantrum at her school.



- In 2010, 11-year-old Alexa Gonzalez was arrested for writing “I love my friends Abby and Faith” and “Lex was here 2/1/10” on her desk with erasable marker.



- In 2012, 17-year-old Diane Tran, an 11th grade honor student, was held in contempt of court after being warned by a justice of the peace to stop skipping school. She was later sentenced to jail when the absences continued.

Zero-Tolerance: As Practice

The notion of deterring future misbehavior is central to the philosophy of zero-tolerance.

Barney Wilson?

The impact of any consequence on future behavior has to be *the* defining characteristic of effective punishment, correction, or course adjustment. Research shows that a zero-tolerance approach to school discipline does not promote school safety. In fact, punitive approaches that exclude children and youth from schools can actually increase behavior problems, the risk of substance use and violence, and the likelihood of academic failure.

To Underscore...

Analysis

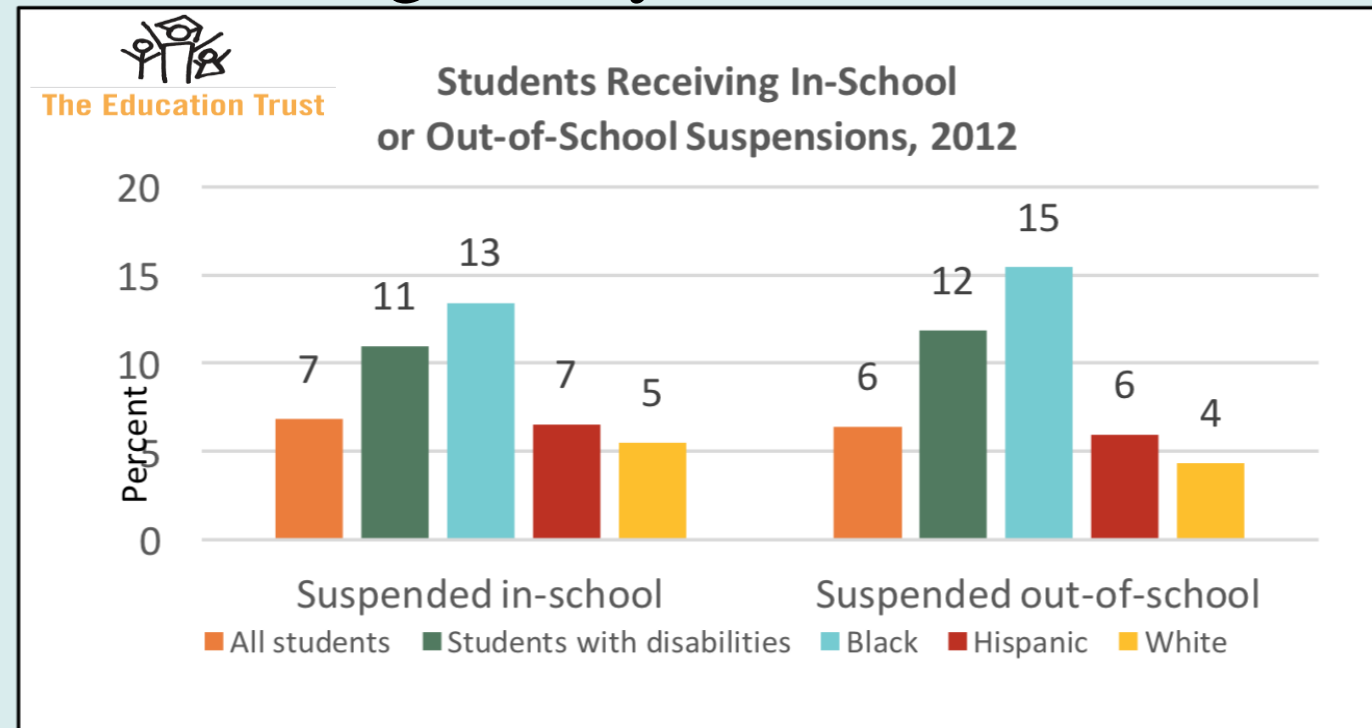
“When children fail to succeed, the whole community is harmed. Keeping students engaged in the classroom is fundamental to academic success. The use of punitive disciplinary practices that rely on suspension, expulsion, and other harsh consequences—often applied disproportionately to minority students—undermine the goal of success for all.”

