

DOWNLOAD PDF POINT : ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES INSTILL DISCIPLINE AND INCREASE SAFETY IN SCHOOLS

Chapter 1 : Zero Tolerance and School Safety - School SecuritySchool Security

effects of zero tolerance policies with respect to child development, the relationship between education and the juvenile justice system, and students, families, and com-.

Under zero tolerance, students who break certain school rules face mandatory penalties, including suspension and referral to law enforcement. The approach gained popularity during the 1980s, and by the mid-1990s, most school districts in the United States had adopted some form of zero tolerance. But at the end of the 1990s, Randi Weingarten wrote an editorial in *American Educator* saying those policies had been a failure. Zero-tolerance policies were supposed to make schools safer and make discipline fair. The turnaround is a response to a growing body of research showing that zero-tolerance policies resulted in a disproportionate number of kids of color suspended, expelled, and referred to law enforcement. School suspension rates, Black and Latino students tend to get suspended from school more often than white or Asian students. In the 2002-03 school year, for example, In 2002, the federal Departments of Education and Justice issued a letter to state education commissioners warning that districts continuing to have a pattern of disproportional discipline risk a federal civil rights action. Many districts are struggling to figure out how to reduce suspensions and still maintain order in classrooms. Weingarten said changes in discipline policies need to be accompanied by training and support for teachers. Some school districts are finding some success in reducing racial gaps in discipline and maintaining order by taking different approaches to discipline, such as restorative justice. In Denver, Tim Turley teaches teachers how to use restorative practices rather than removing kids from the classroom. He said he often meets with skepticism from teachers in his workshops. He reminds them that suspension is a temporary solution. They can remove a student, but "they always come back," Turley said. Turley said suspension is a hollow threat for most kids. Students who are suspended are also more likely to wind up in the juvenile corrections system. Connection between suspensions and graduation Students who have been suspended graduate from high school at lower rates. Graduation rates for students never suspended exceed 80 percent for white, black and Latino students. But for black and Latino students, the rate drops to less than 60 percent among those who were suspended at least once. Data is taken from National Longitudinal Survey. Originally published in the book *Closing the School Discipline Gap: Equitable Remedies for Excessive Exclusion* published by Teachers College Press in "School disengagement is one of the strongest correlates of juvenile delinquency," said Russell Skiba, professor of counseling and educational psychology at Indiana University. Take similar kids at similar schools who commit similar offenses. Suspend some but not others. The ones who are suspended are more likely to get suspended again, to drop out, and to get arrested. The act required states that get federal education money to pass zero-tolerance laws requiring the expulsion of any student who brought a weapon to school. But many states passed laws that went further, requiring suspension or expulsion for other offenses, too. Some school districts created zero-tolerance policies calling for suspension or expulsion for fighting, drugs, smoking, defiant behavior, tardiness and even truancy. He and other researchers started looking at data from a large Midwestern school district, "and began to see some troubling patterns in that data," Skiba said. The majority of suspensions were not for the most serious offenses but rather for more minor behaviors. And we began to see a huge racial gap. Skiba looked at other studies and found the same result. The percentage of students who are white has fallen to just over half, for example, while teachers remain more than 80 percent white. National Center for Educational Statistics Other researchers have found similar results. Researchers Jennifer Eberhardt and Jason Okonofua at Stanford University gave teachers a series of anecdotes about student misbehavior and asked whether the students should be punished. Different teachers got the same anecdotes, but the names were changed: Some teachers got a name that suggested that the child was white, like Greg or Jake. The teachers who got names like DeShawn and Darnell were more likely to suggest harsh discipline on a second offense and more likely to say they could imagine suspending the child in the future. When zero-tolerance policies were first gaining popularity in the 1980s and 1990s, many people thought that strict,

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inflexible policies would result in fairer discipline. But the racial discipline gap got wider. In the s, a black child was twice as likely to be suspended as a white child. Today, a black child is nearly four times as likely to be suspended — even a preschool child. An American Psychological Association task force issued a report on zero tolerance in that said, "Rather than reducing the likelihood of disruption Equitable Remedies for Excessive Exclusion published by Teachers College Press in Weingarten said it was data like this that changed her thinking about school discipline. She argues that it will likely never be possible to get away from suspension and expulsion entirely. Students who are dangerous will always have to be removed from schools. But she says less serious misbehavior should be dealt with in other ways.

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Chapter 2 : Philadelphia reverses course on “zero tolerance” discipline in schools | PBS NewsHour

Students and the Bill of Rights: constitutional rights in school -- Point: zero tolerance policies instill discipline and increase safety in schools -- Counterpoint: zero tolerance policies are unfair and deprive students of due process -- Point: safety concerns must trump Fourth Amendment rights in public schools -- Counterpoint: students.

