

Disparate Racial Discipline and The School-To-Prison Pipeline in Cincinnati Public Schools

2021-2022 School Year



July 2022

Background:

Exclusionary discipline unnecessarily removes students from learning. In Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS), 10,000+ students face suspension, expulsion, and alternative placement by CPS officials annually. Similarly, hundreds of students are arrested or cited by Cincinnati Police Department (CPD) officers within CPS annually. Many times, students cited by police receive an accompanying exclusionary consequence from the district.

Definitions:

- **Exclusionary discipline:** a punishment that removes a student from the classroom
- **Zero tolerance:** policies that mandate a specific punishment for misbehavior
- **Restorative practices:** a guided, flexible practice that emphasizes harm reparation for misbehavior without punitive measures, addressing the root causes of misbehavior while keeping children in the classroom
- **Alternative Learning Center:** A space where students will reflect upon the behaviors that led to disciplinary consequences, understand alternative behavioral options, and identify improved behavior strategies for the future.
- **Alternative Placement Center:** Alternative program in lieu of out-of-school suspension.
- **A2:** Alternative to

Compared to white students, Black students are:

10.5x more likely to be put in an Alternative Learning Center

21x more likely to be put in an Alternative Placement Center

5x more likely to face emergency removal

15x more likely to be expelled with instruction

8x more likely to be expelled *without instruction*

6x more likely to receive out-of-school suspension

34x more likely to be placed in an A2 Expulsion Promise Center (Name for CPS alt. placement center)

16x more likely to be placed in an A2 Suspension Promise Center (Name for CPS alt. placement center)

Invest in Student Mental Health to Reduce Racial Disparities

- ▶ To increase equity and decrease the disparities in exclusionary discipline, CPS must put resources toward proactive support services to increase student well-being. **Investments in mental health have proven positive results.**
- ▶ Schools that employ more school-based mental health providers see improved attendance rates, lower rates of expulsion, suspension, and other disciplinary incidents, improved academic achievement and career preparation, and improved graduation rates.
- ▶ CPS needs **four times more counselors and social workers to meet national standards.**
- ▶ CPS students are approximately **twice as likely** to interact with a police officer or security guard than a counselor.

Recommendations:

- ▶ **Address** root issues of racial inequity and exclusionary discipline disparities in CPS.
- ▶ **Dissolve** the contract between CPS and CPD.
- ▶ **Prioritize** student mental health in the FY23 budget.

Methodology:

The rate of disparity calculation is defined as:

$$PD_{BY} \div PD_{WY} = R_D$$

- PD_{BY} - percent of the district-wide disciplinary event experienced by Black youth
- PD_{WY} - percent of the district-wide disciplinary event experienced by white youth
- R_D - rate of disparity for which Black students are disciplined more frequently than their white counterparts