A Question of Justice

Analysis

In 2014, the Obama administration questioned school discipline policies around the country. It issued new guidelines to urge school administrators to ensure they are not being overly zealous with strict punishments for students.

The Departments of Education and Justice warned schools to make sure they are being fair and equitable and that they are complying with civil rights laws.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2015 Digest of Education Statistics

Suspension & Discipline

CA Education Code for Student Discipline

Education Code, Section 48900 (21)

Section 48900.2: Sexual Harassment

Section 48900.3: Hate Violence

Section 48900.4: Harassment, Threats or Intimidation

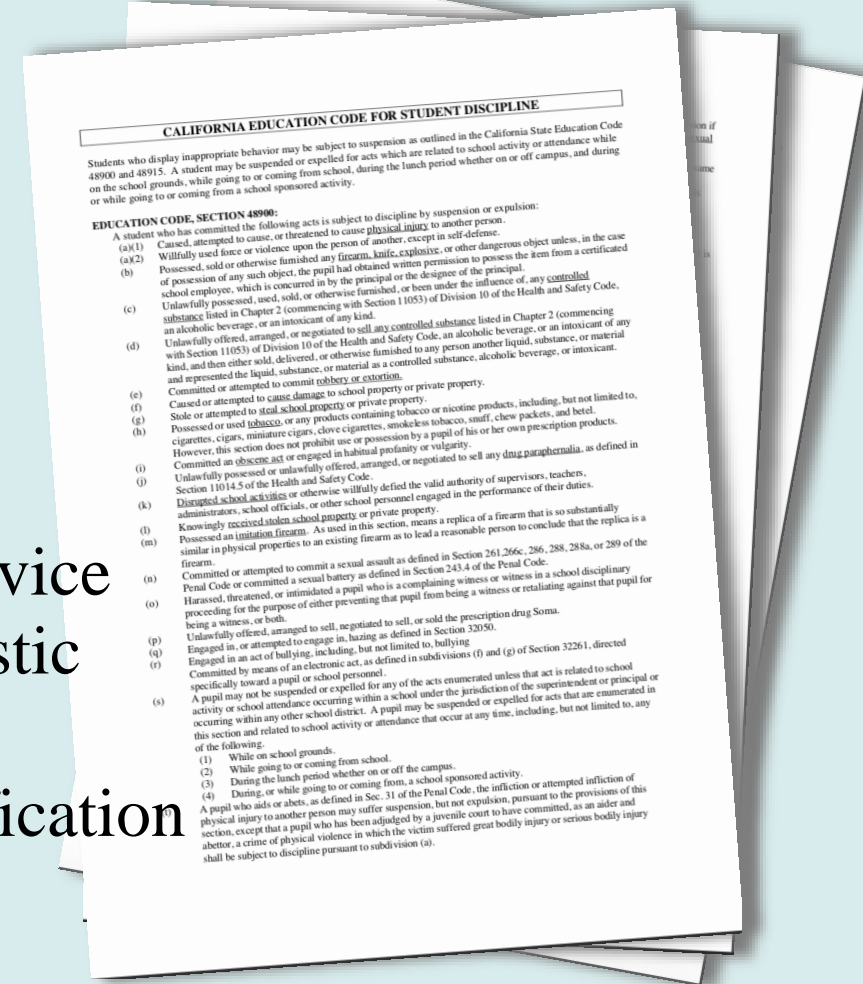
Section 48900.5: Required Other Means of Correction/Exceptions

