



Welcoming the New Kid

Session 5:

Cheering for New Kids: Can We Redirect the School to Prison Pipeline?

Part One: What is the School to Prison Pipeline?

Article 1:

Amanda Ripley, 'How American Outlawed Adolescence'

The Atlantic, November 2016

One Monday morning last fall, at Spring Valley High School in Columbia, South Carolina, a 16-year-old girl refused to hand over her cellphone to her algebra teacher. After multiple requests, the teacher called an administrator, who eventually summoned a sheriff's deputy who was stationed at the school. The deputy walked over to the girl's desk. "Are you going to come with me," he said, "or am I going to make you?"

Niya Kenny, a student sitting nearby, did not know the name of the girl who was in trouble. That girl was new to class and rarely spoke. But Kenny had heard stories about the deputy, Ben Fields, who also coached football at the school, and she had a feeling he might do something extreme. "Take out your phones," she whispered to the boys sitting next to her, and she did the same. The girl still hadn't moved. While Kenny watched, recording with her iPhone, Fields wrenched the girl's right arm behind her and grabbed her left leg. The girl flailed a fist in his direction. As he tried to wrestle her out of her chair, the desk it was attached to flipped over, slamming the girl backwards. Then he reached for her again, extracting her this time, and hurled her across the classroom floor.

The other kids sat unmoving, hunched over their desks. The teacher and the administrator stood in silence. As Fields crouched over the girl to handcuff her, Kenny tried to hold her phone steady. Her legs were shaking and her heart was hammering in her chest. If this was really happening, she thought, someone needed to know about it—someone, apparently, outside that room. "Put your hands behind your back," Fields ordered the girl, sounding excited, out of breath. "Gimme your hands! Gimme your hands!"

Finally, in an unnaturally high voice, Kenny blurted: "Ain't nobody gonna put this shit on Snapchat?" The administrator tried to quiet her down, saying her name over and over, but she would not be silenced. "What the fuck?" she said, her voice rising further. "What the fuck?" Then she hit the Post button on her phone's Snapchat app.

Videos taken by Kenny and other students ended up online, and the story went viral that night. The girl who was thrown was black, like Kenny, and the footage of her being flung across the classroom by a white police officer inflamed debates about race and law enforcement. Hillary Clinton tweeted that there was "no excuse" for such violence, while the singer Ted Nugent praised Fields for teaching a lesson to "a spoiled, undisciplined brat."

After Fields handcuffed the girl, another deputy arrived to escort her out of the classroom. She would be released to her guardian later that day. Then, according to Kenny, Fields turned to her. "You got so much to say?," Fields asked. "Come on."

Kenny did not speak. She got up and put her hands behind her back.

The next day, the principal called the incident "horrific," and the school-board chair said it represented an "outrageous exception to the culture, conduct, and standards in which we so strongly believe." Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott, who oversees the officers at Spring Valley, said he was sickened by the videos and was investigating his deputy's actions. He added in passing that Niya Kenny had been arrested for "contributing to the chaos." None of the other officials mentioned her name.

Kenny's case did not receive much attention from officials because it was not unusual. Her arrest was based on a law against "disturbing school," a mysterious offense that is routinely levied against South Carolina students. Each year, about 1,200 kids are charged with disturbing school in the state—some for yelling and shoving, others for cursing. (In fact, the girl who was thrown from her desk was charged with disturbing school too, though the public uproar focused on the use of force.) State law makes it a crime to "disturb in any way or in any place the students or



teachers of any school” or “to act in an obnoxious manner.” The charge, which has been filed against kids as young as 7, according to the American Civil Liberties Union, is punishable by up to 90 days in jail or a \$1,000 fine.

At least 22 states and dozens of cities and towns currently outlaw school disturbances in one way or another. South Dakota prohibits “boisterous” behavior at school, while Arkansas bans “annoying conduct.” Florida makes it a crime to “interfere with the lawful administration or functions of any educational institution”—or to “advise” another student to do so. In Maine, merely interrupting a teacher by speaking loudly is a civil offense, punishable by up to a \$500 fine.

In some states, like Washington and Delaware, disturbing-school laws are on the books but used relatively rarely or not at all. In others, they have become a standard classroom-management tool. Last year, disturbing school was the second-most-common accusation leveled against juveniles in South Carolina, after misdemeanor assault. An average of seven kids were charged every day that schools were in session.

