

REPORT ON

**School Discipline Disproportionality in the
Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation
and the School-to-Prison Pipeline**
September 2018

By
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Report Commissioned by:
**Evansville Commission on the
Social Status of African American Males**



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SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

Greetings Readers,

I extend this letter to you as a way to understand the report that you are about to read. As an engaged citizen in the Evansville community it is important to understand the many sides and complexities of the School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP) and how it impacts our community (*community is being defined as ALL those who reside in the vicinity of Evansville and Vanderburgh County*). This report is one more voice to assist in understanding, advocating, and recommending how to address the STPP, and criminalization of youth in Evansville.

There is no way to comprehensively address all aspects and contributors to the STPP in Evansville. The STPP is a compilation of circumstances, trauma and bias that occurs from many participants to the disadvantage of many youth. Unfortunately, those youth are disproportionately students of color, specifically African American, and Multiracial. In addition, the participants in the STPP are youth, parents, family members, community members, school personnel, police, and juvenile detention personnel. What needs to be clearly conveyed is that the STPP while culminating in the space of school is not singularly the responsibility of school, nor singularly the responsibility of the family, nor community; it is the collective efforts of all to advocate for policy changes, bias training, and family supports.

This report focuses on arrests, school discipline data, and recommendations for policy, practice and community. It is my hope that from reading this report you will be more informed, will understand that the STPP is complex, and that you have a role in addressing its impact.

Thank you,

Timberly L. Baker, PhD

Background

The Evansville Commission on the Social Status of African American Males commissioned the *School Discipline Disproportionality in the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation and the School-to-Prison Pipeline Report* to examine school discipline disproportionality and the School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP) in Evansville. The report provides data on the prevalence of discipline disproportionality in the Evansville Vanderburgh County public schools and analyzes contributing factors that may result in our youth experiencing poor educational outcomes and possibly incarceration.

In December of 2016, a report released by the Indiana Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights identified a number of concerns regarding the role of intersecting biases in implementing disciplinary measures in schools. The report also revealed that children of color and children with disabilities were disproportionately affected and that exclusionary disciplinary policies and practices were highly ineffective.

The Evansville Commission on the Social Status of African American Males held two public forums in February and March of 2017 to share the findings of the Indiana Advisory Committee report, bring awareness to disproportionality in schools and discuss root causes and interventions. Parents, criminal justice officials, educators and concerned citizens, attended the community meetings. In addition to hearing from a diverse group of stakeholders, attendees organized into breakout groups to discuss factors contributing to the STPP.

Though the forums were beneficial in launching a community response, we lacked specific information on the STPP and disproportionality in Evansville schools. This report offers local data and research findings in an effort to understand factors contributing to the STPP. The Evansville Commission on the Social Status of African American Males would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Dr. Timberly L. Baker for her work in providing this report.

This report is an appeal to continue the work of developing comprehensive solutions to disrupt discipline disproportionality and the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Evansville. We are hopeful that by working together, we will transform the lives of our youth and the community.

David Wagner, Chairperson

Evansville Commission on the Social Status of African American Males

Established in 1999 because of legislative findings and statistical studies that revealed disturbing conditions and trends for African American males in Indiana, the work of the Evansville Commission on the Social Status of African American Males focuses on practical solutions and remedies to problems affecting African American Males in the areas of education, employment, health and criminal justice.

Executive Summary

The goal of this report is to provide data about disproportionality in school discipline, by race and special education status, arrests of students from school and the school corporation's efforts to address the School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP). This report takes up the hypothesis that Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) has a STPP and is implementing interventions/programs to address the STPP and criminalization of youth.

The STPP is a compilation of circumstances, trauma and bias that occurs from many participants to the disadvantage of many youth. Unfortunately, those youth are disproportionately students of color, specifically African American, and Multiracial. In addition, the participants in the STPP are youth, parents, family members, community members, school personnel, police, and juvenile detention personnel. What needs to be clearly conveyed is that the STPP while culminating in the space of school is not singularly the responsibility of school, nor singularly the responsibility of the family, nor community; it is the collective efforts of all to advocate for policy changes, bias training, and family supports.

What you will find in this report is background knowledge on how a STPP gets created, the systemic contributors and points of entry that contribute to perceptions of and criminalization of youth and communities. The report provides data for academic years 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 using risk indices on disproportionality, and arrest data covering years 2014-2017. This report focuses on arrests, school discipline data, and recommendations for policy, practice and community.

Overall Findings

Within the 2015-2016 academic year Black students had a risk ratio of 3.7, meaning Black students are almost four times more likely to be suspended than all other groups. Multiracial students have a 1.4 risk for being suspended for verbal aggression. Finally, Hispanic students have the greatest risk for being suspended for the disciplinary category of other. The data on disproportionality identify that there is overrepresentation of non-White students in suspension for several disciplinary categories.

Special Education data showed that students identified as having an Emotional Disability (ED) have a risk ratio of 4.9 for receiving out-of-school suspension meaning students identified as ED are almost 5 times more likely to be suspended than students in any other special education category. This particular category is of note as students experiencing environmental trauma(s) may be more likely to be diagnosed with ED. Students who are more prone to be included in the systemic contributors and points of entry into the STPP are often those classified in OHI (Other Health Impairment) and ED (Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, 2006).

When examining student arrests, risk indices showed that in 2014-2015, Black students are 4.2 times more likely to be arrested from school. Furthermore, in 2015-2016 while the number of overall arrests decreased the risk of Black students being arrested increased going from 4.2 times more likely in 2014-2015 to 6.0 times more likely in 2015-2016.

The most frequent racial group to be arrested within the Evansville community is White. The population of Evansville is estimated at 86% White, with those under the age of 18 being 22% of the population. African Americans are 9.5% of the populations in Evansville and account for 44% of youth arrests. This disproportionate representation amongst youth offenses is not due to more frequent, illegal behavior by African Americans. In a national study it was found that youth behavior was no different, meaning regardless of race youth behaved in the same ways. However, how they were treated as a result of that same behavior did differ (Lauritsen, 2005) by race.

According to Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC) the county of commitment being Vanderburgh County reported that a total of 118 youth ages 13-19, between 2014 and 2017 were incarcerated with the majority serving their sentence at Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility. Of the 118 committed youth, 63 are Black, 36 are White, and 14 of the 118 are female.

Vanderburgh County currently has several agencies that service youth as an alternative to incarceration. The number of youth incarcerated in a year is significantly lower than those that are arrested in a given year. For example in 2014, 22 youth from Vanderburgh County were committed to juvenile incarceration, in contrast in 2014, there were 853 arrests of individuals under the age of 18.

EVSC has two programs that are identified as specifically addressing the STPP: C.A.R.E.S. and OptIN.

Recommendations

Recommendations provided at the end of the report address several areas including: Petitioning the legislature, recommendations for community agencies, and recommendations to the school corporation. Two overarching recommendations are shared here; these recommendations address both changes within schools and within youth serving agencies in Evansville.

