School Discipline Reform: Incorporating the Supreme Court's "Age Matters" Jurisprudence

Barbara A. Fedders
University of North Carolina School of Law, fedders@email.unc.edu

Jason Langberg
SCHOOL DISCIPLINE REFORM: INCORPORATING THE SUPREME COURT’S “AGE MATTERS” JURISPRUDENCE

Barbara Fedders & Jason Langberg*

Relying on social science, neuroscience, and common sense to elucidate the differences between childhood and adulthood, including levels of maturation, impulsivity, and susceptibility to peer pressure, the Supreme Court altered the criminal justice landscape for youth in Roper v. Simmons, Graham v. Florida, J.D.B. v. North Carolina, and Miller v. Alabama—the “age matters” cases. In this Article, we argue that these holdings should be applied outside of the criminal justice system to support efforts to reform school discipline laws, policies, and practices. Specifically, we argue that the science and common sense relied upon in the “age matters” cases similarly support eliminating punitive school discipline approaches, such as zero tolerance policies and school policing, and instead employing developmentally appropriate approaches such as positive behavioral interventions, community building in schools, robust due process for disciplinary proceedings, and adequate counselors, social workers, and psychologists. Implementing these reforms will help prevent youths from becoming ensnared in the school-to-prison pipeline.

* Barbara Fedders is a clinical associate professor of law at the University of North Carolina School of Law. Jason Langberg is an attorney and education justice activist in Cary, North Carolina.
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I. INTRODUCTION

Roper v. Simmons,1 Graham v. Florida,2 J.D.B. v. North Carolina,3 and Miller v. Alabama4 have profoundly altered the youth justice landscape. Central to the holdings in Roper, Graham, and Miller are findings from social science and neuroscience that youths are less mature, more impetuous, and more susceptible to peer influence than adults, and that youths are, therefore, categorically less culpable.5 In J.D.B., the Court made similar findings but relied less on science than “common sense.”6 The thrust of these “age matters” cases is that the fundamental differences between juveniles and adults entitle juveniles to substantively different treatment by police, prosecutors, and judges.7

Child advocates and scholars have pressed for application of these holdings in an array of additional juvenile and criminal settings.8 With respect to sentencing, advocates and scholars have argued that the cases discussed above, singly or in combination, should logically lead to the abolition of all life without parole sentences for juveniles;9 the abolition of sentencing statutes that mandate the same sentence for minors as for adults for certain

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3. 131 S. Ct. 2394 (2011) (holding that age is a factor that must be taken into account by police officers and judges in the analysis of whether an individual was in custody for purposes of triggering the warnings required under Miranda v. Arizona, 384 U.S. 436 (1966)).
5. See Roper, 543 U.S. at 569–70; see also Miller, 132 S. Ct. at 2465 (explaining that juveniles’ transient rashness, proclivity for risk, and inability to assess consequences made them morally less culpable); Graham, 130 S. Ct. at 2026 (explaining that lack of maturity, underdeveloped sense of responsibility, and susceptibility to peer pressure make juveniles less morally reprehensible than adults).
6. 131 S. Ct. at 2407, 2416.
7. See id. at 2402–03; Miller, 132 S. Ct. at 2468–69; Graham, 130 S. Ct. at 2025–27; Roper, 543 U.S. at 561–64.
8. See infra notes 84–104.
crimes;\textsuperscript{10} and the establishment of a right to rehabilitation rather than punishment for juveniles.\textsuperscript{11} As to the interrogation of minors, advocates and scholars have argued that “age matters” jurisprudence should lead to a reinvigoration of the voluntariness doctrine, such that trial courts would take seriously the likelihood that a minor may feel coerced and intimidated in circumstances in which an adult may not,\textsuperscript{12} to a new analysis of interrogation that considers the experiences of a reasonable juvenile in determining whether an officer’s statements or actions might elicit an incriminating response;\textsuperscript{13} and to the imposition of a bright-line rule that statements may not be taken from a juvenile without counsel.\textsuperscript{14} Scholars have also urged that \textit{J.D.B.}’s holding that age affects legal analysis in the confession area should be applied to other doctrinal areas, notably \textit{Terry} stops,\textsuperscript{15} waivers of right to counsel,\textsuperscript{16} duress, justified uses of force, provocation, negligent homicide, and the felony-murder doctrine.\textsuperscript{17}

For the most part, juvenile justice advocates and scholars have not considered whether and how the Supreme Court’s “age matters” cases apply to school safety, discipline policies, and practices.\textsuperscript{18} This Article seeks to fill that omission. A focus on schools by advocates

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} Martin Guggenheim, Graham v. Florida and a Juvenile’s Right to Age-Appropriate Sentencing, 47 HARV. C.R.-C.L. L. REV. 457, 458 (2012).
\item \textsuperscript{13} \textit{Id.} at 165–66.
\item \textsuperscript{14} \textit{Id.} at 170.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Terry v. Ohio, 392 U.S. 1, 27 (1968) (permitting limited search for weapons for protection of police officer who has reasonable belief that his safety is in danger).
\item \textsuperscript{17} See Marsha Levick et al., The Eighth Amendment Evolves: Defining Cruel and Unusual Punishment Through the Lens of Childhood and Adolescence, 15 U. PA. J.L. & SOC. CHANGE 285, 308–14 (2012); see also Emily C. Keller, Constitutional Sentences for Juveniles Convicted of Felony Murder in the Wake of \textit{Roper}, Graham & J.D.B., 11 CONN. PUB. INT. L.J. 297, 308–23 (2012) (“Sentencing a juvenile convicted of felony murder to life without parole is constitutionally suspect in light of Supreme Court precedent that children are fundamentally different than adults.”).
\item \textsuperscript{18} For an important exception, see Josie Foehrenbach Brown, Developmental Due Process: Waging a Constitutional Campaign to Align School Discipline with Developmental Knowledge, 82 TEMPLE L. REV. 929, 931 (2009) (examining “the potential transferability of \textit{Roper}’s recognition of the relevance of developmental psychology and neurobiology to a constitutional assessment of prevalent school disciplinary practices”).
\end{itemize}
and scholars is necessary and timely. Schools should be a primary mechanism for helping young people mature into productive, law-abiding adults who can function in a democracy and contribute to society. Yet, increasingly, schools are functioning to funnel ever-greater numbers of low-income students, students of color, and students with disabilities into jails and prisons. The juvenile in \textit{J.D.B.}, for example, was an African American special education student at the time police questioned him.\textsuperscript{19} While juvenile arrests are down in nearly every criminal offense category,\textsuperscript{20} in many states school-based arrests have declined more slowly than other types of arrests.\textsuperscript{21} Over the last twenty years, school discipline has become increasingly criminalized, which harms the most vulnerable students and creates a “school-to-prison pipeline.”\textsuperscript{22} What is more, young people in the juvenile and criminal justice systems consistently have problems in school, which often contribute to and deepen their court involvement.\textsuperscript{23} 

In the “age matters” cases, the Supreme Court provided a blueprint for how youthfulness mandates different treatment by the

\textsuperscript{19.} \textit{In re J.D.B.}, 686 S.E.2d 135, 136 (N.C. 2009), rev’d, 131 S. Ct. 2394 (2011) (noting special education status). J.D.B.’s race is not specified in any of the reported decisions on the case, but the authors know that he is African American based on discussions with his trial attorney. 

\textsuperscript{20.} \textsc{Charles Puzzanchera & Benjamin Adams, U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Juvenile Arrests 2009} 1 (2011). 


\textsuperscript{22.} \textit{See generally} Matt Cregor & Damon Hewitt, \textit{Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline: A Survey from the Field}, 20 \textsc{Poverty & Race} 5, 5 (2011) (defining school-to-prison pipeline and providing data regarding school discipline and criminalization trends). 

\textsuperscript{23.} \textit{See generally} Ashley Nellis, \textit{Addressing the Collateral Consequences of Convictions for Young Offenders}, \textsc{Champion}, July/Aug. 2011, at 22 (noting that regular school attendance is a protective factor against delinquency).
courts.24 We believe the insights in these cases can and should spur and inform reforms of punitive school discipline policies and practices. This Article makes concrete recommendations for how teachers, school administrators, law enforcement officers, and policymakers can voluntarily incorporate the findings in these cases and appropriately account for and respond to students’ impetuosity, immaturity, and susceptibility to peer influence.25 Doing so will improve school safety and at the same time improve the chances for all young people to attain a quality education.

The Article proceeds in three parts. Part I provides necessary background, briefly summarizing the four “age matters” cases and their possible applications in juvenile and criminal justice. It also describes the role of the juvenile court, an institution founded out of a recognition that youths are fundamentally different from adults. In Part II, we argue that schools should voluntarily reform their policies and practices to comport with the reasoning of the four cases. Part III makes specific suggestions for progressive school change that both account for the unique qualities of youths that the Court recognized and offer hope for dismantling the pipeline.

II. THE CASES AND THEIR APPLICATION TO JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

This Part offers a brief synopsis of the four “age matters” cases and notes their possible applications in the juvenile and criminal justice settings. It then sets out a concise history of the juvenile court, which serves as an example of an institution created to help youths develop into productive and creative adults. Like the Supreme Court roughly one hundred years later, the founders of the juvenile court system also recognized that differences in juveniles mandate distinct treatment by state actors.26 To be sure, the juvenile court has

24. See Editorial, Juvenile Injustice, N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 25, 2012, at SR10 (“The court has done more than set new limits on punishment. It has also set new expectations about American criminal justice.”).


26. Elizabeth Scott & Lawrence Steinberg, Princeton-Brookings, Adolescent Development and the Regulation of Youth Culture 18 THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN 15, 16 (2008) (“At the dawn of the Juvenile court era in the late nineteenth century, most youths were tried and punished as adults. Much had changed by 1909 . . . .”).
frequently failed to live up to its founders’ aspirations. We offer this account for the purpose of demonstrating that schools can and should make similar efforts in constructing and implementing their disciplinary policies.

