

RUNNING HEAD: Lifting the Bar

Lifting the Bar: A Relationship-Orienting Intervention Reduces Recidivism Among Children Reentering School from Juvenile Detention

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Abstract

When children return to school from juvenile detention they face a severe stigma. We developed a procedure to orient educators and students toward each other during this period as positive relationship partners. In Study 1, through a structured exercise, students in reentry powerfully articulated their prosocial hopes for school as well as challenges they faced to an educator of their choosing. In a preliminary field-trial ($N=47$), presenting this self-introduction to this educator in a 1-page letter via a third-party requesting the educator's help reduced recidivism to juvenile detention through the next semester from 69% to 29%. In pre-registered Study 2, the letter led experienced teachers ($N=349$) to express greater commitment to, anticipate more success for, and feel more love and respect for a student beginning reentry, potentially initiating a better trajectory. The results suggest how relationship-orienting procedures may sideline bias and make school more supportive for students facing stigma.

Statement of Relevance

Recent years have seen an explosion of research demonstrating that precise psychological interventions that address students' worries about belonging can help them succeed in school. However, the social environment that students enter can be a profound barrier to success. How can we encourage educators to better support students, especially students who face pervasive stigma? In contrast to past efforts to reduce bias through training programs, we sought to sideline bias by orienting teachers toward positive relationships with students. To do so, we created a procedure to elevate students' voices—an opportunity to articulate their positive and prosocial hopes and goals and the challenges they faced in introducing themselves directly to and requesting help from an educator of their choosing. In the face of one of the most severe stigmas in school, we show that this deeply asset-based approach can improve educators' initial response to students and, preliminarily, students' downstream outcomes.

Lifting the Bar: A Relationship-Orienting Intervention Prevents Recidivism Among Youth Reentering School from Juvenile Detention

Every year, tens-of-thousands of children, disproportionately Black, Latino, and Indigenous boys from lower social-class backgrounds, are incarcerated in juvenile-detention facilities (Sickmund & Puzzanchera, 2014). While much attention has been paid to the “school-to-prison pipeline,” as important is students’ return to mainstream schooling. Students in reentry experience severe rates of school dropout and recidivism (Kubek et al., 2020), harms that can be exacerbated by incarceration itself (Aizer & Doyle, 2013). If schools do not receive students in ways that help them reintegrate successfully, children may be unable to access the opportunities for growth and learning that schools are supposed to provide. Then, the disadvantages that led to incarceration can perpetuate harm into children’s adult lives—undermining educational attainment, civic and workforce participation, health, and well-being. The stakes could not be higher.

Students in reentry face a stigma as severe as any group in school (Greene et al, 2017; Pager et al., 2009; Shalaby, 2017). In the present research, we sought to create a procedure that could sideline the bias these students confront and thus foster a more supportive environment upon their return to school. First, we designed an opportunity for students to describe their positive sense of self, hopes, and goals as they began reentry. We examined whether this structured exercise could elicit from students a compelling self-representation to an educator of their choosing. Next, we delivered students’ self-introduction to this educator, elevating students’ voices and positive self-identity in a request for help. At a high-level, the intervention *orients* students and teachers toward positive relationships with each other, inviting each person to reflect on and become their best self in relation to one another. We examine whether this

approach would improve teachers' receptivity to students and students' fundamental outcomes in reentry.

Despite its significance, little past experimental research has explored the experience of youth in juvenile detention. Moreover, a "dearth of literature" (Kubek et al., 2020, p. 2) has evaluated school practices to support reentry. Indeed, research with this population is challenging for many reasons. Therefore, we base our literature review primarily on ethnographic studies, including our pilot work, and broader research examining psychological factors that contribute to conflict and school-discipline problems.

Children ensnared in the juvenile-justice system face many challenges. Many have experienced violence or trauma (Crosby, 2015), have corresponding mental-health difficulties (Grisso & Schwartz, 2000), and are behind academically (Hirschfield, 2014). Thus, there is not one problem but many. In this context, we focus on positive relationships children can form with adults. Such relationships serve many functions for children. One ethnography described the experience of "being known" by adults as "ordinary magic" for adolescents (Chhuon & Wallace, 2012, p. 394). The importance of positive teacher-student relationships and teachers' expectancies for students' success in general is well-established (Wentzel, 1997). Moreover, adult mentors seem to improve criminal-justice and academic outcomes for disadvantaged youth (Hanham & Tracey, 2017; Spencer et al., 2018; Tolan et al., 2013).

