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Rethinking the Role of the Juvenile Justice System:

Improving Youth's School Attendance and Educational Outcomes

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Author: **Josh Weber**
Research and Data Analysis: **Rebecca Cohen**

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CSG Justice Center

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Over the last decade, states and counties have reconsidered many of the ways that juvenile justice systems have traditionally operated. Yet most jurisdictions have not questioned whether the system should take on education-related responsibilities and hold youth accountable if they fail to comply.

This brief summarizes key findings from an unprecedented research study conducted by The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center on the impact of juvenile justice system involvement—particularly probation—on school attendance in South Carolina and challenges jurisdictions across the country—as well as the broader field—to reconsider whether system involvement is the most appropriate and effective way to promote youth's school success.

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I. Background

Most state and local juvenile justice systems have adopted three formal roles and responsibilities related to youth's school attendance and educational outcomes:

1. Youth can be sent to court for missing school.
In 2018, U.S. schools referred over 60,000 youth—disproportionately youth of color—to juvenile court for truancy.[1] Since 2010, the number of truancy court petitions has held steady while petitions for every other status offense (e.g., curfew violations, running away, etc.) and almost all types of delinquency offenses (e.g., property, drug, and public order, etc.) have declined substantially.[2]

2. Monitoring school attendance is a focus of probation.
Approximately 288,000 youth are placed on some form of probation every year; less than 30 percent of these placements are the direct result of an offense that involved another person.[3] Daily school attendance—and sometimes grade improvements—are standard conditions of probation in jurisdictions across the country.

3. Youth are detained and incarcerated for failing to comply with the conditions of probation, including those related to school.
Approximately 20 percent of all youth who are detained and 15 percent of youth who are incarcerated in state custody are detained or incarcerated due to technical violations of the conditions of their probation.[4] The reasons for such violations are not tracked nationwide or often even at the local level, but at least one study has found that failure to comply with school-related conditions increased the likelihood of youth having their probation revoked and being placed in a juvenile correctional facility.[5]

Jurisdictions are justifiably concerned with youth's school attendance and educational progress because school engagement and completion are associated with an array of positive, long-term outcomes, such as reduced crime and increased labor market earnings.[6] Research has also shown that youth in contact with the juvenile justice system have significant educational needs, as they are disproportionately likely to struggle with school attendance, perform below grade level, have learning disabilities, be suspended/expelled, and drop out.[7]

While it's in young people and communities' best interest to keep youth in school and on track for a successful future, it's important to ask: do an arrest, court involvement, and probation actually have a positive impact on young people's educational success? Indeed, recent events have challenged jurisdictions to reconsider the appropriate role of the justice system in people's lives. These questions are bolstered by research that has consistently shown that formal system involvement has a limited impact on, and may actually increase, recidivism rates for youth who have a low risk of reoffending.[8]

II. Previous Research on the Impact of Juvenile Justice Involvement on Youth's Education

It's appropriate to question whether juvenile justice system involvement is the best way to improve youth's educational outcomes, because the research conducted to date suggests that system contact is likely to do more harm than good. Multiple studies have shown that an arrest and/or court involvement has a substantial negative impact on young people's school attendance, grade retention, high school completion, and even college enrollment.[9] Importantly, a number of these studies have controlled for a variety of individual and socioeconomic factors to essentially create two similar populations of young people, the primary difference being contact with the juvenile justice system. One of the most rigorous studies that controlled for a variety of external factors found that youth who were arrested were 22 percent more likely to drop out of high school and 16 percent less likely to enroll in college than their peers who had not been arrested.[10]

While less well studied, juvenile incarceration is also associated with a significant decrease in high school completion rates. One study that attempted to control for both neighborhood and youth demographics found that youth who were incarcerated were 30 percent less likely to graduate from high school than their un-incarcerated peers.[11]

A major gap in the existing research is how being placed on probation impacts youth's school attendance and educational outcomes. Probation is far and away the most common juvenile justice system intervention and has an estimated nationwide cost of more than $2 billion annually.[12] Probation's prevalence and costs, along with the commonly held assumption that system supervision should and will promote improved school attendance and other educational outcomes for struggling students, make it critical to understand the relationship between probation and youth's education in a data-driven way.

III. Study Methodology

CSG Justice Center research staff examined daily school attendance for all youth attending public schools in South Carolina during the 2015 and 2016 school years who, in the following year, were referred to the juvenile justice system and diverted from formal court involvement[13] or were adjudicated and placed on probation.[14] We analyzed the school attendance for these two groups of youth ("diverted youth" and "youth on probation") in the year prior to system contact, and then how their attendance changed during their first year of system involvement. Our analysis is based on data collected from South Carolina's Integrated Data Warehouse.

Data collection challenges limited our analysis to school attendance, which is not the only marker of improved educational outcomes but is generally a necessary prerequisite for improving other outcomes, such as grade retention, performance, and school completion. Even with these challenges, however, South Carolina is one of only a few states that has an integrated statewide juvenile justice and education database that enables analysis of the relationship between probation and education outcomes. While this study is based on South Carolina data, the findings in this brief raise questions and concerns that are applicable to jurisdictions nationwide.

