



Precursors of Crime in Jackson: Early Warning Indicators of Criminality

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The Life Cycle of Crime in Jackson—A 360 Degree View

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contrary to state-wide and nation-wide trends, homicides in Hinds County have remained largely consistent for the past twenty years. The Mississippi Attorney General's office requested a report on the characteristics, observable early in life, of those who later become serious offenders.

This report presents findings of research conducted on more than a hundred thousand individuals: everyone who had ever gone to school in Hinds County between the years of 2003 to 2013. Educational histories of those people provided by the Mississippi Department of Education were cross referenced with arrest records contained in data maintained by the Jackson Police Department and Hinds County Sheriff's Office. Juvenile justice data was also provided by the Hinds County Juvenile Justice Data System (2006–2013). These data sets were merged and analyzed to reveal correlations between childhood events and future criminality.

Many of our findings reproduce familiar patterns:

- Those who have failed a grade, dropped out, or been chronically absent from school are more likely than others to become criminally active.
- Those involved in the juvenile justice system are more likely to be criminally active as adults.
- Race and sex are arrest risk factors. Being black and male is highly correlated with having been arrested by Jackson Police Department or Hinds County Sheriff.
- The race and sex differences are even more pronounced for serious or very serious crimes than for minor crimes.

In addition, we were able to identify specific schools whose students are disproportionately likely to go on to become criminally involved.

Interviews with dozens of criminally-involved people and the families and community around

them showed that, even before their own criminal involvement, those who acted criminally had heavy exposure to poverty, to violence and other crime (as victims and witnesses), and “street justice.” Their first-person narratives illustrate the complicated course from academic failure into custodial and community corrections.

Finally, BOTEC researchers sought out appropriate tried-and-true violence reduction strategies from across the nation, taking pains to recommend those that are cost effective and relatively easy to implement. With the appropriate attention, persistence, energy, and allocation of resources, Hinds County and Jackson could reduce violent crime. Using our indicators, we could develop a “target efficiency group” most likely to benefit from additional resources.

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Several characteristics are more prevalent in records of individuals who are involved in the adult criminal justice system than among those who are not. An individual arrested as an adult in Hinds County or Jackson is 240% more likely to have dropped out of school at some point, 160% more likely to have been involved in the juvenile justice system, and 67% more likely to have been chronically absent while enrolled in school in Hinds County. These numbers jump when looking at individuals who were arrested for serious or very serious crime: 280% more likely to have ever dropped out, 220% more likely for juvenile justice involvement, and 78% more likely to have ever been chronically absent at any point during their K–12 education. A history of having failed a grade is overrepresented by 53% for this grouping of arrestees and 69% for serious/very serious crimes. Being male is overrepresented by 40% for adult criminal arrests and 76% for serious/very serious crimes. African-Americans are

overrepresented by 12% for arrests in the adult system and 15% for serious/very serious crimes.

Of the 30,000 students currently enrolled in Jackson Public Schools, according to these data we can predict that approximately 5%, or 1,500 students, will at some point get arrested by the Jackson Police Department or Hinds County Sheriff's Office (the adult criminal justice system); 2.2%, or 660 will be arrested for a serious crime such as a drug charge, aggravated assault, robbery, weapons offense, kidnapping, abuse and neglect, and burglary; and 0.44% or 132 will be arrested for a very serious crime such as murder, manslaughter or rape.

Toward developing a target efficiency group on which to focus resources, if we prioritized just the two strongest indicators—1) having dropped out at some point, and 2) being involved in the criminal justice system—we could narrow the treatment population to

0.75%, or 225 students of those currently enrolled in JPS.

QUALITATIVE THEMES AND FINDINGS

Interviewers met with currently- and formerly-incarcerated individuals, as well as the corrections officers and officials responsible for their custody. Some parts of these narratives will confirm conventional wisdom about the world on the other side of the law; others are surprising.

The population represented in these accounts is for the most part poor, with childhoods marked by loss, violence, and neglect. They had few advantages before their loss of liberty and describe prison conditions that fail to provide basic necessities of life, let alone opportunities for improvement. Their criminal history is difficult to overcome as they return to the community with the same problems that contributed to their prior behavior.

BACKGROUND

The Mississippi Office of the Attorney General (OAG) was asked by the state legislature to address the crime problem in the capital city of Jackson. Among the major issues are violent and major property crimes, which have, for the

In the past three years, homicides committed by juveniles in Jackson have quadrupled, returning the capital city to crime levels it has not seen since the mid-nineties.

past decade, remained well above state and national levels. In the past three years for which data are available, homicides committed by juveniles in Mississippi have quadrupled, returning the state to crime levels it has not seen since the mid-nineties.

From 2009 to 2014, the murder and non-negligible manslaughter rate increased by two thirds¹.

1. Crime reported by Jackson Police Dept., Mississippi. Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics—UCR Data Online.

Figure 1: City of Jackson, US, and Mississippi Violent Crime Rates Per 100,000 Residents from 1985 to Present

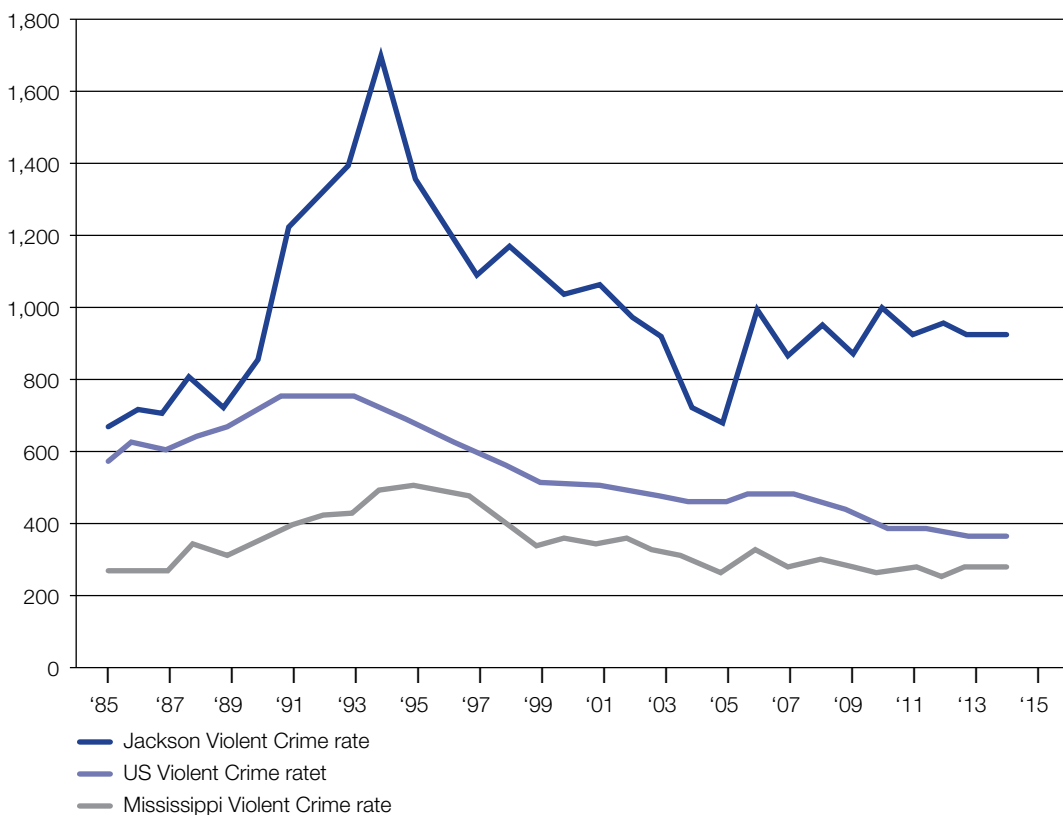


Figure 2: City of Jackson, United States, and Mississippi Murder and Non-Negligent Manslaughter Rates Per 100,000 Residents from 1985 to Present

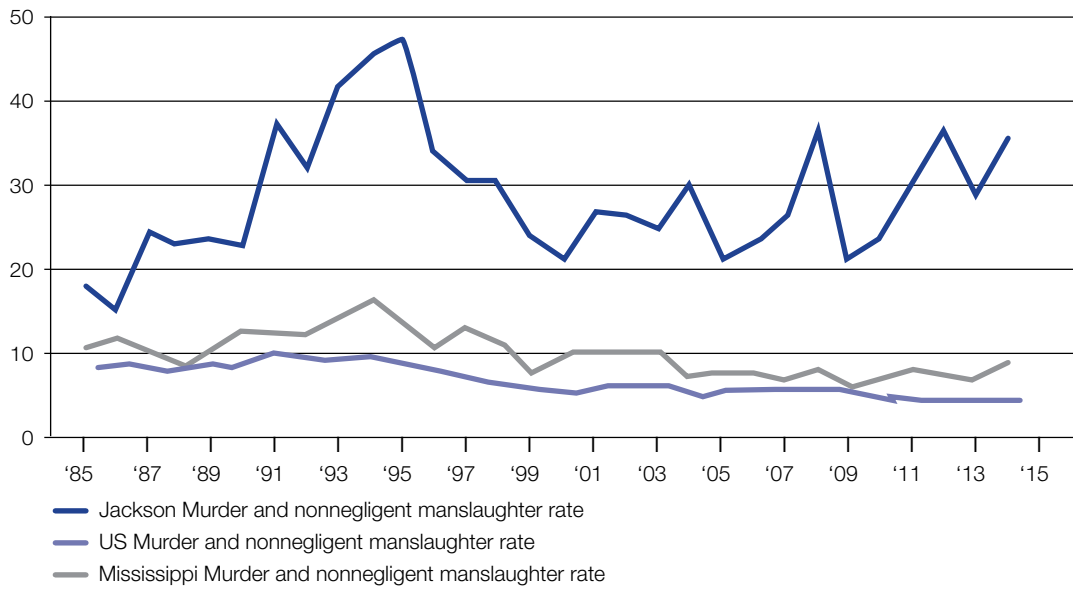
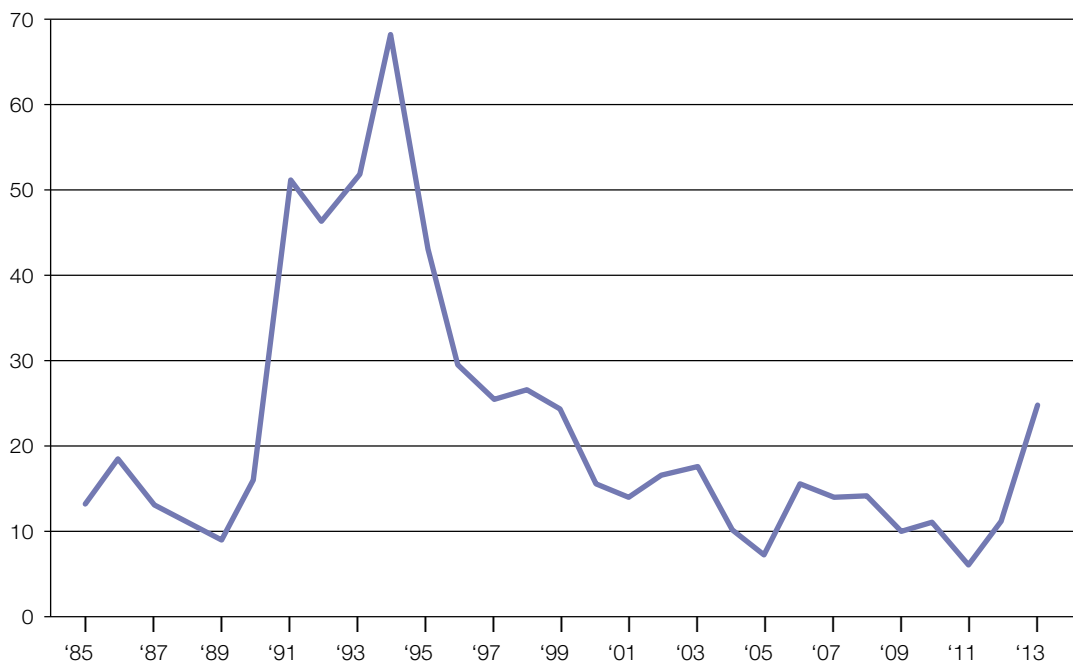


Figure 3: Number of Homicides Committed by Juveniles in Mississippi



To date, little data has been available to shed light on possible precursors to criminality or where resources could be focused to meet this public safety challenge. BOTEC was hired by the OAG to determine if existing data, supplemented with interviews in the community, could provide a better understanding the precursors of crime in Jackson.

We set out to create a meta, or combined, data set of individuals committing current crimes in Hinds County. The data combined adult criminal justice information with juvenile justice and public school records to see what the education and juvenile justice history could tell us about how the individuals got to where they are now. This can help policymakers both identify criminogenic conditions and focus preventive efforts on those most likely to become serious offenders. The BOTEC research team set out to generate an early warning indicator system that Jackson could use to identify children most likely to be on a course to criminality, versus those who appear to be on track to succeed.

We used Mississippi student records and Hinds County and Jackson Police Department criminal records to answer these questions: Which schools produce the greatest number of criminals in Hinds County? Where are they located? Who attends these schools? Researchers also tried to determine whether they could reasonably identify variables that

would not just be confounded by a challenging education environment in Jackson Public Schools (JPS), where math proficiency is at 53%, reading proficiency at 48%, and the overall graduation rate is 64%. Our population sample was relatively homogenous. In the 10 years of data we examined, 95% of the students in JPS were African-American. And JPS reports that in 2013 approximately 90% of its students came from low-income families.

The quantitative data was supplemented with in-depth interviews with currently- or recently-incarcerated individuals and their families provide their view of the pathways they experienced from youth and school to prison. We did not set out to confirm or disprove any of these accounts.

Given the trends in Jackson, we know that hundreds of young people now attending public schools will eventually become criminals (some of them violent felons) who will cause damage to their communities in a multitude of ways. This study tracks the “life course” followed by individuals from childhood into and out of the public schools, veering into early encounters with law enforcement and then the juvenile justice system, and finally into incarceration as a result of serious, often violent crimes. Rather than dwelling on the incendiary issue of who is to blame, the OAG has asked us for solutions that could interrupt the status quo, which currently generates an intolerably high crime rate.

RESEARCH METHODS

QUANTITATIVE METHODS Creating Cross-Agency Datasets

The data used for this analysis come from the Mississippi Department of Education (2003–2013), Jackson Police Department (1995–2015), Hinds County Sheriff’s Office (1995–2015), and the Juvenile Justice Data System (2006–2013). Each entity provided a unique dataset that was then merged using common linking factors to create a dataset of 109,890 youth who fell into several categories. An individual was included if he or she had attended a school in Hinds County at any point between 2003 and 2013. Individuals were also included if they had ever been arrested by the Jackson Police Department or Hinds County Sheriff’s Office and had attended a school in Mississippi. Individuals who had been arrested by Hinds County Sheriff’s Office or Jackson Police Department are not included in this dataset unless we could get access to their educational data. Additional methods description can be found in Appendix VII.

Severity Level of Adult Criminal Justice Data

Charges in the adult criminal justice data were grouped into an offense category and then assigned a severity level of Minor, Moderate, Serious, or Very Serious, depending on the offense category of the charge. The methodology used to classify the severity level of a charge was developed by a team of criminologists and sociologists from the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University.

Very serious offenses include murder, manslaughter, and rape or sexual assault. Serious offenses include drug offenses, aggravated assault, robbery, weapons offenses, kidnapping, burglary, and abuse or neglect. Due to charges being grouped into offense categories and then being assigned a severity level, the true severity of a given charge within each offense category varies. For example, all drug charges, including

simple possessing, selling, and manufacturing a drug, are all considered a serious offense within the data. Variables were then generated to indicate if an individual had ever been charged with an offense by severity level. An additional severity level indicator variable was created by flagging all individuals who had been charged with a serious or very serious offense.

QUALITATIVE METHODS

The BOTEC research team created semi-structured interview guides, each designed for a particular group. All interviewees were volunteers. Standard research procedures were used to protect participants’ identities and to ensure that they understood the purpose of the research and their right to stop an interview at any time. In particular, researchers interviewing incarcerated people emphasized that researchers had no affiliation with the criminal justice system, and would not share any information derived from the interviews with guards or other prison personnel.

Both individual and group interviews were conducted. If possible, inmates and parolees were interviewed alone. Other interviews involved multiple participants—for example, interviews involving prisoners and their family members during visiting hours, or groups of church members. When interviews were conducted within a secure facility, interviewers worked in pairs if possible—one to ask questions and the other to take notes.²

Interviews with participants who were not incarcerated were audio recorded, unless participants opted out (in which case researchers took notes). Recordings and raw notes were transcribed, and researchers engaged in “open coding,” a process of sifting through data and finding recurring themes. Additional methods description can be found in Appendix VIII.

2. All electronic devices are banned from secure facilities (prison and county jail).

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the individuals included in the data. 82% of students are black and 52% are male. 4.5% of the students have been identified as being in special education and nearly 5% have ever dropped out of school.³ Of those students

3. The percentage of students who have ever dropped out of school appears low in this dataset due to the way the population was selected. Some students may have withdrawn from school for reasons other than dropping out, or transferred to another school outside of Mississippi, and thus would not have been flagged as having dropped out. Others may have been too young to drop out; some of them will drop out later but will not be flagged as dropouts in this analysis.

who do drop out, a small number were flagged as having been suspended or expelled at least once. Between 2003 and 2013, 31% of students in this dataset were not promoted to the next grade at least once and 39% were chronically absent during at least one school year. Overall, 5% of individuals in this dataset are involved in the adult criminal justice system while 4.7% are involved in the juvenile justice system. The number of individuals arrested by either Jackson Police Department or Hinds County Sheriff's Office is nearly identical at 3.1% each. Finally, 1.3% of the individuals in this dataset have been arrested by both Jackson Police Department and Hinds County Sheriff's Office at least once.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Population

Distribution of Population	Percent
White	15.82
Black	81.93
Other*	2.25
Male	51.65
Female	48.35
Ever identified as Special Education	4.46
Ever dropped out of school	4.93
Ever dropped out due to suspension/expulsion	0.58
Ever failed a grade	30.90
Chronically absent in any school year	39.00
Involved in the adult criminal justice system**	5.02
Involved in the adult criminal justice system for a serious charge	2.70
Involved in the adult criminal justice system for a very serious charge (murder, manslaughter, rape)	0.44
Ever arrested by Jackson Police Department	3.18
Ever arrested by Hinds County Sheriff's Office	3.18
Involved in the juvenile justice system	4.70
Ever arrested by Jackson Police Department & Hinds County Sheriff's Office	1.34

*Other includes Native American, Asian, Hawaiian, Hispanic, & Multi-racial.

**This is an underestimate because some in the sample who had not been arrested yet have been arrested since or will be arrested later. The median age of the population at the time we stopped counting was almost 20 and average age was 20.

Table 2 provides a closer look at the difference in demographics between the overall cohort and those individuals who are involved in the adult criminal justice system or have been charged with committing a serious or very serious offense. The departure from the demographic distribution⁴

4. After controlling for being in the adult criminal justice system or having been charged with committing a serious or very serious offense.

is notable. Black individuals were 12% more likely than non-blacks to be involved in the adult criminal justice system. If we limit the data to just those individuals who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime, this difference increases to 14.6%. Men are also overrepresented among those involved in the adult criminal justice system and among those who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious offense.

