

Lifting the Bar

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Character Lab

From Juvenile Detention...



To School



15-Month Development Process



Goals

- To normalize challenges in the transition back to school but represent improvement as possible
- To describe how students can achieve this growth
 - By thinking about their values, and what they would like to achieve in school
 - By developing positive relationships with adults in school who can help them make progress toward these goals

Delivery

- A few days after reentry
- One-on-one session with an adult in a quiet location in their school
 - Interactive
 - About 45-minutes

It's Hard At First

What Older Students Shared

To begin, we will share what older students told us.

Of course, students have many different experiences coming back from Juvenile Detention. These stories focus on some of the common challenges students experienced and how they responded to them.

So far, we've learned **three main things**:

1. Students said that coming back to school was hard at first. For example:

- *Students worried about getting in trouble again.*
- *They worried about being behind on schoolwork.*
- *Sometimes they worried that teachers and other students would treat them badly.*
- *Some students felt embarrassed about wearing a GPS tracker on their ankle.*

It Gets Better With Time

2. Students said that their experience in school got better with time.

- *Students were able to develop positive relationships with teachers and other adults in school.*
- *Students made progress on their schoolwork.*
- *Students were able to get involved in activities and groups they valued.*
- *Students felt confident they were making progress on things that mattered to them.*

By Thinking About What's Important to You

3. Students' experience in school got better in two ways:

a. One way was that students said it helped to think about what was important to them personally: *What kind of person they wanted to be in school and after, what kind of difference they wanted to make for their families and their community, and how they can grow into that kind of person.*

What's important to you? Below are some ideas from other students. Please circle 1 to 3 things.

- *Be a good role model for my younger brother or sister*
- *Learn skills that could help me get a good job*
- *Make my parents proud of me*
- *Try my best in school*
- *Prepare myself for college*
- *Help support my family*
- *Use art or music as a way to express myself*
- *Have good relationships with people*
- Other: _____

Pick one you circled above. Tell us why this is important to you.

By Building Better Relationships with Adults in School

b. A second way was that students said it helped to get to know teachers and other adults in school better. This took time and persistence, but reaching out and talking more with adults helped students get started, and make progress toward the things that were important to them.

Students said that:

- *They talked more with teachers and other adults about what mattered to them.*
- *As they developed stronger relationships with adults in school, they felt respected.*
- *These relationships helped them get what they wanted out of school.*

Intervention Story #3

“I used to think a lot in Juve, about how things seemed really difficult for kids like me. After I got back home, I thought about it even more because I could see it happening all around me, like people not able to get jobs or dropping out of school, or all of the overdue bills we got in the mail at home. It seemed like nothing was going to change.

One day, they cut our electricity, so my alarm didn't go off and I overslept. When I finally got to school, my teacher yelled at me for not getting there until the end of second period. That pissed me off because it wasn't my fault. On the way to my next class some kid bumped into me. I yelled at him to watch where he was going. He yelled something back. Before I could respond, Ms. J., who people said was a mean teacher, came between us and told us to cut it out. When I went to my locker, Ms. J. pulled me aside and asked if I was OK. I just said, “Whatever!” and slammed my locker and walked away.

Later that night, I thought about how I blew off Ms. J. She seemed to know something was wrong, and cared how I felt. I've been sent to the office for less. So the next day, when I saw her in the hallway, I thanked her for not sending me to the office. She said that I didn't have to explain what was wrong, she knows things can be tough. Later she said if I was ever having a bad day and wanted to come to her classroom during free periods to calm down, I was welcome.

I thought that was pretty cool of her. I liked how she didn't get all in my business. I had never thought of her as a “cool teacher” before, but then I knew she was willing to listen. Sometimes I did go to her room when I was upset, just to put my head down for a little while. And sometimes I talked to her about what I was going through. It really made a difference knowing she had my back. And it made me see that there are a lot of teachers in school who want to help. The world seems difficult sometimes, but things seem a lot more doable knowing there are people who have your back. It helped me feel more in control.”

