



Public School Counselors

Crisis of Mental Health

Counselors

- ASCA set standards of conduct
- ASCA sets student to counselor ratio 250:1
- States set counselor staffing
- School board develops placement plans
- Principals determine manpower need
- Federal government regulates 504 and IEP

Inappropriate (counseling) activities:

- Registering and scheduling students
- Cognitive testing
- Absenteeism and tardiness
- Disciplinary actions
- Dress code violations
- Teaching classes
- Computing grade-point averages
- Clerical recordkeeping
- Study hall monitors



Mental Health Effects

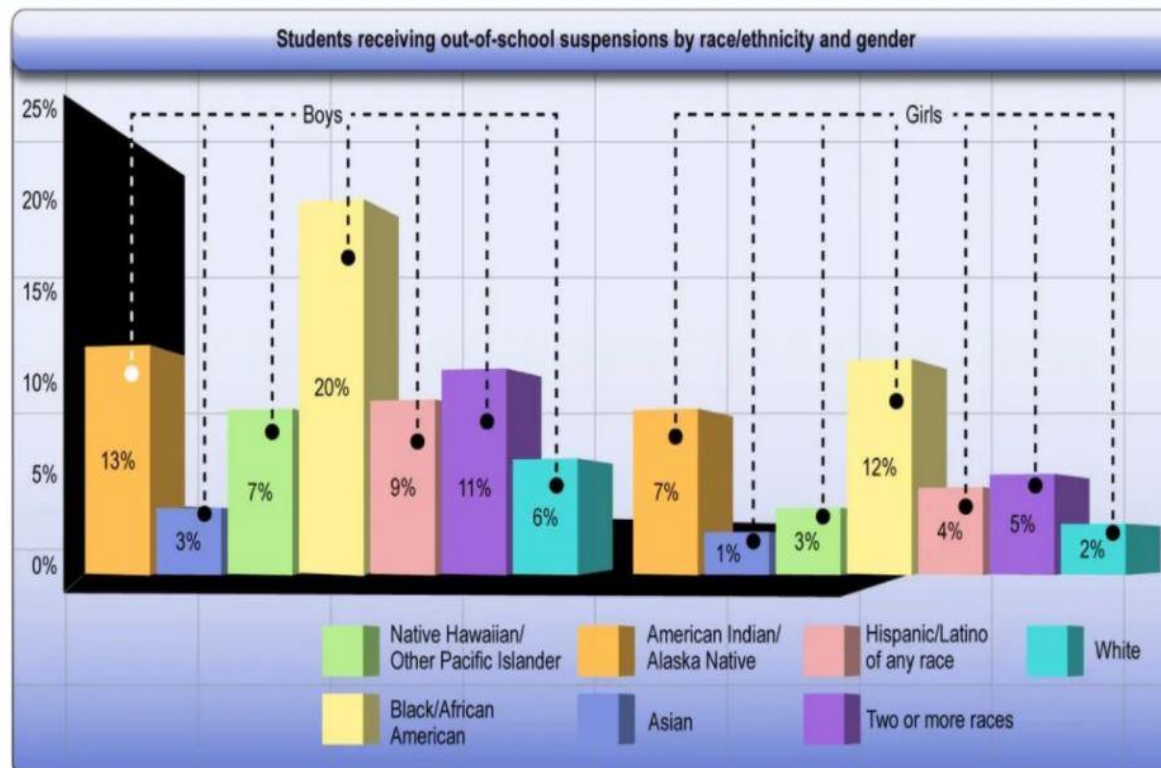
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

- Parental Drug Abuse
- Incarceration of a family member
- Divorce
- Sexual abuse
- Verbal and mental abuse
- Violence
- homelessness

School learning impact

- Low academic performance
- Absenteeism
- Discipline
 - Talk back
 - Tardiness
- Dropouts
- Graduation rate

Suspension Impact

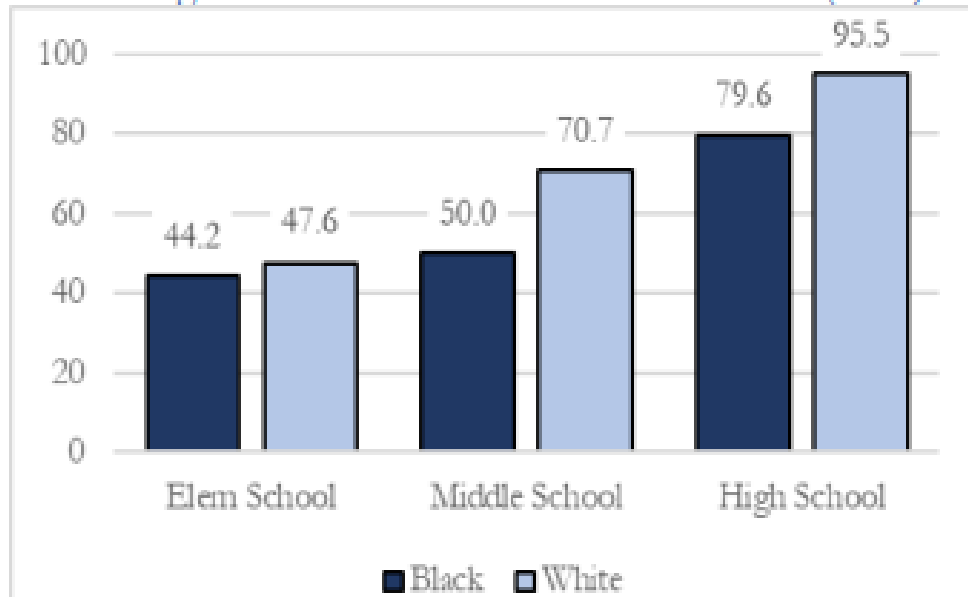


(US Department of Education)

- Gun free Act 1994
- 10% increase: Out of school suspension
- Zero Tolerance Policy PA (1995)
- 48% of preschool students suspended are black
- Discipline leads to higher rates of contact with the juvenile justice system
- One cohort of non-graduates costs 35 billion over a lifetime

Counselor Ratios

Figure 3: Percentage of Students Enrolled in Schools Meeting the 500:1 Student to Counselor Ratio (2018)



Data Source: Authors' analysis of PDE employment data from the PDE website
<https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/ProfSupPers/Pages/default.aspx>


- 14% of schools have no counselor
- 380:1 counselor to students in rural schools
- 499:1 in urban schools
- charter schools less likely to have counselor
- 24% of schools meet the 250:1 ratio
- Philadelphia 700:1 in some schools
- Philadelphia police outnumber counselors



Policy Needed

- Address disparity in low performing schools
- Increase academic success
- Decrease criminal justice referral
- Ensure equity in all schools

“What was sacrificed along the way was an institutional commitment to fairness, due process in administering discipline, getting to the root of conflicts, and coming up with solutions that would likely prevent future conflicts.” (ACLU, 2015).



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