

## **Discriminatory Discipline in the City of Richmond Public Schools**

### **Richmond Public Schools leads the Commonwealth in suspending students.<sup>i</sup>**

During the 2014-15 school year:

- RPS issued 6,667 short-term suspensions to 3,203 students, including more than 1,800 short-term suspensions issued to elementary school students (kindergarten through 5th grade).
- RPS issued 491 long-term suspensions to 459 students. Among Virginia school divisions, RPS had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest long-term suspension rate.

### **African-American students and students with disabilities (SWD) in Richmond Public Schools are punished more harshly and more frequently than their peers.**

During the 2014-15 school year:

- African-American students made up **76 percent** of the total student population but were issued **93 percent** of short-term suspensions, **98 percent** of long-term suspensions, and **97 percent** of expulsions.
- African-American students were **5.69** times more likely than white students to be short-term suspended.
- SWD made up **16 percent** of the student population but were issued **31 percent** of short-term suspensions, **30 percent** of long-term suspensions, and **63 percent** of expulsions. SWD were **2.77** times more likely to be short-term students than students without disabilities.
- African-American SWD were **12.91** times more likely than White SWOD to be short-term suspended.

### **Overly punitive discipline policies cause lasting harm to children.**

Research shows that students who are suspended from school are more likely to experience:

- School avoidance and diminished educational engagement,<sup>ii</sup>
- Decreased academic achievement,<sup>iii</sup>
- Increased behavior problems,<sup>iv</sup>
- Dropping out,<sup>v</sup>
- Substance abuse,<sup>vi</sup> and
- Justice system involvement.<sup>vii</sup>

### **There are more effective ways to decrease student misconduct and improve school climate.**

Proven interventions and alternatives to overly punitive discipline policies include:

- MyTeachingPartner, a system of professional development designed to improve teacher-student interactions and student engagement.<sup>viii</sup>
- Social and emotional learning programs, which are designed to create learning environments that meet the development needs of students, including feelings of belonging, safety, and community.<sup>ix</sup>
- Multi-tiered systems of supports, a framework that promotes school improvement through research-based academic and behavioral practices.<sup>x</sup>
- Restorative justice practices that focus on repairing harm done to relationship and people, developing solutions by engaging all persons affected by a harm, and accountability.<sup>xi</sup>