Restorative Justice Programs: Restorative Justice (RJ) programs reduced the incidence of punitive student discipline (out-of-school suspension) and whether current existing racial disparities in student discipline could be alleviated by the introduction of Restorative Justice (Simson, 2012). Findings from examining Restorative Justice Programs suggest that restorative justice can be effective in reducing overall suspension levels as well as large African American disproportionality in school suspensions.

Legislation: Require youth serving institutions to adhere to [HB 1421](#) (enacted July, 2018) and promote and support cultural adaptation training upon hiring of school police, teachers, administrators, juvenile court and service agencies ([Disproportionate Minority Contact Phase II, 2013](#)).

In the process of creating this report several data gaps were identified. Meaning communication of key characteristics for youth who are arrested or incarcerated. These gaps need to be addressed and closed, building more wrap-around information so that agencies and institutions can effectively address the needs of youth.

Definition of Terms

Disproportionality (DISPRO):

Noun form of disproportional meaning too large or too small in comparison with something else. Refers to the ratio between the percentage of persons in a particular racial or ethnic group at a particular decision point or experiencing an event (maltreatment, incarceration, school dropouts) compared to the percentage of the same racial or ethnic group in the overall population.

Enrollment (ENR):

The number of people enrolled, typically at a school.

Frequency:

The rate at which something occurs or is repeated over a particular period of time or in a given sample.

Out-of-School Suspension:

Out-of-School Suspension is an exclusionary discipline practice in which a student is removed from the school for part of a day or multiple days (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003).

Special Education Category (SPED):

There are 13 categories of special education as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Autism, Blindness, Deafness, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impaired, Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Visual Impairment.

Risk Index (RI):

The **risk index** is the percentage of a given racial/ethnic group that is included in a specific category. The formula for calculating this index for overall diploma type is:

$$\frac{\text{Number of students in Group X receiving Diploma X}}{\text{Total Enrollment of Students receiving Diploma X}}$$

Risk Ratio (RR):

The **risk ratio** is a comparison of the risk indexes of different groups. When calculating a group's relative risk, their risk index is divided by the risk index selected for comparison, such as all other groups combined. The formula for this calculation for overall risk to receive Diploma X is:

$$\frac{\text{Risk of Group X to receive Diploma X}}{\text{Risk of All Other Groups to receive Diploma X}}$$

School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP):

The School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP) is a construct used to describe policies and practices especially with respect to school discipline, in the public schools and juvenile justice system that decreases the probability of school success for children and youth, and increase the probability of negative life outcomes, particularly through involvement in the juvenile justice system. (*American Civil Liberties Union, 2008; Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014*)

Introduction

The School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP) is a construct used to describe policies and practices especially with respect to school discipline, in the public schools and juvenile justice system that decreases the probability of school success for children and youth, and increase the probability of negative life outcomes, particularly through involvement in the juvenile justice system (American Civil Liberties Union, 2008; Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014). Even though the national average of youth incarceration is declining there is an increase in penal system contact via the school. "...African American youth face nearly five times the likelihood of incarceration compared to their White peers across the country; Latino and Native American youth face between two and three times the likelihood." (Youth Incarceration in the United States, 2011)

According to the Civil Rights and the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Indiana report, the State Advisory Committee "sought to examine the extent to which the application of school disciplinary and juvenile justice policies in the State of Indiana may have a discriminatory impact on students on the basis of race, color, sex, and/or disability, –leading to a disciplinary incidence of law enforcement contact and criminal penalties (Indiana Advisory Committee, 2016)." In October 2015, Indiana Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights voted to study the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Indiana because in Indiana the incarceration rate is "258 per 100,000 youth, which is approximately 25% greater than the national average of 196 per 100,000." (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013)

As an extension of the national and state work on the STPP and criminalization of youth, the Evansville Commission on the Social Status of African American Males, commissioned this report to inform the community and galvanize action.

The goal of this report is to provide data about disproportionality in school discipline, by race and special education status, arrests of students from school and the school corporation's efforts to address the STPP. This report takes up the hypothesis that Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation has a STPP and is implementing interventions/programs to address the STPP and criminalization of youth. What you will find in this report is background knowledge on how a STPP gets created, the systemic contributors and points of entry that contribute to perceptions of and criminalization of youth and communities. The report provides data using risk indices on disproportionality. The report ends with recommendations for community and school.

Systemic Contributors

Contributors to students being in the STPP and the criminalization of youth are varied; there are both individual and systemic contributors with the systemic often overlooked. The nature of systemic contributors is that they impact all students and while not all students are criminalized, suspended or expelled, all students are impacted by the treatment that their peers receive.

School Climate/Culture

Due to the fact that school characteristics are a greater predictor of a suspension/expulsion for defiance than student characteristics, the school a student attends is of great importance in examining suspension/expulsion. It is not the student that is more likely to be suspended or expelled because of individual characteristics but rather the school they attend is more likely to suspend or expel students (Baker, 2012). The study completed by Baker (2012) is focused on the disciplinary category of defiance, however it articulates a greater issue of noting that the school a student attends can be the precipitating factor in a student being suspended/expelled.

Academic Achievement - Gaps/Lost Instructional Time Due to Suspensions

As we continue in an age where the achievement gap and federal regulation of schools is ever increasing, finding solutions to increase both high school and college graduation is imperative. Students with greater numbers of disciplinary infractions are more likely to struggle academically (Morrison & D’Incau, 1997), dropout, and are therefore less likely to enroll in postsecondary education.

Consider that low academic standing increases the likelihood of suspensions (Arcia, 2006; Rodney, Crafter, Rodney, & Mupier, 1999).

According to Gregory et al. (2010), a suspended student can spend anywhere from one class period to ten days or more out of the learning environment. Researchers have consistently found a positive relationship between time spent in academic learning and student achievement (Brophy, 1988; Fisher et al., 1981; Greenwood et al., 2002). This connection between discipline and achievement is a driving force behind examination of discipline policies and categories. It has been found that lower student achievement is highly correlated with disciplinary punishment (Christle et al., 2004). In addition, suspensions may increase underachievement because it reinforces the negative behavior by allowing students to avoid class time and therefore academic engagement (Atkins et al., 2002). Although suspension is often used as a temporary solution to behavior issues “it is academically detrimental and may produce life-long negative effects” (Christle et al., 2004, p. 521), just as reduced economic opportunities.

(DIS)Ability Status and Juvenile Correction

Another barrier, according to a Dear Colleague letter from the Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (U.S. DOE SPERS, 2014), clarifies the needs of youth in juvenile detention centers, which are covered by the Individuals with Disability Education Act (2014). It is required by IDEA that all protections “apply to students with disabilities in correctional facilities and their parents” (U.S. DOE SPERS, 2014). It is the responsibility of interagency cooperation, the State Educational Agency (SEA), the juvenile detention center as Local Educational Agency (LEA) and LEA where the detention center is located. “A student with a disability in a correctional facility who violates a code of student conduct is entitled to the protections that must be afforded to all students with disabilities related to discipline procedures, including those related to a change of placement, manifestation determination, and provision of services beginning with the 11th cumulative day of removal in a school year (34 CFR §§300.530 through 300.536)” (U.S. DOE SPERS, 2014).