Black NYU Press, Over the past two decades, school discipline has grown increasingly harsh and impersonal. Many schools and states are willing to exclude “temporarily and permanently” students for almost any type of behavior. Local communities and policy advocates have pushed back and managed some important successes in recent years, but the seriousness and scope of the problem demands a systematic long-term check. Courts cannot simply abandon students to school boards and the political process. Too often, both schools and politicians have shown themselves to be irrational and willing to sacrifice students in the expedient pursuit of other goals. This irrationality and the need for change are best captured through the lives of students who experience discipline. Apparently, the feelings persisted. She told Benjamin she brought a knife to school that morning in her bookbinder. Benjamin took the note seriously. He knew his friend had previously attempted suicide and had even been hospitalized to deal with ongoing issues. Benjamin was worried she would use the knife to hurt herself that morning. Benjamin was smart enough to know that a real solution for her long-term well-being was beyond him. He planned to tell both her family and his own about the incident at the end of the school day and let them determine what to do in the coming days and hours. But in the short term, he was not going to leave her safety “and in his mind possibly her life” to chance. So Benjamin asked his friend if he could take the bookbinder from her locker and put it in his own for safekeeping. Benjamin told her that he had the binder in his locker, although it is unclear that he had actually seen or touched the knife inside the binder. What was clear, however, was that Kellogg knew that Benjamin did not pose any real threat to himself or others. Kellogg sent Benjamin by himself to get the binder and bring it back to the office. The assistant principal responded to his admittedly good deed by suspending him for ten days. The principal of the school then escalated the situation and referred Benjamin to the superintendent for potential further punishment. Both the superintendent and two different school district hearing panels decided to increase his punishment. Benjamin later asked the court system to reverse his punishment as irrational, but no court ever took his case seriously. The courts all claimed their hands were tied. Not only have states taken a zero-tolerance approach to real weapons or drugs, but they have extended the approach to everyday items that a student might have, like a cough drop or fingernail clippers. In some instances, their rationale has appeared to be that everyday items could be used as weapons or for illegitimate purposes. In other instances, the rationale is simply that students must do what they are told or suffer the consequences. A Pennsylvania statute, for instance, directs schools to expel and refer to law enforcement any student who brings a weapon to school. For instance, according to media reports in , a seven-year-old boy brought an ink pen to Hershey Elementary School. Apparently, the pen buzzed or vibrated when touched a certain way, presumably to startle the unsuspecting user. She said it was a weapon and suspended him for four days. Over the past decade, newspapers have been littered with similar stories of so-called weapons. Schools have taken similarly broad approaches to the meaning of drugs. According to reports, students have been expelled for various everyday over-the-counter medicines that they had brought to school for legitimate reasons. Some districts take zero tolerance toward weapons even further. They punish students for just thinking or talking about them. Students have been suspended or expelled for drawing pictures of weapons, chewing their Pop-Tarts into the shape of weapons, making gun gestures with their hands on the playground, having squirt guns in their possession, and simply writing stories that included guns or violence in them. In all fairness, these behaviors could be early warning signs of a troubled student. But more often, they are signs of a playful and normally developing child. Even in those rare instances when the behavior is a warning sign, summarily suspending a student is not an effective way to respond. Yet many schools and states do not distinguish between the normal and troubled child. Even when schools can tell the

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difference between these studentsâ€™ which is not always easyâ€™they refuse to do so. Some believe state law prohibits them from making reasonable distinctions. Others believe that making distinctions and exercising judgment are simply bad ideas. Either way, both groups adopt harsh discipline policies and procedures that remove all judgment and wisdom from official policy. While he was gone, one of his friends put a hunting knife in the glove compartment and left it there. The friend had started carrying itâ€™purportedly for self-defenseâ€™following an out-of-school altercation with another boy regarding a former girlfriend. When Dustin dropped his friend off later, the friend left the knife in the car. Dustin did not know his friend had put or left the knife in the car. The next night, Dustin drove his friends to school for a football game and parked in the school parking lot. They were all members of the band and were to perform that night. At some point before the game, some other students told the band director that they had seen Dustin drinking what they believed to be alcohol with one of his friends. The band director questioned Dustin and his friend but released them because he did not smell any alcohol on them. Fifteen minutes later, the assistant principal decided to question them again. The search did not turn up any hint of drinking. It did, however, turn up the knife that had been left in the glove compartment. As with Benjamin Ratner, at that point, judgment and circumstances were cast aside. School district officials quickly took steps to expel Dustin. They conducted several hearings at the school and district level. Everyone involvedâ€™from principals and the hearing officer to each school board memberâ€™agreed that they would expel him. At each point, the evidence was straightforward and uncontroverted. That he and the others involved testified that he did not know it was there was irrelevant. Possession of a weapon on school property is a violation of Knox County Policy. Two or three years ago we were dealing with guns, guns, guns. Before the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, the board asserted that it could and would expel ignorant, or otherwise innocent, students because intent just does not matter under its rules. Moreover, his victory stands largely as an outlier among various other courts that have affirmed districts expelling students under similar circumstances. Zero-tolerance and harsh-discipline responses like these to so-called weapons and drugs reveal a problematic mind-set that undermines rational decision making. The districts and states that adopt these policies never seriously grapple with the goals they are trying to achieve and whether their policies are necessary, much less effective. Rule making and unflinching adherence to rulesâ€™regardless of whether the rule and punishment make senseâ€™become ends in and of themselves. States and schools never stop to question whether elementary school students using scissors as real weapons are but remote possibilities or viable threats around which to build a rule. Nor do they stop to seriously examine whether rules for the sake of rules actually make schools safer and improve student behavior instead of simply producing more school exclusions. Most often, these policies are assertions of power that few schools and states have ever seriously questioned. In this respect, they are attempts by states and schools to delude themselvesâ€™or the publicâ€™into believing they are creating more orderly environments. The truth is that they are often doing the opposite. African American, Latino, poor, and disabled students are punished at much higher rates than white students are. This inequality starts at the very earliest levels of school and proceeds through high school. In elementary school, while only 1. In other words, African American elementary school students are nearly five times as likely to be suspended as whites. In high school, the suspension rates jump for everyone. The suspension rate for whites is 6. The African American suspension rate is The suspension rate of Latinos, Native Americans, and English-Language Learners are all nearly twice the rate of whites. These racial disparities in discipline are not new. In the s, when the Office for Civil Rights first began tracking discipline, the data showed that African Americans were suspended at two to three times the rate of whites. The initial theory was that discriminatory discipline became a means by which many schools managed, if not resisted, school desegregation. Explicit bias has become implicit bias. De jure segregation and inequality, while significantly reduced between and the late s, have returned as de facto segregation and inequality. Bias, segregation, and inequality now intersect with generally bad ideas about discipline to make matters worse. Zero tolerance, ironically, was proposed by some advocates as a cure to certain biases and disparities in the discipline system. They would remove discretion from discipline by