Each year in Maryland, Florida, and Kentucky, about 1,000 students face the charge. In North Carolina, the number is closer to 2,000. Nationwide, good data are hard to come by. Some states, like Nevada and Arizona, do not track how many times juveniles are charged with this offense. (In Arizona, a court official would tell me only that the number is somewhere between zero and 5,375 arrests a year.) But figures collected by *The Atlantic* suggest that authorities charge juveniles with some version of disturbing school more than 10,000 times a year. This number does not even include older teenagers who are charged as adults.

Over the years, judges around the country have landed on various definitions of disturbance. In Georgia, a court concluded, a fight qualifies as disturbing school if it attracts student spectators. But a Maryland court found that attracting an audience does not create a disturbance unless normal school activities are delayed or canceled. In Alabama, a court found that a student had disturbed school because his principal had had to meet with him to discuss his behavior; an appeals court overturned the ruling on the grounds that talking with students was part of a principal’s job.

Just this summer in New Mexico, a federal appeals court upheld a school police officer’s decision to arrest and handcuff a 13-year-old who had repeatedly burped in gym class, ruling that “burping, laughing, and leaning into the classroom stopped the flow of student educational activities, thereby injecting disorder into the learning environment.” The decision reads like an *Onion* article, albeit one that goes on for 94 pages.

When teenagers talk back, scream obscenities, or otherwise behave badly, adults must call them out and hold them accountable. That’s how kids learn. In time, most kids outgrow their delinquent ways. Police and policy makers who defend these laws say they make classrooms safer. But the laws have also been used to punish behavior that few reasonable people would consider criminal. Defiance is a typical part of adolescence, so putting teenagers in jail for swearing or refusing to follow an order is akin to arresting a 2-year-old for having a meltdown at the grocery store. It essentially outlaws the human condition. And the vagueness of the laws means they are inevitably applied unevenly, depending on the moods and biases of the adults enforcing them. In South Carolina, black students like Kenny are nearly four times as likely as their white peers to be charged with disturbing school.

[...]

“America generally loves crime and punishment—this idea that punishment somehow corrects behavior, that it teaches kids a lesson,” says Jenny Egan, the Maryland public defender. In reality, the more involvement kids have with the legal system, the worse their behavior gets. Kids who get arrested and appear in court are nearly four times as likely to drop out of high school, Gary Sweeten found. But most people in the chain of decision making—from the state lawmaker to the teacher to the principal to the school police officer to the prosecutor—do not realize how much damage their actions can do, Egan says: “I don’t think a majority of people in the system understand what it does to a child to put him in handcuffs and take him to court—at the very moment when he is trying to figure out who he is in the world.”

Kids facing disturbing-school charges in South Carolina are typically offered punishment outside the court system, such as community service. If they’ve already taken this option in the past—or if they’ve been convicted of other charges on top of disturbing school—they can be incarcerated or placed on probation, a layer of surveillance that



boosts their chances of getting re-arrested for things as trivial as missing a day of school. In many juvenile cases, judges will make parents a party to the case, meaning that they are legally bound to report a child who comes home after a court-ordered curfew or violates any other probation condition.¹

Article 2:
Department of Extended Learning Time, Afterschool and Services
Out of Harm's Way Final Report: 2009 – 2010
August 19, 2010

‘As a society, there are many things that we are still learning about youth violence in our communities. However, there are some things that we know. The report “Healing Invisible Wounds: Why Investing in Trauma-Informed Care for Children Makes Sense” (July 7, 2010, Justice Policy Institute) details the following unsettling facts:

- 14 – 34 percent of children have experienced at least one traumatic event;
- As many as 9 in 10 youth in the justice system have experienced a traumatic event, yet few such youth are identified as traumatized, and fewer receive appropriate treatment or placement;
- Children are twice as likely as adults to be victims of serious violent crime and three times as likely to experience simple assault;
- 13.4 percent of female adolescents report having been sexually assaulted;
- 35 – 46 percent of adolescents report witnessing violence;
- Youth of color are more likely to experience violence than their white counterparts (46.1 per 1,000 in the population versus 42.1, respectively).



