

Education & Dialogue subcommittee

Monthly Learning February Topic

THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE

Meet Sally Jones (left) and Mariah Smith (right). Sally and Mariah go to the same school in the Pittsburgh area, they are both 15 and they are both fictional characters based on real-life stories. These two teenagers are going to help us learn about how the "school to prison pipeline" works. The phrase "school to prison pipeline" describes a trend of legislation and unchallenged practices that lead to children being taken out of the classroom and placed in the juvenile justice system.



Like many teenagers in their school, Sally and Mariah both vape. Both regularly bring their vapes to school and often dip out of class to vape in the restroom. One day, a teacher catches them outside the restroom. The teacher sends them to the principal's office and confiscates the vapes. Sally is given lunch detention for the day, but Mariah is suspended for a week. When Mariah returns to school, she feels as if her teachers are targeting her. If she walks into class as the bell rings, she gets written up. She is searched every morning when she gets to school. Exactly one month later, a school police officer searches her backpack and finds a THC vape (main psychoactive ingredient in the cannabis plant). Mariah is suspended from school and faces charges for illegal possession of a controlled substance.

You may be thinking to yourself that this scenario sounds unbelievable, or you may be angry that Mariah was given harsher treatment than her peer. Unfortunately, what happened to Mariah is not uncommon. The "pipeline" was built by decades of legislation and federal initiatives that provide a legal basis for imposing severe punishment on children who need help.

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THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE continued

Resources

- ACLU: <u>What Is The School-to-Prison Pipeline</u> (5 min read) article defining the "pipeline" and the "nuts and bolts" holding it together. While originally written in 2008, but it is still very accurate to today's world.
- <u>How Does it Affect Students?</u> (3 min watch) Kimberlé Crenshaw (law professor, expert in civil rights, critical race theory, & race and gender issues) explains how girls like Mariah ended up out of school and into the juvenile justice system.
- ACLU: <u>What is Zero-Tolerance?</u> (3 min read + 3 min watch) article that defines "zero tolerance policy" and a video of a young man who experienced the pipeline and zero-tolerance policy first-hand.
- 8 Million Stories: Zero-Tolerance Policies in Schools (20 min watch) video featuring stories from young people at risk of being sucked into the school-to-prison pipeline.
- American Bar Association: <u>School-to-Prison Pipeline Statistics</u> (Explore at your own pace) list of statistics regarding zero-tolerance policies, student resource officers and law enforcement in schools, dual process on suspensions and expulsions on nonviolent offenses, and the impact on students of color, LGBTQIA+ students, and students with disabilities. Each category has several source links that provide a wealth of education about the impact of this "pipeline."
- Education Law Center: <u>Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline</u> (Explore at your own pace) guidance for reforming school policies, educational tools to ensure students' rights, and advocacy toolkits for students facing school discipline. Whether a consumer has been expelled from preschool or is facing truancy, these resources are great professional tools for anyone on your caseload.
- <u>Care, Not Control</u> (Explore at your own pace) actionable ways to help end youth incarceration in Pennsylvania.



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February 2025 Monthly Learning Topic

THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE continued

SALE CHILDREN BEING PUSHED € PRISON

THE PIPELINE TO PRISON: THE U.S. HAS THE HIGHEST INCARCERATION RATE IN THE WORLD, AND ITS PRISONS AND JAILS ARE OVERWHELMINGLY FILLED WITH AFRICAN AMERICANS AND LATINOS. THE PATHS TO PRISON FOR YOUNG AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND LATINO MEN ARE MANY, BUT THE STARTING POINTS ARE OFTEN THE SCHOOL AND FOSTER CARE SYSTEMS.

FROM SCHOOL TO PRISON

STUDENTS OF COLOR FACE HARSHER DISCIPLINE AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE PUSHED OUT OF SCHOOL THAN WHITES.





FROM U.S. SCHOOLS EACH YEAR







68



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BLACK AND LATINO STUDENTS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO NOT GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL AS WHITES.

OF ALL MALES IN STATE AND

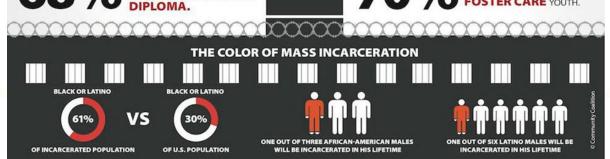
DO NOT HAVE A HIGH SCHOOL

FEDERAL PRISON



OF YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING FOSTER CARE WILL BE UNEMPLOYED WITHIN A FEW YEARS AFTER TURNING 18.

OF INMATES IN CALIFORNIA STATE PRISON ARE FORMER FOSTER CARE YOUTH.





AlleghenyChildrens.org 😗 💥 0



YOUTH OF COLOR ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WHITES TO BE PLACED IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM, A BREEDING GROUND FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.

50%



OF FOSTER CARE YOUTH ENTERING THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM ARE PLACEMENT-RELATED

TURNING 18.

OF CHILDREN IN THE

ARE BLACK OR LATINO.

BEHAVIORAL CASES (e.g., RUNNING AWAY FROM A GROUP HOME).

FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

OF YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING FOSTER CARE WILL BE INCARCERATED

WITHIN A FEW YEARS AFTER