



Exploring Intersectional Policy Solutions To Challenge the School to Prison Pipeline: Improve Wellness of Girls and Women

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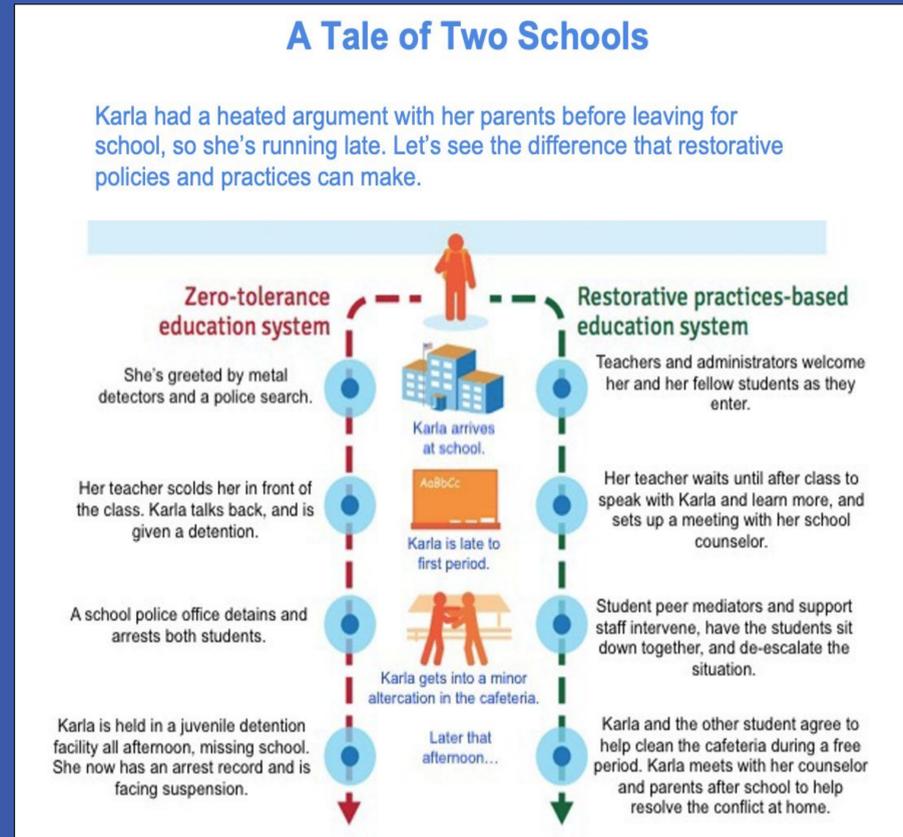
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Introduction

The Los Angeles County (LAC) Board of Supervisors established the Women and Girls Initiative (WGI) in 2016 to examine systemic issues that lead to inequitable gender outcomes. The WGI has tasked our group with examining the school-to-prison pipeline within the LACOE jurisdiction to offer policy recommendations to enhance the wellness of Black & Indigenous girls.

Background

- The school to prison pipeline describes the shunting of students out of schools and later into justice involvement.
- In the US, girls are becoming the fastest growing juvenile justice population.
- Black girls experience adverse childhood experiences at rates higher than their white peers and also receive a disproportionate rate of out of school suspensions starting as early as preschool.
- There is a compelling need to investigate school discipline and care policies to increase the wellness of Black girls.



Methods

A mixed methods assessment was completed by utilizing quantitative county level data through the California Department of Education public datasets. This will offer insight into school performance, suspensions/expulsions, and college and career readiness to allow for an intersectional analysis. Qualitative data collection will be through LAC stakeholder interviews and reviewing Youth Justice Work group recommendations.

Discussion

Black girls are suspended at a rate disproportionately higher than their enrollment rate nationally and this is true for school districts within LA county. Suspensions in LACOE have been increasing in count and suspension rate for girls enrolled in high schools. LAUSD has been successful at reducing total suspensions, but racial disparities persist similar to disparities seen in LACOE. Furthermore, black girls are suspended for “defiance” and “violence without injury” at rates higher than their peers. In literature review and qualitative interviews a theme emerged that black girls are perceived as more mature and aggressive. To remedy this we recommend anti bias education and reframing response to defiance with care interventions rather than suspension in LACOE schools. For Restorative Justice practices to be implemented successfully across school districts translating to positive outcomes for women of color schools must be equipped with more support and resources equitably. We recommend increasing staffing for PSA and PSW to aid in holistic student support within LACOE to allow restorative discipline practices. There are racial ethnic differences across teachers and students in demographic data and qualitative interviews reveal the need for further anti bias training for teachers and staff.

Ethnicity	Cumulative Enrollment	Total Suspensions	Unduplicated Count of Students Suspended	Suspension Rate	Percent of Students Suspended with One Suspension	Percent of Students Suspended with Multiple Suspensions
African American	320	145	62	19.4%	46.8%	53.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	*	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	70	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Filipino	42	1	1	2.4%	100.0%	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino	731	119	60	8.2%	60.0%	40.0%
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*
White	187	6	5	2.7%	80.0%	20.0%
Two or More Races	52	3	2	3.8%	50.0%	50.0%
Not Reported	*	*	*	*	*	*