

KEY ISSUES:

“Divided Attention” is a great way to start conversation with different students, parents, community members and advocates. This will be of particular interest to people who want to explore the following topics:

- Mindfulness in education
- Social emotional learning
- School to Prison Pipeline
- Fair school funding



GENERAL DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

- What are your initial thoughts after watching the film?
- Could you relate to any of the characters/interviewees in the film?
- What moments surprised you?
- What questions did the film arise/provoke?
- Did the film help you understand any concepts such as: school to prison pipeline, public school funding, charter schools, equitable education, mindfulness and meditation practices?
- Did you feel inspired to take action in any way?
- What themes or ideas do you relate to?

LEARN MORE

Mindfulness

- Coalition of Schools Educating Mindfully (COSEM): www.educatingmindfully.org
- Mindful schools: www.mindfulschools.org/

School to Prison Pipeline

- ACLU: www.aclu.org/issues/juvenile-justice/school-prison-pipeline/school-prison-pipeline-infographic
- Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund: dredf.org/legal-advocacy/school-to-prison-pipeline/
- Vox “The school-to-prison pipeline, explained” video primer on Youtube.
- Toolkit for organizing against the SPP: dignityinschools.org/toolkits/stpp/
- Local Efforts: www.delcoadvocacy.org/school-to-prison-pipeline.html

School Funding Inequity

- Campaign for Fair Funding: pafairfunding.org/pennsylvania-budget-letter/
- Education Law Center: www.elc-pa.org/
- Public Interest Law Center: www.pubintlaw.org/
- Children First (Formerly Public Citizens For Children and Youth): www.childrenfirstpa.org/

TAKE ACTION: GET INVOLVED LOCALLY

1. Attend the Receiver’s meeting each month. <https://www.chesteruplandsd.org/domain/57>
2. Attend other public meetings for the district.
3. Contact the Receiver and Superintendent with your concerns: Nafis Nichols: nnichols@chesteruplandsd.org
4. Contact school Principals to learn how you can support them.
5. Join a PTO/ PTA at 1 or more schools and stay committed.
6. Ask all candidates running for office what they have done/will do for CUSD.

Website:

www.phillycam.org/dividedattention

<https://www.delcoadvocacy.org/divided-attention.html>

DIVIDED ATTENTION



(73mins, 2022)

Produced by PhillyCAM and DCARO

“Divided Attention” explores the context behind the obstacles the Chester-Upland School District has faced in the last 70 years -complicating the approval and funding of programs like those which combat the school-to-prison pipeline. The city’s challenges and growth are contrasted by the unstable support and funding inequities that have plagued Chester for decades. A call-to-action, the film looks at how the history of inequitable school funding has impacted the community and how organizers are fighting back.

Partners:



This project 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.



MINDFULNESS Discussion Prompts:



- Have you personally ever tried practicing mindfulness? With your students?
- Do you feel you/your students would benefit from more organized mindfulness efforts within your school system? Why or why not?
- Do you feel mindfulness is an integral part of social emotional learning?
- Who do you feel needs explicit mindfulness instruction and/or practice? Who might benefit the most?



Background:

According to the American Psychological Association, “research shows that stressed teachers impact students’ stress levels and student stress impacts learning outcomes. Students learn better in a climate that is more emotionally positive. Studies have demonstrated a link between positive emotional classroom climates and academic achievement. Mindfulness training improves middle school teachers’ occupational health, well-being, and interactions with students in their most stressful classrooms.” Mindfulness practice can help with emotional and stress regulation, which contributes positively to general well being.



Keywords:

- **Mindfulness** - generally speaking: the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we are doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what’s going on around us
- **Emotional Regulation** - the ability to respond to the ongoing demands of experience with the range of emotions in a manner that is socially tolerable and sufficiently flexible to permit and delay spontaneous reactions as needed
- **Amygdala** - a part of the brain that processes fearful and threatening stimuli, including detection of threat and activation of appropriate fear-related behaviors in response to the stimuli, but has other functions as well
- **Social Emotional Learning** - an educational method that aims to foster social and emotional skills within school curricula

SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE



Discussion Prompts:

- What role does the school climate or school resource officer play in your school?
- How does the school to prison pipeline manifest in different schools?
- How can mindfulness programs offer alternatives to disciplinary actions?
- In the film, Dr. Baughn talks about “Hug them to jail.” What does this mean to you?
- How do different people view the impact or effectiveness of disciplinary actions?
- “Behavior is communication.” In what ways in your life do you communicate through behaviors? Attitudes?
- What positive outlets do you have in your life?
- Why would students with disabilities be more likely to fall into the pipeline?



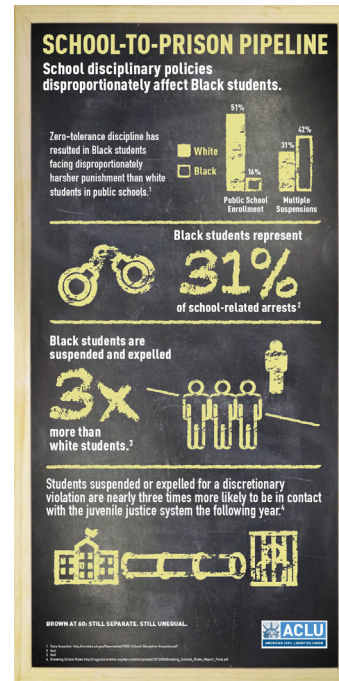
Background:

The ACLU defines the “school-to-prison pipeline’, as a disturbing national trend wherein children are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Many of these children have learning disabilities or histories of poverty, abuse or neglect, and would benefit from additional educational and counseling services. Instead, they are isolated, punished and pushed out. ‘Zero-tolerance’ policies criminalize minor infractions of school rules, while cops in school lead to students being criminalized for behavior that should be handled inside the school. Students of color are especially vulnerable to the discriminatory application of discipline.”



Keywords:

- **School to prison pipeline** - the phenomenon where public schools are gateways to prison for students due to administrative disciplinary actions and routines, along with an increased police presence in schools



SCHOOL FUNDING INEQUITY



Discussion Prompts:

- What are the results of inequitable funding?
- What resources have you noticed in your school?
- How are schools funded?
- What is a Fair Funding Formula?
- What is a Charter School?
- What are some differences between a Charter School and a neighborhood school?
- Do charter schools help historically disadvantaged communities?
- What is a school board?
- How does the threat of changing school systems impact students, parents and teachers?
- How should we fund education to ensure more equitable outcomes?



Background:

Based on research presented by POWER Philadelphia, Pennsylvania currently provides only 34-37% of the money spent on public education. This is considerably less than most states which contribute about 50%, making Pennsylvania one of the least federally supported states in regards to public schooling. In 2016 a Fair Funding Formula was passed by the state legislature that would be used to distribute Basic Education Funding equitably to school districts across the state. The state legislature voted that only new money to Pennsylvania could be used, so that only about 11% of education funding is distributed through the Fair Funding Formula. For school districts of similar poverty levels, whiter districts almost always receive higher per-student funding from the state than less white districts. This pattern holds across all levels of wealth.



Keywords:

- **Trauma Informed** - care for someone with the background knowledge of how to navigate and be alerted of trauma and trauma effects
- **Receivership** - the process of a school district being under the control of a receiver ; a receiver can make any and all decisions in place of a school board just as one individual
- **School Board** - a committee of elected local people on a panel which make decisions of maintenance and future improvements to a school