Prison Pipeline or College Pathways: Transforming the Urban Classroom

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Abstract : The "school-to-prison pipeline" is a widely known phenomenon within education. Although data surrounding this epidemic is daunting, we coin the term "school-to-postsecondary pipeline" to explore proactive strategies that are currently working in K-12 education for African American students. The assumption that high school graduation, postsecondary matriculation, and social success are not the assumed norms for African American youth, positions the term "school-to-postsecondary pipeline" as the newly casted advocacy term for African American educational success. Using secondary data from the Children's Defense Fund and the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, we examine current conditions of educational accessibility and attainment for African American students, and provide effective strategies for classroom teachers, administrators, and parents to use for the immediate implementation in schools. These strategies include: (a) engaging instruction, (b) relevant curriculum, and (c) utilizing useful enrichment and community resources. By providing proactive steps towards the school-to-postsecondary pipeline, we hope to counter the docility of the school-to-prison pipeline as the assumed reality for African American youth.

Keywords : college access, higher education, school-to-prison pipeline, urban education reform

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