SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE

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WHAT IS THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE?

The policies and practices that are directly and indirectly pushing students out of school and on a pathway to prison.
Zero tolerance policies, aggressive school policing, and extreme school discipline practices lead to high rates of suspension, expulsion, and even arrest for youth.
CRIMINALIZATION OF NORMATIVE ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR

Pushing & Shoving → “Battery”
Swiping headphones → “Theft” or “Robbery”
Talking Back → “Disorderly Conduct”
SEVERE RACIAL DISPARITIES IN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

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 vs. 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
How does this impact Black girls?

Black girls are frequently marginalized and criminalized by schools.

• Referrals to juvenile justice in Allegheny County are down over the past 15 years, but racial disproportionality in referrals is up. Black girls are 10 times more likely than White girls to be referred to the Juvenile Justice system.
Some examples of the harms to Black girls

- Dress code policies targeting specific body types
- Grooming standards failing to recognize and appreciate different hair types
- Adultification of Black girls
POLICING IN SCHOOLS
Police presence in schools has been on the rise, especially in the last 15 years.

More types of incidents now require police notification.

State and federal funding for cops in schools has expanded.

Many Zero Tolerance policies have broadened the definition of “weapon.”
WHAT IS A SOLUTION TO POLICING IN SCHOOLS?
DO WE NEED POLICE IN SCHOOLS?

Many studies suggest that police presence in schools is causing more harm than good.
• Schools can improve their code of conduct to hold students accountable for minor misbehavior without excluding them from school

• Examine the root causes of racial disparities and make a commitment to end them

• Limit the role of law enforcement to serious crimes

• Increase culturally responsive counseling and community intervention resources

• Give youth and parents a real voice in creating and implementing positive school discipline

• Ensuring that Black girls with disabilities have access to culturally affirming and appropriate special education supports and services that include school-based mental health supports
What can make a difference?

- Culturally affirming and responsive mental health supports and services
- Interactive and culturally appropriate curriculum
- Positive behavioral interventions