THE WORLD OF JUVENILE JUSTICE ACCORDING TO THE NUMBERS

Michael Rozalski
State University of New York at Geneseo, Geneseo, New York, USA

Marilyn Deignan
Rochester City School District, Rochester, New York, USA

Suzanne Engel
Alfred University, Alfred, New York, USA

Intended to be an instructive, yet sobering, introduction to the complex and disturbing nature of the juvenile justice system, this article details the “numbers,” including selected percentages, ratios, and dollar amounts, that are relevant to developing a better understanding of the juvenile justice system. General statistics about juvenile and adult correctional systems in the United States are compared with similar data for U.S. public schools (e.g., prevalence of learning and behavior disabilities among school-aged children and those who are incarcerated). Lastly, the benefits of providing educational services for incarcerated juveniles, along with statistics related to recidivism and potential costs to our society, are included.

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Address correspondence to Michael Rozalski, School of Education, SUNY Geneseo, South Hall 222A, Geneseo, NY 14454, USA. E-mail: rozalski@geneseo.edu
- Number of students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade: 54,200,000 (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005, p. iii)
- Number of students aged 12–18 who were victims of theft and violent crimes at school respectively: 1,200,000 and 740,000 (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005, p. iii)
- Rate of homicides and suicides at school per 1,000,000: 1 (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005, p. iv)
- Likelihood that students aged 5–19 were murdered at home, rather than at school: 70 (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005, p. iv)
- Percentage of respective urban, suburban, and rural students aged 12–18 who were most likely to avoid specific places in school because they were fearful: 6, 4, 3 (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005, p. vii)
- Number of juvenile courts in the United States: 3,000 (Krisberg, 2005, p. 9)
- Minimum number of law enforcement agencies: 10,000 (Krisberg, 2005, p. 9)
- Number of inmates in U.S. prisons and jails: 2,200,000 (White, 2006)
- Ratio of U.S. residents behind bars to those who are not: 1:136 (White, 2006)
- Percentage of school-age children in the juvenile justice system who have a disability: 32 (Quinn, Rutherford, Jr., & Leone, 2001, p. 2)
- Percentage of youth in corrections who meet the diagnostic criteria for one or more mental health disorders: 90 (Otto, Greenstein, Johnson, & Friedman, 1992, p. 7)
- Year, according to the Massachusetts Body of Liberties, in which it was permissible to “putt to death” any child who “shall CURSE or SMITE their natural FATHER or MOTHER:” 1641 (Hawes, 1971, p. 13)
- Year in which the U.S. Congress passed the Gun-Free Schools Zone Act, a law that compelled schools to adopt “zero tolerance” policies requiring schools to expel students for at least one year for carrying weapons: 1990 (Gun-Free Schools Zone Act, 1990)
- Vote by which the Gun-Free Schools Zone Act was overturned in U.S. v. Lopez because the Supreme Court ruled that Congress overstepped its authority: 5:4 (U.S. v. Lopez, 1995, p. 1)
• Year in which Congress revised the law, now called the Gun-Free Schools Act, to circumvent the Supreme Court ruling and again compel states to adopt “zero tolerance” disciplinary policies for weapon-toting students: 1994 (Gun-Free School Act, 1994; Rozalski & Yell, 2004, p. 509)
• Percentage increase from 1999 to 2003 of schools who use security guards and/or police officers: 54 to 70 (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005, p. vii)
• Percentage of schools who report controlling access by locking or monitoring doors: 75 (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005, p. vii)
• Percentage decline from 1993 to 2003 of students who reported carrying a weapon at school: 6 (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005, p. vi)
• Percentage of public schools who took at least one serious disciplinary action against a student: 54 (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005, p. vii)
• Minimum number of total disciplinary actions taken in U.S. schools: 1,163,000 (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005, p. vii)
• Of those serious disciplinary actions, percentage who were suspended for at least five days, removed with no services, or transferred to specialized schools respectively: 83, 11, 7 (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005, p. vii)
• Percentage of incarceration discrepancy that is due to racial arrest rate differences: 80 (Blumstein, 1982, p. 1259)
• Ratio of students with disabilities who graduate to students with emotional disturbance who graduate: 56:40 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. IV-5)
• Minimum number of students with emotional disturbance who dropped out of school: 19,032 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. IV-5)
• Estimated “external” lifetime cost to society for having a single student drop out of high school: $243,000 to $388,000 (Cohen, 1998, p. 5)
• Minimum number of students with disabilities who were in correctional facilities: 15,930 (U.S. Department of Education, 1999, p. II-2)
• Estimated annual cost to society for average career criminal: $40,000 (Cohen, 1998, p. 11)
• Rate, from 1992 to 1996, at which the number of students with disabilities in correctional facilities has risen over the special

- Percentage of those students who were labeled with emotional disturbance and learning disabilities respectively: 42, 45 (U.S. Department of Education, 1999, p. II-2)
- Year in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that inmates are covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and, as such, regardless of their age, may be entitled to accommodations in education programs offered in correctional facilities: 1998 (Pennsylvania Department of Corrections v. Yeskey, 1998)
- Average percentage of states’ juvenile and adult correctional facilities who report providing special education services respectively: 92, 39 (Kirshstein & Best, 1996, pp. 3, 8)
- Estimated “external” cost to society for having a single student turn to a life of crime: $1,300,000 to $1,800,000 (Cohen, 1998, p. 5)
- Range of treatment “success rates” needed for these programs to pay for themselves: 1–5% (Cohen, 1998, p. 30)
- Amount of money spent by Maryland on correctional education programs: $12,000,000 (Steuer & Smith, 2003, p. 2)
- Amount of money saved per year by Maryland as a result of educational programs that resulted in lower recidivism rates: $24,000,000 (Steuer & Smith, 2003, p. 2)
- Percentage of correctional education participants who were respectively re-arrested, re-convicted, and re-incarcerated: 48, 27, 21 (Steuer & Smith, 2003, p. 12)
- Percentage of non-participants who were respectively re-arrested, re-convicted, re-incarcerated: 57, 35, 31 (Steuer & Smith, 2003, p. 12)
- Ratio of average yearly wages earned by correctional education participants vs. non-participants after release: $7,775: $5,980 (Steuer & Smith, 2003, p. 14)

REFERENCES

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