



**MICHAEL BENNET**  
U.S. SENATOR *for* COLORADO

## **Restorative Practices in Schools Act of 2022**

U.S. Senator Michael Bennet

The school-to-prison pipeline funnels students—especially students of color and students with disabilities—out of school and toward the juvenile and criminal justice systems, denying them an education and limiting their future employment opportunities. Overly harsh school discipline policies, the rise of zero-tolerance policies in schools, and racial and ethnic bias all contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. Restorative practices acknowledge and honor the dignity of students. They are proactive strategies to prevent misbehavior by improving school climate, building community, and strengthening relationships. The Restorative Practices in Schools Act of 2022 offers an opportunity to stop the school-to-prison pipeline by reducing out-of-school suspensions and limiting students’ risk of dropout and arrest.

The Restorative Practices in Schools Act would:

- Establish competitive grants to help schools and districts build safe, inclusive learning environments and encourage the use of restorative practices in place of overly harsh punitive discipline policies, like “zero-tolerance,” which often results in disproportionate punishment for minor infractions. These practices include hiring staff to lead restorative practices; implementing restorative practice trainings; and funding antiracist and culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum, material development, and training. The bill also establishes targeted school and student safety standards which schools must meet before receiving a grant.
- Prioritize schools and eligible applicants with the greatest demonstrated need. This includes schools that are disproportionately impacted by juvenile and criminal justice systems, and serve high-poverty communities and/or rural communities.
- Direct the Government Accountability Office to study the school-to-prison-pipeline and research the extent to which evidence-based interventions--such as restorative practices--can improve student achievement and enhance public safety and student well-being.
- Establish a data-tracking system at the Department of Education to highlight strong examples of restorative practices in schools and establish guidance on school discipline practices that can dramatically reduce the number of children who are funneled into the school-to-prison pipeline.

The National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and People for the American Way have endorsed the bill.