Disproportionality in School Discipline

The following section discusses contributors to the STPP and displays data from EVSC. The data provided shows enrollment by race, out of school suspension by race, and expulsions by race, for the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 academic years. There are multiple contributing factors that increase the likelihood of a student entering the STPP. The purpose of sharing this information is to assist in developing an understanding of some of the characteristics and experiences of students that contribute to perceptions of their criminalization and the impact of suspension/expulsion. While this is by no means an exhaustive list of potential factors that may contribute to the STPP, these are the most widely researched and debated contributors.

Suspension/Expulsion

Educators employ various tactics to punish children for disciplinary infractions, the most frequent consequence being suspension/expulsion which creates an exclusionary system that contributes to reduced learning opportunities in school and a weakening of student-school attachment, which negatively effects student performance (Anyon, Zhang, Hazel, 2016). It is documented, within multivariate and longitudinal studies that suspension/expulsion is a risk factor for negative consequences including reduced academic achievement (Noltemeyer, Ward & Mcloughlin, 2015), dropout (Sullivan, Klingbeil, & Van Norman, 2013), push out (Nelson, Ridgeway, Baker, Green, & Campbell, 2017) and increased involvement in the juvenile justice system (Skiba, Arrendondo, & Williams, 2014). The negative consequences associated with suspension, such as reduced achievement, dropping out, and delinquency all have been linked to future economic struggles for individuals (McFadden, Marsh, Price, & Hwang, 1992). Furthermore, with just one incident of suspension or expulsion, a student's likelihood of juvenile justice contact within the next year nearly triples (Fabelo et al., 2011).

2014-2015 / 2015-2016 DATA TABLES:
Total Number of Students by Consequences by Race by Year

Race	2014-2015			2015-2016			
	Enroll (Pct. Enroll)	OSS	EXP	Enroll (Pct. Enroll)	OSS	EXP	Arrest
<i>White</i>	15,918 (71%)	1,495	33	16,025 (70%)	1,236	13	23
<i>Black</i>	3,103 (14%)	1,228	39	3,176 (14%)	1,042	26	19
<i>Multiracial</i>	2,170 (10%)	511	16	2,185 (9%)	404	22	10
<i>Hispanic</i>	880 (4%)	68	3	962 (4%)	55	0	0
<i>Asian</i>	274 (1%)	3	0	313 (1%)	1	0	0
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	85 (.3%)	6	0	101 (.4%)	9	0	0
<i>American Indian</i>	44 (.2%)	30	1	37 (.2%)	12	0	0
Total	22,474	3,341	92	22,799	2,759	61	52

Indiana Department of Education Data Collection, 2014, 2015. Retrieved from Indiana Department of Education data collection of Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation 7995.

Included in the above table is the number of students by academic year by racial classification and their enrollment in the district and number of incidence by consequence that racial group is responsible for.

Gender

It has been continually documented that boys are suspended/expelled more than girls with African American boys/males being most likely to be suspended/expelled and arrested from school (Anyon et.al. 2018; Rovnor, 2016). The entrance into the STPP is most likely for males and females that are African American. The interaction of race has shown that African American girls are more likely to be suspended/expelled than any of their female counterparts (Morris & Perry, 2017).

Race/Ethnicity

Racial/ethnic bias has been documented as contributing to disproportionality in school discipline for over thirty years (Wu, Pink, Crane et.al, 1982; Gregory, Skiba, & Mediratta, 2017). The interaction of racially disproportionate outcomes for penal system interaction has been recognized since the 1980's (Mallett, 2016). With the emergence of the STPP it has been documented that racial disproportionality exists. In a 2011 national study completed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, it was reported that the likelihood of incarceration of African American youth was five times greater than their White peers; with LatinX and Native American youth being two and three times more likely than their White peers. Furthermore, Indiana ranks 31st for the highest disproportionate rates between Black and White Americans with a 4.8/1 ratio for arrests (Annie E Casey, 2011).

2014-2015 DATA TABLES:
Disproportionality, Risk Indices and Relative Risk Ratio:
2014-2015 for Out-of-School Suspension (OSS), by Race, by Disciplinary Category

DISCIPLINARY CATEGORY (TOTAL # OF)	Race/Ethnicity															
	White				Black				Multiracial				Hispanic			
	ENR	DISPRO	RI	RR	ENR	DISPRO	RI	RR	ENR	DISPRO	RI	RR	ENR	DISPRO	RI	RR
OVERALL	1496	45%	9%	.34	1190	36%	38%	3.5	512	15%	23%	1.7	69	2%	7%	.5
DEFIANCE	490	44%	32%	.96	386	35%	32%	.95	193	17%	37%	1.15	24	2%	34%	1.0
FIGHTING	229	43%	15%	.91	208	39%	17%	1.1	75	14%	15%	.89	14	3%	20%	1.26
VERBAL AGGRESSION	196	41%	13%	.87	181	39%	15%	1.1	80	17%	16%	1.1	10	2%	14%	1.02
OTHER	151	41%	10%	1.02	146	40%	12%	1.6	57	15%	11%	1.2	3	0%	--	--
INTIMIDATION	118	43%	7%	.92	102	37%	8%	1.1	43	15%	8%	1.0	7	2%	--	--

Notes: ENROLLMENT (ENR); DISPROPORTIONALITY (DISPRO); RISK INDEX (RI); RELATIVE RISK RATIO (RR) All data included in the table is collected via the Indiana Department of Education Discipline Report academic year 2014-2015. Race/Ethnicity categories included in the table represented the groups that are most frequently involved in the disciplinary system. Not all incidences or racial/ethnic groups are included. The disciplinary categories included have the highest frequencies of consequence. Disciplinary Categories that include less than 10 incidents are not stable identifiers of disciplinary outcomes; therefore they will not be reported in the final report. Highlighted are the groups with the highest relative risk OSS for the row discipline category.

2015-2016 DATA TABLES

Disproportionality, Risk Indices and Relative Risk Ratio for Out-of-School Suspension: 2015-2016 for Out-of-School Suspension (OSS), by Race, by Disciplinary Category

DISCIPLINARY CATEGORY (TOTAL # OF)	Race/Ethnicity															
	White				Black				Multiracial				Hispanic			
	ENR	DISPRO	RI	RR	ENR	DISPRO	RI	RR	ENR	DISPRO	RI	RR	ENR	DISPRO	RI	RR
OVERALL	1237	45%	7%	.34	1043	37%	33%	3.7	405	15%	19%	1.6	56	2%	5%	.46
DEFIANCE	370	44%	30%	.97	319	38%	30%	1.0	134	16%	33%	1.1	9	1%	16%	.52
FIGHTING	226	44%	18%	.97	215	42%	21%	1.1	55	11%	14%	.69	17	3%	30%	1.6
VERBAL AGGRESSION	135	41%	11%	.87	122	37%	12%	.98	62	19%	15%	1.4	14	1%	--	--
OTHER	137	46%	11%	1.05	110	37%	11%	.96	39	13%	9%	.87	11	4%	20%	1.8
INTIMIDATION	137	42%	11%	.9	127	39%	12%	1.0	52	16%	13%	1.1	4	1%	.87	.60

Notes: ENROLLMENT (ENR); DISPROPORTIONALITY (DISPRO); RISK INDEX (RI); RELATIVE RISK RATIO (RR) All data included in the table is collected via the Indiana Department of Education Discipline Report academic year 2015-2016. Race/Ethnicity categories included in the table represented the groups that are most frequently involved in the disciplinary system. Not all incidences or racial/ethnic groups are included. The disciplinary categories included have the highest frequencies of consequence. Disciplinary Categories that include less than 10 incidents are not stable identifiers of disciplinary outcomes; therefore they will not be reported in the final report.

