

Townsend Harris High School

The Effect of School Policing on Graduation Rates in New York City Public High Schools

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Abstract:

Recent years have witnessed a stark rise in the number of students forced out of schools in the form of suspensions and arrests. These events are correlated with increased use of zero-tolerance policies and employment of police officers as security agents in public schools. Students who have been suspended, even once, are at increased risk of involvement in the criminal legal system than their peers who have not. Previous studies, from advocacy groups, research institutions, and community organizations have concluded that there is a relationship between student suspensions and increased risk of incarceration at a young age. This relationship most impacts working-class black and Latino students. Students who are regularly suspended or arrested for minor occasions of petty misbehavior feel they are not welcome in school and are often motivated to drop out of school. In these occasions, they often get caught in the criminal legal system because they are statistically more likely to get stopped by the police especially if they are spending more time outside instead of in school. Thus, a research project was designed to study the relationship between suspensions, arrests, and New York Police Department-trained school security agents on graduation rates. Online surveys were distributed to schools to assess the school climate in terms of the number of school security agents employed. These schools were selected based on the studies of previous reports and anecdotes that have assessed the number of security agents the school employs in addition to the number of suspensions. The second part of the research recorded the graduation rates of 108 schools from 2011 and a correlation assessment was done between these graduation and school policing rates. The data suggested an inverse correlation between graduation rates and school policing. Although the conclusions made from the survey answers are not definitive because of the small sample size, the surveys also indicated a negative correlation between the increased number of school security agents and graduation rates (322).

Introduction:

Just late last October, the Internet went abuzz talking about a young black high school student in South Carolina who was brutalized and slammed in her seat by a police officer assigned to her school. Unfortunately, the incident of young high school students, particularly black students and students with special needs, being harassed, arrested, and suspended by police officers or school safety agents employed by the local police department for minor or non-criminal offenses is far too common to be considered an isolated event. For the past two decades, despite the trend of crime decreasing nationally, public schools have moved toward harsher and more punitive forms of school discipline including increased suspensions despite decreasing student population, zero-tolerance policies, increased arrests, and increased presence of police officers and agents trained by the local police department.

Prior to 1998, New York City public school safety agents were trained and employed by the Department of Education. However, in 1998, Mayor Giuliani established a partnership between the Department of Education and the New York Police Department. In this partnership, New York City public school safety agents were trained by the New York Police Department but employed by the Department of Education. The established partnership created the New York City Police Department School Safety Division. The NYPD School Safety Division is larger than all but four of the nation's police forces including police forces in Boston, Las Vegas, Detroit, or Washington DC (Secret Agreement, 2009). Thus, the School Safety Division, which is funded by the Department of Education, has grown enormously despite only having jurisdictions in New York City schools. Since the implementation of the NYPD School Safety Division, there has been a depression of criminal incidents. (Mayor Giuliani, 2000) However, as many studies have stated, this is not a trend exclusive to New York City public high schools, but is a trend that applies to the nation's declining rate of criminal activities. Thus, there is no substantial evidence that the implementation of the NYPD School Safety Division

caused fewer crimes. In fact, due to the implementation of the School Safety Division, more students have gotten arrested than previous years, especially for minor or non-criminal offenses.

Relinquishing control of school safety agents to the NYPD have resulted in increased police patrolling in school campuses, increased likelihood of safety and security issues being investigated, increased reportings of potential crime by students to school safety agents, and increased arrest rates for non-violent misbehavior. However, there is little to no evidence that an increased presence of police increases the safety of students and school environments (Changmin and Gottfredson, 2011). Data that demonstrates that there is a positive effect on maintaining crimes when increasing the number of school safety agents, are speculative and self-reported, and therefore is not objective enough to reach a definite conclusion (Changmin and Gottfredson, 2011).

The increased presence of police-trained school safety agents in school campuses have given rise to civil liberties concerns. Many of the schools that have an increased school safety presence are schools with a concentration of low-income black and Latino students. The increased police presence in these particular schools are rationalized by alleged increased crime rates in these schools. However, black and Latino students face the brunt of this expansion of law enforcement on school campuses. Previous studies have shown that black and Latino students disproportionately get arrested or suspended because of increased school safety presence. Black students make up 33% of the New York City student population but make up 53% of all suspensions, 58% of all long-term suspensions, 56% of students serving six or more suspensions, and 55% of suspensions due to subjective offenses like insubordination. Students with special needs also are disproportionately represented in students who do get suspended. Black students with special needs are disproportionately represented among special needs students who are suspended (Ofer, 2011). School safety presence in schools also causes students to face harsher punitive punishments

for misbehavior common among adolescents. As a result, students get suspended and arrested for minor and non-criminal behavior.

