

Connecticut School-Based  
Diversion Initiative

# Enhancing Supports to Reduce School-Based Arrests

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# Overview

- Background
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- School-Based Arrest in the News
- School-Based Diversion Initiative
- Restorative Practices in SBDI Schools
- Next Steps

# Background

Fewer juvenile court referrals, *proportion* from schools continues to be high

- 18.6% of all CT juvenile court referrals in 11-12; 14% in 12-13; 10% in 13-14, 20% in 14-15

High rates of unmet mental health needs and academic risk among youth who are arrested or expelled

- 20% of children meet criteria for MH diagnosis (160,000 youth in CT)
- Rates are 65-70% among youth in juvenile detention
- 80-90% in detention w/ significant trauma exposure
- Students arrested are 2x as likely not to graduate; increases to 4x if processed through court

# Background and Statistics

- School arrest, expulsion, and suspension disproportionately affects students of color and students with disabilities
- Influence of “zero tolerance policies,” “exclusionary discipline,” “school pushout,” “school to prison pipeline,” and role of law enforcement in schools
  - Presence of law enforcement in schools rose 37% from 1997-2007
  - \$2.3 million allocated to fund SROs/security officers in 2013
  - Ongoing challenge of determining what constitutes criminal activities vs. matters of routine discipline

# Newtown Response

- **Renewed emphasis on school based mental health and school safety**
  - Creation of Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety
    - Gun Violence Prevention Working Group
    - School Security Working Group
    - Mental Health Service Working Group
  - Creation of Sandy Hook Commission
  - PA 13-178 **An Act Concerning the Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health of Youths** signed into law in June 2013

**There are expanded opportunities in Connecticut for bridging the mental health, health, juvenile justice, and education systems**

- Reducing school-based arrests is one way to enter into this systems-level work

# Progress in Connecticut

There have been a number of recent improvements in the CT system, supported by a multi-pronged approach

CT's approaches were highlighted in a New York School Justice Summit publication ([www.school-justicesummit.org](http://www.school-justicesummit.org)) and *Family Court Review*

## Changes in CSSD Policies

- Changes to Juvenile Court Intake process (probation supervisors now can “send back” inappropriate court referrals)
- “Raise the Age” includes 16 and 17 year olds in the juvenile system
- New data collection practices to track school-based arrests

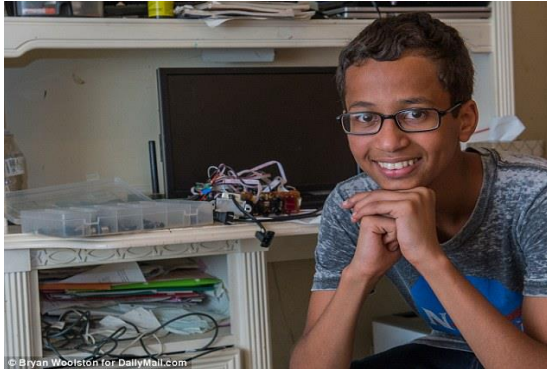
Systems coordination, public awareness, school policy consultation

- CT Juvenile Justice Alliance; OPM Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee; CT Voices for Children school disciplinary data
- Host forums; school-police MOA; analyze and report school discipline data

# School-Based Arrests in the News

## Muslim teen Ahmed Mohamed creates clock, shows teachers, gets arrested

*Posted: September 16, 2015, By Ashley Fantz, Steve Almasy and AnneClaire Stapleton, CNN*



## Police handcuff Georgia kindergartner for tantrum

*Posted: Apr 17, 2012, By Jeff Martin and Jeri Clausing, Associated Press*



## Kiera Wilmot, 16, Arrested And Expelled For Explosive 'Science Experiment'

*Posted: May 1, 2013 By Rebecca Klein, The Huffington Post*



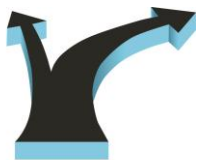
## Two Easton lacrosse players suspended under zero-tolerance policies

