Starting as early as preschool, about 94,000 children were suspended in Pennsylvania schools for the 2017-2018 school year.1

Black children in Pennsylvania are about 5 times more likely to be suspended than White children.1

Black children comprise 40% of out-of-school suspensions, and 32% of expulsions, yet they comprise about 15% of the school population.1

Public schools with high proportions of Black children use more exclusionary and less reparative discipline strategies.4

Black children are more likely to be disciplined for minor infractions than White children.5

Exclusionary practices cause psychological harm.9 They also ignore and exacerbate Black children’s traumatic responses from concurrent intergenerational and environmental racial stressors.6,9,10

Exclusionary practices are ineffective.5 They are associated with low academic performance even for non-suspended students,12,13 increased behavior problems,5 school drop-out,13 arrests and incarceration.7

Just Discipline
An Effective and Evidence-Based Restorative Justice Policy Solution

A framework of restorative justice is a fundamental shift in thinking about school environments and discipline.10 Restorative practices promote:

- School environments that focus on building strong relationships among teachers, staff, children, and families.8,10
- Discipline strategies prioritizing accountability, communal decision-making, and restoring relationships over punitive and exclusionary discipline.11

The Just Discipline intervention has demonstrated success in:

- Reducing behavior infractions and suspensions.10
- Improving academic performance.10
- Improving student relationships, staff satisfaction, and school climate.10

Implementing Just Discipline involves district buy-in, specialized staff and training, student therapeutic support, disaggregated data, and teacher collaboration.10
References