Section 48900.6: Disciplinary Action/Community Service

Section 48900.7: Suspension or Expulsion for Terroristic Threats

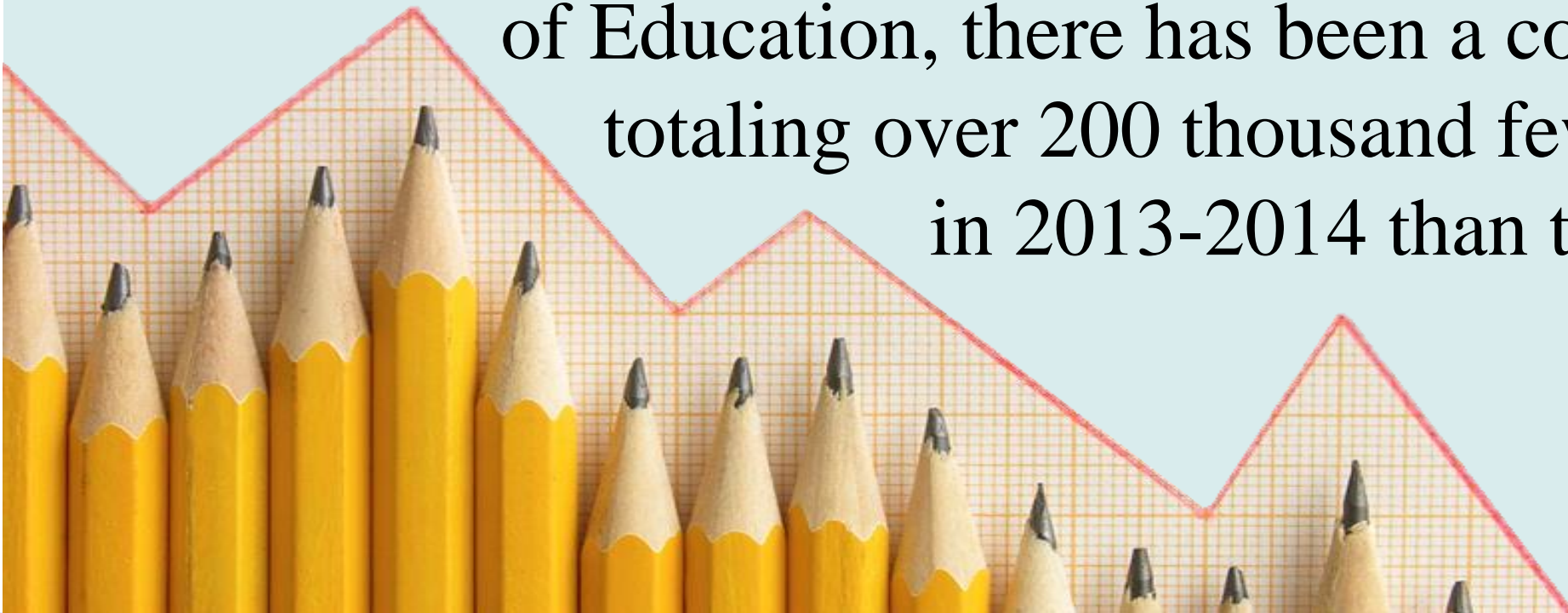
Section 48900.8: Suspension, Expulsion, Parent Notification and State Department of Education Report

Section 48915: (Expulsion)



School Suspension Rates Falling

California's legislators have put the state among those at the forefront of discipline reform. Most importantly, according to the most recent data available from the California Department of Education, there has been a consistent decline totaling over 200 thousand fewer suspensions in 2013-2014 than two years ago.



Disproportionality

Analysis

Suspension rates, however, are still very high, and the discipline gap between White and non-white students alarming—Black students, for example, experience 19 more suspensions than White students per every 100 students enrolled.



Racial Disparities in School Discipline

Black students are 3-4 times more likely than their white peers to be expelled or face multiple suspensions from school.