A. Roper v. Simmons

In 2005, the Supreme Court held in Roper v. Simmons that the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments prohibit capital sentences for individuals who commit crimes while under the age of eighteen. Writing for the majority, Justice Kennedy began with a discussion of society’s “evolving standards of decency” in order to determine which punishments are so disproportionate that they are cruel and unusual. In assessing the “objective [indicia] of national consensus” on the issue, he noted that thirty states had banned the death penalty for juveniles. After determining that a national consensus did exist and opposed the juvenile death penalty, Justice Kennedy stated that youth under age eighteen are fundamentally different from adults, so the usual justifications for the death penalty (i.e., retribution and deterrence) are less applicable to juveniles. Relying on assessments of death-row inmates arrested as juveniles, Justice Kennedy laid out three primary differences between minors and adults that justified a finding that minors cannot be reasonably classed “among the worst offenders”: (1) a “lack of maturity” and an “underdeveloped sense of responsibility” that “result in impetuous and ill-considered actions and decisions”; (2) a heightened susceptibility to peer pressure that renders them more deserving of forgiveness; and (3) a less developed character and less fixed personality traits, which make rehabilitation more possible.

27. See generally Barry Feld, Abolish the Juvenile Court: Youthfulness, Criminal Responsibility, and Sentencing Policy, 88 J. CRIM. L. & CRIMINOLOGY 68, 68 (1997) (arguing that reforms to juvenile court have transformed it “from a nominally rehabilitative social welfare agency into a scaled-down, second-class criminal court for young people . . . that provides young offenders with neither therapy nor justice”).
29. Id. at 560–61 (quoting Trop v. Dulles, 356 U.S. 86, 101 (1958)).
30. Id. at 564 (noting that twelve states had “rejected the death penalty altogether” while eighteen, “by express provision or judicial interpretation, exclude juveniles from its reach”).
31. Id. at 571.
32. Id. at 569–70.
B. Graham v. Florida

Five years after the decision in Roper v. Simmons, the Court considered the constitutionality of juvenile sentences of life without parole in nonhomicide cases. The Court had never before employed the more searching Eighth Amendment appellate review used in death penalty cases in a noncapital context. Prior to Graham, courts applied much more stringent standards of review to death sentences than to noncapital sentences. What is more, the majority in Roper took pains to find that the availability of life without parole sentences could supply a necessary deterrent effect that the now-abolished death penalty might have provided earlier. Nevertheless, in Graham, in an opinion once again authored by Justice Kennedy, the Court applied Roper’s scientific insights regarding juveniles and held unconstitutional juvenile sentences of life without parole for nonhomicides.

Without acknowledging that it was breaking the “death is different” barrier, the Court in Graham applied the two-part analysis previously used only in capital cases to assess whether the sentence violated the Eighth Amendment. First, the Court assessed the national consensus on life without parole sentences for nonhomicide crimes. Examining state sentencing statutes, Justice Kennedy concluded that “[t]hirty-seven States, the District of Columbia, and the Federal Government permit sentences of life without parole for a juvenile nonhomicide offender in some circumstances.” To Justice Kennedy, Florida’s argument that the state legislative tally demonstrated that there was no national consensus against juvenile

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34. Id. at 2022–23.
36. Roper, 543 U.S. at 572.
38. Guggenheim, supra note 10, at 463 (“What is most remarkable about Graham is how casually the majority broke the ‘death is different’ barrier.”). Justice Thomas in dissent noted the Court’s transformation of its Eighth Amendment jurisprudence. Graham, 130 S. Ct. at 2044 n.1, 2046 (Thomas, J., dissenting) (“The Court radically departs from the framework those precedents establish by applying to a noncapital sentence the categorical proportionality review its prior decisions have reserved for death penalty cases alone . . . . ‘Death is different’ no longer.”).
40. Id. at 2015.
life without parole was “incomplete and unavailing.” He went on to analyze sentencing practices within the states and found a “consensus” against the application of life without parole sentences for juveniles who commit nonhomicide offenses, as there was only a small number of such sentences imposed in a handful of states.

Second, the Court determined whether the punishment itself violated the Constitution. As he had in Roper, Justice Kennedy emphasized, “[T]he task of interpreting the Eighth Amendment remains our responsibility.” In holding that sentencing juveniles to life in prison without the possibility of parole for crimes other than homicide is categorically forbidden, the Court relied on the three findings it previously made in Roper regarding youths’ immaturity, susceptibility to peer pressure, and incomplete character development. Justice Kennedy expressed the Court’s belief that psychology and brain science continued to show “fundamental differences” between adults and juveniles. The Court then held:

A State is not required to guarantee eventual freedom to a juvenile offender convicted of a nonhomicide crime. What the State must do, however, is give defendants like Graham some meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated maturity and rehabilitation. . . . The Eighth Amendment does not foreclose the possibility that persons convicted of nonhomicide crimes committed before adulthood will remain behind bars for life. It does forbid States from making the judgment at the outset that those offenders never will be fit to reenter society.

As several commentators have noted, the fact that the Court applied this more stringent form of review to a noncapital sentence seems to indicate the Court’s comfort with applying a different set of

41. Id. at 2023. Justice Kennedy did note, however, that federal law allows for the possibility of a life without parole sentence for offenders as young as thirteen. Id.

42. Id. at 2023–24.

43. Id. at 2026–30.

44. Id. at 2026 (citing Roper v. Simmons, 543 U.S. 551, 575 (2005)).

45. Id.

46. Id.

47. Id. at 2030.
rules to juveniles. J.D.B. and Miller are further examples of this trend.

C. J.D.B. v. North Carolina

In J.D.B. v. North Carolina, the Court had the opportunity to apply Roper’s and Graham’s insights regarding youth in the Fifth Amendment context. J.D.B. was a thirteen-year-old, seventh-grade, middle school, special education student in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. A police investigator, who was investigating off-campus home break-ins, went to the school to find and question J.D.B. The investigator had a uniformed police officer, also known as a school resource officer (SRO), remove J.D.B. from his social studies class and take him to a conference room. The assistant principal aided the investigator by verifying J.D.B.’s date of birth, address, and parent contact information. The investigator then interrogated J.D.B. in the conference room, with the door closed, for thirty to forty-five minutes with the SRO, assistant principal, and an administrative intern present. The assistant principal told J.D.B., “[D]o the right thing... the truth always comes out in the end.” The investigator threatened J.D.B. with a custody order. J.D.B. then confessed. Only after his confession did the police investigator inform J.D.B. that he could refuse to answer the investigator’s

50. Id. at 2399. The Supreme Court opinion did not include in its factual recitation of J.D.B.’s status as a special education student. However, the North Carolina trial court judge who heard J.D.B.’s original motion to suppress included in his factual findings that J.D.B. was a special education student. In re J.D.B., 686 S.E.2d 135, 136 (N.C. 2009), rev’d, 131 S. Ct. 2394 .
51. J.D.B., 131 S. Ct. at 2399.
52. Id.
53. See id.
54. Id.
55. Id.
56. See id. at 2400.
57. Id.
questions and that he was free to leave. At no point did the police
or school administrators call J.D.B.’s guardian.

The Court granted certiorari to consider “whether the Miranda
custody analysis includes consideration of a juvenile suspect’s
age.” In 1966, when Miranda was issued, the Court had not yet
held that Fifth Amendment protections apply to juveniles; that
decision came the following year in In re Gault. Prior to J.D.B., the
analysis of whether a person was entitled to Miranda warnings rested
on the question of whether she had been taken into custody or
otherwise deprived of her freedom of action in any significant way.
A court’s interpretation of custody focused on how a “reasonable
person” in the suspect’s position would perceive her circumstances,
without regard to the age of the suspect.

Citing Roper and Simmons regarding the fundamental
differences between juveniles and adults, Justice Sotomayor wrote
for the majority:

It is beyond dispute that children will often feel bound to
submit to police questioning when an adult in the same
circumstances would feel free to leave. Seeing no reason for
police officers or courts to blind themselves to that
commonsense reality, we hold that a child’s age properly
informs the Miranda custody analysis.

D. Miller v. Alabama

In the 2012 case of Miller v. Alabama, the Court extended the
holding of Graham and held that statutes mandating life without
parole sentences for juvenile homicides violate the Eighth

58. Id.
59. Id. at 2399.
60. Id. at 2401.
63. Miranda, 384 U.S. at 444.
65. Id. at 666–68 (noting that age is a factor in considerations of the voluntariness of a
suspect’s statement under the Fourteenth Amendment, as well as whether or not any waiver of the
right against self-incrimination was voluntary).
67. Id. at 2398–99; see also id. at 2401–06 (providing an overview of Miranda’s
requirements).
Amendment. Justice Kagan, writing for the majority in Miller, acknowledged that Graham was limited to nonhomicides, but opined:

[N]one of what [the opinion] said about children—about their distinctive (and transitory) mental traits and environmental vulnerabilities—is crime-specific. Those features are evident in the same way, and to the same degree, when (as in both cases here) a botched robbery turns into a killing. So Graham’s reasoning implicates any life-without-parole sentence imposed on a juvenile, even as its categorical bar relates only to nonhomicide offenses.

Justice Kagan further asserted that while the holding did not bar all juvenile life without parole sentences—instead barring only those imposed by a mandatory sentencing scheme—such sentences should be “uncommon.” The Court rested its opinion not only on J.D.B.’s “commonsense” conclusions but also on the science at the center of Roper and Graham, which, Justice Kagan wrote, had become “even stronger.”

E. Back to the Future:
A Brief History of the Juvenile Court

Groundbreaking though they are, these four Supreme Court cases in fact hearken back to the founding of the juvenile court at the turn of the twentieth century. The juvenile court was founded on the notion that children are different from adults and are essentially good. Whether motivated by a belief that children were less blameworthy or innately innocent, the court’s founders viewed children as differing significantly from adults in the reasons they commit crimes and as a result believed that the consequences society

69. Id. at 2460. The Court further held that all youth sentenced pursuant to a mandatory life without parole sentence are entitled to a resentencing hearing that takes into account “how children are different, and how those differences counsel against irrevocably sentencing them to a lifetime in prison.” Id. at 2469.

70. Id. at 2465.

71. Id. at 2469.

72. Id. at 2465 & n.5.

attaches to those crimes should be different. The juvenile court was created to offer rehabilitative alternatives to the adult criminal courts, focus on treatment rather than punishment, and provide for confidentiality to protect youths from the stigma associated with court involvement. In short, “[T]he juvenile court was to act as would a kind and just parent.”