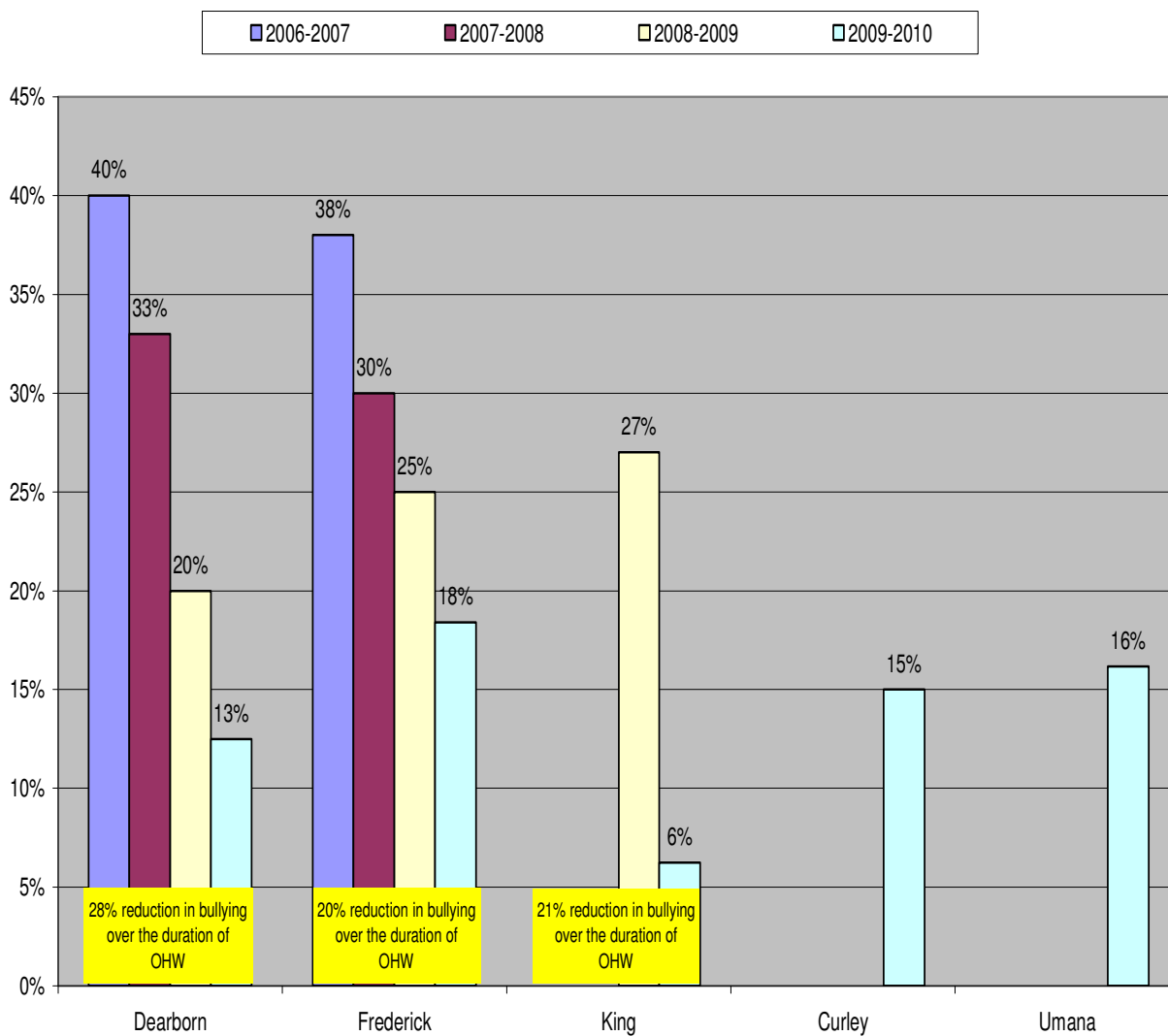
The facts regarding the prevalence and details of youth violence are widely acknowledged, however, the identification of a strategy to comprehensively and systemically reduce violence is a continual subject of debate. In Boston, youth violence and gang activity are on the rise (Boston Indicators Project) and leaders from all sectors of the city are looking for answers. Out of Harm's Way (OHW), an initiative of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimac Valley and the Department of Extended Learning Time, Afterschool, and Services (DELTA S) of Boston Public Schools (BPS), has proven to be a potential vehicle to stem the tide of violence in the city.²

¹ Amanda Ripley, 'How America Outlawed Adolescence,' *The Atlantic*, November 2016

² Department of Extended Learning Time, Afterschool and Services, *Executive Summary, Out of Harm's Way Final Report: 2009 – 2010*, August 19, 2010



Percentage of OHW School Students Who Reported Being Bullied (2006-2010)



Note: The DELTAS program started at the Dearborn and Frederick in 2006, then included the King in 2008, and then the Curley and Umana in 2009.

Unfortunately, DELTAS' proposal was not accepted by the Boston Public School District.



