

The School-to-Prison Pipeline

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## Lesson Plan

**Unit Topic:** The School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP) & Human Rights

**Lesson:** This lesson will allow students to understand the topic of the School-to-Prison pipeline. In addition, being able to engage with their fellow students in order to create a safe-classroom; while, promoting a critical discussion on the negative effects the School-to-Prison pipeline plays in education.

**Rationale for the Lesson:** This lesson is imperative to introducing students to the hidden factors that play a role in furthering negative connotations of marginalized students. The School-to-Prison pipeline, is visible in all schools, all levels of socio-economic statuses, effects all races, ethnicities, gender, and other marginalized groups of students. This is not something that is general to one student group, but effects thousands of students across the nation. It is important for students to be able to understand and recognize this pipeline in order to create restorative justice in and out of their classrooms. Further, faculty and staff can benefit from learning the impacts of the STPP and create classroom environments that are inclusive while not pushing harsh disciplinary tactics.

**New Jersey Common Core State Standards:**

**6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century:** All students will acquire the skills needed to be active, informed citizens who value diversity and promote cultural understanding by working collaboratively to address the challenges that are inherent in living in an interconnected world.

- **Social Studies:** 6.3.12.A.1 - Develop a plan for public accountability and transparency in government related to a particular issue(s) and share the plan with appropriate government officials.
- **Social Studies:** 6.3.12.D.1 - Analyze the impact of current governmental practices and laws affecting national security and/or individual civil rights/ privacy.

**Essential Question:** What role does the School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP) play in K-12 education? How does the STPP affect students and what are the underlying institutional policies that continue to perpetuate this pipeline?

**Objectives:**

- Students will be able to understand what the School-to-Prison Pipeline is within education.
- Students will be able to engage with their peers to create a safe-space in order to end the discriminatory system of the STPP.
- Students will be able to recognize that the STPP affects all marginalized students group and is not based solely on race or ethnicity.

**Launch/Beginning:** Students will be engaged by watching a short introductory video powered by the ACLU. All students will be given three brochures to take home or review after class

regarding the STPP. Discuss a few key terms and begin by going over what the STPP is at the foundation and the statistics associated with a PowerPoint.

**Learning Activities/Middle:** Students will explore the School-to-Prison Pipeline and what it entails. This will include an activity known as “Here I Stand.” This will include 3+ questions (dependent upon time allotted) that explore the students understanding on the STPP and how it effects their classmates. Students will stand on one side of the classroom and walk to one of the following three walls: Agree, Neutral/In-Between, Disagree. With each question a short discussion will follow, concluding with a debrief and overall discussion on this topic. After the activity, we will come together and discuss the statistics and the STPP in further detail. This will include going over the brochures and infographics in addition discussing any last question the class may have on the STPP. The remainder of the class will be open discussion based via questions from the ACLU.

**Closure/End:** As the discussion ends the students will come up and write down something they have learned and ways to create restorative justice on a large Post-It-Note, later to be hung in the classroom.

### **Step-By-Step Procedures with Time Allocations (40 Minutes+):**

- **Prepare lesson with PowerPoint. (2 Minutes)**
  - The PPT will contain definitions and used to display questions for discussion. This is for students to use to reference during all activities.
  - See attached PPT in Bibliography
  - Hand out all infographics (3 found in Bibliography)
- **“Gone Too Far” Video, ACLU (3 Minutes)**
  - Show the video to the class as an introduction to the STPP.
  - Found in Annotated Bibliography.
- **PowerPoint Introduction to Topic**
  - Redefine the School-to-Prison Pipeline
  - Define the following list of key-terms:
    - Zero-Tolerance Policy
    - School-to-Prison Pipeline
    - LGBTQ+
    - ACLU
    - Intersectionality
    - Social/Restorative Justice
- **“Here I Stand” Activity (Approx. 15 Minutes)**

- Have all students gather on one side of the classroom to start. Make 3 clear locations that represent “Agree,” “Neutral/In-Between,” and “Disagree.” Read out a statement and have the students move accordingly. Have a student explain why they stand where they do. Repeat this 3+ times (depending on time).
- Possible Statements (*Please note, these statements can be edited to fit the campus/classroom community ~ These are not definite questions, but an outline*):
  - Students who act out in class should speak with a counselor rather than a police officer.
  - Do you think students are too often disciplined too harshly?
  - Police in school make me feel safe.
  - Teenagers that verbally/physically threaten teachers should be charged, rather than speaking with a counselor before facing police intervention.
  - There should be more police officers in schools than counselors.
  - The “zero-tolerance” policy is beneficial for students.
  - Student did not want to participate in class. When asked to raise her hand the student refused. The teacher proceeded to lift the student from the desk and drag her from the classroom. There the police met the student and arrested her. As it turns out the student’s grandmother had just passed, and the father has been deployed to Iraq. Do you feel this was an appropriate reaction to the student’s behavior?
- **Discussion (Approx. 20 Minutes)**
  - After the “Here I Stand” activity the students and teacher(s) will discuss the STPP. There will also be a few discussion questions asked that can start a larger class discussion between the students and teachers.
    - Discussion statements found in Annotated Bibliography, “Discussion Questions...” (ACLU). (*Please note, these statements can be edited to fit the campus/classroom community ~ These are not definite questions, but an outline*).
- **Closer (Approx. 5 Minutes to the End)**
  - The closer will have the students 3 infographics provided at the beginning of the class. The students can break into groups and each group will review one of the infographics. After 2-3 minutes of review, the remainder of the class will be each group discussing what they found in the infographic and their analysis thereof.