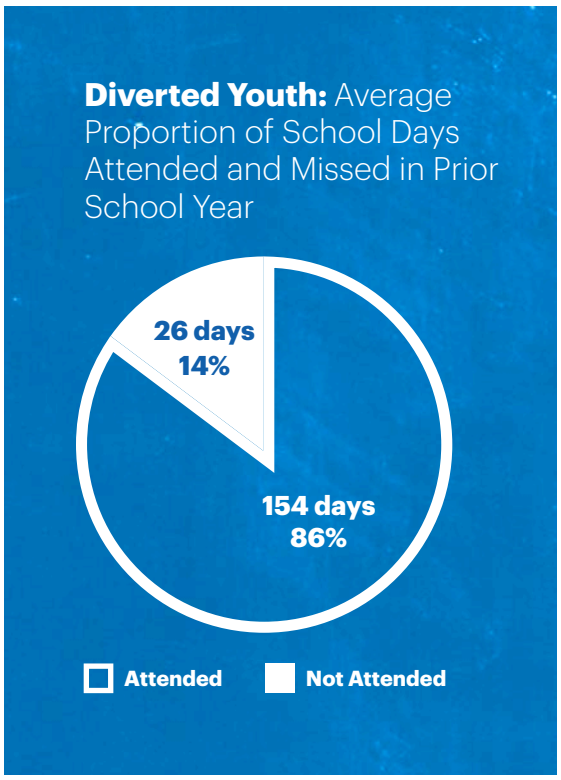
To complement the data analysis, we conducted focus groups in 2019 with a range of stakeholders in South Carolina to understand the policies and practices of the juvenile justice system and schools that impact youth who are arrested, court involved, and/or placed on probation. We obtained feedback from probation officers, judges, prosecutors and public defenders, school resource officers, school and Department of Education personnel, and youth involved in the system and their families. These conversations—along with similar focus groups that we've held with juvenile justice system stakeholders in an array of counties and states across the country over the last five years—inform the discussion section below.

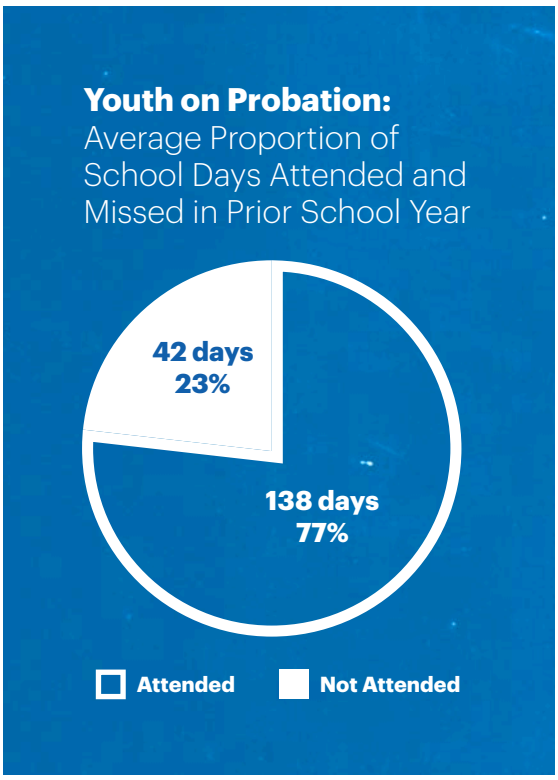
IV. Key Findings

Finding 1

In the school year prior to system involvement, diverted youth and youth on probation missed an average of 26 and 42 days of school, respectively.

Jurisdictions have good reason to be concerned about the school attendance of youth who become involved in the juvenile justice system because these students miss many school days. In the year prior to their system involvement, *diverted youth did not attend school, on average, for 26 days, or 14 percent*





of the 180-day school year. Youth on probation did not attend school, on average, for 42 days—almost 25 percent of the school year. Further, beyond these averages, a quarter of all youth placed on probation missed almost 60 days of school or more in the year prior to their system involvement.

It's important to note that youth might not attend school because of an excused absence, unexcused absence, or because they became unenrolled in school. We could not distinguish the reasons for lack of attendance based on the data available to us. For this reason, we can't easily compare the attendance of our study population to South Carolina's statewide population of middle and high school students. That said, during these same years (2015–2016), South Carolina reported that approximately 5–10 percent of all public high school students were "truant," which was defined as accumulating unexcused absences on 3 consecutive days and/or accumulating a total of 5 or more unexcused absences at any time during the school year. While not an exact comparison, more than 85 percent of diverted youth and 90 percent of youth on probation missed a total of 5 days or more during the school year prior to their system involvement.

Finding 2

On average, the school attendance of youth who were diverted or placed on probation declined in the first year of their system involvement.

