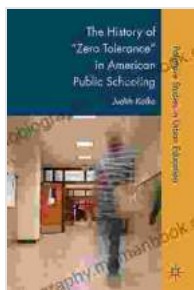


The History of Zero Tolerance in American Public Schooling

Zero tolerance policies are a type of school discipline that mandates harsh punishments for any violation of school rules, regardless of the severity of the offense. These policies were first implemented in American public schools in the 1990s, in response to a perceived increase in school violence. However, the effectiveness of zero tolerance policies has been widely debated, and they have been criticized for their disproportionate impact on students of color and students with disabilities.



The History of "Zero Tolerance" in American Public Schooling (Palgrave Studies in Urban Education)

by Oliver Goldsmith

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 454 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 197 pages
Screen Reader : Supported



The Origins of Zero Tolerance

The origins of zero tolerance policies can be traced back to the 1980s, when the Reagan administration began to promote a "get tough on crime" approach to law enforcement. This approach emphasized harsh punishments for even minor offenses, in the belief that it would deter crime.

In the 1990s, this approach was applied to school discipline, with the passage of the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994. This law required schools to expel any student who brought a gun to school, regardless of the circumstances.

The Gun-Free Schools Act was followed by a wave of other zero tolerance laws and policies. These laws and policies mandated harsh punishments for a wide range of offenses, including fighting, drug possession, and truancy. In some cases, students were even expelled for non-violent offenses, such as bringing a toy gun to school.

The Impact of Zero Tolerance

Zero tolerance policies have had a significant impact on American public schools. These policies have led to an increase in school suspensions and expulsions, particularly among students of color and students with disabilities. In some schools, the number of suspensions has increased by more than 50% since the implementation of zero tolerance policies.

The increase in suspensions and expulsions has had a number of negative consequences for students. Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school, fall behind academically, and become involved in the juvenile justice system. They are also more likely to experience mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression.

The Debate Over Zero Tolerance

The effectiveness of zero tolerance policies has been widely debated. Some proponents of zero tolerance argue that these policies have made schools safer. They point to the fact that school violence has declined since the implementation of zero tolerance policies. However, critics of zero

tolerance argue that these policies have not made schools safer, and that they have instead led to a more punitive and hostile school environment.

Critics of zero tolerance also argue that these policies have a disproportionate impact on students of color and students with disabilities. Students of color are more likely to be suspended and expelled from school than white students, even for the same offenses. Students with disabilities are also more likely to be suspended and expelled from school, even though they may not be able to control their behavior.

The debate over zero tolerance is likely to continue for some time. However, it is important to consider the evidence before making a decision about whether or not to support these policies. The evidence suggests that zero tolerance policies are not effective in reducing school violence, and that they have a number of negative consequences for students.

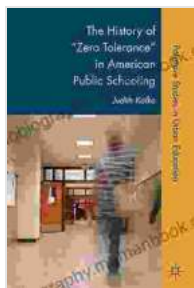
Alternatives to Zero Tolerance

There are a number of alternatives to zero tolerance that have been shown to be more effective in reducing school violence and promoting a positive school climate. These alternatives include:

- Restorative justice
- Positive behavioral interventions and supports
- School-wide positive behavior support
- Trauma-informed care

These alternatives focus on building relationships between students and staff, and on teaching students how to resolve conflicts peacefully. They

have been shown to be effective in reducing school violence, improving school climate, and promoting student success.



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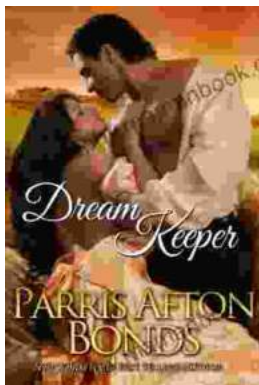
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