

Student Rights & Safety

ACLU: Cops and No Counselors

Cops and No Counselors

- This report provides the first state-level student-to-staff ratio comparison for other school-based mental health personnel, along with school counselors.
- The report reviews school arrests and referrals to law enforcement, with particular attention to disparities by race and disability status.
- **A key finding of the report is that schools are under-resourced and students are over-criminalized.**

How the Lack of School Mental Health Staff Is Harming Students



- The report analyzed federal data collected from 96,000 public schools nationwide and found:

1.7 million

students are in schools with cops,
but **no counselors.**

3 million

students are in schools with cops,
but **no nurses.**

6 million

students are in schools with cops,
but **no school psychologists.**

10 million

students are in schools with cops,
but **no social workers.**

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Source: U.S. Department of Education, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2015-16

Recommendations vs. Colorado Reality

- Professional standards recommend at least 1 counselor and social worker for every 250 students
- At least 1 psychologist for every 700 students
- At least 1 nurse for every 750 students
- Student-to-counselor ratio: 503:1
- Student-to-social worker ratio: 2,258:1
- Student-to-psychologist ratio: 1,578:1
- Student-to-nurse ratio: 2,853:1

No data indicates that police in schools improve either the students' mental health, educational outcomes, or their safety—indeed, in many cases they are causing harm.

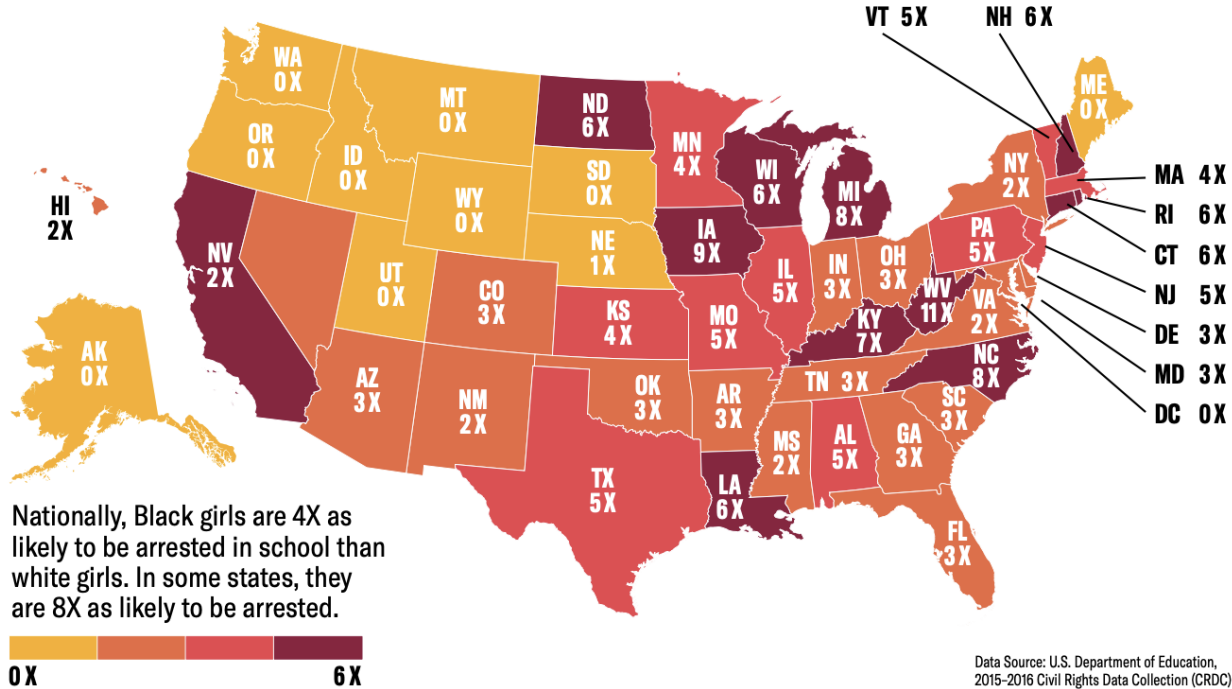
School to Prison Pipeline

Cops & No Counselors: Impact & Bias

- Students with disabilities and students of color are most frequently criminalized
 - Students with disabilities were arrested at a rate 2.9 times that of students without disabilities.
 - In some states, they were 10 times as likely to be arrested than their counterparts.
- Black students were arrested at a rate 3 times that of white students. In some states, they were 8 times as likely to be arrested.
 - Latinx students were arrested at a rate 1.3 times that of white students.
 - Black and Latino boys with disabilities were 3 percent of students but were 12 percent of school arrests.

MAP F

Black-White Girl School Arrest Risk



Black students in Denver are disproportionately suspended from school, over identified as needing special education, and under-enrolled in advanced classes.

More than twice as many Denver students were handcuffed than district originally reported

BY MELANIE ASMAR - AUGUST 2, 2019 - UPDATED AUGUST 5, 2019



- The district reported SROs had handcuffed students 58 times in the past 2 years
- That number was actually **155 students**
- Nearly half of those students were black

While only 13% of Denver students are black, 45% of the students who were handcuffed in the past two years were black.

Recommendations

Prioritize Funding of Student Support Services Over Law Enforcement

- A recent 7 year study in North Carolina compared middle schools that used state funds to hire and train school police with those that did not. It found schools that used state grants for SROs did not report a reduction in assaults, homicide, bomb threats, substance possession or use, or weapons possession.

- When in schools, police do what they are trained to do—detain, handcuff, and arrest. This leads to increased student alienation and a greater criminalization of our youth.
- **There is no conclusive evidence to support that school policing measures actually make schools—or students—safer.**

Effective Prevention Models: Counselors

- Aim to get all Colorado schools compliant with recommended student-to-counselor, nurse and psychologist ratios

“We must arm school counselors across the country with the appropriate counselor to student ratio (1 to 250). School counselors, social workers and school psychologists [are] all on the mental health frontlines.”

— **Dr. Laura Hodges**, Nationally Certified School Counselor, in a statement to the Federal Commission on School Safety⁴⁹

- Up to 80 % of youth need mental health services
- Of those receiving assistance, 70-80% receive services in school
- Students are 21x more likely to visit school based mental health (SBMH) providers than community mental health centers
- Research has shown that SBMH providers improve school climate and other positive outcomes for students.
- Data shows that school staff who provide health and mental health services to our children not only improve the health outcomes for those students, but also improve school safety.

Effective Prevention Models: Education

- Invest in evidence-based and culturally responsive social-emotional learning programs known to prevent bullying and misbehavior while still supporting students
- Create legislation that makes comprehensive health education a graduation requirement
- Define comprehensive health education as including but not limited to: mental health, trauma, self-care and bullying prevention

Transparency & Reporting

- Ensure accurate state-level reporting of the number of law enforcement, security guards, school arrests, and referrals to law enforcement.
- Support investigations by state education departments and the Attorney General's Office into complaints and allegations of discrimination.
- Ensure accurate data is regularly submitted to the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC)

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