The above tables “Disproportionality, Risk Indices and Relative Risk Ratio for OSS” for both 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 displays the percent of disproportionality for the racial group, and the risk index and risk ratio for each discipline category by race. From these tables we know that disproportionality exists; for example White students, while 71% of the population of students in the 2014-2015 school year, are only 45% of students suspended from school; conversely, Black students are 14% of students enrolled in the corporation and are 36% of students suspended from school. Within the 2015-2016 academic year, Black students have a risk ratio of 3.7; meaning Black students are almost four times more likely to be suspended than all other groups. Multiracial students have a 1.4 risk for being suspended for verbal aggression. Finally, Hispanic students have the greatest risk for being suspended for the disciplinary category of other. The data on disproportionality identify that there is overrepresentation of non-White students in suspension for several disciplinary categories.

Special Education

Nationally, students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension as students without disabilities (Civil Rights Data Snapshot, 2014). According to a testimony by Carol Kilver, (2016) “70% of Indiana’s juvenile justice youth have a disability and or mental illness” (Civil Rights and the STPP in Indiana, p. 19). In addition, on a national level, students with disabilities are 25% of arrests and those referred to law enforcement even though they are about 12% of the population (Civil Rights Data Snapshot, 2014). Furthermore, many locations, including Evansville, do not record the special education status of students upon arrests or detainment in youth services, which presents a difficulty in providing services.

2014-2015 / 2015-2016 DATA TABLES
Disproportionality, Risk Indices and Relative Risk Ratio:
Out-of-School Suspension by Special Education Category

SPECIAL EDUCATION CATEGORY	2014-2015				2015-2016			
	ENR	DISPRO	RISK INDEX	RISK RATIO	ENR	DISPRO	RISK INDEX	RISK RATIO
OVERALL	3516				3227			
SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY	443	13%	31%	.23	324	30%	23%	.55
LANUAGE OR SPEECH IMPAIRMENT	105	3%	14%	.12	53	5%	11%	.29
OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT	270	8%	60%	.61	255	24%	5%	1.74
EMOTIONAL DISABILITY	484	15%	<100%	1.78	356	33%	<100%	4.9

Notes: ENROLLMENT (ENR); DISPROPORTIONALITY (DISPRO); RISK INDEX (RI); RELATIVE RISK RATIO (RR) All data included in the table is collected via Evansville School Corporation data release for academic year 2014-2015, and 2015-2016. The special education categories included have the highest frequencies of consequence, not all special education categories are represented here.

The risk index is the risk that a student will be suspended, while students identified as having an Emotional Disability (ED) make up 8% of students in special education with a total enrollment of 310 students, the number of students suspended who are identified as ED is 484. This makes these students more likely to be suspended. The risk ratio is the comparison between groups, this means students identified as ED are almost 5 times more likely to be suspended than students in any other special education categories. This particular category is of note as students experiencing environmental trauma(s) may be more likely to be diagnosed with ED. Students who are more prone to be included in the systemic contributors and points of entry into the STPP are often those classified in OHI (Other Health Impairment) and ED (Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, 2006).

There are other characteristics that are not examined through data in this report that can also contribute to students entering the STPP. These characteristics influence perceptions of students, their parents and communities. Including these characteristics informs perceptions of particular communities and their disproportionate representation in suspension and the STPP.

Points of Entry into the STPP

Substance Use

Since the introduction of zero tolerance in schools, the use of punitive disciplinary policies and practices have been intended to deter further misbehavior. Proponents of the policy believe that harsh consequences for those who are caught will deter other students from committing similar offenses. Yet, research shows that the common exclusionary disciplinary approaches for substance related offenses are ineffective (Evans-Whipp, Plenty, Catalano, [Herrenkohl](#) & Toumbourou, 2015; Hemphill, Kotevski, Herrenkohl, Smith, Toumbourou, & Catalano, 2017). A study examining the longitudinal effect of schools' drug policies on student marijuana use found that schools in Washington state and Victoria Australia, who always or almost always reported marijuana use, had disciplinary policies that used out-of-school suspensions. The schools that used out-of-school suspension as a consequence for illicit drug policy violations had students who were 1.6 times as likely to use marijuana a year later (Evans-Whipp et al., 2015).

Mental Health

Mental health conditions have a profound educational impact on many children and adolescents. Researchers at the University of Exeter investigated the impact of exclusion from school and found a bidirectional relationship suggesting that students with mental health conditions are more likely to be suspended from school (Ford, Parker, Salim, Goodman, Logan, & Henley, 2017). Likewise, suspensions can have long lasting implications that may lead to the onset of increased psychological distress. Rushton, Forcier, & Schectman (2002) examined factors associated with persistent depressive symptoms for adolescents and found that the only academic variables associated with persistent depressive symptoms a year later was a history of school suspension.

LGBTQA+ Youth

More recently, students who identify as LGBTQ have been found to be at increased risk for more school disciplinary experiences and, for some, involvement in the juvenile courts and detention and incarceration facilities (Losen et al., 2014; Palmer, Greytak, & Kosciw, 2016). One nationally representative research sample of LGBT-identifying students found between 1.25 and 3 times the odds for school expulsion, juvenile arrest, and conviction, with a particularly higher risk for girls, even after controlling for other explanatory variables (Himmelstein & Bruckner, 2011). In a study examining sexual orientation-based disparities in school suspension and juvenile justice system involvement, LGBT youth were more than twice as likely as heterosexual students to report that they had been suspended from school (Poteat, Scheer, & Chong, 2016). Findings from another national study of 1,367 middle and high school students, inclusive of gender minority youth, found that LGBTQ students were far more likely to have been referred to the principal's office, received detention, and been suspended (Palmer, Greytak, & Kosciw, 2016).

Poverty

Studies of school suspension have consistently documented over-representation of low-income students being suspended as a consequence (Brantlinger, 1991; Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010; Skiba et al., 1997; Wu et al., 1982). Brantlinger (1991) reported high-income students were more likely to receive more mild and moderate consequences while low-income students reported receiving more severe consequences. Low-income students were 1.75 times more likely to get a suspension than their middle and upper-income classmates regardless of the type of infraction (Barrett, McEachin, Mills, & Valant, 2017)

Points of entry into the STPP are not exhaustive, however there is an increased risk for students who fall into any one of these categories. Each factor offered here has been found to contribute to perceptions of criminalization of youth and/or suspension or expulsion from school. While each characteristic shared may contribute to perceptions of and disproportionate representation in the STPP there are alternatives to suspension and the criminalization of youth.