Table 2: Percent Change between Overall Population and Individuals in the Adult Criminal Justice System, and Individuals Charged with Committing a Serious or Very Serious Offense

	Overall % of Population	Adult Criminal Justice System	Difference	Serious or Very Serious Crime	Difference
Black*	82%	92%	12.2%	94%	14.6%
Male	52%	73%	40.4%	92%	76.9%
Failed Grade	31%	60%	95.8%	44%	42.4%
Dropped Out	5%	17%	240.0%	19%	280.0%
Chronically Absent	39%	77%	97.4%	59%	59.3%
In the Juvenile Justice System	5%	13%	160.0%	16%	220.0%

Note: The difference is the percent change of each characteristic between the overall dataset and each limited subset of the population divided by the overall population percentage.

* White and other non-black students were underrepresented in the eventually criminally-active population.

Individuals identified as having been chronically absent were 67% more likely to be involved in the adult criminal justice system and 77% more likely to have been charged with a serious or very serious offense. Similarly, those who have failed a grade were disproportionately represented in the adult criminal justice system (60.5% more likely) and disproportionately charged with committing a serious or very serious crime (42% more likely than their baseline representation). Furthermore, although only 5% of all individuals have been in the juvenile justice system, they are disproportionately represented among those who enter the adult criminal justice system (160% more likely) and those

charged with serious and very serious crimes (220% more likely). Overall, 13% of those active in the adult criminal system and 16% of those who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious offense have been in the juvenile justice system. Dropping out of school carries the highest associated risk of being involved in the adult system (240% more likely) and of committing a serious or very serious crime (280% more likely). While only 5% of the individuals in the overall dataset have dropped out, 17% percent of those involved in the criminal justice system and 19% of those who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious offense have dropped out.

High schools varied in their percentages of students who went on to commit crimes. Notably, over 10% of the students at Wingfield, Lanier, Provine, and Jim Hill High School committed a crime, while less than 5% of students from Murrah High School did so. The percentages of students charged with serious or very serious crimes were lower, but the school-to-school ratios were similar.

These high schools were chosen because they are located in Jackson, where many of the arrests from our database have occurred.

The schools in Figure 4 shown in red have a percentage of students ever enrolled that ended up in the adult criminal justice system in excess of 10%. These schools also have the highest rates of students having been charged with a serious or very serious offense.

ADULT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT

Our risks are inter-correlated. Of the 109,890 students whose records we examined, 5,513 (5.01%) later became involved in the adult criminal justice system. Of those, 2,773 were

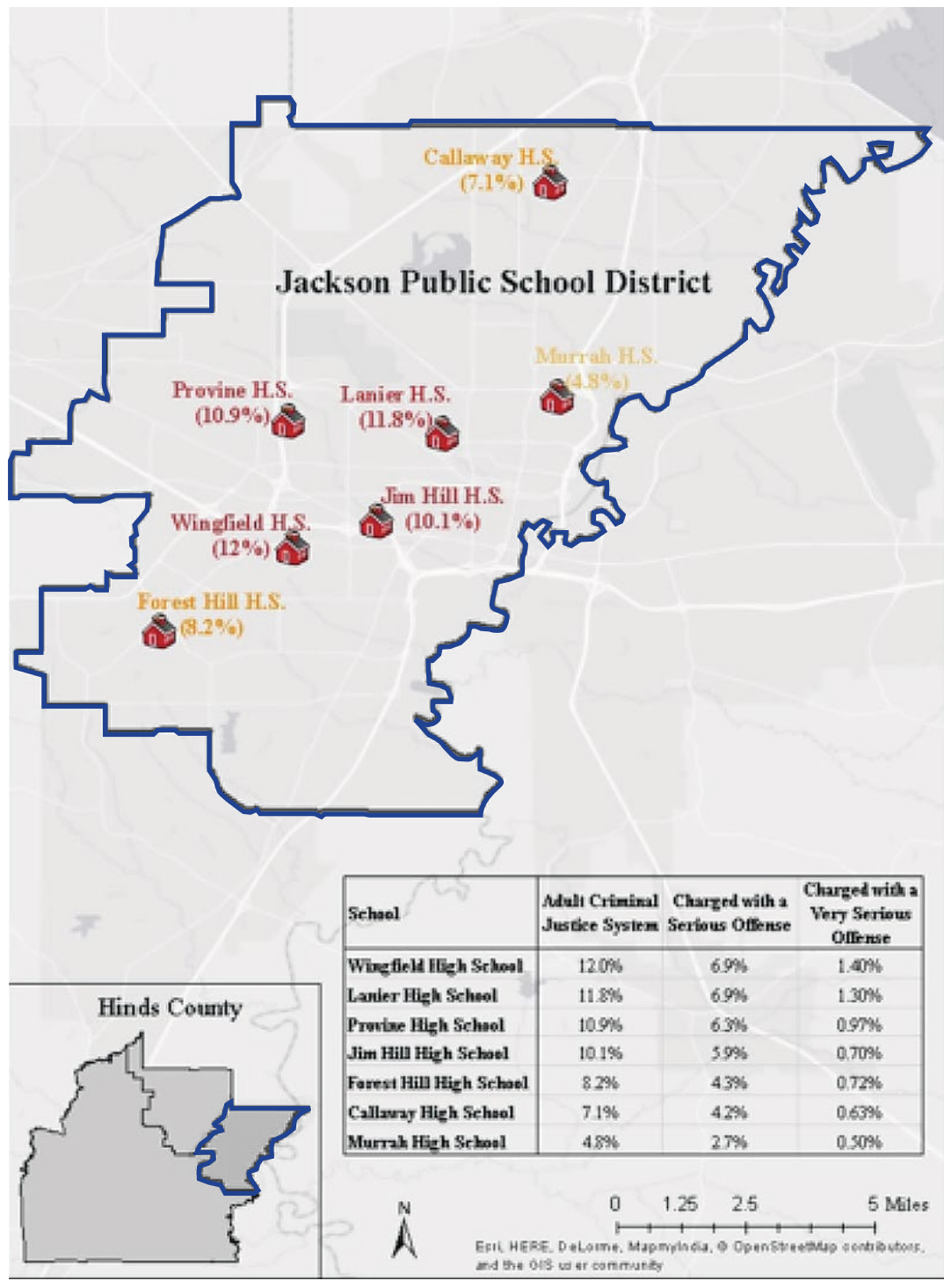
charged with at least one serious offense and 489 with a very serious offense. (178 faced both “serious” and “very serious” charges.) Since Table 2 shows multiple juvenile variables are correlated with adult criminal justice outcomes, Table 16 presents results from regression analysis to describe which juvenile characteristics have significant and independent predictive power on adult criminal justice system involvement.⁵ Estimates are presented in odds-ratio form, which represents the probability of an individual with a given characteristic (e.g., chronic absenteeism) having the outcome of interest (e.g., being involved in the adult criminal justice system) relative to the probability of an individual without that characteristic having said outcome. From Table 16, males consistently have a higher likelihood of committing either a serious or very serious offense as compared to females. Students in special education are 1.4 times more likely to commit a serious or very serious offense.

5. Logit regressions are used for the primary analysis to account for the dichotomous nature of the outcome variable of interest (e.g., having been involved in the criminal justice system).

Table 3: Percent of Students Ever Enrolled in JPS who ended up in the Adult Criminal Justice System, who have been charged with committing a Serious Offense, and who have been charged with committing a Very Serious Offense

School	Adult Criminal Justice System	Charged with a Serious Offense	Charged with a Very Serious Offense
Wingfield High School	12.0%	6.9%	1.40%
Lanier High School	11.8%	6.9%	1.30%
Provine High School	10.9%	6.3%	0.97%
Jim Hill High School	10.1%	5.9%	0.70%
Forest Hill High School	8.2%	4.3%	0.72%
Callaway High School	7.1%	4.2%	0.63%
Murrah High School	4.8%	2.7%	0.50%

Figure 4: Students Ever Enrolled in JPS High Schools who ended up charged with a crime by Jackson Police Department or Hinds County Sheriff’s Office



QUALITATIVE RESULTS

FINDING 1: DEFICITS IN THE NUCLEAR FAMILY AND EARLY NEGATIVE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE ARE COMMON, AND WIDELY UNDERSTOOD TO UNDERMINE EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

BACKGROUND

“In every conceivable manner, the family is link to our past, bridge to our future.”

—ALEX HALEY

Interviews reveal deficiencies in family structure associated with the crime-committing population in Hinds County. Children in minority neighborhoods suffer from weak bonds, including low levels of attachment to parental figures and decreased involvement in conventional activities.⁶ Single parenthood and marital discord are both associated with juvenile delinquency primarily as a result of the corresponding low levels of supervision.⁷ Jackson ranks 18th in the nation for rate of single parenthood in United States cities of more than 50,000.⁸ The lack of social capital present in disadvantaged communities thwarts educational achievement and access to conventional activities, job opportunities, and conventional peers and mentors.⁹

In order to help the reader understand the relevant familial factors, we summarize social bond theory: that delinquency and social bonds are inversely related. The four social bonds that work independently and in combination to restrain criminal conduct are: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.¹⁰

Attachment

A child's attachment to parents (or parental figures) works indirectly to control behavior.

6. McNulty, 2003

7. Haynie, 2006

8. City-data.com

9. Haynie, 2006

10. Hirschi, 1969

Although laypeople generally focus on the parents' role in controlling their children, the controlling dynamic runs in the opposite direction. It is the child's attachment to the parent that matters more; children obey their parents and avoid delinquency when they care about their parents' opinion and do not want to disappoint them. We found fractured and disrupted family relationships in Jackson; this creates strained parent-child relationships and produces children who do not care about disappointing the parent.

Commitment

Commitment refers to the extent to which individuals have some skin in the game, described by researchers as a “stake in conformity,” meaning that children understand that delinquency will jeopardize something they value, such as graduation, team sport, or academic success.¹¹

Involvement

Involvement in pro-social and conventional activities can operate to displace delinquency, as contemplated in the adage: “idle hands are the devil's workshop.” Access to after-school and weekend sports, music, art, clubs, and church activities can reduce the free time that might lead to mischief. Care should be taken to prevent social class or stereotyping from restricting or prohibiting participation in pro-social activities. Our interviews revealed a need to address exclusion based on stereotyping: providers of youth activities sometimes deliberately exclude children perceived to be dangerous or likely to be a bad influence on other children.

11. Toby, 1957

Belief

Children who believe in the rule of law (i.e., who have been raised to believe that the law and rules are there for their own benefit) are less likely to break rules. This is critical for our work and for Jackson's future because of the vicious cycle currently at work. As discussed below, children are frequently the victims of crime, and see evidence of victimization all around them in blighted neighborhoods, leading them to lose respect for the system. Not surprisingly, children whose parents engage in criminal activities often develop disregard for the law or police.

The need to ensure school attendance

Truancy leads to dropping out and correlates with early criminal activity, as discussed in the quantitative section herein. Mentoring has been found to have a positive effect on juveniles.¹²

School attendance is fostered by mentoring,¹³ which may be as simple as a personal relationship with a caring adult, and undermined when schools fail to keep students safe.¹⁴ Victimization, in the form of hazing, bullying or recruitment to join anti-social groups or gangs causes students to join gangs, carry weapons, avoid school, and ultimately drop out.

Bullying¹⁵

This problem warrants special mention, not just because of the current attention it receives in the mainstream media, but because schools are uniquely poised to intervene. Teachers and other school employees can be trained to conduct

cost-effective interventions. Bullies need an audience to be effective, and when schools empower students to abandon ringleaders, depriving them of the audience, a rapid culture shift occurs, eliminating the behavior.

Hazing

Hazing is different from bullying in that hazing has a veneer of acceptability as a rite of passage into an inclusion, usually to a school group like a sports team. It may include physical or verbal abuse and can include activities such as drinking, sleep deprivation, kidnapping, or sexual assault.¹⁶ Research suggests that hazing virtually always has a "nod and wink" approval from adults and may be extinguished by better oversight of programs.¹⁷

INTERVIEW RESULTS

The majority of our participants who later ran into trouble with the criminal justice system described upbringings that were full of losses, danger, and instability. Elements of dysfunction included poverty, disabilities, boredom, and lack of adult attention, death or absence of parents, often resulting from addiction or incarceration. Home and school lives were unstable, due to multiple and abrupt changes in income, living situation, school attendance, and the location of home.

School

Many participants reported early disciplinary trouble in school following by dropping out. As one parolee explained,

"I... started skipping school and stuff before I got to high school. My middle grade school experience was not good... I got to hanging with the wrong crowd... End of middle school...(I was) hanging with (a) dude or partner or whatever..."¹⁸

12. Rogers, 2014, Anderson, 2014

13. McPartland & Nettles, 1991, p. 528

14. Barnert, Perry, Azzi, Shetgiri, Ryan, Dudovitz, Zima, and Chung, 2015

15. Bullying can occur in schools, neighborhoods, or on the internet, and take a variety of forms including physical, verbal, and psychological (spreading rumors and intimidation). Ericson, 2001. Prevalence estimates suggest that as many as 75% of school-aged children have been bullied at least once.

16. Allan & Madden, 2008

17. Finkle, 2004, Campo, Poulos, and Sipple, 2005 and Robinson, 1998

18. This person became the interviewee's partner in crime.

Participants across the study reported chronic boredom and lack of engagement in school, and many made a direct connection between boredom and getting caught up in antisocial and illegal activities. As one inmate explained,

“Instead of going to school I would rather like run the streets and smoke marijuana and stuff and just do the wrong thing.”

A parolee, asked to recall something he enjoyed in school, replied,

“High school—not really. I wasn’t there long enough to enjoy nothing, to see what it was really about.”

Many participants, without regard to involvement in crime, talked about violence and bullying in school. One was bullied for being mixed race; another for being “bald-headed” and having big ears. A woman reported being afraid of her classmates at school:

“Somebody... actually set my school on fire. My Nana used to work there and she actually got injured cause a little boy had brought a lighter with him inside his own backpack. And set—his whole classroom—he wanted to kill his own classmates. And then somebody had brought a knife and he was in a fight and he almost stabbed somebody with a knife.”

The majority of our participants were high school dropouts, although some had graduated from high school, and others had post high-school education or military service. Those who had graduated or gotten a GED spoke of this accomplishment with pride. Many of those currently incarcerated or on parole spoke with regret about having wasted opportunities to get an education when they were teenagers.

Family

Although some participants spoke about positive families, with strong, involved parents who taught values and kept them “on the right

track,” the majority described their families as fractured, abusive, and marked by unreliability and neglect. Some were neglected by family members, others were rejected or abandoned, and several lost their parents or other family members through violence, addiction, or incarceration. The landscape of family shifted often and without warning:

“My mama was married to my step dad. We was living in Pittsburgh and then one day he dropped us off in Jackson and came and picked me up from Kansas City. I was living with my grand mama. Came back to Jackson. Shit he bailed. Ain’t even see him no more for real. I was living in a different house. Had nothing and everything just changed like that. Going from having my own room, my own toys to everything. No nothing. It was a big difference.”

One parolee mentioned growing up with a mother who was a crack addict:

“My mama smoking [crack] so she wasn’t stable at all. Then my grandmama, she’ll get tired of it and whatever and send me off to my auntie, then I’ll go stay with my mama when she get half way straight. Then she don’t be all the way straight so I’ll have to go back and live with my grandmama. Something like that.”

Another participant described parents who loved and cared for him, but did not provide discipline:

“Dad worked nights, and spent most of the day with my mom. I was the first-born... I was pretty much the experimental child, I guess you could say. Dad drank. Mom drank. Parents let me start smoking weed when I was 12 years old. And... you know being allowed to smoke weed and have my friends over to smoke weed, I eventually became kind of a popular person.”

Many participants described their families as undefined, with the roles of caregiver shifting at any particular moment. These parental figures might be aunts or grandparents, older siblings, or friends' parents. Often, they described their past or current living situations with the phrase, "I stay with..." In context, the term is used to distinguish the two types of living arrangements; our participants used the term to indicate that the arrangement was not permanent, echoing the kind of disruption present in their childhoods. Some understood that their caregivers had a financial reason for the relationship:

"... and his mama, she had got custody of me she became my legal guardian because I was getting a check every month. Because my mama she gets,

was getting disability check, she still getting a disability check. She was shot in the head when she was pregnant with my older sister. She still has the bullet in her head and stuff so I was getting a check for that every month. She (my friend's mama) got custody of me so she can get a check and I can have some type of income coming around, help her out and stuff."

At the time of interview, many participants in this study were repeating the same cycles of loss that they had experienced as children; having lost their own parents to incarceration, they were now separated from spouses and their children.

FINDING 2: CORRECTIONS DO NOT PROVIDE CORRECTION

BACKGROUND

Prior to the 1970s, the goal of imprisonment was to rehabilitate the offender for the benefit of the state.¹⁹ A variety of factors—rising crime rates, a prevailing belief that rehabilitation programs did not work, and political conflict over the criminal justice system, among other reasons—resulted in a shift away from rehabilitation towards an orientation favoring punishment during the 1970s. As we “got tough” on crime and made war on drugs, the prison population expanded and the public expressed outrage that inmates were receiving benefits (free college credits, for example) unavailable to the public. As billions of dollars were spent on new and larger prisons, less attention was given to rehabilitation, and some prisons became more like “warehouses” designed to tightly control and punish large numbers of offenders.²⁰ Overcrowding strained resources for rehabilitation, including treatment for substance abuse and mental health disorders. Simultaneously, deinstitutionalization of long-term mental health patients led to an observation that “prisons, and even jails, have become the dumping grounds of necessity for those who have mental health issues.”²¹ Prison health care facilities are typically deficient, spawning litigation by inmates for inadequate care.^{22, 23}

The incarcerated population typically shows low educational attainment, unemployment, substance abuse, mental health problems, and relationship instability. Juveniles who spent time in correctional facilities are more likely to drop out of high school and be on public assistance later in life.²⁴ Boys who were locked up are less likely to desist from criminal activities

in adulthood and have significantly more problems associated with alcohol abuse. Girls who are incarcerated are more likely to become single parents, drop out of high school, and suffer from the effects of poverty and mental distress.²⁵ Of course these statistics suffer from the “chicken or the egg” conundrum: we do not argue that juvenile detention caused poor outcomes, but without casting any aspersions, we simply note that the corrections process often does not improve matters. There is a school of thought that incarceration serves its purpose if the offender is punished and society is protected during the period of incapacitation. Others hold the view that we should try to make the correctional process more likely to deter future criminal behavior.

Since the experience of incarceration plays a critical role in recidivism, we interviewed inmates and parolees about that subject. As further discussed below, modern research has uncovered a counter-intuitive truth: when wrongdoers perceive that they were treated with fairness and respect—even if convicted and given harsh sentences—they develop respect for the same system that is punishing them and have better outcomes. Regardless of one’s position about minimum standards for humane conditions of confinement, the information we elicited is useful to understand some unintended consequences of incarceration.

Cash-strapped facilities may be unable to provide adequate food, clothing, basic toiletries, and telephone access. Since the institution must prevent contraband from entering the facility, a deal is often struck with a for-profit vendor who will supply goods and services that may be purchased by the inmate at a greatly inflated price, which increases the inmates’ motive to smuggle items into the facility.