- 9th grade student, class of 2020

P03: Scared

Lastly, we would like to ask you a few questions about your own plans for the transition.

Who is an adult in school you would like to get to know better, for instance, someone you do not know well yet?

Examples: a specific teacher, coach, counselor, or other adult in school

Job (e.g., math teacher, coach): Name:

Example: Assistant Principal Mrs. Johnson

1. **Ms. [last name] because I’m far behind in that class**
2. _____

What would you like one of these adults to know about you?

1. What would you like your teacher to know about who you are as a person and what is important to you? Write 1-2 things.

I’m a serious person about my school and graduating and play football, but I just have a problem catching up fast.

2. What would you like your teacher to know about your goals in school? Write 1-2 things.

I want to have all A’s or B’s and I want to graduate and play college football

3. What would you like your teacher to know about what is difficult for you in school that you would like to improve, so they can help? Write 1-2 things.

I would like to help myself and get help from other people by understanding it one by one and growing slowly through the process.

Interviewer Script

We may be able to share some of your thoughts with one of the adults you selected. This way, they will understand you a little better, and can help you in your transition back to school. If you don’t want your thoughts shared with one of the teachers you selected, please let us know.

Thank you very much for your help. Your contribution, and those of other students, will help future students succeed in coming back to school in Oakland from the Juvenile Detention system.

| Who is an adult in school you would like to get to know better...? | What would you like your teacher to know about who you are as a person and what is important to you? Write 1-2 things. | What would you like your teacher to know about your goals in school? Write 1-2 things. | What would you like your teacher to know about what is difficult for you in school that you would like to improve, so they can help? Write 1-2 things. |
|--|--|--|--|
| 1. 6th grade math teacher - Ms. [last name] | to know I'm a good kid and likes to learn new things and like to have fun and I like talkin alot. | one is to graduate from middle school two is to not have any problems with no one | one is turning in my homework two is wearing uniform or sleeping in class |
| 1. 10th grade counselor (Ms. [last name]) | I would want my councelor to know that im really trying to work and start doing good things to help me achieve my goals. | I would want all of my teachers to know that I would need help getting a 3.5 GPA. Another thing is i wanna graduate on Honor roll. | I would want them to help me stay focused in and out of class. Another thing is that i wanna be an A+ student in Algebra. |
| 1. Teacher - Mr. [last name] | want them to know that I care about make people happy. and that I respect them | Want them to know everything about my goals in life. I want them to know I'm for real | How bad I stink at read. How bad I am at computation |
| none | I have a bad attitude and I get bored easily | Try to stay in class. | I need more 1 on 1 time with the teacher because I don't learn as fast as other kids. |

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Key Elements

- 1. Asserts the student has taken steps to improve their transition
- 2. Emphasizes the importance of a positive relationship with an adult for children’s development
- 3. Says that the student chose the specific adult
- 4. Anticipates and normalizes difficulties in the transition
- 5. Encourages adults to broker positive relationships with other adults
- 6. Encourages prompt initiation of the relationship
- 7. Assumes and elicits good intentions, skills, and professionalism



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UNIVERSITY

Dear [Mr./Ms. teacher last name],

We hope that your school year is going well.

Your student, [student full name], decided to participate in a program to improve his/her transition back to school from the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC). As part of this program, students have the opportunity to identify an adult in school whom they would like to be a partner for them in this transition. As you know, one of the most important factors in any student’s development is having a trusting and positive relationship with an adult in school.

[student first name] would like for you to be this adult for them.

The transition back to school from the JJC is difficult for many students. Some days will be easier and some days will be harder.

We hope that you will be able to be there for this student and to help him/her grow and overcome the challenges that s/he faces. We also hope that a strong relationship with you will help [student first name] develop better relationships with other teachers and have a better school experience as a whole.