As Finding 1 revealed, in the year prior to their involvement in the juvenile justice system, diverted youth and youth on probation missed many days of school. In the following year, contrary to what many policymakers, judges, attorneys, and juvenile justice agency staff might expect, youth's juvenile justice involvement was not associated with improvement in their school attendance. Instead, *youth who became involved with the juvenile justice*

system missed, on average, five additional days of school—a statistically significant difference.

We cannot conclude from this data that system involvement *caused* a decline in youth attendance given the myriad factors that impact school attendance overall and from one year to the next. However, we were able to control for some of these factors in our analysis, including youth's age, race, ethnicity, gender, number of prior system referrals, nature of their offense, county size, prior year school attendance, and placement at an alternative school. As a result, we can conclude that this five-day decline in youth's attendance, on average, during their first year of system involvement was not attributable to these demographic and school differences.

Finding 3

There was no significant difference in attendance between youth specifically mandated by the court to comply with a school attendance order and their peers who were not.

Mandatory school attendance is a standard condition of juvenile probation in South Carolina, as it is in almost every state and locale. It's feasible, though, that we did not find any positive association between youth's system involvement and their school attendance because the juvenile justice

professionals and related service providers involved were not focused on trying to improve attendance for all diverted youth and youth placed on probation, but only for those youth for whom school attendance was identified as a particular concern.

To test this possibility, we examined the change in school attendance from the prior year to the first year of system involvement for all youth (those diverted and those placed on probation) who received an attendance order from the juvenile court, which requires youth to attend school every day, regardless of their current level of system involvement. Youth who received an attendance order were presumably identified as requiring system intervention specifically to address their school attendance, which, at minimum, included ongoing court monitoring; possible sanctions if they failed to improve their attendance, such as more intensive system supervision and/or confinement; and potentially, education-related services and supports. We found *no statistically significant difference in the attendance of diverted youth and youth on probation who received such attendance orders* compared to their peers who did not, even when controlling for all other factors.

Finding 4

Older youth experienced significantly greater attendance declines during their first year of system involvement than their younger peers.

When controlling for other factors, youth who were 15 years of age or older missed, on average, approximately 7.5 more school days during their first year of system involvement compared to the prior year, as opposed to their peers under the age of 15 who missed only approximately 1.5 more school days. *This difference of almost 6 missed school days was the most pronounced difference amongst any paired demographic groups in our analysis*. It's

hard to say why system involvement was associated with such a substantial comparative decline in attendance for older youth. However, prior studies have shown that school absenteeism rates gradually increase as youth age during the middle and high school years, peaking during 12th grade.[15] Perhaps juvenile justice system involvement exacerbates the complex set of factors that drives older youth to feel less engaged in school, and for at least some of these youth, to ultimately drop out.

When controlling for all other factors, we also found much smaller but still significant differences in the change in attendance from the prior year to the first year of system involvement for youth with prior system referrals (1.5 fewer days attended) compared to youth with no prior referrals and for White youth compared to their Black and Hispanic peers (2 days fewer). Our analysis did not find any other measurable differences in attendance changes by youth or school demographics.

V. Discussion

Across the country, the juvenile justice system is used in a variety of ways to address youth's school attendance challenges under the presumption that court oversight, probation supervision, and even secure confinement will improve youth's school attendance. This first-of-its-kind study contributes to a growing body of knowledge that not only casts doubt on this presumption, but suggests that system involvement, and specifically probation, has the opposite of its intended effect and actually results in worse attendance.

We theorize that there are three key factors that explain why, contrary to expectations, the South Carolina students in our study who became involved in the juvenile justice system did not experience any attendance improvement, and in fact, had worse attendance. First, research has shown that the tools most familiar and readily available to juvenile justice systems—court mandates; court oversight; supervision appointments; compliance checks; and sanctions, including detention and other forms of out-of-

home placement—are unlikely to facilitate long-term positive youth behavior changes, such as school attendance and completion, and might even have negative effects. Indeed, research indicates that system supervision, by itself, has little if any impact on recidivism, and that adolescents are developmentally wired to act impulsively, not think about the long-term consequences of their actions, and be swayed less by the severity of sanctions than incentives.[16] In response, over the last decade, courts, probation, and juvenile corrections agencies nationwide have shifted, in at least some respects, toward a more developmentally appropriate, positive youth development approach. These reforms have included the decriminalization of truancy in approximately half of all states[17] and efforts to minimize the use of detention and other intensive sanctions for youth who commit status and low-level delinquent offenses. However, most juvenile justice systems generally—and state and local probation agencies in particular—are still fundamentally oriented around supervision and compliance functions.

Likewise, the average probation officer does not have—nor is it reasonable to expect them to have—the expertise or experience to accurately identify the complex set of individualized reasons that particular youth do not attend school, assess their specialized learning needs, and connect them (and their families) with appropriate services and supports. Additionally, information sharing and collaboration between education and juvenile justice systems is hampered by the local nature of school policy and practice, a general struggle over roles and responsibilities, and resource constraints and often limited service availability on both sides. Fundamentally, then, the basic structure, parameters, and staffing of how most juvenile justice systems operate, both on their own and in relation to schools, may make them ill-suited to serve as an effective, systemic solution to chronic school absences.

