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# Securing the Education Pipeline: Arrested Learning - When We Suspend and Expel Our Youngest from School

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# Too Young to Suspend: Arrested Learning

Securing the Education Pipeline  
by Ending the School to Prison Pipeline  
in Georgia

Presenters:  
Marlyn Tillman and  
Pamela Perkins Carn  
December 2, 2015

# Learning Outcomes

- Gain an understanding of the negative effects of suspensions and expulsions on children who are in the early stages of formal education – in particular pre-kindergarten through third grade
- Explore alternative frameworks and approaches to suspensions and expulsions that create positive school climates and provide better outcomes for student achievement, such as positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS with illustrations of Tier 1 and/or 2 interventions), cultural proficiency and restorative justice/practices
- Become familiar with national and state efforts to promote family engagement and restorative public policies as alternatives to suspending and expelling our youngest learners

# School to Prison Pipeline Defined

The school to prison pipeline is the funneling of children from the public school system into the juvenile and criminal justice systems, in part, due to:

- school discipline policies (e.g., zero tolerance, school-based arrests),
- disproportionate application of student suspensions,
- high stakes testing,
- administrative practices (e.g., school board appropriations disparity)
- legislative statutes (e.g., compulsory attendance)

that adversely affect children of color, poor children and children with learning disabilities/differences – emerging LGBTQ population.



# Arrested Learning

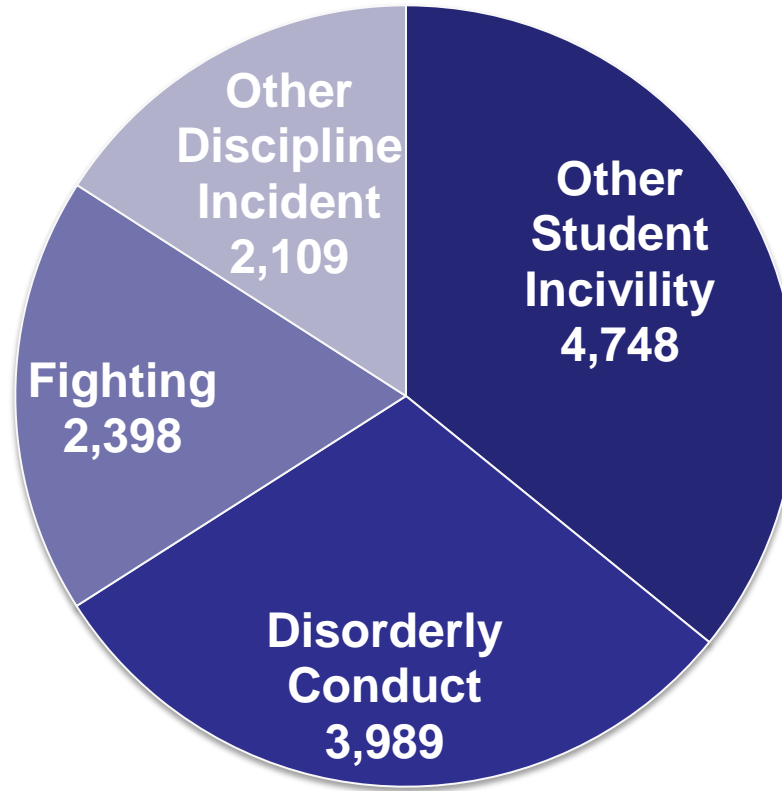
**2013-2014 SCHOOL YEAR**

**GA SUSPENDED**

**14,292**

**pre-k through third graders**

# GA Pre-K thru 3rd Graders Assigned to OSS 2013-2014 School Year



Total = 13,244  
(93% of the incidents)

# Arrested Learning

Estimated more  
than 500  
expelled in GA's  
pre-K

In 2005, Dr. Walter S. Gilliam surveyed a sample of 4,000 state-funded preschools, looking at expulsions:

- He found that preschoolers were expelled at three times the rate of students in K-12 settings.
  - *Such a process, though, was rarely called "expulsion" by school personnel. Instead, families were often just told that a preschool was not the right fit and that they should look elsewhere.*
- Four-year-olds were expelled at a rate about 1.5 times greater than three-year-olds.
- Boys were expelled at a rate more than 4.5 times that of girls.
- African-Americans were about twice as likely to be expelled as Latino and white children, and more than five times as likely to be expelled as Asian-American children.