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making certain punishments mandatory. Without discretion, racial bias would lack an obvious entry point into disciplinary decisions, and racial disparities might plummet. In other words, if all students involved in fights are automatically suspended, schools would necessarily treat students equally, even if suspensions went up. Advocates, however, misjudged where the discriminatory discretion was occurring. Teachers send African Americans to the office at much different rates than they send whites, even when the students engage in similar behavior. Zero tolerance prevents principals from second-guessing teachers and sending students back to class. Even if a principal believes school exclusion is inappropriate in a given case, zero-tolerance policies can require the principal to suspend anyone who lands in his or her office. Thus, the primary effect of zero tolerance has been to amplify discrimination rather than reduce it. Teachers retain the discretion to discriminate, and zero-tolerance policies force principals to perpetuate it. For this reason, it should come as no surprise that racial disparities in suspensions have increased in many places since

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Chapter 3 : Discipline After Zero Tolerance | Education News

Schools have also developed tunnel vision focus in training school administrators on how to improve test scores, but often fail to provide adequate training on discipline and school safety issues. Proper training of school administrators on school board policies, disciplinary procedures, and overall school safety issues can reduce the risks of.

Transcript Audio Some school districts are rethinking "zero tolerance" discipline policies, which lead to students being arrested for minor violations and disproportionately affect students of color. In , a Philadelphia deputy police commissioner reversed a longstanding policy of automatic arrests, an approach that has lowered recidivism and improved school safety. I expected more from you. But school security just found two students with several vials of marijuana. This is what I mean about you doing dumb stuff out there, and in here. Rather than being arrested, the student is put in the Philadelphia Police School diversion program. A citywide initiative that aims to keep kids out of the criminal justice system for misdemeanors. Things like having drugs in school. Or bringing items that are banned, like pocket knives and bb guns. Even hair combs and scissors, which could be dangerous. You have a bottle opener, which can still be used as a weapon, it has a point. Philadelphia police officer Tamesha Golphin says sometimes kids have a reasonable explanation. Totally forgot the knife was in the book bag. In March, 10th grader Senaaj Jackson set off a metal detector when, he says, he accidentally brought a kitchen knife to school. And I got in. And then I put the knife in my book bag and I then forgot to take it out. Then the next morning I went to school, and when I put my book bag through the monitor, he said we have a problem. Senaaj says getting arrested would have affected the entire family. His mom works full time, so he helps take care of his 5 brothers and sisters. The first thing I thought about was my mom. I got too many brothers and sisters, I got to be here for them. I got scared, my heart dropped, my stomach bubbling up. So now Senaaj goes to a day after-school program that provides mentoring and support. It includes group sessions where they discuss drugs and alcohol. The reason why a lot of people do different types of drugs is because you have some kind of problem like he says stress. And they talk about anger management and conflict resolution. You guys are young. You guys are gonna have interactions with the police at some point. The people that work there, they very respectful. Even if you disrespect them, they still talk to you respectfully. Principal Mary Dean has worked in the Philadelphia school district for 26 years. In a high needs environment like this one, our students need it, they really do. I tell everyone, I have the smartest kids in the city. They are just brilliant. Before under the zero-tolerance policy, was any of that looked at? You have to be arrested. Naomi Goldstein is an expert in juvenile justice and a professor of psychology at Drexel University. She says kids will often outgrow bad behavior. And automatically arresting them can actually make things worse. Goldstein says that cycle often starts at school. She says harsh penalties for breaking school rules push kids, minorities disproportionately, into the criminal justice system. Kevin Bethel spent eight years as the deputy police commissioner overseeing security in the Philadelphia Public Schools. He used to be in charge of locking kids up. That would involve taking that child from school, placing them in one of our six facilities around the city to process the juvenile, and be fingerprinted, photographed, held in a cell block upwards of six hours, waiting for a parent to arrive. But then about six years ago, Bethel began attending programs and workshops, where he met advocates from other cities who were reforming their approach to juvenile justice. He learned more about adolescent development, trauma, and why kids act out. When I look at what we were locking them up for, you know, when you saw that a large percentage of them were just minor offenses, things that I did as a kid. You know, I had my little Cub Scout knife. I got into fights in schools. I did all that stuff. I did those things! He started the diversion program in , announcing that officers would arrest only when it was absolutely necessary. I guess I was kind of leery. She says teachers there were skeptical too. I think the teachers felt reassured when they saw us arresting kids. To them suspension was not good enough, they just want to see something done. They want to see that child go out in handcuffs. The program has had an impact. Throughout Philadelphia, student arrests have dropped by 71 percent, from nearly

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in to this school year. At West Philadelphia High School, arrests dropped from 21 to just 2 last year. Recidivism rates have improved citywide, too. And school safety improved. An average of 1, fewer serious incidents have been reported annually since the program began. In my nearly year career looking at juvenile justice programs, again, it is almost unheard of to see results like this. A main reason for the successful results? Like this one, called The Bridge. The diversion initiative has taken advantage of already existing programs funded by the Philadelphia Department of Human Services. So there are no major new costs. Terrina Smith is a case manager at the bridge who counsels students and even visits the kids and their parents at home. It could be problems at home, it could be a cry for help. Niche Smith is a year-old high school senior. She was sent to the bridge after getting caught with a Taser at school. My mom handed it to me. She gave it to me. I used to go from school straight to work. She was failing her classes at school, and says she had little ambition. But then she started to open up. And then it was just like they talked to me, it was like you can do it, and I was like okay. And I can do it. I know I can, I got it in me. As for Senaaj Jackson, Terrina checks in with him about his bad grades and skipping school. And she pushes him on his career goals.

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Chapter 4 : Table of contents for Library of Congress control number

suggest that Zero Tolerance policies have failed their promise to increase school safety. Advocates of the Zero Tolerance polices refute this argument by pointing out the high rates of suspension and expulsion.

