



A BIT OF PERSPECTIVE

Educators

The Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance talked with educators around Connecticut. We asked them: What wasn't in the film that audiences should know?

1. When school budgets get squeezed, it cuts down on the time adults have to interact with kids.

Staff cuts mean larger class sizes, which can make it harder for a teacher to find the time to talk with a child about personal or social issues. Often the positions that are cut are professionals who would help struggling students: reading specialists, social workers, school psychologists, guidance counselors.

2. Schools are judged on test scores, period.

Because scores on Mastery and CAPT tests affect funding, schools are sharply focused on developing the knowledge and skills those tests measure. That leaves little time for things like building a classroom community. "Sadly, we end up teaching *subjects*, not *children*," said one teacher.

3. Teachers need back up from parents.

Several expressed frustration that when they tried to address truancy with their students' families, some parents were not receptive and didn't stress good school attendance or achievement with their children.

4. Schools need to be connected to resources, like those in the film, that help kids.

Unfortunately, programs don't always have enough slots to meet the need. Or they don't exist in every community. Or the process of getting a kid help can be so involved that the better part of a school year can slip away before a problem is addressed.

5. Many teachers don't have training in classroom management.

Continuing education tends to focus on academic subjects, not on the critical work of engaging kids in learning, things like classroom management, conflict resolution and de-escalation. Those who do get this training often do not get enough.

6. The juvenile justice system needs to coordinate better with schools.

Kids continue to attend school in the system, but they may be working on material that has nothing to do with what was being taught back in their home school. Teachers discussed having trouble getting information on what kids learned while they were confined.