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OUR VIEW ON THE ISSUE

Last year, when a sheriff's deputy, who was assigned to Spring Valley High School in Columbia, South Carolina, dragged a 16-year-old female student from her desk (photo right), debate on social media immediately erupted about zero tolerance in the public education system. Like you, we were disturbed by both the overreporting of seeing a young Black girl's body attacked and the underreporting of incidents of Black girls' school suspensions, which Morris brilliantly documents in *Pushout*. In a moment when people have turned to Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to celebrate #BlackGirlMagic, we are seeing fewer and fewer portraits of real-life young, gifted and Black girls across the media spectrum. In fact, we celebrate those young people who are reclaiming their own images and embracing the Black Girl Attitude that is an intrinsic part of their identity. It is how we have survived through generations of oppression and adversity against insurmountable odds.



to establish a uniform stu-
presentation. In a society so
ed by race and gender, we all
with implicit biases that shape
leas, stereotypes and norms
ack femininity. Our perceptions
erence can sometimes fuel
conscious biases that inform our
conscious reactions to individu-
ed upon latent, involuntary
out race, gender, sexuality
aspects of identity. This is
nt because, well, educators
le. It's unreasonable to think
y are not impacted by the
of negative images associ-
Black female identity in
lar consciousness. Certain
interactions offer evidence
is the case with many
ies offered by the girls
women in this book—but
e it at a structural level.
a school's proportion

of students of color, the higher the
likelihood that punitive exclusionary
discipline will be used in response to
student behaviors deemed disruptive
and problematic. It's unlikely that
administrators of these schools are
intentionally of the mind to punish
youth of color more than their
White counterparts. But punitive
responses to student behaviors are
especially prevalent in schools where
principals and other school leaders
believe that "frequent punishments
helped to improve behavior." And
these leaders are disproportionately
found in schools with high numbers
of students of color. Their presence
there is not an accident. □

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