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— genuinely — a final resort.

Can reducing the use of kiddie racial profiling to discipline youth by kicking them out of class be the key to reducing the achievement gap — and the incarceration rate?

### New Obama Policy

Last July, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and Education Secretary Arne Duncan together rolled out the Supportive School Discipline initiative, dedicated to addressing “the ‘school-to-prison pipeline’ and the disciplinary policies and practices that can push students out of school and into the justice system,” the Justice Department said.

“The initiative aims to support good discipline practices to foster safe and productive learning environments in every classroom,” Holder said at the time.

The policy came in response to a massive University of Texas study tracking nearly one million seventh graders for three years.

room holds them back in the long run.

“We have seen this kind of indication for literally decades,” he says. “We know what works, we just have, for various reasons, political philosophical and otherwise, decided that we’re not going to do what works.”

Frederick says that back in 1979-1980, part of the Portland schools desegregation plan was “the concern about the kind of impact that suspensions and expulsions have on minority kids, black kids in particular, and that in fact was feeding the pipeline for kids going into the prison system.”

“By showing an increasing number of black kids that are being suspended and expelled, you were also finding a disproportionate number of kids in juvenile detention, because they were being expelled and sent home without supervision, in part because they didn’t have the family structure to provide supervision — there was this ‘Leave It

haunting clue to the consistent population of young people being flushed out of the schools and into the prisons.

Oregon State Department of Education spokeswoman Crystal Green listed off local school districts that have landed on a list for disproportionate discipline of special education students.

In 2011: Portland Public Schools and Woodburn School District

In 2010, Woodburn, Beaverton and Tigard/Tualatin

In 2009, Eugene, Portland, and Tigard/Tualatin.

“There’s a highly complicated formula that looks for are too many minority special ed kids being identified for special ed, and are the minority special education kids being disproportionately disciplined,” Green said. “I’ve definitely heard principals from schools doing this work and being successful in this work saying, you don’t want to believe it’s perception, but everyone comes into this things with their own judgments; so just making sure that peoples’ awareness is really there on this issue.”

### Missing Data?

In Seattle, the Post-Intelligencer newspaper has reported on the disparities for 10 years; school officials say they are just now beginning to collect data district-wide and they’ll make it available in 2013.

That’s not soon enough for one researcher, who has already obtained the raw data and crunched the numbers. Steve Trubow of the Olympic Research Laboratory in Port Angeles, Wa., has filed civil rights complaints against 19 school districts across the state in the past few months.

His findings:

- in Highline Public Schools, where white special ed students outnumber black special ed students 2 to 1, the black students comprise 57 percent of the suspension rate;
- The disproportionality rate in Seattle, Issaquah and Battle Ground shows black students suspended or expelled at four times the rate of white students;
- Black students are expelled or suspended at five times the rate of white students in Bremerton and Shelton
- in Bellingham schools, black students with IEPs are suspended or expelled at seven times the rate of white students with IEPs;
- in Pasco, the African American students

‘We know what works, we just have, for various reasons, political philosophical and otherwise, decided that we’re not going to do what works’

The data showed the vast majority had at least one suspension — 84 percent for boys, 70 for girls. Black students were 31 percent more likely to receive a “school discretionary action” than white or Hispanic students.

“Ensuring that our educational system is a doorway to opportunity — and not a point of entry to our criminal justice system — is a critical, and achievable, goal,” Holder said in a statement last summer. “By bringing together government, law enforcement, academic, and community leaders, I’m confident that we can make certain that school discipline policies are enforced fairly and do not become obstacles to future growth, progress, and achievement.”

### Literally Decades

Oregon Rep. Lew Frederick, D-Portland, spent many years as the public information officer for the Portland Public Schools; before that he was a television news reporter. He says he’s not surprised by the idea that kicking students out of the class-

room to Beaver’ belief that mom was going to be there and hand out discipline there when it clearly was not going to be the case.”

### Slow Progress

In Washington state, education officials have yet to agree on any statistical data on the “push out” issue; in Oregon, the numbers add up in an almost spooky way.

“More than a third of Oregon young people who have been incarcerated are convicted of felonies within three years of their release,” reported the Annie E. Casey Foundation last year in their study, “No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration.”

Meanwhile, a new study by Multnomah County’s Department of Community Justice shows nearly 40 percent of African American school kids throughout Multnomah County experience suspension or expulsion, almost 3.5 times the rate of white students.

These two statistics measure different things — yet the “nearly 40 percent” and the “more than one third” proportion is a



Camron and Tamberlee Tarver

with IEPs are suspended or expelled at 28 times the rate of their white counterparts.

### Schools to Prisons

The new Multnomah County report, “Exclusionary Discipline in Multnomah County Schools: How Suspensions and Expulsions Impact Students of Color,” links early-childhood school exclusions to the drop-out rate, youth violence and incarceration.

The document is truly a milestone; its authors describe it as “the first time our community has been able to compare discipline data, disaggregated by race, across all districts using shared definitions and assumptions.” It was commissioned by the Commission on Children, Families & Community and the SUN Service System.

“Nationally, Caucasian students are referred to the office significantly more frequently for offenses that can be objectively documented (e.g. smoking, vandalism, leaving without permission and obscene language),” it says.

“African-American students, in contrast, are referred more often for disrespect, excessive noise, threat and loitering — behaviors that would seem to require more subjective judgment on the part of the refer-

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

# SEATTLE 2012

## BULLETIN BOARD

**THE SKANNER.com**

If you have an event you want to share with the community, email it two weeks in advance to *The Skanner* at [info@theskanner.com](mailto:info@theskanner.com)

### Thursday February 23

LOCAL AUTHOR’S WILL DISCUSS THE 1962 SEATTLE WORLD’S FAIR. Author’s Paula Becker and Alan J. Stein will discuss their book. The Seattle’s World’s Fair featured the debut of two Seattle landmarks: The Space Needle and the Monorail. 6:30 – 7:30

p.m. Ballard Branch Library, 5614 22nd Ave. NW. Free and open to the public.

### Sunday February 26

BITTERLAKE COMMUNITY CENTER’S PANCAKE BREAKFAST. Enjoy all-you-can-eat pancakes, plus scrambled eggs, sausage and juice and coffee. Proceeds from this event will help provide scholarships for our low income neighbors. \$5 per person children under 4 are free. 9 a.m. – noon 13035 Linden Ave. N.

### Monday February 27

WATERFRONT SEATTLE FORUM: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY. How can the waterfront help to restore the natural ecology of Elliott Bay and showcase sustainable design: Come and get involved with the discussion. 5:30 – 7 p.m. Downtown at Town

Hall Seattle, 1119 8th Ave.

### Friday – Sunday March 2 – 4

FRIENDS OF THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY MINI BOOK SALE. Approximately 25,000 items will be up for sale to the public at bargain prices at the 2012 Friends of the Seattle Public Library Mini Book Sale, scheduled for March 2 - 4. Friday & Saturday hours 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Sunday hours 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Warren G. Magnuson Park, 7400 Sand Point Way. NE Building 30 workshop.

### Saturday March 3

PANCAKE BREAKFAST. Everyone is invited to join us for great food and good conversation. Breakfast is free however donations are greatly appreciated. Zion Lutheran Church 4634 Alger Ave. Everett. 9 a.m. -11 a.m.