Beginning in the 1960s, civil rights activists, civil libertarians, child advocates, and scholars critiqued the juvenile court’s benevolent aspirations as window dressing for the denigration of children’s rights and disregard of basic due process. Over time, the Supreme Court instituted due process protections in juvenile court proceedings, insisting that the juvenile court’s rehabilitative trappings could not excuse disregard of fair procedure. While scholars and advocates praised this “constitutionalization” of juvenile court, they also worried that instituting procedural protections might simultaneously weaken the juvenile court’s founding principle—that children should be treated differently than adults. Their concern was that criticism of the juvenile court, along with calls for heightened, adult-like protections in the court, would undermine its legitimacy as a separate institution.

Some of those fears seem to have been realized. Beginning in the late 1980s, state legislatures began making it easier for minors to be transferred to adult criminal court. While no state has abolished

75. McKeiver v. Pennsylvania, 403 U.S. 528, 551–52 (1971) (White, J., concurring) (noting that the court’s founders employed a deterministic philosophy by which they viewed children’s law-breaking behavior as resulting not from personal choices, but from forces—poverty, a chaotic home life, peer pressure—largely outside their control).
76. Fedders, supra note 73, at 778 (internal quotation marks omitted).
77. Id. at 779–80.
78. Gault, 387 U.S. at 22–55 (holding that juveniles are entitled to counsel in the fact-finding portion of cases that can end in commitment to a youth facility, notice of charges, the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses, and the right against self-incrimination); In re Winship, 397 U.S. 358, 368 (1970) (holding that juveniles have the right to have charges against them proven beyond a reasonable doubt); Breed v. Jones, 421 U.S. 519, 541 (1975) (holding that juveniles are entitled to protection against double jeopardy).
79. Arya, supra note 11, at 101 n.13 (citations omitted).
80. Id.
its juvenile court, every state has passed laws that resulted in more young people being prosecuted and incarcerated as adults. 82 Until the four “age matters” cases, support seemed to be declining for the notion that children’s uniqueness entitles them to substantively different, more protective treatment from the state, at least in the case of serious crimes. 83

F. Implications of the “Age Matters” Cases for Juvenile and Criminal Justice

The four “age matters” cases constitute a sea change in the punitive trends in juvenile and criminal justice that began in the late 1980s. 84 Taken together, *Roper*, *Graham*, and *Miller* have transformed sentencing practices for juveniles. *J.D.B.*’s declaration that a child’s age must be a factor in the *Miranda* custody analysis similarly changes law enforcement interrogation practices. How broad will the reach of these cases ultimately be? Chief Justice Roberts (who, ironically, wrote a concurring opinion in *Graham*) dissented in *Miller*, opining that the majority’s assertion that life without parole sentences for juveniles should be rare is in fact an “invitation to overturn life without parole sentences imposed by juries and trial judges.” 85 He went on to describe *Miller*’s reach:

This process has no discernible end point—or at least none consistent with our Nation’s legal traditions. . . . Having cast aside those limits, the Court cannot now offer a credible substitute, and does not even try. After all, the Court tells us, “none of what *Graham* said about children . . . is crime-specific.” The principle behind today’s decision seems to be only that because juveniles are different from adults, they must be sentenced differently. There is no clear reason that principle would not bar all mandatory sentences for juveniles, or any juvenile sentence as harsh as what a similarly situated adult would receive. Unless confined, the only stopping point for the Court’s

82. See generally id. (mapping the current landscape of laws governing sanctioning juveniles as adults).
83. Guggenheim, supra note 10, at 466.
84. Id. at 472–74.
analysis would be never permitting juvenile offenders to be tried as adults.86

The end point of these cases may in fact be the establishment of a constitutional principle that minors must always be sentenced differently from adults. One scholar argues that it is impermissible after *Graham* for a legislature to authorize the imposition of an automatic sentence on children that is the same sentence imposed on adults for the same crime, regardless of whether the children are prosecuted in juvenile or criminal court.87 Another scholar pushes this argument further and suggests that retribution may no longer properly be a goal of prosecuting juveniles.88 Another argues that the cases establish a constitutional right to rehabilitation for minors.89

Outside of the sentencing context, the four cases suggest other fundamental alterations in the treatment of minors in the juvenile and criminal systems. Scholars assert that *J.D.B.*’s holding that age must be factored in the *Miranda* custody analysis should logically apply to other areas pertaining to juvenile confession law.90 For example, when assessing whether the prosecution has proven that a juvenile confessed freely and voluntarily, a trial judge might logically apply, as a general presumption, the insights from *Roper, Graham, J.D.B.*, and *Miller* that children are “‘more vulnerable or susceptible to . . . outside pressures’ than adults”91 and thus more likely to succumb to police interrogation by giving statements that are “the product of . . . adolescent fantasy, fright or despair.”92 Under this view, the analysis of a juvenile’s waiver of his or her Fifth Amendment rights should be similarly searching.93 Taken seriously, these cases could also support an argument for a bright-line rule that a child below the age of

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86. *Id.* at 2481–82 (citations omitted).
88. Dan Markel, *May Minors Be Retributively Punished After Panetti (and Graham)?*, 23 FED. SENT’G REP. 62, 65 (2010) (“[J]uveniles must [now] be treated somewhat like the incompetent: that is, as sources of risk and objects of compassion who can hopefully be cured or treated or contained until they exhibit the competence expected from them as adults. Until that time . . . they should be spared the special sting of condemnation associated with the retributive rebuke commonly connected to punishments in prisons or trials as adults.”).
89. Arya, *supra* note 11, at 102.
91. *Id.* at 163.
eighteen must be afforded an opportunity to confer not only with her parent or guardian, as is true in several states, but also with counsel prior to police interrogation. That is because juveniles’ lack of maturity and susceptibility to adult influence render them unable to appropriately assert their rights.

\textit{J.D.B.} could apply in other doctrinal areas in delinquency and criminal law that involve the use of the “reasonable person” test. Felony murder, negligent homicide, provocation, justified force, and duress are all criminal law doctrines requiring judges and juries to analyze “reasonableness.” These doctrines could well be altered to account for the reasonable \textit{juvenile}, as is now required for \textit{Miranda} analysis after \textit{J.D.B.}.

Similarly, the “‘commonsense conclusions about behavior and perception’ that the Court categorically applied to youth in \textit{J.D.B.}” could apply in the Fourth Amendment context. The analysis of whether an individual has been seized by the police and is thus entitled to some protection under the Fourth Amendment turns on whether a reasonable person in that position would feel free to walk away from the officer. Given \textit{J.D.B.’s} findings regarding young people’s deference to authority, a juvenile is arguably less likely than an adult to feel free to walk away from authority. Thus the rubric for analyzing seizures under the Fourth Amendment should include considerations of age.

In sum, the four cases collectively stand for the proposition that the status of being young entitles a minor to different treatment from, and heightened protections against, the state in juvenile and criminal

\begin{itemize}
  \item 94. See id. at 165–67.
  \item 95. Id.; see also BARRY FELD, \textit{KIDS, COPS, AND CONFESSIONS: INSIDE THE INTERROGATION ROOM} 35–59 (2012) (proposing interrogation reforms for youth suspects to prevent false confessions).
  \item 96. See Miller, 132 S. Ct. at 2476 (Breyer, J., concurring) (“[T]here is no basis for imposing a sentence of life without parole upon a juvenile who did not himself kill or intend to kill.”).
  \item 97. Levick et al., \textit{supra} note 17, at 291 n.39.
  \item 98. Farber, \textit{supra} note 16, at 140.
  \item 99. See Terry v. Ohio, 392 U.S. 1, 16–18 (1968).
  \item 100. Farber, \textit{supra} note 16, at 136.
  \item 101. Id. at 121. In some states, courts must take age into consideration in Fourth Amendment analyses. See, \textit{e.g.}, \textit{In re I.R.T.}, 647 S.E.2d 129, 130 (N.C. Ct. App. 2007) (“[T]he age of a juvenile is a relevant factor in determining whether a seizure has occurred within the meaning of the Fourth Amendment.”).
\end{itemize}
justice settings. The cases tell us little, however, about what role adults can play to prevent youths from criminal involvement. 

Youths in the juvenile and criminal systems have made mistakes, sometimes serious ones. But their families, communities, and schools have also often failed them in significant ways. What might the “age matters” cases also tell us regarding what we owe to youths in other state systems, such as public schools? And how, if at all, can the cases galvanize advocacy on behalf of young people to prevent their movement from schools to jails and prisons? It is to these questions that our discussion now turns.

III. “AGE MATTERS” IN SCHOOL

We argue here that those who care about the welfare of young people in the juvenile and criminal systems should push for an end to the way in which schools currently funnel young people into those systems. The “age matters” cases provide tools to do so. The cases speak to a vision of childhood as a time of growth, development, and amenability to redemption and rehabilitation. They point to the necessity of second chances. The cases can be persuasive in urging teachers, principals, and education policymakers to enact policies and practices that curtail the increasingly punitive environment of contemporary public education. In so doing, schools can become both safer and more just.

103. See Buss, supra note 25, at 61–63.
104. Aaron Sussman, The Paradox of Graham v. Florida and the Juvenile Justice System, 37 VT. L. REV. 381, 392 (2012) (“[O]ffenses by the young also represent a failure of family, school, and the social system, which share responsibility for the development of America’s youth.”) (quoting TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND TASK FORCE ON SENTENCING POLICY TOWARD YOUNG OFFENDERS, CONFRONTING YOUTH CRIME 7 (1978)).
105. See Miller, 132 S. Ct. at 2455.
106. See id.
107. See id.
108. See, e.g., id.
109. See id.
A. The Role of School Discipline in Youth Development

Schools play a central role in the socialization and development of children. Children and adolescents spend more time in schools than they do in any place other than their homes. Compulsory attendance laws are in place in all fifty states. On average, students spend over thirty hours per week and over one thousand hours per year in school. Additionally, children tend to, and are encouraged to, identify with adults in schools. Those adults—teachers, administrators, support staff, security personnel, and others—do more than transfer knowledge; they transmit attitudes and values. Education and child development scholars agree that schooling is a kind of child-rearing, a process by which society formally expresses itself to youths regarding what is important. Teachers help their


111. See ECCLES & ROESER, supra note 110, at 504.


students grow along crucial developmental pathways. Therefore, to be successful, schools must create conditions that foster positive development and learning. Indeed, this is what they do for the most privileged children and families.