When students get suspended and arrested for these petty incidents of misbehavior they are motivated to drop out because they are sent the message that their school and teachers do not want them (Rosann and Richards, 2012) and constantly face the likely threat that they will be suspended or arrested again. Many studies have concluded that students who are suspended even once are at increased risk of dropping out of schools than their peers who have not been suspended. In one study in Mobile, Alabama, for example, shows that when a freshman in high school serves even just a single out-of-school suspension, he or she is at greater risk of dropping out of high school (Shah, 2013). Suspensions have been linked to the fueling of the school-to-prison pipeline. The school-to-prison pipeline describes the tendency of students who are suspended to be at increased risk of becoming incarcerated. Thus, students are pushed out of schools and into prisons. Despite the obvious harmful impacts of suspensions, heavy reliance on suspensions continues for non-dangerous behavior (Ofer, 2011). Under Mayor Bloomberg, New York City witnessed a 132% increase of suspensions. In the 2002-2003 academic year, 31,879 students were suspended. However, in the year 2008-2009 that number increased dramatically to 73,943 students. Additionally, long-term suspensions increased by 150% from 1999-2000 to 2008-2009. Although in the school year of 1999-2000 15% of all suspensions were long-term, that number increased to 22% by 2008-2009. Low-income black students disproportionately were and continue to be affected by this reliance on suspensions. The increased reliance on suspensions correlates with the integration of NYPD officers into school safety in New York City (Ofer, 2011).

The high police presence in schools on top of the over policing of many of these students' neighborhoods creates a hostile environment for students who often feel constantly surveillanced. These students are predominantly low-income students of color.

When Mayor Michael Bloomberg was inaugurated, the Impact Schools initiative was launched. This initiative increased the presence of police officers and school safety agents in 22 New York City middle and high schools. These schools were chosen because of high numbers of criminal incidents, high numbers of student transfers because of safety violations, chronic low school attendance, and increased disorderly behavior. These schools are also overcrowded, larger, receive less funding per student, contain more over-age students, and are attended by more poor black students than other New York City public schools (A Look at the Impact Schools, 2005).

School violence, regardless of whether the school possesses increased or decreased amounts of school safety agents, is currently at an all-time low (Petteruti, 2011). The amount of self-reported crime has decreased by 69% from 155 incidents of violence per 1,000 students in 1993 to 47 incidents of violence per 1,000 students (Petteruti, 2011). No study has been conducted that prove that school safety agents have improved school safety. It is also difficult for outside parties to conduct studies because statistical data and effects of increased policing are not publicly published. Additionally, some research that were conducted that tested the effectiveness of school safety agents demonstrated that schools without school safety agents were actually more safe (Petteruti, 2011). Schools receive school safety agents depending on the amounts of incidents of crime or misbehavior that take place in that school. But oftentimes, as a consequence, men of color, people with mental disabilities, and transgender people are aggressively treated and get sent to the juvenile justice system at an early age (Mukherjee and Karpatkin, 2007). Statistics show that increased policing in schools often result in increased arrest and suspension

rates for non-violent misbehavior problems that would not have been similarly dealt with in other non-policed schools. Furthermore, interactions with the juvenile justice system at an early age decreases the likelihood of the student continuing their education and graduating (Sweeten, 2006).

Many schools employ more school safety agents than guidance counselors. In the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year, New York City public high schools employed 5,055 school safety agents and 191 armed police officers, whilst employing only 3,152 guidance counselors (Mukherjee, 2007). School safety agents are not equipped to deal with students possessing mental health issues or other disabilities but in some cases they deal with these students regardless. In one case, school safety agents arrested a student who had heart problems and claimed they did not have any knowledge about the student's disability. Although the student was later released, the parents of the student claim that the student consequently faced trauma after the incident (Kolodner, 2010).

The aggressive tendencies of security agents that push students out of school by suspending them for minor, non-criminal behaviors result in students' higher probability of serving time in the criminal legal system rather than higher education. This is particularly the case for low-income black and Latino students who are disproportionately affected by school policing and make up a large portion of people who are incarcerated as well.

It is due to the concerns of constant discrimination against poor communities of color that this research investigation was designed. Many community organizations have voiced concerns regarding violations of civil liberties of black and Latino students and it is because of these concerns that this research investigation is important. Communities of color have historically faced many civil liberties

violations and it is important to investigate any concerns so such violations do not occur for a chronic period of time.

As such, concerns that increased policing leads students to drop out of school stimulated a research project investigating the effect of increased school policing including suspension and arrest rates and school security agents presence on graduation rates in New York City public high schools. It was hypothesized that as the rate of school policing increase, the rate the students in that school graduate decreases because students often drop out of high school because of the threat of another suspension or arrest, feel they are not wanted in school, and feel the school environment is hostile because of increased suspensions, arrests, and school security presence.

Methodology:

In order to assess of the effect of school policing on graduation rates, a research project was designed that was composed of two parts: survey and historical analysis.