Alternatives to Suspensions

In theory, the use of out of school suspension as a disciplinary consequence is intended to reduce future behavior problems. However, research does not support the notion that suspension improves behavior; in fact, in some cases it may lead to undesirable and unintended outcomes, including a diminished school climate, lower academic achievement due to lost instructional time, higher school dropout rates, as well as misconduct and delinquent behaviors (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Fabelo et al., 2011; Resnick et al., 1997). Costenbader and Markson (1997), one of the foundational studies to examine the responses of students who had been suspended during their school career, found that fifty-five percent of the 252 students suspended were angry at the person who suspended them, and thirty-two percent predicted that they would be suspended again. Moreover, there is evidence that past suspensions are a predictor of a future suspension (Tobin, Sugai, & Colvin, 1996).

Recommendations to Address Disproportionality in Suspension

Disproportionality in suspension is not a singular fix. There are policy, practice and training recommendations that may improve the disproportionate representation of Black students in the STPP.

Restorative Justice

Implement Restorative Justice as a response to violation of school community norms, meaning behavior expectations; this recommendation includes teachers violating school community norms as well. It needs to be understood and addressed that students are not the only ones that violate school community norms and teacher behavior is often the antecedent to student behavior that results in disciplinary action or arrest. Research has shown some positive outcomes associated with the implementation of restorative justice as a framework for increasing relationships and building community within the school. In one study examining the application of restorative justice principles to disciplinary policies in educational settings the authors found that while some teachers had concerns about the amount of time required to implement restorative justice practices, most teachers and students had positive reactions to the programming and believed that the restorative practices improved the school climate (Stinchcomb, Bazemore & Riestenberg, 2006). Additionally, there was an overall reduction in behavioral referrals and suspensions. Another study in West Oakland, California saw an 87 percent decline in suspensions over the course of a 5-year period, and expulsions declined to zero during the implementation of restorative justice (Sumner, Silverman & Frampton, 2010). There has also been some evidence to show that the implementation of restorative justice has been effective for reducing disproportionality in school discipline. Simson (2012) studied whether the introduction of Restorative Justice (RJ) programs reduced the incidence of punitive student discipline (out-of-school suspension) and whether current existing racial disparities in student discipline could be alleviated by the introduction of Restorative Justice. Results of the study revealed that 13 schools implementing a RJ program in Denver and Santa Fe reduced their Black suspension percentage disparity by about 4.5 percentage points, while non-RJ schools increased their disparity by slightly less than 1 percent. Findings from this research suggest that restorative justice can be effective in reducing overall suspension levels as well as large African American disproportionality in school suspensions.

Restorative Practices For Student and Teacher

Gregory, Clawson, Davis, and Gerewitz (2016) gathered student surveys in 29 high school classrooms to identify whether the implementation of Restorative Practices (RP) is associated with positive teacher relationships for students of all racial and ethnic groups. The study suggests that teachers who used RP more consistently had more positive relationships with their students. They were perceived as more respectful and issued fewer exclusionary discipline referrals compared to teachers who used RP less frequently. In addition, the findings also indicated that teachers who used RP more frequently issued fewer discipline referrals to Hispanic and African American students. Hopefully, opportunities to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline can improve overall outcomes for students.

Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships & Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools (A Guide for Educators) (2014) is a resource from the National Education Association, Advancement Project, American Federation of Teachers, and National Opportunity to Learn Campaign. otlcampaign.org/restorative-practices. The Educator's guide illustrates how restorative practices can help schools move away from zero tolerance and toward positive discipline policies that can be integrated into the classroom, curriculum, and culture of schools. Additionally, the state of Minnesota, who was the first to implement Restorative Justice and Restorative Practices at a statewide level, have several resources for learning and growing the use of these practices (<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/safe/clim/prac/>).

Arrests as a Contributor to the School-to-Prison Pipeline

The STPP is generally shown through suspension and expulsion rates within a district, the number of students arrested from school, and the number of juvenile arrests in the community. Included in this section are the risk indices for students being arrested, this risk is calculated to show the likelihood of a particular racial groups' risk of being arrested from school. The school level arrests are included for both the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 academic year. The data collection years from IDOE begins with 2015-2016 academic year because it was the first year it was collected. Arrests within the city of Evansville are also included, by category of arrest, by age, by gender, and by race, the city of Evansville data is for the year 2014 as it is the last collection year for the Bureau of Justice Statistics at the time this report was written.

2014-2015 / 2015-2016 DATA TABLES

Risk of Being Arrested from School by Race

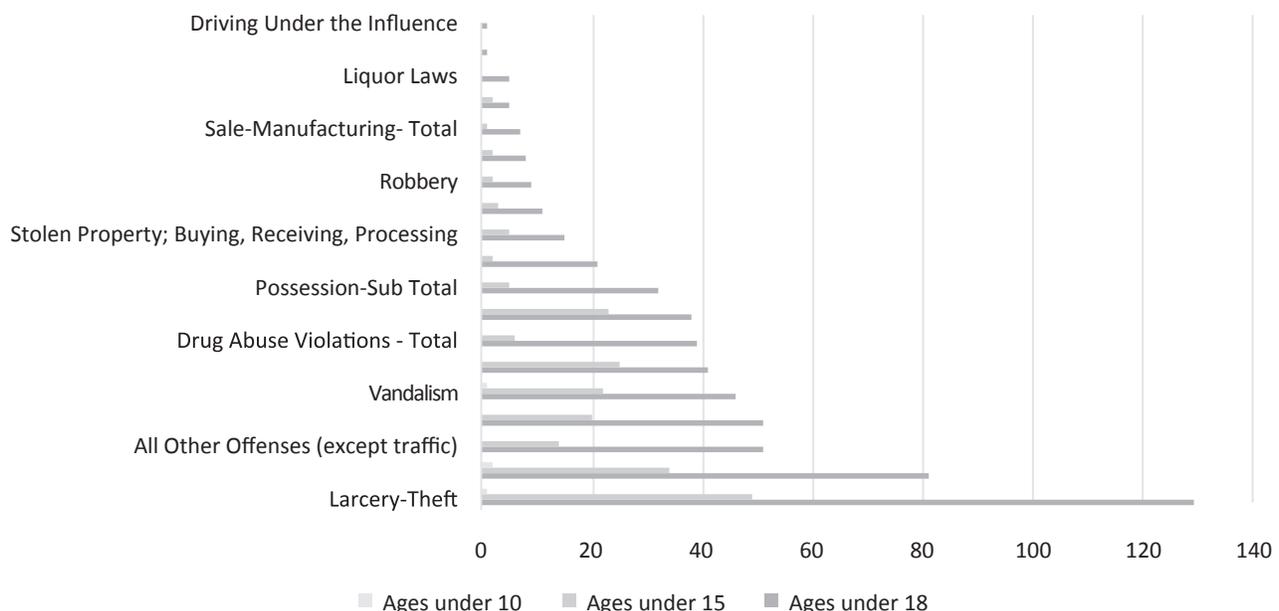
Ethnicity	2014-2015 Number of Arrests	Risk Ratio by Race	2015-2016 Number of Arrests	Risk Ratio by Race
<i>White</i>	72	0.6	24	0.3
<i>Black</i>	49	4.2	30	6.0
<i>Multiracial</i>	0	--	6	--
<i>Hispanic</i>	0	--	0	--
<i>Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander</i>	0	--	1	--
<i>Asian</i>	0	--	0	--
Total	121		61	

All data included in the table is collected via Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation data release for academic year 2014-2015, and 2015-2016. The risk can only be calculated for racial categories with more than 10 students arrested in the designated year.

