



## Viewpoints

# GAO's Recent Report Underscores Stark Disparities in Arrest Rates



The Government Accountability Office's recent report underscores the stark disparities in arrest rates among students based on race, gender, and disability status. These findings are not just statistics; they represent systemic inequities that have profound consequences for individuals and communities alike. Students of color, particularly Black students, and those with disabilities are disproportionately affected, facing higher rates of arrest compared to their peers. What's equally alarming is the intersectionality of these factors—where Black girls without disabilities, for instance, experience higher arrest rates than white girls with disabilities.

This report demands a critical examination of our approach to school discipline and the role of law enforcement within educational settings. While safety concerns are valid, the presence of police in schools correlates with increased arrest rates, suggesting a need for a more nuanced and thoughtful approach. As educators and policymakers, we must prioritize understanding the root causes of these disparities and reforming policies and practices accordingly. This begins with transparent data collection and analysis, as recommended by the GAO, to inform targeted interventions that promote fairness and equity in our schools. Ultimately, our goal should be to create supportive environments where all students can thrive without fear of unjust consequences that could impact their entire lives.

You can read the full article at:

**The report adds to a growing body of research that shows students of color, particularly Black students, and students with disabilities face disproportionate disciplinary measures at school. Researchers have said that early punitive discipline can negatively impact school experience, graduation rates, and the likelihood of ending up in the criminal justice system.**

[www.edweek.org/...](http://www.edweek.org/...)

## Professionals

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