Assignment 8: School-To-Prison Pipeline

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Q:1 Explain the school-to-prison pipeline and why we should be concerned?

Amid growing infractions within premises of educational institutes, the government imposed strict zero-tolerance policies (Heitzeg, 2009). The policies were intended to curb the number of infractions (Heitzeg, 2009). However, the repercussion of these policies rippled through the country giving rise to a newer term school-to-prison pipeline (Heitzeg, 2009). School-to-prison is a systematic process that sees young students entangling with the rigmaroles of the criminal justice system (Heitzeg, 2009). The acts of students that were previously looked into by the school authorities are now probed and adjudicated by criminal justice authorities (Heitzeg, 2009). This disturbing process is of particular concern because taxpayers are bearing the brunt for the costs that are allocated toward criminal justice institutions. Additionally, the expulsion from school has a social stigma attached to it. Once an individual has been expelled from the school, the society deems that particular individual as an offender denying fair opportunities to them (American Civil Liberties Union, 2019). As a result, that individual, more often than not, tends to become a habitual offender defying authorities.

Q:2 Describe at least two free or low-cost solutions/techniques?

Educational institutes with their already meager funds often find it difficult to bring cost-effective solutions to table aimed to end the school-to-jail pipeline (Neyfakh, 2015). One cost-effective solution is to build the capacity of the teachers (The Editorial Board, 2013). By training the teachers to effectively teach discipline, the students shall stay where they belong- the schools (The Editorial Board, 2013). Another cost-effective for schools is to hire conflict resolution consultants. The consultants would be tasked with solving any issue arising between students themselves or with the authorities that, otherwise, would have landed them in jail. Certainly, by adopting the aforementioned measures, the horrendous issue of school-to-jail pipeline would end rather rapidly.

Q:3 Describe systemic influences that have “caused” or contributed to the school to prison pipeline?

The harsh and punitive policies imposed by the government for minor infractions have exacerbated an already widely debated issue (This American Life, 2014). The youth is increasingly becoming recalcitrant towards authorities (This American Life, 2014). One systematic factor that influenced school-to-jail pipeline is reflected in the fact that the government earmarked almost the double of what was previously allocated for criminal justice system while increasing the budget for education by 21% between the years 1987 to 2007 (Cole, 2019). Another factor proved influential is the number of school resource officers surged to 38% between the years 1997 and 2007, according to the U.S. Department of Justice (Marilyn, 2013).

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