Article 3:
Beth Hawkins, 'The Power of Restorative Justice in the Classroom'
U.S. News & World Report, April 8, 2016

'The public charter school is located in the impoverished New Orleans East district, where Hurricane Katrina all but completed devastation wrought by decades of blight. A large number of Sci Academy's students are trauma survivors; many show up for high school years behind.



Despite such formidable challenges, 98 percent are accepted into college before they graduate. To accomplish this feat, Sci Academy's staff have thought long and hard about discipline and culture.

In the fall of 2013 and the spring of 2014, a number of New Orleans schools came under community pressure to find a balance between the high suspension rates and the culture of high expectations. A team of Collegiate staff, including teachers, took on the work of researching positive discipline practices and visiting programs where it was working. They got a grant from a nonprofit dedicated to improving school quality to pilot a homegrown system, as well as assistance from The Micah Project, a faith-based local effort to staunch violence and the incarceration of the city's youth.

Results were dramatic and quick. In 2015, the suspension rate dropped to 12 percent [from 56 percent]. System-wide, GPAs rose from 2.08 to 2.33 and attendance from 87 percent to 92 percent. Most impressive, the GPAs of Sci Academy students suspended at least once rose from 1.64 to 2.14. That's after one year. School systems that have had time to refine the practices suggest greater gains are possible. Denver Public Schools, nationally recognized as a leader in restorative justice, has reduced suspensions by a third since 2010.

The Oakland Unified School District has had restorative justice in some schools for a decade. Absenteeism in middle schools with the programs is down 24 percent, ninth grade reading proficiency has doubled, high school dropout rates are down 56 percent and graduation up 60 percent. Part of the formula is not letting discipline interrupt learning. When a Sci Academy student has disrupted the classroom or had conflict with another student, the first stop is now the Positive Redirection Center, a space always staffed by two adults.

After students fill out a questionnaire with sections labeled, "Own it," "Fix it" and "Learn from it," they get help framing and rehearsing a conversation with the school community member they harmed. When Sci Academy students stay in the center for more than a couple of hours, they continue their work on a bank of computers that classroom teachers keep current. Center staff can administer exams. Nor does a referral to the center mean a student has to sit out sports and other extracurricular activities, like it does in most places.

One student who was a frequent visitor in the fall started the winter quarter with a 4.0 GPA and kept his place on a team roster. "He gets to still feel like he can be the all-star member of the basketball team," says Dukes. "He's not on the outside because he struggles." If the process ended there – and many schools don't go that far with their restorative justice – it wouldn't be nearly as effective, says Cornelius Dukes, Sci's dean of positive redirection. The adult who initiated the redirection has 24 hours to close the loop by seeking the student out and asking what he could do differently.³

³ Beth Hawkins, 'The Power of Restorative Justice in the Classroom,' *U.S. News & World Report*, April 8, 2016



Article 4:
Allan MacRae and Howard Zehr, 'Righting Wrongs the Maori Way'
Yes! Magazine, July 8, 2011

'During the 1980s, New Zealand faced a crisis familiar to other Western nations around the world. Thousands of children, especially members of minority groups, were being removed from their homes and placed in foster care or institutions. The juvenile justice system was overburdened and ineffective. New Zealand's incarceration rate for young people was one of the highest in the world, but its crime rate also remained high. At the same time, New Zealand's punitive approach was also in part a "welfare" model. Although young people were being punished, they were also being rewarded by receiving attention. Yet they were not being required to address the actual harm they had caused.

Especially affected was the minority Maori population, the indigenous people of New Zealand. Maori leaders pointed out that the Western system of justice was a foreign imposition. In their cultural tradition, judges did not mete out punishment. Instead, the whole community was involved in the process, and the intended outcome was repair. Instead of focusing on blame, they wanted to know "why," because they argued that finding the cause of crime is part of resolving it. Instead of punishment ("Let shame be the punishment" is a Maori proverb), they were concerned with healing and problem-solving. The Maori also pointed out that the Western system, which undermined the family and disproportionately incarcerated Maori youth, emerged from a larger pattern of institutional racism. They argued persuasively that cultural identity is based on three primary institutional pillars—law, religion, and education—and when any of these undermines or ignores the values and traditions of the indigenous people, a system of racism is operating.

Maori leaders pointed out that the Western system of justice was a foreign imposition. In their cultural tradition, the whole community was involved in the process. Because of these concerns, in the late 1980s the government initiated a process of listening to communities throughout the country. Through this listening process, the Maori recommended that the resources of the extended family and the community be the source of any effort to address these issues. The FGC [Family Group Conference] process emerged as the central tool to do this in the child protection and youth justice systems.