The survey participants of this study were school faculty from a variety of New York City public high schools. A purposive sampling of schools that are affected by increased policing and schools that are not was conducted. Survey questions were sent out via email to the following schools that are largely affected by increased policing. These schools were chosen based on the study conducted by Drum Major Institute for Public Policy that provided a list of schools impacted by increased policing from the Impact Schools initiative launched in January 2004. These schools include:

- Abraham Lincoln High School
Enrollment: 2313 students
Brooklyn, NY
- Harry S. Truman High School
Enrollment: 1911 students
Bronx, NY
- John Bowne High School
Enrollment: 3722 students

Queens, NY

- Sheepshead Bay High School
Enrollment: 1124 students
Brooklyn, NY

Additionally, schools that report the most suspensions were also surveyed. These schools include:

- Richmond Hill High School
Enrollment: 2225 students
Queens, NY
- Susan Wagner High School
Enrollment: 3461 students
Staten Island, NY
- School for Democracy and Leadership
Enrollment: 330 students
Brooklyn, NY
- Martin Van Buren High School
Enrollment: 2096 students
Queens, NY
- Herbert Lehman High School
Enrollment: 2059 students
Bronx, NY
- Grover Cleveland High School
Enrollment: 1869 students
Queens, NY

Other schools that reportedly have a reputation of having increased school safety agents and police officers that were also surveyed include:

- Queens Collegiate: A College Board School
Enrollment: 647 students
Queens, NY
- John Adams High School
Enrollment: 2838 students
Queens, NY
- It Takes A Village High School
Enrollment: 569 students
Brooklyn, NY
- High School of Economics and Finance
Enrollment: 767 students
New York, NY
- LaGuardia High School of Arts
Enrollment: 2730 students
New York, NY

- University Neighborhood High School
Enrollment: 299 students
New York, NY
- A. Philip Randolph Campus High School
Enrollment: 1360 students
New York, NY
- Brooklyn Technical High School
Enrollment: 5458 students
Brooklyn, NY
- William Cullen Bryant High School
Enrollment: 2627 students
Queens, NY

Schools that do not have as many school security agents and police officers that were surveyed include:

- Bard High School Early College
Enrollment: 560 students
New York, NY
- Bard High School Early College, Queens
Enrollment: 600 students
Queens, NY
- Forest Hills High School
Enrollment: 3800 students
Queens, NY
- Bayside High School
Enrollment: 3241 students
Queens, NY
- Stuyvesant High School
Enrollment: 3292 students
New York, NY
- High School for Mathematics, Science and Engineering at City College
Enrollment: 456 students
New York, NY
- Information Technology High School
Enrollment: 920 students
Queens, NY
- Bronx High School of Science
Enrollment: 3037 students
Bronx, NY
- James Baldwin School: A School for Expeditionary Learning
Enrollment: 260 students
New York, NY
- Academy of American Studies
Enrollment: 810 students

- Queens, NY
- Baccalaureate School for Global Education
 - Enrollment: 500 students
 - Queens, NY
- Brooklyn High School of Latin
 - Enrollment: 592 students
 - Brooklyn, NY
- The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria
 - Enrollment: 576 students
 - Queens, NY
- The Young Women's Leadership School, Queens
 - Enrollment: 555 students
 - Queens, NY
- The Young Women's Leadership School
 - Enrollment: 464 students
 - New York, NY
- The Young Women's Leadership School, Brooklyn
 - Enrollment: 351 students
 - Brooklyn, NY
- The Young Women's Leadership School, Bronx
 - Enrollment: 184 students
 - Bronx, NY
- Benjamin Cardozo High School
 - Enrollment: 3628
 - Queens, NY

The principals of these schools were contacted and requested to appoint a school personnel to complete a survey. One school personnel from each of the schools that responded completed a survey. A large pool of schools were required because of the lack of insurance that each school would respond with completed surveys. Therefore, a large pool of schools was needed to ensure a large quantity of data.

The risks of taking the surveys were minimal. Benefits included determining whether increased policing, an issue that many organizations advocate against, is truly a variable that affects graduation rates. The conclusion of the survey determined whether increased policing exists at the expense of the education of certain students. All surveys were taken anonymously so as to protect the person's identity.

Participants were notified that participation in the survey was completely voluntary and anonymous. Participants could have stopped taking the survey at any time if they felt uncomfortable.

The data from the surveys received were recorded on a Google Spreadsheets. This data was divided into categories of the amount of school security agents, school size, and graduation rates to better analyze the demographics that are affected by increased policing. Schools were separated by size. Small schools consisted of student bodies below 1000, medium schools consisted of student bodies between 1000-2000, and large schools consisted of student bodies above 2000. The school size was averaged from the last three reported school population from the School Quality Guide. Once the schools were separated, the number of SSAs and the graduation rates of each school was compared.

Additionally, graduation rates of 108 schools were recorded from 2011 using data recorded in the Department of Records and the New York City Traditional Graduation Archives. The rate of student reference to law enforcement and the rate of in-school and out-of-school suspensions in the year 2011 from these 108 schools were collected from the Civil Rights Data Collection database. These rates were compared to the graduation rates in 2011. The correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between school policing and graduation rates.

All data was stored through Google Spreadsheets by being coded and then analyzed using countif and SPSS statistics. Data was password protected and only accessed by the student researcher and adult supervisor to ensure anonymity and protection of participants.