Risk of Being Expelled

Black



White

Risk of Facing Multiple Suspensions



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2009-10

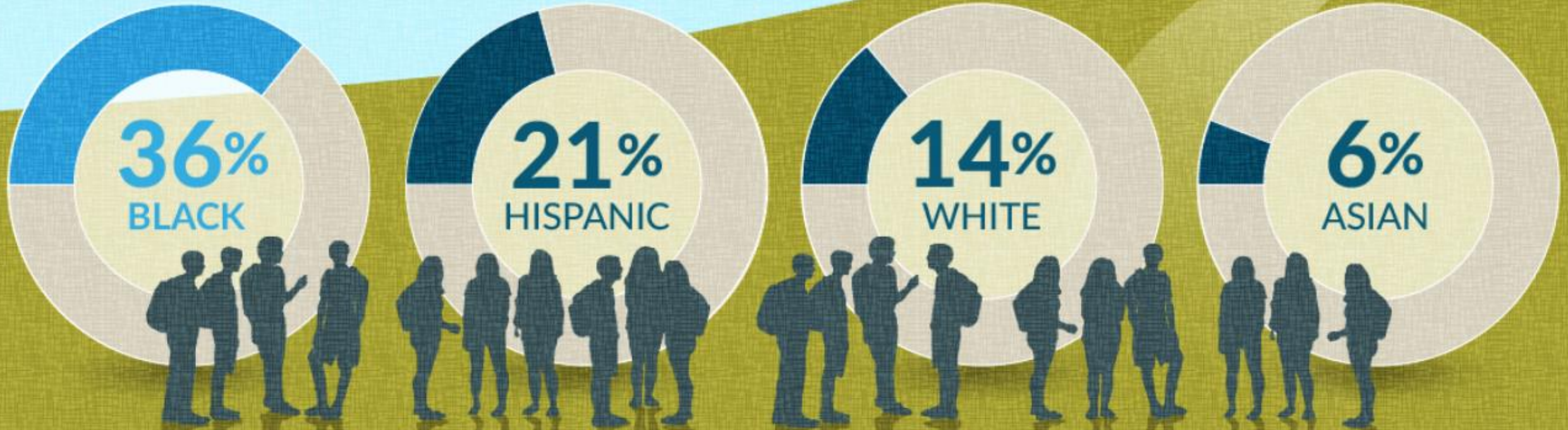
American Institutes for Research | www.air.org

Disproportionality

Analysis

Suspensions and Expulsions by Race/Ethnicity

Among students who started high school in 2009, a higher percentage of Black students than of Hispanic, White, and Asian students had ever been suspended or expelled by 2012.



Note: Includes suspensions and expulsions prior to high school as well. Starting high school is defined as starting 9th grade.

Disproportionality

Analysis

Non-white students receive more harsh punitive measures and less mild discipline than their non-minority peers, even controlling for Socio-economic Status

- African-American students are 3.5 times as likely to be suspended or expelled as their white peers.
- Latino students are 1.2 times as likely to be suspended and 1.5 times as likely to be expelled as their white peers.
- Pacific Islander students are 1.5 times as likely to be suspended or expelled as their white peers.

Suspension (CA SY 2017-18)



In SY 2017-18, there were **6,384,919** students enrolled in California schools.

363,406 of all California students were suspended during the 2017-18 school year.

Suspension (CA SY 2017-18)

• Violent Incident (Injury)	-	46,433	(12.8%)
• Violent Incident (No Injury)	-	179,219	(49.3%)
• Weapons Possession	-	11,786	(3.2%)
• Illicit Drug Related	-	50,547	(13.9%)
• Defiance Only	-	59,808	(16.5%)
• Other Reasons	-	15,613	(4.3%)

363,406 / 6,384,919 = 5.7%

Suspension (CA SY 2017-18)

