MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS

Approximately 20 percent of adolescents have a diagnosable mental health disorder.

One in 10 youth in the United States experience a mental disorder severe enough to limit daily functioning in the family, school, and community setting.

Among adolescents with mental health needs, 70 percent do not receive the care they need.

Untreated mental health issues may lead to poor school performance, school dropout, strained relationships, involvement with the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, substance abuse, and engagement in risky sexual behaviors.

EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL DISABILITY (EBD) STATISTICS

More than two million young people in the United States have emotional/behavioral disabilities.

Youth with EBD …
• have the worst graduation rate of all students with disabilities. Nationally, only 40 percent of students with EBD graduate from high school, compared to the national average of 76 percent.
• are three times as likely as other students to be arrested before leaving school.
• are twice as likely as other students with other disabilities (e.g. developmental or learning) to be living in a correctional facility, halfway house, drug treatment center, or on the street after leaving school.
• are twice as likely as students with other disabilities to become teenage mothers

Up to 85 percent of children in juvenile detention facilities have disabilities that make them eligible for special education services, yet only 37 percent had been receiving any kind of services in their school.

Youth with emotional disturbance are 13 times more likely to have been arrested while still in school compared to students with other disabilities.

10 to 25 percent of students with EBD enroll in post-secondary education (compared to 53 percent of typical population).

OVERUSE AND DISPARITIES OF PUNITIVE DISCIPLINE POLICIES IN SCHOOLS

A new Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) report by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights represents data collected from the 2009/2010 school year. The CRDC, a representative sample covering approximately 85 percent of the nation’s
students, found that:

- Students with disabilities (under the IDEA and Section 504 statutes) represent 12 percent of students in the sample, but represent nearly 70 percent of the students who are physically restrained by adults in their schools.
- Students covered under IDEA are over twice as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions than their non-disabled peers.
- Across all districts, African American students are over 3½ times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their White peers.
- African American boys and girls have higher suspension rates than any of their peers. One in five African American boys and more than one in ten African American girls received an out-of-school suspension.
- In districts that reported expulsions under zero-tolerance policies, Hispanic and African American students represent 45 percent of the student body, but 56 percent of the students expelled under such policies.
- While male and female students each represent about half the student population, males made up 74 percent of the students expelled.

Of one million public school students in Texas tracked between their seventh- and 12th-grade school years:

- 60 percent were suspended or expelled at least once between their seventh- and 12th-grade school years.
- Approximately 59 percent of students disciplined 11 times or more did not graduate from high school.
- African Americans were 30 percent more likely to face disciplinary action than Whites, often for a similar incident that would not lead to suspension for a White student.

Only three percent of disciplinary actions were for conduct for which state law mandates suspensions and expulsions (e.g. bringing a weapon to school, drug possession or use). 97 percent of suspensions/expulsions were for minor infractions that did not jeopardize the safety of the school population (e.g. talking back to the teacher, talking in class, noncompliance with dress code).

In 2006-07, African American students were over three times more likely to receive out-of-school suspensions than White peers. Latino and Native American students were 42 percent and 66 percent more likely than White peers to receive out-of-school suspensions, respectively.

RELATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF ‘ZERO TOLERANCE’ POLICIES VS. PBIS FRAMEWORK

There is little or no evidence that strict zero tolerance policies have contributed to reducing student misbehavior or improving school safety. Studies of suspension have consistently documented that at-risk students do not change their behavior as a result of suspension; that suspension is associated with school dropout and juvenile incarceration; and that schools with higher rates of suspension and expulsion tend to have lower test scores and a less satisfactory school climate. In short, there is no data that zero tolerance contributes in any way to school safety or improved student behavior.


Schools that establish systems with the capacity to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with integrity and durability have teaching and learning environments that:

- Are less reactive, aversive, dangerous, and exclusionary and more engaging, responsive, preventive, and productive;
- Address classroom management and disciplinary issues (e.g., attendance, tardiness, antisocial behavior);
- Improve supports for students whose behaviors require more specialized assistance (e.g., emotional behavioral disabilities); and
- Maximize academic engagement and achievement for all students.


Studies evaluating the effectiveness of PBIS report:

- Reduced discipline referrals up to 50 percent
KEY STATISTICS

● Reduced student vandalism, aggression, and delinquency, as well as alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use
● Reduced problem behaviors in non-instructional areas, including recess, hallway transitions, and bus rides
● Improved academic achievement and school engagement
● Improved supports for students with emotional or behavioral disorders (EBD)
● Early identification of students at-risk for developing serious problem behavior
● Improved graduation rates when implemented at the high school level


SCHOOL DROPOUT STATISTICS

Every year, an estimated 1.3 million American high school students drop out, a disproportionate number of whom are youth of color.


In 2008, the dropout rate for students living in low-income families was about four and a half times greater than the rate of their peers from high-income families.


The majority of students with disabilities dropping out of high school tend to have emotional/behavioral disabilities (52.3 percent), speech or language impairments (29.4 percent), and learning disabilities (29.1 percent).


Nationally, about 71 percent of all students graduate from high school on time with a regular diploma, but barely half of African American and Hispanic students earn diplomas with their peers. In some states the gap between White and minority graduation rates is as much as 40 or 50 percentage points.


Dropouts from the Class of 2008 will cost the nation more than $319 billion in lost wages over the course of their lifetimes.


If U.S. high schools and colleges raise the graduation rates of Latino, African American, and Native American students to the levels of White students by 2020, the estimated increase in personal income would add more than $310 billion to the US economy.


Increasing the graduation and college matriculation rates of male students by five percent could lead to combined savings and revenue of almost $8 billion each year in reduced crime-related costs.


STATISTICS FROM SOMERSWORTH HIGH SCHOOL, SITE OF THE FILM

In 2005-2006 – Kelsey’s freshman year – Somersworth High School had one of the highest dropout rates in the state. With the introduction of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at Somersworth High in Fall 2006, along with a youth-directed planning process called RENEW (Rehabilitation, Empowerment, Natural supports, Education and Work) for students like Kelsey with intensive needs – staff, students, parents and administrators began to see a transformation. By 2008-2009, the dropout rate at the school was reduced by 75 percent and discipline referrals by 60 percent.