19. Caplow & Simon, 1999

20. Irwin, 2005

21. Crutchfield and Weeks, 2015

22. McDonald, 1999

23. Crutchfield and Weeks, 2015

24. Lanctot, 2007

25. Ibid.

For every inmate, the effect of incarceration spreads to friends and communities, disproportionately among people of color.²⁶ Prison sentences strain families, and though the research is complicated, there is some evidence to suggest that children of incarcerated parents may be more likely to become involved in juvenile delinquency, develop mental disorders, engage in illegal drug use, do poorly in school, and be underemployed.²⁷

The impacts of a penal sentence extend after release. A criminal record is an impediment to employment, voting rights and eligibility for public benefits such as subsidized housing. Mental health disorders, including addictive illness, prevalent in the prison population, are a risk factor for reoffending.²⁸ As noted above, correctional facilities often lack adequate treatment resources, and many inmates leave prison facing more serious problems than were present when they entered.²⁹

INTERVIEW RESULTS

We interviewed teenagers convicted of crimes and involved in the AOP (Adolescent Opportunity Program), adult inmates of the Mississippi Department of Corrections, individuals on parole or probation, and their families to explore how their experiences affected them, since the experience is part of the “life cycle” of crime. Interviews suggest that little rehabilitation occurs and that the mental, physical, and psychological health of inmates deteriorates. The prison, parole, and probation system takes a toll on family relationships. Inmates and their families across all settings (juvenile justice, adult prison, parole, and probation) agreed that being in prison

was at best empty and numbing, and at worst terrifying and dangerous. Prisoners and their families felt powerless, and perceived the system to be arbitrary, corrupt, abusive, and neglectful. They felt that they were punished for events beyond their control and for the actions of others, and disproportionately punished for minor transgressions. Visits, phone calls, and letters from outside, as well as involvement in educational programs and religious faith were the “rays of light” in their lives.

Through our interviews we identified four themes: (a) dehumanization, the process by which participants feel less than human; (b) contraband; (c) living conditions; and (d) prisons and family.

Dehumanization

Participants described dehumanization as a result of the systems put in place by authorities in charge of the correctional facilities or post-incarceration programs. Verbal disrespect and discourtesy was almost always mentioned.

“The officers are on you 24/7, talk to you like shit and like you ain’t a human being. You gotta respect me as a man because I’ll slap the shit out you and then you send me to prison. You have to sign a list just to eat and they feed you like shit. Everything we get we have to provide ourselves.”

When we asked participants what they would do to improve the facility, many spoke of interpersonal respect:

“I would listen to people. I would just listen to people and treat people like people. Don’t treat people like they’re beneath me. I would be respectful.”

Contraband

Contraband in prisons is a priority for prison administration because of obvious security risks, and it also presents an opportunity for

26. Clear, 2008, Wildeman, 2009 (by the age of 14, one in four black children have an incarcerated parent).

27. Murray and Farrington, 2008

28. Western, Braga, Davis, & Sirois, 2015

29. Crutchfield and Weeks, 2015.

staff corruption. We were surprised at how often the topic of contraband was raised by the inmates, however. The type of contraband (food, clothing, cosmetics) that comes up naturally in interviews reflects the level of deprivation that inmates experience. The risk of being caught with contraband is high: inmates mentioned harsh punishments meted out for being caught with contraband, such as being removed from educational programming and prevented from having visitors.

Despite high risk of detection and punishment, inmates obtain contraband items frequently, which causes stress to themselves and those around them, since an entire “zone” may be punished for an individual offense. Although weapons and drugs are obtained for obvious reasons, we noted that inmates will endure anxiety and accept the risk of possessing more mundane forms of contraband such as cosmetics. The advent of cell phones has changed the landscape for prison administration, with some officials suggesting that better telephone access for inmates might be necessary to stem the smuggling of phones.^{30, 31}

One inmate talked about paying other inmates for the use of a cell phone. Another mentioned that she would call her family on her smuggled cell phone, but she would not speak, to avoid detection. Instead, she would lie quietly on her bed, listening to her loved ones talk to her. An older inmate, who had been in prison for more than thirty years, commented that younger inmates were not content, as he was, to communicate in letters:

30. Cell phones are prohibited in correctional facilities since they could be used to intimidate witnesses, plan escapes, orchestrate crimes, and order retaliation against other inmates. Burke & Owen, 2010.

31. Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2005

“They have cell phones. I have stationery.”

A majority of prison inmates and prison workers told us that drugs were widely available in prison. One inmate complained that fellow prisoners were injecting suboxone right next to her in a dormitory. Another mentioned finding “rocks of meth” scattered over his bed. Many inmates talked about “spice,” a synthetic cannabinoid, which is increasingly available in prison. One inmate described seeing the effects of this compound:

“Five guys in the day room. One guy was high on Spice. He was taking little baby steps. The guys lied to him, told him he had a visitor. He did everything they told him. They [were] making sport of it.”

The inmate went on to explain,

“When you live in the bottom of the barrel, you want that. I did. You will spend your last commissary money to buy Spice.”

Although many inmates wanted contraband, they were also well aware that the consequences of being caught with it were high. One woman noted that she had been disciplined harshly for having tobacco—her visiting privileges were taken away for months. Another inmate explained,

“Illegal stuff going on here affects me. I don’t want to be punished for something I haven’t done.”

Sharing her “zone” with 116 other women made her constantly anxious that one person’s contraband would be discovered and all would be punished. The world inside prison was full of items from the outside world, but these items, no matter how highly prized, were dangerous and contributed to an atmosphere of fear and tension.

Living Conditions

Both prison inmates and those living in post-incarceration “restitution centers” complained about living conditions. They reported feeling physically unsafe and uncomfortable, well beyond the expected emotional and psychological effects of incarceration.³²

In both the prison and the restitution centers, a participant talked about not having enough food, or being given food that was unsafe to eat:

“For lunch sometimes they’ll have roast beef that’s moldy, maybe a hotdog...the only real meat is chicken on Thursday and it won’t even be cooked...it’s bad, but if you don’t eat it you’ll starve.”

When BOTEK researchers visited the prison and other facilities in September, the temperature outside was in the upper 90s. One prisoner told an interviewer,

“I live in a room with 120 women in bunk beds. There is no air conditioning. We have yard call once or twice a week.”

She went on to mention that “yard call” and walking from her building to the visitor’s center were the only opportunities she had to see the outside world. When her zone was denied yard call, she missed seeing clouds and grass. Another inmate said that his zone generally didn’t get yard call on the weekends, because the prison was short staffed.

Many prisoners talked about enduring physical pain from untreated medical problems, discussed more fully in finding #5.

32. The Mississippi Department of Correction maintains restitution center programs as an alternative to incarceration. Offenders serving time in a restitution center are required to work and perform community service. Their wages go directly to the center and are applied to their room and board, court costs, and restitution to victims.

Participants also spoke about emotional distress, particularly during adjustment. One inmate serving a life sentence said that for her, the first few months and years were the worst. Another mentioned that he frequently wanted to die when he was first imprisoned. Parolees said that they were desperate not to go back “inside.” One, living in a very restricted environment, said, “It’s like heaven compared to how it used to be (in prison.)” Others spoke of being bored, lonely, and afraid.

Several participants, both in prison and on parole, spoke eloquently about their religious faith as a way to survive and thrive in difficult circumstances. As one inmate explained, because of her spiritual life, “I am not physically free, but I’m free. I got rid of some baggage (through prayer). I was in bondage too long— I’m not in chains anymore.” Another mentioned appreciating the Book of Job, and saw in it evidence that a faithful person could survive any trials. Among those participants with religious faith, prayer and Bible reading provided spiritual comfort, daily rituals, and a way to fight boredom and hopelessness. One inmate who had been incarcerated for years mentioned how much he missed worship services, which had been part of prison life earlier in his sentence, but were not available any more.

Prison and Families

BOTEK researchers interviewed some family members of adult and juvenile inmates. The majority expressed fear for their loved ones’ health and safety, and anger over the way they were treated by officials and guards. They worried about money, and complained of being gouged by the commissary system. Many current or former inmates clung to their families, and were particularly affected by missing their children. Inmates also spoke about tense relationships between themselves and their families caused by the expense of basic items in prison.

“Unless you have family that, that, that’s financially able to put money on your books, like you’re gonna go hungry and uh you know, then when you make a call you’re like upset. You’re like, ‘Gosh I need things’, you know what I mean? They don’t give you deodorant, they don’t give you shampoo. You know, they give you soap with...lye so it like dries your skin out... Well, if your family is not giving you money, when you do finally get to make a phone call, sometimes I’d be irate. I’d say ‘I need, I need stuff!’ But you know at the same time in the back of my head I’m knowing... they don’t have it. They don’t have a lot of money and I put myself here and they shouldn’t do without so I can have it. You know it’s a conflict. It’s an inner struggle between what you need and what they’re able to provide so... it causes conflict.”

Several inmates expressed gratitude for the love and support of family members, and commented on the painful experience of prisoners who had no one to visit, call, or send money.

“Some guys’ systems fall apart in here... but my friends and family have never given up on me. You have to remember to be good to your family— they’re suffering as much as you are.”

Family members talked about being afraid and frustrated when they were unable to reach their loved ones in prison, or even to find out about them through official channels. For example, the husband of a female inmate found out that his wife was in the hospital wing, but wasn’t able to speak with her or find out what was wrong with her health until weeks later. The man’s wife told researchers that prison staff had insulted and lied to her husband as well as hanging up on him when he tried to get information.

Several inmates talked about the pain of losing family members but being unable to attend their funerals, or giving birth in prison and not being able to nurse or bond with their infants. One inmate, whose daughter died when she was incarcerated, explained,

“Nothing here helped me... I didn’t get counseling. Someone asked me weeks later how I was feeling after the passing. I had no write ups, but I wasn’t allowed to attend my daughter’s funeral.”

FINDING 3: POVERTY AND CRIME ARE INTERTWINED

BACKGROUND

Poverty is linked to crime, but in ways that are complex and often counter-intuitive. For the purpose of this report, we simply summarize the basic research data and set forth the experience of our participants.³³

During the 1970s and 1980s, poverty spread rapidly throughout urban communities in the United States,³⁴ and disproportionately burdens people of color. In 2014, blacks between the ages of 18 and 64 accounted for 23% of the American population living below the poverty

line even though all blacks represented only 13% of the U.S. population.³⁵ This is compared to 10% of non-Hispanic Whites and 20% of Hispanics living in poverty.³⁶

Youth who reside in disadvantaged neighborhoods have an increased risk for delinquent behaviors.³⁷ Economic problems at the family level increase self-reported delinquency, drug use, and parental reports of aggressive behavior.³⁸ Family economic problems can also increase the time parents have to work outside of the home, placing parents in a quandary between additional income and less time to supervise and interact with their children.

33. Absolute poverty refers to an individual's inability to secure or maintain the basic necessities for human survival, such as food, clothing, and shelter (Foster, 1998). Relative poverty is defined as a way of life and income much worse than the general standard of living in the region.

34. Poverities.org, 2012

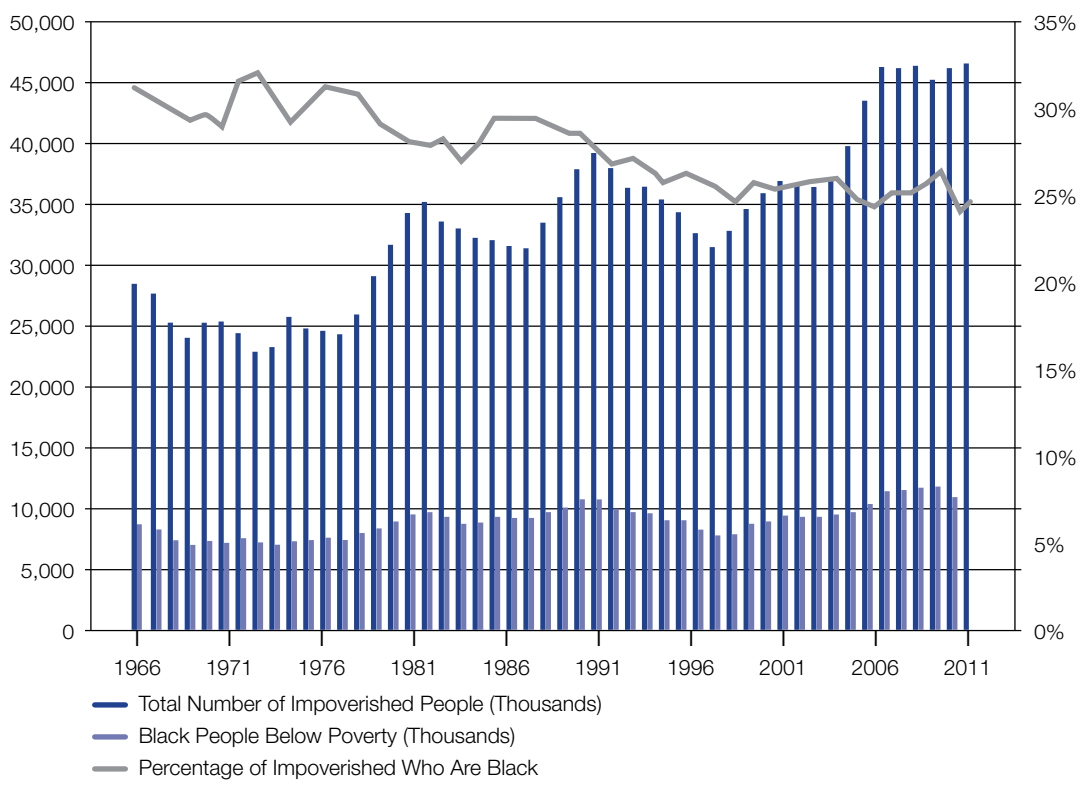
35. United States Census Bureau, Quickfacts, 2014

36. Ibid.

37. Alexander, 2010

38. Agnew, Matthews, and Bucher et al., 2008

Figure 5: Black poverty in the United States from 1966-2013



While school engagement protects against delinquency and higher educational attainment can lower the likelihood of poverty, youth who live in disadvantaged communities face obstacles to educational success because their schools are often underperforming.³⁹ Low-income youth enter school with lower academic skills than their affluent counterparts, and their academic deficits tend to increase with time.⁴⁰ Schools in poor urban communities are more likely to have “zero-tolerance” disciplinary policies,⁴¹ which increase expulsion rates for young men of color, especially blacks.⁴² The “school-to-prison pipeline,” a term that refers to the pattern of students who have trouble in school that proceeds to the juvenile justice system and ultimately to adult correctional institutions has been documented.⁴³

Poverty contributes to crime and delinquency,⁴⁴ and leads to the disproportionate incarceration of black men. While blacks only comprised 13% of the U.S. population in 2010, they accounted for 39% of the prison and jail population. Black men are six times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Hispanic white men, and 2.5 times more likely than Hispanic men.⁴⁵ Researchers project that one in three

black men will spend time behind bars at some point during his lifetime.⁴⁶ Upon their release, formerly incarcerated individuals struggle to find and maintain gainful employment, placing them at increased risk for recidivism. In many states, convicted felons are legally barred from specific occupations, and employers are reluctant to hire ex-offenders, particularly blacks.⁴⁷ Even without a criminal record, employment opportunities are not evenly distributed across race; one study found that 14% of non-offending blacks received a callback following an interview, compared to 17% of whites with a criminal record.⁴⁸ The best available estimates are that about two-thirds to three-quarters of released inmates will be re-arrested within five years of release.⁴⁹

The release of offenders from juvenile and adult correctional facilities into poor urban communities with disproportionate rates of incarceration and reentry⁵⁰ and limited ability to provide supportive environments⁵¹ is therefore a critical juncture, a point at which intervention could have maximal impact.

INTERVIEW RESULTS

Inmates and ex-offenders spoke of poverty as a pervasive issue in their lives and also described ways that poverty motivated them to turn to illegal activities:

“I did it [drug dealing] to pay my bills. I really started doing it when my girl was 6 months or 5 months pregnant. I had lost my job. That’s when I just, I really did hustle.”

One corrections officer told us about an inmate who had robbed a bank to pay for dialysis treatment.

39. Lee & Burkham, 2002; Peske & Haycock, 2006; Legters, Balfanz, & Jordan et al., 2002

40. Fix & Passel, 2003

41. Krezmien, Leone, Zablocki, & Wells, 2010; Losen & Martinez, 2013; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Verdugo, 2002NY”, “event-place”: “New York, NY”, “abstract”: “This report by the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the Public Policy Research Institute presents the results of a study examining the effects of school discipline on students’ success and their involvement with the juvenile justice system. Key findings from the study include the following: 1

42. Skiba, 2011

43. Advancement Project, 2010; American Civil Liberties Union, 2008; Children’s Defense Fund, 2007; Sickmund, Sladky, Kang, & Puzanchera, 2015; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006

44. Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley, 2002

45. Carson, 2014

46. Mauer, 2011

47. Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2007; Pager, 2007

48. Pager, 2003

49. Cooper, Durose, & Snyder, 2014

50. Clear, 2007; Sampson & Loeffler, 2010

51. Morenoff and Harding, 2014

Low Wages

We frequently heard about the frustration of having to choose between low wage jobs and public benefits, since public assistance is not usually available to working people, and the minimum wage is inadequate to support a family. The lowest paid workers in Jackson spend at least half of their paycheck on housing.

One man at the county facility explained that he started selling drugs as a teenager in order to help his mother who struggled to cover the bills. Another inmate at the jail said that he had a job but “the money was too slow.” With only low wage jobs like McDonald’s available he was unable to support his young son. One participant linked poverty explicitly to the number of children in his family:

“There were, there were a lot of us so, my dad made good money but you know, with seven kids a lot of money doesn’t go very far. So, it was stretched for sure.”

Other participants mentioned the stress of raising multiple children. Many had been involved in raising their siblings or had been raised by older siblings. Families with five or more children were common, and families were often blended. When parents or caregivers died, became addicted to drugs or alcohol, or went to prison, resources were stretched thinner.

One parolee explained the strong incentive not to work for low wages:

“... if they do have a job it’s a low paying one where they can’t even afford to pay the bills. If you have a job it’s hard to get any kind of benefits. So you know what I mean—any public assistance at all. So if you have a job and you don’t get public assistance what incentive does that give you to keep your job when I can get more food in my kitchen if I don’t have a job? Why would I work? That’s

insane! It doesn’t make sense. You know I’ve had jobs and then I go up to apply for help and they say, ‘Oh, you make too much money.’ Are you serious? I make 7.25 an hour. I was like, ‘How is that too much money?’ You know, it blows my mind.”

Responses from youth of Jackson often focused on issues of poverty, from hunger to neighborhood blight. When one young participant was asked what she would do to solve the problem of crime for people living in Jackson if she had unlimited resources, she replied simply:

“Feed them.”

Poverty trails offenders released from prison because of fewer opportunities due to the criminal record. For people serving time in state restitution centers, restrictions and costs within the system make it difficult if not impossible for inmates to discharge their financial obligation.

Neighborhood Blight

“Before we do anything else in Jackson, I’d make sure they get all the houses and the places in Jackson with all the tall grasses cut down and redo the houses that have been abandoned.”—CHURCH LEADER

Neighborhood blight is part of the vicious cycle in Jackson; crime causes blight and blight fosters crime. Abandoned houses, called “bandos,” shelter runaway youth and provide a haven for drug use or headquarters for gang activity. A former paramedic from Jackson noted that houses were in “bad shape” in those neighborhoods. He questioned if the bad houses made it a magnet for crime or if crime led to the dilapidated houses, but either way, he saw a strong link throughout his time responding to emergencies throughout the city. This was echoed by an inmate at a county facility who described a lot of foreclosures in his neighborhood. He said that people who lived

in the houses can't afford to stay but no new people want to move in. Another participant said that South Jackson declined in the 90's during a period of "white flight" and transition from predominantly white-collar workers to "more working class people" in the area.

