

DMC Action Network e-News

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Tackling DMC at the Deep End of the System

Keeping youth of color from entering the juvenile justice system is a big part of eliminating racial and ethnic disparities - but it isn't the only way to reduce DMC. This month, representatives from eleven DMC Action Network sites met to discuss strategies to prevent post-disposition youth of color from unnecessarily progressing deeper into the system.



A comprehensive approach to DMC reduction involves looking at racial and ethnic disparities at *all* points in the juvenile justice system. Given that in some jurisdictions the worst rates of overrepresentation occur as youth of color move deeper into the system, this means taking a hard look at what happens to youth after they are adjudicated delinquent.

For example, determining whether youth of color end up in secure detention for violations of probation more frequently than white youth is an important first step in tackling DMC. But jurisdictions also need effective tools to reduce overrepresentation at that stage of the process.

On February 2, individuals from DMC Action Network core and partner sites traveled to Washington, DC to sharpen their ability to address that challenge as part of the DMC Action Network's Technical Assistance Series. Dana Shoenberg and Shauna Epps of the Center for Children's Law and Policy facilitated the seminar on post-disposition youth, which provided strategies for developing graduated rewards for youth on probation, promoting seamless re-entry in a DMC reduction context, and creating culture change in a juvenile justice agency.

The meeting was part of the DMC Action Network's series of Technical Assistance Seminars, which are designed to further develop the expertise and leadership skills of local staff responsible for day-to-day operations of DMC reduction initiatives in Network sites. These intensive seminars provide practical guidance through information- and idea-sharing among peers, practice applications, and presentation opportunities. [Click here to download an agenda and materials from the seminar on post-disposition strategies.](#)

For more information on the Technical Assistance Series or to learn more about the DMC Action Network, contact [Lisa Garry, DMC Policy Director.](#)

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DMC Action Network

The DMC Action Network is a project of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's [Models for Change](#) initiative.

The Network aims to share knowledge and accelerate progress in the reduction of racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system.

Core States

Pennsylvania
Berks County
Allegheny County
Philadelphia
Lancaster County

Illinois
Peoria

Louisiana
Jefferson Parish
Rapides Parish

Washington
Benton/Franklin Counties
Pierce County



Dr. Jeffrey Butts works with seminar participants on using graduated rewards to help youth on probation develop important skills for healthy and successful development.



Seminar participants discuss successful post-disposition strategies and ongoing challenges in their jurisdictions with Lisa Garry and Dana Shoenberg of the Center for Children's Law and Policy.

Zero Tolerance for Inequality: How Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, Is Rethinking School Discipline

When school officials turn to zero-tolerance discipline policies, the approach can become a leading contributor to DMC if youth of color are disproportionately arrested and detained for disciplinary issues. In addition, youth who are suspended or expelled in districts without in-school suspension options often end up unsupervised during school hours and get into more trouble. Roy Juncker, Director of the Jefferson Parish, LA Department of Juvenile Services, explains that although the school to prison pipeline is currently "alive and well" in his jurisdiction, stakeholders are attacking DMC through peer learning opportunities and a data-driven approach to the problem.

Jurisdictions throughout the country grapple with how to keep kids who get in trouble on campus in school and out of the juvenile justice system. Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, a DMC Action Network core site, is no exception. But for Jefferson Parish, the answer to that question means looking closely at what happens to youth of color when school rules are broken.

Partner States

Maryland

Baltimore City
Baltimore County
Montgomery County
Prince George's County

Wisconsin

Rock County
Outagamie County
Kenosha County

Kansas

Sedgwick County
Seward County
Lyon-Chase County

North Carolina

Union County
Carrabus County

"We have a big DMC issue here," notes Roy Juncker, Director of the Parish's Department of Juvenile Services. "A big part of the reason is that one-third of our referrals are coming from our public school system." African-American youth represent about 50% of the youth population in the public school system, yet they account for 80% of school arrests. In Jefferson Parish public schools, the majority of those arrests - approximately 60% - are for non-violent offenses that deal with public order. Only 4% of the arrests made in Jefferson Parish public schools are for violent felonies.

Those statistics are striking, particularly when other schools in the district are managing disciplinary issues without resorting to referrals to the juvenile justice system, according to Mr. Juncker. "When you look at data from private schools, you see hardly any arrests on school grounds. You have to ask: Are those kids any different than the kids in public school? The answer is 'no' - it's that private schools are handling things differently."

