

# Draining the School-to-Prison Pipeline

"Draining the School-to-Prison Pipeline" is a monthly publication addressing issues of community school reintegration, sharing practical recommendations to support returning students, tracking relevant public policy and legislation, and addressing racial and other inequities in Pennsylvania's educational system.

This final edition of the Draining the School-to-Prison Pipeline publication highlights two new tools for dismantling the cyclical nature of the School-to-Prison pipeline by improving the process of student reintegration into community school following an institutional placement. Page 3 describes new Pennsylvania legislation that provides important new protections for returning students, and below is an introduction to a new publication on the subject: *School Reintegration for Youth Returning from Residential Placement: Voices from the Field and Recommendations for Pennsylvania*.

## Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline through School Reentry

Philadelphia's Support Center for Child Advocates (*Child Advocates*) and the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University (Temple IOD) collaborated over a multi-year period, with support from the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council, to understand existing barriers and outline concrete strategies to better support youth returning to a community school after exiting a residential placement in the child welfare, juvenile justice, and/or behavioral health systems.

*Child Advocates* and Temple IOD conducted in-depth interviews with a range of professionals involved in the process of student reentry, including staff at public school districts, Intermediate Units, charter schools, congregate care facilities, systems-involved youth and their families, community-based providers, and advocates from across the Commonwealth. Interview subjects represented the juvenile justice, child welfare, and behavioral health systems, as well as a mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas throughout a number of Pennsylvania counties.

Combining insights from the in-depth interviews with identified best practices in the relevant literature, our team of multi-disciplinary professionals identified five systemic barriers to successful school reintegration and compiled recommendations to improve six crucial areas when youth return to a community school. The team focused on strategies available to schools and system professionals at or after the time of a student's discharge from a facility, and those that can be implemented with little or no cost.

To read the full report, access advocacy material, and learn about how you can support youth reintegrate back into their community school visit our website by clicking [HERE](#).

SUPPORT  
Center  
FOR  
**child**  
advocates



Photo courtesy of Canva Photo Library

### Table of Contents

Grow Your Knowledge p.3

Spotlight Series p.2

From Policy to Practice p.3

The Road from Our Reality to Our Responsibility p.3

This publication is supported by a grant from the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council; in part by grant number 2001PASCDD-02, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.

Copyright © 2022 Support Center for Child Advocates & Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council. Permission to reprint, copy and distribute this work is granted provided that it is reproduced as a whole, distributed at no more than actual cost, and displays this copyright notice. Any other reproduction is strictly prohibited.

**Thank you to our  
readers for your  
support and interest  
in this topic!**

# SPOTLIGHT SERIES

Our Spotlight Series highlights individuals and organizations that are doing innovative and important work on the issues of community school reintegration, dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline, and addressing bias in education.

In our final issue we want to thank all the staff that supported Child Advocates' work regarding school-to-prison pipeline reentry. Their dedication and passion to improving educational stability for youth has advanced systemic change in the lives of countless young people living in Pennsylvania.



Renny Osuna,  
M.A. Ed.  
2020-2021

As a Policy Associate at *Child Advocates*, Renny provided the team with expertise in education policy research and evaluation, particularly on the subject of educational barriers experienced by youth. Renny served as a lead interviewer and was instrumental in compiling and analyzing data from dozens of interviews for the *Voices from the Field* report.



Blanca Castro,  
MSW  
2020-2021

As a Child Advocate Social Worker at *Child Advocates*, Blanca brought both practical and policy skills to the team. Blanca collected qualitative data, participated in interviews, and engaged in outreach to professionals in the child welfare and juvenile justice field. Blanca's efforts framed the development of the "Youth and Family Participation" and "Welcoming School Community" sections of the *Voices from the Field* report. Blanca also collaborated on a pilot program that provided transitional services to youth reintegrating back from one of 5 state secure juvenile facilities.



Parris Boyd,  
MSW  
2018-2022

As the Project Coordinator for Criminal Justice and Sexuality Initiatives at Temple University's Institute on Disabilities, Parris conducted significant research into existing models of school reentry, participated as a member of the interviewing team, and assisted with the drafting of the *Voices from the Field* report. Parris was also an integral part of developing and delivering trainings based on the report's findings.



