



Reaching a Critical Juncture for Our Kids: The Need to Reassess School-Justice Practices

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School Safety and School Climate: Two Core Values

- ❑ The Need to Keep Schools and Communities Safe
- ❑ The Need to Maximize Educational Opportunity

The Roots of “Zero Tolerance”

- ❑ Earliest usage: 1983 Norfolk submarine incident
- ❑ Established in Late 80’ s Drug Enforcement
- ❑ Picked up in Schools in 1989-1990
- ❑ 1994: Gun Free Schools Act Becomes Law

Extensions of Zero Tolerance

- ❑ Drugs & alcohol
- ❑ Gangs
- ❑ Fighting
- ❑ Threats
- ❑ Watching fights
- ❑ Hats
- ❑ Plastic weapons/paper guns
- ❑ Aspirin
- ❑ Paper clips
- ❑ Nail files

Selected School Events Leading to Suspension or Expulsion as Reported in U.S. National News.

| Location & Date | Description of Incident | Outcome |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Atlanta, GA September, 2000 | Eleven year old Ashley Smith was found with a 10 inch novelty chain attaching her Tweety Bird wallet to her key ring. | Suspended for two weeks for violating school's weapon policy classifying a chain as a weapon, in the same category as pellet guns, ice picks, and swords. |
| Columbus, GA May, 2005 | 17 year old talking with his mother in Iraq for the first time in a month refused to turn it off and hand it over to a teacher | Suspended for 10 days for violation of school cell phone policy and "defiance" |
| Hurst, TX March, 2002 | 16 year old boy found with bread knife in back of truck after helping Grandmother move the previous weekend | Expelled for one year to county Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program |

Unintended Consequences: Has ZT Increased Suspension/Expulsion?

- ❑ Rate of suspensions and expulsions has doubled since the 1970's
- ❑ Dramatic increases in some districts:
 - Chicago expulsions prior to zero tolerance 1995-96: 81
 - Three years later, after ZT: 1000

Unintended Consequences: Juvenile Justice in the Schools

- ❑ Increases in school-based arrests
 - PA: Number of JJ referrals to school has tripled over 7 years
- ❑ Incidents
 - 14 yr old girl arrested for dress code violation
 - Student w/ disabilities arrested for \$2 theft
 - Chicago: 24 students held overnight for food fight

A National Investigation into Zero Tolerance

- ❑ 2005: American Psychological Association commissioned Zero Tolerance Task Force to
 - Examine development and implementation of zero tolerance policies
 - Provide recommendations for implementing policies “in ways to benefit children as opposed to inflicting damage upon them.”
- ❑ Report released, August, 2006
- ❑ Published in *American Psychologist*, Jan., 2008

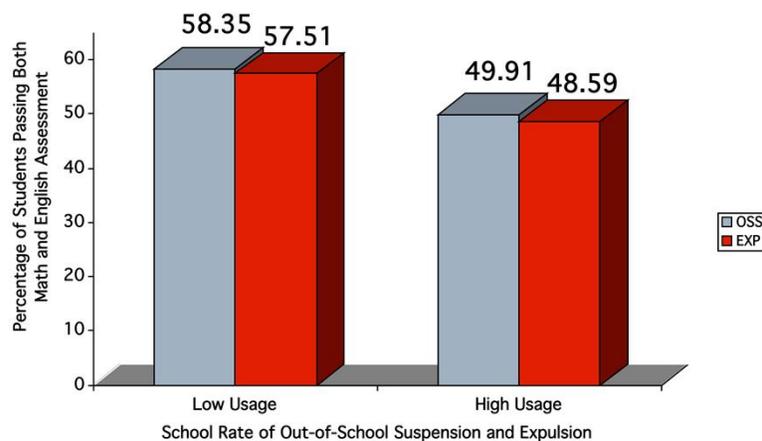
Question 1: Have zero tolerance policies made schools safer and more effective?

- ❑ **Assumption: By mandating punishment for certain offenses, ZT increases consistency of discipline, sends clear disciplinary message.**
 - Rates vary dramatically across schools & districts
 - Due as much to variations in schools and principals as students

Question 1: Safer and More Effective?