Results:

A research project was conducted which studied the effect of implementation of school security agents, suspensions, and referrals to law enforcement on graduation rates in New York City public high schools. The average

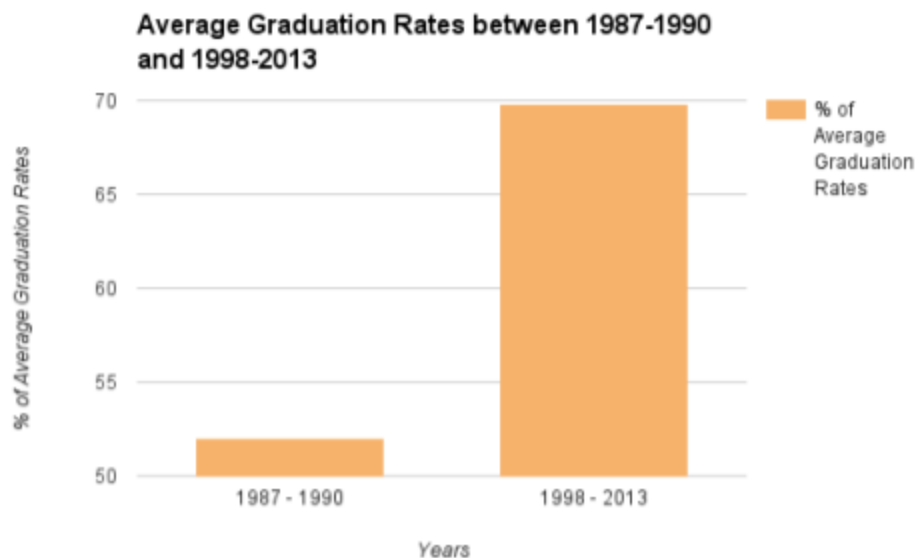


Figure 1. Average Graduation Rates between 1987-1990 and 1998-2013

graduation rates of 61 New York City public high schools before 1998 was 52% and the average

graduation rate of 108 New York City public high schools after 1998 was 69.8%.

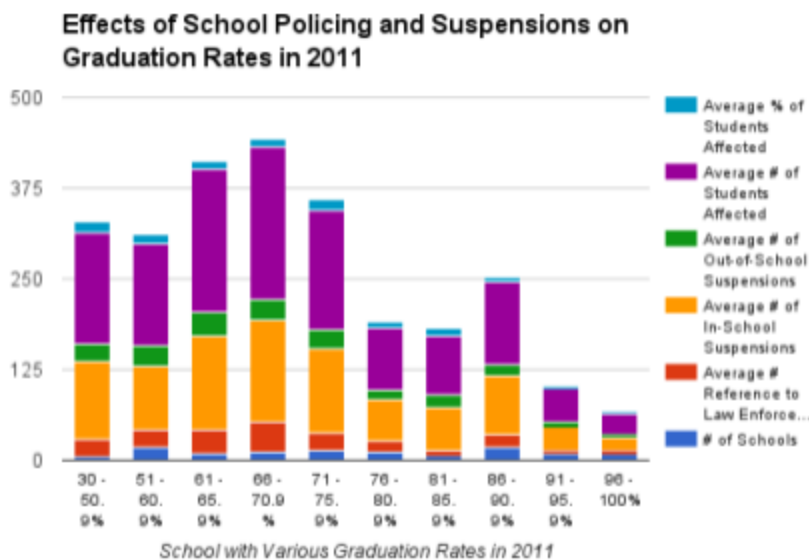


Figure 2. Effects of School Policing and Suspensions on Graduation Rates in 2011

serving in-school suspensions was 107.8, the average number of students serving out-of-school suspensions was 23.8, thus the average number of students affected by school policing was 154.8 which is

15.2% of the total student body in these schools. 17 New York City public high schools had graduation rates between 51-60.9% in 2011. Of these schools, the average number of students referred to law enforcement was 24.2, the average number of students serving in-school suspensions were 89.1, the average number of students serving out-of-school suspensions were 26.9, thus the average number of students affected by school policing was 140.2 which is 13.9% of the total student body in these schools. 8 New York City public high schools had graduation rates between 61-65.9% in 2011. Of these schools, the average number of students referred to law enforcement was 34.1, the average number of students serving in-school suspensions were 128.9, the average number of students serving out-of-school suspensions were 33.4, thus the average number of students affected by school policing was 196.4 which is 10.6% of the total student body in these schools. 11 New York City public high schools had graduation rates between 66-70.9% in 2011. Of these schools, the average number of students referred to law enforcement was 42.5, the average number of students serving in-school suspensions were

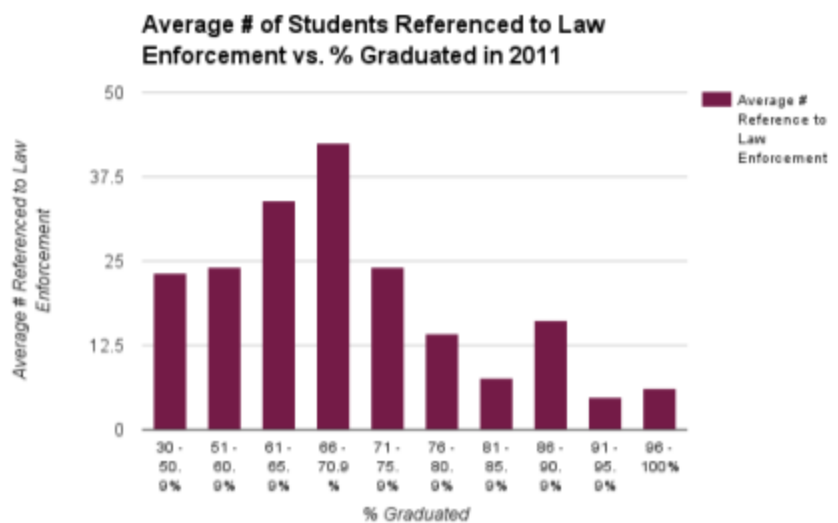


Figure 3. Average Number of Students Referred to Law Enforcement vs. Percent Graduated in 2011