Discipline is one of the ways young people are socialized and undergo development in schools. School safety can be achieved using proactive strategies that promote healthy development and support a democratic, progressive vision of public education. Alternatively, reactive school safety efforts, driven by a goal of achieving control and conformity and accomplished by meting out punishment, may inhibit youth development and contribute to the flow of young people into the juvenile and criminal systems.

B. Discipline as Social Control

Some critics of public education view it as being primarily focused on a hidden curriculum of conformity, uniformity, competition, and control. They see education as a tool to manipulate students from poor and working class families, to serve the needs of global capitalism by molding future low-cost workers, and to entrench and reproduce deep social inequalities. Under this view, sectors of students are, first and foremost, taught to follow orders, and in the process of schooling, diversity, independent

118. See id.
119. See id.
120. See Russell Skiba & M. Karega Rausch, Children’s Needs III: Development, Prevention, and Intervention 87 (George G. Bear & Kathleen M. Minke eds., 2006).
thinking, and individuality can be crushed, leading many students to become alienated, complacent, passive, bored, and anxious. This view does not, of course, extend to children of the wealthy ensconced in well-resourced suburban public or private schools.

Unfortunately, the school discipline regime that has emerged over the last two decades supports this highly critical view of education. At the height of the “tough on crime” era and on the heels of mandatory minimum sentencing, three-strikes laws, the “broken windows” theory of aggressive policing, unprecedented construction of a prison regime, high-profile school shootings (e.g., Columbine), the media saturating a panicked public with hyperbolic stories about juvenile “super-predators,” and changing public perceptions of children, the federal government, state legislatures, and local school districts began adopting zero-tolerance policies and


127. See Shapiro, supra note 124.


131. See, e.g., CAL. EDUC. CODE § 48915(c)(1) (West 2013) (requiring expulsion for possession of firearm on school premises).


expanding the presence of law enforcement in schools. The “take no prisoners discipline” that emerged is situated in, and in some ways is motivated by, the unrelenting drive for “accountability” in public education that largely takes the form of high-stakes, standardized testing for students.

These factors have led to the criminalization of school disciplinary systems, even though schools are among the safest places for children and serious acts of violence in schools are rare.


Over forty years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that “schools may not be enclaves of totalitarianism[,]” yet in many ways, those are precisely what they have become. Crime-control imperatives increasingly dominate educational policy. High-profile tragedies produce more calls for policing of schools. Students are increasingly viewed as one dimensional, either as potential victims or as suspects whose behavior needs to be managed and controlled. After the latter group of students is identified, disciplinary policies and practices serve to push them out of schools, rather than simply eliminating or managing their negative behaviors and helping them to grow out of adolescence. As in J.D.B.,

140. See John W. Whitehead, Zero Tolerance Schools Discipline Without Wiggle Room, HUFFINGTON POST (Feb. 8, 2011, 7:45 PM), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-w-whitehead/zero-tolerance-policies-schools_b_819594.html (“As surveillance cameras, metal detectors, police patrols, zero tolerance policies, lock downs, drug sniffing dogs and strip searches become the norm in elementary, middle and high schools across the nation, America is on a fast track to raising up an Orwellian generation—one populated by compliant citizens accustomed to living in a police state and who march in lockstep to the dictates of the government. In other words, the schools are teaching our young people how to be obedient subjects in a totalitarian society.”).
141. See Majd, supra note 134, at 361.
143. See Henry A. Giroux, Schools and the Pedagogy of Punishment, TRUTHOUT (Oct. 20, 2009), http://archive.truthout.org/10200910 [hereinafter Giroux, Schools and the Pedagogy of Punishment] (“The combination of school punishments and criminal penalties has proven a lethal mix for many poor minority youth and has transformed schools from spaces of youth advocacy, protection, hope and equity to military fortresses, increasingly well-positioned to mete out injustice and humiliation, transforming the once-nurturing landscapes that young people are compelled to inhabit.”); Henry A. Giroux, The Tragedy of Youth Deepens: Ten Years After Columbine, COUNTERPUNCH (Apr. 20, 2009), http://www.counterpunch.org/2009/04/20/ten-years-after-columbine/ [hereinafter Giroux, The Tragedy of Youth Deepens] (“[M]any public schools, traditionally viewed as . . . nurturing, youth-friendly spaces dedicated to protecting and educating children, have become one of the most punitive institutions young people now face . . . . Educating for citizenship, work, and the public good has been replaced with models of schooling in which students are viewed narrowly either as a threat or perpetrator of violence, on the one hand, or as infantilized potential victims of crime . . . on the other.”).
145. See Giroux, Schools and the Pedagogy of Punishment, supra note 143; Giroux, The Tragedy of Youth Deepens, supra note 143; see also SUSAN SANDLER ET AL., TURNING TO EACH OTHER NOT ON EACH OTHER: HOW SCHOOL COMMUNITIES PREVENT RACIAL BIAS IN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE 2 (2000), available at http://web.multco.us/sites/default/files/cfc/documents/justice_matters__how_school_communities_prevent_racial_bias_in_school_discipline.pdf (addressing the discipline crisis and suggesting approaches that work to prevent racial bias in discipline).
146. See OPPORTUNITIES SUSPENDED, supra note 135, at 2–3.
teachers and administrators increasingly function as and work hand-in-hand with law enforcement. Across the country, very young children have been suspended from school and restrained and arrested at school.\footnote{147} Conditions in schools in working-class and poor communities often reflect an obsession with security and violence\footnote{148} and resemble prison conditions: both have decaying and overcrowded facilities, undertrained and underpaid staff, and a penury of equipment and supplies. Additionally, both prisons and schools in low-income communities tightly regulate conduct by employing armed guards, conducting random searches, and utilizing surveillance equipment, emergency phones, and sign-in desks.\footnote{149} In short, schools are in many ways preparing some students for life as a criminal,\footnote{150} and have become “‘accomplices’ to the project of mass incarceration.”\footnote{151}

The singular, misguided focus on removing students identified as problems through suspension, expulsion, and policing has come at the expense of academic achievement, school safety, and overall
student well-being. It also comes at a time when many schools do not have libraries, art rooms, computer labs, or robust athletic programs. The punitive approach overlooks young people’s critical developmental needs. Punitive discipline is a missed opportunity for positive socialization, affirming democratic norms, and meeting the developmental needs of students. The current school discipline regime is alienating and isolating, and increasingly instills in children a sense of hopelessness and despair.

1. Zero Tolerance, Suspension, and Expulsion

Zero tolerance policies mandate predetermined consequences—typically suspension and expulsion from the educational setting—for various student offenses. Zero tolerance policies are designed, in part, to express school-wide intolerance for certain behaviors by punishing those behaviors severely, without regard to context, actual

154. See WEBBER, supra note 123, at 119 (“The public, unable to see an alternative method of dealing with student violence due to shock and political indolence, allows the processing of students by the now panicked hidden curriculum to continue without acknowledging the negative effects of such socialization. Shiftless in front of the television screen, the public blinks at the policy of containment operating in schools and only seeks comfort in the visible signs of security (police uniforms, clear backpacks, camera lenses, and children paraded in front of courthouses donning bulletproof vests.”); TEST, PUNISH, AND PUSH OUT, supra note 21, at 10 (citation omitted).
156. See AARON KUPCHIK, HOMEROOM SECURITY: SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IN AN AGE OF FEAR 194 (2010); Suvall, supra note 155, at 553.
157. See KUPCHIK, supra note 156, at 6–7; Giroux, Youth in a Suspect Society, supra note 149 (“As schools increasingly resemble zones of abandonment, trust and respect give way to fear, disdain and suspicion, creating an environment in which critical education withers. Unfortunately, policies and practices designed to foster exclusion and mete out shame and humiliation make it easier for young people to look upon their society and their futures with suspicion and despair, rather than anticipation and hope. What is horrifying about the plight of youth today is not just the severity of deprivations and violence they experience daily, but also how they have been forced to view the world and redefine the nature of their own childhood within the borders of hopelessness, cruelty and despair.”).
harm, mitigating factors, or extenuating circumstances. Proponents of zero tolerance policies argued that, in addition to deterrence, these policies would create more consistency in discipline. As shown below, however, these predictions about more equity in punishment have not been proven true.

By the mid-1990s, zero tolerance policies were in place in most schools across the country. The policies were implemented without any empirical support for their efficacy in schools. Worse yet, there is now ample evidence—and conclusions by organizations such as the National Association of School Psychologists, the American Psychological Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics—that zero tolerance policies are not only ineffective, but also destructive. The harm arises largely due to the mismatch between zero tolerance policies and prescriptions for positive youth development. No one should be punished by being deprived of an education.

First, zero tolerance disregards the adolescent brain development research that formed the basis of the Supreme Court’s “age

160. See Judith A. Browne et al., Zero Tolerance: Unfair, with Little Recourse, in NEW DIRECTIONS: ZERO TOLERANCE, supra note 138, 73, 73; Am. Psychological Ass’n, supra note 138, at 854. Instead of deterrence and consistency, zero tolerance policies seem to be merely superficial and political stopgap measures to deeper problems of inequality. See OPPORTUNITIES SUSPENDED, supra note 135, at 17; SKIBA, supra note 133, at 2–3.
163. See Am. Psychological Ass’n, supra note 138, at 860.
165. See OPPORTUNITIES SUSPENDED, supra note 135, at 10; TEST, PUNISH, AND PUSH OUT, supra note 21, at 14; Gil G. Noam et al., Beyond the Rhetoric of Zero Tolerance: Long-Term Solutions for At-Risk Youth, in NEW DIRECTIONS: ZERO TOLERANCE, supra note 138, 155, 156; Am. Psychological Ass’n, supra note 138, at 855; Majd, supra note 134, at 377–78.
matters” cases. It punishes young people for exhibiting some of the normative adolescent behaviors that characterize their development, including questioning authority, being susceptible to peer influence, and failing to fully consider or understand the consequences of their actions.

Second, zero tolerance policies push youths out of school, depriving them of an education, often through unfair and arbitrary processes. These policies impede developmental needs such as strong and trusting relationships with adults, positive attitudes toward fairness and justice, and the ability to manage conflicts and learn from mistakes. Zero tolerance is a form of abandonment: it disinvests in youths by isolating them from supportive peers and adults. Moreover, zero tolerance is most often implemented at the middle and high school levels, a time when adolescents are keenly attuned to issues of justice and fairness. Finally, overly harsh punishment can destroy a child’s spirit and cause significant heartbreak for students and their families.

