

Disproportionate Incarceration CHRE Suggestions

Original Unit at:

<https://www.sabes.org/content/disproportionate-incarceration-unit-plan>

Disproportionate Incarceration: Graphing, Proportional Reasoning, and Social Justice Math Instructional Unit

Several years ago, my law office was fighting for the release of a black man who had been condemned, at the age of 16, to die in prison. Matthew was one of 62 Louisiana children sentenced to life imprisonment without parole for nonhomicide offenses. But a case I'd argued at the Supreme Court was part of a 2010 ruling that banned such sentences for juveniles, making our clients eligible for release.

Some had been in prison for nearly 50 years. Almost all had been sent to Angola, a penitentiary considered one of America's most violent and abusive. Angola is immense, larger than Manhattan, covering land once occupied by slave plantations. Our clients there worked in fields under the supervision of horse-riding, shotgun-toting guards who forced them to pick crops, including cotton. Their disciplinary records show that if they refused to pick cotton — or failed to pick it fast enough — they could be punished with time in "the hole," where food was restricted and inmates were sometimes tear-gassed. Still, some black prisoners, including Matthew, considered the despair of the hole preferable to the unbearable degradation of being forced to pick cotton on a plantation at the end of the 20th century. I was fearful that such clients would be denied parole based on their disciplinary records.

Reading selected from "Prisons and Justice?" issue of *The Change Agent* <https://changeagent.nelrc.org/issues/issue-40/>

<https://slowrevealgraphs.com/special-collection-incarceration-in-the-us/>

The US Prison system is broken.

- Over 2.2 million people are currently in US jails or prisons. That's greater than the population of New Mexico.
- The US has both the highest prison population in the world, as well as the highest rate of incarceration.
- The average annual cost to incarcerate one inmate in federal prison is about \$29,000 — more than the average yearly tuition at a state university.
- The U.S. prison population has more than quadrupled since the early 1980s: when mandatory minimum sentencing laws for drugs went into effect.
- Sentencing policies, implicit racial bias, and socioeconomic inequity contribute to racial disparities at every level of the criminal justice system.

Group	Rate (1 in ...)
All Men	1 in 9
White Men	1 in 17
Black Men	1 in 3
Latino Men	1 in 6
All Women	1 in 56
White Women	1 in 111
Black Women	1 in 18
Latina Women	1 in 45

LETTER FROM BIRMINGHAM CITY JAIL

by Martin Luther King Jr.

74% of people held by jails are not convicted of any crime

PRISON

In Jails 746,000

Identity: Students will explore what it means to be socially just and how they have experienced social justice and injustice.

Skill: Students will understand relationships collected from graphs; Communicate relationships using graphs; Develop and/or strengthen multiplicative reasoning and connect it to visual representations

Intellect: Students will learn what is justice and what quantitative data tells and does not tell. **Criticality:** Students will learn about the disparities of that exist in the incarceration system. **Joy:** Students will connect *real* justice to joy.