

EWA Deep Dive: Covering Education with an Investigative Lens

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U.S. NEWS

In states with few legal protections, students say they've been unfairly punished at school

Students facing suspension and expulsion are granted vastly different rights depending on where they live, an NBC News investigation found.

EDUCATION

Alabama passes bill making it harder to kick students out of school

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U.S. NEWS

The state took children from their parents – then failed to give them a ‘real’ education

Foster youth in Michigan say the classes they took in state-funded facilities didn't count toward graduation. Some dropped out. "I felt destroyed," one said, "like everything I did was for nothing."



Michigan's governor signs law to help foster youth earn diplomas

The law follows NBC News' reporting on problems that made it more difficult for foster youth placed in residential facilities to complete high school.



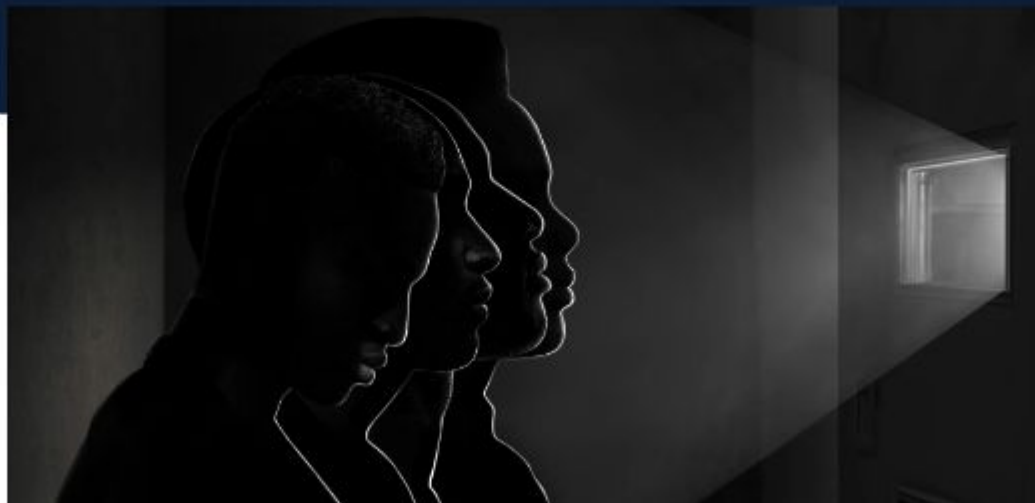




U.S. NEWS

'No light. No nothing.' Inside Louisiana's harshest juvenile lockup

Teens at the Acadiana Center for Youth at St. Martinville were held in solitary confinement around the clock, shackled with leg irons and deprived of an education.



Louisiana limits solitary confinement for youth

The governor signed Louisiana's first law restricting isolation for youth after two suicides and an NBC News, ProPublica and The Marshall Project investigation into harsh conditions in a new state juvenile facility.

Rep. Royce Duplessis, a New Orleans Democrat and the bill's sponsor, said he didn't think the legislation would have been successful without reporting from NBC News, The Marshall Project and ProPublica, which brought crucial attention to the conditions in juvenile facilities.

"It showed the public, it showed legislators that some things were happening that nobody should be proud of," Duplessis said. "It showed we need to make some changes."

Federal data

Civil Rights Data collection

(<https://ocrdta.ed.gov>)

Or through ProPublica's **Miseducation**

<https://projects.propublica.org/miseducation/>

- Updated every two years (but recent data skewed by Covid)
 - Bullying/ harassment/ violence
 - suspension/expulsion
 - restraint/seclusion
 - Advanced placement courses
 - Chronic absenteeism
 - School counselors
 - Teacher experience
- All of the above by race/ethnicity/sex/disability/etc.

More federal data

EdFacts

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/index.html>

- Centralizes state performance data with other data.

National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

<https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/>

- Collected from states every year for decades
 - Every school has a unique ID
 - Enrollment /demographics, etc.

State/local data

- Test scores
- Enrollment
- Demographics
- Graduation rates
- Funding information

Employee lists

- EVERYONE employed by a district: salary, school, email address, numbers for district-issued phones
- Employee licenses. A database of every licensed teacher, social worker, librarian, administrator, etc. in your state: License area, years of experience, path to certification (alternative v. traditional), where they work

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- Contracts — everyone who got paid, details about the vendor, the reason for the payment, the date, the amount, how it was awarded (was there a bidding process?)
- Per-school or per-district breakdowns (are funds being distributed equally)

Violations/incidents

- Special education complaints/investigations
 - Incident reports
 - Employee discipline/terminations
- Safety issues (food, elevators, asbestos, lead)

Student information

- Class size database
- Seclusion and restraint
- Student punishment (age/grade, reason, which teachers/schools)
 - School-based arrests

Documents

- School improvement plans
- Charter school applications
 - Written policies
 - Student handbooks
 - Audits
 - reports