Teacher-student relationships readily become self-fulfilling as positive expectations and trust either build or erode (Raudenbush, 1984), particularly in contexts of stereotyping and stigma (Goyer et al., 2019; Okonofua et al., 2016b; Yeager et al., 2017). Thus, it is critical to begin relationships well. How can we help students and educators (teachers, counselors, administrators, coaches) establish a better trajectory from the outset of reentry?

Many people pursue careers in education because they aspire to support children (Johnson et al., 2012). Yet positive relationships may be compromised by negative stereotypes that label youth offenders and boys of color as violent and out-of-control (Shalaby, 2017). For students, stereotypes can give rise to mistrust and worries about belonging, and thus a vigilance to signs of disrespect or mistreatment from adults (Goyer et al., 2019). Indeed, our focus-group students with experience in juvenile detention expressed an abiding uncertainty about their relationships with adults in school and society broadly. Such concerns are not unfounded (Riddle & Sinclair, 2019). Well-controlled studies find that teachers judge a misbehaving child a “troublemaker” more quickly if that child is Black (than White), even when those misbehaviors are minor (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015). If minor misbehaviors lead to negative judgments of Black children generally, such behaviors in Black children with a history of incarceration certainly can (Greene et al, 2017; Pager et al., 2009). Over time, worries about mistreatment and social stereotypes can create toxic cycles between students and educators to both students’ and teachers’ detriment (Okonofua et al., 2016b).

Yet this process is not inevitable. Interventions that precisely target how students and teachers make sense of each other as their relationships begin show that improvement is possible. One 50-minute exercise to address students’ worries about belonging and relationships with teachers at the outset of 6th grade reduced disciplinary citations among Black boys through 12th grade by 65%, it seems by improving cycles of teacher-student interactions (Goyer et al., 2019; see also Borman et al., 2019).

A second intervention encouraged teachers to take an empathic- rather than a punitive-mindset toward misbehaving students. This 70-minute exercise halved suspensions among the 1,682 racially diverse middle-school students teachers taught over the school year (Okonofua et

al., 2016a). Of particular relevance, this “empathic-discipline” intervention was premised on the idea that, even as teachers are commonly exposed to a punitive model of school discipline (e.g., zero-tolerance policies), teachers also have access to and, indeed, prize an empathic model for interacting with students in difficulty (Johnson et al., 2012).

Likewise, we presume that, even as educators commonly have access to negative stereotypes about justice-involved youth and Black boys, they also have access to a positive model for interacting with children in difficulty—one in which they help a child recover from setbacks to grow and succeed. Thus, the primary goal of our intervention was not to overturn biases but to sideline them, and help educators apply instead a more positive existing model in welcoming a child in need to their class (Okonofua et al., 2020). The intervention was simple to implement yet precisely designed, timed, and targeted. Students reflected on their values and goals in school and identified and introduced themselves to an educator with whom they wished to build a stronger relationship—all in a 45-60-minute one-on-one session a few days after reentry. This educator then received the student’s self-introduction in a 1-page letter from our team requesting support.

Unlike past interventions, this approach focuses on students and educators simultaneously in an integrated manner. In reentry, youth have already been told that they do not belong, stereotypes are palpably on the table, and trust has been broken. Even if students approach an educator with a positive mindset, they may not be well-received. Thus, we aimed to support students’ belief in the value and possibility of cultivating positive relationships with educators *and* educators’ receptiveness to those efforts. We target the relationship, not either person alone.

Study 1 serves a dual role. First, within the student-treatment condition, it is a structured

qualitative study that examines the sense of self and positive values and goals that students can articulate as they begin reentry through the exercise we designed, including how children can present themselves to an educator who could help them overcome the challenges they face. Second, it is a small randomized intervention field-experiment providing a preliminary test of whether this self-introduction can improve students' fundamental outcomes—to stay in mainstream school and not recidivate to juvenile detention. Finally, Study 2 examines how this self-introduction shifts teachers' initial response to a student in reentry, potentially facilitating a better relationship.