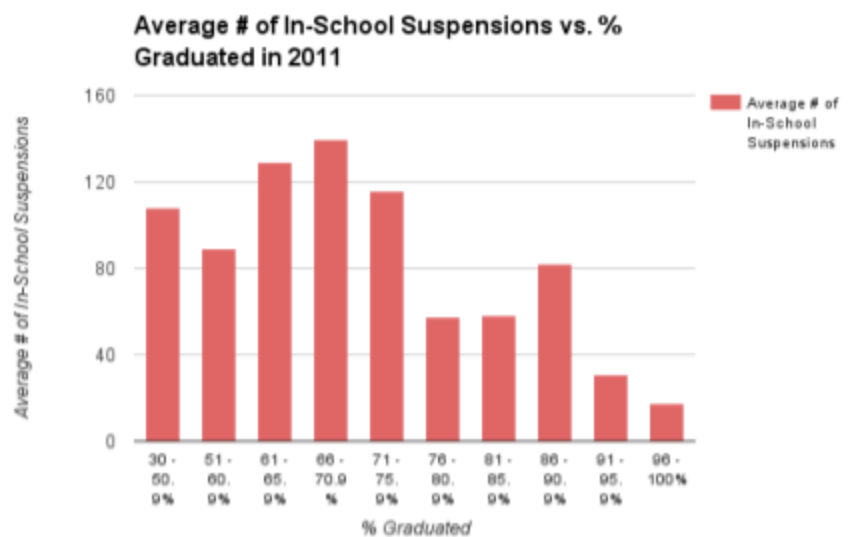


Figure 4. Average Number of In-School Suspensions vs. Percent Graduated in 2011

139.5, the average number of students serving out-of-school suspensions were 28.5, thus the average number of students affected by

school policing was 210.6 which is

11.5% of the total student body in

these schools. 14 New York City

public high schools had graduation

rates between 71-75.9% in 2011. Of

these schools, the average number of

students referred to law enforcement

was 24.2, the average number of

students serving in-school suspensions were 116.1, the average number of students serving out-of-school

suspensions were 25.1, thus the average number of students affected by school policing was 165.4 which

is 14% of the total student body in these

schools. 12 New York City public high

schools had graduation rates between

76-80.9% in 2011. Of these schools, the

average number of students referred to

law enforcement was 14.3, the average

number of students serving in-school

suspensions were 57.5, the average

number of students serving out-of-school suspensions were 13, thus the average number of students

affected by school policing was 84.8 which is 10% of the total student body in these schools. 6 New York

City public high schools had graduation rates between 81-85.9% in 2011. Of these schools, the average

number of students referred to law enforcement was 7.7, the average number of students serving in-school

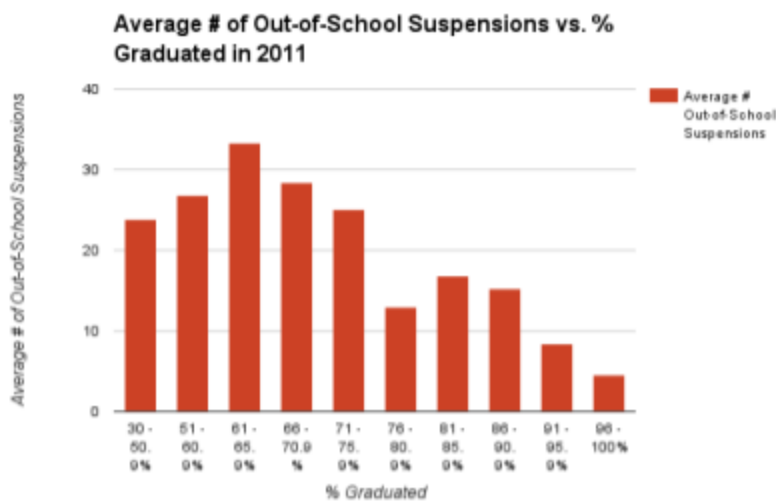


Figure 5. Average Number of Out-of-School Suspensions vs. Percent Graduated in 2011

