How can we help fight the School to Prison Pipeline?

Decarcerate NJ is involved in the nationwide movement to bring attention to mass incarceration rates and slave prison labor. Events are being planned throughout the country to occur on and around the anniversary of the Attica Prison uprising. Please visit their site for more information and events:


The New York State Special Commission on Attica suggests that “With the exception of Indian massacres in the late 19th century, the State Police assault which ended the four-day prison uprising was the bloodiest one-day encounter between Americans since the Civil War.”

On this anniversary we urge you to join us as we work to educate ourselves and other educators about mass incarceration in the United States. This week we will post a series with resources.

Why is this important to us as educators?

(MON) We owe it to our students to understand our school’s role in perpetrating the school-to-prison pipeline and how incarceration can affect our students.

Let’s face it, 70% of our teaching force is white and female. We are also a smaller percent of the population that faces incarceration. We don’t have as full of an understanding as people that have been directly impacted as a result of a family member being incarcerated. We need to recognize
this and we need to help each other understand it. Part of that understanding includes understanding the school-to-prison pipeline. Print out some of these articles and leave them in the faculty room. Hang some of the graphics on the wall. Plan an after-school meeting to have an open discussion about this topic.

Articles:
When Mass Incarceration Trickles Down to Children
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michele-goodwin/when-mass-incarceration-t_b_11554242.html

How School Suspensions Push Black Children Behind

The School-to-Prison Pipeline is an Epidemic That Can be Cured
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-school-to-prison-pipeline-is-an-epidemic-that-can-be-cured_us_57bc822be4b00d9c3a1a3934

Preliminary Report from the School-to-Prison Pipeline Task Force
http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/diversity_pipeline/stp_preliminary_report_final.authcheckdam.pdf

Debtor’s Prison for Kids
http://debtorsprison.jlc.org/#!/map

NEA Takes a Stand on the School-to-Prison Pipeline
http://ra.nea.org/2016/07/06/nea-takes-stand-school-prison-pipeline/

NEA Policy Statement
http://ra.nea.org/delegate-resources/policy-statement-on-discipline/

AFT Racial Equity Task Force
http://www.aft.org/resolution/supporting-recommendations-aft-racial-equity-task-force-and-work-performed

Guide for having discussions about mass incarceration:
The Chicago Prison Industrial Complex Teaching

Teacher Resources

Toolkit to share with teachers with resources to help break the school-to-prison pipeline
http://www.tolerance.org/school-to-prison-pipeline

http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-43-spring-2013/feature/teachers-guide-rerouting-pipelinе
(TUES) We owe it to our students to teach them a complete picture of history. There are many resources that educators can use to help expose our students to a more complete picture of history.

Some websites that provide these resources about incarceration include:

The Zinn Education Project  http://zinnedproject.org/tag/incarceration/

Teaching Tolerance  http://www.tolerance.org/search/apachesolr_search/incarceration

Meet with your subject area team to create a project to teach awareness of mass incarceration and advocacy, such as this example:  
https://prezi.com/hbnyjm1yaee6h/mass-incarceration-awareness-advocacy-professional-development-for-teachers-and-project-for-students/

(WED) We owe it to our students to create a more responsive disciplinary system.
Many of our current disciplinary practices and systems are full of subjectivity and bias. A recent study has found that when students are suspended or expelled, the likelihood that they will repeat a grade, not graduate, and/or become involved in the juvenile justice system increases significantly. African-American students and children with particular educational disabilities who qualify for special education were suspended and expelled at especially high rates.


Restorative justice practices can be one way to work towards change in our schools. They require us to address the roots of student misbehavior. But we need to possess a willingness to rethink and rework our classrooms, schools, and school districts.

More explanation can be found at Rethinking Schools

http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/29_01/edit1291.shtml

Locate educators and administrators and parents in your district that are interested in finding an alternative way to handle school discipline. Research restorative justice practices and create a working team for implementation.

Some resources:

Teaching Restorative Practice with Classroom Circles

Restorative Justice 4 Schools - UK
http://www.esc20.net/users/0114/docs/SchoolImplementationPack%20RestorativeJustice4SchoolsUK.pdf

Implementing Restorative Justice
We owe it to our students to teach them about the rights of an individual. Students need to be taught what their rights are, how to assert their rights, the law and history of such individual rights.

Resources:
Activities from Human Rights Resource Center
http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/edumat/activities.shtm

The Advocates for Human Rights
http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/for_educators

Facing History and Ourselves
https://www.facinghistory.org/topics/justice-human-rights
We owe it to our students to understand how the incarceration of a family member can affect them.

In order to provide support, we must first develop an understanding.

Resources:

Children of Incarcerated Parents: Presentations
http://youth.gov/youth-topics/children-of-incarcerated-parents/presentations

National Institute of Corrections: Children of Incarcerated Parents
http://nicic.gov/coip

Mass Incarceration: Collateral Damage: The Children Left Behind
https://www.thenation.com/article/mass-incarcerations-collateral-damage-children-left-behind/