### **Materials and Equipment Needed:**

- Computer & Internet Connection
- Infographics & Brochures

**Summative Assessment:** Students can review the infographics and brochures at home. While doing this they can work on creating their own brochure/infographic on ways to recognize, dismantle, and create restorative justice in relation to the School-to-Prison Pipeline.

**Modification(s)/UDL:**

- **Loss of Internet:** In the case the school does not have or loses internet connection, then the video can be skipped and the time allotted can be used for class activities.
- **Students with Disabilities:** Students who require mobility accommodations; the classroom can be re-arranged to allow the student to access the entire class. There will be multiple means of expression and engagement to allow students to participate equitably. Instructors in the room can be sure each student is understanding and participating and make the necessary accommodations. The PowerPoint allows for students to refer back to the question asked to ensure comprehension.

## Annotated Bibliography

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, 2011.

This book is a great introduction and conversation with the mass incarceration problem in the United States and its disproportionality of incarcerating people (or students) of color. This book does not directly relate to the School-to-Prison Pipeline, however can be used to gain knowledge on the parallels of mass incarceration and students of color facing harsh disciplinary actions; therefore, being pushed out of school into the mass incarceration pipeline. This book can be used to discuss with students the prison pipeline and the history of imprisonment and its racist roots from the end of the slavery.

Butrymowic, Sarah, and Jackie Mader. "Pipeline to Prison: Special Education Too Often Leads to Jail for Thousands of American Children." *Early Education*, 24 June 2017, [hechingerreport.org/pipeline-prison-special-education-often-leads-jail-thousands-american-children/](http://hechingerreport.org/pipeline-prison-special-education-often-leads-jail-thousands-american-children/).

This article written by Sarah Butrymowic and Jackie Mader is a discussion on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and students with disabilities. The article begins with an explanation of a student who was arrested in front of his classmates and sent to court, prison, and mental health facilities, because of a temper-tantrum in class. In addition, this student was found to have Bi-Polar Disorder, which includes mania and outbursts as such. This student, was out of school for months at a time and this adversely effected his schooling. This story is not singular but one of many. As explained in this article in the *Hechinger Report* titled, "Pipeline to Prison: Special Education Too Often Leads to Jail for Thousands of American Children," the authors continue to explain the already inferior education students with disabilities receive and then, the addition of the STPP to only further restrict their access to equitable education. This article also discussed the varying state-to-state laws and regulations regarding students with disruptive behavior which can be reviewed in the classroom to understand one's own state laws and barriers.

"Discussion Questions: The School-to-Prison Pipeline." American Civil Liberties Union. [https://www.aclu.org/files/images/asset\\_upload\\_file596\\_35546.pdf](https://www.aclu.org/files/images/asset_upload_file596_35546.pdf)

During the class discussion, this document provides a list of discussion questions. These questions will promote a great discussion in the classroom surrounding the School-to-Prison Pipeline.

"Key Statistics." National Center on Inclusive Education. <https://whocaresaboutkelsey.com/docs/educational-materials/key-statistics.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

This document is an incredibly beneficial handout for students to provide key statistics and numbers related to the School-to-Prison Pipeline. Its broken down in a few sections that clearly show the disparity marginalized students face in schools. Those sections are, *Mental Health Statistics*, *Emotional and Behavioral Disability (EBD) Statistics*, *Overuse and Disparities of Punitive Discipline Policies in Schools*, *Statistics from Somersworth High School*, *School Dropout Statistics*, and *Relative Effective of 'Zero Tolerance' Policies VS. FBIS Framework*. These are all important to read through as it provides a thorough and concrete understanding on

the disparities and who exactly is pushed out of schools. Subsequently, showing stats at what rate students are tracked from schools and into the prison pipeline.

Klein, Rebecca. "Black Students Are Less Likely to Get Suspended When They Have Black Teachers." The Huffington Post, TheHuffingtonPost.com, 1 Nov. 2016, [www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/black-students-suspension\\_study\\_us\\_581788e0e4b064e1b4b4070a](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/black-students-suspension_study_us_581788e0e4b064e1b4b4070a).

This article is important in showing the lack of teachers of color and the problem that this under-representation causes for students of color. For students involved in disciplinary cases at schools those with black teachers faced less "exclusionary discipline" (Klein). However, teachers of colors are staffed in what Klein called, "harder to staff" schools and therefore have less autonomy with students. This article examines the relation and causation of lack of representation of teachers of color and its correlation to the STPP. Students who face expulsion are less likely to receive harsh punishment if they feel represented and understood from the classroom. This article also explains the issue of teacher salaries and the improvement required of working conditions to lessen the impact of the STPP.