Parents of teenagers in trouble told us about the problem with "bandos." One mother explained that her middle-school son and his girlfriend frequently spent nights in them, essentially "camping out" in buildings that were dirty, dangerous, and full of drug detritus and broken alcohol bottles.

Lack of Youth Programs

The majority of participants in this study agreed that there were not enough programs for young people in Jackson, and that teenagers were plagued with boredom. A woman incarcerated at the county jail explained that in her 19 years living in Jackson she saw all of the recreational activities for young people disappear, including closings of the skating rink, movie theaters, and the mall. When asked about programs for youth, one corrections officer who has children said

"I don't know. It's out there but a lot of times you can't afford it."

One parolee summed up his understanding of why young people in Jackson turned to crime:

"It's just you want to be a part of something I guess. That's my guess. It's easier to fall in to that. You could join the YMCA you know? But that takes money and everybody doesn't have money. That's what it is. Lack of money."

Mental Health

Lack of access to mental health care is also linked to crime in Jackson. Participants in the study who lived in poverty mentioned

frequently that they or their family members needed mental health treatment, but failed to receive it. Many felt that they or their loved ones had been misdiagnosed. Some participants mentioned being prescribed drugs, but not getting counseling. Counseling was particularly hard to come by in jail, prison, or restitution centers. Staff members at the jail in Jackson commented on the number of inmates with mental health disorders. A nurse estimated that 90% of the inmates at the facility were on psychiatric medications. She went on to explain that people with money in Mississippi might have the benefit of mental health services, but that "these kids don't have a chance." One guard said

"And my heart just breaks because they don't belong here."

The quality of the mental health services may also be lacking. A health professional working with MDOC reported seeing conflicting diagnoses in many inmate charts that at times led to inappropriate medications being prescribed. A young ex-offender told our interviewer:

"I went to the doctor a few times and...one of them says I have ADHD, and they prescribed me to Adderall. I go to another one and they say I've got bipolar and they give me lithium..."

A psychiatrist at a juvenile justice facility told BOTEK researchers that he worried about his patients continuing to get mental health care after they left the facility. He mentioned that he sent patients home with a three-month supply of medication and a specific referral to a mental health care provider, but knew that despite these efforts, the likelihood of patients continuing with consistent, appropriate care was low because of problems such as lack of available and supportive adults, money for prescriptions, and transportation.

Transportation

Public transportation is critical to combatting poverty in the city so that residents of the poorest parts of town can commute for work. A website (walkscore.com) that evaluates accessibility of cities assigns Jackson a 25% score for “walkability,” meaning that cars are necessary for errands. Although the JATRAN bus system includes 12 routes, some areas are

underserved. Bus service ends at 7:30 p.m., eliminating public transportation as an option for individuals working evening or night shifts in the city. The issue of transportation came up in interviews of parents as well as ex-offenders. One mother of an incarcerated youth explained:

“...he ran out of medicine and there was no way that I can get a ride to his doctor ‘cause I don’t have no transportation.”

FINDING 4: CRIME SPREADS THROUGH CERTAIN POPULATIONS

BACKGROUND

The term “culture of crime” is used by social scientists to describe how living in neighborhoods with thriving illicit drug markets forces even law-abiding people to change the way they live. For instance, a researcher noted that residents in parts of Philadelphia were forced to take pains to avoid an unintentional slight to others in public, since violations of the street code were met with disproportionate aggression.⁵² The most poignant, and perhaps the most significant illustration of this in Jackson came when parents told our researchers that their children did not have the luxury of “turning the other cheek” or stepping away from conflict because doing so would mark them as easy targets in the future. There is some empirical support for this in the literature.⁵³

The culture of crime may manifest itself in disadvantaged, minority communities in a variety of ways. Drug use and addiction become the norm, even in children as young as 12.⁵⁴ A local economy may come dependent upon the illegal drug market, which provides young people with “jobs, money, drugs, social meaning, status, and a way of life that is often transmitted across generations.”⁵⁵ As drug dealers and their guns become part of the neighborhood culture, law-abiding people believe that carrying a weapon is necessary for self-defense. Rates of street crime are typically higher among adolescents who cite protection as the primary reason for owning a gun, and individuals who are motivated to own guns for this reason may also be more likely to join gangs.⁵⁶ A study of gun offenders in the two New York City neighborhoods found that image or

reputation was the second most frequently cited reason for acquiring a gun, making it clear that as more people carry guns, more people feel that having a gun is normal and necessary.⁵⁷

Finally, like in the culture of crime, stealing may be a part of the “pecking order,” quite apart from a desire to obtain the property. When the code of the street assigns symbolic value to shoes, jewelry, and clothing, an individual may obtain social status by taking these objects away from a rival even if he has no use or need for them.

INTERVIEW RESULTS

Jackson’s impoverished people are surrounded by crime and feel its effects in various ways. Participants in this study mentioned crime frequently, even when not asked directly about it. Their life stories were often dominated by family members and friends who broke the law as a matter of course, some to feed addictions, some for income to support their families, others for the entertainment and thrills, but we still found plenty of evidence that a moral code is intact. We met many people who were proud to distinguish themselves from criminals, and even incarcerated participants often drew explicit comparisons between themselves and “gang bangers” or “bad elements” they perceived to be “worse.”

Participants frequently mentioned crime as a culture, a way of life as opposed to specific, isolated acts. Growing up in a culture of crime was frequently cited as a reason for participants’ own criminal behavior and lifestyle. As one parolee explained,

“You know, in Jackson, Mississippi everybody got a struggle, you know what I’m saying and so much crime going on in Jackson, Mississippi and I got caught up in it, me and brother got caught up in a situation and we on papers...”

52. Anderson, 1994, 1999

53. Brezina, Agnew, Cullen, & Wright, 2004; Stewart & Simons, 2006; Stewart, Simons, & Conger, 2002

54. 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

55. Johnson, Golub, & Dunlap, 2000

56. Bjerregard & Lizotte, 1995; Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, & Chard-Weirschem, 1993; Wright & Rossi, 1986

57. Wilkinson & Fagan, 2002

Another parolee, when asked what he would do to improve the situation in Jackson, explicitly linked drugs and violence:

“The violence, I would stop the violence and the drugs going through in Jackson. Mississippi ‘cause all this drugs and this killing and shooting stuff it’s making everybody move from Jackson: everybody, like, my people are trying to move away from Jackson. It’s just too much stuff going on back here.”

Drugs

For many participants, crime was strongly connected to illegal drugs, most often marijuana, but including cocaine, (powder and crack), prescription drugs, methamphetamine, and heroin. Alcohol was also mentioned, but more often by older participants. “Spice” (actually an undefined synthetic compound often with hallucinogenic properties, but described by participants as “stronger” marijuana) was mentioned as easily available, particularly in prison.

Many participants mentioned using marijuana on a regular basis, and frequently said that they had started doing so as teenagers. Others linked smoking marijuana with skipping school, or as something to do when hanging out with friends. One participant said that he and his friends would skip school, get high, and then go “joyriding” in stolen cars, hoping to hook up with girls.

“I have smoked a lot of marijuana before in my life, I started smoking marijuana at the age of 13, like, I’m being honest and I kind of hate I did start smoking weed because like throughout the years I admit it’s been kinda hard but it’s like when I went to jail or whatever, it helped me, you know, to stop.”

Others talked about addiction to harder drugs. One inmate mentioned that he started using

painkillers prescribed to his grandmother to treat her cancer, then moved on to heroin because it was cheaper and more easily available.

Many inmates and parolees had been convicted of drug dealing. For example, one inmate mentioned that he and his “partner,” who met in middle school, began a lucrative business selling marijuana:

“I was buying it. Buying two or three pounds and it was cheap back then.”

Guns

Participants in this study echoed what we heard from participants in our earlier study on the school to prison pipeline in Jackson. In those interviews, children as young as 11 mentioned having guns in the home and being trained to use them in case of a home invasion. One inmate said:

“It’s crazy in Jackson, It’s crazy, you know you can’t just say anything to anybody, they’ll be ready to shoot you.”

Many prisoners and parolees had committed felonies with guns, or mentioned owning or using them. Participants who were not themselves involved in crime culture, such as church members, jail employees, youth services workers, and families of incarcerated people, also mentioned guns as easily available. Many participants talked about having guns as a form of protection for themselves and their families. One middle school student explained:

“My mama protects me and my sister... she has about three guns. And she has put them in about every room. And she put one in my room, my sister’s room, and her room.”

In an ironic twist, one inmate, convicted of murder and serving a life sentence without possibility of parole, told us that she carried a gun for personal protection, and used it in a confrontation at work when she felt her life and that of her unborn child were threatened.

"I was threatened with a pistol by a younger woman. She had got written up for cussing out a supervisor. She went in the break room. I'm just sittin' there, and the girl went crazy on me. I just tried to stay out of it. That girl took her pistol out. I had a gun in my purse. Fired. She was killed..."

Other participants talked about the pleasure and sense of power they felt in using and owning guns:

"I just loved to carry weapons. I just liked them. That was part of my job (dealing drugs). I just liked it. I kept a lot of them."

Other inmates and parolees mentioned that young people displayed guns to look tough. A jail employee mentioned that a thirteen-year-old had been recently convicted of holding people up with a BB gun.

Stealing

Many participants mentioned robbery, home invasion, and carjacking as a regular part of life in Jackson. The experience of having been robbed was common across all categories—from those with stable jobs and middle-class lives through those living in "bad" neighborhoods but having no connection to crime culture, to those actively involved in crime themselves. One prison inmate, who had been convicted of a drug offense, mentioned being carjacked and commented,

"I think of saying to them, 'What gives you the right to come and take my car?' I don't even know if it's drugs anymore—maybe it's the high, the rush of it."

Many participants in prison or on parole had been convicted of property crimes. Others mentioned that they had committed such crimes but had not been caught. One parolee, who described himself as "not into robbery," nonetheless reeled

off a list of things he had stolen:

"I took these Xanax one time and like I went out into the parking lot and I don't even know why but I just started opening cars and taking stuff and I'm like 'I'm not like that. I'm not a thief at all.'... I wake up one morning and it's like an appliance store in the living room. I don't know where the stuff came from. I still don't. It's crazy. But like...petty stuff like stealing gas, you know, I would do that. Like a pump and jump is what we used to call it. You fill up your gas tank and ride out. Just petty stuff. Like nothing, nothing crazy."

Another participant had a similar perception of himself:

"I wasn't too much of a criminal type guy. But I did my share. I would steal things like bikes, I stole, broke into businesses, broke into cars..."

In these participants' worlds, stealing was petty; it did not rise to the level of being a 'real' criminal.

Gangs

Participants in this study agreed that gang involvement and affiliation had touched their lives even if they were not affiliated. One female inmate explained her initiation into a gang, which happened when she was a teenager:

"I actually was affiliated when I was younger. Um, there's two ways, you either have to sleep with them or fight, and I had to fight because there was no way, you know what I'm saying?"

Another inmate pointed out that young gang members came into prison and continued to function as members:

"I notice about the young men in here, they have tattoos—they are

gang members. They are a threat to society. They band together, beat up on guys—come into the system with attitude, 'I got short time.' I seen nothing positive come out of them. They will do anything. Illegal stuff, in here."

Street Justice

Participants in deadly violence attributed their actions to the culture of "street justice," or attempting to deal with insults, abuse, or perceived disrespect through violence. Often, these disputes occurred within families, or involved sexual relationships. Participants spoke about arguments or fights, sometimes about trivial matters, that led to violence, a cycle of revenge and ultimately a homicide. A teenager told a story about his girlfriend's family: a fight that began as a squabble over what kind of music to play in the car led to a series of confrontations between two families and concluded with a murder:

"So he get ready to leave or whatever, my girlfriend daddy, so he get ready to leave, he leaving and the man go back in the house and he come back out with a shotgun. And he run up to him and he tap him on the shoulder he turn around, before he can say anything he shot him in the chest and he died instantly. The witnesses say he left his body in the middle of the street..."

One woman, serving a life sentence for murder, talked about her siblings and violent death:

"Now, my mama had 10 kids. My baby brother robbed my babies' daddy. He was 26 when he did this. But my baby brother, he could do no wrong in my mama's eyes. My kids' daddy was a hothead. When he got out of

jail, he shot and killed my brother. He shot him five times—but he got out. The brother next after me stabbed and killed my oldest brother. He got 7 years, then he went in to Whitfield state hospital from Raymond. He'll have whole conversations with people who aren't there. My mama, after 10 children, now has seven. 2 were murdered, 1 died from cancer, 1 in prison for life (that's me)."

Many participants spoke about threatening or committing acts of violence out of pride, revenge, or to "stand up for" loved ones. For example, a teenage participant said that a man had threatened his girlfriend's family, which motivated him to "rescue" his girlfriend and her family:

"(My girlfriend said) he threatened the family. He threatened to kill everybody in the house. I said who, she [said] me, my mama, and everybody in the house... So I call everybody, I say c'mon, we need to take care of some business. So we get in the car... we standing the front yard of the house making sure 'cause he said he coming by the house. I said 'y'all stay in the house.' Her brother came out too. I said we out here, we gonna make sure he ain't come here. So then, a couple minutes after we look up and see her mama come. And she was like why y'all out here? And I told her we out here to make sure he don't come back here. I said if he gonna kill you he gonna have to kill me. She said thank you Lord."

Several participants had killed or injured members of their own families, and others had been attacked by family members or intimate partners.

FINDING 5: RACISM, CORRUPTION, AND INCOMPETENCE ARE A PART OF THE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM

BACKGROUND

Recent years have seen promising research into far reaching effects of seemingly minor changes to the way authority figures interact with offenders, and the benefits of transparent fairness in the administration of justice.⁵⁸ We now know that the police can achieve “legitimacy” in the eyes of young African-American men and that when they do, those young men commit fewer crimes.⁵⁹ Perceptions of “justice” matter.

Scholars have identified four primary types of justice: distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational. Each of these concepts contains important considerations for decreasing recidivism; it is imperative that authority figures understand that their behavior has the power to change future criminalities. To be sure, the concept is counterintuitive. Police come into the picture after a crime is committed; they do not typically think about future crimes. Prosecutors and judges often express the belief that they have no role in crime prevention, but they are wrong. By the time a defendant appears before a judge it is too late to undo the crime that has been committed, but what happens in that courtroom will have a lot to do with whether more crimes will occur.

Distributive justice is the perceived fairness of one’s own outcomes (i.e., whether the individual was convicted and the harshness of punishment) compared with other groups.⁶⁰ Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the procedures that lead to decision outcomes.⁶¹ For example, a defendant who feels pressured into a plea bargain will retain a sense of unfairness even if he is ultimately

satisfied with the sentence.⁶² A third type, interpersonal justice, concerns the individual’s assessment of how he was treated by police, prosecutors and judges.⁶³ People who were treated with respect were more supportive of the law and legal authorities regardless of the outcome, and more importantly, were more likely to obey the law in the future. It turns out that the strongest predictor of recidivism is a defendant’s attitude toward the judge and whether he felt that the judge treated him fairly and with respect.⁶⁴ These findings were consistent regardless of one’s race, gender, and prior record, even among those who received unfavorable sentences. Finally, informational justice concerns the degree to which individuals receive complete, truthful, and timely explanations for those procedures and decisions.⁶⁵

INTERVIEW RESULTS

Participants from all groups (prisoners, guards, families, and community members) spoke about the problem of crime being a systemic as opposed to a personal or individual one. Many expressed despair, frustration, and anger at their powerlessness. Those who had been incarcerated felt helpless; caught in a system that seemed to doom them to failure. They felt that poverty and racism trapped them in a dead-end life. Even members of “the system,” such as corrections officers, felt trapped and overwhelmed by policies, regulations, and organizational structures that they knew were unfair and failing to serve people. This theme explores the opposite of the four types of justice described above: perceived injustice is present in all aspects of society and government.

58. Hawken & Kleiman, 2009

59. Meares, 2009, Denver, 2011.

60. Van den Bos, Vermont, & Wilke, 1997

61. Colquitt, 2001.

62. Thibaut and Walker, 1975

63. Tyler, 2001

64. Berman and Gold, 2012

65. Bies and Moag, 1986

Some participants felt that there were issues so endemic to Jackson and Mississippi in general that to be successful they need to leave the area. As one prison inmate said,

“Mississippi is the worst place ever to live... It’s about who you know, not what you do.”

A community leader talked about an overall sense of hopelessness, particularly among the youth of Jackson:

“I think some people are kind of stuck. Sometimes they think you have to be pro-black or pro-white...but I don’t think it’s necessarily one race enforcing racial tension on another race. I think a lot of times it’s a lot just us within our own ethnic race, saying ‘That’s just how it is.’”

Court System as Unfair

We heard allegations by inmates, ex-offenders, and family members that the criminal justice system in Mississippi is unfair, specifically complaints of biased and incompetent police, inadequate counsel, arbitrary or vindictive sentencing, and disorganized case management. Many inmates and their families were confused and angry about the circumstances of criminal prosecutions, interactions with defense counsel, sentences, and their treatment in prison. Tempting as it is to dismiss these opinions as the grouching of people held to account for their crimes, we stress two important considerations: first, to a certain extent, perceptions of unfairness and incompetence in the criminal justice process were corroborated those who work within the system. Second, the research summarized above includes examples of people who chose to become law abiding after an interaction with the criminal justice system. When the process is transparent, fair and respectful, it appears that offenders learn from the experience.

Some of the inmates we interviewed described having positive relationships with law enforcement throughout their lives, although at least one did note being targeted by police because of the race of the friends she was with at the time of her arrest. Most of the concern over fairness in the system focused on what happened *after* arrest and (for parolees) throughout their reintegration. One inmate said that he did not meet with the public defender for several months and that his case was handed off to three different lawyers during the trial process, which lasted for 37 months before trial. It took another inmate two years before his trial began. Several inmates also expressed frustration over their legal representation. They described lawyers not being prepared, not showing up or filing proper paperwork, or pressuring the inmate to take a plea deal regardless of claimed innocence. One inmate told us that she could not gain access to court documents because doing so cost money. Inmates who went to trial instead of taking a plea deal said that their sentences seemed excessive—as if they were being punished for maintaining their innocence. Several inmates interviewed knew that their sentence should be ending soon but had no information or clear dates for parole or release.

Many of the inmates admitted their crimes and did not disagree with their convictions, but expressed frustration that the sentencing seemed arbitrary. Several inmates specifically cited examples of individuals convicted of more severe crimes who received lighter sentences.

“Nothing is fair or makes sense. I embezzled \$24,000 and got 8 years. Another person I know in here embezzled \$250,000 and got 5 years.”

One woman serving a life sentence for a homicide that she says was in self-defense (her victim had a gun at the time), noted a story in the newspaper of a man who shot and unarmed man seventeen times and was convicted of manslaughter.

Issues of fairness continued into post-prison, during parole and time being served at restitution centers. One ex-offender, currently living in a restitution center noted that he had been fired from a job because he had been at a doctor's appointment, but the staff at the center neglected to provide his employer with the record of the appointment.

Corrections Management and Oversight

Authorities in charge of corrections (jails, prisons, and restitution centers) may not realize the extent to which they play a role in reduction of crime by discouraging recidivism. One parolee gave an overview of the prison system and why it was unlikely to change:

"Mississippi's largest employers are Walmart and the Mississippi Department of Corrections. Mississippi Department of Corrections! To me it's a conflict of interest for the state to be the one sending us to prison when the same prison they're sending us to is their largest provider. You know like if it's their largest employer then a lot of tax money is collected, you know? Generated through that. And then government grants as well, you knew? Like look at Chris Epps. How much money did he steal before they found out, you know? That's insane. If he took that much, how much have other people taken that you know, hasn't been... found out about? It blows my mind."