Study 1: An Intervention Field-Experiment to Improve Reentry

Method

Participants and Design

Participants were 47 children in the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center returning to middle and high school in the Oakland Unified School District ($M_{age}=15.93$, $SD=1.26$, range: 13-17). Consistent with the juvenile-justice population in this community, most participants were boys (87%) and youth of color (98%), primarily African/African American (62%) or multi-racial African/African American and another group (21%). Most participants' mothers had no college experience (60%). Almost all were native English speakers (96%). For complete demographics as well as a comparison to all youth who transitioned from the Juvenile Justice Center to this district during the same period, see Table S1 (Supplementary Online Material-Reviewed). As this comparison reveals, the participant sample is broadly representative but slightly older and had stayed somewhat longer in custody as compared to the full population.

This sample size reflects the number of children we were able to obtain over two successive academic years of committed data collection. The primary challenges were logistic.

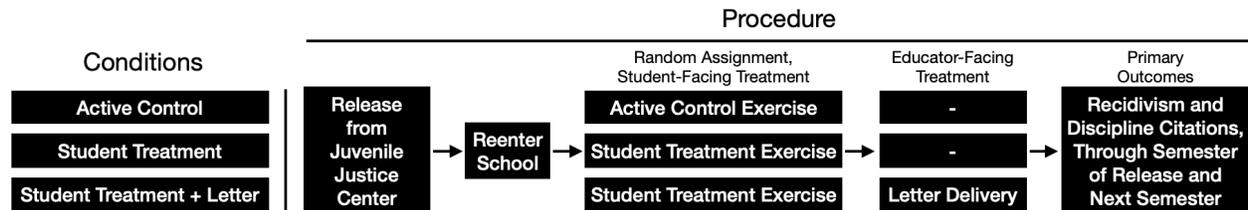
For instance, many youth are released at unpredictable times, as their cases are processed and when a parent/guardian can come pick them up, including on evenings and over weekends. Because we were unable to initiate the study (i.e., obtain consent) before a parent/guardian came to the Juvenile Justice Center, if research staff were not present when a youth was released we could not include them in the study. Although we did not track consent rates, most families who were approached agreed to participate. Staff estimate that fewer than 10% of families approached declined to participate. Declinations primarily reflected the constraints of the lengthy and complex process of release from the JJC itself.

This sample size is appropriate for the qualitative purpose of Study 1 and for the development of stimuli for Study 2. However, it is relatively small for the purpose of a randomized controlled experiment. Given this as well as the novel nature of the procedure, the experimental test should be understood as preliminary. However, considering the difficulty of obtaining longitudinal field-experimental data from this population, the “dearth” of relevant research evaluating strategies to support school reentry (Kubek et al., 2020), and the inherent importance of this population and significance of the primary outcomes, we see this test as important, both for theory and as a foundation for future research. In addition, we follow best practices in data reporting and analyses. For instance, data were not analyzed during data collection, we make every effort to report results transparently including in robustness tests across statistical models, and we make data available where possible. We also discuss the importance of replication and questions of heterogeneity and generalizability in the General Discussion.

There were three between-subjects conditions: A control condition and two student-treatment conditions in one of which a letter requesting support for the student was delivered to

an educator of the student’s choosing during reentry (condition $N_s=17, 15, 15$, respectively). The student-facing experience was identical for students in the two student-treatment conditions. See Fig. 1.

Figure 1. Overview of procedure and experimental conditions (Study 1).



Procedure

Consent at the Juvenile Justice Center. Children being released from the Juvenile Justice Center received a series of wraparound services, including those focused on physical health, mental health, and school placement. Following this process, they were released from the custody of the county to their parent(s) or guardian(s). At this point, a representative of the Oakland Unified School District introduced our study to the child and their legal guardian as an effort on the part of teachers, staff, the Juvenile Justice Center, and researchers “to understand how students feel about their school and the transition to school.” Children were told they would receive a \$10 gift card for participating in the initial portion of the study (intervention delivery) and a \$5 gift card for completing a follow-up survey. If the child was interested, they and their guardian met with a member of the research team in a private room where, with assurance of confidentiality, the parent/guardian gave consent and the child gave assent to participate, which included the release of school records.

