



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 9, 2018

Confirmed: Obama-era School Discipline Policies Enabled Nikolas Cruz's Massacre

For months, critics have been accusing Obama-era mandates of stopping the Parkland school shooter from being treated as the threat he was, but the Broward School District deliberately misled parents, students, and the media by stating Cruz had “no connection” to the PROMISE Program, wherein students who commit crimes aren’t charged for the crimes if they do an alternate program. Yet not only was Cruz connected to it, he was supposed to have completed it.



Florida Congressman Marco Rubio had even questioned whether Cruz was involved in the program, only to be assured he was not. The latest revelation prompted Rubio to take to Twitter. “I was repeatedly told that the Parkland shooter was never in the Promise Program I was asking questions about. Now it turns out that in fact he was,” Rubio tweeted, along with the article from WJCT broadcasting station.

When parents of the victims learned of Cruz’s connection to the Promise Program, they were infuriated. Ryan Petty, the father of shooting victim Alaina Petty, called it a “stunning revelation,” and claimed that the district’s discipline policies created “perverse incentives” and “deadly chaos for our children, teachers & staff.”

When Nikolas Cruz opened fire on Valentine’s Day at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, killing 17 students and staff, the media immediately blamed guns and the NRA, despite evidence that there were numerous ignored red flags leading up to that fateful day, including indications of the shooter’s mental illness and violent tendencies. Newer revelations now show that Obama-era discipline directives may also be culpable for failing to prevent the shooting.

The *Washington Times* reports that the Parkland shooter had been referred to the PROMISE Program, described as a “progressive protocol emphasizing counseling over suspensions.” The program is designed to keep young people out of the “school-to-prison pipeline.” The program is considered controversial as it was designed to prevent “systemic racism” by limiting the arrests of minority students. WJCT reports that students who commit any of the 13 misdemeanors listed by the program are permitted to attend the program to avoid the criminal justice system. The program instead provides counseling and other means of support.

WJCT reports that the PROMISE Program was born after school officials noted that more students were arrested at school, on the bus, or at school-sponsored events in Broward County than in any other district in Florida. The district claimed that its “zero tolerance” policies were disproportionately affecting minority or disabled children, as well as LGBT students.

WJCT continues,



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At the urging of civil rights groups, [Superintendent Robert] Runcie led an effort to reform the district's discipline policies. Administrators partnered with a variety of entities involved with juvenile justice — including law enforcement, the state attorney's office, Judge Elijah Williams of the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit of Florida, the NAACP, and a county-based government agency that focuses on children's affairs. The group consulted with another judge who had seen some success dealing with similar problems in Georgia.

The committee met for a year with the stated purpose of eliminating the "school-to-prison pipeline." The result was PROMISE — an acronym that stands for Preventing Recidivism through Opportunities, Mentoring, Interventions, Supports and Education. It launched in 2013.

According to the *Washington Times*, the PROMISE Program was "at the forefront of a national movement that culminated in the Obama administration's 2014 directive on school discipline, which threatened school districts with civil rights investigations unless they reduced racial disparities in school discipline." (A larger percentage of minority kids got in trouble than white kids, so the system was deemed racist — overlooking any evidence of whether the kids were actually guilty of what they were accused of.)

More than 500 schools have enacted similar policies to avoid facing civil rights investigations, states Max Eden, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, forcing teachers and administrators to manipulate figures to avoid investigation. Eden contends that the discipline protocol created a "culture of fear" that compelled "educators to underreport serious offenses." He cites examples specifically related to Cruz, such as the death threats he made and weapons that he brought to school, for which there "appears to be no record," as evidence of the type of underreported offenses.

And beyond the controversy of the program itself, newly released documents now reveal that Cruz never even completed the program.

A referral was made while Cruz was in Westglades Middle School in 2013, after committing vandalism, two sources told WLRN. Cruz appeared for an intake interview one day after the incident occurred but did not complete the recommended three-day assignment.

While numerous mainstream media outlets claimed it was a lack of "common sense gun control" to blame for the Parkland shooting, *The New American* magazine had already made the connection to the agreement made between school administrators and law enforcement agencies. TNA's C. Mitchell Shaw [reported](#) on March 2 that despite all of Cruz's lengthy history of violence, threatening social-media posts, and multiple reports that described him as a potential "school shooter" to authorities, he never once was charged with a crime that might have prevented his purchase of the weapon that enabled him to execute the school massacre.

With confirmation that Cruz indeed was connected to the PROMISE program, Florida Governor Rick Scott is now calling for a complete review of the program, specifically its oversight and referral services. Unfortunately, it's far too late to save Cruz's 17 victims.

Image: Screenshots from [Broward County PROMISE program](#)



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