Money and Price Gouging

Family members bear much of the financial burden of incarceration. Prison inmates can earn some money for phone calls and canteen or commissary purchases, but prices are high, and laypeople are often surprised at the type of items that inmates must purchase, like shampoo. Inmates told us that prison food

may contain bugs or mold, forcing them to buy instant noodles and powdered milk from the canteen.

The cost of phone calls was also a major concern to both inmates and their families.⁶⁶ One inmate said that a twenty-minute phone call to family cost her nine dollars. Another explained that his brother, who lives out of state, had received a cell phone from a local area in an attempt to reduce the costs of the calls. The prohibitive cost of phone service has also made contraband cell phones more desirable. However, it is not just the high price of canteen items and phone use that family members pay for—they often have to pay fees in order to give inmates money. The mother of one inmate explained:

"We give her money for the commissary and for her phone account. There is a kiosk at the entrance to the visitation building, but it doesn't work, so we can add money to her account at Walmart. We are allowed to give her up to two hundred dollars per month, but Walmart will only process one hundred per transaction and charges six dollars for each transaction. This means that we are paying twelve dollars every month in fees to Walmart to give our daughter two hundred dollars."

Guard and Management Corruption

During the interviews we heard concerns about corruption at all levels of the system. Some inmates cited the indictment of Department of Corrections Commissioner Chris Epps and the corruption at the highest levels. At the jail one staff member suspected vendor corruption behind a \$17,000 in federal grant money for rapid HIV test kits that the facility never received.

66. This matter has received national attention, and the FCC recently took steps to ensure that telephone calls from prisons are affordable. <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/inmate-telephone-service>

In 2014, the *Clarion-Ledger* reported corruption of prison guards in an article featuring then-Commissioner Epps talking about moral character of his employees.⁶⁷ We heard similar stories were told by the inmates and guards in separate interviews. A staff member at the county jail expressed frustration with corrections officers who let infractions slide to avoid paperwork and who smuggled in contraband. At the same time, she said that with the corrections officer's salary she could understand how temptation for a parent struggling to feed a family could lead to their corruption.

There have been public reports of officers having sex with inmates in the towers and sending inmates to carry out physical attacks against other inmates. We heard that a guard ordered several inmates to beat an inmate with a lock after she yelled a racial epithet at the guard. A male inmate explained:

"[There is] violence inside the system, and the blatant disregard by the officers towards it... it's almost like they promote it so they don't have to do their job. You know if they can get, if they can get other inmates to govern other inmates then they don't have to do their jobs."

At the county facility one staff member blamed low hiring standards for corrections officers:

"Maybe there needs to be a psychological exam. You know, to see if you're easily persuaded or... if you have a real bad quick temper."

Lack of Services within Prison

RECOVERY AND MENTAL HEALTH

There do not appear to be many treatment options for inmates. Participants told us that counseling is not easily obtained and that there

were no Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous groups in the facility.

Many of the inmates also suffer from untreated mental illness. One inmate said:

"There's some people shouldn't be here, should be at Whitfield. One woman doesn't know where she is. Maybe dementia, maybe brain damage. People steal from her, take advantage."

Another explained:

"Mental patients used to go to a facility in Meridian, but they're definitely many in this prison."

One inmate did say that there is a class in coping with mental illness, but that only 16 out of 116 people get in every six months.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

"I've been lying on the ground sometimes because my asthma is so bad. I have low blood sugar, and it gets so bad that my hands won't unclench. I get no response from the guards."—Female inmate

Health care within the system appears to be inadequate. When he was first incarcerated at the county facility, one inmate with Crohn's disease said that he was not given his medication for several weeks and dropped down to 87 pounds. Thereafter, he said that it took years to get a nutritional supplement added to his treatment plan. We were also told that there is only one medical unit in a facility that houses men, women, and juveniles, which delays medical treatment for women and juveniles since the unit has to be locked down. One of the women we interviewed had a painfully gnarled right hand that she said had been broken and never set properly. As we prepared to leave, a woman we had not interviewed cautiously approached us to say that that her wrist had been broken 2 weeks

67. <http://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2014/10/05/miss-prisons-guards-low-pay-corruption/16789393/>

ago but it had still not been set by a doctor. Another woman who suffered a spider bite said she was denied treatment until it developed into a serious staph infection. It should be noted that prison had very recently changed medical providers, which may result in better care, although the location of the medical unit will not change.

Education

Educational programs appear to be limited. Programs are available to provide school for juvenile inmates and there are programs to get a GED. Some female inmates talked about working towards a cosmetology degree.

However, not all inmates can get into the programs, and equipment is lacking. One tutor in the juvenile justice center said,

“They have Windows XP. They have to save their work on 3½ inch floppies but it’s not a good program... it should be better– the kids are learning more about how to smuggle and how to run gangs, than they are getting an education that keeps them out of trouble.”

We were not made aware of any re-entry programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through analysis of the numbers we have developed some Early Warning Indicators of future criminality for the children in Hinds County. These include (a) involvement in the juvenile justice system, (b) chronic absenteeism, (c) dropping out of school, and (d) having failed a grade.

Many children with warning indicators did not end up committing crimes; it is imperative that these data be used to identify children who could benefit from interventions, not as a means to exclude or stigmatize them. These data are meant to allow legislators, practitioners, activists and family members to better educate themselves on what to look for and what to do to intervene on the behalf of these children and focus resources where they are most needed.

Jackson and the surrounding areas are not just suffering from a crime control perspective. They are also low on resources. Some of these recommendations, such as Functional Family Therapy, are expensive. We recommend that the more expensive programs like this be targeted only to youth and families where there is relatively high confidence that there will be a costly criminal trajectory ahead.

We have included some recommendations to increase individual successes and thereby benefit the community in Hinds County. These include best practices and program resources nationwide for dealing with wayward youth.

1. Pursue evidence-based strategies that disrupt nascent criminal behaviors.

Decades of research have identified a range of interventions proven to halt behavior patterns that eventually develop into serious crime.⁶⁸ A systematic review conducted by the Task Force

for Community Prevention Services concludes that violence prevention interventions accounted for a 15% reduction in the targeted behavior. Jackson could benefit from implementing interventions in schools, communities and corrections facilities.

Below we provide an overview of several programs at each level of prevention that have been found effective at preventing the issues we determined were associated with future criminality and have been used successfully to stem the development of serious violent crime. Each of these programs has been evaluated and found to be effective.

- **The Incredible Years** series is a set of comprehensive and developmentally-based curriculums to help parents and teachers provide young children (ages 0–12) with a strong emotional, social and academic foundation, in order to achieve the long-term goal of reducing the development of depression, school dropout, violence, drug abuse and delinquency in later years. The program curriculum aims to reduce the development of conduct problems by strengthening parent competencies to promote young children’s social, emotional, and academic competence during weekly group sessions over a three-to-five-month period. Teachers are provided with classroom management strategies (positive and proactive teaching techniques, positive teacher-student relationships, and supportive teacher-parent relationships) to manage difficult and inappropriate child behavior problems, while promoting social, emotional, and academic competence.
- **Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies**[®] (PATHS) is a universal school-based program that targets preschool and

68. Farrington, 2013; Hahn et al., 2007; Wilson & Lipsey, 2007; Community Preventive Services Task Force, n.d.

- elementary school-aged youth (ages 5–11). Specifically, at least two times per week, classroom teachers engage their students in lessons that promote the development of skills in self-control, emotional wellness, social skills, self-esteem, interpersonal relationships and problem-solving skills.
- **LifeSkills Training (LST)** is a school-based universal prevention program that is designed to prevent adolescent violence, tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana use among middle/junior high school students (ages 12–14). Classroom teachers teach approximately 30 LST sessions over the three-year period, which includes training in personal self-management skills, social skills, and social resistance skills. Additional violence prevention lessons also are available each year the program is implemented, and skills are taught using instruction, demonstration, feedback, reinforcement, and practice.
- **Functional Family Therapy (FFT)** targets families and youth (ages 12–18) at risk for disruptive behavioral problems. This short-term program (approximately 30 hours) is designed to improve within-family attributions, family communication and supportiveness while decreasing intense negativity and dysfunctional patterns of behavior. Parenting skills, youth compliance, and a range of behavioral domains (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral) are targeted for change based on the specific risk and protective factor profile of each family. The intervention is implemented with a team of three to eight master's level therapists, with caseloads of 10 to 12 families. A licensed clinical therapist oversees the entire process.
- **Multisystemic Therapy® (MST)** is a family and community-based treatment program that addresses the multiple causes of serious antisocial behavior in adolescent juvenile offenders, ages 12 to 18. Specifically, the

MST intervention seeks to improve the real world functioning of youth by altering their natural settings (i.e., home, school, and neighborhood) in ways that promote pro-social behavior while decreasing antisocial behavior. MST therapists thus work with youth and their families to address the known causes of delinquency on an individualized, yet comprehensive basis. By using the strengths in each system (family, peers, school, and neighborhood) to facilitate change, MST addresses the multiple factors known to be related to delinquency across the key systems within which youth are embedded. The extent of treatment varies by family according to clinical need. Therapists generally spend more time with families in the initial weeks (daily if needed) and gradually taper their time (to as infrequently as once a week) over the three- to five-month course of treatment.

2. Build an Early Warning and Intervention Management System that uses data to track and support students who are veering off the track to graduation.

These efforts recognize that early course corrections are more likely to succeed. Research identifies three primary predictive early warning indicators that a student is not heading toward graduation. These early warning indicators and their thresholds, also known as the “ABCs,” include:

- Attendance: Missing 20 days or being absent 10 percent of school days;
- Behavior: Two or more mild or more serious behavior infractions; and
- Course performance: An inability to read at grade level by the end of third grade; failure in English or math in sixth through ninth grade; a GPA of less than 2.0; two or more failures in ninth grade courses; and failure to earn on-time promotion to the tenth grade.⁶⁹

69. Bruce, Bridgeland, Fox, & Balfanz, 2011

By tracking these factors, schools can implement dropout prevention strategies when they are needed, before it is too late.

Jackson might also consider broader use of early warning systems to identify students with danger indicators combined with systematic and tailored intervention. These systems collect relevant information about individual students that can be tracked by school employees and shared with parents so that early intervention is possible.

3. Concentrate intervention resources on chronically truant students.

An individual arrested as an adult in Hinds County or Jackson is 67% more likely to have been chronically absent while enrolled in school in Hinds County. These numbers jump when looking at individuals who were arrested for serious or very serious crime: 78% more likely to have ever been chronically absent at any point during their K–12 education.

One third of the students currently enrolled in JPS will be chronically absent at some point. This is almost 10,000 students, so interventions would have to be implemented efficiently.

Truancy can be predicted by reviewing attendance and discipline policies, teacher-student relationships, academic performance, and mental health problems. Therefore, we recommend using the following strategies to head off truancy.

- Collaboration—develop a multidisciplinary partnership among key agencies and organizations to guide and implement truancy programming;
- Family Involvement—actively engage families in truancy programming and school-related activities, and provide family-based supports that address truancy risk factors;
- Comprehensive Approach—use broad and flexible strategies that addresses multiple risk factors for truancy (e.g., transportation, mental health, school climate, family needs;
- Meaningful incentives and sanctions — provide motivating incentives and accountability-based sanctions;
- Supportive context (e.g., strength-building resources, equitable policies, safe environment, etc.); and
- Rigorous evaluation and ongoing assessments (i.e., use findings to develop evidence based programs and identify and sustain funding for truancy programming).

Below we discuss two school-based truancy programs that are proven to be effective with students at all levels of schooling.

Positive Action (PA) is a universal school-based truancy prevention program that targets students from kindergarten through eighth grade. This social-emotional learning program includes school-wide climate change efforts (e.g., professional development, incentives, etc.) and a six-unit classroom-based curriculum that teaches understanding and management of self and positive ways to interact with others.⁷⁰ These six classroom-based units include:

- The Positive Action Philosophy and the Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle;
- Positive Actions for Body and Mind;
- Social/Emotional Positive Actions for Managing Yourself Responsibly;
- Social/Emotional Positive Actions for Getting Along with Others;
- Social/Emotional Positive Actions for Being Honest with Yourself and Others; and
- Social/Emotional Positive Actions for Improving Yourself Continuously.

70. Universal interventions target the general population, and are not directed at a specific risk group. These programs are thus provided to an entire population, such as a school or community.

Career Academies

At the high school level, the Career Academies approach includes personalized, small learning communities (i.e., school-within-a-school) that enhance students' engagement and performance in high school and provide them with the credentials and skills needed to make successful transitions to post-secondary education and a career. Students enter a Career Academy in 9th or 10th grade through a voluntary process, and are engaged in a mixture of academic and career readiness classes over the next few years, supplemented by workplace opportunities through partnerships with local employers.

4. Recruit community non-profit groups to support children during the gap between the end of the school day and when they are back in the care of their parents.

Unsupervised after-school hours are when many children first become involved in anti-social or dangerous activities. Schools in wealthy neighborhoods often have afterschool activity programs built in, but as this is unlikely to occur in Jackson's poorest areas, churches and community groups should be mobilized to fill the gap. The following are characteristics of good after-school programs:

- Clear goals, with curricula written to address those goals;
- High expectations from both program directors and staff;
- A safe and well-supervised environment;
- Experienced and well-trained personnel;
- Warm and respectful relationships between staff members and students;
- Sufficient study time and academic assistance for students, in addition to activities designed to engage them through technology, science, and arts; and

- Regular evaluation of efforts to ensure ongoing improvement of the quality of the program.

Since funding may be provided from a variety of grants and other sources, it may be that the best bang for the buck is using state resources to help groups apply for funding.⁷¹

Much attention has been given to the adolescent's need for sleep, and consideration of later school start times. Shifting school hours may also reduce the number of unsupervised afterschool hours.

5. Coordinate community resources in the poorest neighborhoods.

Three types of programs are recommended for impoverished communities: (a) earnings and asset development, (b) family strengthening, and (c) neighborhoods strengthening. Programs in the first category include job training, assistance with employment, subsidized housing, money management and so forth. Programs aimed at strengthening families include counseling and addiction services, respite care for caregivers, transportation, and assistance with parenting skills. Lastly, neighborhood-strengthening programs would include those intended to increase community development and community programs, and to improve relations with law enforcement.

6. Use targeted behavioral and disciplinary interventions for K-8 special education populations.

Compared to their peers, special education students or students with other disabilities are more likely to act out in ways that result in behavioral and disciplinary referrals.

71. Tools for communities looking to start new after-school programs, including innovative approaches to funding and sustainability, are available from the Afterschool Alliance at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/startingaProgram.cfm>.

The following approaches address the needs of special education populations to prevent their involvement with the juvenile justice system or after they have made contact with the system:

- Punishment-based school discipline methods should be avoided because they are not effective for reducing disruption or violence.⁷² Zero-tolerance policies disproportionately affect children and youth with disabilities, and, “in addition to losing valuable instruction time, students subject to exclusionary discipline methods are more likely to be held back, drop out of school, and enter the juvenile justice system.”
- Early screening programs and interventions for students with learning and behavioral disabilities are critical. Students who are identified as having these needs should be targeted with programs designed to address these difficulties, such as anger management.
- Parents should teach their children about appropriate steps to take when questioned by the police, either in school or in the community. Identification bracelets that include the child’s disability may also be a useful approach for providing police with information about how best to deal with the child.
- Restorative justice interventions, such as victim-offender mediation programs, seek to make individuals aware of the damage done while allowing them the opportunity to repair these damages and ultimately be reintegrated into their families, schools, and communities. Using restorative justice approaches as an alternative to school expulsion and suspension allows teachers and administrators to determine whether students’ disabilities play a role in behavioral incidents and to make adjustments if their students’ support needs are not being met.

72. Elliot, Hatot, Sirovatka, & Potter, 2001; Gottfredson, 2001; Leone et al., 2000; Thornton, Craft, Dahlberg, Lynch, & Baer, 2000.

7. Seek to reduce incarcerations of children by means of the “valid court order” exception.

At present, Mississippi youth court judges have the ability to incarcerate children for non-criminal acts, such as running away, violating curfew, or disobeying their parents by issuing orders applicable to an individual child. When the child engages in the behavior prohibited by the order, the judge may incarcerate the child for contempt of the order. Although judges cannot be told what to do, youth court judges could be brought into the discussion of evidence-based interventions and encouraged to adopt practices shown to improve outcomes. Research indicates that incarceration should be the remedy of last resort. The failure of detention and institutional placement to reduce reoffending is well documented, as is the deleterious effect of exposing children to peers with more serious offending histories.

8. Establish community programs that strive for rehabilitation and redirection of status offenders, not just discipline.

While there are a variety of alternatives to incarceration, the unfortunate reality is that very few of them are achieving the desired effect. A series of interviews with offenders, parents, and third party experts made it fairly clear that many of these programs do not inspire children to change their behaviors. One mother recounted her son’s interaction with a judge: “He went off on that (expletive) judge. He doesn’t care. He cares about nothing.”

Perhaps even more discouraging is the typical youth response to these programs. In response to Jackson’s Adolescent Opportunity program, many participants expressed sentiments to the effect of, “I’m here because I have to be, and because I don’t want to have to go be locked up for a longer time.” In most cases, these programs are just a temporary fix that do not solve the root problems of these youth, and cause them to develop a psychological rivalry with law enforcement and the government.

However, there are some successful programs that could be replicated in Jackson. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) program that has been piloted in Adams, Leflore, Rankin, Harrison, and Washington Counties, and the Vera Institute of Justice's Family Justice Program currently help many communities move away from confinement and punishment towards reforms that improve systems and services for status offenders and their families. JDAI, a wide-ranging program that is used in over 300 counties, has been successful at developing community-based detention alternative programs that both improve long-term outcomes for offenders and reduce costs to taxpayers. For instance, Chicago has a program that allows offenders to live at home and attend school while assigned to a special evening program bridging the gap between school and bedtime with constructive activities and an evening meal. Rochelle Stanfield, author of *The JDAI Story: Building a Better Juvenile Detention Story*, wrote a description that helps set the scene a little more completely:

"The center of activities for the WACA [Westside Association for Community Action] Evening Reporting Center is a huge, brightly lit room in a shabby old settlement house building. On a weekday evening last fall, most of the attention centered on a ping pong table, where a crowd of teens cheered and laughed over a spirited game. However, something appeared to be going on just about everywhere in the room. A few youngsters were in head-to-head conversations with an adult here. Another group was

setting out dinner there. Others walked back and forth purposely on some errand or another. The overall impression was one of joyful chaos."

Later in the book Stanfield reports that even though most youth are assigned to the evening-reporting center for 21 days, many continue to come back after their "sentences" are completed because they enjoy the environment. Larger-scale statistics also indicate progress: in Cook County, as well as other pilot sites, admission to detention centers declined, case processing times sped up, and the number of youths failing to appear in court declined, all of which reduce expenses to taxpayers. Federal funding grant opportunities are available to for JDAI experts to assist with implementations.

9. Develop resources to investigate and report on family circumstances for use in sentencing so that judges are better informed and able to integrate mental health professionals and treatment into sentencing.