Baseline measures at the Juvenile Justice Center. Next, the parent/guardian was asked to leave the room so the child could complete baseline psychological and demographic measures in private. These were selected for their potential relevance to subsequent outcomes: (1) *grit*; (2)

fixed-theories of personality; (3) *school identification*; and (4) a novel *sensitivity to incarceration-based rejection* measure based on past research (Mendoza-Denton et al., 2002); as well as demographic questions: (5) number of parents and (6) grandparents born in the United States; (7) first language; highest level of education completed by (8) their mother (or primary guardian) and (9) father (or secondary guardian) (however, we used only the latter in analyses, as it tends to be more variable and predictive and because single-parent households are more likely to be led by mothers than by fathers); (10) gender; (11) race/ethnicity; and (12) date of birth (to calculate age and match records). We used these measures (1) to test for equivalence across conditions and (2) as covariates, to control for alternative sources of variance, increasing power and ensuring robustness. For complete items, reliability information, and sources see Supplementary Online Material-Unreviewed.

Student Treatment Exercise: Orienting Students in Reentry Toward Positive Relationships with Educators

Development. The intervention was developed in a 15-month highly collaborative process among the research team, the Juvenile Justice Center, Oakland Unified School District, and community after-school groups and programs in Oakland, CA. This process featured qualitative methods so as to elevate the voices of children with experience in juvenile detention. For details of this process, see the Supplementary Online Material-Reviewed.

Intervention Session in School. Several days after release, students took part in a one-on-one session with a member of the research team in a private area in the student's school (e.g., empty classroom, library). Materials were completed on paper, included some audio, and were read aloud where necessary. In total, this session took 45-60 minutes.

Overview and representation. The intervention drew on techniques developed in past social-belonging interventions (Walton & Brady, 2020). It was interactive and honorific, not remedial or punitive. Students read, heard, and reflected on stories from older students describing common challenges in reentry and how these could improve with time with the support of educators. They were asked to share their own experiences and told that their responses would be shared with future students in reentry to help them in their transition:

Every year, many students come back to school in Oakland from the Juvenile Detention system. We want to learn more from you about what this is like. That way, we can help future students learn more about what to expect when they come back to school... We think future students can learn from you.

Thus, participating students were treated as benefactors not beneficiaries, an empowering rather than a potentially stigmatizing role.

Normalizing challenges and identifying opportunities for improvement. First, students were told that we had talked with older students who had made this transition, and summarized the main points they had made:

(a) 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 felt marked by wearing a GPS tracker.

(b) Students said that their experience in school got better with time. Students were able to develop positive relationships with teachers. Students made progress on their schoolwork. Students were able to get involved in activities and groups they valued...

(c) Students said their experience in school got better in two ways.

Students' experience improved by (1) identifying values and goals in school. First, participants were told:

[S]tudents 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.

Students were given a list of 8 values (“ideas from other students”) and asked to circle 1-3 that were “important to you.” These included 4 interdependent and relational values (“Be a good role model for my younger brother or sister,” “Help support my family,” “Make my parents proud of me,” and “Have good relationships with people”), 3 achievement-related values (“Learn skills that could help me get a good job,” “Prepare myself for college,” “Try my best in school”), 1 other value (“Use art or music as a way to express myself,”), and an open-ended option (“Other: ____”). Students were then asked to describe why a value they selected “is important to you.”

By assuming that students held positive prosocial values and goals, this exercise reinforced a positive rather than stigmatized, punitive, or remedial representation of students. The emphasis on interdependent values further reflected our pilot work and research suggesting the centrality of such values in lower-income and racial-minoritized communities (e.g., Stephens et al., 2012). Finally, inviting students to connect their values and goals to school draws on the prosocial-purpose intervention, which suggests that doing so can enhance academic outcomes (Yeager et al., 2014)

Students' experience improved by (2) developing relationships with educators in school. Second, participants were told that:

[S]tudents said it helped to get to know teachers and other adults in school better. This took time and persistence, but...[this] helped students get started, and make progress toward the things that were important to them.