Mr. Juncker, who was honored a year ago by the Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR) and the Jefferson Parish Council for his work in reforming the jurisdiction's juvenile justice system, notes that concerns about DMC are helping to drive reforms there. But, he also emphasizes the need to move to a "smarter approach" for handling school referrals from a public safety standpoint. "Right now, you're exposing kids to the delinquent aspect of the juvenile justice system as a result of being arrested for non-violent offenses at schools. The research tells us that approach just doesn't make sense."

Part of Jefferson Parish's approach to reducing school referrals involved sending a 14-person delegation of community stakeholders to Clayton County, Georgia, in mid-January. Officials there have implemented a program that cut in half the number of youth detained because of school arrests. Judge Steven Teske of the Clayton County Juvenile Court had outlined the approach, known as the School Referral Reduction Protocol, during the [DMC Action Network's third annual meeting](#) - a presentation that resonated with Mr. Juncker.

"I closed my eyes and listened to Judge Teske, and he could have been talking about Jefferson Parish," said Juncker. "The data from Clayton County on school referrals mirrored the data from and challenges in our jurisdiction." For Mr. Juncker, the program had an instant appeal.

The School Referral Reduction Protocol, which is based on graduated responses to delinquent behavior in school, aims to reduce misdemeanor referrals to juvenile court and increase safety in the school and the community by allowing police and probation officers to concentrate on high-risk offenders. Jefferson Parish officials used the two-day visit to learn more about Clayton County's system and begin thinking about how elements of the program could work in their own jurisdiction.

The recent site visit is not the Parish's first step in tackling school referrals. In addition to analyzing detailed data on arrests at individual schools, the jurisdiction has piloted a mediation program at two middle schools. However, recent changes in district boundaries and school administrators have made analyzing the program's impact difficult. Officials in Jefferson Parish are also using funds to train officers and school officials on alternative ways of managing disciplinary incidents, and Mr. Juncker is currently exploring with community stakeholders the idea of returning to school-based probation.

In Jefferson Parish, officials are working to reduce DMC through a combination of different strategies. According to Mr. Juncker, that multifaceted approach reflects the jurisdiction's commitment to "really attack the DMC issue in our schools." The hope is that the data will soon give the Parish something to celebrate -- that is, something aside from the New Orleans Saints first Superbowl win.

*Tell us how you're working to reduce DMC by cutting down on school referrals:
email jszanyj@cclp.org.*

The Newest DMC & Juvenile Justice Resources

- Advocates from the Advancement Project released a new report on how high-stakes testing and strict disciplinary policies work together to set youth up for academic failure. The publication, [Test, Punish, and Push Out: How 'Zero Tolerance' and High-Stakes Testing Funnel Youth into the School to Prison Pipeline](#), includes detailed recommendations for local, state, and federal officials on replacing zero-tolerance and high-stakes testing policies with those that permit all youth to achieve a quality K-12 education.
- The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) published a new report entitled [Sexual Victimization in Juvenile Facilities Reported by Youth, 2008-2009](#). The report's findings, which are based on the National Survey of Youth in Custody, indicate that more than 1 in 10 youth in state juvenile facilities and large local facilities reported experiencing at least one incident of sexual victimization by staff or youth in the previous 12 months.
- The National Reentry Resource Center, a product of the Council of State Governments Justice Center, provides education, training, and technical assistance to states, tribes, territories, local governments, service providers, non-profit organizations, and institutions working on reentry issues. The Center hosts a webpage [devoted exclusively to re-entry issues for youth involved in the juvenile justice system](#).
- The National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN) has released resources that build upon the MacArthur Foundation's recent research report entitled [Pathways to Desistance](#). That report concluded that community-based alternatives were just as effective as institutional placements in preventing recidivism of youth who have committed serious offenses. NJJN's website now includes [a list of talking points based on that research, in addition to an audio and Powerpoint presentation by Professor Edward P. Mulvey that describes the research behind the report and its findings](#).
- The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) published an update to its 2009 investigation into the use of seclusion and restraints on America's schools. The report, [School Is Not Supposed to Hurt](#), examines state and federal efforts to address the issue since NDRN published its initial report and argues for federal minimum standards to protect youth from abusive practices.
- Chicago Public Radio's WBEZ is currently running a series on the Illinois juvenile justice system entitled [Inside and Out: Young People and Juvenile Justice in Illinois](#). The report examines Illinois' progress in reforming its secure juvenile facilities and includes personal stories, interviews, investigative reports, and photo essays. The radio station will continue its coverage over the next six months in order to track the experiences of youth within the system.
- [A recent issue of Time Magazine explored the issue of race and ethnicity in American society in the context of the U.S. Census](#). The article tracks the historical approach to collecting race and ethnicity data in America through the Census and reviews the debate surrounding possible changes to the paper-and-pencil questionnaire.