

# For kids to succeed, dismantle the school to prison pipeline

Alternatives to suspension help keep kids out of juvenile justice

## CURRENT SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PRACTICES LEAD TO A HIGH NUMBER OF REFERRALS TO THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM



When kids are not in school they are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior



**1 IN EVERY 10**

KIDS MISSED 10% OR MORE OF SCHOOL IN THE 2015 - 2016 SCHOOL YEAR

Too often law enforcement intervenes in school discipline

VIRGINIA RANKS \_\_\_\_\_

**WORST** FOR NUMBER OF REFERRALS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

\_\_\_\_\_ IN THE COUNTRY

Children are suspended early and in large numbers

FOR PRE-K TO 12TH GRADE IN THE 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR:

**123,000**

SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS

**3,000**

LONG TERM SUSPENSIONS



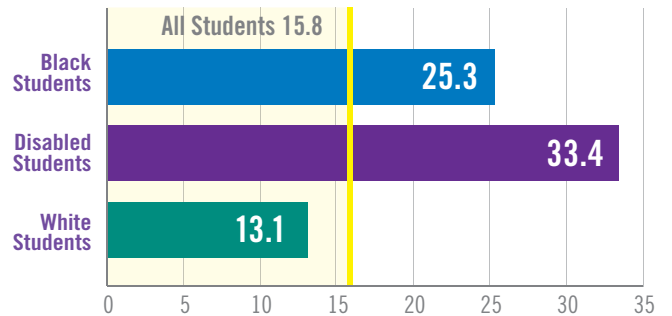
**1 OUT OF 5**

SUSPENDED STUDENTS ARE IN PRE-K TO 5TH GRADE



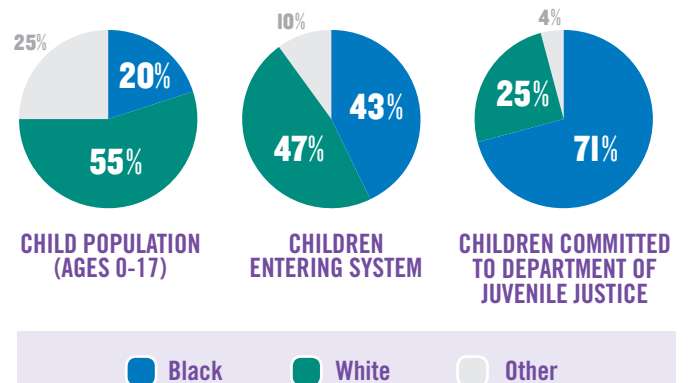
## BLACK STUDENTS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY REFERRED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

Referrals to law enforcement per 1,000 students 2011-2012



Once children have been referred to the juvenile justice system from school, their experiences vary. Children in foster care, students with disabilities, children with mental health needs, and children who are homeless enter the system at higher rates, and have greater difficulty exiting, than other populations of children.

## THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM COMMITS BLACK CHILDREN TO THE JUVENILE CORRECTIONS SYSTEM AT DISPROPORTIONATE RATES



\* All sources available at [vakids.org/elections](http://vakids.org/elections)



## Questions for Candidates

#VAVotes4Kids

- 1 Statistics show that truancy, defined as missing more than 10% of school in a school year, has devastating effects on both students and communities. The short-term effects are an increase in delinquent, criminal, and gang activity. Long-term effects include poor physical and mental health, the continuance of family poverty, and a high risk of addiction and incarceration. **What efforts do you think Virginia should be making to keep children in school?**
- 2 The U.S. Department of Education data analyzed by the Center for Public Integrity shows that Virginia schools, in a single year, referred students to law enforcement agencies at a rate nearly three times the national rate. Numerous studies show that these school discipline policies increase the chances of these students becoming involved with the adult criminal justice system. **If elected, how would you address these issues?**
- 3 Virginia schools disproportionately suspend Black students and students with disabilities. In 2016, African American students were 23% of the student population, but were subjected to 60% of long-term suspensions. Students with disabilities were 12% of the student population but 22% of long-term suspensions. **What would you do to ensure that all children are treated equally in the school system when it comes to behavior and discipline?**
- 4 Data on Virginia's juvenile justice system point to its ineffectiveness and high cost: 58% of kids placed on parole are rearrested within 12 months. In addition, it costs roughly \$100,000 to incarcerate youth for one year. Virginia's Department of Juvenile Justice is in the middle of a transformation that is shifting the system from punitive to rehabilitative. **If elected, what would you suggest to improve our juvenile justice system?**
- 5 Some Virginia localities have analyzed their school discipline data, made changes to their codes of student conduct and school resource officer procedures, and instituted alternatives to suspension and court referrals. The Virginia Department of Education is working to expand the use of evidenced-based approaches to improve student behavior. **What is your view on investing in programs that promote alternatives to suspension?**
- 6 A majority of youth committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice in Virginia require mental health services. In 2016, over 64% of youth who entered Virginia juvenile justice facilities demonstrated symptoms of one or more mental health disorders. Additionally, more than three in five of these youths were prescribed psychotropic medication at some point in their lives. **How would you support the behavioral health needs of children who come in contact with the juvenile justice system?**

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