In 1989 the legislature passed a landmark Act of Parliament. The Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act totally revamped the focus and process of juvenile justice in New Zealand. Although it did not use this terminology until later, the New Zealand legal system became the first in the world to institutionalize a form of restorative justice. Family Group Conferences became the hub of New Zealand's entire juvenile justice system. In New Zealand today, an FGC, not a courtroom, is intended to be the normal site for making such decisions.⁴

⁴ Allan MacRae and Howard Zehr, 'Righting Wrongs the Maori Way,' *Yes! Magazine*, July 8, 2011



Part Two: The Value of Deep, Personal Involvement

Isaiah 59:1 – 21

- ^{59:1} Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short that it cannot save;
Nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear.
- ² But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God,
And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.
- ³ For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity;
Your lips have spoken falsehood, your tongue mutters wickedness.
- ⁴ No one sues righteously and no one pleads honestly.
They trust in confusion and speak lies;
They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity.
- ⁵ They hatch adders' eggs and weave the spider's web;
He who eats of their eggs dies, and from that which is crushed a snake breaks forth.
- ⁶ Their webs will not become clothing, nor will they cover themselves with their works;
Their works are works of iniquity, and an act of violence is in their hands.
- ⁷ Their feet run to evil, and they hasten to shed innocent blood;
Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, devastation and destruction are in their highways.
- ⁸ They do not know the way of peace, and there is no justice in their tracks;
They have made their paths crooked, whoever treads on them does not know peace.
- ⁹ Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us;
We hope for light, but behold, darkness, for brightness, but we walk in gloom.
- ¹⁰ We grope along the wall like blind men, we grope like those who have no eyes;
We stumble at midday as in the twilight, among those who are vigorous we are like dead men.
- ¹¹ All of us growl like bears, and moan sadly like doves;
We hope for justice, but there is none, for salvation, but it is far from us.
- ¹² For our transgressions are multiplied before You, and our sins testify against us;
For our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities:
- ¹³ Transgressing and denying the LORD, and turning away from our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving in and uttering from the heart lying words.
- ¹⁴ Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away;
For truth has stumbled in the street, and uprightness cannot enter.
- ¹⁵ Yes, truth is lacking; and he who turns aside from evil makes himself a prey.
Now the LORD saw, and it was displeasing in His sight that there was no justice.
- ¹⁶ And He saw that there was no man, and was astonished that there was no one to intercede;
Then His own arm brought salvation to Him, and His righteousness upheld Him.
- ¹⁷ He put on righteousness like a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head;
And He put on garments of vengeance for clothing and wrapped Himself with zeal as a mantle.
- ¹⁸ According to their deeds, so He will repay,
Wrath to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies;
To the coastlands He will make recompense.
- ¹⁹ So they will fear the name of the LORD from the west and His glory from the rising of the sun,
For He will come like a rushing stream which the wind of the LORD drives.
- ²⁰ 'A Redeemer will come from Zion,
He will remove ungodliness from Jacob,' declares the LORD. [*Greek Septuagint*; see Romans 11:26]
- ²¹ 'As for Me, this is My covenant with them,' says the LORD:
'My Spirit which is upon you,
And My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth,
Nor from the mouth of your offspring,
Nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring,' says the LORD, 'from now and forever.'

Historical and Cultural Background

- *Isaiah*: A poetic preacher who lived in around 800 BC, in the Southern Kingdom of Judah (after the nation Israel split into two kingdoms). He is among the 'Hebrew prophets' who put their hope in God to bring about a worldwide change through the Jewish Messiah (final king).



- Look at what Paul does in Romans 11:26 – 27 when he quotes Isaiah 59:20. He had at least two manuscripts to choose from:
 - At least one Hebrew version said this:

‘The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,’ declares the Lord.
 - But he quotes the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), which said this:

‘A Redeemer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob,’ declares the LORD.

Guiding Questions

1. Guiding questions to Article 1: Amanda Ripley, ‘How American Outlawed Adolescence,’ The Atlantic, November 2016 (these suggested questions are especially designed for youth, but I thought they were relevant to people of any age) :
 - a. What is a zero tolerance policy? Does/did your school have one? Do you think it is an effective way to create a successful school environment? What are the positives and/or negatives of this approach?
 - b. Do you think that harsh punishment for even small infractions is a good way to deter young people from committing more serious crimes? Explain why or why not.
 - c. Do you think that once kids get in trouble with the law they will get in trouble again through adolescence and into adulthood? Explain why or why not.
2. Guiding questions to Article 2: Department of Extended Learning Time, Afterschool and Services, Out of Harm’s Way Final Report: 2009 – 2010.
 - a. Does seeing violence or being the victim of violence encourage more violence?
 - b. What are other ways kids see violence? What do you think the impact is?
3. Guiding questions to Article 3 and 4: Beth Hawkins, ‘The Power of Restorative Justice in the Classroom,’ U.S. News & World Report, April 8, 2016 and Allan MacRae and Howard Zehr, ‘Righting Wrongs the Maori Way,’ Yes! Magazine, July 8, 2011
 - a. What is ‘restorative justice’ in the classroom setting? How does it play out?
 - b. Why does it seem effective?
4. Compare the costs of both approaches, generally speaking. Who pays what?