*Posted: May 10, 2011, By Liz Bowie, The Baltimore Sun*



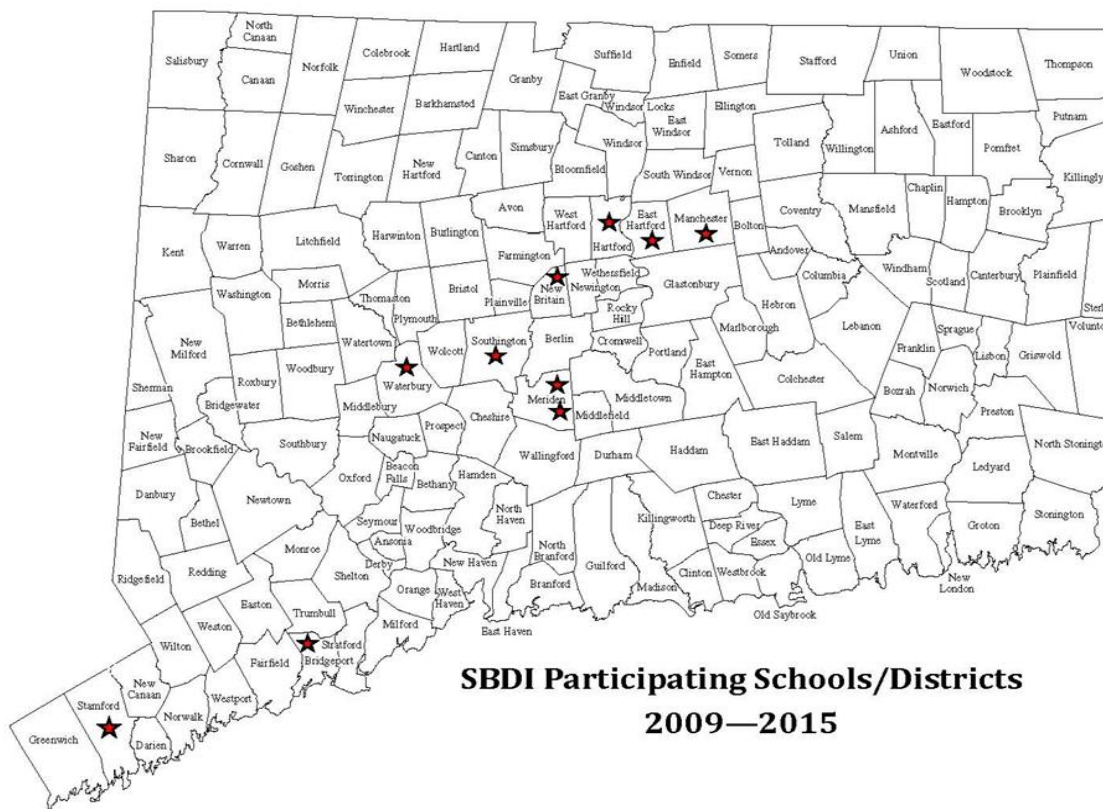
# Development of SBDI

- 2008: MacArthur Foundation Models for Change Mental Health Juvenile Justice Action Network facilitated by NCMHJJ
- 2009: Pilot SBDI in 3 schools
- 2010: State agencies sustained by sharing cost, blended funding with collaborative oversight
- 2013: Expanded partnership as evidence increased, tied into larger education and criminal justice reforms
- 2015: Statewide expansion through Governor's \$1M biennium





# Participating Schools



- Bridgeport Public Schools**
- Luis Muñoz Marin School
- Consolidated School District of New Britain**
- New Britain High School
- CT. Technical High School System**
- H.C Wilcox Technical High School (Meriden)
- East Hartford Public Schools**
- East Hartford High School
- East Hartford Middle School
- Hartford Public Schools**
- Academy of Engineering and Green Technology at Hartford Public High School
- Culinary Arts Academy at Weaver High School
- Sarah J. Rawson School
- Manchester Public Schools**
- Illing Middle School
- Manchester High School
- Meriden Public Schools**
- Francis T. Maloney High School
- Orville H. Platt High School
- Venture Academy
- Southington Public Schools**
- John F. Kennedy Middle School
- Joseph A. DePaolo Middle School
- Stamford Public Schools**
- Cloonan Middle School
- Westhill High School
- Waterbury Public Schools**
- Crosby High School
- Enlightenment School
- Wallace Middle School
- West Side Middle School



Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut, Inc.