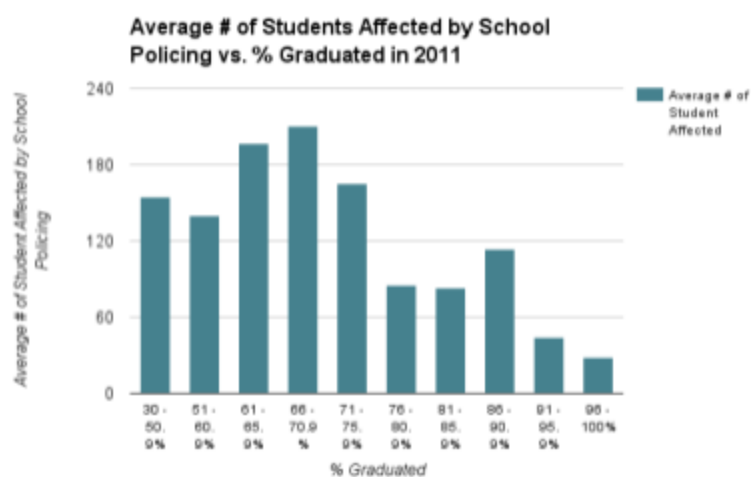


Figure 6. Average Number of Students Affected by School Policing vs. Percent Graduated in 2011

suspensions were 58.3, the average number of students serving out-of-school suspensions were 16.8, thus the average number of students

affected by school policing was

82.8 which is 10.3% of the total

student body in these schools. 18

New York City public high schools

had graduation rates between

86-90.9% in 2011. Of these

schools, the average number of

students referred to law

enforcement was 16.3, the average number of students serving in-school suspensions were 81.9, the

average number of students

serving out-of-school

suspensions were 15.3, thus

the average number of

students affected by school

policing was 113.6 which is

6.4% of the total student

body in these schools. 9

New York City public high

schools had graduation rates between 91-95.9% in 2011. Of these schools, the average number of students

referred to law enforcement was 4.9, the average number of students serving in-school suspensions were

31.1, the average number of students serving out-of-school suspensions were 8.4, thus the average

number of students affected by school policing was 44.4 which is 3.5% of the total student body in these

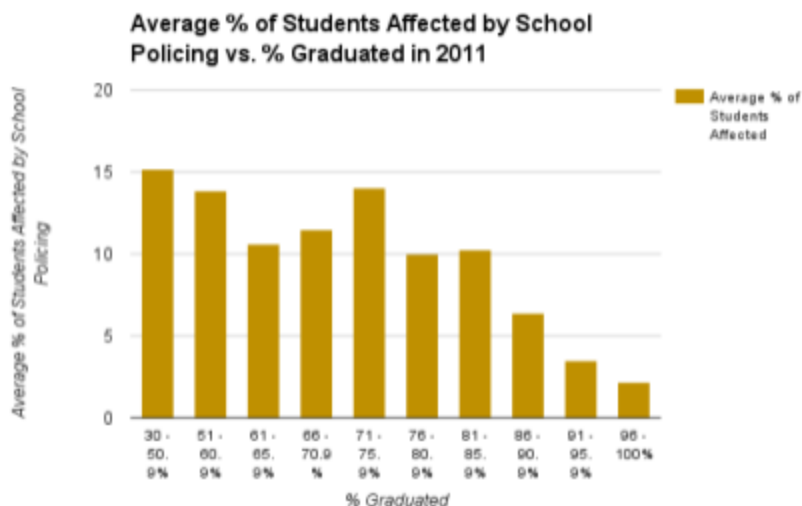


Figure 7. Average Percent of Students Affected by School Policing vs. Percent Graduated in 2011

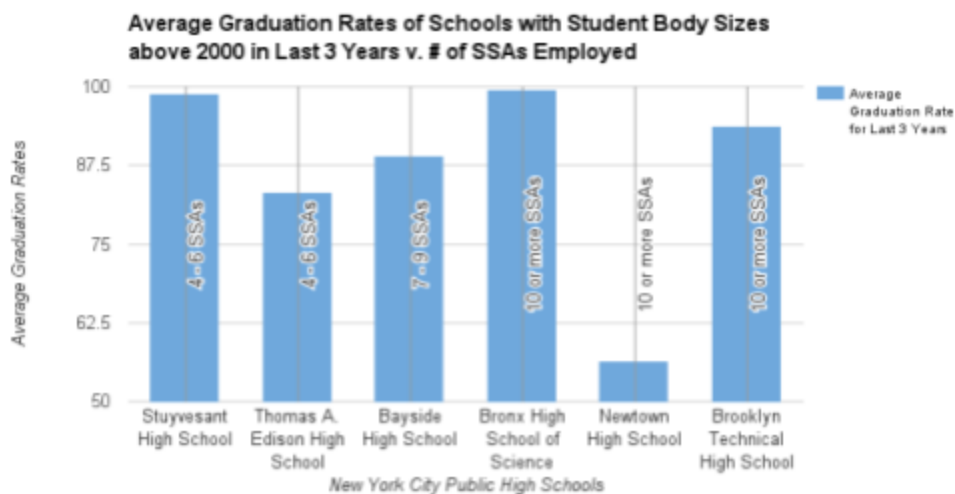


Figure 8. Average Graduation Rates of Schools with Student Body Sizes above 2000 in Last 3 Years v. Number of School Security Agents (SSAs) Employed

schools. 8 New York City public high schools had graduation rates between 96-100% in 2011. Of these schools, the average number of students referred to law enforcement was 6.1, the average number of students serving in-school suspensions were 17.5, the average number of students serving out-of-school suspensions were 4.5, thus the average number of students affected by school policing was 28.1 which is 2.2% of the total student body in these schools.