- ❑ **Assumption: Removal of students who violate rules creates more conducive learning climate for the rest.**
 - More removal = Less satisfactory climate and school governance
 - Emerging evidence of negative correlation between suspension and achievement

Percent Passing State Test by School Disciplinary Use (Adjusted for Demographic and Economic Indicators)

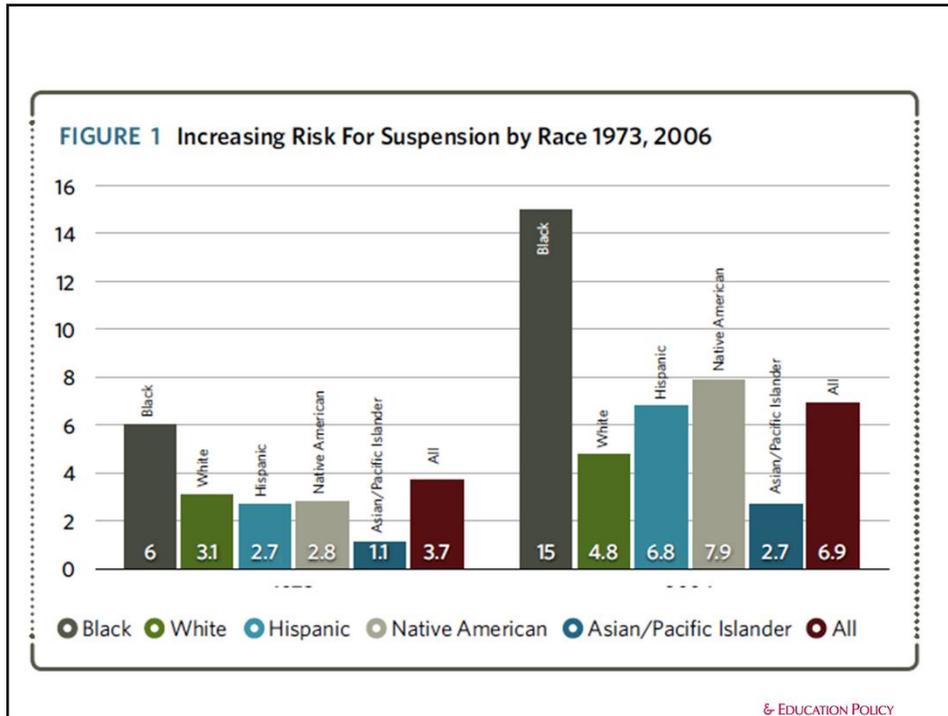


Question 1: Safer and More Effective?

- **Assumption: Swift and certain punishments of ZT have deterrent effect, improving student behavior and discipline.**
 - Predicts higher future rates of misbehavior & discipline
 - Long term relationship with dropout, failure to graduate on time

Question 2: What has been the impact of ZT on students of color?

- **Assumption: By removing subjective, contextual factors, will be more fair to all students.**
 - CRDC (2012) Black students suspended 3.5x as frequently
 - Also disproportionality in:
 - Office referrals
 - Corporal Punishment
 - Arrests



Alternative Explanations of Disciplinary Disproportionality

- ❑ Disproportionality is related to poverty
 - Poverty and disproportionality correlate, but...
 - Effects of race remain after control
- ❑ Do black students misbehave more?
 - No supporting evidence
 - Appear to be treated more severely for same offenses

What Behaviors are Students Referred For? By Race

Of 32 infractions, only 8 significant differences:

- White students referred more for:
 - Smoking
 - Vandalism
 - Leaving w/o permission
 - Obscene Language
- Black students referred more for:
 - Disrespect
 - Excessive Noise
 - Threat
 - Loitering

What Does Predict Racial Disparity in Discipline?

- ❑ Racial composition:
 - Higher proportion of students of color= more punishment
- ❑ Extent of staff diversity
 - More teachers of color = lower suspension rates
 - Doesn't hold for administrators
- ❑ Classroom management
- ❑ School climate

Question 3: To what extent are zero tolerance policies developmentally appropriate?

- ❑ Prior to age 15, immaturity in
 - Poor resistance to peer influence
 - Attitudes toward and perception of risk
 - Future orientation
 - Impulse Control
- ❑ Developmental neuroscience: Brain Immaturity
- ❑ Zero tolerance: Not well-suited to adolescent development

Question 4: Has zero tolerance affected the relationship between education and the juvenile justice system?

