

SEATTLE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROJECT EDUCATION JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

School-to-Prison Pipeline:

1. a tangible reality in our community;
2. a systemic conduit that tracks marginalized youth out of the school system and into cycles of poverty and incarceration.

Enough is enough!

Youth organizers in Seattle are part of a national movement against the school-to-prison pipeline.

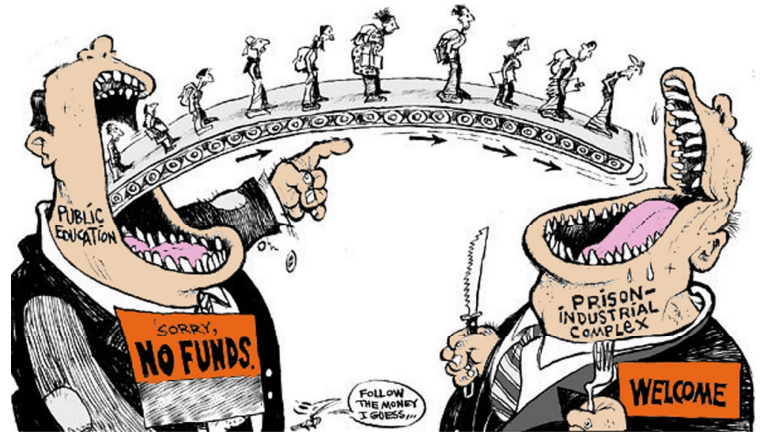
We're addressing the discipline gap as one crucial step toward education justice.

THE RACIAL DISCIPLINE GAP IS REAL (BAD) IN SEATTLE SCHOOLS

While the total number of suspensions and expulsions have gone down, the disparity has not gone away. **All students impacted by subjective and punitive discipline policies but we believe that these policies worsen the achievement gap for youth of color.**

- African American students are suspended over 4 times more than white students in high school. Samoan youth are suspended 3 times more than white students.
- In middle school, almost 25% of Native American and African American youth are suspended and 30% of Samoan youth are suspended.
- In elementary school African American youth are getting suspended 9 times more than white youth.*

* This data is drawn from Seattle School's 2008-2009 school year.



WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT THIS ISSUE NOW?

- Youth and families are impacted by the educational opportunity gap, and impacts will become harsher as the economy worsens and the various social and emotional supports are cut from school budget.
- Despite multiple attempts, the gaps haven't been closed in Seattle schools, and the racial disparity in graduation and discipline rates is still unacceptably high.
- In a climate of budget cuts and scandal, if grassroots community members do not speak clearly and loudly now, race and social justice will fall off the radar of priorities.
- Seattle School District's current attempt, Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, faces an uncertain future because of budget cuts.

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OUR CAMPAIGN DEMANDS

We Need To Know What's Going On (in all schools for all students)

- Consistent data collection across schools that includes data on race, gender, class, etc.
- Include data for informal and collective punishment and for subjective vs objective offenses.
- Data should be transparent and open to the public.

We Need Alternatives to Punitive Discipline

-Pilot a discipline policy based on transformative justice, which involves students, staff, and the community to resolve problems without suspensions, expulsion, or police on campus

SEATTLE STUDENTS KNOW THERE'S A PROBLEM

SYPP organizers surveyed over 100 youth across a variety of schools and neighborhoods, on the streets, in parks, at community centers, and at schools.

Of the 100+ young people surveyed:

75% identified as People of Color

70% are in high school

60% are female, 40% are male

54% have been suspended

42% think Seattle discipline policies are too harsh

51% report having been informally punished

68% state that they received different punishments for the same behaviors as other students

50% believe that their teachers give different punishments based on personal bias

EXPERIENCES OF INFORMAL PUNISHMENT

"Yes, I have been kicked out of the classroom and asked to "hold up the wall" (literally)."

"My teacher does shame me and other people in front of the class."

"I have been pushed by an administrator."

DID YOU KNOW?

Being suspended from school is a better predictor of high school dropouts than*:

- Low socio-economic status
- Not living with both parents
- High number of schools changes

*Suhyun Suh, Jingyo Suh, & Irene Houston, *Predictors of Categorical At-Risk High School Dropouts*, 85 Journal of Counseling and Development 196, 196-203 (2007).

IT'S THE SYSTEM - NOT THE TEACHERS!

Education reform advocates often point an accusing finger at teachers for failing schools. This blame game justifies the use of high stakes testing to "hold teachers accountable," but rarely does it improve the most vulnerable schools. We believe that without systemic change that values teachers *and* students we won't see real education justice. **We recognize that zero tolerance discipline policies and high stakes testing work in conjunction to create the school to prison pipeline.**

"Zero-tolerance" policies criminalize minor infractions of school rules, while high-stakes testing programs encourage educators to push out low-performing students to improve their schools' overall test scores. Students of color are especially vulnerable to push-out trends and the discriminatory application of discipline. – ACLU

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