

## School-to-Prison Pipeline - 2013

Schools are intended to be laboratories of opportunity. We pursue education so that we can follow our dreams, have interesting careers, open our minds to new ideas, make friends, and try new things. But imagine if this was not the case. Imagine that instead of an education being a pathway to success, school was a pipeline to prison.

The so-called “school-to-prison” pipeline refers to a system of disciplinary policies that have more of an effect of criminalizing children than educating them. For minor infractions, students can rack up many charges that lead them into the criminal justice system and unemployment instead of towards higher learning. These school policing measures significantly affect young men and women of color.

It is hard to illustrate what it must feel like to have every decision you make have such serious consequences that you might end up with a criminal record. Although inappropriate or dangerous behavior should not be tolerated, neither should students feel like the slightest misstep could be a first step towards time behind bars.

The American Civil Liberties Union created a game that explains the kind of behavior that would lead to a student being taken out of the school system and into the criminal justice system. To play the game and learn more, [click here](#).

Because the school-to-prison pipeline is at the cross-section of education policy, civil rights, criminal justice, and government policies, many different groups are engaged in eradicating this problem. [A large school district in Florida](#) is partnering with law enforcement agencies and the NAACP to reconfigure their school-to-prison pipeline. Earlier this month, [Rolling Stone reported on how the school-to-prison pipeline poses not just a challenge to the betterment of our education system, but to equal rights](#).

Over the past 100 years, WRJ has always been at the forefront of the battle for civil rights and equal opportunity of all Americans. From women’s suffrage, to the Civil Rights Movement, to the advancement of women in Jewish life, to stalwart support for the LGBT community, to the crucial issues of today, WRJ is committed to social action. This resolution on the school-to-prison pipeline is another step towards justice.