- ❑ Zero Tolerance may have increased reliance on:
 - School security measures: No data on efficacy
 - Use of Profiling: No evidence that profiles can be constructed
- ❑ Has increased referrals to juvenile justice system

Support for the School-to-Prison Pipeline Model

- ❑ Conceptual
 - School alienation -> risk for delinquency
- ❑ Empirical evidence
 - Disparities in suspension predict disparities in arrest (Nicholson-Crotty et al, 2009)
 - Suspension predicts increased likelihood of juvenile justice contact (Council for State Govts., 2011)

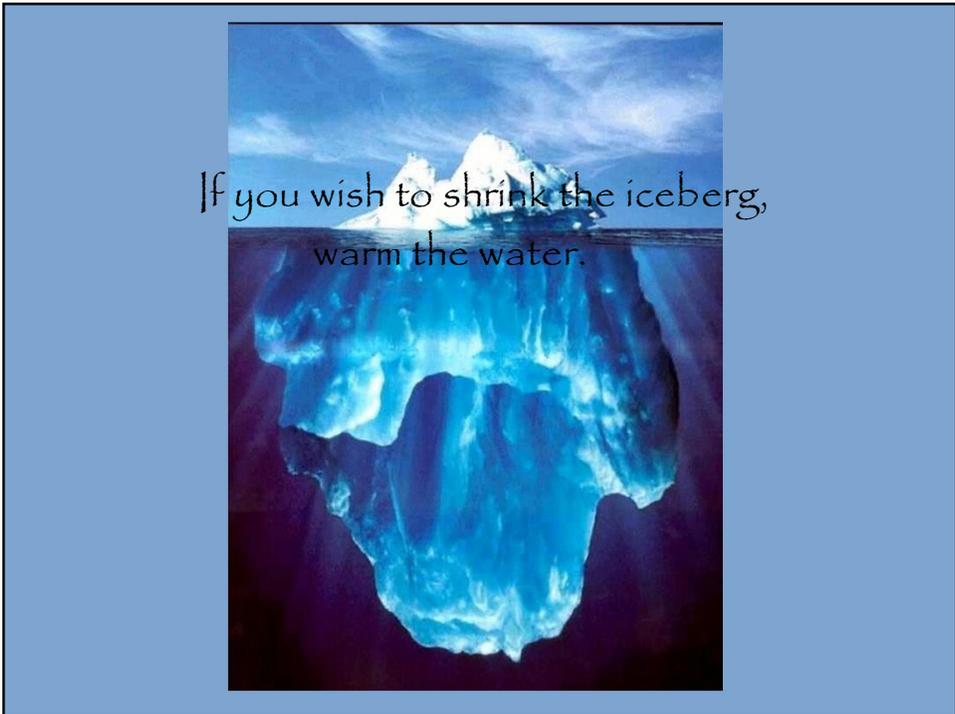
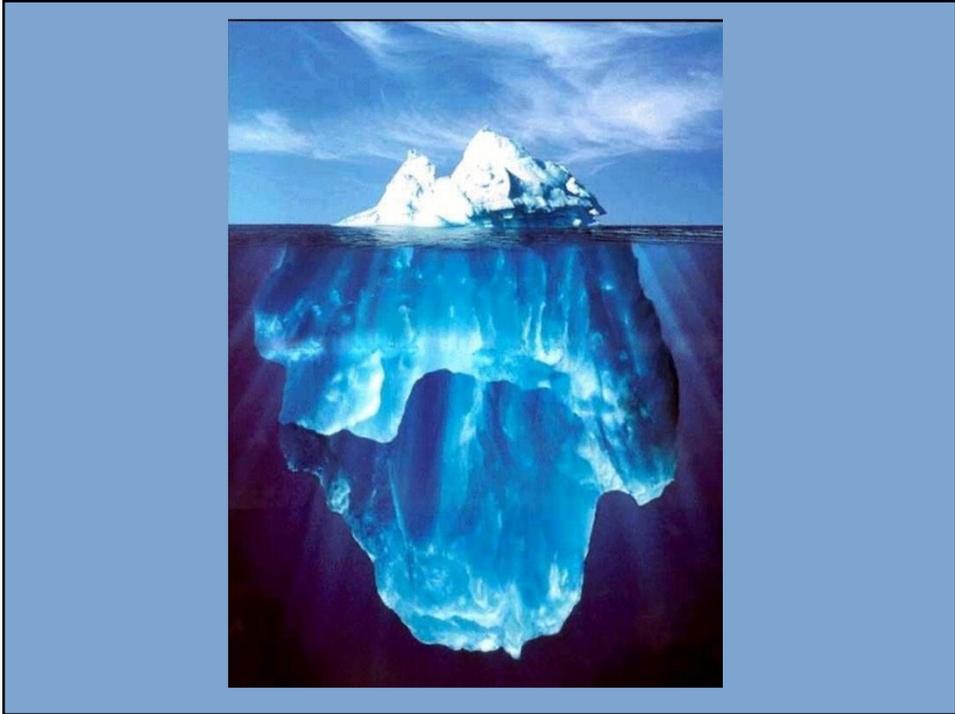
Question 5: What has been the impact of zero tolerance policies on students, families and communities?

