



School-to-prison Pipeline

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Introduction

Kindergarten through grade 12 schools are institutions where youth go to learn, grow, and sculpt their minds for their future. For some youth, schools do not present a warm and welcoming environment, and instead, respond in ways that create negative outcomes for certain youth. Factors like bullying, poor student-to-teacher interactions, and negative parental attachment can cause youth to have problems in school. Minority youth are also more likely to get in trouble in school for the same behaviors as their white counterparts. The school-to-prison pipeline is a pathway that begins in the school system that operates under the notion of zero tolerance for some youth (e.g., youth-of-color). Once a youth enters the juvenile justice system, the likelihood of having adult criminal legal system involvement is then increased. As such, this poster will describe the factors of the school-to-prison pipeline and propose changes.

School Issues

Bullying

- Estimates suggest around 18-31% of youth have been bullied in school, with 7-15% reporting being victims of cyberbullying (McCuddy & Esbensen, 2016).
- Studies find that bullied youth have more mental health challenges as well as subsequent acts of delinquency including substance use (McCuddy & Esbensen, 2016).
- Additional studies report that victimization is also associated with later engagement in property offending, as well as general behaviors described as aggressive or “deviant” (Wong & Schonlau, 2013).

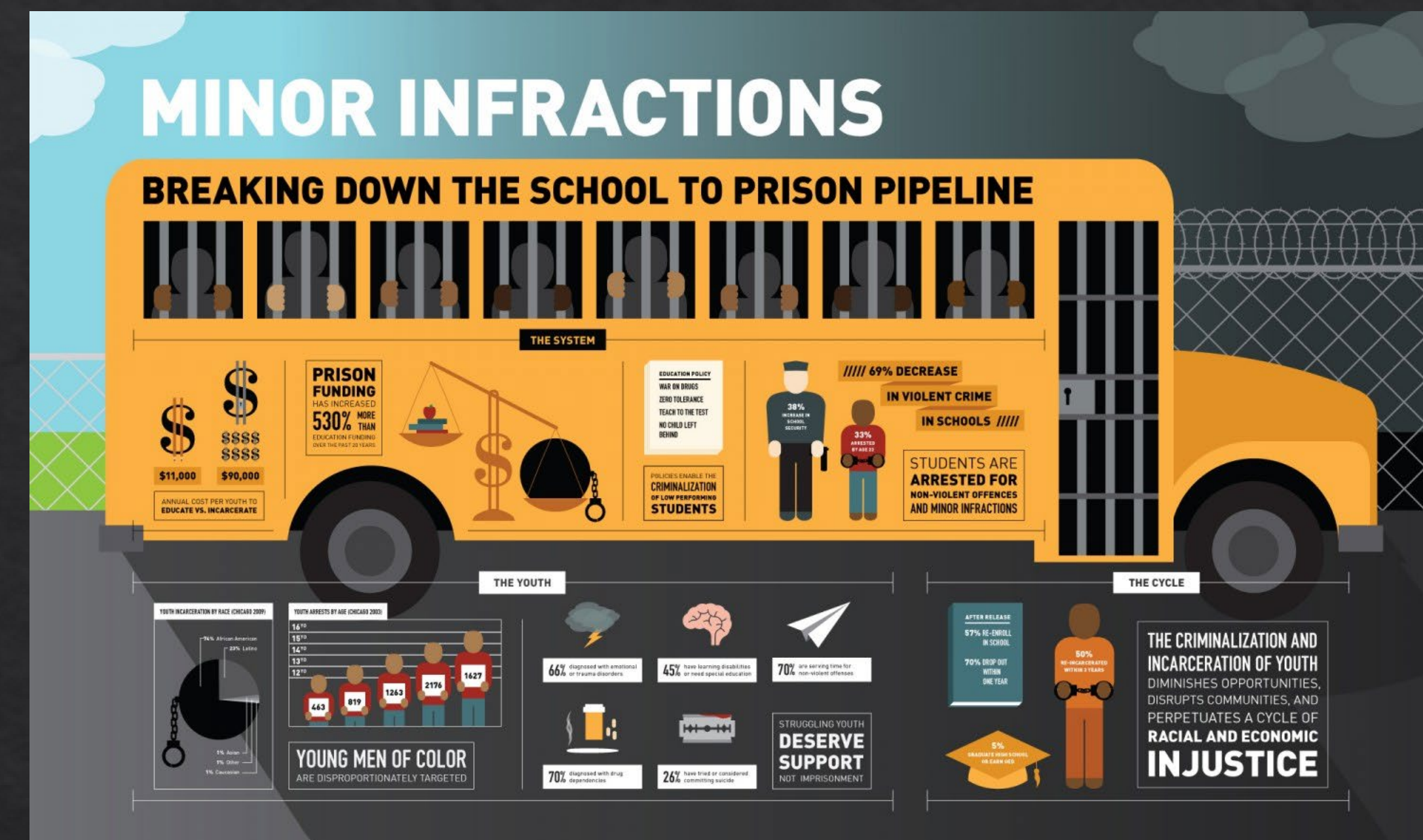
Teacher Relationships

- When youth do not have positive bonds with school personnel, research finds a positive correlation with school misconduct and a negative association with school cohesion (Demagnet & Van Houtte, 2011).
- Additionally, when youth do not have positive connections with their teachers, there is an increased likelihood for school suspensions (Hemphill et al., 2014).

Zero Tolerance in Schools

- When schools respond only with disciplinary actions, youth achievement scores decline as do graduation rates (Hemez et al., 2019).
- Studies find that youth who are suspended from school before the age of 12, are nearly two times more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system than youth without suspensions (Novak, 2019).
- Youth with school suspensions have an 8% increase in odds of arrest (Novak, 2019).

“A process by which youth who experience punitive punishment in schools are increasingly enmeshed within the criminal justice system” (Hemez et al., 2019, p. 235).



School-to-prison Pipeline

Race

- Stereotyping may explain why Black students are disproportionately affected by zero tolerance policies (Pigott et al., 2017).
- In both urban and rural schools, African American and Latina/o students are vulnerable to placement in the school-to-prison pipeline (Marchbanks et al., 2016).
- In rural schools, the number of African American and Latina/o American students is associated with higher rates of referrals to the juvenile justice system (Marchbanks et al., 2016).

Poverty

- Racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to reside in communities that are characterized by poverty, unemployment, family disruption, crime and violence, social isolation, and discrimination (Marchbanks et al., 2016).
- Some suggest the higher rates of violence, crime, unemployment, social disorganization, and poverty in urban areas influences misconduct within their schools (Marchbanks et al., 2016).

Implications & Suggestions

Families

- Poor attachment to parents has been associated with more delinquent behavior (Hoeve et al., 2012).
- Multi-systemic Family Therapy can improve parenting skills, family relations, social support, associations with pro-social peers, and sustained positive behavioral changes.

Schools

- Research supports the wraparound model in working with at-risk youth—one that involves families, the school system, and service providers (Abdullah et al., 2013).
- Providing students with avenues to improve student-teacher communication has been found to be associated with improved perceptions of school (O’Neill & Vogel, 2019).

Communities

- Prevention programs such as the Busy Streets initiative can reduce risk factors such as community disorganization (Parks et al., 2018).
- The presence of school mentors (e.g., Big Brother Big Sisters) can help aid students’ connections to their school (Herrera et al., 2011).

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