Third, youth development in schools requires flexibility because each learning environment is different and students possess varying backgrounds and needs. However, zero tolerance is, by

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168. See TEST, PUNISH, AND PUSH OUT, supra note 21, at 14 (“Indeed, in a great many schools, it is seemingly no longer acceptable for young people to act their age.”); DANIEL J. LOSEN & RUSSELL J. SKIBA, SUSPENDED EDUCATION: URBAN MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN CRISIS 11 (2010).

169. See OPPORTUNITIES SUSPENDED, supra note 135, at 4.

170. See Noam et al., supra note 165, at 156; cf. OPPORTUNITIES SUSPENDED, supra note 135, at 10–12.

171. See generally ZERO TOLERANCE, supra note 128.

172. See ROBBINS, supra note 149.

173. See TEST, PUNISH, AND PUSH OUT, supra note 21, at 11–12.

174. See SANDLER ET AL., supra note 145, at 4; Browne et al., supra note 160, at 73.

175. See SANDLER ET AL., supra note 145, at 4–5.


177. See Ken Bernstein, AFT Advocates Against a One-Size-Fits-All Approach to Education, AFL-CIO NOW (July 23, 2012), http://www.aflcio.org/Blog/Other-News/AFT-Advocates-Against-a-One-Size-Fits-All-Approach-to-Education (“[AFT President Randi Weingarten and] the American Federation of Teachers . . . insist we remember that not all children are alike, that we not reduce their education to the single measure of performance on test and that we remember that it is our responsibility to adjust the education we give them to the needs they have—and not
definition, inflexible\(^{178}\) and thus limits educators’ ability to perceive and implement positive, developmentally appropriate, individualized, and proportional solutions to behavior problems.\(^{179}\)

Worse yet, as zero tolerance policies gained prevalence, school administrators retained wide discretion to use out-of-school suspension and expulsion for relatively minor, subjective offenses.\(^{180}\) Incentives for suspending students discretionarily, such as relieving overworked teachers, reducing student competition for funds and resources, and artificially boosting scores on standardized tests, have remained firmly in place.\(^{181}\) In fact, the majority of suspensions are for nonviolent, less serious offenses, such as inappropriate language, tardiness, truancy, disobedience, and disrespect.\(^{182}\) Suspensions in these cases are not typically required by zero tolerance policies but have become a habit—in the absence of school social workers, nurses, parent aids, and trained volunteers in resource-starved schools.

Zero tolerance policies, combined with virtually unlimited discretion for administrators to suspend students for minor offenses,\(^{184}\) have dramatically increased the use of school suspension and expulsion.\(^{185}\) The number of school suspensions nearly doubled from 1974 to 2006.\(^{186}\) According to the U.S. Department of Education, over 10 million students were placed in some form of out-of-school suspension in 2007 and 2008. While the rates of suspensions have dropped since then,\(^{187}\) millions of students are discipline-remediated every year.\(^{188}\) The effects of school discipline on students are well-documented, and there is growing evidence that school discipline policies are an important factor in students’ academic outcomes and future success.\(^{189}\)

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\(^{178}\) See Noam et al., supra note 165, at 155.

\(^{179}\) See Garver & Noguera, supra note 152, at 26.


\(^{182}\) See LOSEN & SKIBA, supra note 168, at 9.

\(^{183}\) See id.

\(^{184}\) See SKIBA, supra note 133, at 10.


Education’s Office for Civil Rights,\textsuperscript{187} over 3,000,000 students were suspended from school at least one time during the 2009–10 school year.\textsuperscript{188}

Yet there is no evidence to suggest that widespread use of suspension and expulsion makes schools safer,\textsuperscript{189} improves student behavior,\textsuperscript{190} deters misbehavior effectively,\textsuperscript{191} or benefits nonsuspended students academically by improving the learning climate.\textsuperscript{192} The reality is that suspension and expulsion cause significant damage to youth development. Suspension and expulsion are associated with negative educational outcomes,\textsuperscript{193} including less time for learning,\textsuperscript{194} grade retention,\textsuperscript{195} poor academic performance,\textsuperscript{196} failure to graduate on time or dropping out,\textsuperscript{197} and less satisfactory school climates.\textsuperscript{198} Additionally, suspension and

\textsuperscript{188.} See OPPORTUNITIES SUSPENDED, supra note 135, at 11–12.
\textsuperscript{189.} See Skiba & Knesting, supra note 185, at 35; Michelle Fine & Kersha Smith, Zero Tolerance: Reflections on a Failed Policy That Won’t Die, in ZERO TOLERANCE, supra note 128, 256, 258 (arguing that zero tolerance prevents youths who need help from coming forward); LOSEN & SKIBA, supra note 168, at 2.
\textsuperscript{192.} See Mendez, supra note 191, at 25; Skiba et al., supra note 191, at 1077–78.
\textsuperscript{193.} See OPPORTUNITIES SUSPENDED, supra note 135, at 13.
\textsuperscript{194.} See LOSEN & SKIBA, supra note 168, at 2.
\textsuperscript{195.} See FABELO ET AL., supra note 180, at xi, 54–60.
\textsuperscript{196.} See Mendez, supra note 191, at 25.
\textsuperscript{197.} See LOSEN & SKIBA, supra note 168, at 10 (citation omitted); Am. Psychological Ass’n, supra note 138, at 854; Lawrence M. DeRidder, How Suspension and Expulsion Contribute to Dropping Out, EDUC. DIG., Feb. 1991, at 44; Ruth B. Ekstrom et al., Who Drops Out of High School and Why? Findings from a National Study, 87 TEACHERS COLL. RECORD 356 (1986); Mendez, supra note 191, at 25; Skiba & Knesting, supra note 185, at 33.
\textsuperscript{198.} See LOSEN & SKIBA, supra note 168, at 10; Am. Psychological Ass’n, supra note 138, at 854.
expulsion make schools and communities less safe by exacerbating behavior problems, antisocial behavior, and developmental problems, and creating a self-fulfilling belief that the student is incapable of abiding by the school’s social and behavioral codes. These policies cause some students to view confrontational discipline as a challenge to escalate their behavior. Additionally, suspended and expelled students are left with more time unsupervised, prevented from receiving needed treatment or assistance, and provided with more opportunities to socialize with negative peers, which all eliminate the possibility of school serving as a protective factor against delinquent conduct and violence. Adolescents who are out of school are also more likely to engage in self-destructive behavior such as smoking and using drugs. Furthermore, suspension and expulsion breed distrust, confrontation, and alienation, thereby resulting in psychological damage and negative mental health outcomes for students. Removing students from

199. See Michael P. Krezmien et al., Juvenile Court Referrals and the Public Schools: Nature and Extent of the Practice in Five States, 26 J. CONTEMP. CRIM. JUST. 273, 274 (2010); Am. Psychological Ass’n, supra note 138, at 854, 860.


201. See Teske, supra note 166, at 91 (explaining that MRI studies have shown that a zero tolerance policy may exacerbate the existing challenges for youths, since youths are developmentally immature at that age).

202. See Browne et al., supra note 160, at 77 (citation omitted).

203. See SKIBA, supra note 133, at 14 (referring to this phenomenon as “counter-coercion”).

204. See Am. Acad. of Pediatrics Comm. on Sch. Health, Out-of-School Suspension and Expulsion, 112 PEDIATRICS 1206, 1207 (2003) (“Children who are suspended are often from a population that is the least likely to have supervision at home.”).

205. Cf. id.

206. SKIBA, supra note 133, at 14; Morrison et al., supra note 200, at 57; Skiba & Peterson, supra note 159, at 376.

207. See Teske, supra note 166, at 89–90.


209. See OPPORTUNITIES SUSPENDED, supra note 135, at 10; BROWNE, supra note 147, at 28.

210. See NEW DIRECTIONS: ZERO TOLERANCE, supra note 138, at vi.

211. See Morrison et al., supra note 200, at 56–57.

212. See Am. Psychological Ass’n Zero Tolerance Task Force, supra note 138, at 856 (“[Z]ero tolerance policies may create, enhance, or accelerate negative mental health outcomes for youth by creating increases in student alienation, anxiety, rejection, and breaking of healthy adult bonds.” (citation omitted)).
school inhibits their preparation to become participants in a self-governing democracy. Finally, as developed further below, these sanctions are applied in a wildly discriminatory fashion.

2. School Policing

The facts of *J.D.B.* are a microcosm of an increasingly pervasive intertwining of policing and schooling. Suspensions and expulsions increased dramatically over the last two decades, while school districts at the same time experienced an explosion in the presence of law enforcement officers and other security personnel in schools. For example, the number of SROs assigned to patrol North Carolina public schools increased 249 percent from 1995–96 to 2008–09. In Texas, approximately 167 school districts now have their own police departments, whereas in 1989, police departments were present in only seven districts. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that, in 1997, there were 9,446 SROs nationwide, and then, in 2007, there were 13,056 SROs—a 38 percent increase.

Despite the lack of reliable evidence that shows SROs make schools safer and the fact that SROs often lack adequate training, accountability, and oversight, the proliferation of school police

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213. See *LOSEN & SKIBA*, supra note 168, at 11.
215. See *TEST, PUNISH, AND PUSH OUT*, supra note 21, at 15–16.
officers has become common across the country. 221 Recent estimates place the total number of SROs nationwide at 17,000. 222 Law enforcement officers patrol nearly half of all U.S. public schools, and school-based law enforcement officers are the fastest growing segment of law enforcement. 223 The Los Angeles Unified School District has its own school police department with over 350 sworn police officers, 126 nonsworn school safety officers, and 34 civilian support staff. 224 In New York City, nearly 5,500 school safety agents (who wear NYPD uniforms and have the power to stop, frisk, question, detain, search, and arrest students) and 200 armed police officers are assigned to patrol the public schools. 225 Even when SROs are not present, law enforcement may be heavily intertwined with schools. Forty-one states currently require schools to report students to law enforcement for certain school-based offenses. 226 Anecdotal evidence shows that schools make law enforcement

221. See Garver & Noguera, supra note 152, at 6; Mae C. Quinn, The Fallout from Our Blackboard Battlegrounds: A Call for Withdrawal and a New Way Forward, 15 J. GENDER RACE & JUST. 541, 555, 557, 578 (2012) (commenting that public schools are “occupied territories and police states” and that “SROs add to the oppressive environment that poor and minority youths experience in public schools” and are part of the United States’ “multi-front attacks on our most vulnerable children”).