# Goals of the School-Based Diversion Initiative

**Reduce** the number of discretionary arrests in school, reduce expulsions and out-of-school suspensions

**Build** knowledge and skills among teachers, school staff, and school resource officers to recognize and manage behavioral health crisis in the school, and access needed community resources

**Link** youth who are at-risk of arrest to appropriate school and community-based services and supports

# SBDI Core Components

## Professional Development

- Training and Workgroups

## Community Coalition Building

- Emergency Mobile Crisis Services
- Systems of Care

## Discipline Policy Consultation

- Graduated Response Model
- Restorative Practices

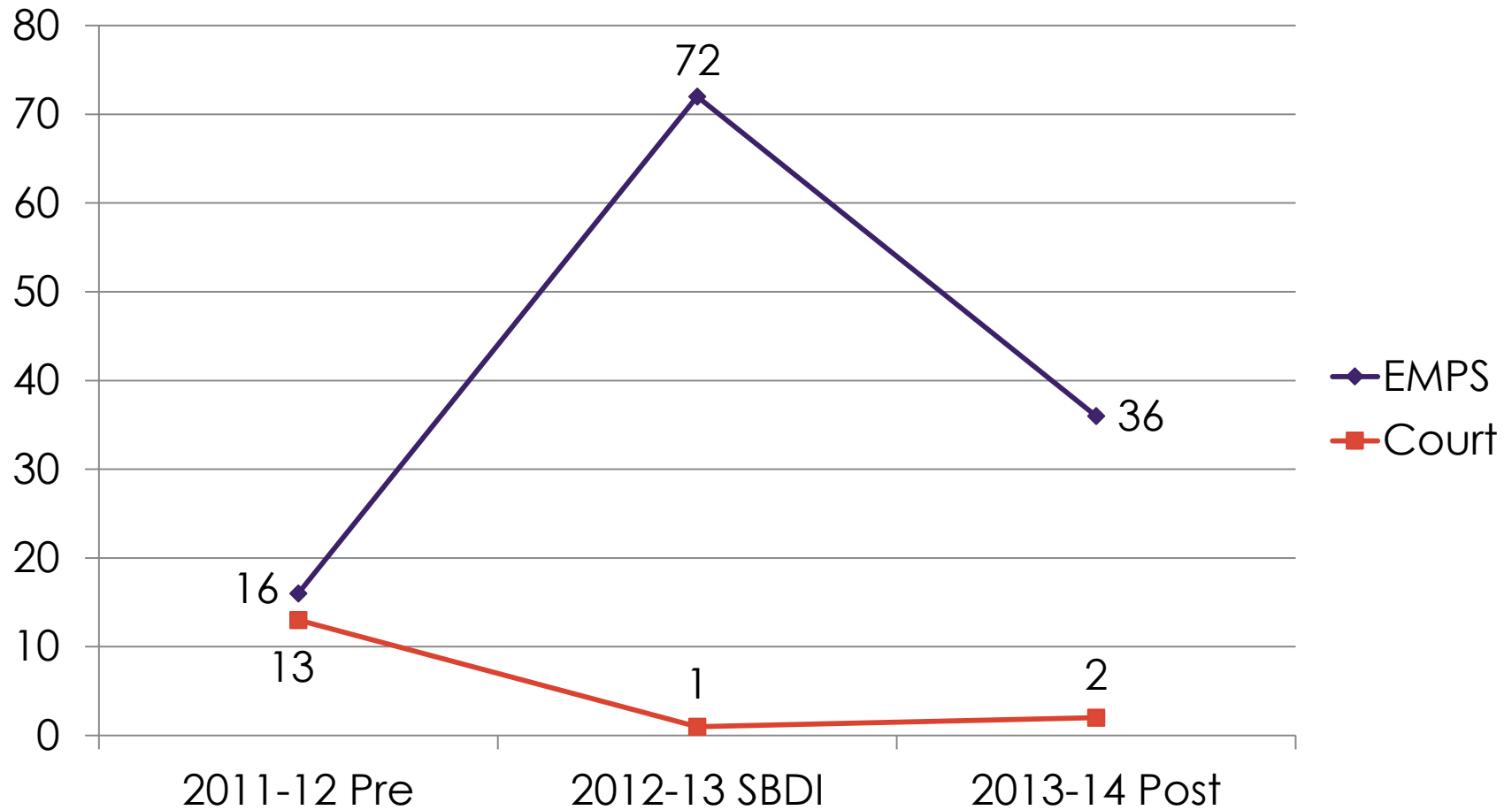
## Implementation Guided by SBDI Toolkit



# Restorative Practices in SBDI Schools

- **SBDI Model and Restorative Practices**
  - Creating a school climate that incorporates restorative practices as an alternatives to exclusionary discipline
- **Professional Development**
  - Circles
  - Restorative Conferencing
- **2015 School, Police, and Community Symposium**
  - How Restorative Practices can be used in schools and engage families

# Rawson Elementary Referral Data



# Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative

Referrals to Behavioral Health Service

UP 94%

Among the 18 schools that have participated in SBDI since 2010, those schools on average have reduced court referrals by 45% in their first year of participation, and have increased EMPS referrals by 94%.