To understand the entirety of each individual status offender's background and reason for their criminal behavior would be an overly idealistic, impractical goal for the government. However, to attempt rehabilitation and re-direction of youths in the absence of this knowledge would be equally impractical.

Some of JDAI's programs include counseling and after-school programs to address anger, conflict resolution, victim reconciliation, and peer pressure, and others have established fully licensed mental health clinics for court-involved and other high-risk youth. In some situations, services target specific populations or issues: Harris Houston has created a girls court to address the needs of girls in trouble with the law.

CONCLUSION

Educational records contain statistically valuable information about which students are at greatest risk of proceeding to adult criminal activity. In particular, dropping out, involvement in the juvenile justice system, and chronic absenteeism are strong warning signs. A variety of interventions have been shown to reduce the

propensity to criminal activity, and especially to violence, but some of those interventions are expensive and Jackson and Hinds County have limited resources. Those resources can generate more public-safety value if they are concentrated on the highest-risk students.

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APPENDIX I: GRADE LEVEL COHORT DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTIONS

Students were separated into five grade level cohorts depending on the grade levels they were actively enrolled in. These cohorts include a 5th grade cohort, a 5th to 6th grade cohort, a 6th through 8th grade cohort, an 8th grade cohort, and an 8th to 9th grade cohort. To remain in the sample for cohorts that span multiple grade levels, the student was required to be actively enrolled in all specified grade levels at least once between 2003 and 2013. Some students will be observed in multiple cohorts if their active enrollment spans the entire 5th through 9th grade range. Between 20 and 30 percent of all students in the dataset can be observed in each of these grade level cohorts. Table 4 includes a detailed summary of the percent difference in demographic characteristics of the overall cohort as compared to only those individuals in the adult criminal justice system or those individuals who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious offense.

5th Grade Cohort

There were 24,245 students who could be seen actively enrolled in 5th grade between 2003 and 2013. 85% of the students in this cohort are black and 51% are male. Over half of these students have been chronically absent at least once in their educational career and 43% of them have failed at least one grade. 13.5% of these students are involved in the juvenile justice system while 4% of them are involved in the adult criminal justice system.

Compared to the overall 5th grade cohort, there is a 70% increase in the percentage of students in the adult criminal justice system and a 91% increase in the percentage of students who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime that have failed a grade. When this cohort is limited to just those individuals in the adult criminal justice system

or who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime there is over a 200% increase in the percentage of students that have dropped out as compared to the overall cohort. Finally, there is over a 200% increase as compared to the overall cohort in the percentage of students involved in the juvenile justice system when limiting the data to only those in the adult criminal justice system or who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime.

5th–6th Grade Cohort

A total of 22,063 students who could be seen actively enrolled in both 5th and 6th grade between 2003 and 2013 were included in the analysis of this cohort. 86% of the individuals of this cohort are black and 52% are male. In this cohort, 4.5% of individuals are involved in the adult criminal justice system while 14.5% are involved in the juvenile justice system. Over 50% of the students in the cohort have been chronically absent and 45% of students have failed a grade at least once.

Among individuals we can see in the 5th–6th grade cohort there is an 11.6% increase in the percentage of black students that are involved in the adult criminal justice system as compared to the overall cohort. After limiting the cohort to just those individuals who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime, there is a 14% increase in the percentage of black students as compared to the overall cohort. Again, the increase in percentage of students who have dropped out as compared to the overall cohort after limiting the data to those who have been charged with committing any criminal offense or charged with committing a serious or very serious offense is over 200%. There is 59.3% increase in the percentage of chronically absent students in the cohort after

limiting the data to just those individuals in the adult criminal justice system while there is a 72% increase in the percentage of chronically absent students in the cohort after limiting the data to just those who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious offense.

6th–8th Grade Cohort

There were 27,834 students who could be seen actively enrolled in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades between 2003 and 2013 were included in the analysis of this cohort. This cohort is majority black (86%) and is made up of 52% males. 5.6% of the population was identified as being in special education. 8.4% of the individuals were flagged as having dropped out and 1.2% of individuals in the cohort had been suspended or expelled during at least one school year. 43% of the students in the cohort had failed at least one grade during their academic career and over half had been chronically absent in at least one school year. Overall, 5.4% of the individuals in this cohort were involved in the adult criminal justice system while 13% were involved in the juvenile justice system.

There is an 11.6% increase in the percentage of black students that are involved in the adult criminal justice system as compared to the overall cohort. After limiting the data to students who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime, there is a 14% increase in the percentage of black students as compared to the overall cohort. Again, the increase in percentage of students who have dropped out as compared to the overall cohort after limiting to individuals who were charged with committing any criminal offense or charged with committing a serious or very serious offense is over 200%. There is 59.3% increase in the percentage of chronically absent students in the cohort after limiting the data to just those individuals in the adult criminal justice system while there is a 72% increase in the percentage of chronically absent students in the cohort after limiting the data to those

who were charged with committing a serious or very serious offense.

8th Grade Cohort

A total of 33,037 students who could be seen actively enrolled in 8th grade between 2003 and 2013 were included in this analysis. Similar to previous grade level cohorts, 85% of the individuals that comprise this cohort are black and 50% are male. 41.4% of the individuals have failed at least one grade and 52% have been chronically absent in at least one school year. 8.2% of the individuals have dropped out and 1% were suspended or expelled at least once. 5.7% of the individuals in this cohort are involved in the adult criminal justice system and 10.5% are involved in the juvenile justice system.

Within the 8th grade cohort, similar to previous grade level cohorts, there is over a 200% increase in the percentage of students who have dropped out as compared to the overall cohort when limiting the cohort to only those who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime. Compared to the overall cohort, there is a 70% increase in the percentage of students who have ever failed a grade when limiting the data to those students involved in the adult criminal justice system. There is an 90% increase in the percentage of students who have failed a grade after limiting the data to individuals who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious offense. Finally, there is a 180% increase in the percentage of students involved in the juvenile justice system when limiting the cohort to only those individuals involved in the adult criminal justice system.

8th–9th Grade Cohort

There were 22,267 students who could be seen actively enrolled in both 8th and 9th grade between 2003 and 2013 that were included in this analysis. 87% of the individuals in this cohort are black and 51% are male. 4.5% have been identified as being in special education and nearly 8% have dropped out of school.

43% of individuals in this cohort have failed at least one grade during their academic career and 53% have been chronically absent at least once during this time. Nearly 5% of the individuals in this cohort are involved in the adult criminal justice system while 13.5% are involved in the juvenile justice system.

Compared to the demographic characteristic breakdown of the overall cohort, there is 67% increase in the percentage of student who

have failed a grade after limiting the data to students involved in the adult criminal justice system. When the cohort is limited to just those individuals who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious offense there is an 86% increase in the percentage of students who have failed a grade. When limiting by either criminality indicator, there is an over 200% increase in the percentage of students who have failed a grade as compared to the overall cohort.

Table 4: Demographic Characteristic Distribution Differences

Grade Level		Overall	Adult Criminal Justice System	Difference	Charged with a Serious or Very Serious Crime	Difference
5 th	Black	85%	96%	12.90%	97%	14.10%
	Male	51%	76%	49.00%	96%	88.24%
	Failed Grade	43%	73%	69.80%	82%	90.70%
	Dropped Out	7%	23%	228.60%	27%	285.70%
	Chronically Absent	52%	82%	57.70%	91%	75.00%
	In the Juvenile Justice System	13%	46%	240.74%	59%	337.03%
5 th -6 th	Black	86%	96%	11.60%	98%	14.00%
	Male	52%	79%	50.54%	96%	82.93%
	Failed Grade	45%	77%	71.10%	84%	86.70%
	Dropped Out	8%	26%	225.00%	30%	275.00%
	Chronically Absent	54%	86%	59.30%	93%	72.20%
	In the Juvenile Justice System	14%	49%	237.93%	60%	313.79%
6 th -8 th	Black	86%	95%	10.50%	96%	11.60%
	Male	52%	75%	44.20%	95%	82.70%
	Failed Grade	44%	73%	65.90%	80%	81.80%
	Dropped Out	8%	24%	200.00%	28%	250.00%
	Chronically Absent	53%	82%	54.70%	89%	67.90%
	In the Juvenile Justice System	13%	38%	192.31%	47%	261.54%
8 th	Black	85%	94%	10.60%	94%	10.60%
	Male	50%	71%	42.00%	93%	86.00%
	Failed Grade	41%	70%	70.70%	78%	90.20%
	Dropped Out	8%	23%	187.50%	28%	250.00%
	Chronically Absent	52%	79%	51.90%	86%	65.40%
	In the Juvenile Justice System	10%	28%	180.00%	35%	250.00%
8 th -9 th	Black	87%	97%	11.50%	97%	11.50%
	Male	51%	76%	49.00%	96%	88.20%
	Failed Grade	43%	72%	67.40%	80%	86.00%
	Dropped Out	8%	26%	225.00%	29%	262.50%
	Chronically Absent	53%	83%	56.60%	90%	69.80%
	In the Juvenile Justice System	13%	42%	211.11%	52%	285.19%

APPENDIX II: INVOLVEMENT IN THE ADULT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The predicted likelihood of a student's involvement in the adult criminal justice system based on various educational variable and controls is similar to that of a student's likelihood to commit a serious or very serious crime in each grade level cohort. However, after controlling for involvement in the adult criminal justice system, the predicted likelihood of a youth to commit a serious or very serious crime due to any education variable is no longer statistically significant, with one exception. Students who are chronically absent and in the adult criminal justice system consistently exhibit an increased likelihood to commit a serious or very serious crime than a student active in the adult criminal justice system that has never been chronically absent.

5th Grade Cohort

As shown in the logistic regression results in Table 17, being an African-American boy increases a student's likelihood of being involved in the adult criminal justice system. However, after controlling for the student's birth year and educational indicators, students involved in the juvenile justice system are nearly four times more likely to be arrested by the Jackson Police Department or Hinds County Sheriffs' Department as compared to those students with no involvement in the juvenile justice system. Students who are chronically absent are 2.2 times more likely to be involved in the adult criminal justice system while students who dropout or fail a grade are 1.4 times more likely to be involved in the adult criminal justice system. Certain grade level controls, including having a low MCT language or math score in 5th grade, being chronically absent in or before 5th grade, and withdrawing from school in 5th grade were not found to be statistically significant.

Table 6 presents the cross tabulations of students in the 5th grade cohort for variables

that are found to be statistically significant. Of the students involved in the adult criminal justice system, 96% are black, 76% are male, 73% have failed a grade, 23% have dropped out, 82% have been chronically absent, and 46% are involved in the juvenile criminal justice system. Of those students not involved in the adult criminal justice system, 84% are black, 50% are male, 41% have failed a grade, 7% have dropped out, 50% have been chronically absent, and 12% are involved in the juvenile justice system.

5th–6th Grade Cohort

The logistic regression results used in the analysis of this cohort are presented in Table 19. Model 1 indicates black students are 4.8 times more likely to be involved in the adult criminal justice system than non-black students while male students are 3.5 times more likely to be involved in the adult criminal justice system than female students. The differential risk of involvement in the adult criminal justice system for black and male students decreases as more controls are introduced in the model. Model 3 indicates a student who ever failed a grade, dropped out of school, was suspended from school, was identified as being in special education, or was chronically absent during a school year has an increased likelihood of being involved in the adult criminal justice system. Model 4 introduces a control for school fixed effects. In this model, black students are 3.3 times more likely to be in the adult criminal justice system and male students are 2.6 times more likely than female students to be involved in the adult criminal justice system. Students who fail a grade, dropout, or are chronically absent also exhibit an increased likelihood of adult criminal justice system involvement. Finally, students who are involved in the juvenile justice system are 3.7 times more likely to be

arrested by Jackson Police Department or Hinds County Sheriff's Office than students with no involvement in the juvenile justice system.

In the 5th through 6th grade cohort, 96% of students who are in the adult criminal justice system are black and 79% are male. Of the students in the adult criminal justice system, 77% of these students have failed a grade, 26% of them have dropped out of school, 86% of them have been chronically absent and 49% of them are involved in the juvenile justice system. However, given that a student is not involved in the adult criminal justice system, only 44% of them have failed a grade, 7% have dropped out, 53% have been chronically absent and 13% are involved in the juvenile justice system. In the group of students that are not involved in the adult criminal justice system, 85% are black and 51% are male. The complete table of cross tabulations of involvement in the adult criminal justice system against these variables can be seen in Table 7.

6th–8th Grade Cohort

Table 21 provides the results of the logistic regressions run for this cohort. Again, being a black or male student consistently increases the likelihood of a student's involvement in the adult criminal justice system as compared to non-black or female students. After controlling for school fixed effects and other relevant education variables in Model 4, the likelihood of a youth being involved in the adult criminal justice system is 1.9 times higher if the student is ever chronically absent. Black students are 2.8 times more likely than non-black students to be involved in the adult criminal justice system while male students are 2.4 times more likely than female students to be involved in the system. Students who have failed a grade, are in special education, have dropped out of school, or are or are chronically absent in 6th grade have an increased likelihood of being involved in the adult criminal. Finally, Model 4 shows a youth who is involved in the juvenile

justice system is 3.3 times more likely to be involved in the adult criminal justice system than a youth not involved in the juvenile justice system.

Table 9 provides a detailed summary of the characteristics of the 5th through 6th grade cohort and the limited subset of this cohort involved in the adult criminal justice system. Among those involved in the adult criminal justice system, 95% of the individuals are black and 75% are male. While 42% of the overall cohort has failed a grade, 73% of the individuals involved in the adult criminal justice system have failed at least one grade during their educational career. Furthermore, while 7% of this grade level cohort have dropped out, among those in the adult criminal justice system, 24% have dropped out.

8th Grade Cohort

The results of logistic regressions predicting the likelihood of involvement in the adult criminal justice system can be seen in Table 23. Model 4 shows the results of this regression after controlling for school fixed effects. Black students are 2.5 times more likely to be arrested by Jackson Police Department or the Hinds County Sheriff's Office than non-black students while male students are 2.2 times more likely to be arrested than female students. Students who fail a grade, dropout, are ever suspended, or are chronically absent also exhibit increased likelihoods of being involved in the adult criminal justice system. There is some evidence that students who are chronically absent in or before 8th grade have an increased likelihood of adult criminal justice system involvement as well. Finally, students involved in the juvenile justice system are 3.2 times more likely to be involved in the adult criminal justice system as compared to students with no juvenile justice system involvement.

94% of students in this cohort that are involved in the adult criminal justice system are black while 77% of the are male. Although 40% of the entire cohort has failed a grade, among

those who are involved in the adult criminal justice system, 70% have failed a grade and 23% of them have dropped out of school. Given that a student is in the adult criminal justice system, 79% have been chronically absent at some point, 34% were chronically absent in 8th grade, and 16% were chronically absent prior to 8th grade. A summary of these tabulations can be found in Table 11.

8th–9th Grade Cohort

A series of logistic regression models was used in the analysis of this cohort and a detailed summary of statistics can be found in Table 25. Model 4, which controls for school fixed effects and other educational variable indicators, shows that black students in this cohort are 3.9 times more likely to be involved in the adult criminal justice system while male students are still 2.3 times more likely than female students to have this involvement. Chronic absenteeism also increases the likelihood of a student being involved in the adult criminal justice

system in the model. Students who have been chronically absent are 2 times more likely to be involved in the adult criminal justice system than students who have never been chronically absent. Students who have failed a grade are 1.3 times more likely to be involved in the adult criminal justice system while students who have dropped out are 1.5 times more likely to have adult criminal justice involvement. Finally, students who are involved in the juvenile justice system are 3.3 times more likely to be involved in the adult criminal justice system.

Table 13 includes a summary of cross tabulations for this cohort. 94% of youth involved in the adult criminal justice system are black while 71% of these students are male. 70% of students in the adult criminal justice system have failed a grade and 23% of them have dropped out. Finally, 79% of these students have been chronically absent at some point in their educational career and 16% of them have been chronically absent prior to 8th grade.

APPENDIX III: COMMITTING A SERIOUS OR VERY SERIOUS CRIME

5th Grade Cohort

Table 18 shows the logistic regression results of the likelihood of students committing a serious or very serious crime in the adult criminal justice system (N=24,245). After controlling for education variables and school fixed effects, students who fail a grade, are in special education, dropout, or are chronically absent have an increased likelihood to commit a serious or very serious crime. Students who are chronically absent are 3.9 times more likely to commit a serious or very serious crime whereas students who are chronically absent prior to 5th grade are 4.5 times more likely to commit a crime of that nature. When limiting the cohort to only those students we can see involved in the adult criminal justice system (N=1,055), the indicators of being male, involved in the Juvenile Justice System, or being chronically absent remain statistically significant and increase the likelihood of a youth's involvement in the adult criminal justice system.

Cross tabulations of students committing a serious/very serious crime or not against the variables found to be statistically significant in the logistic regressions are presented in Table 5. The cross tabulations across the various education variables follow a similar pattern to that of cross tabulations of student involvement in the adult criminal justice system. Again, given that a student has been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime, the majority of students are black, male, chronically absent, involved in the juvenile justice system, and have failed a grade. The most notable departure from the pattern of cross tabulations of adult criminal justice involvement is that 59% of students who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious crimes are involved in the juvenile justice system.

5th–6th Grade Cohort

Table 20 shows the result of the logistic regression analysis run for this cohort to determine which variables increase or decrease the likelihood of committing a serious or very serious crime. The most notable increase to the likelihood of a student committing a serious or very serious crime is if the student is male. In this analysis, black students are 3.8 times more likely to commit a serious or very serious crime as compared to non-black students. Other variables that increase the likelihood of a student committing a serious or very serious crime include the student failing a grade, being in special education, dropping out of school, being chronically absent at any point in their educational career, and being chronically absent prior to 5th grade. Students who are chronically absent prior to 5th grade are 4.5 times more likely to commit a serious or very serious crime whereas students who are chronically absent, regardless of the grade level this occurred in, are 3.8 times more likely to commit a serious or very serious crime as compared to those students who have not been chronically absent.

A summary of cross tabulations of statistically significant variables against whether or not the student has been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime can be found in Table 8. Of students who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime, 98% are black and 95% are male. Furthermore, 84% of this group of students has failed a grade, 93% have been chronically absent, and 60% are involved in the juvenile justice system. Finally, 17% of these students have been in special education and 30% have dropped out of school.

6th–8th Grade Cohort

Table 22 shows the results of a logistic regression predicting the likelihood of committing a serious or very serious crime when controlling for various educational variables and involvement in the juvenile justice system. Black students are 2.6 times more likely than non-black students to commit a serious or very serious crime. Furthermore, students who have failed a grade, are in special education, or dropout of school are about 2.5 times more likely to commit a serious or very serious crime as compared to students who have not failed a grade, are not in special education, or have not dropped out of school. Students who were chronically absent prior to 6th grades are 3.6 times more likely to commit a crime of this nature while students who are ever chronically absent are 3 times more likely to commit a serious or very serious crime.

In this cohort, 96% of youth who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime are black and 95% of them are male. 80% of these youth have failed a grade and 89% have been chronically absent. Notably though, only 3% of these students were chronically absent prior to 6th grade. Finally, 15% of students who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime are in special education and 28% of them have dropped out of school. A complete list of these cross tabulations can be found in Table 10.