Guest contributor July 20, , Nowadays, it has been modified in context to include bullying and disruptive behavior in the classroom. Petersburg Times, reported that a 10 year old girl was expelled from school for possession of a weapon. The weapon was discovered when the girl herself handed it to her teacher. The weapon was a plastic knife that her mother had placed in her lunchbox for slicing an apple. In another instance, an adolescent boy was also expelled for talking to his mother on a cell phone in school where cell phone use is not allowed. He had not spoken to her in 30 days because she was a soldier stationed in Iraq. But is a zero tolerance policy really the best method to prevent bullying and other disruptive behaviors in the classroom? We should investigate whether zero tolerance policies have actually made schools safer. According to a recent article by the Vera Institute of Justice, there has been no research supporting a decrease in disruptive behavior or violence in schools with the implementation of zero tolerance policies. In the article, the decrease in disruptive or bullying behavior in the classroom is due to an overall decline in juvenile violent crime across the United States between and In fact, according to the FBI, the juvenile violence rate is at an all-time low. So, the decrease in disruptive behavior in the classroom is probably due to the overall decrease in juvenile crimes across the nation and not because of zero tolerance policies. The NASP goes further to say that these zero tolerance policies have not only brought any positive results but have actually had negative consequences on students and their schools. However, there is no data that supports African-American students or students with disabilities being more disruptive or more violent that would warrant such disciplinary actions. It has also been noted that students who are disciplined in the zero tolerance policy have a multitude of negative consequences. Psychosocial immaturity which can include poor resistance to peer influence, attitude towards perception of risk, future orientation, and impulse control is a major negative consequence of adolescents who were subjected to this discipline. Another negative consequence is that the rate of dropping out is much higher for students who have been subjected to zero tolerance such that it hinders their academic progress. There is a good amount of evidence that shows that preventing bullying or disruptive behavior is far more cost effective than zero tolerance policies which can eventually lead to unemployment, welfare and prison costs. Alternative methods to zero tolerance can greatly enhance the classroom and the students future. Reinforcing positive behavior instead of disciplining negative behavior provides support for the student. In the examples given in the beginning of the article, a better review of the context would probably not have led to the students being expelled from the school. The teacher should have interpreted that as a positive behavior for handing in something the student knew she was not supposed to have in her possession. If she reviewed the situation, she would have known that the mother placed it in her lunchbox. It was not warranted for the girl to be expelled. In the second example of the adolescent boy talking to his mother, review of the context of his situation should have provided leniency. That certainly is not disruptive or bullying behavior. Proper training and education of the teacher and school administration can provide an alternate form of discipline other than zero tolerance. Classroom management can effectively address minor disruptive behavior at that level and not be allowed to escalate to the point of extreme discipline such as suspension or expulsion. Administration and teachers can use models that will provide alternate methods of addressing minor bullying or disruptive behavior. Using zero tolerance policies have proven to be less effective in the classroom and in the life of the student. This will help to reduce disruptive and bullying behavior, produce better members of society who are less likely to go to prison and use welfare and more likely to complete school and earn higher degrees of education.

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Chapter 5 : Zero Tolerance Policies and Bullying in the Classroom

of schools had adopted zero tolerance policies for violence, going beyond federal mandates. 6 To put some muscle behind these policies, the federal government and states began to increase funding for security guards and other school-

Read Mode Schools Rethink Post-Columbine Discipline When schools began greatly expanding zero-tolerance policies against student misbehavior after the shootings at Columbine High School in , few expected to see kids as young as 6 handcuffed and removed from school for throwing a temper tantrum or playing with squirt guns. With nearly half of states now mandating that schools expel and often call the police on students for fighting, possessing weapons of any kind or even disrupting class, thousands of students nationwide have been kicked out of school or seen the inside of a cop car for violating zero-tolerance policies. Some of the first stirrings of a possible retrenchment can be seen in three states -- Indiana, Mississippi and Texas -- where a handful of lawmakers are trying to reverse the trend of adopting ever-more stringent discipline policies. What is zero tolerance? The term "zero tolerance" was coined in the s for strict drug-seizure policies adopted as part of the federal "War on Drugs. Zero tolerance became national policy for schools when President Bill Clinton signed the Gun-Free Schools Act of , which was passed in response to several school shootings across the country. The federal law required states to expel students who bring firearms to school for at least one calendar year. State lawmakers and school boards since have expanded the punishment for weapons to include automatic expulsion or suspension for drugs and alcohol, fighting, swearing, disrupting class, disobedience, truancy and more than a dozen other forms of misbehavior. Highly publicized arrests in Florida and Nevada in the past two months are among dozens of examples where zero-tolerance policies have gone too far, critics say. In January, two grade-school children were arrested in Ocala, Fla. And in Nevada, Clark County School District officials recently tried to expel a student who drew a comic strip depicting the death of his teacher. Some school officials and police say parents concerned about safety have demanded such stepped-up vigilance and discipline, and leave them no alternative but to have children removed from school and sometimes entered into the criminal justice system. To critics, however, there is scant evidence that zero-tolerance policies increase school safety and mounting evidence that harsh discipline may do more harm than good. In fact, the data point the other direction, said Skiba, who has done several studies critical of zero-tolerance policies. In a study released last summer, Skiba reported that African-American students in Indiana are four times more likely to get suspended and two-and-a-half times more likely to be expelled than white students. Previous studies have found no evidence that this is due to higher rates of misbehavior by minority students, Skiba said. Instead, African-American and Hispanic students appear to be suspended and expelled for more subjective and minor infractions than white students, he said. Backers of zero-tolerance policies say that tactics such as installing metal detectors, creating crisis-response plans and cracking down on bullying, unruly and suspicious behavior have led to a dramatic drop in school-related violence. They point to a federal report issued in December that showed violent crime in schools fell 50 percent between and , a striking decline that mirrors the national drop in crime. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also found a drop in the number of weapons students admitted bringing to school in a national survey. The center reported that 6. The Columbine school shooting in Colorado -- in which Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris killed 12 students and a teacher before committing suicide -- was the worst in a series of a dozen school shootings in the United States over an month period. Although children actually are much safer in school than out -- the chance of becoming a victim in a school-associated violent death is less than one in a million, according to the Youth Law Center -- these incidents had an enormous effect on public perceptions of school danger. Zero-tolerance policies were not new in , but in the wake of Columbine, they were dramatically expanded by state legislatures and school districts to include not just weapons and drugs, but fighting and misbehavior. Now the list of infractions that can get students expelled or