Racial/Ethnic Categories		Cumulative Enrollment	Total Suspensions	% Suspension by Ethnicity	% Total Suspended
African American	(5.64%)	360,326	63,009	17.5%	17.3%
American Indian/Alaskan Native.	(0.53%)	33,808	4,310	12.7%	1.2%
Asian	(9.15%)	584,002	8,188	1.4%	2.3%
Filipino	(2.42%)	154,530	2,694	1.7%	0.7%
Hispanic/Latino	(54.19%)	3,459,758	195,187	5.6%	53.7%
Pacific Islander	(0.47%)	30,046	2,182	7.3%	0.6%
White or More Races	(23.15%)	1,470,216	71,443	4.8%	19.7%
Two or More Races	(3.55%)	226,787	13,641	6.0%	3.8%

Does it Take A Village?

Analysis

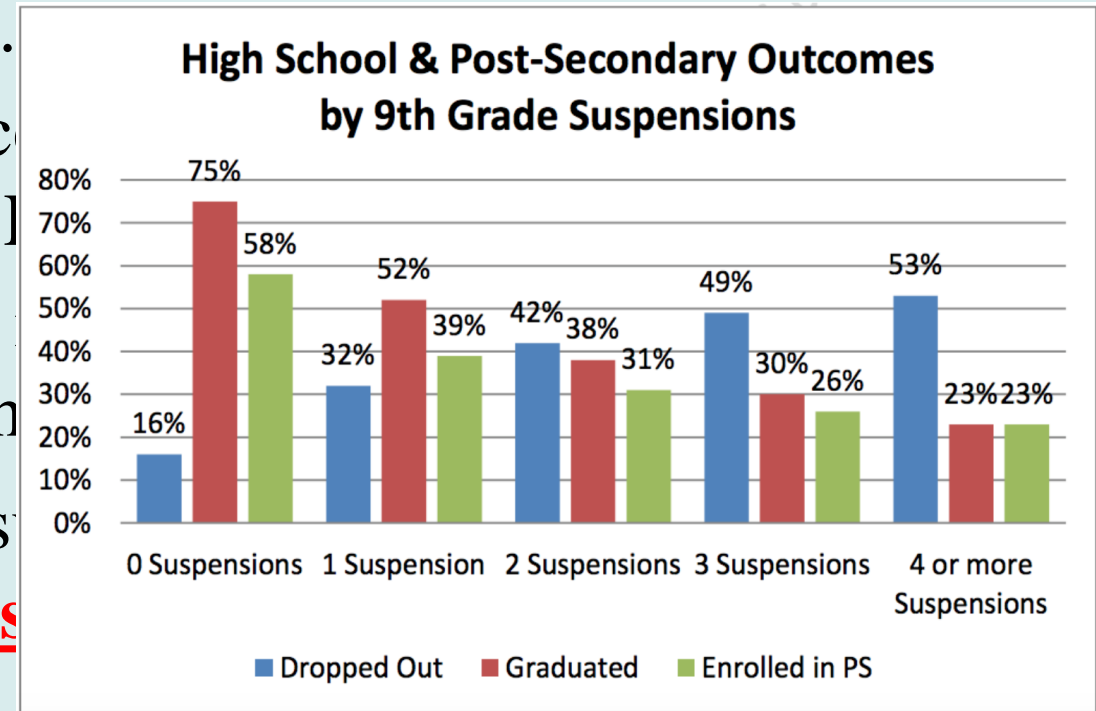
If school effects on child and adolescent outcomes exist, presumably they are constituted from processes that involve collective aspects of community life—i.e. schooling. What are the collective processes that make for a healthy educative experience and social environment for children and adolescents?

Does it Take A Village?