8th Grade Cohort

Students who are black or male have an increased likelihood of committing a serious or very serious crime. Furthermore, students who have failed a grade are 1.7 times more likely to commit a serious or very serious crime while students who dropout are 1.6 times more likely to commit a crime of this nature. Finally, students who were chronically absent before 8th grade are 3.7 times more likely to commit a serious or very serious crime whereas students who were ever chronically absent are 2.6 times more

likely to commit a serious or very serious crime. A detailed summary of the logistic regressions results for this cohort can be found in Table 24.

The overwhelming majority of students who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime are black or male. 78% of these students have failed a grade and 28% have dropped out. 35% of these students have been in the adult criminal justice system. Finally, 86% of students who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious have been chronically absent at some point in their educational career while 18% of these students were chronically absent before 8th grade. Table 12 includes a detailed summary of the cross tabulations for this cohort.

8th–9th Grade Cohort

Table 26 includes results of the logistic regression run for this cohort. Black youth are 3.2 times more likely to commit a serious or very serious crime than non-black youth. Students who have failed a grade are 1.5 times more likely to commit a crime of this nature while students who dropout are 1.4 times more likely to do so. Special education students are 1.6 times more likely to commit a serious or very serious crime. Finally, students who have ever been chronically absent are 3.3 times more likely to commit a serious or very serious crime while students who were chronically absent prior to 8th grade are 3.8 times more likely to do so.

97% of students who have been charged with committing a serious or very serious crime are black while 96% of them are male. 90% of students who have been charged with committing a crime of this nature have also been chronically absent at some point in their educational career while 59% of them were chronically absent prior to 8th grade. Finally, 52% of students who commit a serious or very serious crime have been involved in the juvenile justice system. A detailed summary of these cross tabulations can be found in Table 14.

APPENDIX IV: CROSS TABULATIONS

Table 5: Cross Tabulations of 5th Grade Cohort, Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime*

		Black		Male		Failed a Grade		Special Education	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime	No	15%	85%	50%	50%	58%	42%	97%	3%
	Yes	3%	97%	4%	96%	18%	82%	87%	13%
		Dropped Out		Chronically Absent		In Juvenile Justice System			
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes		
	No	93%	7%	49%	51%	89%	11%		
	Yes	73%	27%	9%	91%	41%	59%		

*Tabulations calculated as a percentage of those in each category given the student has been charged with committing a serious/very serious crime or not

Table 6: Cross Tabulations of 5th Grade Cohort, Adult Criminal Justice System*

		Black		Male		Failed a Grade	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Adult Criminal Justice System	No	16%	84%	50%	50%	59%	41%
	Yes	4%	96%	24%	76%	27%	73%
		Dropped Out		Chronically Absent		In Juvenile Justice System	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	No	93%	7%	50%	50%	88%	12%
	Yes	77%	23%	18%	82%	54%	46%

*Tabulations calculated as a percentage of those in each category given their involvement in the adult criminal justice system

Table 7: Cross Tabulations of 5th–6th Grade Cohort, Adult Criminal Justice System*

		Black		Male		Failed a Grade	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Adult Criminal Justice System	No	15%	85%	49%	51%	56%	44%
	Yes	4%	96%	21%	79%	23%	77%
		Dropped Out		Chronically Absent		In Juvenile Justice System	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	No	93%	7%	47%	53%	87%	13%
	Yes	74%	26%	14%	86%	51%	49%

*Tabulations calculated as a percentage of those in each category given their involvement in the adult criminal justice system

Table 8: Cross Tabulations of 5th–6th Grade Cohort, Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime

		Black		Male		Failed a Grade		Special Education	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime	No	15%	85%	49%	51%	56%	44%	94%	6%
	Yes	2%	98%	4%	96%	16%	84%	83%	17%
		Dropped Out		Chronically Absent		In Juvenile Justice System			
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes		
	No	93%	7%	47%	53%	87%	13%		
	Yes	70%	30%	7%	93%	40%	60%		

*Tabulations calculated as a percentage of those in each category given whether they have been charged with committing a serious/very serious crime or not

Table 9: Cross Tabulations of 6th–8th Grade Cohort, Adult Criminal Justice System*

		Black		Male		Failed a Grade		Special Education	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Adult Criminal Justice System		No	86%	50%	50%	58%	42%	95%	5%
	No	14%	86%	50%	50%	58%	42%	95%	5%
	Yes	5%	95%	25%	75%	27%	73%	88%	12%
		Dropped Out		Chronically Absent		In Juvenile Justice System		Chronically Absent Before 6 th Grade	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	No	93%	7%	48%	52%	88%	12%	95%	5%
	Yes	76%	24%	18%	82%	62%	38%	97%	3%

*Tabulations calculated as a percentage of those in each category given their involvement in the adult criminal justice system

Table 10: Cross Tabulations of 6th–8th Grade Cohort, Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime

		Black		Male		Failed a Grade		Special Education	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime		No	86%	50%	50%	58%	42%	95%	5%
	No	14%	86%	50%	50%	58%	42%	95%	5%
	Yes	4%	96%	5%	95%	20%	80%	85%	15%
		Dropped Out		Chronically Absent		In Juvenile Justice System		Chronically Absent Before 6 th Grade	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	No	92%	8%	48%	52%	88%	12%	95%	5%
	Yes	72%	28%	11%	89%	53%	47%	97%	3%

*Tabulations calculated as a percentage of those in each category given whether they have been charged with committing a serious/very serious crime or not

Table 11: Cross Tabulations of 8th Grade Cohort, Adult Criminal Justice System

		Black		Male		Failed a Grade		Dropped Out	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Adult Criminal Justice System	No	15%	85%	51%	49%	60%	40%	93%	7%
	Yes	6%	94%	23%	77%	30%	70%	77%	23%
		In Juvenile Justice System		Chronically Absent		Chronically Absent in 8 th Grade		Chronically Absent Before 8 th Grade	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	No	91%	9%	50%	50%	86%	14%	89%	11%
	Yes	72%	28%	21%	79%	66%	34%	84%	16%

*Tabulations calculated as a percentage of those in each category given their involvement in the adult criminal justice system

Table 12: Cross Tabulations of 8th Grade Cohort, Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime

		Black		Male		Failed a Grade		Dropped Out	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime	No	15%	85%	51%	49%	60%	40%	92%	8%
	Yes	6%	94%	7%	93%	22%	78%	72%	28%
		In Juvenile Justice System		Chronically Absent		Chronically Absent Before 8 th Grade			
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes		
	No	90%	10%	49%	51%	89%	11%		
	Yes	65%	35%	14%	86%	82%	18%		

*Tabulations calculated as a percentage of those in each category given whether they have been charged with committing a serious/very serious crime or not

Table 13: Cross Tabulations of 8th–9th Grade Cohort, Adult Criminal Justice System

		Black		Male		Failed a Grade		Dropped Out	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Adult Criminal Justice System		No	86%	No	50%	No	59%	No	93%
	No	14%	86%	50%	50%	59%	41%	93%	7%
	Yes	3%	97%	24%	76%	28%	72%	74%	26%
		In Juvenile Justice System		Chronically Absent		Chronically Absent Before 8 th Grade		Chronically Absent in 8 th Grade	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	No	88%	12%	49%	51%	56%	44%	94%	6%
	Yes	58%	42%	17%	83%	47%	53%	90%	10%

*Tabulations calculated as a percentage of those in each category given their involvement in the adult criminal justice system

Table 14: Cross Tabulations of 8th–9th Grade Cohort, Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime

		Black		Male		Failed a Grade		Dropped Out	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime		No	87%	No	50%	No	58%	No	93%
	No	13%	87%	50%	50%	58%	42%	93%	7%
	Yes	3%	97%	4%	96%	20%	80%	71%	29%
		In Juvenile Justice System		Chronically Absent		Chronically Absent Before 8 th Grade		Chronically Absent in 8 th Grade	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	No	88%	12%	48%	52%	56%	44%	94%	6%
	Yes	48%	52%	10%	90%	41%	59%	90%	10%

*Tabulations calculated as a percentage of those in each category given whether they have been charged with committing a serious/very serious crime or not

APPENDIX V: CORRELATIONS OF OVERALL DATA

Table 15 shows several indicators in a student's educational career, including being identified as a special education student, dropping out of school, being suspended during the school year, failing a grade, or being chronically absent during any school year, are positively correlated with involvement in the adult criminal justice system. Across all cohorts in the following analysis, the indicator of being chronically absent consistently increases the likelihood of a youth being arrested

by Jackson Police Department or Hinds County Sheriff's Office. Similarly, students who are black or male have an increased likelihood of being involved in the adult criminal justice system. While being flagged for any of these indicators increases the likelihood of involvement in the adult criminal justice system, involvement in the juvenile justice system consistently increases the likelihood of a youth being involved in the adult criminal justice system the most.

Table 15: Correlations of the Overall Data

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Involved in the adult criminal justice system	–					
2. Involved in the juvenile justice system	.0917***	–				
3. Identified as special education student	.0588***	.0493***	–			
4. Ever dropped out of school	.1322***	.1143***	.0459***	–		
5. Ever suspended from school	.0219***	.0588***	–.0020	.3359***	–	
6. Ever failed a grade	.1300***	.0912***	.0239***	.2062***	.0594***	–
7. Ever been chronically absent	.1647***	.2040***	.1194***	.2498***	.0759***	.3348***

*($p < .05$), **($p < .01$), ***($p < .001$)

APPENDIX VI: REGRESSION TABLES

Table 16: Logistic Regression Results by Crime Type

	Adult Criminal Justice System	(1) Charged with a Serious or Very Serious Crime	(2) Charged with a Serious Crime	(3) Charged with a Very Serious Crime
Black	2.444*** (0.185)	0.998 (.175)	0.951 (.166)	1.265 (.454)
Male	2.294*** (0.0952)	13.33*** (.387)	9.678*** (.001)	12.58*** (4.332)
Failed Grade	1.539*** (0.0661)	1.211* (.117)	1.216* (.113)	0.981 (.15)
Special Education	1.343*** (0.0846)	1.383* (.199)	1.277 (.168)	1.322 (.24)
Dropout	1.433*** (0.0695)	0.99 (.103)	0.994 (.0966)	1.085 (.157)
Chronically Absent	2.192*** (0.104)	1.784*** (.192)	1.698*** (.178)	1.147 (.209)
Withdraw in 5 th Grade	1.041 (0.0882)	0.683* (.131)	0.784 (.141)	0.905 (.246)
Low MCT Math Score in 5 th Grade	1.192 (0.248)	0.94 (.451)	0.474 (.205)	2.268 (.139)
Low MCT Language Score in 5 th Grade	0.902 (0.191)	2.383 (.324)	2.405 (.111)	0.513 (.296)
Withdraw in 8 th Grade	1.052 (0.0610)	1.710*** (.225)	1.585*** (.193)	1.292 (.226)
Low MCT Math Score in 8 th Grade	1.122 (0.102)	0.961 (.194)	0.88 (.166)	1.078 (.291)
Low MCT Language Score in 8 th Grade	1.156 (0.108)	0.943 (.197)	0.842 (.163)	1.443 (.389)
Juvenile Justice System	3.441*** (0.201)	1.557*** (.206)	1.667*** (.207)	0.681* (.132)
Original Enrollment in Hinds County	0.833*** (0.0404)	2.061*** (.224)	1.823*** (.242)	1.276 (.277)
Constant	0.000540*** (0.000134)	0.0418*** (.0218)	0.0286*** (.0164)	0.0379*** (.0314)
N	47824	3480	3480	3480

Table 17: Logistic Regression Results of 5th Grade Cohort: Involvement in the Adult Criminal Justice System

	(1) Adult Criminal Justice System	(2) (Controlling for Year of Birth & Other Education Variables	(3) (Controlling for attending a high school in Hinds County)	(4) (Including School Fixed Effects)
Adult Criminal Justice System				
Black	4.588*** (0.728)	3.163*** (0.514)	3.369*** (0.557)	3.349*** (0.556)
Male	3.213*** (0.236)	2.517*** (0.195)	2.505*** (0.195)	2.517*** (0.196)
Years Actively Enrolled Prior to 5 th Grade		1.031 (0.0494)	1.009 (0.0486)	1.010 (0.0487)
Failed Grade		1.516*** (0.123)	1.378*** (0.114)	1.362*** (0.113)
Special Education		1.395** (0.179)	1.336* (0.172)	1.331* (0.172)
Dropout		1.458*** (0.133)	1.421*** (0.130)	1.431*** (0.132)
Suspended		0.731 (0.170)	0.713 (0.166)	0.728 (0.171)
Chronically Absent		2.197*** (0.205)	2.208*** (0.208)	2.209*** (0.209)
Juvenile Justice System		3.817*** (0.279)	3.779*** (0.281)	3.746*** (0.280)
Chronically Absent before 5 th Grade		0.925 (0.244)	0.922 (0.244)	0.934 (0.247)
Chronically Absent in 5 th Grade		0.910 (0.0940)	0.874 (0.0911)	0.882 (0.0921)
Withdraw in 5 th Grade		1.091 (0.0973)	1.042 (0.0935)	1.047 (0.0942)
Low MCT Math Score in 5 th Grade		1.249 (0.255)	1.239 (0.255)	1.233 (0.253)
Low MCT Language Score in 5 th Grade		0.950 (0.199)	0.945 (0.198)	0.950 (0.199)
Original Enrollment in Hinds County			1.022 (0.0912)	1.221 (0.142)
Constant	0.00541*** (0.000894)	0.00631*** (0.00140)	0.00722*** (0.00167)	0.00556*** (0.00165)
N	24245	24245	24245	24245

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses **p<0.05, ***p<0.01, ****p<0.001"

Table 18: Regression Results of 5th Grade Cohort: Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime in the Adult Criminal Justice System

	(1) Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime	(2) (Controlling for Year of Birth)	(3) (Including Education Variables)	(4) (Including School Fixed Effects)
Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime				
Black	5.940*** (1.392)	3.296*** (0.793)	3.479*** (0.849)	3.417*** (0.838)
Male	22.80*** (4.580)	17.00*** (3.457)	17.04*** (3.472)	17.09*** (3.484)
Years Actively Enrolled Prior to 5 th Grade		1.053 (0.0645)	1.004 (0.0622)	1.006 (0.0624)
Failed Grade		1.853*** (0.220)	1.617*** (0.198)	1.587*** (0.195)
Special Education		1.810*** (0.269)	1.662*** (0.250)	1.660*** (0.251)
Dropout		1.439** (0.164)	1.403** (0.162)	1.417** (0.164)
Suspended		0.888 (0.233)	0.988 (0.263)	1.071 (0.288)
Chronically Absent		3.656*** (0.558)	3.843*** (0.594)	3.865*** (0.598)
Juvenile Justice System		0.918 (0.269)	0.905 (0.267)	0.907 (0.268)
Chronically Absent before 5 th Grade		5.066*** (0.478)	4.618*** (0.447)	4.491*** (0.439)
Chronically Absent in 5 th Grade		0.809 (0.106)	0.795 (0.106)	0.805 (0.107)
Withdraw in 5 th Grade		0.948 (0.111)	0.933 (0.111)	0.929 (0.111)
Low MCT Math Score in 5 th Grade		1.157 (0.276)	1.155 (0.279)	1.138 (0.275)
Low MCT Language Score in 5 th Grade		1.156 (0.271)	1.163 (0.276)	1.182 (0.281)
Original Enrollment in Hinds County			1.964*** (0.264)	2.897*** (0.559)
Constant	0.000424*** (0.000127)	0.000308*** (0.000113)	0.000226*** (0.0000866)	0.000128*** (0.0000631)
N	24245	24245	24245	24245

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses **p<0.05, ***p<0.01, ****p<0.001"

Table 19: Logistic Regression Results of 5th–6th Grade Cohort: Involvement in the Adult Criminal Justice System

	(1) Adult Criminal Justice System	(2) (Controlling for Year of Birth & Other Education Variables	(3) (Controlling for attending a high school in Hinds County)	(4) (Including School Fixed Effects)
Adult Criminal Justice System				
Black	4.789*** (0.820)	3.224*** (0.567)	3.298*** (0.587)	3.299*** (0.590)
Male	3.533*** (0.278)	2.606*** (0.217)	2.600*** (0.217)	2.616*** (0.219)
Years Actively Enrolled Prior to 5 th Grade		1.044 (0.0497)	1.032 (0.0493)	1.031 (0.0492)
Failed Grade		1.544*** (0.135)	1.438*** (0.128)	1.427*** (0.127)
Special Education		1.225 (0.136)	1.144 (0.129)	1.142 (0.128)
Dropout		1.496*** (0.135)	1.479*** (0.135)	1.490*** (0.136)
Suspended		0.740 (0.167)	0.746 (0.170)	0.766 (0.175)
Chronically Absent		2.285*** (0.237)	2.301*** (0.240)	2.298*** (0.240)
Juvenile Justice System		3.829*** (0.287)	3.738*** (0.285)	3.711*** (0.285)
Chronically Absent before 5 th Grade		0.919 (0.238)	0.908 (0.235)	0.909 (0.236)
Chronically Absent in 5 th Grade		0.867 (0.0935)	0.850 (0.0923)	0.859 (0.0935)
Withdraw in 5 th Grade		1.153 (0.106)	1.124 (0.104)	1.128 (0.104)
Low MCT Math Score in 5 th Grade		1.208 (0.256)	1.215 (0.258)	1.212 (0.257)
Low MCT Language Score in 5 th Grade		0.977 (0.216)	0.970 (0.215)	0.973 (0.215)
Original Enrollment in Hinds County			1.162 (0.109)	1.441** (0.180)
Constant	0.00489*** (0.000877)	0.00595*** (0.00467)	0.00560*** (0.00442)	0.00392*** (0.00318)
N	22063	22063	22063	22063

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses **p<0.05, ***p<0.01, ****p<0.001"

Table 20: Logistic Regression Results of 5th–6th Grade Cohort: Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime in the Adult Criminal Justice System

	(1) Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime	(2) (Controlling for Year of Birth)	(3) (Including Education Variables)	(4) (Including School Fixed Effects)
Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime				
Black	7.035*** (1.848)	3.860*** (1.039)	3.893*** (1.058)	3.823*** (1.044)
Male	23.22*** (4.848)	16.27*** (3.441)	16.48*** (3.490)	16.47*** (3.490)
Years Actively Enrolled Prior to 5 th Grade		1.078 (0.0643)	1.038 (0.0621)	1.036 (0.0621)
Failed Grade		1.918*** (0.241)	1.702*** (0.219)	1.674*** (0.216)
Special Education		1.537*** (0.200)	1.379* (0.183)	1.375* (0.183)
Dropout		1.550*** (0.172)	1.520*** (0.171)	1.531*** (0.173)
Suspended		0.891 (0.225)	1.008 (0.259)	1.087 (0.282)
Chronically Absent		3.672*** (0.617)	3.802*** (0.645)	3.822*** (0.649)
Juvenile Justice System		0.899 (0.257)	0.885 (0.254)	0.875 (0.252)
Chronically Absent before 5 th Grade		5.017*** (0.480)	4.557*** (0.447)	4.426*** (0.438)
Chronically Absent in 5 th Grade		0.782 (0.107)	0.775 (0.107)	0.784 (0.109)
Withdraw in 5 th Grade		1.013 (0.121)	1.006 (0.121)	1.006 (0.122)
Low MCT Math Score in 5 th Grade		1.161 (0.285)	1.181 (0.294)	1.175 (0.292)
Low MCT Language Score in 5 th Grade		1.160 (0.289)	1.167 (0.295)	1.182 (0.298)
Original Enrollment in Hinds County			2.062*** (0.283)	2.837*** (0.547)
Constant	0.000372*** (0.000122)	0.000209*** (0.000231)	0.000121*** (0.000136)	0.0000785*** (0.0000913)
N	22063	22063	22063	22063