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arrested tops 20, ranging from swearing and insubordination to making terrorist threats or skipping school. Under federal law, all states must adopt zero-tolerance policies for firearms. But since Columbine, zero-tolerance policies have been adopted for fighting in 23 states, for disrupting class in 19 states, and kids can be expelled for making threats in 12 states, according to the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy. The tide may be turning, however. Few states have recently expanded their zero-tolerance policies, and this year, several lawmakers have introduced bills to roll them back. In Texas, zero-tolerance policies have resulted in a disproportionate number of low-income, disabled and minority students being sent to alternative disciplinary schools, most of which have few books or computers and substandard teachers, said Texas state Rep. Dora Olivo, a Democrat. Olivo recently introduced a bill that would make schools responsible for the assessment test scores of students who are transferred into disciplinary schools. The measure passed the Texas House last week and is being considered by the Senate. Increasingly, he said, groups who perform poorly on standardized tests, such as students with disabilities, minorities and low-income kids, are targeted for expulsion by school administrators and kicked out for minor infractions. Another bill pending in Texas, introduced by Republican state Sen. In Mississippi, Democratic state Rep. Eric Fleming introduced a bill that would prohibit schools from zero-tolerance policies. And legislation has been introduced in Indiana to study why African-American and Hispanic students are suspended more frequently than white students.

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Chapter 6 : Schools start to rethink zero tolerance policies

schools provided the initial motivation for adopting zero tolerance disciplinary policies and may well motivate still another round of tough disciplinary measures. But what is the reality of school violence.

Zero tolerance discipline laws require automatic and generally severe punishment for specified offenses that could range from possessing weapons to physical assault. They leave little leeway for consideration of the circumstances of the offense. As a researcher of education policy and school discipline, I would highlight that these revisions, some of which have been passed in other states, represent a significant change of course for state school discipline law. In fact, my recent work and that of others suggests that the shift away from zero tolerance approaches is for the better. Why zero tolerance policies were introduced Throughout the s, the number of states with zero tolerance laws, those requiring suspension or expulsion for specified offenses, increased significantly. The rapid adoption of such laws was spurred in part by the passage of the Gun-Free Schools Act, federal legislation that required states to adopt mandatory expulsion laws for possessing a firearm in school. These safety concerns were further heightened by the shooting that took place at Columbine High School, a public high school in Littleton, Colorado. Following Columbine, by the early s, nearly every state had a zero tolerance law in place. Many of these laws expanded beyond firearms to include other weapons, physical assaults and drug offenses. Push back against zero tolerance Clearly, such zero tolerance laws were meant to improve the safety and order of the school environment. However, in recent years, they have been seen as being overly prescriptive and as contributing to racial disparities in school discipline. Black kids are suspended at a higher rate. Children image via www. As a result, in , the U. The letter was a call for reductions in the use of suspensions and expulsions and, instead, for a focus on ensuring the fair use of school discipline for students of all backgrounds. In particular, I sought to find out if they contributed to increased use of suspensions and if they led to racial disparities. Given claims by proponents of such laws that they increase the safety and order of the school overall, I also wanted to see if these laws contributed to decreases in perceptions of problem behaviors in the school as a whole. I used national data collected by the U. The sample included thousands of school districts and principals spanning the late s to the mids. The study revealed three important findings. First, the study showed that state laws requiring schools to have zero tolerance policies increased suspension rates for all students. Second, suspension rates increased at a higher rate for African-American students, potentially contributing to racial disparities in discipline. Finally, principals reported few decreases in problem behaviors in schools, suggesting that the laws did not improve the safety and order of schools. The findings, in context The findings show that the adoption of state zero tolerance laws result in increases in district suspension rates. For the average-sized district, such laws resulted in approximately 35 more suspensions per year. Though this number may seem small, the potential impact is quite large. In short, state zero tolerance laws may be imposing significant financial costs on society. Burden of zero tolerance laws is not shared equally. Boy image via www. The results of my study suggest that the increase in suspension rates for black students as a result of these laws is approximately three times the size of that for white students. Coupled with other research that finds links between zero tolerance policies and racial disparities, this finding demonstrates that these laws, though supposedly neutral with regard to race, are disproportionately impacting students of color. Recent data released by the U. No reduction in misbehavior Proponents of zero tolerance discipline have argued that the use of suspensions and expulsions increases the safety and order of the learning environment as a whole. My study found evidence to refute the claim. In my data set, principals rated the degree to which various behavior problems i. I found that, in the view of principals, the presence of a state zero tolerance law did not decrease their rating of the degree to which these various behaviors are problems. In other words, state zero tolerance laws did not appear to be contributing to improved levels of safety and order overall. What the results mean for policy and practice Students, parents and other stakeholders have an expectation that schools should be safe and orderly environments that treat all

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students equitably. While it is imperative that schools take active steps to achieve these goals, the findings of my work call into question whether state zero tolerance discipline laws are the most effective way to do so. While suspension and expulsion may still be appropriate tools in some circumstances, it is important for schools to consider context, and states to allow such discretion, in the administration of school discipline. Furthermore, it is important to have safeguards in place to ensure that such discretion is utilized equitably for students of color, who too often experience disproportionate disciplinary exclusion. The revised disciplinary laws under consideration in Michigan and similar revisions to school disciplinary policies in other states represent more promising steps to ensuring effective and fair school discipline.

