

Student Perceptions of Their Postsecondary Aspirations after Facing Long-Term  
Suspensions

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Abstract

For decades, researchers have shed light on the injurious effect exclusionary discipline policies have on academic achievement and postsecondary aspirations. By providing personal narratives, these stories can enhance our understandings of how regressive policies transform students' lives. Viewed through the lens of critical theory, this case study is based on interviews with 16 former students of one Midwestern school district, all of whom received long-term suspensions while in high school. Findings include the parallels between the district and national trends, as well as the binary language students use to associate student behavior and perceived academic identity. The findings suggest that fear of the one's disciplinary record being revealed plays a cumbersome role in students' academic journeys.