Second, it's not only unreasonable to expect juvenile justice systems to improve youth's school attendance, but research suggests that pushing youth into the juvenile justice system for this purpose—particularly youth that have a low risk of reoffending—can cause harm by prompting youth to see themselves as "delinquent" as a result of their system involvement. Consequently, these young people may increasingly behave in accordance

with this self-image, including skipping school and associating with a more negative peer group. Youth's family members, peers, teachers, coaches, and other adults may also treat them more harshly (known as the "labeling" effect), resulting in strained connections to positive adults and peers that are most critical to supporting these vulnerable students to stay in school and on track for a successful future.[18]

Third, our focus group participants in South Carolina shared that schools there impose sanctions on youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system in ways that are likely to not only negatively impact their school attendance but a host of positive youth outcomes. The prevalence of such punitive approaches is difficult to quantify given that education policy in South Carolina, as in many parts of the country, is often determined at the local level and differs significantly across and even within school districts. However, the following policies and practices were identified as not uncommon in many locales when youth are arrested, adjudicated, and/or placed on probation:

- School personnel receive notification of youth's juvenile justice system involvement—including access to youth's confidential records—even if their offenses were nonviolent and/or did not take place on school grounds or involve students or staff.
- Youth are barred from attending in-person classes before they have been proved guilty of a crime and adjudicated as such by the juvenile court.
- Youth—and disproportionately youth of color—are suspended or expelled, sometimes without a formal hearing or parental involvement, and typically without legal representation or due process.
- Youth are required to attend alternative schools for "troubled" or "special needs" students for undefined periods of time with unclear criteria for returning to their home schools. These alternative schools can have lax academic standards and minimal oversight. In addition, districts sometimes don't provide youth who attend alternative schools with access to public transportation, and bar the students who attend them from participating in extracurricular activities, such as sports and clubs.

Focus group participants in South Carolina also identified common juvenile court and probation practices that might similarly serve as obstacles to youth more regularly attending school, including the following:

- Probation officers visiting youth while at school resulting in youth feeling stigmatized by their teachers and peers
- Court hearings being scheduled during school hours that require youth to miss school (and parents to miss work) in order to attend

All of these responses to youth's contact with law enforcement and the juvenile justice system tend to dissuade and make it harder for youth to regularly attend school, including limiting their interaction with positive adults, peers, and activities that could have a buffering effect. And our experience with juvenile justice systems across the country affirms that South Carolina is not the only state in which such policies and practices are common and generally unquestioned.

VI. Conclusion

Our research affirms that jurisdictions should take concerted action to address the extensive school absences of youth at risk of entering the juvenile justice system or who are already in it. Yet our findings also add to an existing body of evidence that suggests that juvenile justice system involvement is not associated with positive impacts on youth's school attendance and may in fact negatively affect students' school success. In particular, our study fills a notable gap in the existing research by exploring and raising important questions about whether juvenile probation should be seen as a viable tool for improving youth's school attendance. Over 288,000 youth are placed on some form of probation each year at an expense of more than $2 billion annually.[19] And there are significant collateral consequences of a juvenile arrest and adjudication. Restrictions related to postsecondary education, employment, housing, immigration, and more impact the opportunities of all young people—particularly youth of color—for the rest of their lives.

Given these facts, jurisdictions should use these study findings as cause to rethink whether excessive school absences should be treated like a crime and/or subject to court oversight and sanctions. Jurisdictions should also evaluate the most appropriate and effective roles and responsibilities for the juvenile justice, education, and other youth-family service systems, as well as community service providers, for keeping youth engaged in school and supporting long-term, positive educational outcomes.

To begin this examination and consider what changes to policy, practice, and funding might be needed in your jurisdiction, explore our related infographics and their accompanying policy recommendations:

- Rethinking Juvenile Justice and Schools: How students can suffer when cutting class is a crime (Part 1 of 2)
- Rethinking Juvenile Justice and Schools: How probation can do more harm than good when it comes to keeping youth in school and on track (Part 2 of 2)

Study Appendix: Detailed Methodology

This study examines the impact of juvenile justice involvement on school attendance. Staff from The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center examined a cohort of almost 11,000 students from South Carolina who entered the juvenile justice system in school year (SY) 2016–2017 to see if and how system involvement impacted their attendance.

First, it is important to note that *youth in the juvenile justice system have different demographics and attendance rates than the general public-school-enrolled population in South Carolina* even before they become involved in the system. In the year prior to system involvement, youth attended fewer days of school than their peers who were not involved in the system. Youth involved in the juvenile justice system also had an average attendance rate of 89 percent compared to 95 percent for all youth enrolled in middle or high school in the state.[20] Additionally, the students in the system were more likely to be Black (55 percent vs. 36 percent) and less likely to be Hispanic (3 percent vs. 8 percent) than their uninvolved peers.[21] These factors (i.e., school attendance prior to justice involvement and youth demographics) are related to justice system involvement and likely influence youth attendance rates independently of system involvement.