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Chapter 7 : Rights of Students - David L. Hudson - Google Books

New research finds state zero tolerance laws do not improve student safety. In fact, they increase the use of suspensions and racial disparities in discipline.

Now zero-tolerance policies have spread to other student safety areas, including alcohol use, fighting, bullying and more. If a student is caught committing such an act, they often are immediately suspended or expelled “no questions asked.” Zero-tolerance policies were implemented with the best of intentions and while they sound like a good idea, scholars are now rethinking their effectiveness. The American Psychological Association APA formed the Zero Tolerance Task Force to examine research on the disciplinary approach to determine if common assumptions about its effectiveness are true. Some of the beliefs the task force investigated included: Zero policies increase the consistency and clarity of school discipline. Removing students who violate school rules creates a school climate more conducive to learning. Swift and certain punishments can deter misbehavior, thus improving overall student behavior and discipline. What the task force found, however, was that much of the data actually contradicted these assumptions. First, zero-tolerance policies do not seem to increase consistency of school discipline. Second, zero-tolerance policies tend to increase suspension and expulsion rates, which negatively affect school climate ratings, student achievement and therefore overall scores. Finally, zero-tolerance policies do not reduce disruption or deter the behaviors they were meant to address. In fact, the APA says suspensions and expulsions are moderately associated with a higher likelihood of students dropping out of school or failing to graduate on time. Most importantly, when students are suspended or expelled, they are missing crucial instruction time. When they get back to the classroom, they can feel behind or lost, which can further contribute to misbehavior. And according to the American Civil Liberties Union ACLU, students who are suspended or expelled for a discretionary violation are nearly three times more likely to be in contact with the juvenile justice system the following year. What makes zero-tolerance policies so destructive for students is they do not take into consideration the situation that caused the behavior. For example, should a student be suspended for biting a pastry into the shape of a gun? No, but it has happened. For example, should a student on the autism spectrum who gets overstimulated and acts-out by hitting another student get suspended? Dismissing students who misbehave without helping them work through the underlying reason for the behavior is providing a disservice to the student. Not only are they not getting the support they need, it is putting them at-risk of misbehaving again which could prematurely end their educational career and put them in contact with the criminal justice system. Instead of blanket punishments for bad behavior, schools should create a system that allows administrators to assess each case and each student involved to get to the root of the problem. Administrators and teachers need to define a set of student behavior expectations, and then share them with the student body. These expectations should be easy for all students to understand and should be promoted by all faculty and staff consistently and frequently. What also needs to be spelled out to students is what happens when a student does and does not meet the expectations. Students who meet expectations will be praised and recognized for their behavior, while students who do not meet expectations will face a consequence. To help facilitate this, teachers and administrators need the following: Training on how to support students with behavioral problems A reporting process to properly record all student behavior, both good and bad An administrative team dedicated to analyzing data for potential trends, which can be used to create preventative actions for problem behaviors A way to reward positive behavior Training: Misbehavior can stem from many different factors, so it is important for educators to be trained on a variety of issues. Relevant training topics include the cycle of acting out, the warning signs of child abuse, bullying, depression or discriminatory harassment, and more. It is crucial that teachers and administrators report ALL student behavior, including behavior that results in immediate action from administration, behavior that is just disruptive and positive behavior. By reporting all behavior, a school is able to create a comprehensive record for each student. This data can help administrators decide on

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appropriate interventions to support the student. Using an online reporting tool makes it easy for teachers to report all behavior, whether positive or negative. Additionally, records being stored online are easy to access and reference. An online repository of student behavior reports allows administrators to identify trends in student behavior. Is there an uptick of referrals coming from a specific teacher? Is there an increased amount of misconduct happening in a certain part of the building or at a specific time? Has a student been acting out of character? These are all things administrators are able to identify, and respond to, if all behavior is reported. They can use this trend data to determine prevention strategies. Maybe a teacher who is submitting many referrals simply needs some professional development on classroom management techniques. Maybe a faculty member needs to monitor a specific hallway in between periods to deter misconduct, or maybe a student who is acting out is facing trauma at home and needs support services. These are all simple strategies that can make a difference in the overall climate of the school. Rewarding positive behavior shows that administration is invested in supporting students and the recognition makes it more likely that positive behavior will be repeated. Supporting Students Unlike a zero-tolerance approach to discipline, a PBIS system turns misbehavior into a learning opportunity.

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Chapter 8 : South Carroll High School Home

New research indicates the crackdown on misbehavior in schools has not increased school safety a quarter century after the rise of zero-tolerance school discipline policies. A report on the effect of zero-tolerance policies released by Vera Institute of Justice, a national nonprofit group, argues.