The above data shows the number of students arrested in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 from the school corporation, and the risk of being arrested from school by race. Note that there is a decrease in the number of students arrested from school between 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 academic years. The risk indices show that in 2014-2015 Black students are 4.2 times more likely to be arrested from school. Furthermore, in 2015-2016 while the number of overall arrests decreased the risk of Black students being arrested increased going from 4.2 times more likely in 2014-2015 to 6.0 times more likely in 2015-2016. This is a significant difference between Black students and all other students and Multiracial students and all other.

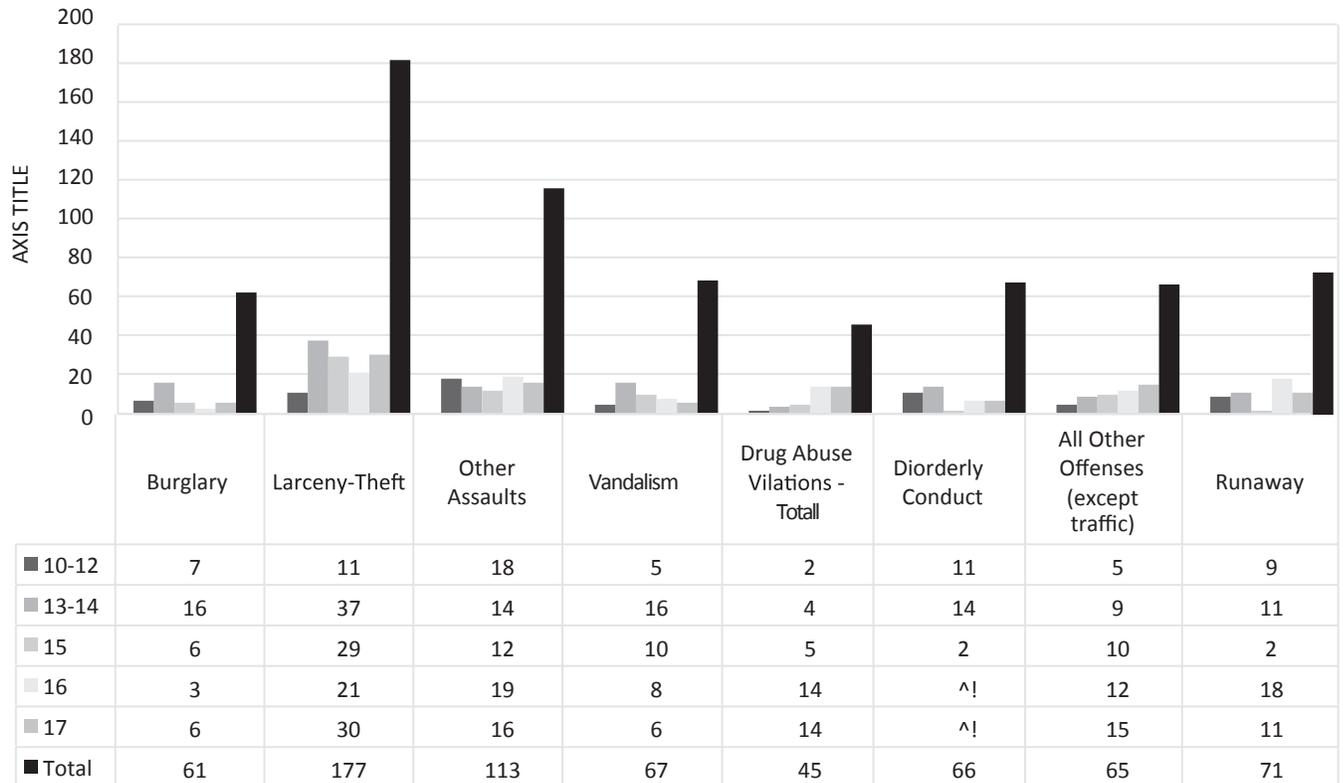
The following data charts were created using data retrieved from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and is representative of Evansville city wide arrests of persons 18 years of age and under in 2014 (2014 is the latest reporting year for the Bureau of Justice Statistics). Each chart represents a different composition of those arrested. The arrests reported were made by the Evansville Police force and not the school corporation.

ARRESTS OF JUVENILES BY AGE CROUPING 2014



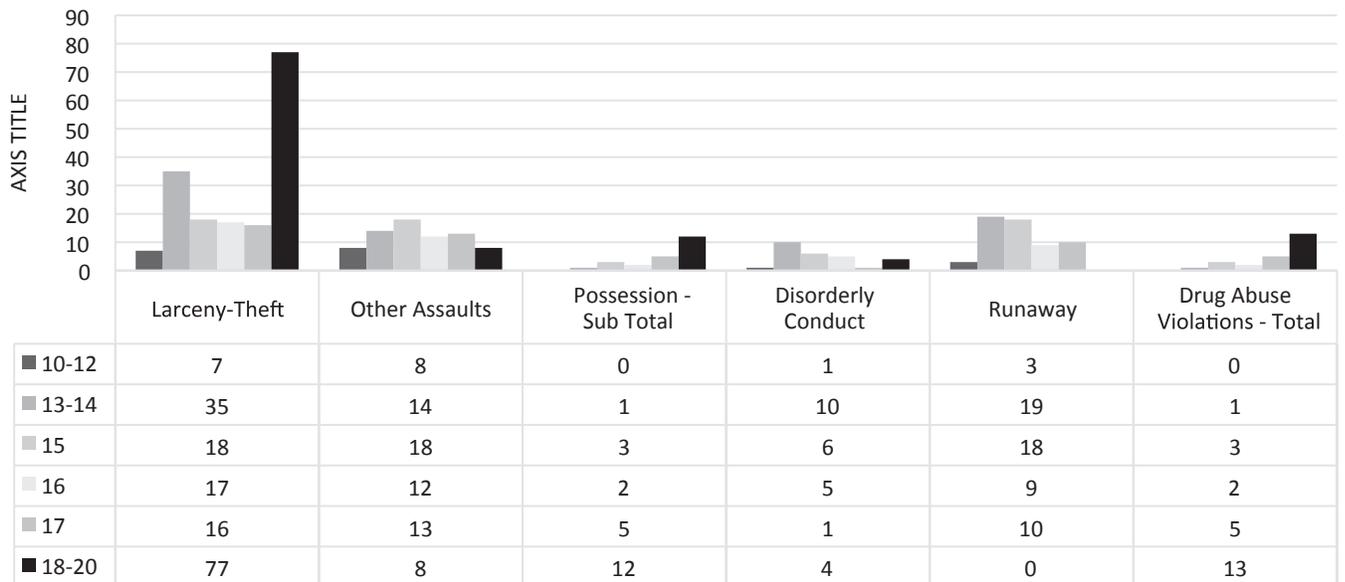
Snyder, H. N., Cooper, A. D., and Mulako-Wangota, J. Bureau of Justice Statistics. (Juvenile Arrests). Generated using the Arrest Data Analysis Tool at www.bjs.gov. (2017).