Part Three: Action Steps

1. Explore whether your school district's board has explored restorative justice provisions. Consider writing to your school board representatives to encourage them to do so. As of 2013, Boston Public Schools formally decided to use restorative justice practices:

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Rights and Responsibilities

- Rights and Responsibilities
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 - Code of Conduct Attachments
 - **Code of Conduct Advisory Council**
 - Legal Aid Agencies

Code of Conduct Advisory Council

The mission of the Code of Conduct Advisory Council (COCAC) is to provide an opportunity for parents, students, administrators, teachers, advocates, community partners and other stakeholders to work collaboratively with the Boston Public Schools to improve disciplinary policies and promote positive school climate.

Operating with the overarching principle that denial of education is not an appropriate disciplinary tool, COCAC advises the Superintendent and School Committee on discipline issues, reviews the Code of Conduct to make recommendations for improvement, evaluates implementation, and promotes the use of alternatives to school exclusion, such as restorative justice.

COCAC has set the following goals:

- Creating a real, meaningful, constructive relationship with the Boston Public Schools
- Promoting discipline alternatives to school exclusion, such as restorative practices, student planning centers, and behavior management systems
- Analysis of on-the-ground data from BPS related to disciplinary practice implementation
- Expanding our network of active parents, students, activists and community stakeholders

COCAC has had a fantastic start:

- MAJOR SUCCESS in 3-year coalition effort to work with BPS in creating NEW CODE of CONDUCT voted unanimously by the BPS School Committee on September 4, 2013. And, instrumental in securing major federal grant on November 14, 2013 to train BPS personnel on RESTORATIVE JUSTICE provisions in the new code.

Contact Us

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Office of Equity
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BPS Safe Space and Bullying Prevention Hotline
 617-592-2378 (call or text)

Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC)
 617-635-8079 x104
[Email](#)
[Website](#)

Note that a very good definition of restorative justice (in the sense of a process for responding to harm through participation and relationship-building) is found in Appendix B of the Boston Public Schools Code of Conduct, updated July 2014.⁵ As of 2016, however, Boston still has some important steps to take, especially as it manages charter schools.⁶

⁵ Boston Public Schools, *Boston Public Schools Code of Conduct*, September 2004; last revised 2014; <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib/MA01906464/Centricity/Domain/162/CoC%202014%20-%20Final%20Version%20for%20BSC%208-27-2014.pdf>

⁶ Travis Andersen, 'School Discipline Policies Criticized, Defended,' *Boston Globe*, April 12, 2016; <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/04/11/boston-public-school-parents-call-for-changes-tough-discipline-policy/vIOXcjq5TR3mzS5EA8s4xH/story.html>



Leader's Notes

Part One: What is the School to Prison Pipeline?

1. Guiding questions to Article 1: Amanda Ripley, 'How American Outlawed Adolescence,' *The Atlantic*, November 2016 (these suggested questions are especially designed for youth, but I thought they were relevant to people of any age)⁷:
 - a. What is a zero tolerance policy? Does/did your school have one? Do you think it is an effective way to create a successful school environment? What are the positives and/or negatives of this approach?
 - b. Do you think that harsh punishment for even small infractions is a good way to deter young people from committing more serious crimes? Explain why or why not.
 - c. Do you think that once kids get in trouble with the law they will get in trouble again through adolescence and into adulthood? Explain why or why not.
 - d. Consider Ta-Nehisi Coates' observation:

'I came to see the streets and the schools as arms of the same beast. One enjoyed the official power of the state while the other enjoyed its implicit sanction. But fear and violence were the weaponry of both. Fail in the streets and the crews would catch you slipping and take your body. Fail in the schools and you would be suspended and sent back to those same streets, where they would take your body. And I began to see these two arms in relation - those who failed in the schools justified their destruction in the streets. The society could say, "He should have stayed in school," and then wash its hands of him.