Morgen Black-  
Smith, Esq  
2018-2022

As a staff attorney and program manager for Project YES! (Youth Educational Success) at *Child Advocates*, Morgen coordinated and participated in all aspects of *Child Advocates'* activities related to school-to-prison pipeline reentry. Morgen also provided direct legal representation and other advocacy to dozens of young people facing residential placement, ensuring that those students were aware of their educational rights in those settings and ensuring that those rights were enforced.



Alana Peck,  
MSW, M.S. Ed  
2018-2019

As a policy and education intern at *Child Advocates*, Alana conducted literature reviews and analyzed existing best practice models to develop research questions for youth reintegrating back from a congregate care placement. Alana strategically dissected and mapped the process of educational reintegration to the School District of Philadelphia for youth placed in a congregate placement, and provided direct support to *Child Advocates* clients experiencing that transition



Ciera Ellison, MLS  
2021-2022

As a Child Policy Associate at *Child Advocates*, Ciera was responsible for the creation and content of the *Draining the School-to-Prison Pipeline* newsletter.. Ciera was a lead trainer on the project who spoke at two national conferences and trained over 400 professionals on how to support youth transition back into school.

# From Policy to Practice

In January of 2022, Governor Wolf signed into law Act 1 of 2022 (24 P.S. § 13-1331.1). The Act is intended to remove education and graduation barriers for youth that are experiencing educational instability, defined as one or more changes in a school entity enrollment in a single school year due to: child welfare or juvenile justice involvement, homelessness, or as part of court-ordered services under a voluntary placement or custody agreement. Advocates at Juvenile Law Center together with the Education Law Center have summarized the Act's major provisions:

- Identify eligible students for support under Act 1;
- Designate a Point of Contact to ensure that eligible students receive the benefit of Act 1;
- Facilitate prompt transfer of education records and appropriate placement;
- Ensure that students receive full and partial credit for all work completed;
- Waive local graduation requirements that would otherwise serve as a barrier to participation in extracurricular activities or utilize other methods to fulfill requirements;
- Develop a graduation plan to ensure timely graduation;
- Work with a prior school district to confer a diploma if a student is unable to graduate from their current school;
- Work with the Department of Education to obtain a state-issued Keystone Diploma if other options are exhausted.

#### Resources

Education Law Center and Juvenile Law Center. (2022, May). Supporting graduation & equal access for students ... - elc-pa.org. Education Law Center. Retrieved June 22, 2022, from <https://www.elc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ELCs-Act-1-Fact-sheet-May-2022-Final.pdf>

## The Road from Our Reality to Our Responsibility

*Every issue of this digest addresses issues of racial disparity and other inequities in the systems of education, juvenile justice, child welfare, and behavioral health by identifying systemic barriers, introducing evidenced-based research for dismantling current practice, and creating a blueprint for structural change and empowerment.*

For the last 9 months we have produced a monthly advocacy digest that explores the ways historical education practices, and school climates can contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. We have compiled every issue that we ever published here. While our work on this grant is coming to an end, the impact will not! Please explore our resources.

### Grow your knowledge

On May 10th, 2022 the Juvenile Law Center and Education Law Center hosted a webinar on Act 1 of 2022. That webinar, along with additional resources for advocates can be found [HERE](#).

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) is expected to issue detailed guidance about Act 1 in August 2022. In the meantime, they have issued an interim guidance outlining the basic responsibilities for schools under the Act. That guidance can be found [HERE](#).

### Issue 1.

[Inaugural Issue of Draining the School-to-Prison Pipeline](#)

### Issue 2.

[Pennsylvania's School Funding Trial: The "Need to Know"](#)

### Issue 3.

[Special Education and Its Impact on the School-to-Prison Pipeline](#)

### Issue 4.

[Testing Kids Into the School-to-Prison Pipeline](#)

### Issue 5.

[Truancy Consequences Open the Door to the School-to-Prison Pipeline](#)

### Issue 6.

[Using an Inclusive Curriculum to Decrease Student Exposure to the School-to-Prison Pipeline](#)

### Issue 7.

[Youth Homelessness and the School-to-Prison Pipeline](#)

### Issue 8.

[Alternative Education and the School-to-Prison Pipeline](#)