- ❑ Effects of punitive approach for students
 - May create decrease in school belongingness (e.g. Hawkins et al)
 - Fails to address root problems (isolation, family stress)
- ❑ Relative costs of education vs. incarceration
 - Texas: Education--\$7000/yr vs. Incarceration--\$40,000/year
 - AFT: Alternative school \$1750 per year saves \$18,000/yr

Two Discourses on School Safety

- Traditional understanding
 - Purpose: Protection from perpetrators (Student)
 - Methods: Exclusion, law enforcement, security
 - Assessment strategy: Serious safety threatening incidents, crime and victimization



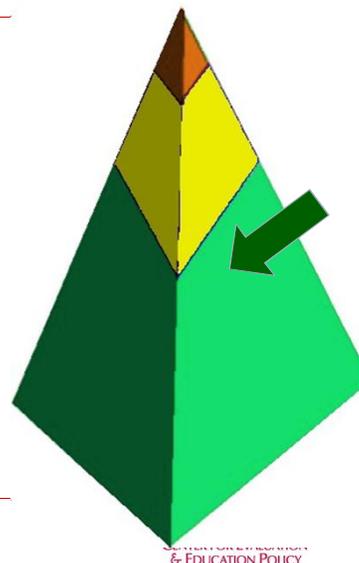


Two Discourses on School Safety

- ❑ Traditional understanding
 - Purpose: Protection from perpetrators (Student)
 - Methods: Exclusion, law enforcement, security
 - Assessment strategy: Serious safety threatening incidents, crime and victimization
 - ❑ Emerging understanding
 - Purpose: Teach civility and interaction (School)
 - Methods: Preventive measures, 3-tiered model
 - Assessment strategy: Broader measures of climate and connectedness
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Question 6: Are There Alternatives to Zero Tolerance?

- ❑ **Creating the Climate**
 - Bullying Prevention
 - Conflict Resolution/Life Skills
 - Classroom Management
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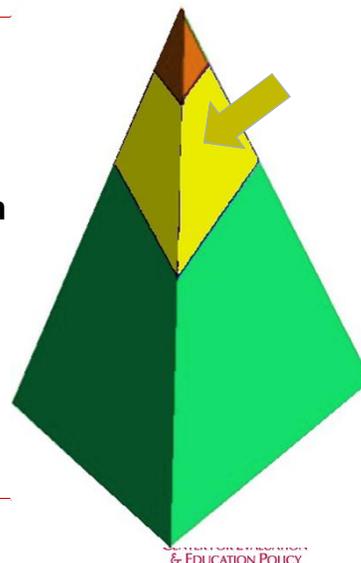
Clarify Expectations and Improve Training

“Once you send a child to the office as a classroom teacher you give up a part of your control over that child...

As a school we’ve come to realize that it’s a lot better to handle the discipline within the team of teachers because that sends a message to the student that the team has control.”

Are There Alternatives to Disciplinary Removal?

- **Creating the Climate**
 - Bullying Prevention
 - Conflict Resolution/Life Skills
 - Classroom Management
- **Early Identification/Intervention**
 - Check and connect
 - Mentoring, Anger Management

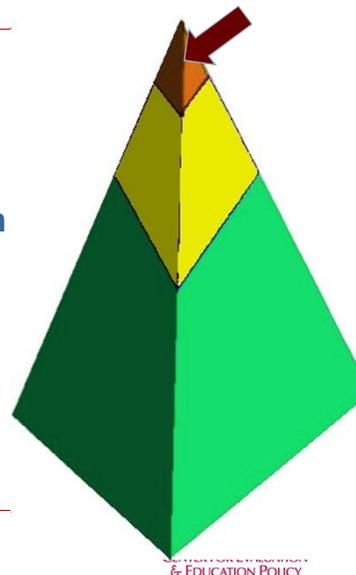


Communication & Connection: At Risk or Alienated Students

“And all we asked was that an adult would meet with these kids once a week...I would have lunch with this child and we would play chess and we would talk and he would share things that were going on in his life...We saw that were making progress with these kids because really a lot of these kids didn't have anyone who really took an interest in them.”