223. See Hirschfield, supra note 137, at 82 (citation omitted); Kim, supra note 121, at 878–79.


referrals for offenses that go beyond those mandated by state statute. 227

Surveillance and other security measures in schools also increased over the last two decades. 228 Today, public schools—with video cameras, metal detectors, standardized tests, attendance records, drug tests, SROs, tracking of online activity, and constant watching and listening by staff—are some of the most surveilled public spaces and constitute one of the largest markets for security companies. 229 Aside from prison and jail inmates, students are among the most policed and surveilled groups. 230

Similar to suspension and expulsion, school policing has many negative impacts on youth development. First, school policing diverts limited financial resources toward security. 231 For example, New York City’s budget for police and security equipment increased 65 percent between 2002 and 2008, to more than $221 million. 232 In 2004, the Denver Public Schools had fourteen SROs that cost taxpayers approximately $1.35 million. 233 In the Wake County Public School System (in and around Raleigh, North Carolina), one of the most poorly funded large school systems in the nation, 234 a national board-certified teacher with a bachelor’s degree would need six years of licensed experience before earning the average security investigator salary and twelve years of licensed experience before earning the average SRO salary. 235 Second, school policing can produce alienation and mistrust, disrupt the learning environment, create adversarial relationships between school officials and students, interfere with student learning, and negatively affect student

229. SCHOOLS UNDER SURVEILLANCE, CULTURES OF CONTROL IN PUBLIC EDUCATION (Torin Monahan & Rodolfo D. Torres eds., 2010).
231. Sussman, supra note 149, at 797.
232. TEST, PUNISH, AND PUSH OUT, supra note 21, at 16.
morale.\textsuperscript{236} Third, the presence of SROs results in more students being referred to court for minor offenses, which could be more easily and productively handled through school administrative procedures.\textsuperscript{237} Fourth, students who must regularly appear in court miss valuable class time.\textsuperscript{238} Fifth, school-based searches, interrogations, arrests, and court referrals can cause emotional trauma, embarrassment, and stigmatization.\textsuperscript{239} Adolescence is a volatile period of identity development, and therefore, the stigma of being treated like a criminal in school can be devastating.\textsuperscript{240} Nevertheless, aggressive school policing teaches students that they are dangerous, do not belong, and have little to contribute.\textsuperscript{241} Students may internalize or even embrace the label of troublemaker or criminal, at which point it may become a self-fulfilling prophecy.\textsuperscript{242} Finally, students who are funneled into the juvenile and criminal systems often face debilitating collateral consequences, including stigmatization, academic failure, ineligibility for student loans, reduced employment opportunities, eviction from public housing, and deportation.\textsuperscript{243}

3. Disparities

School discipline as a form of social control has had a disproportionately negative effect on the development of certain categories of students.\textsuperscript{244} Harsh discipline policies and practices—namely, zero tolerance, suspension, expulsion, and over-policing—

\textsuperscript{236} The “Worst of Both Worlds.”, supra note 138, at 340.
\textsuperscript{238} See Cobb, supra note 237, at 595.
\textsuperscript{239} TEST, PUNISH, AND PUSH OUT, supra note 21, at 12.
\textsuperscript{240} Sussman, supra note 149, at 819.
\textsuperscript{243} LANGBERG, FEDDERS & KUKOROWSKI, supra note 235, at 5–6.
\textsuperscript{244} See Quinn, supra note 221, at 542–43.
have a disparate racial impact.\textsuperscript{245} National data from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education\textsuperscript{246} show that nearly one in every six African American students (17 percent), one in fourteen Latino students (7 percent), and one in twelve Native American students (8 percent) were suspended at least once during the 2009–10 school year, compared with only one in twenty white students (5 percent) and one in fifty Asian American students (2 percent).\textsuperscript{247} The data further reveal that during the same school year, African American students made up 18 percent of students enrolled in the schools sampled, yet they accounted for 35 percent of students suspended once, 46 percent of students suspended more than once, and 39 percent of students expelled.\textsuperscript{248} The OCR’s data further show that African American students were disproportionately arrested at school.\textsuperscript{249} These data prompted the U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, to comment in March 2012: “The sad fact is that minority students across America face much harsher discipline than non-minorities—even within the same school.”\textsuperscript{250} These racial disparities have grown over the last forty years.\textsuperscript{251}

Additionally, African American students are, in many places, punished more harshly than similarly situated white students who commit the same offenses.\textsuperscript{252} For example, during the 2010–11 school year in the Wake County Public School System, African Americans who committed “cell phone use” for the first time were suspended 72 percent of the time compared to white first time offenders who were suspended 30 percent of the time for the same

\textsuperscript{245} Tamar Lewin, \textit{Black Students Punished More, Data Suggests}, N.Y. TIMES, Mar. 6, 2012, at A11; \textit{see also} OPPORTUNITIES SUSPENDED, supra note 135, at 7.

\textsuperscript{246} For the complete set of Office of Civil Rights reports, see \textit{Civil Rights Data Collection}, U.S. DEP’T EDUC. OFF. FOR C.R., http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/data.html and Lewin, supra note 245.


\textsuperscript{248} Lewin, supra note 245.

\textsuperscript{249} Donna St. George, \textit{Black Students Are Arrested More Often, Data Reveal}, WASH. POST, Mar. 6, 2012, at A2.

\textsuperscript{250} \textit{Id.}

\textsuperscript{251} LOSEN & SKIBA, supra note 168, at 2–3.

offense. Worse still, these racial disparities exacerbate social inequality. Students with the highest rates of suspension already disproportionately face potential obstacles to healthy youth development, such as poverty, single-parent families, a lack of health insurance, abuse and neglect, and food insecurity. Students with disabilities are also disproportionately pushed out of schools. Nationwide, students with disabilities are suspended about twice as often as their nondisabled peers. During the 2009–10 school year, 13 percent of students with disabilities were suspended at least once, compared to 7 percent of students without disabilities. Additionally, students with disabilities made up 12 percent of the student body, but 70 percent of those students who were subject to physical restraints. The largest ever study of school discipline found that, in Texas, three-quarters of students with a disability were suspended or expelled at least once, compared to 55 percent of students with no recorded disability. A 2004 report


255. Id. (noting that in 2010, 39 percent of African American children, 37 percent of American Indian children, and 34 percent of Latino children lived in poverty, compared to 14 percent of white children, and 14 percent of Asian children).


258. CHILDRENS DEF. FUND, supra note 256, at F-6 (noting that in 2009, 35 percent of African American children and 35 percent of Latino children were food insecure, compared to 17 percent of white children).


261. Id.

262. Lewin, supra note 245.

263. FABELO ET AL., supra note 180, at 50.
found that though students with disabilities comprised only 13 percent of the school-aged population in Pennsylvania, they comprised 24 percent of the school-based referrals to the police or juvenile justice system.264

Consequently, African American students with disabilities are at an especially high risk of being victimized by harsh discipline. According to Dan Losen, director of the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the Civil Rights Project at UCLA, “[O]ne out of every four Black K-12 students with disabilities was suspended out of school at least one time in 2009–2010[,] . . . a full 16 percentage points higher than for white students with disabilities.”265

IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR REFORM

Public education can be, and numerous schools currently are, vastly different from the predominant culture described above. School administrators and educational policymakers can incorporate the concepts and principles derived from social science and neuroscience that formed the basis of the “age matters” cases into improved educational policies and practices. The principles of these cases—that youth are categorically less culpable than adults and therefore less deserving of the harshest punishment and that consequences must account for the individual circumstances of a child—can animate a return to the spirit of optimism regarding the potential of youth that motivated the juvenile court founders. If educators take the reasoning of these cases seriously, they can contribute to positive youth development by helping young people mature,266 develop their strengths,267 and become adults who make


265. LOSEN & GILLEPSIE, supra note 252, at 14.

266. Comer, supra note 117, at 3 (“Adequate support for development must be restored. And school is the first place this can happen. It is the common pathway for all children—the only place where a significant number of adults are working with young people in a way that enables them to call on family and community resources to support growth systematically and continually. And school is one of the few places where students, staff, and community can create environments in which to help young people achieve the necessary levels of maturity.”)

positive contributions to their communities and actively participate in a self-governing democracy. Schools can help students develop autonomy, individual mobility, independent thought, and, at the same time, teach children how to live together by developing an appreciation of diversity, fairness and compassion toward others, community, and interconnectedness. Schools can help students to “reach the full measure of their humanity.”

It is possible to accomplish the goals of instilling discipline and promoting safety while simultaneously encouraging positive youth development in school. Safe schools build on students’ assets and strengths in order to help them improve their behaviors and achieve academic success, rather than pushing them out through suspension, expulsion, and court referrals. There is no magic bullet or quick


270. LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND, THE RIGHT TO LEARN: A BLUEPRINT FOR CREATING SCHOOLS THAT WORK (1997); MEIER, supra note 116, at 7–8 (explaining that the public schools allow for a sense of community, and train students for political conversations dealing with “race, class, religion, and ideology”).

271. AYERS, supra note 116, at 1.

272. See generally Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 217 (III) A, art. 26 (Dec. 10, 1948) (calling for education that is “directed to the full development of the human personality”); United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, G.A. Res. 47/25, art. 29 (Nov. 20, 1989) (requiring that education of the child “be directed to: (a) The development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential; (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms . . . (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin”); United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, G.A. Res. 2200A(XXI), art. 13 (Dec. 16, 1966) (“1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.”).


274. Noam et al., supra note 165, at 155, 170.
fix for ensuring that schools are both developmentally appropriate and safe. Moreover, piecemeal approaches at reform have not, by and large, been successful. Thus, to ensure school safety in a way that supports youths, schools should begin by forming teams of respected members of the school community—including students, parents, teachers, and staff—to analyze available data and examine existing and potential resources, and then to develop a comprehensive, strategic plan that utilizes an array of strategies.

Fortunately, extensive research exists that can provide teams with guidance about research-based strategies for promoting a safe school climate and developmentally appropriate responses to disruption. In the following sections, the strategies are divided into three levels from broadest to narrowest: (1) policy reform; (2) school-wide prevention practices; and (3) individualized interventions and alternatives.