Discipline requires knowledge, skill, sensitivity and self-confidence; like any art, it is something that one will acquire through training and experience; it becomes easier with practice. Many people confuse discipline with classroom management; discipline is one dimension of classroom management and classroom management is a general term. Utilizing disciplinary actions can be an opportunity to reflect and learn about consequences, instill collective values, and encourage behavior that is acceptable for the classroom. Recognition of the diversity of values within communities can increase understanding and tolerance of different disciplinary techniques. Recently, scholars have begun to explore alternative explanations for why students are being disciplined, in particular the disproportionate rate of discipline towards African American and Minority students. Lack of engagement and stimulation - Students are curious and constantly searching for meaning and stimulation in the school environment. Teachers who fail to offer opportunities for movement and interpersonal engagement are likelier to have to use strictness and rules to maintain law and order. African-American boys are also most likely to receive out-of-school suspensions. African-American boys were also the most likely to be labeled by faculty or school administration as overtly aggressive. While high-income students more often reported receiving mild and moderate consequences e. Theory[edit] School discipline practices are generally informed by theory from psychologists and educators. There are a number of theories to form a comprehensive discipline strategy for an entire school or a particular class. Students are taught problem-solving and negotiation techniques. Named for psychiatrist Alfred Adler. These approaches have shown some positive effects on self-concept, attitudes, and locus of control, but effects on behavior are inconclusive Emmer and Aussiker. It requires the pupil to report to a designated area of the school during a specified time on a school day typically either recess or after school and remain there for a specified period of time, but also may require a pupil to report to that part of school at a certain time on a non-school day, e. In UK schools, for offenses too serious for a normal detention but not serious enough for a detention requiring the pupil to return to school at a certain time on a non-school day, a detention can require a pupil to return to school 1â€”2 hours after school ends on a school day, e. In schools where some classes are held on Saturdays, pupils may get detention on a Saturday even if it is a non-school day for them. However, short-time detention by teachers is still common. Teachers may ask the students to do some missed work after school. Keeping students after school is common, but usually lasts no more than 3 to 5 hours. The conditions that schools must ensure are that: Suspension[edit] Suspension or temporary exclusion is mandatory leave assigned to a student as a form of punishment that can last anywhere from one day to a few weeks, during which the student is not allowed to attend regular lessons. In-school suspension requires the student to report to school as usual, but attend a designated suspension classroom or room all day. Students who breach a suspension by attending school may be arrested for and charged with trespassing. This could result in an extension of suspension, community service, and sometimes jail time. Students who continue to breach a suspension could be sentenced to expulsion and longer, more severe punishments. Students are also not allowed to attend after-school activities such as proms, sporting events, etc. School corporal punishment Throughout the history of education , the most common means of maintaining discipline in schools was corporal punishment. While a child was in school, a teacher was expected to act as a substitute parent , with many forms of parental discipline or rewards open to them. This often meant that students were commonly chastised with the birch , cane , paddle , strap or yardstick if they did something wrong. Around 69 countries still use school corporal punishment. Corporal punishment in schools has now disappeared from most Western countries, including all European countries. In the United States, corporal punishment is not used in public schools in 34 states,

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banned in 31, permitted in 19, of which only 16 actually have school districts actively administering corporal punishment. The other 19 states mostly in the South continue to allow corporal punishment in public schools. Of the 19 which permit the practice, three – Arizona, Colorado, and Wyoming have no public schools that actually use corporal punishment as of . Paddling is still used to a significant though declining degree in some public schools in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas. Private schools in these and most other states may also use it, though many choose not to do so. A cartoon picture that shows students receiving "Corporal Punishment. Most mainstream schools in most other countries retain punishment for misbehavior, but it usually takes non-corporal forms such as detention and suspension. In Australia, school corporal punishment has been banned in most states. Victoria VIC – Banned in government schools in and non-government schools in . In , it was banned in non-government schools as a part of school registration requirements. Western Australia WA – Corporal punishment was banned in government schools in , but regulations did not extend to non-government schools. This is the last resort, when all other methods of discipline have failed. However, in extreme situations, it may also be used for a single offense. In some US public schools, expulsions are so serious that they require an appearance before the Board of Education or the court system. It was completely banned for compulsory schools in China. In the United States, when it comes to student discipline, there is a marked difference in procedure between public and private institutions. With public schools, the school must provide the student with constitutional due process protections as public educational institutions operate as an extension of state governments. Restorative justice In schools, restorative justice is an offshoot of the model used by some courts and law enforcement; it seeks to repair the harm that has been done by acknowledging the impact on the victim, community, and offender, accepting responsibility for the wrongdoing, and repairing the harm that was caused. Restorative justice also focuses on justice as needs and obligations, expands justice as conversations between the offender, victim and school, and recognizes accountability as understanding the impact of actions and repairing the harm. Traditional styles of discipline do not always work well for students across every cultural community. As an alternative to the normative approaches of corporal punishment, detention, counseling, suspension, and expulsion, restorative justice was established to give students a voice in their consequences, as well as an opportunity to make a positive contribution to their community. Each student has the ability to contribute to the conversation, the person who has misbehaved has the opportunity not only to give their side of the story but also has a say in their consequence. Consequences defy the traditional methods of punitive punishment and instead give students an opportunity for restoration. In , the U.

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Chapter 9 : Here's Why a Zero-Tolerance Policy in Our Schools Is a Terrible Idea | Education News

legislation of zero tolerance, suburban schools have gradually employed police, school resource officers, and plainclothed agents since zero tolerance policies were implemented, especially in light of the Columbine.