It does not matter that the "intention" of individual educators were noble. Forget about intentions. What any institution, or its agents, "intend" for you is secondary. Our world is physical. Learn to play defense - ignore the head and keep your eyes on the body. Very few Americans will directly proclaim that they are in favor of black people being left to the streets. But a very large number of Americans will do all they can to preserve the Dream. No one directly proclaimed that schools were designed to sanctify failure and destruction. But a great number of educators spoke of "personal responsibility" in a country authored and sustained by a criminal irresponsibility. The point of this language of "intention" and "personal responsibility" is broad exoneration. Mistakes were made. Bodies were broken. People were enslaved. We meant well. We tried our best. "Good intention" is a hall pass through history, a sleeping pill that ensures the Dream.'⁸

2. Guiding questions to Article 2: Department of Extended Learning Time, Afterschool and Services, *Out of Harm's Way Final Report: 2009 – 2010*.
 - a. Does seeing violence or being the victim of violence encourage more violence?
 - b. It's important to recognize that children might be coming to school having observed domestic violence, or being a victim of it. The impact of that is:

'There is substantial evidence indicating that children who witness domestic violence (DV) have psychosocial maladaptation that is associated with demonstrable changes in the anatomic and physiological make up of their central nervous system. Individuals with these changes do not function well in society and present communities with serious medical, sociological, and economic dilemmas.'⁹

⁷ Some of these suggested questions come from PBS Learning Media NY, FRONTLINE: Prison State | School-to-Prison Pipeline: <http://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/fl32-soc-psjuvexperts/prison-state-school-to-prison-pipeline/>

⁸ Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York, NY: Penguin Random House, 2015), p.33

⁹ Areti Tsavoussis, Stanislaw P. A. Stawicki, Nicoleta Stoicesa, and Thomas J. Papadimos, 'Child-Witnessed Domestic Violence and its Adverse Effects on Brain Development: A Call for Societal Self-Examination and Awareness,' *Frontiers in Public Health*, October 10, 2014; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4193214/>



- c. It's also important to recognize that children come to school having watched violence on TV or in video games. The impact of that is:

'The purported effects of media violence have been studied and analyzed for at least 50 years. According to a history of the topic compiled by the Canadian Media Awareness Network, researchers in 1956 asked 12 children to watch a violent cartoon while another dozen viewed a non-violent cartoon. As the kids played together afterward, those who had watched the violent cartoon were considerably more likely to hit other children and break toys.'¹⁰

Also:

'The Virginia Tech Research Division showed students several non-violent movies, followed by super-violent movies. Results indicated violent films can increase hostile behavior.

The University of Alabama conducted a similar study and obtained similar results. The results also indicated the aggressive behavior didn't occur just after viewing, but remained with the individuals for "quite some time." The study concludes with a caution for parents that immature and/or aggressive children should not have access to violent films.

The Macquarie University Children and Families Research Centre found that children who watch violent movies are more likely to view the world as an unsympathetic, malicious and scary place and that this stimulates aggression. It also suggests children are more likely to exhibit combative behavior while becoming desensitized to violence. Reportedly, the MRI brain scans of children who have viewed film or television violence had a similar look when compared to those who have violently acted out.'¹¹

- d. STATE: Given the impact of violence on us, even in our brains, I think it's important to explore restorative justice in the classroom.
3. Guiding questions to Article 3 and 4: Beth Hawkins, 'The Power of Restorative Justice in the Classroom,' *U.S. News & World Report*, April 8, 2016 and Allan MacRae and Howard Zehr, 'Righting Wrongs the Maori Way,' *Yes! Magazine*, July 8, 2011
- What is 'restorative justice' in the classroom setting? How does it play out?
 - Why does it seem effective?
 - The authority figures, like teachers and principals, facilitate a conversation and process involving students. They do not view disruption as only an offense to them.
 - The students get a chance to articulate how they are impacted by violence or other disruptive behavior by their fellow students. They are encouraged to own the process, too. It teaches them social skills that will stay with them outside the classroom as well.
 - It may have neurological benefits. According to neuroscientist Daniel Riesen in his TED Talk, 'The Neuroscience of Restorative Justice,' bringing offenders back into relationship encourages them to grow emotionally, by empathizing with their victims. Physiologically, the amygdala, which seems to impact empathy, is stimulated in those encounters.
- c. STATE: American culture is individualistic. This seems to be why our first instincts in dealing with offenders of any sort is to restrict their individualism: take away their freedom to move around (incarceration); take away relationship (isolation); etc. Restorative justice requires us to think more communally and relationally, because the basic idea is that there is a relationship that

¹⁰ Tom Jacobs, 'This Is Your Brain on Violence,' *Pacific Standard*, January 4, 2008; <https://psmag.com/this-is-your-brain-on-violence-8f466bce8c08#.hrfa7jwkv>

¹¹ Dale Archer, 'Violence, the Media, and the Brain,' *Psychology Today*, September 2, 2013; <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/reading-between-the-headlines/201309/violence-the-media-and-your-brain>



we're trying to restore. It's where we *reassert* relationship and insist that we live in a relational fabric. It's intriguing that the Maori people of New Zealand had a process that can be called restorative justice.