School-Based Court Referrals

DOWN 45%

The Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative is helping transform school discipline and improve student outcomes. Instead of arresting and suspending children with behavior problems, SBDI schools are connecting them to community-based behavioral health services.

Learn more at:  
[www.chdi.org/sbdi](http://www.chdi.org/sbdi)  
and [www.ctsbdi.org](http://www.ctsbdi.org)

Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative

# Next Steps

- National Technical Assistance
- Governor's Second Chance Society
- Statewide Expansion
- Restorative Practices Network

# Next Steps

- Learning Community for Sustainability
- Youth and Family Engagement
- Community Engagement
- Law Enforcement Engagement

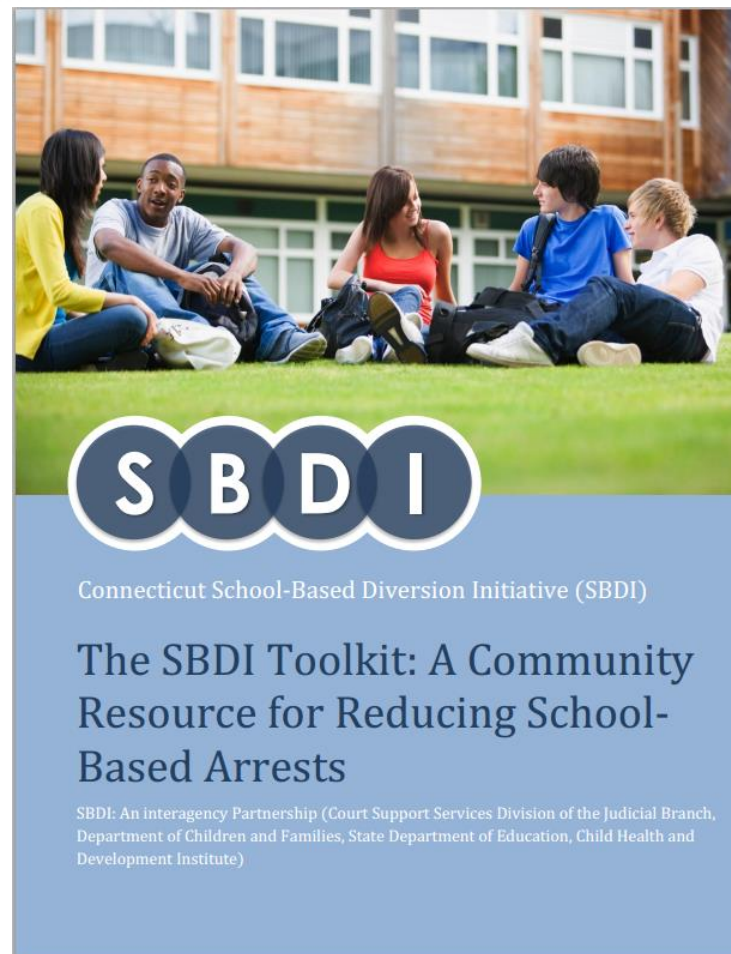


# SBDI Toolkit

Available for **free download**  
<http://www.chdi.org/SchoolToolkit>

We recognized a need to reach  
**more schools, more quickly**

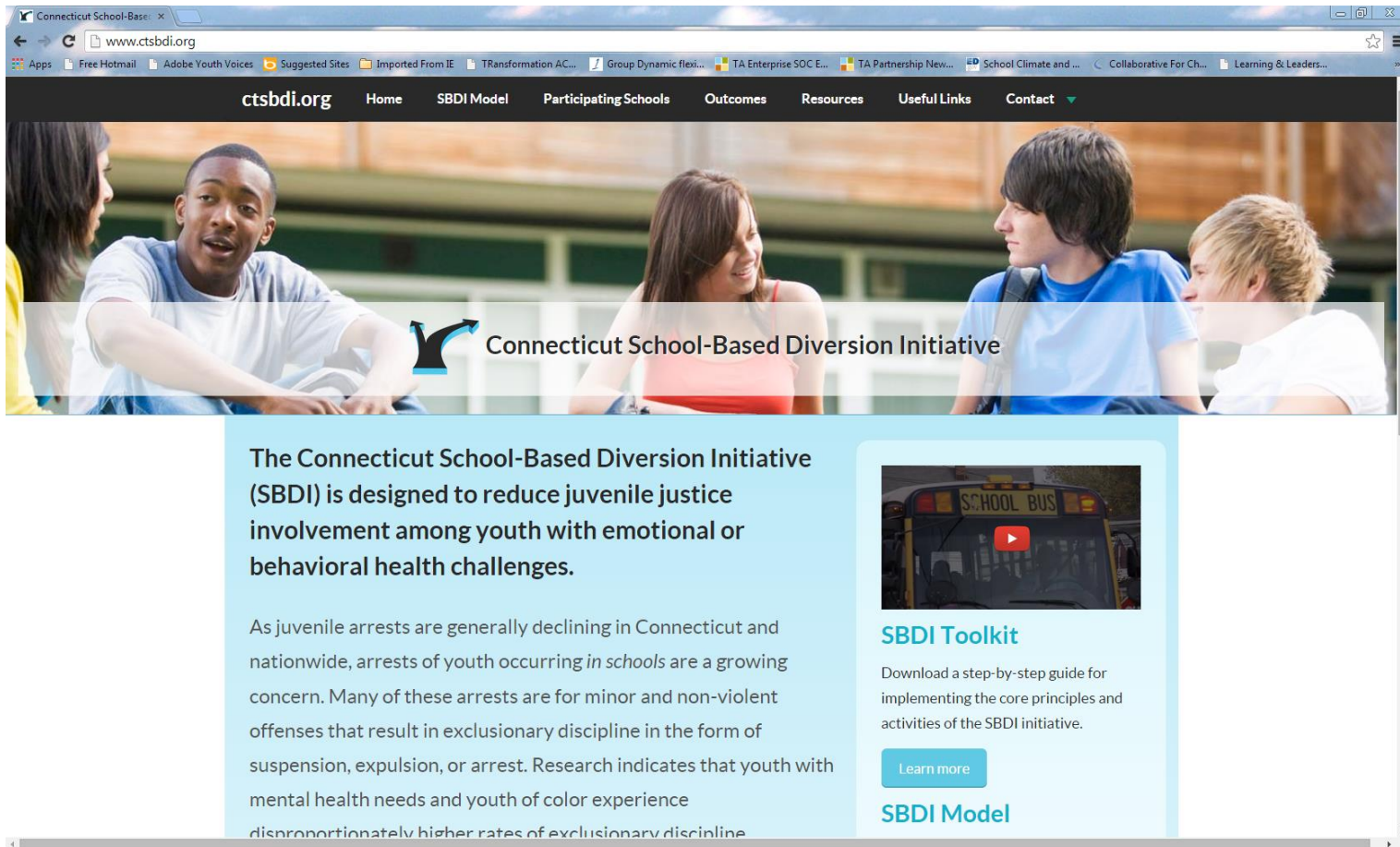
Toolkit was designed for a school  
to **self-implement some of the  
core principles and activities** of  
SBDI



# SBDI Toolkit's Contents

- **Self-assessment guide** and best practice information  
Immediate action steps
- **Support** for Data informed Decision-Making and Referral and Service Coordination
- **Appendices:** Sample MOA; Graduated Response Framework; Core Training Modules; Workgroup Activities; SBDI Application Form; List of Resources

# SBDI Website [www.ctsbdi.org](http://www.ctsbdi.org)



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) website. The browser address bar displays [www.ctsbdi.org](http://www.ctsbdi.org). The navigation menu includes links for Home, SBDI Model, Participating Schools, Outcomes, Resources, Useful Links, and Contact. The main banner features a photograph of four diverse students sitting at a table, with the text "Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative" overlaid. Below the banner, a light blue box contains the following text:

**The Connecticut School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) is designed to reduce juvenile justice involvement among youth with emotional or behavioral health challenges.**

As juvenile arrests are generally declining in Connecticut and nationwide, arrests of youth occurring *in schools* are a growing concern. Many of these arrests are for minor and non-violent offenses that result in exclusionary discipline in the form of suspension, expulsion, or arrest. Research indicates that youth with mental health needs and youth of color experience disproportionately higher rates of exclusionary discipline

To the right, there is a video player showing a school bus with a red play button overlay. Below the video player, the text reads:

**SBDI Toolkit**  
Download a step-by-step guide for implementing the core principles and activities of the SBDI initiative.  
[Learn more](#)

Below the video player, the text reads:

**SBDI Model**



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## Contact Us

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