It started with a snowball, tossed from a group of high school students playing in the first snowfall of winter. The snowball ended up hitting a teacher standing about 20 yards from the group. It was a seemingly innocent act, one that the teacher might have laughed off. Instead, the teen faced a severe penalty: It was light, fluffy snow—not an ice ball. And nobody was injured. Illustration by Etienne Delessert. Other clients have faced expulsion after being falsely accused of participating in a fight, Payne says, or not walking away from watching a fight when directed to by school staff. While student discipline problems have plagued schools for years, many lawyers say zero tolerance-like policies at schools have outlived their usefulness and may in fact be doing more harm than good. There is no evidence, for instance, that zero tolerance policies—which mandate automatic punishment, such as suspension or expulsion, for infractions of a stated rule—have done anything to decrease school violence. Evidence is mounting, however, that extreme disciplinary reactions are resulting in higher rates of repeat offenses and dropout rates. Moreover, the once-politically popular policies may have reinforced a perception that school violence has increased, forcing schools to have on-campus law enforcement whose presence can magnify both the number and seriousness of offenses. Lawyers complain that these officers, referred to as school resource officers, often lack sufficient training, leading to more arrests—sometimes for infractions as minor as flatulence or dress code violations. The result is a backlash against zero tolerance, with some schools beginning to turn away from such rigid punishments. Instead they are directing their efforts toward creating positive school environments and devising creative approaches to discipline problems. Losen co-authored a book on the subject, *The School-to-Prison Pipeline: Structuring Legal Reform*, published in 2014. Zero tolerance school-discipline policies became popular in the 1990s, fueled by both President George H. W. Bush's 1994 Gun-Free Schools Act, which requires schools to suspend students who bring firearms to school for one year or lose all federal funding. In a 2014 report, the group found that there are many misconceptions around the effectiveness of zero tolerance in schools. School violence has remained stable since the mid-1990s, the report says, and schools with higher suspension and expulsion numbers had less satisfactory ratings of school climate. The Department of Education is casting doubts on zero tolerance. A DOE report issued in January notes that reactions such as suspension predict a greater possibility of misbehavior. The report encourages schools to create positive climates with evidence-based prevention strategies for discipline. It specifically mentions setting clear expectations and using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, a framework for behavioral guidance and social culture focused on emotional needs and academic success. Students also are encouraged to take ownership of behaviors that can be problematic in a school setting. But unlike more antiquated methods of maintaining order—such as writing the names of misbehaving students on the chalkboard—kids are asked to think about what they did, what their actions were trying to accomplish and who their actions may have hurt. The PBIS approach often asks students to think about how they will do things differently in the future and to consider how their actions affect everyone. Future town halls are planned for Boston, Miami and Tempe, Arizona. Much of the criticism against zero tolerance policies is that they target black students. In Chicago, for example, while blacks make up 30% of the student population, they are more than three times as likely to be suspended or expelled, according to the January DOE report. At the time, the agency was investigating school discipline complaints. It also alleges violations of Section VI of the law, which holds that public funds cannot be spent on practices that encourage or subsidize discrimination based on race, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination against someone based on his or her disability. In June, the Wake County Public School System released a memo of understanding, which states that school administrators have the sole responsibility for implementing the student code of conduct and discipline policies. It notes that officers must work closely with

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school administrators, only use appropriate force and attend annual training programs. Still, the agency believes more needs to be done. There are no meaningful limits on the discretion of school resource officers, nor are there mandates about appropriate parental notification when police intervention occurs, according to the statement. He mentions Southeast Raleigh High School, where 70 percent of the student body is black, and 43 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunch. OCR data show that a comparable Chicago high school, with 1, students, showed no in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions. A school resource officer reportedly grabbed the boy, 16, by the arm. The boy pulled away, and the officer pulled his arm behind his back and handcuffed him in front of other students. According to the complaint, the boy has been successful working with counselors to improve his social skills. Yet he sat in handcuffs for about 20 minutes. When his mother picked him up, no one mentioned that her child had been cuffed. After coming back from a three-day suspension, a group of students assaulted T. In a separate incident, a student identified as J. The student, then 14, waited about an hour in a room by himself without knowing why. Requests to call his mother were denied, according to the complaint. His phone was also confiscated. The principal and officer questioned J. Both boys said it was play. On his first day back, a group of football players approached J. After saying he did not want to fight, according to J. His father had directed J. Nothing like this had ever happened to J. He got to the hallway when the SRO grabbed him again, twisted his arms behind his back, slammed him against a wall, and handcuffed him. A juvenile court counselor declined to go forward with charges but did place J. The experience caused J. He now attends a different one, farther from his home. His mother spends two hours a day taking him there and back. The complaint also mentions Apex High School, located in a Raleigh suburb. At the school, However, the percentage of blacks receiving in-school suspensions is almost 10 times the percentage of whites, the data show. But if we look at patterns and practices, we see that black students are disciplined at an alarming rate. Police Chief John Letteney says none of the alleged incidents listed occurred with his officers. Mo Canady, a retired Hoover, Alabama, police officer who supervised a person school resource officers unit, agrees. That rarely happens, Canady says. When he hears of situations where officers in schools lead to more arrests, he assumes that the officers have not been properly trained. It found that, overall, juvenile arrests between and fell by 31 percent. The Education Department mentions restorative justice as an alternative to suspensions and expulsions. A process with nonpunitive disciplinary responses focused on repairing harm done to relationships and people, it also engages all parties involved in the behavior and considers accountability. Of the student body, 63 percent is black. The peace room was intended as an alternative to suspension and expulsion, says Mariame Kaba, founding director of Project Nia. A grassroots organization with a long-term vision of ending youth incarceration in Illinois, the group recruited volunteers who received restorative justice training and worked with students in the peace room. Teachers and administrators could recommend students visit the peace room; attendance was voluntary. Also, students on their own could visit the peace room after school. Also, the district reportedly will end mandatory expulsions for preschool through fifth-grade students, except for weapons infractions. According to the Civil Rights Data Collection, the district had students in , of which 32 percent were Native American and 67 percent were white. In addition, 45 percent of the student body qualified for free or reduced-cost lunch. Five years after the consent decree was entered, Carrier arrived at Winner School District. Since then, the parties have agreed to a modification, including the goal of raising the Native American graduation rate to 55 percent. Also, the agreement set the goal of lowering in-school or out-of-school suspension for Native American students to a maximum of 40 for the school year. Carrier expects that the decree will be lifted in South Dakota law mandates bus service only for homes 5 or more miles from school, and the route was previously removed due to perceived bus discipline problems. He also had classroom management concerns. What does Carrier advise teachers to do when a student falls asleep in class? After a few hours, he woke the child up and took him back to class. Carrier tries to limit out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, mostly for misbehavior that causes significant safety concerns or repeat disrespectful behavior toward teachers. He prefers in-school suspension, as well as before-school, lunchtime and after-school detention, when necessary. I know what we need to do,

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rather than have a pamphlet or something that tells me what needs to be done. Parents and their children also may play a large role in demanding change. This year the San Francisco Unified School Board voted to eliminate willful defiance as a reason to suspend a student. Riley-Collins, executive director of the Mississippi ACLU, mentions that last year her state introduced legislation about school resource officers with language similar to that in the Department of Education report. When the Department of Education released the guidelines in January, her office alerted Mississippi legislators.