The correlation relationship between students referred to law enforcement and graduation rates in 2011 is -0.33. The correlation relationship between students serving in-school suspensions and graduation rates in 2011 is -0.29. The correlation relationship between students serving out-of-school suspensions and graduation rates in 2011 is -0.43. The correlation relationship between the percentage of students affected by school policing and graduation rates in 2011 is -0.38.

According to the surveys received, Bayside High School has 7-9 school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 10 or more guidance counselors. Bronx High School of Science High School has 10 or more school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 10 or more guidance counselors.

Baccalaureate School for Global

Education has 1-3 school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 1-3 guidance counselors.

Brooklyn High School of Latin has 4-6 school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 4-6

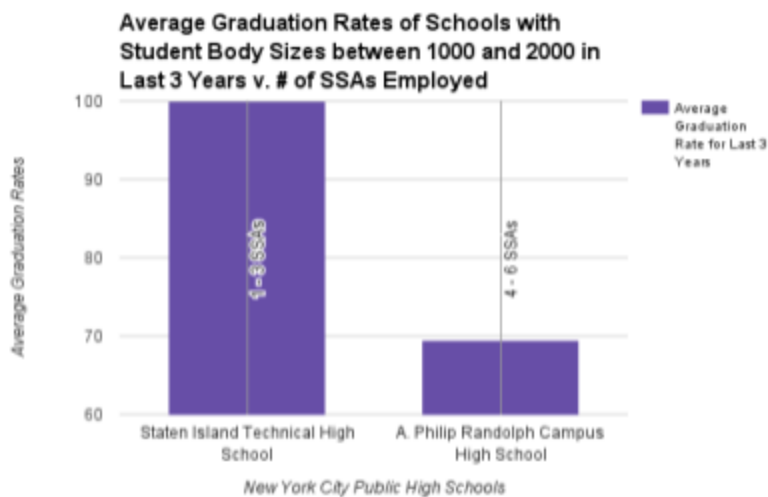


Figure 9. Average Graduation Rates of Schools with Student Body Sizes between 1000 and 2000 in Last 3 Years v. # of School Security Agents (SSAs) Employed

guidance counselors. Brooklyn Technical High School of Latin has 10 or more school security agents, 10 or more stationed police officer, and 10 or more guidance counselors. Eleanor Roosevelt High School has 1-3 school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 1-3 guidance counselors. It Takes A Village High School has 7-9 school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 1-3 guidance counselors. Newtown High School has 10 or more school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 10 or more guidance counselors. Queens High School for Information, Research and Technology has 10 or more school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 1-3 guidance counselors. The Young Women's Leadership School, Brooklyn has 1-3 school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 1-3 guidance

counselors. Staten Island Technical High School has 1-3 school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 4-6 guidance counselors. A. Philip Randolph Campus High School has 4-6 school security agents, 0 stationed police officer,

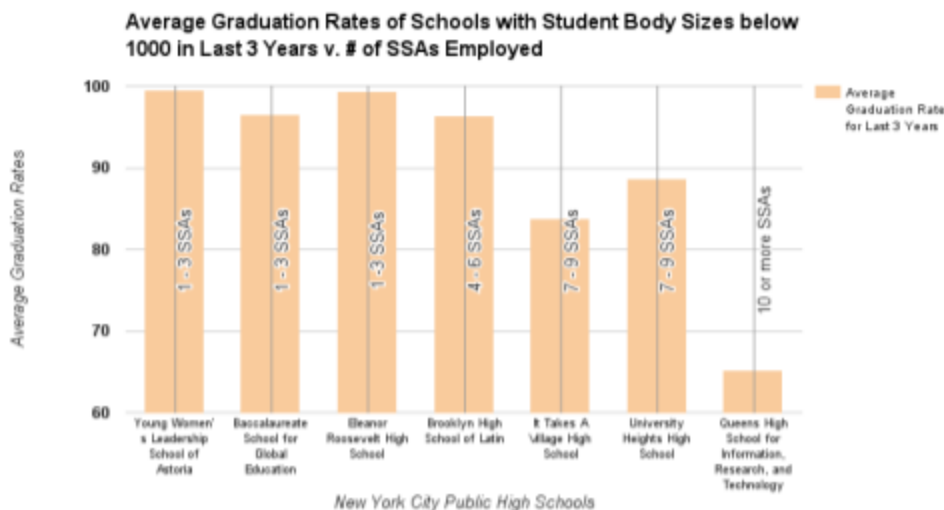


Figure 10. Average Graduation Rates of Schools with Student Body Sizes below 1000 in Last Years v. Number of School Security Agents (SSAs) Employed

and 4-6 guidance counselors. The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria has 1-3 school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 1-3 guidance counselors. Thomas Edison High School has 4-6 school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 7-9 guidance counselors. University Heights High School has 7-9 school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 1-3 guidance counselors. Stuyvesant High School has 4-6 school security agents, 0 stationed police officer, and 10 or more guidance counselors.

There is a -0.52 correlation relationship between the number of school security agents stationed in a school and the graduation rates of students in the last 3 years.