As part of our process, we asked [student first name] what s/he would like you to know about him/herself. Here is what s/he said:

- I’m a serious person about my school and graduating and play football, but I just have problem catching up fast
- I want to have all A’s or B’s and I want to graduate and play college football
- I would like to help myself and get help from other people by understanding it one by one and growing slowly through the process

We encourage you to reach out and talk to him/her within the next week. For example, you could talk with him/her about some of these things that are important to him, some of his/her goals in school, and/or ways that you could be helpful to him/her during this transition.

The first few weeks back are important to a successful transition, so we hope you are able to reach out and talk with [student first name] soon.

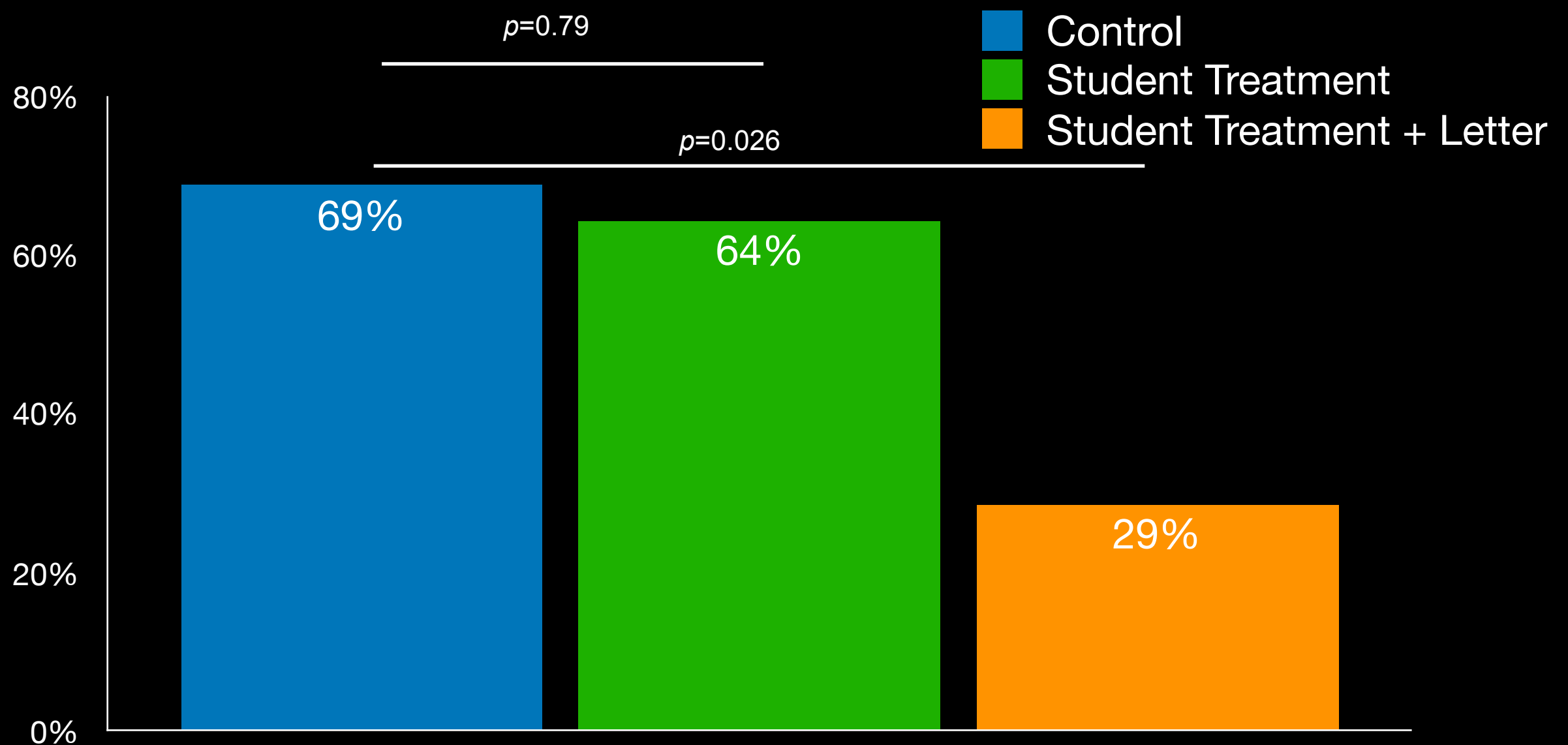
At the end of the day, teachers like you are on the front lines and are the most important people for the success of [student first name] and all your students. Thank you for your work.