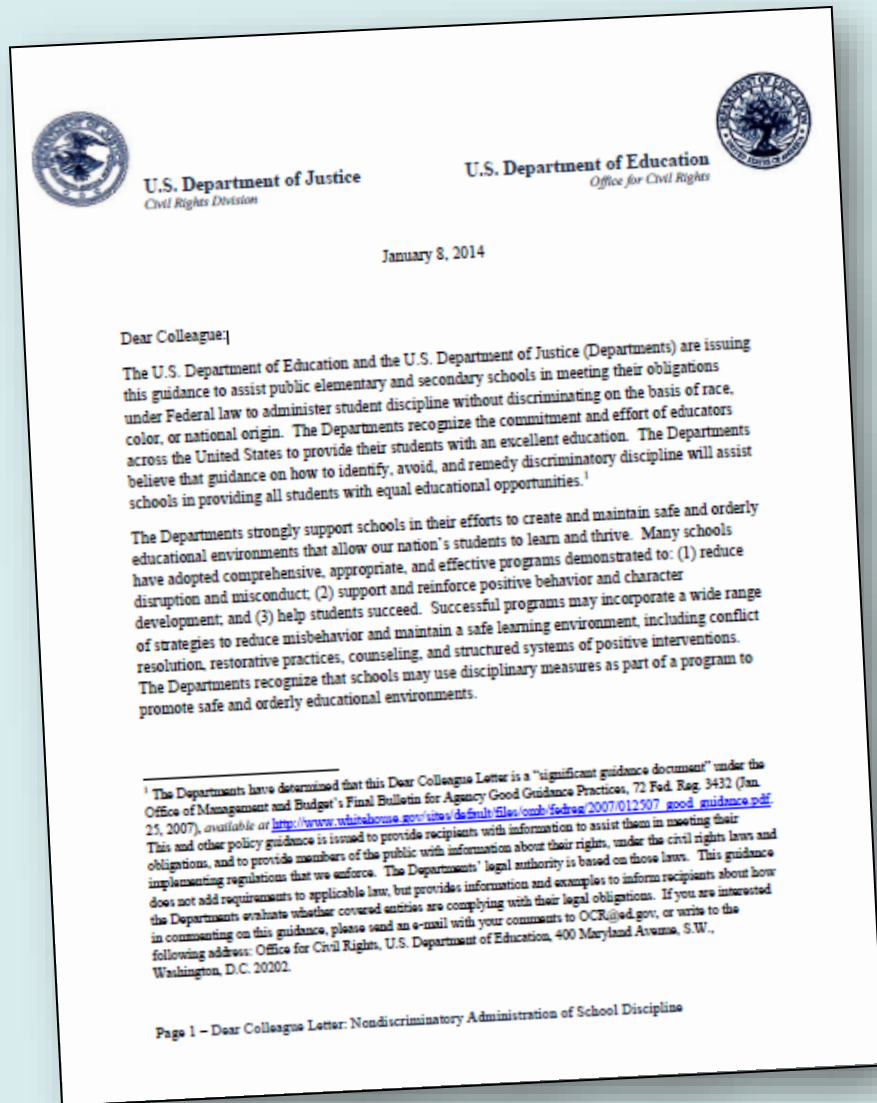
Analysis

A suspension can be life altering. It is the #1 predictor—more than poverty—of whether children will drop out of school, increasing the likelihood of unemployment, reliance on social-welfare programs, and imprisonment.

- Exclusionary discipline practices **increase High School dropout rates** and cost the nation billions in lost tax revenue.
- High school dropout on average experience expectancy that is **6-9 years shorter** than 1
- Young adults with a history of suspension **and volunteer** in civic activities after high
- Only **10%** of young men who have been suspended in school are likely to **enroll in four-year ins**



Helpful Reading: Dear Colleague



Dear Colleague Letter, January 8, 2014 (U.S. Departments of Education and Justice)



U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
www2.ed.gov/ocr



U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
www.justice.gov/crt

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.html>

In Closing

Analysis

The traditional model says, 'Throw the kids out for refusing to listen...'

What students need the most is **NOT** negative consequences and zero tolerance policies. What...students need is absolutely consistent and urgent **SUPPORT** around maintaining appropriate behavior. They need to feel **VALUED** and **CONFIDENT** in one of our society's most **CRITICAL INSTITUTIONS**.

Thank you.

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