<http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/ExpulsionCompleteReport.pdf>



# Negative Effects of Suspensions & Expulsions

## Early Education

- Children's brains are influenced by their experiences-- both positive and negative.
- Their early experiences set the trajectory for the relationships and successes they will experience for the rest of their lives.
- It is crucial that children's earliest experiences truly foster – and never harm – their development.
  - *Expulsion and suspension practices in early childhood settings should be prevented, severely limited, and eventually eliminated.*





# Negative Effects of Suspensions & Expulsions

## Early Education

- Suspensions and expulsions
  - *potentially hinder social-emotional and behavioral development*
  - *remove children from early learning environments and the corresponding cognitively enriching experiences that contribute to healthy development and academic success later in life*
- Evidence that expulsion or suspension early in a child's education is associated with expulsion or suspension in later school grades.

# Negative Effects of Suspensions & Expulsions

## Early Education

- Young students who are expelled or suspended—
  - *are 10 times more likely to drop out of high school*
    - Georgia is among the five states with the highest number of young adults between the ages of 16 and 21 who are not in school and who have not completed a high school education.
  - *experience academic failure and grade retention*
    - The National Center for Education Statistics reported that Georgia's 2012-2013 high school graduation rate has slightly improved, yet still places us at the bottom of the nation.
  - *hold negative school attitudes*
    - Missing more than five days of school each year, regardless of the cause, begins to impact student academic performance and starts shaping attitudes about school. (GA DOE)

# Negative Effects of Suspensions & Expulsions

## Early Education

- *face incarceration more so than those who are not*
  - The National Institute of Corrections reports (2013) that Georgia's incarceration rate is 35% higher than the national average.
- Expulsion and suspension practices may also delay or interfere with the process of identifying and addressing underlying issues, which may include disabilities or mental health issues.

# Learning Outcomes

- Explore alternative frameworks and approaches to suspensions and expulsions that create positive school climates and provide better outcomes for student achievement, such as positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS with illustrations of Tier 1 and/or 2 interventions), cultural proficiency and restorative justice/practices



# To fix the achievement gap, we must fix the school discipline gap.

- In 2012, Georgia ranked ninth in the nation in in-school and out-of-school suspensions with almost 1.7 million days of lost instruction. (GA DOE)
- A 2015 report, “Are We Closing the Discipline Gap,” released by The Center for Civil Rights Remedies at UCLA, showed that the number of high-suspending elementary schools in the U.S. out-numbered the lower-suspending elementary schools in only seven states—
  - *Delaware*
  - *Florida*
  - *South Carolina*
  - *Louisiana*
  - *North Carolina*
  - ***Georgia***
  - *Mississippi*



# We must model the behavior we seek

- We need a model discipline policy that incorporates social-emotional learning would benefit all of Georgia's children.
  - *Children are not “tiny adults.” A child's brain does not function with the same logic and reasoning capacity of an adult brain.*
  - *Discipline policies and practices must be compatible with the child's cognitive developmental ability to understand.*



## Proven Alternative Frameworks and Approaches

- The PBIS framework empowers school stakeholders to:
  - *identify the needs of all students*
  - *match the level of support to the academic and/or behavior need.*
- Restorative Justice practices change our approach to violations from punitive to repairing the harm.
  - *Assists children in learning from their mistakes*
  - *Teaches children to:*
    - resolve conflict,
    - accept accountability and
    - repair harm resulting from actions.
- Cultural Competence/Proficiency
  - *Key to thriving in culturally diverse classrooms and schools*
  - *Can be learned, practiced, and institutionalized to better serve diverse students, their families, and their communities*



# Proven Alternative Frameworks and Approaches – Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports

A **decision-making framework** that guides selection, integration and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for **improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students.**

Positive behavioral interventions, strategies and supports **focus on increasing desirable behaviors instead of punishing undesirable behaviors.**

www.pbis.org  
Challenging Behavior & Effective Discipline for All Students: Best Practice Strategies for Educators, A. Canter and Browning Wright



# “Simon Says” Exercise

Focus on increasing desirable behaviors

Play a round of Simon Says with the attendees to create an appreciation for differences and increase interaction with others who appear to be different

# Proven Alternative Frameworks and Approaches – Restorative Justice Practices

With **traditional “discipline,”** which is usually **punitive in nature**, the following questions are usually raised:

- What rules have been broken?
- Who did it?
- What should the punishment be?