MALE ARRESTS BY CATEGORY BY AGE 2014



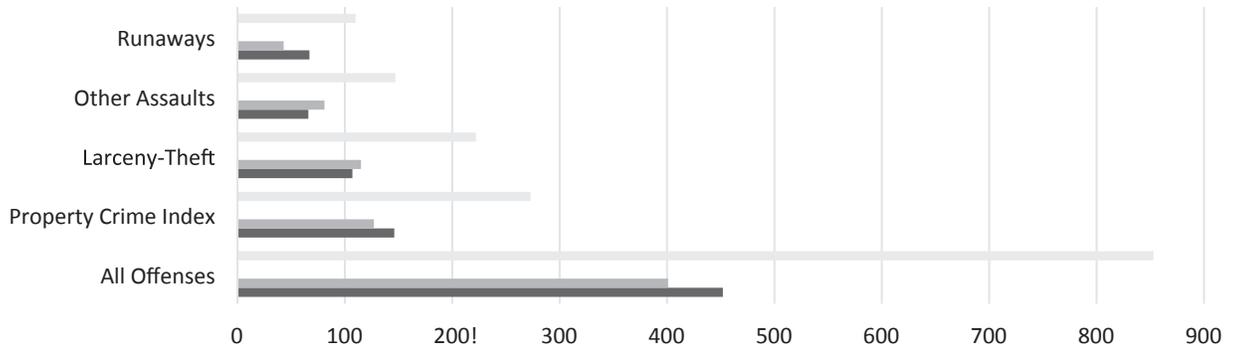
Note: From the tables above and below that the number of arrests by gender does vary and males are more likely than females to be arrested within the City of Evansville. Also note that most minors who were arrested were for the offenses of Larceny or Theft.

FEMALE ARRESTS BY AGE AND CATEGORY 2014



The most frequent racial group to be arrested within the Evansville community is White. The population of Evansville is estimated at 86% White, with those under the age of 18 being 22% of the population. African Americans are 9.5% of the populations in Evansville and account for 44% of youth arrests; this disproportionate representation amongst youth offenses is not due to more frequent illegal behavior. In a national study it was found that youth behavior was no different, meaning regardless of race youth behaved in the same ways. However, how they were treated as a result of that same behavior did differ (Lauritsen, 2005).

MOST FREQUENT YOUTH OFFENSES BY RACE 2014



	All Offenses	Property Crime Index	Larceny -Theft	Other Assaults	Runaways
Total	853	273	222	147	110
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0	0	0	0
Blacks	401	127	115	81	43
Whites	452	146	107	66	67

Juvenile Commitments in Vanderburgh County

According to the Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC), 118 youth were committed to juvenile incarceration between 2014 and 2017. In each year more Black youth than any other were committed and more males were committed. The majority of youth were committed to Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility, in Pendleton Indiana. Furthermore, all females committed in 2014-2017 served their sentences in Madison Correctional Facility, Madison, Indiana. In 2014 a total of 22 youth were committed and 14 out of 22 (14/22) were Black and 5/22 were White, and 6/22 are female. In the year 2015, 33 youth were committed; 19/33 Black, and 10/22 are White, 3/33 female. In the year 2016, 27 youth were committed; 15/27 Black, and 8/27 are White, 2/27 female. In the year 2017, 36 youth were committed; 15/36 Black, and 13/36 are White, and 6/36 female. The number of youth incarcerated in Vanderburgh County within a year is significantly lower than those that are arrested in a given year (Vanderburgh Juvenile Facility placement data 2014-2017). For example in 2014, 22 youth from Vanderburgh County were committed to juvenile incarceration, in contrast in 2014, there were 853 arrests of youth under the age of 18.

Alternatives to Criminalization of Youth

There are a number of ways to begin to restructure the system and change the narrative about youth who have experienced behavioral difficulties or encounters with the law. One way is to destigmatize students with disabilities. Research has shown that students with disabilities are two times more likely to receive out-of-school suspension as their peers without disabilities (US Department of Education, 2014). Instead, there should be a focus on increasing mental health services and/or building community partnerships to service students with significant mental health needs. Another recommendation is to have trauma-informed schools. Research shows that trauma can contribute to an academic decline and negatively impact a child's ability to learn and function appropriately in the classroom (Mallet, 2014). The traumatic stress, if not addressed may contribute to increased deviant and risky behavior, retraumatization, and juvenile justice involvement (Ko et al., 2008). Adopting a trauma-informed approach in schools allows teachers and staff to recognize, understand and address the learning needs of children impacted by trauma and develop a school culture and curriculum sensitive to their learning needs (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). Thus reducing the criminalization of youth, by addressing mental health and trauma.

Recommendations to Address the Criminalization of Youth

Informed Trauma Care Training

Drawing on a growing body of brain research linking childhood trauma and trouble at school, some districts are training educators to recognize that students' behavior issues may be symptoms of traumatic stress. "Looking at student behavior through a trauma-informed lens, . . . helps us understand how homelessness, malnourishment, transient families, and how unsafe neighborhoods may debilitate students and derail their behavior" (NEA, 2015, pg. 19). Drawing on the Children's Policy and Law Initiative's Trauma informed school training series resources are available statewide to learn and grow more in addressing the entry points of the STPP (<http://www.cpliofindiana.org/about-psdi.html>).

Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline Recommendations

Generally, recommendations are concrete, attainable and are able to be implemented with intention, insistence, evaluation and revision. The recommendations offered below are attainable; they take time and a multitude of efforts from all aspects of community.

- Police should be a last resort, not a first response
- Improve the staff-to-student ratio
- Put less emphasis on standardized tests
- Provide more college and career-prep
- Implement alternative discipline practices

School Resource Officers

Reform the training of School Resource Officers to include trauma informed care, and implicit bias training (<http://www.cpliofindiana.org/about-psdi.html>). Just as offered above, the criminalization of youth has been exacerbated by the presence of law enforcement within schools, not as a protector of students from outside threats, but as a policing force within the school. Behaviors that two decades ago were normal adolescent behavior are now classified as criminal. The presence of police to keep students safe is important and supported; with the rash of school shootings, the need for well-trained police officers is more important than ever. That training needs to include how officers perceive and interact with particular populations of students, especially since the profile of recent school shooters does not reflect the disproportionate representation we see amongst those arrested from school.