Participating students were given bullet-point examples of what past students did to build relationships with adults in school (e.g., “They talked more with teachers and other adults about what mattered to them”).

Next, participating students were given four stories from older students and one from a teacher gathered, refined, and tested in our pilot process. The stories were described as typical (“These are the kind of stories we heard a lot”) and as depicting common challenges students experienced in reentry and how students responded. Participating students were told that the stories had been edited for clarity and privacy. They were provided in written form and, additionally to increase engagement, impact, and realism, as audio recordings created by students in our pilot process. Participating students were told that, for privacy, the recordings were made by different students than those who had originally shared them, as was the case. They were played as participating students read them. To encourage interactivity, after each story, participants were asked “What, if anything, stood out to you in this story? Please highlight anything you found important or interesting.”

Each story depicted significant challenges in the transition from juvenile detention back to school and how thinking about one’s goals and values and developing positive relationships with educators could help. Importantly, the stories depicted the process of developing these relationships as hard, as not always successful, and as requiring persistence but ultimately as paying off. For full transcripts, see Supplementary Online Material-Unreviewed.

Saying-is-believing exercises. A powerful way to help people internalize a message and see its relevance to their life is to ask them to describe it in their own terms, often in the form of advice for a younger audience whom they can help, what is termed “saying-is-believing” (e.g., Walton & Cohen, 2007). To do so, following the stories, participating students were asked to share their ideas to help future students in reentry:

[W]e want to learn from you. You are in the perfect position to help future students.

We’ll share some of your ideas about coming back to school and other students’ ideas with future students.

Students were told that, as much as possible, we would share their contributions with future students “like you...same gender, age, and experience.” They were assured of their confidentiality: “Everything you tell us is private...So please be totally honest. That way we can give future students the most help.” Students provided written responses to three questions, about (1) common challenges students face coming back to school, (2) how relationships with adults in school can help, and (3) how students can develop these relationships.

To reinforce the experience, participating student were told, “We think it will be most helpful for future students if they hear directly from you, in your own voice, instead of just seeing words on paper.” Students were then asked if they would be willing to also address these issues orally, and reminded that their responses would be confidential (see Walton & Cohen, 2007). Almost all students agreed (92.9%). Those who did were asked the same three questions orally and provided their spoken responses to an audio recorder. After doing so, participants were thanked and reminded of their contribution (“Thank you very much for your help. Your answers will help future students coming back to school in Oakland”).

Identifying and introducing oneself to an educator who could help. Finally, students were asked to identify “an adult in school you would like to get to know better, for instance, someone you do not know well yet” such as “a specific teacher, coach, counselor, or other adult in school.” They were given an example (“Assistant principal, Mrs. Johnson”) and space to list up to three people. Finally, participants were asked, “What would you like one of these adults to know about you?” and asked:

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

In both student-treatment conditions, participating students were told that their responses might be shared with the educator of their choosing:

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...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.

No student expressed discomfort with sharing their responses with an educator they had chosen.

The Letter to an Educator: Orienting Educators Toward Positive Relationships with Students in Reentry

For a random half of treatment-condition students, we delivered a 1-page letter to one of

the named educators. The letter came from our team and requested the educator’s support for the student. It included the student’s self-introduction and specific social-psychological elements (e.g., anticipating and normalizing difficulties: “The transition back to school...is difficult for many students. Some days will be easier and some days will be harder.”) and was honorific (“Thank you for your work”). By elevating students’ voices and self-introduction in a request for help for a student in need, we sought to sideline negative stereotypes attached to predominately African American justice-involved youth, which could otherwise undermine the student-educator relationship. See Fig. 2.

Figure 2. Personalized letter to the educator in school nominated by the student (Study 1).

