



Read More Our History

In 2013, E-SToPP formed an informal researcher-practitioner partnership with Positive Peer Leadership Mentoring (PPLM), a Miami-Dade Anti-Gang Strategy Initiative, housed in Miami-Dade's Juvenile Services Department. Since 2013, E-SToPP has facilitated weekly group-based PPLM sessions with incarcerated youth at both Miami-Dade's Regional Juvenile Detention Center and Turner Guilford Knight Correctional Center. During that time, over 1,000 incarcerated youth participated annually in PPLM sessions, producing over 50 youth-written newsletters, which were distributed in the facilities, emailed to listservs, and posted on E-SToPP's website (<https://www.e-stopp.org>). E-SToPP also recruited hundreds of PPLM volunteers by posting opportunities on E-SToPP's website as well as on college/university faculty and department websites, providing community members, professionals, and students from institutions of higher learning, including Florida International University, University of Miami, NOVA Southeastern University, and Barry University, opportunities to accrue community service, federal work study, pro bono, course credit internship, practicum, fellowship, and volunteer hours.

Since 2013, E-SToPP has engaged with the community, public school system, juvenile justice system, adult correctional system, business professionals, and local universities and colleges to both strengthen existing and develop new partnerships; and to gain perspective on existing reentry options for youth who are referred out of class, suspended, expelled, and/or incarcerated. E-SToPP has sought out and submitted research-informed proposals and grants to support its efforts toward developing and implementing sustainable reentry mentoring (OJJDP PPLM Fatherhood Reentry Mentoring Program Proposal; PPLM Mentor-Mentee Support Manual), freedom school (Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools Proposal), transformative schooling (XQ E-SToPP Transformative High School), school-wide restorative justice (M-DCPS Restorative Justice Practices Pilot Program Proposal), and other trauma-informed and social justice-oriented initiatives that ensure racially equitable, transformative educational opportunities for marginalized youth.

E-SToPP also hosted two summer fellows from Southern Education Foundation's Leadership Initiative (SELI); organized volunteer cohorts and internships to co-facilitate weekly PPLM sessions with incarcerated youth more consistently (PPLM Transformative Lesson Plans); created an advanced clinic practicum agreement with FIU's clinical psychology department (FIU E-SToPP Advanced Clinical Practicum Agreement); facilitated PPLM orientations, and workshops at detention center and university settings (PPLM Orientation, Development, and Workshop Manuals); facilitated a PPLM Orientation Workshop hosted by Key Largo School; piloted a community-university-school collaborative summer institute for The Education Effect at FIU for 3 M-DCPS middle schools (The Leadership Empowerment Advocacy & Development [LEAD] Project Engagement Plan Summer Institute Development Manual) with a follow-up in-school pilot during Fall semester 2018 (CCC-YEP Pacing Guides); and collaborated on various university students' academic requirements related to the school-to-prison pipeline. During this time



period, E-SToPP developed and posted 22 ongoing PPLM and other social justice-oriented opportunities for involvement in its larger effort to eliminate systemic obstacles that disproportionately funnel Black and Brown youth into the school-to-prison pipeline (PPLM Volunteer Applications).

From 2013-2020 (pre-pandemic), E-SToPP received positive feedback and joy for years from incarcerated youth who participated in PPLM sessions when we shared our mission and vision of mentoring them back to their home public school, teaching existing schools how to welcome them back, and even building E-SToPP Schools for them to attend upon their release from the juvenile justice system. However, we discovered on a DJJ Case Flow Diagram (during a local reentry team meeting we requested so we could figure out how E-SToPP fits into the DJJ model) that there are no reentry options to public school available for youth involved in the school-to-prison pipeline. This translated to the realization that no reentry [navigation route] policies or mandates exist that would dictate the need to prepare schools, youth, families, and other stakeholders in how to successfully and sustainably welcome youth who have been isolated—often for years from racially equitable, transformative schooling and education opportunities—and are returning from being referred out of class, suspended, expelled, and/or incarcerated. Additionally, parents and youth have no choices as far as problem-solving, repairing harm, getting an education, and which school to attend, once youth are referred out of class, suspended, expelled, taken into custody, incarcerated and so forth—basically, they are denied the right to an education based on the system’s policies and mandates regarding who gets to say in class or the school and who needs to be removed from class or the school.

Additionally, prosecutors were authorized to direct file youth (or detained in juvenile justice system) without judge’s review or approval—another denial of basic rights (see Miami Herald January 4, 2019 Op-ed; 2019 legislature will address bill again to keep youth out of adult prison; MH February 22, 2019 Op-ed Ruban Roberts President MD Branch of NAACP ‘The No Place for Our Child Coalition’ training about *adult jails are no place for children*). If youth is not direct filed or detained in the juvenile justice system, the youth is provided a diversion option (to where matters), and the case is closed. After studying the DJJ Case Flow Diagram, E-SToPP realized that in order for youth to avoid getting taken into custody (one of the entry points for the school-to-prison pipeline), youth would have to never get referred out of the classroom for *perceived misbehavior* in the first place. This led us back to the basic premise of E-SToPP’s mission and vision—get at the root of the school-to-prison pipeline issue (i.e., preventing, avoiding, and abolishing exclusionary school discipline) through collaborative professional development, relationship building, teaching and learning in caring classrooms, and problem solving among all stakeholders, especially the children and families, as a basic right and the right and positive thing to do to achieve sustainable, racially equitable, transformative education and schooling for all!