



# Wisconsin Center for Education Research

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## School-to-Prison Pipeline and Academic Achievement: History, Impact, and Policy Interventions

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# Scope of the Issue

- Defining the school-to-prison pipeline
- Zero-tolerance policies
- Huge increase in school-based arrests
  - Nearly tripled in 7 years in some states (Cregor and Hewitt 2011)
- School → Disciplinary Practice → Juvenile Justice Involvement → Criminal Justice Involvement

# Disproportionately Impacted Populations

- Students of color
  - 38% of general population; 70% of incarcerated juveniles
  - Dane County:
    - Black students 6x more likely to be arrested
    - Black students 15x more likely to be suspended
    - Residents without high school diploma:
      - 3% white residents
      - 13% black residents
      - 12% Asian American residents
      - 23% Latinx residents

# Disproportionately Impacted Populations

- Youth with disabilities
  - Out-of-school suspension: overrepresented by 13.2%
  - Law enforcement referral: overrepresented by 15.5%
  - Expulsion: overrepresented by 12.1%
- LGBTQ youth
  - 12.5% absent in the last month due to feeling unsafe
  - 5-7% of general population; 13-15% of juvenile justice

# Policy Interventions

- Diversion programs for nonviolent offenses
- Transition/Reentry services for students returning to school from a juvenile detention center
- Restorative interventions for students
- End of referrals for status offenses



# Example of Predicted Outcomes

- Differ by target population and policy intervention
- Example: WISE Diversion program (Fader et al. 2015):
  - 2500+ students in school, 85 in program (1 in 29 students)
  - 26% of participants missed 5+ fewer days of school
  - 11% of participants improved GPA by 10+ points
  - 15% of participants experienced 3+ fewer disciplinary referrals

# Example of Predicted Outcomes

- In a hypothetical Dane County school of 2,100 students, where 72 are diverted...
  - If offense could have warranted suspension: 67 students participating would be African-American (15x more likely to be suspended than White students in Dane County) and 5 students would be white
  - If offense could have warranted arrest: 62 students would be African-American (6x more likely to be arrested than White students in Dane County) and 10 students would be white
  - While small percentage, huge impact on extreme racial disparities resulting in school-to-prison pipeline in Dane County

# Questions & Comments

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