If you have any questions, please contact the Research Coordinator, [research staff name], at [email@stanford.edu].

Sincerely,
The Stanford University Lifting the Bar Project

Recidivism to Juvenile Detention

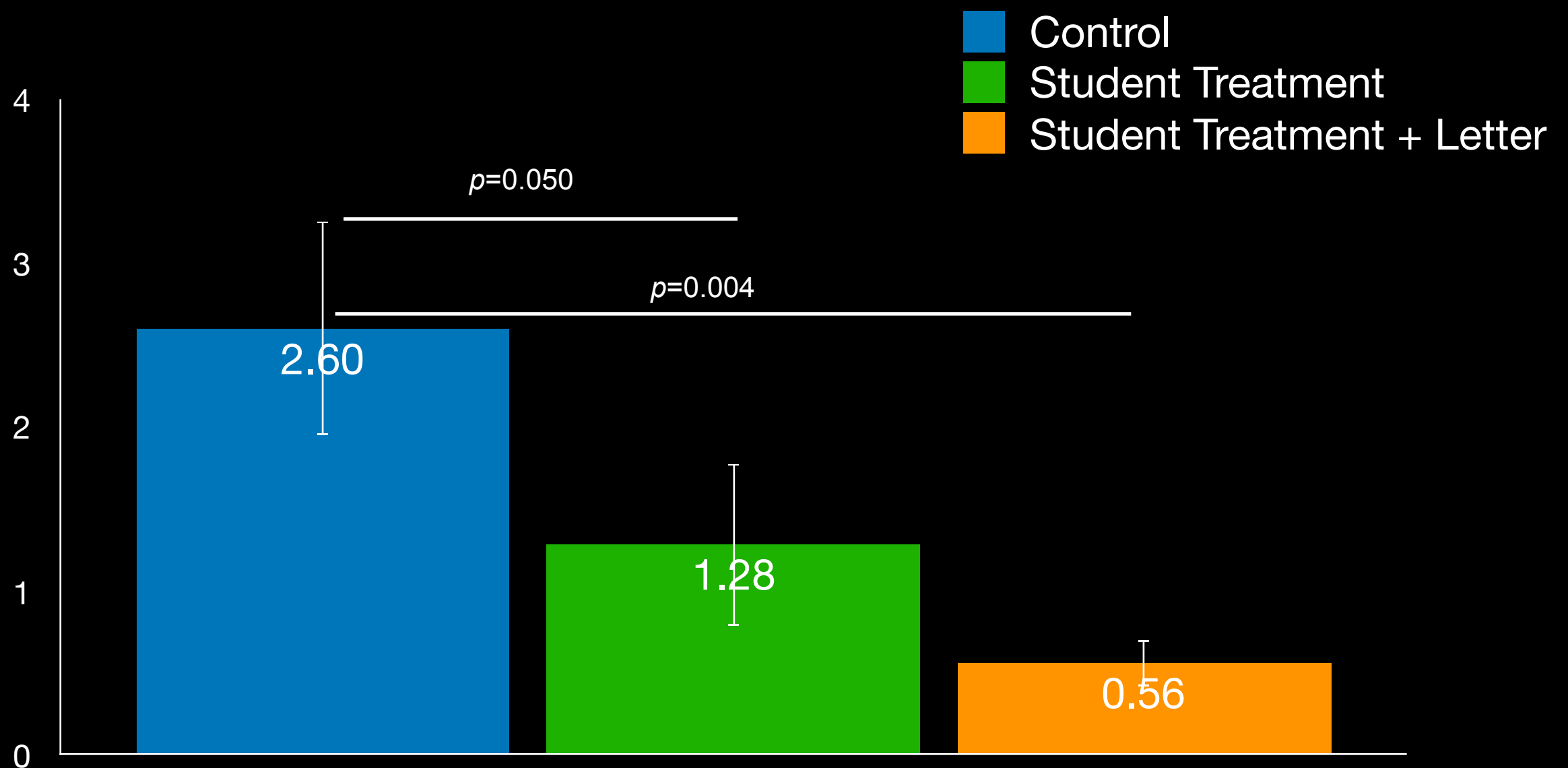
In Term of Release or Next Term, Official Juvenile Detention Data