Are There Alternatives to Disciplinary Removal?

- **Creating the Climate**
 - Bullying Prevention
 - Conflict Resolution/Life Skills
 - Classroom Management
- **Early Identification/Intervention**
 - Check and connect
 - Mentoring, Anger Management
- **Effective Responses**
 - Functional Assessment
 - Restorative Justice
 - In-School Alternatives



Creative Options for Challenging Students: At School

“One comes in from 6 to 2 and the other from 10 to 6 and in that cross they meet with the student and if necessary, go to a class with the student they’re having particular trouble in...”

“The program has been very successful. Our suspension rate the first year we implemented it dropped 50%.”

Creative Options for Challenging Students: In the Community

- ❑ Boys & Girls Club, Wayne County
 - Schools fax work for suspended students
 - Conflict Resolution, speaker programs
- ❑ Hamilton Centers
 - Collaboration with courts, DFC
 - 97% completion rate for students in program
- ❑ Allen County Youth Services Program
 - SOCAP: Case Facilitator assigned
 - Students Out of School (SOS): Students have performed over 5000 hours of community service

The Difficulty of Talking About Race

“When you say minorities, are you, what are you speaking of?...[INTERVIEWER: *Ethnic and racial minorities*]...Oh....OK...Alright...We have like...I guess we have about half and half. I don't know that I've ever really paid attention to it .”