Our analysis focuses on how attendance changes after justice system involvement, so we examined all youth enrolled in public schools in South Carolina who were referred to the juvenile justice system and disposed to diversion or probation supervision during SY2016–2017. For the purpose of this study, "diversion" includes the following disposition codes: divert, divert to arbitration, divert to Department of Juvenile Justice supervised program, divert to solicitor supervision program not arbitration, divert with behavior contract, youth court diversion, and truancy order.

Prior to their involvement in the juvenile justice system, *the diversion and probation groups within our study cohort differed in several important ways*. In the year prior to supervision, the youth who were disposed to probation attended, on average, 16 fewer school days (approximately 3 school weeks) than youth who were diverted. In the year prior to supervision, the group that was diverted attended an average of 154 school days compared to the group disposed to probation who attended an average of 138 days. Additionally, youth disposed to probation were slightly older (average age of 15 compared to 14), more likely to be male (76 percent vs. 62 percent), and more likely to be Black (58 percent vs. 54 percent) than the diversion group.

Table 1. Study Cohort Overview

	STUDY COHORT					
	Diversion	*Probation*	*Status*	*Low-Level Misd and Fel*	*Misd and Fel*	*Serious Fel*
Total	9,174	1,685	1,143	7,857	1,685	174
Black	54%	58%	34%	57%	57%	62%
Hispanic	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%
White	41%	37%	59%	39%	37%	33%
Other	1%	2%	4%	1%	2%	2%
Female	38%	24%	50%	39%	17%	3%
Male	62%	76%	50%	61%	83%	97%
Mean prior referrals	0.51	1.58	0.96	0.54	1.05	1.26
Alternative school in first year of sup	8%	10%	6%	8%	11%	11%
Truancy Order	7%	1%	41%	1%	4%	2%
Mean age at referral*	14	15	14	15	14	14
Mean attendance in year prior to supervision*	154	138	133	156	148	145

**independent samples test indicates a difference in means between diversion and probation groups at p<0.001 level.*

Data

To assess the impact of juvenile justice involvement on school attendance, CSG Justice Center staff requested data from the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDOE) and South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (SCDJJ). Requested files, which included youth demographics, attendance, and school information from SCDOE, and disposition, offense, referral history, and supervision dates from SCDJJ, were released to and compiled by the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA) Data Warehouse. The RFA Data Warehouse combined records across datasets and provided the CSG Justice Center with deidentified data files.

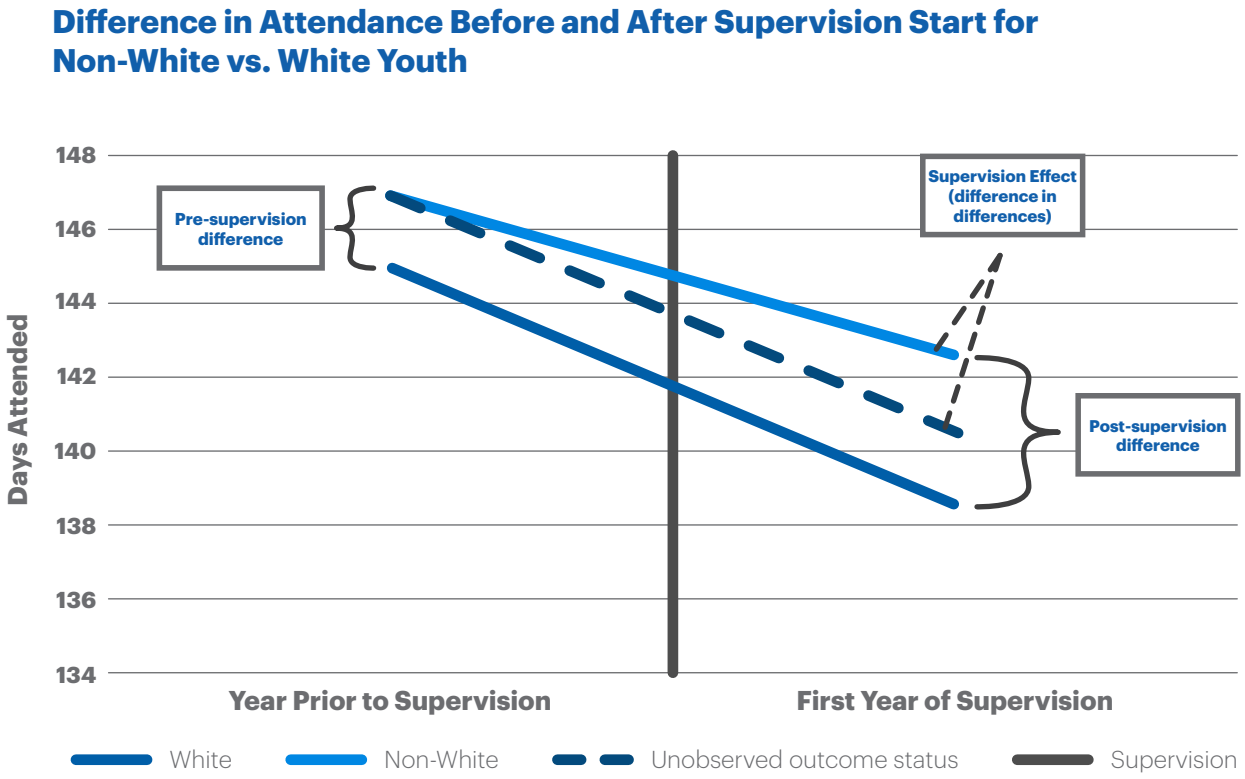
CSG Justice Center staff selected a study cohort from the RFA-provided data files that included all youth disposed to probation or diversion in SY2016–2017. Attendance information for the school year prior to supervision and the first year of supervision was then linked to every youth disposition record.

