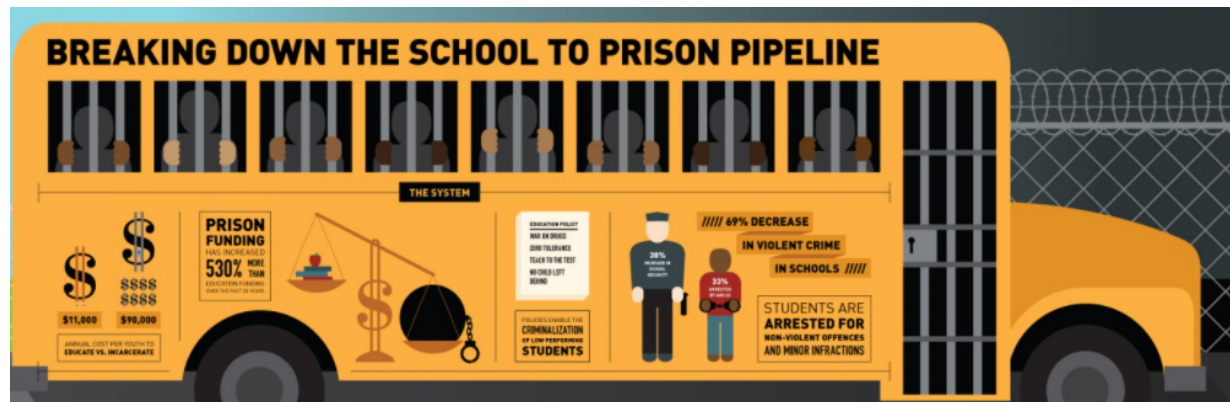
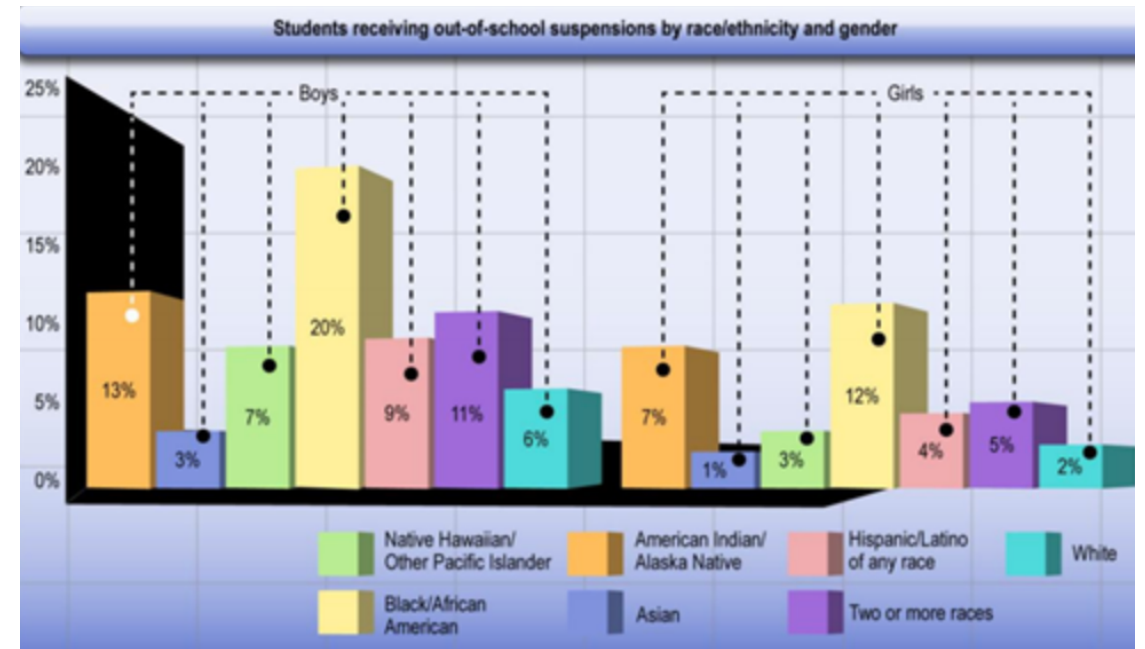