A. Recommended Policies

At the broadest level, state legislatures should adopt statutes and school boards should adopt policies that take into account principles of youth development. Such changes should begin with adopting a mission, guiding principles, or a statement of purpose that fosters a caring and supportive culture. Dignity in Schools is a national organization that challenges school push out and advocates for young people to receive a quality education and be treated with dignity.

In August 2012, after years of work by stakeholders around the

276. Geronimo, supra note 181, at 284.
277. Skiba & Rausch, supra note 120, at 96–98.
278. Id.; Skiba et al., supra note 275, at 7–8.
279. Various authors have various categorizations. See, e.g., Skiba & Rausch, supra note 120, at 93–94 (noting (1) primary or universal prevention, (2) secondary or selected prevention, and (3) tertiary or indicated prevention); Gagnon & Leone, supra note 138, at 104 (noting (1) universal interventions; (2) student-centered approaches; and (3) school security).
country, Dignity in Schools released a Model Code on Education and Dignity.\textsuperscript{282} The Model Code recommends a policy that defines the components of a high-quality education, which is one that “[a]ddresses the mental, physical, social and emotional needs of children and youth”\textsuperscript{283} and “[p]rovides appropriate instruction, experiences and discipline for each age and grade level[.]”\textsuperscript{284} Policymakers should then revise codes of conduct, due process procedures, and policies or agreements governing SROs.\textsuperscript{285}

1. Code of Conduct

State legislators should revise statutes and school board members revise codes of conduct to eliminate zero tolerance because, as discussed above, it does not account for adolescent development.\textsuperscript{286} Zero tolerance should be replaced by graduated systems of discipline, including less severe consequences for more minor offenses and younger students who are especially immature, impulsive, and susceptible to peer influence.\textsuperscript{287} The codes should require administrators to consider, prior to meting out any suspension or expulsion, mitigating factors—such as the student’s age and developmental level\textsuperscript{288}—that might have influenced the student’s

\textsuperscript{282} Id.
\textsuperscript{283} Id. at 7.
\textsuperscript{284} Id.
\textsuperscript{285} See id. at 19.
\textsuperscript{288} Additional mitigating factors that should be considered include the following: the student’s ability to understand consequences; whether the student was a victim of bullying or acting in self-defense; whether the student has experienced abuse, neglect, domestic violence, or homelessness; whether the student has mental health issues; the student’s lack of disciplinary history; and the student’s expression of remorse.
behavior at no fault of her own. Replacing mandatory punishments with behavioral consequences that account for the individual circumstances of a child is consistent with the spirit and holdings of Graham and Miller. Administrators should also be required to use developmentally appropriate interventions and alternatives (see section C below for a discussion of interventions and alternatives).

Finally, the codes should also specify that students have rights related to positive youth development, such as the rights to be treated with fairness and respect, be in a supportive and positive environment, and receive services for their developmental needs.

2. Due Process

In 1975, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that students have a state-created property interest in educational benefits and a liberty interest in reputation while in school, both of which are protected by the Due
Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Therefore, students facing a suspension of ten days or fewer must be given some form of notice and hearing. Pursuant to lower court decisions, state statutes, and local board policies, students facing longer suspensions may be entitled to additional procedures, such as the right to written notice, the opportunity to review records prior to a hearing, and a hearing in front of a neutral decision maker at which the student can be represented by an attorney, present evidence, cross-examine witnesses, and make a recording.

However, in reality, these minimal due process protections are often inadequate or ignored, which result in suspension appeals being a “kangaroo court.” For example, written notice may not be provided in a timely manner or in the parent or guardian’s primary language; schools may wrongly claim that records necessary for the student to prepare an adequate defense are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); the “neutral” decisionmaker may be a teacher supervised by the principal who recommended the suspension or expulsion, or another individual paid by the school system that is seeking to remove the student; students from low-income families are not provided with an attorney appointed at public expense and may not be able to find free or affordable legal services; and students cannot cross-

298. See id.
299. Simone Marie Freeman, Upholding Students’ Due Process Rights: Why Students Are in Need of Better Representation at, and Alternatives to, School Suspension Hearings, 45 FAM. CT. REV. 638, 642–43 (2007) (providing research that shows these rights are not afforded in many states and school districts).
301. See In re Gault, 387 U.S. 1, 28 (1967) (“Under our Constitution, the condition of being a boy does not justify a kangaroo court.”).
examine witnesses when schools are allowed to use hearsay evidence. When these violations occur, suspension hearings are fundamentally unfair and are “a facade for arbitrariness.”

The lack of due process afforded to students being pushed out of school has negative effects on youth development and, consequently, harms school safety. Inadequate due process can cause a student to feel like the school is out to get her, send an improper message that the state can act arbitrarily, and cause a student to feel angry and defiant. Alternatively, adequate procedures may help students perceive the discipline process and the larger society as fair and legitimate; cause students to feel empowered and confident; teach students about democracy and respect for the dignity of the individual; reduce recidivism by improving a student’s perception of and compliance with the law and encouraging students to invest in rehabilitation; enhance the possibility that the truth will emerge; and expose bias. Therefore, prior to an expulsion, long-term suspension, or transfer to an alternative school, due process should, at a minimum, provide the student with certain basic procedures. First, automatic, open discovery (with necessary

306. See Stone v. Prosser Consol. Sch. Dist. No. 119, 971 P.2d 125, 127 (Wash. Ct. App. 1999) (stating that “it is risky to base an expulsion on hearsay statements bolstered by a school official’s testimony that the proponent is reliable”); see also Newsome v. Batavia Local Sch. Dist., 842 F.2d 920, 926 (1988) (refusing to require an opportunity to cross-examine witnesses and recognizing the importance of hearsay evidence in school disciplinary hearings).


310. Birckhead, supra note 242, at 1478 (citation omitted).

311. Freeman, supra note 299, at 646; Buss, supra note 304, at 574.

312. Freeman, supra note 299, at 646.

313. William G. Buss, supra note 304, at 549; Miriam Rokeach & John Denvir, Front-Loading Due Process: A Dignity-Based Approach to School Discipline, 67 OHIO ST. L.J. 277, 288 (2006) (“The philosophy of due process is based on a single premise that has special significance in the educational setting—every person possesses dignity that requires the government to treat them with respect. First, it teaches students a fundamental principle of democracy: the dignity of the individual. Second, it demands that schools treat students fairly.”).


315. Id. at 1477.

316. In re Gault, 387 U.S. at 26–27 (1967); Fedders, supra note 73, at 818.


redactions to comply with privacy laws) should be required along with automatic and timely hearings at which hearsay is prohibited. Additionally, the student should receive free legal counsel and an interpreter, if necessary. Lastly, the student’s case should be reviewed by an independent decisionmaker who makes written findings based on a standard of clear and convincing evidence.\footnote{A MODEL CODE ON EDUCATION AND DIGNITY, supra note 280, at 34–37, available at http://www.dignityinschools.org/files/DSC_Model_Code.pdf; see also CATHERINE Y. KIM, DANIEL J. LOSEN & DAMON T. HEWITT, THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE: STRUCTURING LEGAL REFORM 83 (2010) (suggesting additional due process safeguards).}

3. School Policing

For reasons detailed in section II.B.ii above, law enforcement officers should not be assigned to schools and should be replaced by youth development professionals (e.g., counselors, psychologists, social workers, and mentors).\footnote{See, e.g., Majd, supra note 134, at 391.} However, if SROs continue to patrol hallways, policymakers must enact policies or agreements to limit the SROs’ negative impacts on youth development. For example, policymakers should prohibit SROs from being involved in matters that do not involve serious criminal activity of immediate threats to physical safety; carrying guns and TASERS; interrogating students without a parent or guardian present; searching or arresting students without probable cause; and conducting strip searches. Furthermore, policymakers should ensure that SROs are prepared to make positive contributions to youth development by undergoing training in adolescent development and psychology, and mental illness. Additionally SROs should be trained to recognize symptoms of trauma, abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, and—it should go without saying—to not sexually harass students. They should be trained to de-escalate and diffuse volatile situations, and work with students who have disabilities, while working to become culturally competent. They should be familiar with the effects of court involvement and the positive alternatives to arrest and court involvement, as well as students’ rights.\footnote{ACLU & ACLU OF CONN., HARD LESSONS: SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAMS AND SCHOOL-BASED ARRESTS IN THREE CONNECTICUT TOWNS 7–8, 11–13, 47–50 (2008), available at http://www.aclu.org/pdfs/racialjustice/hardlessons_november2008.pdf; WALD & THURAU, supra note 133, at 9–12; see also ADVANCEMENT PROJECT, supra note 233, at 46–47; DIGNITY IN SCHS. CAMPAIGN—L.A. CHAPTER, SOLUTIONS FOR LOS ANGELES SCHOOL POLICE
B. Recommended Prevention Efforts

Under prevailing school discipline regimes, misbehavior is treated as originating solely with students and their families, rather than as a reflection of a child’s environment, socioeconomic status, neighborhood, and school. In reality, educators would have to worry less about managing misbehavior if the school climate were more developmentally appropriate and responsive to children’s individual needs in the first place. Creating a trusting, respectful, and supportive school culture, along with a foundation of protective factors, will help prevent misbehavior, maximize safety, and support youths. This can be accomplished by changing school-wide practices, engaging students, selecting and training appropriate staff, and creating a sense of community. Effective prevention efforts

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322. Daniel J. Losen, Nat’l Educ. Policy Ctr., Discipline Policies, Successful Schools, and Racial Justice 1 (2011), available at http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/school-discipline/discipline-policies-successful-schools-and-racial-justice/NEPC-SchoolDiscipline-Losen-1-PB_FINAL.pdf; Miriam Rokeach & John Denvir, supra note 313, at 282 (“The blame is placed upon the student while underlying problems of school culture, student-teacher relations, and students’ frustration when their academic needs are not met remain unidentified and unaddressed.”); see also Aaron Sussman, supra note 104, at 381 n.7 (discussing how Graham v. Florida is “systematically transformative” but “paradoxically limited” by its own transformative potential).