Analysis

CSG Justice Center staff used a series of difference-in-difference (DiD) models to assess the impact of supervision on attendance for youth who became involved with the juvenile justice system. A DiD design allowed us to evaluate the impact of an intervention, policy, or treatment by measuring the difference in outcomes for two groups (exposed to treatment vs. not exposed to treatment) before and after treatment exposure. This approach assumes that in the absence of an intervention, the difference in outcomes between the two groups will remain constant over time.

For our purposes, we ran DiD models to observe supervision effects on attendance for youth on probation vs. diversion, truancy order vs. non-truancy order, White vs. non-White, and older vs. younger youth (see DiD output for each model in Tables 2–6 below). In each model, we controlled for demographics, referral history, offense type, prior year school attendance, county size, and alternative school exposure in the first year of supervision. Our DiD models considered three differences: (1) difference in pre-supervision school attendance between groups (e.g., probation vs. diversion or White vs. non-White), (2) difference in post-supervision school attendance between groups, and (3) the difference in differences between the pre- and post-supervision groups (see Chart 1 for graphic representation of DiD analysis).

Chart 1. Example of Difference in Difference for White vs. Non-White



Limitations

Our model does not allow us to attribute all the reported differences in attendance to juvenile justice system involvement or supervision. There are many factors that contribute to attendance but that are not easily measurable (e.g., parental/caregiver discretion, social connectedness, youth safety concerns), or are not available in our dataset (e.g., school disciplinary history, academic performance). Additionally, our model does not account for group differences associated with being selected for a diversion or probation group; a youth disposed to diversion, on average, looks different than a youth disposed to probation regarding a number of characteristics we can measure and likely more that we cannot. While our models control for some of these characteristics, our design does not account for selection bias in a way that allows us to completely isolate the impact of supervision.

Table 2. Difference in Differences Output for Diversion vs. Probation

Diversion vs. Probation				
DIFFERENCE-IN-DIFFERENCES WITH COVARIATES				
Number of observations in the DIFF-IN-DIFF: 21,718				
	Before	*After*	*Total*	
Probation	1,685	1,685	3,370	
Diversion	9,174	9,174	18,348	
	10,859	10,859		
Report Covariates and Coefficients				
Variable(s)	*Coeff.*	*Std. Err.*	*t*	*P>t*
Black	3.338	0.463	7.215	0
Hispanic	-2.187	1.263	-1.732	0.083
Other	4.633	1.826	2.538	0.011
Female	-0.357	0.467	-0.766	0.444
15 or older	-5.858	0.446	13.128	0
Low-level misd & fel	16.856	0.866	19.457	0
Misd and Fel	13.145	0.986	13.338	0
Serious fel	15.565	1.935	8.043	0
Priors	-8.645	0.477	18.137	0
Truancy order	-4.476	1.096	-4.083	0
Alt school in first yr sup	-4.949	0.806	-6.137	0
Small county	-0.268	1.158	-0.232	0.817
Medium county	0.278	0.715	0.389	0.697
Outcome var.	*attend*	*S. Err.*	*t*	*P>t*
Before				
probation	133.171			
diversion	144.561			
Diff (T-C)	11.39	0.897	12.7	0.000***
After				
probation	128.799			
diversion	139.269			
Diff (T-C)	10.471	0.897	11.67	0.000***
Diff-in-diff	-0.92	1.205	0.76	0.445
R-square: 0.10				
***p<0.01; **p<0.05;*p<0.1				