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- <sup>i</sup> The sources of the suspension and expulsion data in this fact sheet are public records provided by the Virginia Department of Education in a January 6, 2016 email to Legal Aid Justice Center and the VDOE's online Safe Schools Information Resource. The SSIR is available at <https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/pti/>.
- <sup>ii</sup> Emily Arcia, *Achievement and Enrollment Status of Suspended Students: Outcomes in a Large, Multicultural School District*, 38 *Educ. & Urb. Soc'y* 359 (2006).
- <sup>iii</sup> Emily Arcia, *Achievement and Enrollment Status of Suspended Students: Outcomes in a Large, Multicultural School District*, 38 *Educ. & Urb. Soc'y* 359 (2006).
- <sup>iv</sup> S.A. Hemphill, et al., *The Effect of School Suspensions and Arrests on Subsequent Adolescent Antisocial Behavior in Australia and the United States*, 39 *J. Adolescent Health* 736 (2006); S.A. Hemphill, et al., *Pathways from School Suspension to Adolescent Nonviolent Antisocial Behavior in Students in Victoria, Australia and Washington State, United States*, 40 *J. Community Psychol.* 301 (2012); Irwin A. Hyman & Donna C. Perone, *The Other Side of School Violence: Educator Policies and Practices That May Contribute to Student Misbehavior*, 36 *J. Sch. Psychol.* 7 (1998); Linda M. Raffaele Mendez, *Predictors of Suspension and Negative School Outcomes: A Longitudinal Investigation*, 2003 *New Directions Youth Dev.* 17 (2003).
- <sup>v</sup> Emily Arcia, *Achievement and Enrollment Status of Suspended Students: Outcomes in a Large, Multicultural School District*, 38 *Educ. & Urb. Soc'y* 359 (2006); T. Fabelo, et al., *Breaking Schools' Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Students' Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement* (Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2011); Linda M. Raffaele Mendez, *Predictors of Suspension and Negative School Outcomes: A Longitudinal Investigation*, 99 *New Directions for Youth Dev.* 17 (2003); Lawrence M. DeRidder, *How Suspension and Expulsion Contribute to Dropping Out*, 56 *Educ. Digest* 44 (1991).
- <sup>vi</sup> S.A. Hemphill, et al., *The Impact of School Suspension on Student Tobacco Use: A Longitudinal Study in Victoria, Australia, and Washington State, United States*, 39 *Health Educ. & Behav.* 45 (2012).
- <sup>vii</sup> V. Costenbader & S. Markson, *School Suspension: A Study with Secondary School Students*, 36 *J. Sch. Psychol.* 59 (1998); T. Fabelo, et al., *Breaking Schools' Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Students' Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement* (Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2011).
- <sup>viii</sup> University of Virginia Curry School of Education, *Measuring and Improving Teacher Student Interactions in PK-12 Settings to Enhance Students' Learning*, Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, 3, [http://curry.virginia.edu/uploads/resourceLibrary/CLASS-MTP\\_PK-12\\_brief.pdf](http://curry.virginia.edu/uploads/resourceLibrary/CLASS-MTP_PK-12_brief.pdf) (last visited Aug. 12, 2016); My Teaching Partner, MTP: Secondary Overview, <http://www.mtpsecondary.net/about/index.php> (last visited Dec. 14, 2015); University of Virginia Curry School of Education, My Teaching Partner, <http://curry.virginia.edu/research/centers/castl/mtp> (last visited Aug. 12, 2016).
- <sup>ix</sup> Marc A. Brackett and Susan E. Rivers, *Transforming Students' Lives with Social and Emotional Learning*, Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, 4, available at <http://ei.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Transforming-Students%E2%80%99-Lives-with-Social-and-Emotional-Learning.pdf> (last visited Aug. 12, 2016); see also Maanvi Singh, *Why Emotional Learning May Be as Important as the ABCs*, NPR (Dec. 31, 2013, 11:03 A.M.), available at <http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2014/12/31/356187871/why-emotional-literacy-may-be-as-important-as-learning-the-a-b-c-s>.
- <sup>x</sup> Edutopia, *Supporting Behavioral Needs: A Multi-Tiered Approach*, <http://www.edutopia.org/practice/supporting-behavioral-needs-multi-tiered-approach> (last visited Aug. 12, 2016); Jeffrey R. Sprague, Ph.D., *RTI for Behavior: Applying the RTI Logic to Implementing Three Tiers of Support in SWPBS and ED Eligibility and Supports*, Institute for Violence and Destructive Behavior, University of Oregon, available at [http://ivdb.uoregon.edu/Presentations/SpragueRTI\\_us.pdf](http://ivdb.uoregon.edu/Presentations/SpragueRTI_us.pdf) (last visited Aug. 12, 2016); Edward S. Shapiro, *Tiered Instruction and Intervention in a Response-to-Intervention Model*, RTI Action Network <http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/tieredinstruction/tiered-instruction-and-intervention-rti-model> (last visited Aug. 12, 2016); RTI Action Network, *What is RTI?*, <http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what/whatisrti> (last visited Aug. 12, 2016).

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<sup>xi</sup> The Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue, <http://www.utexas.edu/research/cswr/rji/> (last visited Aug. 12, 2016); Fairfax County Public Schools, Restorative Justice, <http://www.fcps.edu/dss/ips/ssaw/violenceprevention/rj/> (last visited Aug. 12, 2016); David T. Deal, Designing, Marketing, and Implementing School Based Restorative Justice Program: Lessons Learned from Fairfax County, Virginia, International Institute for Restorative Practices 12th World Conference (Oct. 21-23, 2009), available at [http://www.iirp.edu/pdf/Bethlehem\\_2009\\_Conference/Bethlehem\\_2009\\_Deal\\_Packer.pdf](http://www.iirp.edu/pdf/Bethlehem_2009_Conference/Bethlehem_2009_Deal_Packer.pdf); Trevor Fonious, et. al., Restorative Justice in US Schools: A Research Review, WestEd Justice & Prevention Research Center (Feb. 2016), available at [http://jprc.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/RJ\\_Literature-Review\\_20160217.pdf](http://jprc.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/RJ_Literature-Review_20160217.pdf) (last visited Aug. 12, 2016). M. Armour, Ed White Middle School Restorative Discipline Evaluation: Implementation and Impact, 2012/2013 Sixth Grade, Austin: University of Texas, Austin (2013); F. Davis, Discipline with dignity: Oakland classrooms try healing instead of punishment, *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 23(1) (2014), 38–41, available at: <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/education-uprising/where-dignity-is-part-of-the-school-day> (last visited Aug. 12, 2016); S. Lewis, *Improving School Climate: Findings from Schools Implementing Restorative Practices*, Bethlehem, PA: International Institute for Restorative Practices (2009).