# School-To-Prison Pipeline

## Juvenile Detention



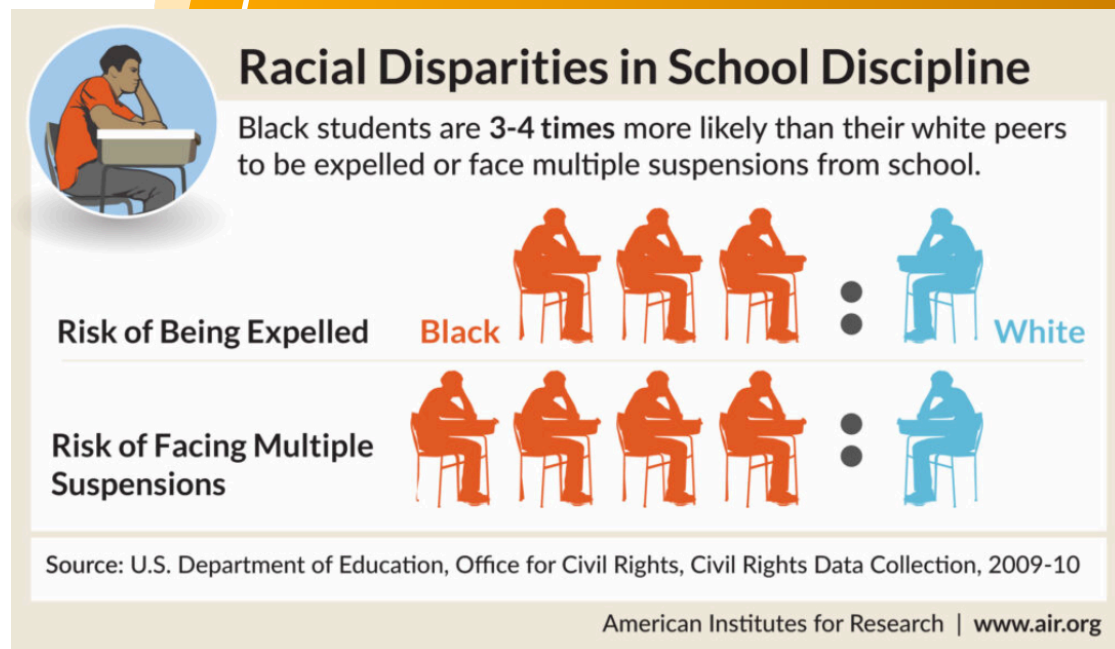
## School-Based Arrests

Zero-Tolerance

# School-To-Prison Pipeline

A disturbing national trend wherein children are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Many of these children have learning disabilities or histories of poverty, abuse, or neglect, and would benefit from additional educational and counseling services. Instead, they are isolated, punished, and pushed out.

In many cases, schools themselves are the ones pushing students into the juvenile justice system, often by having students arrested at school.



Policies that encourage police presence at schools, harsh tactics including physical restraint, and automatic punishments that result in suspensions and out-of-class time are huge contributors to the pipeline, but the problem is more complex than that.

# Zero Tolerance

“Zero-tolerance” policies criminalize minor infractions of school rules, while cops in schools lead to students being criminalized for behavior that should be handled inside the school.

When combined with zero-tolerance policies, a teacher's decision to refer students for punishment can mean they are pushed out of the classroom—and much more likely to be introduced into the criminal justice system.

Students of color are especially vulnerable to push-out trends and the discriminatory application of discipline.

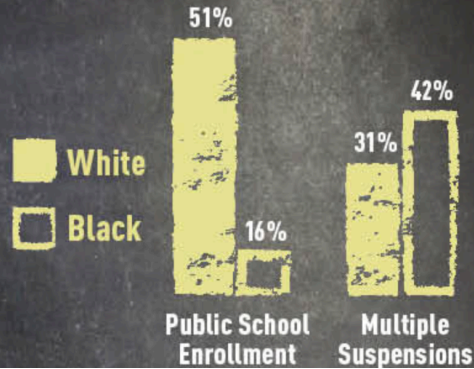


Zero-tolerance policies have been widely criticized when schools have interpreted "weapon" very broadly, expelling students for making guns with their fingers or chewing a Pop-Tart into a gun shape.

# SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

School disciplinary policies disproportionately affect Black students.

Zero-tolerance discipline has resulted in Black students facing disproportionately harsher punishment than white students in public schools.<sup>1</sup>



About 1 in 4 black children with disabilities were suspended at least once, versus 1 in 11 white students with disabilities.

African-American students, for instance, are 3.5 times more likely than their white classmates to be suspended or expelled, according to a nationwide study by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

## Statistics

Black children constitute 18 percent of students, but they account for 46 percent of those suspended more than once.

Black students are suspended and expelled



Students 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.<sup>4</sup>






Encourages Drop Out; No  
Child Left Behind.

The pipeline begins with inadequate resources in public schools.


Overcrowded classrooms, a lack of qualified teachers, and insufficient funding for "extras" such as counselors, special education services, and even textbooks, lock students into second-rate educational environments.




## Failing Public Schools



This failure to meet educational needs increases disengagement and dropouts, increasing the risk of later court involvement.






The lack of due process is particularly acute for *students with special needs*, who are disproportionately represented in the pipeline despite the heightened protections afforded to them under law.

As harsh penalties for minor misbehavior become more pervasive, *schools increasingly ignore or bypass due process protections* for suspensions and expulsions.

This failure to meet educational needs increases disengagement and dropouts, increasing the risk of later court involvement.



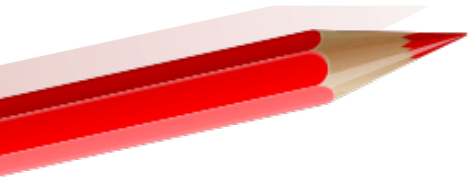
Suspended and expelled children are often left unsupervised and without constructive activities.



Students who enter the juvenile justice system face many *barriers* to their re-entry into traditional schools.

As a result, children are far more likely to be subject to *school-based arrests*—the majority of which are for non-violent offenses, such as disruptive behavior

Many under-resourced schools become pipeline gateways by placing *increased reliance on police* rather than teachers and administrators to maintain discipline.



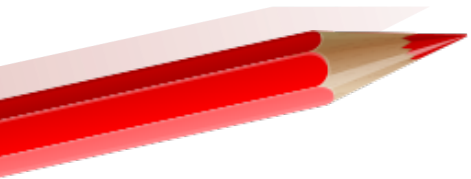
Growing numbers of districts employ *school resource officers* to patrol school hallways, often with little or no training in working with youth.

Youth who become involved in the juvenile justice system are often denied procedural protections in the courts; in one state, up to 80% of court-involved children do not have lawyers.

# Kyle Thompson



LET'S KEEP  
OUR KIDS  
IN SCHOOL,  
NOT IN  
HANDCUFFS.



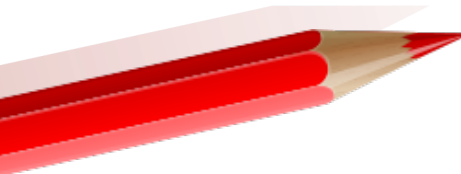
Kyle is part of a national trend where children are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. This 14-year-old Black student declined to show his teacher a note he had written, the child was led from school in handcuffs, barred from all public schools in the state for a year and is spending a year under house arrest.



# Solutions



How can school districts divert the school-to-prison pipeline?



- Increase the use of positive behavior interventions and supports.
- Compile annual reports on the total number of disciplinary actions that push students out of the classroom based on gender, race and ability.
- Create agreements with police departments and court systems to limit arrests at school and the use of restraints, such as mace and handcuffs.
- Provide simple explanations of infractions and prescribed responses in the student code of conduct to ensure fairness.
- Create appropriate limits on the use of law enforcement in public schools.
- Train teachers on the use of positive behavior supports for at-risk students.