- Only deal with the wrongdoer
- Focus on what rule was broken
- Punish the wrongdoer
- Exclude wrongdoers through suspension, expulsion, etc.

Those practicing **restorative discipline**, on the other hand, pose these questions:

- Who has been harmed by this incident?
- What needs to be done to repair the harm?
- Who is responsible for fixing the problem?

- Include those who are affected by the incident in the response
- Understand how people were affected and what harms occurred
- Agree on actions to make things right
- Find what actions can be taken to repair harms and get right with the community



## Proven Alternative Frameworks and Approaches – Cultural Proficiency/Competence

**Cultural proficiency** is a mind-set, a worldview, a way a person or an organization makes assumptions for effectively describing, responding to, and planning for issues that arise in diverse environments.

**Culturally proficient leaders** display personal values and behaviors that enable them and others to engage in effective interactions among students, educators, and the communities they serve.

**Cultural competence** is behavior that aligns with standards that move an organization or an individual toward culturally proficient interactions.

Source: Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders, by Randall B. Lindsey, Kikanza Nuri Robins, and Raymond D. Terrell



# Proven Alternative Frameworks and Approaches – Cultural Proficiency / Competence

**There are five basic cultural competence skill areas.**

## **Valuing Diversity.**

Accepting and respecting differences—different cultural backgrounds and customs, different ways of communicating, and different traditions and values.

## **Being Culturally Self-Aware.**

Culture—the sum total of an individual's experiences, knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and interests—shapes educators' sense of who they are and where they fit in their family, school, community, and society.

## **Dynamics of Difference.**

Knowing what can go wrong in cross-cultural communication and how to respond to these situations.



## Proven Alternative Frameworks and Approaches – Cultural Proficiency/Competence

### **Knowledge of Students' Culture.**

Educators must have some base knowledge of their students' culture so that student behaviors can be understood in their proper cultural context.

### **Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge and Adapting to Diversity.**

Culturally competent educators, and the institutions they work in, can take a step further by institutionalizing cultural knowledge so they can adapt to diversity and better serve diverse populations.



## Proven Alternative Frameworks and Approaches – Cultural Proficiency/Competence

### Examples of a school embracing cultural proficiency:

- **Staff members learn appropriate pronunciations** of student names and learn basic words in ELLs' home languages, which encourages an inclusive school environment;
- **Teachers routinely use multicultural books** in their classrooms to show students that cultural traditions of all students are recognized and accepted throughout the school year; and
- **Written communication sent home from the school** is translated into various languages so that family members can clearly understand relevant information.

# Learning Outcomes

- Become familiar with national and state efforts to promote family engagement and restorative public policies as alternatives to suspending and expelling our youngest learners



## Promoting Family Engagement

- **Local School Councils (LSC)** can bring stakeholders together to inform and implement school climate reforms.
  - *Unite school staff and parents, in an effort to create the highest-quality education possible*
  - *Keep schools accountable to the communities they serve.*
- **The A+ Education Reform Act of 2000** established school councils in Georgia to "bring communities and schools closer together in a spirit of cooperation to:
  - ✓ *solve difficult education problems,*
  - ✓ *improve academic achievement,*
  - ✓ *provide support for teachers and administrators,*
  - and*
  - ✓ *bring parents into the school-based decision-making process."*





# Promoting Family Engagement

**School councils are advisory bodies.** They may provide advice and recommendations to the school principal and local board of education on any matter, including, but not limited to:

- School board policies
- School improvement plans
- Curriculum and assessments
- **Student discipline and attendance**
- Reports regarding progress toward meeting the school's student achievement goals
- **Methods and specifications for the delivery of early intervention services or other appropriate services for underachieving students**
- Report cards issued and audits of the school conducted by the Office of Education Accountability
- Development of a school profile to the community
- School budget priorities, including school capital improvement plans
- School-community communication strategies
- **Methods of involving parents and the community**
- Extra-curricular activities
- School-based and community services
- Community use of the school facility