Controls for age
N=44; robust to alternative models

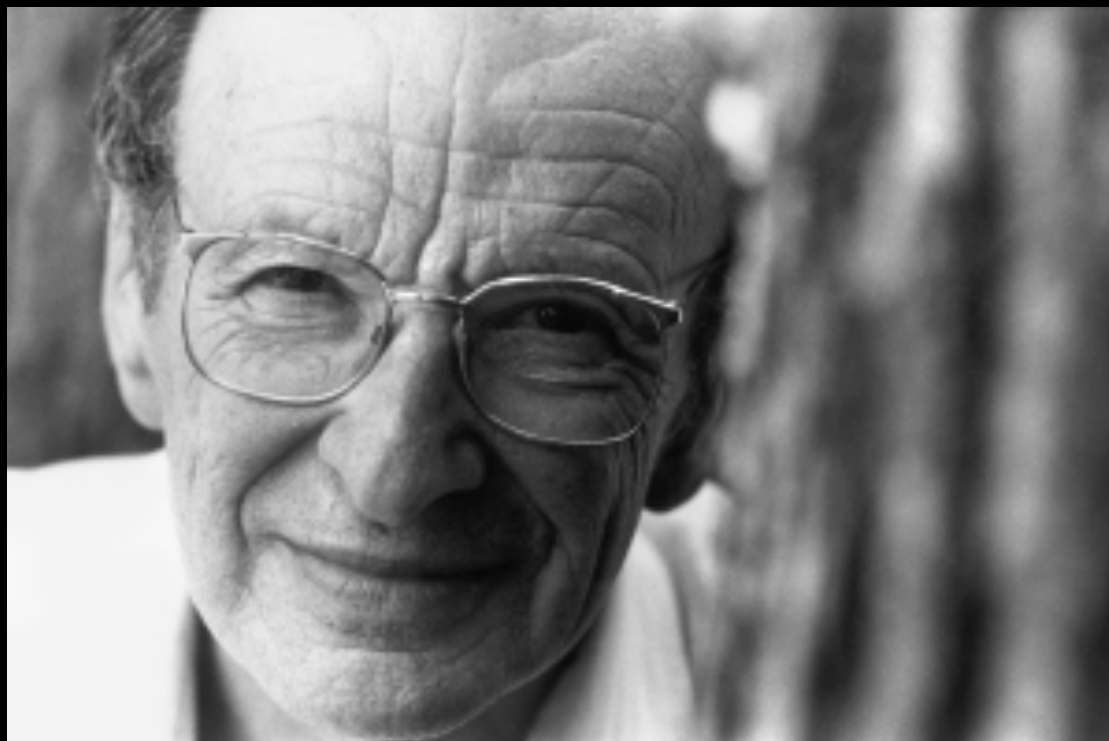
Discipline Citations Per Term

In Term of Release and Next Term, Official School Records



Controls for age, citations in term prior to detention, mother's education; IT personality
 $N=37$; robust to alternative models

Error bars represent 95% CIs



In order to develop normally, a child requires activity with one or more adults who have an irrational emotional relationship with the child. Somebody's got to be crazy about that kid. That's number one, first, last, and always.

- Urie Bronfenbrenner
Co-founder of Head Start