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses **p<0.05, ***p<0.01, ****p<0.001"

Table 21: Logistic Regression Results of 6th–8th Grade Cohort: Involvement in the Adult Criminal Justice System

	(1) Adult Criminal Justice System	(2) (Controlling for Year of Birth & Other Education Variables	(3) (Controlling for attending a high school in Hinds County)	(4) (Including School Fixed Effects)
Adult Criminal Justice System				
Black	3.587*** (0.448)	2.738*** (0.351)	2.831*** (0.370)	2.841*** (0.373)
Male	3.060*** (0.187)	2.381*** (0.154)	2.381*** (0.154)	2.392*** (0.155)
Years Actively Enrolled Prior to 5 th Grade		1.046 (0.0480)	1.030 (0.0474)	1.030 (0.0474)
Failed Grade		1.587*** (0.108)	1.464*** (0.102)	1.450*** (0.101)
Special Education		1.430*** (0.132)	1.323** (0.123)	1.321** (0.123)
Dropout		1.455*** (0.109)	1.429*** (0.107)	1.432*** (0.108)
Suspended		0.659* (0.137)	0.649* (0.135)	0.673 (0.141)
Chronically Absent		1.921*** (0.151)	1.925*** (0.153)	1.934*** (0.154)
Juvenile Justice System		3.327*** (0.216)	3.278*** (0.216)	3.251*** (0.215)
Chronically Absent before 6 th Grade		0.851 (0.156)	0.842 (0.154)	0.853 (0.156)
Chronically Absent in 6 th Grade		1.339*** (0.0962)	1.265** (0.0917)	1.263** (0.0916)
Withdraw in 6 th Grade		1.133 (0.0879)	1.104 (0.0860)	1.111 (0.0867)
Low MCT Math Score in 6 th Grade		1.106 (0.151)	1.122 (0.154)	1.123 (0.154)
Low MCT Language Score in 6 th Grade		0.993 (0.144)	0.994 (0.145)	0.997 (0.145)
Original Enrollment in Hinds County			1.080 (0.0813)	1.291** (0.127)
Constant	0.00881*** (0.00115)	0.00888*** (0.00675)	0.00881*** (0.00670)	0.00707*** (0.00546)
N	27834	27834	27834	27834

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses **p<0.05, ***p<0.01, ****p<0.001"

Table 22: Logistic Regression Results of the 6th–8th Grade Cohort: Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime in the Adult Criminal Justice System

	(1) Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime	(2) (Controlling for Year of Birth)	(3) (Including Education Variables)	(4) (Including School Fixed Effects)
Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime				
Black	4.103*** (0.704)	2.755*** (0.488)	2.708*** (0.487)	2.624*** (0.475)
Male	19.08*** (2.928)	14.65*** (2.281)	14.77*** (2.301)	14.79*** (2.305)
Years Actively Enrolled Prior to 6 th Grade		1.087 (0.0627)	1.061 (0.0616)	1.055 (0.0614)
Failed Grade		1.789*** (0.171)	1.608*** (0.157)	1.584*** (0.156)
Special Education		1.610*** (0.176)	1.464*** (0.162)	1.464*** (0.163)
Dropout		1.534*** (0.140)	1.510*** (0.140)	1.514*** (0.141)
Suspended		0.646 (0.154)	0.715 (0.173)	0.771 (0.188)
Chronically Absent		2.809*** (0.333)	2.930*** (0.351)	2.954*** (0.355)
Juvenile Justice System		0.807 (0.174)	0.804 (0.174)	0.813 (0.176)
Chronically Absent before 6 th Grade		4.000*** (0.327)	3.689*** (0.307)	3.584*** (0.301)
Chronically Absent in 6 th Grade		1.303** (0.115)	1.228* (0.110)	1.225* (0.110)
Withdraw in 6 th Grade		1.170 (0.114)	1.165 (0.115)	1.178 (0.117)
Low MCT Math Score in 6 th Grade		1.093 (0.184)	1.098 (0.186)	1.095 (0.186)
Low MCT Language Score in 6 th Grade		1.039 (0.179)	1.052 (0.183)	1.054 (0.183)
Original Enrollment in Hinds County			1.889*** (0.205)	2.517*** (0.377)
Constant	0.000913*** (0.000203)	0.00117*** (0.000936)	0.000990*** (0.000800)	0.000802*** (0.000673)
N	27834	27834	27834	27834

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses **p<0.05, ***p<0.01, ****p<0.001"

Table 23: Logistic Regression Results of 8th Grade Cohort: Involvement in the Adult Criminal Justice System

	(1) Adult Criminal Justice System	(2) (Controlling for Year of Birth & Other Education Variables	(3) (Controlling for attending a high school in Hinds County)	(4) (Including School Fixed Effects)
Adult Criminal Justice System				
Black	2.921*** (0.290)	2.350*** (0.241)	2.444*** (0.257)	2.499*** (0.264)
Male	2.628*** (0.138)	2.156*** (0.119)	2.144*** (0.119)	2.165*** (0.121)
Years Actively Enrolled Prior to 8 th Grade		1.004 (0.0320)	0.985 (0.0316)	0.985 (0.0316)
Failed Grade		1.686*** (0.102)	1.572*** (0.0962)	1.564*** (0.0958)
Special Education		1.302* (0.165)	1.208 (0.154)	1.204 (0.154)
Dropout		1.472*** (0.0999)	1.448*** (0.0987)	1.444*** (0.0986)
Suspended		0.591** (0.117)	0.562** (0.112)	0.587** (0.117)
Chronically Absent		1.885*** (0.130)	1.892*** (0.132)	1.894*** (0.132)
Juvenile Justice System		3.195*** (0.210)	3.228*** (0.214)	3.235*** (0.216)
Chronically Absent before 8 th Grade		1.287** (0.114)	1.240* (0.110)	1.232* (0.110)
Chronically Absent in 8 th Grade		1.228*** (0.0764)	1.151* (0.0726)	1.166* (0.0737)
Withdraw in 8 th Grade		1.087 (0.0701)	1.011 (0.0663)	1.020 (0.0669)
Low MCT Math Score in 8 th Grade		1.120 (0.103)	1.128 (0.105)	1.130 (0.105)
Low MCT Language Score in 8 th Grade		1.146 (0.108)	1.139 (0.108)	1.139 (0.108)
Original Enrollment in Hinds County			0.945 (0.0636)	1.184 (0.104)
Constant	0.0128*** (0.00132)	0.0168*** (0.0189)	0.0186*** (0.0209)	0.00961*** (0.0111)
N	33037	33037	33037	33037

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses **p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001"

Table 24: Logistic Regression Results of 8th Grade Cohort: Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime in the Adult Criminal Justice System

	(1) Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime	(2) (Controlling for Year of Birth)	(3) (Including Education Variables)	(4) (Including School Fixed Effects)
Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime				
Black	3.095*** (0.416)	2.262*** (0.316)	2.158*** (0.308)	2.147*** (0.308)
Male	13.66*** (1.624)	11.22*** (1.357)	11.31*** (1.370)	11.41*** (1.384)
Years Actively Enrolled Prior to 8 th Grade		0.955 (0.0395)	0.940 (0.0398)	0.935 (0.0397)
Failed Grade		1.864*** (0.158)	1.698*** (0.147)	1.679*** (0.146)
Special Education		1.381* (0.206)	1.300 (0.196)	1.281 (0.194)
Dropout		1.618*** (0.135)	1.588*** (0.134)	1.584*** (0.134)
Suspended		0.589* (0.132)	0.643 (0.146)	0.687 (0.157)
Chronically Absent		2.468*** (0.255)	2.572*** (0.269)	2.587*** (0.271)
Juvenile Justice System		1.327* (0.149)	1.273* (0.144)	1.265* (0.144)
Chronically Absent before 8 th Grade		3.980*** (0.332)	3.766*** (0.320)	3.731*** (0.319)
Chronically Absent in 8 th Grade		1.346*** (0.105)	1.288** (0.102)	1.305*** (0.103)
Withdraw in 8 th Grade		1.243** (0.100)	1.257** (0.103)	1.274** (0.105)
Low MCT Math Score in 8 th Grade		1.191 (0.141)	1.212 (0.145)	1.215 (0.146)
Low MCT Language Score in 8 th Grade		1.173 (0.142)	1.168 (0.142)	1.162 (0.142)
Original Enrollment in Hinds County			1.666*** (0.161)	2.322*** (0.305)
Constant	0.00169*** (0.000289)	0.00173*** (0.000632)	0.00136*** (0.000509)	0.000698*** (0.000298)
N	33031	33031	33031	33031

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses **p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001"

Table 25: Logistic Regression Results of 8th–9th Grade Cohort: Involvement in the Adult Criminal Justice System

	(1) Adult Criminal Justice System	(2) (Controlling for Year of Birth & Other Education Variables	(3) (Controlling for attending a high school in Hinds County)	(4) (Including School Fixed Effects)
Adult Criminal Justice System				
Black	5.278*** (0.940)	3.767*** (0.686)	3.956*** (0.730)	3.933*** (0.729)
Male	3.159*** (0.224)	2.354*** (0.177)	2.349*** (0.178)	2.362*** (0.179)
Years Actively Enrolled Prior to 8 th Grade		1.079 (0.0447)	1.062 (0.0441)	1.058 (0.0442)
Failed Grade		1.451*** (0.121)	1.326*** (0.112)	1.307** (0.111)
Special Education		1.501** (0.207)	1.352* (0.189)	1.339* (0.188)
Dropout		1.527*** (0.131)	1.487*** (0.128)	1.488*** (0.128)
Suspended		0.661 (0.163)	0.646 (0.161)	0.672 (0.168)
Chronically Absent		2.051*** (0.188)	2.033*** (0.188)	2.039*** (0.189)
Juvenile Justice System		3.403*** (0.252)	3.372*** (0.252)	3.322*** (0.251)
Chronically Absent before 8 th Grade		1.287*** (0.0948)	1.213** (0.0910)	1.214** (0.0911)
Chronically Absent in 8 th Grade		0.830 (0.0969)	0.815 (0.0958)	0.819 (0.0963)
Withdraw in 8 th Grade		1.076 (0.106)	1.038 (0.103)	1.047 (0.104)
Low MCT Math Score in 8 th Grade		1.331 (0.305)	1.328 (0.306)	1.329 (0.306)
Low MCT Language Score in 8 th Grade		0.938 (0.224)	0.934 (0.224)	0.941 (0.226)
Original Enrollment in Hinds County			0.986 (0.0855)	1.186 (0.133)
Constant	0.00533*** (0.000978)	0.00541*** (0.00579)	0.00585*** (0.00629)	0.00457*** (0.00497)
N	22767	22767	22767	22767

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses **p<0.05, ***p<0.01, ****p<0.001"

Table 26: Logistic Regression Results of 8th—9th Grade Cohort: Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime in the Adult Criminal Justice System

	(1) Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime	(2) Committing a Serious Crime	(3) Committing a Very Serious Crime	(4) (Including School Fixed Effects)
Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime				
Black	5.330*** (1.249)	3.245*** (0.784)	3.222*** (0.787)	3.164*** (0.778)
Male	22.86*** (4.427)	16.43*** (3.223)	16.45*** (3.230)	16.56*** (3.253)
Years Actively Enrolled Prior to 5 th Grade		1.087 (0.0570)	1.054 (0.0561)	1.045 (0.0560)
Failed Grade		1.746*** (0.210)	1.543*** (0.191)	1.503** (0.187)
Special Education		1.797*** (0.291)	1.613** (0.268)	1.595** (0.267)
Dropout		1.477*** (0.157)	1.423** (0.153)	1.423** (0.154)
Suspended		0.744 (0.210)	0.858 (0.245)	0.962 (0.278)
Chronically Absent		3.224*** (0.468)	3.305*** (0.484)	3.329*** (0.489)
Juvenile Justice System		1.362** (0.134)	1.262* (0.128)	1.266* (0.128)
Chronically Absent before 5 th Grade		4.351*** (0.413)	3.988*** (0.386)	3.826*** (0.374)
Chronically Absent in 5 th Grade		0.728* (0.109)	0.727* (0.110)	0.733* (0.111)
Withdraw in 5 th Grade		0.919 (0.120)	0.910 (0.120)	0.917 (0.122)
Low MCT Math Score in 5 th Grade		1.258 (0.336)	1.271 (0.343)	1.264 (0.341)
Low MCT Language Score in 5 th Grade		1.235 (0.326)	1.225 (0.327)	1.257 (0.337)
Original Enrollment in Hinds County			1.928*** (0.250)	2.878*** (0.532)
Constant	0.000528*** (0.000156)	0.000794*** (0.000900)	0.000455*** (0.000520)	0.000286*** (0.000336)
N	22767	22767	22767	22767

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses **p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001"

Table 27: Logistic Regression Results by Crime Type

	(1) Committing a Serious or Very Serious Crime	(2) Committing a Serious Crime	(3) Committing a Very Serious Crime
Black	0.998 (.175)	0.951 (.166)	1.265 (.454)
Male	13.33*** (.387)	9.678*** (.001)	12.58*** -4.332
Failed Grade	1.211* (.117)	1.216* (.113)	0.981 (.15)
Special Education	1.383* (.199)	1.277 (.168)	1.322 (.24)
Dropout	0.99 (.103)	0.994 (.0966)	1.085 (.157)
Chronically Absent	1.784*** (.192)	1.698*** (.178)	1.147 (.209)
Withdraw in 5 th Grade	0.683* (.131)	0.784 (.141)	0.905 (.246)
Low MCT Math Score in 5 th Grade	0.94 (.451)	0.474 (.205)	2.268 (.139)
Low MCT Language Score in 5 th Grade	2.383 (.324)	2.405 (.111)	0.513 (.296)
Withdraw in 8 th Grade	1.710*** (.225)	1.585*** (.193)	1.292 (.226)
Low MCT Math Score in 8 th Grade	0.961 (.194)	0.88 (.166)	1.078 (.291)
Low MCT Language Score in 8 th Grade	0.943 (.197)	0.842 (.163)	1.443 (.389)
Juvenile Justice System	1.557*** (.206)	1.667*** (.207)	0.681* (.132)
Original Enrollment in Hinds County	2.061*** (.224)	1.823*** (.242)	1.276 (.277)
Constant	0.0418*** (.0218)	0.0286*** (.0164)	0.0379*** (.0314)
N	3480	3480	3480

APPENDIX VII: QUANTITATIVE METHODS

Since this project was explicitly designed to compare information typically kept separate, it was necessary to exclude individuals who were not tracked in both datasets, i.e., older people who attended school before 2003 and those who never attended a public school in Mississippi. This latter group may include private school students.

We did not include data from the police departments of the smaller communities of Edwards, Utica, Bolton, Clinton, Byram, Terry, and Raymond. The combined population from those seven cities is only about 17% of Hinds County. Children from those communities may have been included in our data if they were arrested by the Jackson Police Department or the Hinds County Sheriff's Office, but our analysis was focused on the crime problem in Jackson, and less on the surrounding communities.

Generated Variables

Several pre-existing variables were combined to generate new variables used to group individuals into specific grade level cohorts. A small number of these variables were then also used in the analysis to control for various characteristics of the individuals. The initial dataset contained both a school district and school code for each individual. However, the school code was not unique to the specific district. A combined school district and school code was created by combining these two variables to more easily control for differences between schools. Using this variable, we created an indicator for students in the three Hinds County school districts (Hinds County School District, Jackson Public School District, and Clinton Public School District). We created variables indicating which high school in these three school districts the individual first attended by observing which school they attended in the first year we have data on the individual in 9th through 12th grade.

We simplified the race variable by extracting all individuals who self-identified as "black," and recoding the remaining individuals (originally broken out into white, Native American, Asian, Hawaiian, Hispanic, and multi-racial) as non-black.

The codes for special education and non-promotion were applied broadly; we looked at the data from all years and coded the students for these categories if they were ever flagged for special education or had been held back to repeat a grade. The non-promotion rates are reported cumulatively; between 8% and 10% of all students are held back in any given year. This is higher than the national average. But the probability of having been held back at least once grows with age, so that a 16-year-old has an even greater chance of being behind schedule. Students who were assigned a withdrawal code in any given year are flagged as having dropped out at least once during their academic career. A variable indicating a student had been suspended or expelled was created by analyzing the students' self-reported reasons for having dropped out. We report students absent at least 18 days in any year (10% of a complete school year) as having been "chronically absent."

The code for involvement in the adult criminal justice system was created by looking at arrests by both Jackson Police Department and the Hinds County Sheriff's Office. Any student arrested by either law enforcement agency, regardless of age at time of arrest, was flagged as being involved in the adult criminal justice system. Similarly, the variable indicating a student was involved in the juvenile justice system was created by looking at referral records of youth in the juvenile justice system.

Researchers chose to look further at the 5th and 8th grade cohorts as those are the bridge years into middle school and high school.

To analyze each grade level cohort, variables indicating a student withdrew during 5th or 8th grade, was chronically absent during 5th or 8th grade, was chronically absent prior to 5th or 8th grade, or had a low MCT math or language score in 5th or 8th grade were created. Students who could be seen actively enrolled and having met any of these criteria in the 5th or 8th grade were flagged in these indicators. An additional grade level variable indicating how many years of active prior enrollment can be observed for each student prior to 5th and prior to 8th grade was created by summing the number of active enrollment years a student had prior to their initial entry into either 5th or 8th grade.

Creating Grade Level Cohorts

Five distinct grade level cohorts were created for the analysis of these data. The cohorts

consisted of students who could be seen in 5th grade, students who could be seen in both 5th and 6th grade, students who could be seen in 6th through 8th grade, students who could be seen in 8th grade, and students who could be seen in 8th and 9th grade. One difficulty presented in the data was the way in which grade levels are coded for students in special education. It cannot be determined which specific grade level a student is enrolled in during a given year for a student who is in special education for their entire academic career. These students would have entered in the multi-grade level cohorts by having been enrolled in the grade level of elementary special education multiple times. These students, however, are not necessarily included in the 5th and 8th grade cohorts if they cannot be seen specifically enrolled in those grade levels.

APPENDIX VIII: QUALITATIVE METHODS

The team looked at all the data together, rather than categorizing it according to role (such as prisoner, family member, or guard) or location (such as prison, restitution center, or church). Most themes emerged across all categories. The only exceptions to this pattern were that themes relating to life “inside” (prison, restitution centers, or juvenile detention) were gleaned only from those participants with direct experience in those facilities.

Themes were selected based on several criteria: First, the theme had to shed light on the central topic of crime in Jackson. Second, it had to emerge across multiple participants. Third, it had to be brought up spontaneously by at least one participant: in other words, participants referred to the topic as they were answering other questions or telling stories about their lives. For example, participants were

not asked, “Was your family poor?” but poverty was mentioned repeatedly when participants were asked to describe their childhoods. Finally, all researchers had to agree that a theme was accurate and well-supported by the data; in particular, researchers who had not conducted a particular interview had to agree that data from that interview matched the theme.

Our interviewers took steps to limit potential bias in recording what was often intensely emotional and traumatic information. Interviewers listened as prisoners described dramatic, violent, tragic events, in which they had been victims, perpetrators, or both. Interviewers were aware that many interviewees would live the rest of their lives in prison. When data were coded, interviewers checked with each another to ensure that they gave equal treatment to all data instead of allowing the more dramatic portions to take precedence.