323. Zero Tolerance: New Directions, supra note 138, at 128; Udi Ofir et al., New York Civil Liberties Union, Safety with Dignity: Alternatives to the Over-Policing of Schools 21 (2009), available at http://www.nycul.org/files/publications/nycul_pub_safety_with_dignity.pdf; Clea A. McNeely et al., Promoting School Connectedness: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, 72 J. SCH. HEALTH 138, 138 (2002) (“When adolescents feel cared for by people at their school and feel like a part of their school, they are less likely to use substances, engage in violence, or initiate sexual activity at an early age. Students who feel connected to school in this way also report higher levels of emotional well-being.”).

include establishing, on a school-wide level, clear expectations, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) that create incentives for good behavior, and culturally responsive and competent classroom management, curricula, instruction, and leadership.

Students should be engaged in the classroom through high-quality, varied, lively, engaging instruction, as well as in programs, such as conflict resolution, bullying prevention, and


328. OPPORTUNITIES SUSPENDED, supra note 135, at 36; CTRS. FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION, supra note 325, at 13; SKIBA ET AL., PREVENTING SCHOOL VIOLENCE, supra note 275, at 13; Noam et al., supra note 165, at 159–60; NEW DIRECTIONS: ZERO TOLERANCE, supra note 138.


social and emotional learning. Developmentally appropriate schools also have staff who are positive, compassionate, nurturing, caring, and respectful; have positive attitudes and high expectations; model appropriate behaviors; create a climate of emotional support; are committed to maintaining strong, positive relationships with all students; are well-trained and capable in classroom management, working with students with disabilities, accommodating for adolescent development, and establishing supportive relationships with students and their families; are capable of recognizing early warning signs for violence and disruption; and have time to collaborate with each other, service providers, and families (e.g., by making home visits, holding parent conferences, and issuing newsletters).

One of the best ways to prevent misbehavior is by creating a sense of community at a school. Small schools are essential to creating a sense of community; they allow people to know each other better, feel more responsible for one another, and respond faster to...
In addition to being smaller, schools that are experienced as communities have ample social capital and connectedness, a sense of belonging, common values, and caring and supportive relationships. Schools can actively promote a sense of community by

- using cooperative learning, such as group work and peer tutoring;
- involving families wherever possible, including creating school-family liaisons, providing adequate translation and interpretation, encouraging family members to volunteer in classrooms, having adult learning classes and parent trainings, and forming parent advisory groups;
- emphasizing joy and fun (e.g., celebrations, potlucks, performances, trips, clubs, dances, and assemblies);
- emphasizing and celebrating students’ cultures;
- creating opportunities for collaboration, team-building, bonding, and “resiliency-supporting relationships” (e.g., all-school retreats, town-hall meetings, multi-day orientations for new staff and students, staff advisors for

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341. CTRS. FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION, supra note 325, at 5 (“Students are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and succeed academically when they feel connected to school.”); MARIN & BROWN, supra note 110, at 6.
342. Victor Battistich et al., Caring School Communities, 32 EDUC. PSYCHOLOGIST 137, 137 (1997); Daniel Solomon et al., Creating Classrooms That Students Experience as Communities, 24 AM. J. OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOL. 719, 720 (1996).
344. CTRS. FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION, supra note 325, at 13; Solomon et al., supra note 342, at 723.
345. E.g., GED and English language learner classes.
346. E.g., identifying desirable behaviors, communication strategies, conflict resolution, listening skills, setting expectations, and appropriate praise.
348. See SANDLER ET AL., supra note 145, at 32–33; see also Noam et al., supra note 165, at 223.
349. SANDLER ET AL., supra note 145, at 9, 33.
350. Noam et al., supra note 165, at 158.
students, peer buddy programs, class meetings, and classroom jobs),

- allowing students to have a voice in creating school norms and rules,

- connecting students with community experiences and resources (e.g., through service-learning, student internships, and social service delivery).

C. Recommended Intervention and Alternatives

Even the best policies and most thorough and effective prevention efforts will not eliminate all misbehavior. Students who are still at risk of misbehaving, or do misbehave, require extra support and “maximum understanding, sensible standards, benevolence, justice, and then a chance to grow beyond their...
transgression. Therefore, it is critical that schools have a continuum of planned interventions and alternatives designed to pull students in rather than push them out.

For each student who repeatedly and/or seriously misbehaves, the school should first conduct a functional behavioral assessment to determine the causes of the misbehavior. Then, the school should create and implement an individualized behavioral intervention plan that addresses the whole child. The plan should involve parents and guardians and utilize well-coordinated school-based and community-based services, such as support groups, social services, mental health services, medical/health services, mentoring, afterschool and summer programs, tutoring, and drug and alcohol counseling.

To address ongoing minor misconduct, schools should develop productive consequences, such as student-teacher-parent/guardian

361. See ZERO TOLERANCE, supra note 128, at xvi; Noam et al., supra note 165, at 168.
363. Noam et al., supra note 165, at 160.
365. SKIBA ET AL., supra note 329, at 1, 8; SKIBA ET AL., supra note 275, at, 24–25; Rokeach & Denvir, supra note 313, at 298–99.
366. SKIBA ET AL., supra note 329, at 8.
367. Examples of support groups include managing anger, developing social skills, resolving conflicts, cultivating leadership skills, dealing with the loss of loved ones, and acquiring organizational skills. See Noam et al., supra note 165, at 174.
368. CTR. FOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION & PRACTICE, PREVENTION STRATEGIES THAT WORK: WHAT ADMINISTRATORS CAN DO TO PROMOTE POSITIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR 14 (1999).
369. Examples of mental health services include counseling, aggression replacement therapy, multisystemic therapy, functional family therapy, and anger management training. KRISTA KUTASH & ALBERT J. DUCHINOWSKI, THE ROLE OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN PROMOTING SAFE AND SECURE SCHOOLS (2007); OFER ET AL., supra note 323, at 46; Noam et al., supra note 165, at 176–77; Osher et al., supra note 280, at 127, 138–39; Osher et al., supra note 331, at 102–05; see also Cheryl Smithgall et al., Responding to Students Affected by Trauma: Collaboration Across Public Systems, in KEEPING KIDS IN SCHOOL, supra note 326, at 40, 44–54; SKIBA ET AL., supra note 329, at 5; SKIBA ET AL., supra note 275, at 21–22, 24; Rokeach & Denvir, supra note 313, at 298–99.
370. Examples of mental health services include counseling, aggression replacement therapy, multisystemic therapy, functional family therapy, and anger management training. KRISTA KUTASH & ALBERT J. DUCHINOWSKI, THE ROLE OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN PROMOTING SAFE AND SECURE SCHOOLS (2007); OFER ET AL., supra note 323, at 46; Noam et al., supra note 165, at 176–77; Osher et al., supra note 280, at 127, 138–39; Osher et al., supra note 331, at 102–05; see also Cheryl Smithgall et al., Responding to Students Affected by Trauma: Collaboration Across Public Systems, in KEEPING KIDS IN SCHOOL, supra note 326, at 40, 44–54; SKIBA ET AL., supra note 329, at 5; SKIBA ET AL., supra note 275, at 21–22, 24; Rokeach & Denvir, supra note 313, at 298–99.
371. Id.
372. Id.
373. Id.
374. Id.
375. Id.
conferences, role-plays, reflective essays, and loss of privileges. For more serious misbehavior, schools should utilize rehabilitative measures on a case-by-case, individualized basis, in the spirit of the holding of Graham and Miller. Restorative justice practices, such as peer mediation, victim impact panels, school-based youth court, problem-solving or peace circles, fairness committees, and community service, as well as high-quality in-school intervention rooms, Saturday school, and alternative schools are developmentally appropriate substitutes for draconian discipline that abandons troubled students to the streets or disposes of them in the court system.

376. ADVANCEMENT PROJECT ET AL., ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION, EXPULSION, AND SCHOOL-BASED ARREST (2009).

377. SANDLER ET AL., supra note 145, at 35.


380. See NAT’L ASS’N OF SCH. PSYCHOLOGISTS, supra note 379 (listing the following characteristics of effective alternative programs: low staff to student ratio with highly trained, culturally diverse staff, strong component of parent and community agency involvement, use of nontraditional instruction, adapted curriculum and flexible staff roles, sufficient funding and resources to implement program, sensitivity to individual and cultural differences, clear program and student goals, onsite counseling services, multidisciplinary case management, research-based interventions, and formative and summative program evaluation); SKIBA ET AL., supra note 275, at 24.
V. Conclusion

Roper v. Simmons, Graham v. Florida, J.D.B. v. North Carolina, and Miller v. Alabama involved youths who were investigated by police, prosecuted, and punished. Advocates have won significant victories with the holdings of these cases, which have limited punishment and altered interrogation doctrine. What is now needed is more effort toward preventing young people from becoming ensnared in the juvenile and criminal systems in the first instance by reforming the ways schools attempt to prevent and manage misbehavior. Insisting that public schools become protective instead of reactive, treat rather than punish students, and disentangle themselves from the imperatives of law enforcement is a logical place to start.

The four “age matters” cases, in finding that youthfulness requires distinct treatment from the state, do not speak directly to institutions other than the juvenile and criminal systems. Yet nothing prevents educational policymakers from adjusting their disciplinary policies to reflect the changed jurisprudential reality by adopting the recommendations suggested here. To do so would be consistent with a series of research-based “best practices” proposed for years by advocates.

Juvenile justice and education justice activists and lawyers must join forces to find creative ways to push policymakers to recalibrate school safety and disciplinary policies and practices. Litigation is one tool but is not the only or even the best mechanism for achieving the kinds of changes we urge. Legislative advocacy381 and parent and student organizing,382 for example, should be pursued as means of creating necessary changes.

381. See, e.g., DSC at Senate Hearing on Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline, DIGNITY IN SCHS. BLOG (Dec. 20, 2012), http://www.dignityinschools.org/blog/dsc-senate-hearing-ending-school-prison-pipeline (discussing advocacy efforts during 2012 Senate hearings on school discipline issues).

382. See, e.g., About, CADRE, http://www.cadre-la.org/core/about/ (last visited Apr. 25, 2013) (describing that the organization is led by African American and Latino parents and caregivers whose children attend local schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)); End the School to Jail Track, PADRES & JOVENES UNIDOS, http://www.padresunidos.org/end-school-jail-track (last visited Apr. 25, 2013) (documenting efforts of Denver-area organizing to end harsh discipline policies); School to Prison Pipeline, FAMS. & FRIENDS OF LA. INCARCERATED CHILD., http://www.fflic.org/school-to-prison-pipeline (last visited Apr. 25, 2013) (New Orleans-based organization dedicated to dismantling school-to-