--Classroom Teacher

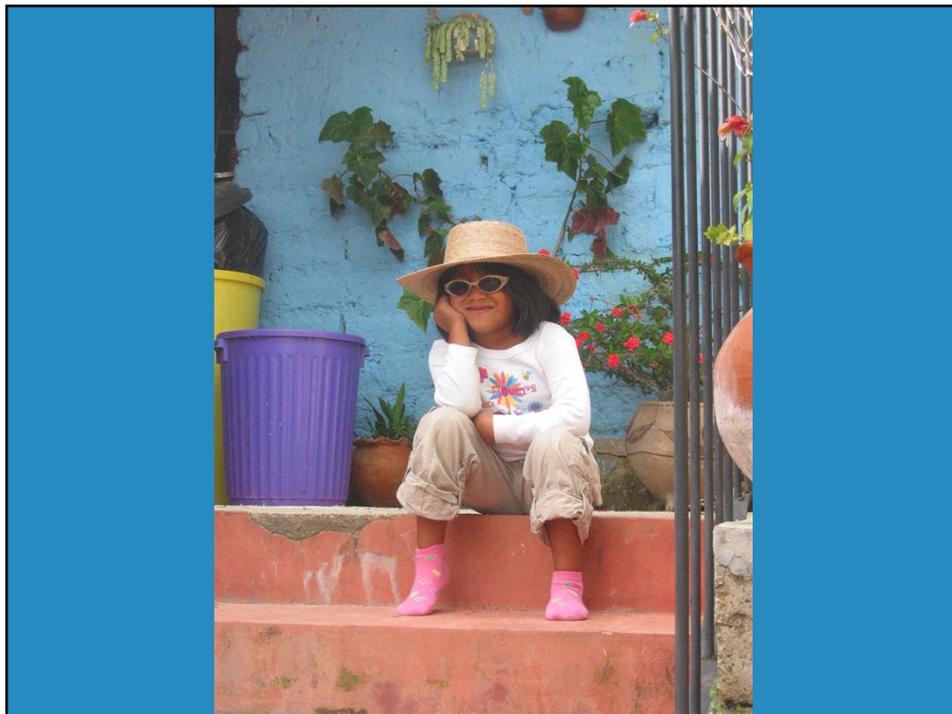
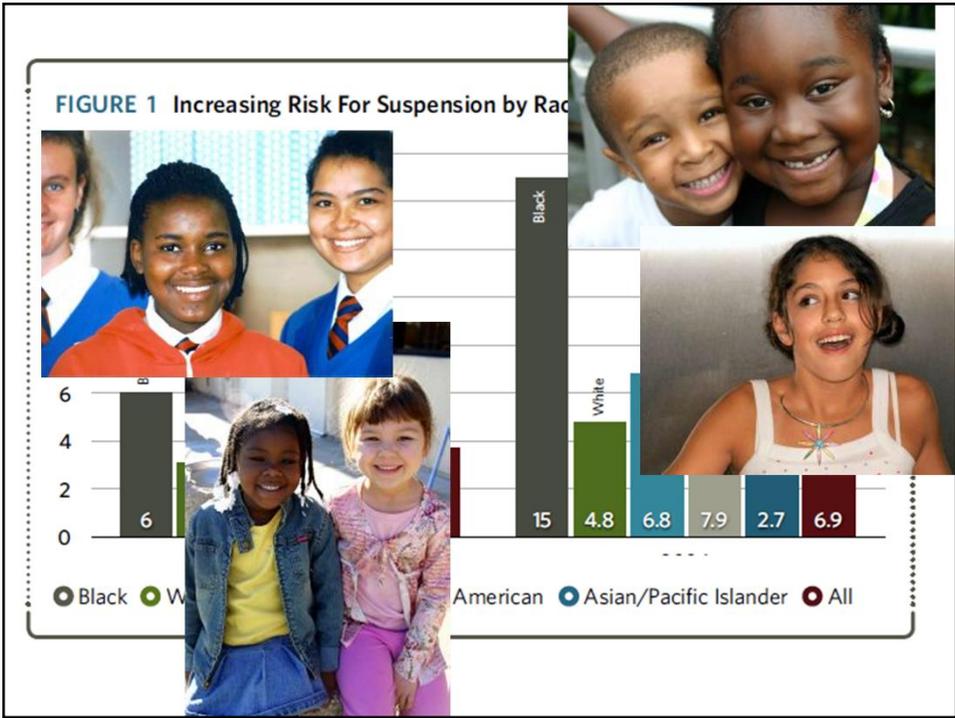
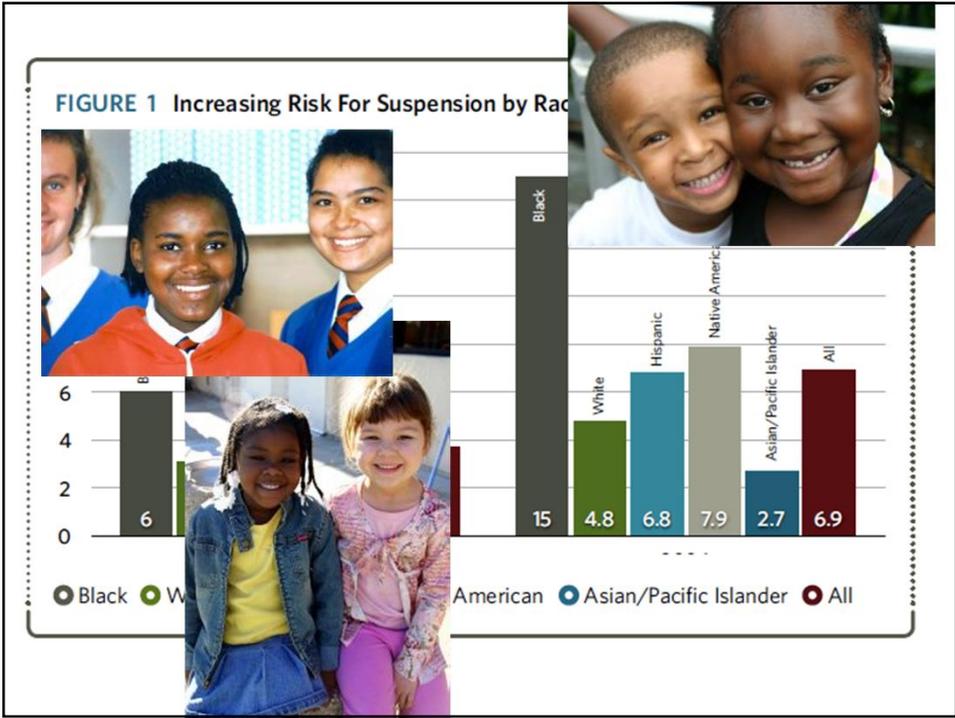