Table 3. Difference in Differences Output for Non-White vs. White

Non-White/White				
DIFFERENCE-IN-DIFFERENCES WITH COVARIATES				
Number of observations in the DIFF-IN-DIFF: 21,718				
	Before	*After*	*Total*	
White	4,421	4,421	8,842	
Non-White	6,438	6,438	12,876	
	10,859	10,859		
Report Covariates and Coefficients				
Variable(s)	*Coeff.*	*Std. Err.*	*t*	*P>t*
Female	-0.332	0.467	-0.71	0.478
15 or older	-5.852	0.446	-13.11	0
Probation	-10.892	0.665	16.387	0
Low-level misd & fel	17.003	0.864	19.681	0
Misd and Fel	13.24	0.984	13.449	0
Serious fel	15.701	1.935	8.116	0
Priors	-8.563	0.476	17.974	0
Truancy order	-4.361	1.096	-3.978	0
Alt school in first yr sup	-4.922	0.807	-6.102	0
Small county	-0.136	1.158	-0.117	0.907
Medium county	0.419	0.714	0.587	0.557
Outcome var.	*attend*	*S. Err.*	*t*	*P>t*
Before				
White	144.935			
Non-White	146.916			
Diff (T-C)	1.981	0.635	3.12	0.002***
After				
White	138.521			
Non-White	142.635			
Diff (T-C)	4.114	0.635	6.48	0.000***
Diff-in-diff	2.133	0.888	2.4	0.016**
R-square: 0.10				
***p<0.01; **p<0.05;*p<0.1				

Table 4. Difference in Differences Output for Older vs. Younger Youth

AGE: 15 or older/younger than 15				
DIFFERENCE-IN-DIFFERENCES WITH COVARIATES				
Number of observations in the DIFF-IN-DIFF: 21,718				
	Before	*After*	*Total*	
<15	4,754	4,754	9,508	
>=15	6,105	6,105	12,210	
	10,859	10,859		
Report Covariates and Coefficients				
Variable(s)	*Coeff.*	*Std. Err.*	*t*	*P>t*
Black	3.338	0.462	7.222	0
Hispanic	-2.187	1.261	-1.734	0.083
Other	4.633	1.824	2.54	0.011
Female	-0.357	0.466	-0.767	0.443
Probation	-10.93	0.664	16.462	0
Low-level misd & fel	16.856	0.865	19.477	0
Misd and Fel	13.145	0.985	13.352	0
Serious fel	15.565	1.933	8.051	0
Priors	-8.645	0.476	18.156	0
Truancy order	-4.476	1.095	-4.088	0
Alt school in first yr sup	-4.949	0.806	-6.143	0
Small county	-0.268	1.157	-0.232	0.817
Medium county	0.278	0.714	0.39	0.697
Outcome var.	*attend*	*S. Err.*	*t*	*P>t*
Before				
<15	142.82			
>=15	139.931			
Diff (T-C)	-2.888	0.626	-4.61	0.000***
After				
<15	141.01			
>=15	132.182			
Diff (T-C)	-8.829	0.626	14.11	0.000***
Diff-in-diff	-5.94	0.879	6.76	0.000***
R-square: 0.10				
***p<0.01; **p<0.05;*p<0.1				

Table 5. Difference in Differences Output for Prior Referrals vs. No Prior Referrals

Priors				
DIFFERENCE-IN-DIFFERENCES WITH COVARIATES				
Number of observations in the DIFF-IN-DIFF: 21,718				
	Before	*After*	*Total*	
No Priors	6,922	6,922	13,844	
Priors	3,937	3,937	7,874	
	10,859	10,859		
Report Covariates and Coefficients				
Variable(s)	*Coeff.*	*Std. Err.*	*t*	*P>t*
Black	3.338	0.463	7.215	0
Hispanic	-2.187	1.263	-1.732	0.083
Other	4.633	1.826	2.538	0.011
Female	-0.357	0.467	-0.766	0.444
15 or older	-5.858	0.446	13.129	0
Probation	-10.93	0.665	16.446	0
Low-level misd & fel	16.856	0.866	19.458	0
Misd and Fel	13.145	0.985	13.339	0
Serious fel	15.565	1.935	8.043	0
Truancy order	-4.476	1.096	-4.084	0
Alt school in first yr sup	-4.949	0.806	-6.137	0
Small county	-0.268	1.158	-0.232	0.817
Medium county	0.278	0.715	0.39	0.697
Outcome var.	*attend*	*S. Err.*	*t*	*P>t*
Before				
no priors	144.211			
priors	136.336			
Diff (T-C)	-7.875	0.658	-11.97	0.000***
After				
no priors	139.62			
priors	130.206			
Diff (T-C)	-9.414	0.658	14.3	0.000***
Diff-in-diff	-1.539	0.908	1.7	0.090*
R-square: 0.10				
***p<0.01; **p<0.05;*p<0.1				