# Promoting Restorative Justice through Public Policy

## HB 135: Too Young to Suspend Act

***Ensures our students are on track to receiving a high-quality education***

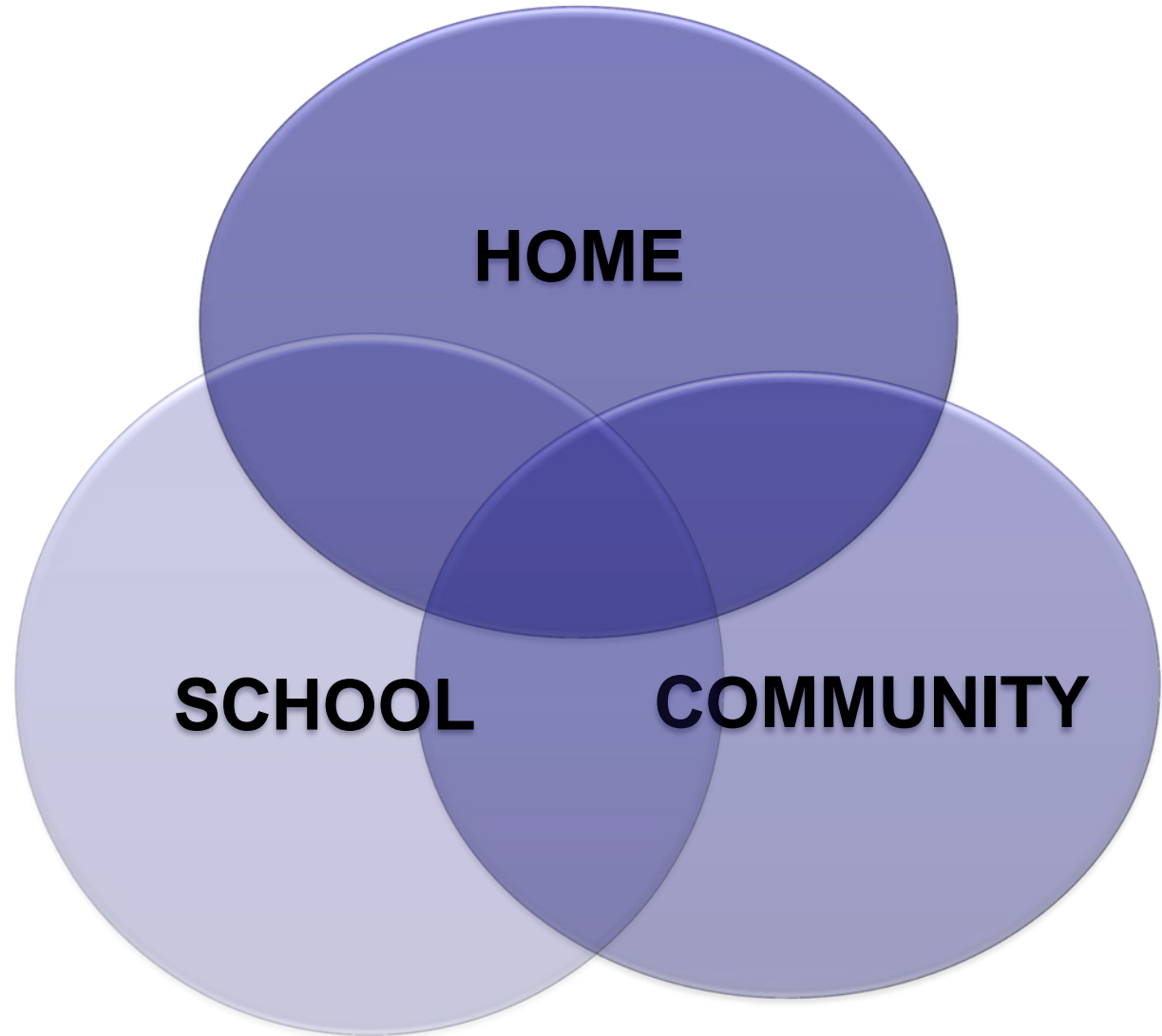
- Prohibits the suspension or expulsion of pre-kindergarten through third grade students.
  - *Why? Children in pre-kindergarten through third grade are learning to read. Third grade marks the point when children move from learning to read, to reading to learn.*
- Directs the Department of Education to establish a model policy for use by local school systems to assist local school systems in developing their own policies for progressive discipline.



# This is about helping our children grow into productive citizens and promoting lifelong learning...

- Be prompt
  - *Be ready to learn when class begins.*
- Be prepared
  - *Have materials with you and know due dates.*
- Be a polite and positive participant
  - *Speak in a respectful tone of voice, and listen attentively.*
- Be productive
  - *Turn in work on time, and always do your best.*
- Be a problem solver
  - *Correct problems quickly and peacefully before they escalate.*

**None of this happens without US**



# Contact Information

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