Part Two: The Value of Deep, Personal Involvement

1. What kind of poetry is this? Hebrew poetry rhymed concepts, and not just sounds. So in the English translation, we can see that one verse will be followed by another that is similar conceptually.
2. How is it kind of natural to distance yourself from violence, and other behavior that you have a moral problem with, or a fear of?
3. In verse 15, God doesn't distance Himself. He overcomes the 'separation' caused by sin and injustice (v.1 – 14) by personally entering the situation in a new and remarkable way.
 - a. The New Testament regarded this as a prophecy of Jesus. Jesus, as the Son of God, who perfectly represented God the Father, entered into human existence as one of us, and fought the battle against sin that we never fully won. He fought it in himself, and cleansed his human nature for God, so that God could share Jesus' humanity with us by the Spirit.
 - b. As evidence: the New Testament writer Paul quoted Isaiah 59:20 explicitly in his letter to the Romans (Rom.11:26 – 27), and it's possible that the entire letter to the Romans parallels this chapter of Isaiah.
 - c. Also as evidence: Paul quotes from the 'armor of God' imagery in Isaiah 59:17 in Ephesians 6:14 – 17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:8. He does this because, in his mind, those who believe in Jesus are identified with Jesus and joined spiritually to Jesus. So because Jesus took up our humanity as a weapon, really, against sin and injustice, we take up Jesus' humanity. Jesus' humanity is weaponized goodness.

¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:14 – 17)

⁸ But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. (1 Thessalonians 5:8)

- d. Whether you believe in Jesus or not, I think the important question here is this: Is there hope for healing human nature?
4. Is God's justice retributive or restorative?
 - a. There is the statement in Isaiah 59:18, which has the language of retribution. The early Christians interpreted this statement and others to refer to sin as self-harming, and God calling us to surrender the self-harm. So if you get addicted to greed, feeling superior to others, anger, and violence, when God comes to cleanse us and heal us, it will be painful. And if people decide to stay addicted for all eternity, God's cleansing and healing love will be eternally painful. Because God will be like an addiction counselor demanding that we stop abusing ourselves, but we will claim that we're just fine, that there is no disease, and that there is no problem!
 - i. For more information, see *The Theme of Fire in Isaiah*, found here: <http://nagasawafamily.org/isaiah-theme-fire.sg.pdf>.
 - b. But look at what Paul does in Romans 11:26 – 27 when he quotes Isaiah 59:20. He had at least two manuscripts to choose from.
 - i. At least one Hebrew version said this:

'The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,' declares the Lord.



- ii. The Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, said this:

‘A Redeemer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob,’ declares the LORD.

- c. What’s the difference?
 - i. Come to Zion (Hebrew) vs. Come from Zion (Greek): A minor difference
 - ii. To those who repent (Hebrew) vs. He will remove ungodliness (Greek): A major difference
 - 1. The Hebrew version leaves open the possibility that God just comes to reward repentance, kind of like a God who judges people at the end of time. He whips out the scales. He weighs your intentions. Etc.
 - 2. The Greek version stresses that God comes to perform something medical. He removes ungodliness like a surgeon would remove a cancer. This is about healing a wound. And it fits better with giving His Spirit in Isaiah 59:21. Something in us is broken and wounded and diseased, which causes our selfishness. So that thing needs to be healed.
 - iii. This would really mean that God’s justice is restorative, not retributive. God is not satisfied by just getting to vent on people while they remain sick and wounded. God is only satisfied by offering His deepest healing
 - 1. Illus: If a child breaks the rule and drinks some chemical in the house, it’s not enough to forgive the kid. Forgiveness is important and vital. But what the kid needs is healing.

- 5. So when we think about restorative justice in the classroom: Yes, it demands that we get more involved in the messiness. It’s emotionally costlier. But in this vision of Isaiah about a God of restorative justice, and especially if we believe in Jesus’ restorative love, then can’t we be inspired to try it?