Table 6. Difference in Differences Output for Truancy Order vs. No Truancy Order

Truancy Order				
DIFFERENCE-IN-DIFFERENCES WITH COVARIATES				
Number of observations in the DIFF-IN-DIFF: 21,718				
	Before	*After*	*Total*	
No Truancy Order	10,222	10,222	20,444	
Truancy Order	637	637	1,274	
	10,859	10,859		
Report Covariates and Coefficients				
Variable(s)	*Coeff.*	*Std. Err.*	*t*	*P>t*
Black	3.338	0.463	7.215	0
Hispanic	-2.187	1.263	-1.732	0.083
Other	4.633	1.826	2.538	0.011
Female	-0.357	0.467	-0.766	0.444
15 or older	-5.858	0.446	13.128	0
Probation	-10.93	0.665	16.445	0
Low-level misd & fel	16.856	0.866	19.457	0
Misd and Fel	13.145	0.986	13.338	0
Serious fel	15.565	1.935	8.043	0
Priors	-8.645	0.477	18.137	0
Alt school in first yr sup	-4.949	0.806	-6.137	0
Small county	-0.268	1.158	-0.232	0.817
Medium county	0.278	0.715	0.389	0.697
Outcome var.	*attend*	*S. Err.*	*t*	*P>t*
Before				
no truancy order	144.538			
truancy order	139.237			
Diff (T-C)	-5.302	1.437	-3.69	0.000***
After				
no truancy order	139.292			
truancy order	135.642			
Diff (T-C)	-3.651	1.437	2.54	0.011**
Diff-in-diff	1.651	1.857	0.89	0.374
R-square: 0.10				
***p<0.01; **p<0.05;*p<0.1				

End Notes

1. Sarah Hockenberry and Charles Puzzanchera, Juvenile Court Statistics 2018 (Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2020), http://www.ncjj.org/pdf/jcsreports/jcs2018.pdf.
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3. Ibid.
4. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2016), https://www. ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/.
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6. Richard J. Bonnie et al., eds., *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach* (Washington DC: National Academies Press, 2013), 141–145.
7. The Council of State Governments Justice Center, "Locked Out: Improving Educational and Vocational Outcomes for Incarcerated Youth" (New York: The Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2015), https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/locked-out-improving-educational-and-vocational-outcomes-for-incarcerated-youth/.
8. Anthony Petrosino, Carolyn Turpin-Petrosino, and Sarah Guckenburg, *Formal System Processing of Juveniles: Effects on Delinquency* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2013), https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-p265-pub.pdf.
9. Paul J. Hirschfield, "Another Way Out: The Impact of Juvenile Arrests on High School Dropout," Sociology of Education 82 (2009): 368–393; Gary Sweeten, "Who Will Graduate? Disruption of High School Education by Arrest and Court Involvement," *Justice Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (2006): 462–480; Jon Gunnar Bernburg and Marvin D. Krohn, "Labeling, Life Chances, and Adult Crime: The Direct and Indirect Effects of Official Intervention in Adolescence on Crime in Early Adulthood," *Criminology* 41 (2003): 1287–1318.
10. David Kirk and Richard Sampson, "Juvenile Arrest and Collateral Educational Damage in the Transition to Adulthood," *Sociology of Education* 88, no. 1 (2013): 36–62.
11. Anna Aizer and Joseph J. Doyle, Jr., "Juvenile Incarceration, Human Capital and Future Crime: Evidence from Randomly-Assigned Judges," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 130, no. 2 (2015): 759–803.
12. Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Transforming Juvenile Probation: A Vision for Getting it Right" (Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2018).
13. Diversion in South Carolina, as in many states, can take many forms regarding the level of supervision and services provided. Diverted youth includes the following categories: divert to arbitration; divert to Department of Juvenile Justice supervised program; divert to solicitor supervision program not arbitration; divert with behavior contract; and youth court diversion.
14. See the Appendix for more detailed methodology and data limitations/caveats.

15. Robert Balfanz and Vaughan Byrnes, "The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation's Public Schools," (Baltimore: Everyone Graduates Center, Johns Hopkins University School of Education, 2012), https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16-1.pdf.
16. Elizabeth Seigle, Nastassia Walsh, and Josh Weber, *Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System* (New York: The Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2014), http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Core-Principles-for-Reducing-Recidivism-and-Improving-Other-Outcomes-for-Youth-in-the-Juvenile-Justice-System.pdf.
17. "States are looking beyond the juvenile justice system to address truancy," Urban Institute, https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/states-are-looking-beyond-juvenile-justice-system-address-school-truancy.
18. Melanie Taylor et al., "Examining the Presenting Characteristics, Short-Term Effects, and Long-Term Outcomes Associated with System-Involved Youths," in *Advances in Psychology and Law,* ed. Monica Miller and Brian Bornstein (Springer, Cham, 2018), 211–245; Gary Sweeten, "Who Will Graduate? Disruption of High School Education by Arrest and Court Involvement," *Justice Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (2006): 462–480
19. Aizer and Doyle, Jr., "Juvenile Incarceration, Human Capital and Future Crime: Evidence from Randomly-Assigned Judges."
20. South Carolina middle and high school attendance rates were drawn from publicly available School Report Card data and averaged across SY2015–2016. School Report Card data can be found here: https://ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards/state-report-cards/. According to the South Carolina 2015–2016 Accountability Manual, attendance rates are calculated as follows: (1) Determine the number of days present for students on the 135th day. (2) Divide this amount by the number of days students were enrolled at the school [https://www.eoc.sc.gov/sites/default/files/Documents/Acct%20Manuals%20Past/2015-16%20Version.04282016.pdf].
21. The public school race/ethnicity data come from the South Carolina Department of Education 2015 and 2016 Quick Facts reports and reflect the statewide K–12 public school population [https://ed.sc.gov/data/other/quick-facts-about-south-carolina-education/].