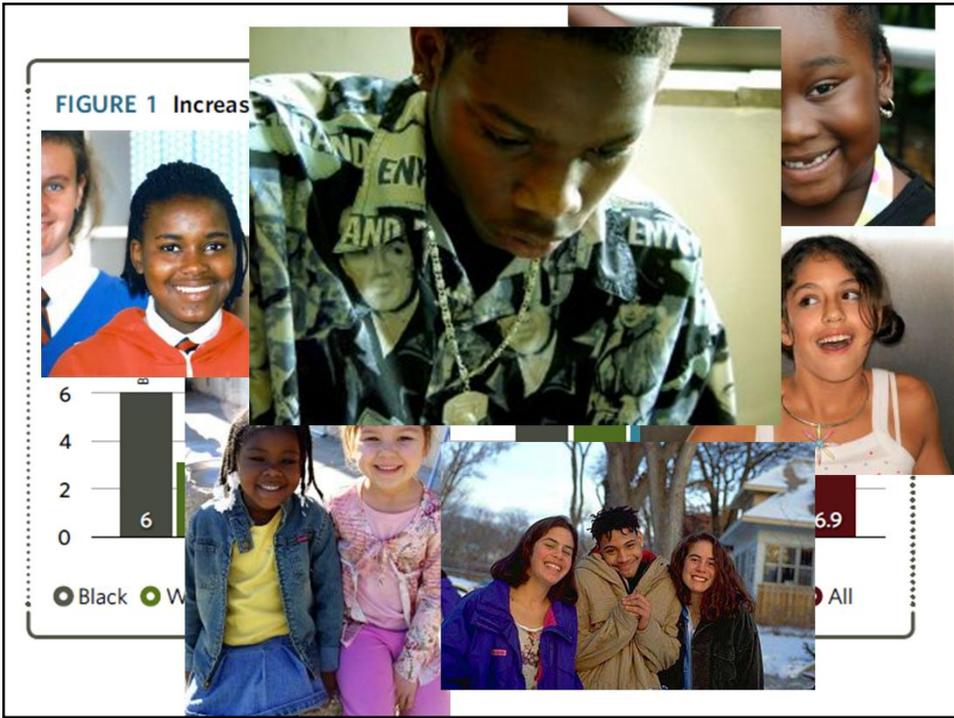
FIGURE 1 Increasing Risk For Suspension by Race 1973, 2006



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Perspectives on Katrina: Washington Post/ABC News Poll, 9/13/05

Q: Overall, do you think problems with the hurricane relief effort are or are not an indication of racial inequality in this country?



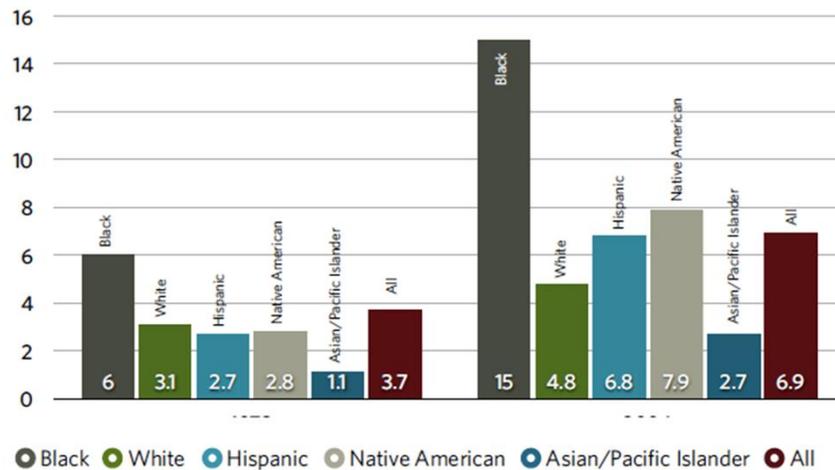
What is Our Theory?

- Poverty?
- Deficits in classroom management?
- Negative community influences?
- Lack of cultural competence?
- Negative peer culture?
- Historical discrimination?

A Blueprint for Changing Discipline

- ❑ Look at the data
- ❑ Expand the options at *all* levels
 - Teach our kids how to get along
 - Re-connect alienated children and youth
 - Pre-planned responses to disruption/violence
- ❑ When race is the issue, address the issue of race

FIGURE 1 Increasing Risk For Suspension by Race 1973, 2006



Websites:

- ❑ APA Zero Tolerance Report
 - <http://www.apa.org/ed/cpse/zttfreport.pdf>
- ❑ “Suspended Education”
 - <http://splcenter.org/get-informed/publications/suspended-education>
- ❑ Equity Project at Indiana University
 - ceep.indiana.edu/equity
- ❑ Educational Researcher Series
 - <http://edr.sagepub.com/content/vol39/issue1/>