Mallett, C. A. "The "Learning Disabilities to Juvenile Detention" Pipeline: A Case Study." *Children & Schools*, vol. 36, no. 3, Nov. 2014, pp. 147–154., :10.1093/cs/cdu010.

As explained in the abstract of this research study; Adolescents are being taken from school and entered into a form juvenile court because of school related problems. This article explains the disproportionate effect and representation within this pipeline. Specifically, this article goes into further research on students with disabilities (SWD) and the outcomes, or risk factors, faces for criminal court involvement. This article can be used for students to read and further understand the link between SWD and detention rates. Subsequently, the beginning of the push from school into the STPP. This research is based off of a case study, thus can be used in a law class in addition to a Human Rights lesson. This article brought up many issues and explains who exactly is responsible. The research finds that it ranges from the school personnel to administration, police, and the general public. There is no one person at fault. A social justice issue as this is engrained, as it is explained, and is made up of many combined efforts to further marginalize already marginalized groups of students.

PowerPoint. Joseph Scarpa, 8 May 2018.

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ax\\_iE7zg9WNQKiEdrcnGLfOuci-PZDi42xYgG0gvTv0/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ax_iE7zg9WNQKiEdrcnGLfOuci-PZDi42xYgG0gvTv0/edit?usp=sharing)

This PowerPoint (PPT) has been created to assist in facilitating the lesson and reviewing key terms. This PPT will have slides defining important key terms associated with the STPP and disciplinary actions in schools. In addition, the PPT will contain the discussion questions that will be asked throughout the activities. This is great to have up, so students can reread what has been stated, or for students who may have disabilities and need extra time understanding or hearing the questions asked. The PPT can be adjusted depending on the questions planned to be asked in the class, but is general, based off one previous lesson taught and the questions asked then. This PPT can be found on Google Slides via the link above.

“Power in Partnerships.” Advancement Project, 29 Sept. 2015,  
[advancementproject.org/resources/power-in-partnerships-building-connections-at-the-intersections-of-racial-justice-and-lgbtq-movements-to-end-the-school-to-prison-pipeline/](http://advancementproject.org/resources/power-in-partnerships-building-connections-at-the-intersections-of-racial-justice-and-lgbtq-movements-to-end-the-school-to-prison-pipeline/).

The article “Power in Partnerships” created by the Advancement Project is a tool to for exploring the intersectionality of the School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP). The article begins with an introduction on what the STPP is. Many people are not familiar with the problems of the STPP, so this introduction begins to explain the pipeline and its relation to the LGBTQ+ community and students. It gives a brief explanation of the statistics associated with LGBTQ+ students and their disadvantage in schools due to this pipeline. A brief infographic is provided, which is below titled “The School-to-Prison Pipeline: Infographic.” From there, this article continues to delve into the behaviors associated with harsher discipline and the subsequent distrust of school officials. This article provides resources and partnerships to create a safe space for LGBT students and specifically LGBT women of color. This article provides several student stories to provide a realistic feature of the STPP and how it directly effects students. Each student tells their story and the intersectionality of LGBT rights, student rights, and the STPP. The article provides several pages of correct terminology that can be used to educate students not familiar with the LGBTQ+ community and experience.

“School-to-Prison Pipeline.” American Civil Liberties Union,  
<https://www.aclu.org/video/gone-too-far>. Gone Too Far Video

This is a brief video that can be used to introduce the STPP to the classroom and includes stories of students negatively and harshly effected by this pipeline.

“The School-to-Prison Pipeline: Infographic.” Advancement Project, 3 Sept. 2013,  
[advancementproject.org/resources/school-prison-pipeline-infographic/](http://advancementproject.org/resources/school-prison-pipeline-infographic/).

This infographic is a tool that can be used to educate students on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and who it affects. The first page discusses what the current climate is for todays’ students. What that may look like is prison environments, pressure from home and at school, discipline, and investment. Each topic has a few main points to it to further explain. The remainder of the page shows percentages and numbers related to STPP. For example, what percent of what race is likely to be suspended. The document is from the Advancement Project on the School-to-Prison Pipeline.

“The School-to-Prison Pipeline: Brochure.” Advancement Project, 3 Sept. 2013,  
[advancementproject.org/resources/school-prison-pipeline-brochure/](http://advancementproject.org/resources/school-prison-pipeline-brochure/).

This brochure is another piece of information in explaining and dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP). It briefly explains what the “common sense approach” to discipline is and how schools over use this harsh policy. Thus, the causation and correlation to the prison pipeline. It provides some brief and shocking examples of students who have been suspended and arrested and exactly what for (e.g. Hugging a friend, chewing, temper tantrum, playing music, etc.). The second page goes into detail on dismantling the STPP. This includes, “establishing protocols,” and forms of intervention decreasing suspension rates. This further explains the decrease of STPP leads to higher attendance and graduation rates.