Discussion:

A research project was conducted which investigated the effects of school policing on graduation rates. When comparing the graduation rates of New York City public high schools before and after the official implementation of New York Police Department (NYPD) trained school security agents (SSAs) the results showed a positive effect on graduation rates. The average graduation rates of New York City public high schools in the years between 1986-1990 was 52% which is substantially less than the average graduation rates of New York City public high schools in the years between 1998-2013 which is 69.8%. These numbers indicate that the employment of NYPD-trained security agents actually helped more students graduate high school on time. However, the data used to reach these statistical numbers may have skewed the results. 1998 was the year when NYPD-trained SSAs were implemented, however the data that was used to measure graduation rates before this implementation is limited to only 5 years between 1986-1990 which is also 8 years before the implementation occurred. This skewed number is being compared to the average of 16 consecutive years immediately after the implementation. Therefore, the conclusions made from these numbers may be misleading.

When comparing the rates of school policing (i.e. increased student referrals to law enforcement and increased in-school and out-of-school suspensions) on the graduation rates of New York City public high schools in 2011, there seems to be an inverse relationship between graduation rates and school policing. Schools with graduation rates between 30%-75.9% referred more students to law enforcement and suspended more students than schools with graduation rates between 76%-100%. The correlation

coefficient between the number of students referred to law enforcement and graduation rates in 2011 is -0.33 which is a moderate negative correlation. However, the correlation coefficient between the number of students serving in-school suspensions and graduation rates is -0.29 which is a weak negative correlation. The correlation coefficient between the number of students serving out-of-school suspensions and graduation rates is -0.43 which is a strong negative relationship. Finally, the correlation coefficient between the number of students affected by school policing and graduation rates is -0.38 which is a moderate negative relationship. Overall, there seems to be a moderate negative relationship between school policing and graduation rates but the correlation coefficient between out-of-school suspensions and graduation rates is high. This can be attributed to the tendency for out-of-school suspensions to be of poor-quality academically, for a longer period of time, and physically removes the student from their regular academic setting for an extended period of time. This can have a substantial negative effect on the student's learning processes and could slow them down. Thus, the strong negative correlation coefficient reflects the potentially permanent harm out-of-school suspensions can do. However, this data only compares statistics from 2011, other years may suggest different relationships.

There seems to be a strong negative relationship between the number of SSAs employed in schools and the graduation rates of those schools. The correlation coefficient is -0.52. The data shows that as the number of school security agents increases the lower the graduation rates tend to be. However, when looking at the data, schools like Bronx High School of Science and Brooklyn Technical High School seem to be unphased from the increased presence of SSAs unlike schools like Newtown High School which is similar in size. This is because of the standardized test-based selectivity process these schools undertake every year before admitting students. Additionally, these schools have fewer black and Latino students than schools like Newtown High School and thus do not have to deal with the implicit biases that exist among all people including school security agents against black and Latino students. In

the rest of the schools there seems to be a pattern that indicates a strong relationship between increased security agents presence and lower graduation rates.

Although the results of the surveys are valuable, the information given may not be completely reliable. The survey requested factual data from an individual at the school and the results could not be verified in any way. In this way, the data is very subjective to the individual's knowledge to the extent of the survey.

Conclusion:

A research project was conducted in which the relationship between increased school policing and graduation rates was explored. It was hypothesized that the increased presence of security agents and suspensions would result in decreased rates of graduation. The results supported this hypothesis. There is a strong negative correlation between the presence of security agents and graduation rates, meaning that as more security agents are employed in a particular school the lower the graduation rate tends to be. Additionally, the school policing and graduation statistics of 2011 also supported the hypothesis; the data shows a negative moderate correlation between school policing and graduation rates in 2011 and a negative strong correlation between particularly out-of-school suspensions and graduation rates.

Sources of error include the discrepancy between the limited amount of graduation rates averaged before 1998 compared to after 1998. The more data used to compare and make conclusions about various things in the research process makes the investigation more conclusive because as the amount of data used increases the more likely outlying numbers and data that skews the results will not have an effect on the calculations. Similarly, the limited number of surveys received makes it difficult to account for discrepancy in answers and is not conclusive about the entire New York City public high school system.

Additionally, the lack of resources to check the factual data received in the survey results in less accurate results and conclusions that may not be representative of the NYC school system or even of the school the administrator is a staff. Furthermore, the data used to study the relationship between school policing and graduation rates was confined to 2011 and thus cannot make overarching conclusions that concerns the entire system.

Further research can eliminate these sources of error by finding the missing years between 1998 and 1986 that can be used to make more accurate statements about the historical effect of school policing on graduation rates. Additionally, the procedure used to analyze the relationship between school policing and graduation rates in 2011 should be expanded to encompass more years. Also, the surveys need to be distributed to a larger population to extract more information and conclude with results that reflect a large portion of the population.

Since the conclusions of this study indicates that school policing practices such as suspensions and increased school security agents presence has a depressing effect on graduation rates, schools should take measures to end suspensions and end the relationship school safety has with the New York Police Department. The New York City school system has more school security agents per student than the city has police officers per New Yorker. Harsh practices that are employed by school security agents push students out of school, which explains the depressing effect school policing has on graduation rates. Thus, measures should be taken to end or at least decrease zero-tolerance policies and suspensions, and school security agents should be trained in restorative practices and de-escalating tactics so they can employ those alternative tools when interacting with students.

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