Increase Number of Alternative Incarceration Programs

Research shows that alternatives to incarceration are effective for communities addressing juvenile recidivism. Yet research also confirms that juveniles arrested have an increased risk of being arrested again and of being incarcerated later in life. Additionally, the Annie E. Casey Foundation documented alternatives that are proven to produce equal or better outcomes like home based counseling, supervision and treatment strategies for juveniles. Furthermore, Vanderburgh County currently has several agencies that service youth as an alternative to incarceration. Included in the supplemental documents are community agencies that work toward alternative incarceration programs.

Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation Response to STPP

The EVSC has two programs that are said to specifically address the concerns that are created by the STPP. These two programs are described below and descriptions are taken directly from the corporation's website. The data for the CARES program was provided by the corporation and denotes the students served in the program by race, gender and socioeconomic status. Note that CARES began in January of 2015. The table also includes the number of students who repeated the program. No data was provided to show participants in the OptIN program as it is new and has not had a complete cycle of participation.

CARES Program

What is CARES?

The EVSC’s Court Assisted Resolution to Expulsion and Suspension Program, or CARES, was developed in partnership with the Vanderburgh Juvenile Court as an alternative to out-of-school suspensions. Students are recommended to CARES by their school administrator following a behavior infraction. Each student assigned to CARES will remain in the program for one or two days. While in the program, students and families meet with a representative of the juvenile court and a social emotional learning specialist. The goal of the program is to place students in an alternative setting to resolve their suspension and to prevent further behavior problems from impacting their education. (<https://district.evscschools.com/cms/one.aspx?portalId=74772&pageId=129892>)

2014-2015 / 2015-2016 DATA TABLES CARES PROGRAM

	2014-2015	2015-2016
Ethnicity	# of Students Placed at CARES	# of Students Placed at CARES
<i>American Indian or Alaska Native</i>	0	0
<i>Asian</i>	0	0
<i>Black or African American</i>	75	145
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	5	18
<i>Multiracial</i>	25	72
<i>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</i>	2	2
<i>White</i>	107	202
Gender		
<i>F</i>	77	116
<i>M</i>	137	323
Free Reduced Lunch		
<i>P</i>	36	87
<i>F/R</i>	178	352
<i>*</i>	19	16
Total	233	455
Students who Repeated CARES	33	142

OptIN Program (Opportunities through Partnerships that Transform and Inspire)

OptIN will educate EVSC students on postsecondary and career options that best match their interests and strengths. “OptIN will connect students’ passion and interests with open positions in our community by ensuring our students have the education and transferable skills necessary for today’s workforce”(David Smith, 2017; <https://district.evscschools.com/cms/one.aspx?portalId=74772&pageId=4991844>)

This program is seen as promising for EVSC and has been identified as one that may assist in addressing the STPP. At this time (May 2018) the program has not had a full cycle and does not have implementation or targeted population data. The EVSC has hopes that the OptIN program will provide another resource for students to avoid the School-to-Prison Pipeline.

Targeted Recommendations

Policy Change

Require youth serving institutions to adhere to HB 1421 (enacted July, 2018) and promote and support cultural adaptation training upon hiring of school police, teachers, administrators, juvenile court and services agencies (Disproportionate Minority Contact Phase II, 2013).

Petition the State Legislature

Support and contact state representatives to advocate for and promote the recommendations offered by the Indiana Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (<http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/Civil-Rights%20and-the-School-to-Prison-Pipeline-in%20Indiana.pdf>).

Petition the state to fund non-formal responses to trauma that are currently only available with a conviction from the juvenile court. For example: Restorative Justice, mental health/counseling. etc.

Recommendations for Advocacy

Places of Worship

Places of worship can participate in addressing the STPP through facilitating community forums and response, mentorships and working within congregations to advocate for students. Some examples may include probation or parole ministries that support youth in attending their appointments and adhering to their probation or parole guidelines.

Prosecutor's Office

The Vanderburgh County Prosecutor's office has several programs currently in place to assist residents who have had an arrest record. The Prosecutor's office can continue to improve community relations through advocating for and resisting the trend to criminalize youth through arrests from schools and continuing programing that is having a positive effect on reducing the criminalization of youth in Vanderburgh County.

Shelters

Local shelters can partner with juvenile courts to assist runaways, making running away a non-arresting offense, reducing the criminalization of youth. Even if the child is taken into police custody they are remanded to child services and not detained by police.

Social Workers

Social workers have an ongoing advocacy role in addressing the entry points and systemic contributors to youth being suspended, expelled, or arrested from school or within the community. Social workers may continue to connect students and families to alternative and prevention programs within Vanderburgh County.

Recommendations for EVSC

Revise the School Disciplinary Code

Revision of the school/district disciplinary code is necessary to reduce inconsistencies in its application to students. Based on the data provided in this report African American and Multiracial students are more likely to be suspended for non-violent offenses and are more likely to be arrested from school. Several recommendations included in this report and within the supplemental documents can assist in reducing disciplinary outcomes and retaining students within school.

Implicit Bias Training

Implicit bias is defined as “attitudes or stereotypes that are activated unconsciously and involuntarily. They are not the same as biases that a person might try to hide because they are unpopular or socially incorrect. Social scientists believe that implicit biases are learned as young as age 3, and may be fueled by stereotypes perpetrated in the media, or beliefs passed along by parents, peers, and other community members” (<http://neatoday.org/2015/09/09/when-implicit-bias-shapes-teacher-expectations/>).

Providing staff with implicit bias training can improve perceptions of situations and people (<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1086492.pdf>). The use of implicit bias training is documented widely and the Kirwan Institute (<http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/researchandstrategicinitiatives/implicit-bias-review/>) has several resources to assist.

Conclusion

The School-to-Prison Pipeline in the city of Evansville is evident. The data provided in this report demonstrates that students are being arrested from local schools, and arrested within the community, contributing to the criminalization of youth.

There is a response by the local school corporation to address student suspension and expulsion and arrests. The EVSC has programs in place that, with time, are believed to reduce the number of students arrested and improve disciplinary outcomes for all students. It is also evident from the data that certain groups of students are disproportionality impacted by arrests and disciplinary consequences. Disproportionality can be addressed with a continued commitment by EVSC to improving outcomes by reducing criminalization of youth and disciplinary sanctions that contribute to the STPP. Several recommendations were given in this report. Each can be taken as individual or as concurrent efforts to effectively address and reduce the number of students and community members impacted by the STPP and criminalization of youth.

The affectiveness and effectiveness of any efforts to address the STPP and the criminalization of youth have to be integrated, sustained efforts; efforts that include school and local community, that embrace a multilayer, multi-pronged approach to school resource officers, teachers and students. The improvement of the STPP has not been documented to be successful when only the school is pursuing change, but rather when community efforts are aligned. This alignment can be parent groups; community organizations; juvenile courts; and advocacy groups. With concerted, connected, and consistent measurable efforts the STPP can be addressed and reduced.

[Supplemental Resources and Data Folder Content List \(Google Content List link\)](#)

[Supplemental Resources and Data \(Google Folder link\)](#)

[Supplemental Resources and Data \(Dropbox Folder link\)](#)

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