End of the Student-Facing Treatment	Educator-Facing Treatment
<p>Lastly, we would like to ask you a few questions about your own plans for the transition.</p> <p>Who is an adult in school you would like to get to know better, for instance, someone you do not know well yet?</p> <p><i>Examples: a specific teacher, coach, counselor, or other adult in school</i></p> <p>Job (e.g., math teacher, coach): _____ Name: _____</p> <p><i>Example: Assistant Principal _____ Mrs. Johnson _____</i></p> <p>1. Ms. [last name] because I'm far behind in that class</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>—page break—</p>	<div style="text-align: right;">  STANFORD UNIVERSITY </div> <p>Dear [Mr./Ms. educator last name],</p> <p>We hope that your school year is going well.</p> <p>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. #1</p> <p>[student first name] would like for you to be this adult for them. #3</p> <p>The transition back to school from the JJC is difficult for many students. Some days will be easier and some days will be harder. #4</p> <p>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. #6</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 #7 <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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. #8</p> <p>If you have any questions, please contact the Research Coordinator, [research staff name], at [email@stanford.edu].</p> <p>Sincerely, The Stanford University Lifting the Bar Project</p>
<p>What would you like one of these adults to know about you?</p> <p>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.</p> <p>I’m a serious person about my school and graduating and play football, but I just have a problem catching up fast.</p> <p>What would you like your teacher to know about your goals in school? Write 1-2 things.</p> <p>I want to have all A’s or B’s and I want to graduate and play college football</p> <p>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.</p> <p>I would like to help myself and get help from other people by understanding it one by one and growing slowly through the process.</p>	
<p>Key Social-Psychological Elements</p> <p>#1 Asserts the student has taken steps to improve their transition</p> <p>#2 Emphasizes the importance of positive relationships with adults for children’s development</p> <p>#3 Says that the student specifically chose the letter recipient</p> <p>#4 Anticipates and normalizes difficulties in the transition</p> <p>#5 Emphasizes the opportunity to support student’s growth in the face of challenges</p> <p>#6 Emphasizes the opportunity to broker positive relationships with other educators</p> <p>#7 Encourages prompt initiation of the relationship</p> <p>#8 Assumes and elicits good intentions, skills, and professionalism</p>	

Note. Left column depicts the end of the student-facing treatment, and how students’ self-introduction solicited in this exercise was piped into (arrows) the educator-facing treatment (right column). The yellow box in the bottom left and corresponding enumerated highlights illustrate how key social-psychological themes were embedded in the letter

Critical to this practice is that students chose the educator; further, this choice was explicit to the educator. In giving students this choice, we assumed they were best positioned to identify who in school was not yet but could be valuable for them. This approach further draws on ethnographic research, which suggests that student-initiated relationships may garner more trust and commitment from both at-risk children and adults than relationships assigned by third parties (Spencer et al., 2016, 2018; see also Schwartz et al., 2013). In addition, student agency may render this relationship more authentic. It also allows students to attribute success building the relationship to their own agency and efforts rather than to an external program, potentially supporting their confidence to build other important relationships with adults. Finally, the focus on a single educator reflects the insight in past research that a strong relationship with even one teacher can improve adolescents' outcomes (Okonofua et al., 2016a; Yeager et al., 2017).

If the first educator the student listed was not available (e.g., no longer at the student's school), we delivered the letter to another educator the student listed. The letter was delivered in person by research staff using a standard script, ensuring receipt and allowing recipients to ask any questions.

Active Control Condition

The randomized control condition included the same representation and structure. Like the treatment, it normalized challenges in the return to school from juvenile detention, included student stories and interactive elements, and placed students in the role of benefactors (e.g., it was described as an opportunity to help future students). However, instead of goals, values, and relationships, the content focused on how students could meet challenges by developing "better study skills to catch up and be more successful in school." Thus, while potentially helpful, it did not address the critical dimensions that may orient students in reentry and educators toward each

other as positive relationship partners. Students (1) reflected on study skills that would be most helpful to them, (2) read and heard stories from older students that described how they developed better study skills to improve their transition, (3) described why study skills are important and what kinds of study skills students can develop for future students, and (4) recorded their advice about developing study skills. They were then (5) asked what specific study skills they would like to get better at, and listed 1-3 ways they would improve this study skill (“I will...”). Finally, students were told, “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.”

Measures

Manipulation check. Participants were asked what was the “primary idea of the stories you read” and given four options. One matched the treatment material (“Developing positive relationships with teachers and other adults in school who can help you achieve your goals”), one matched the control material (“It’s helpful to learn new study skills to do better on tests and homework assignments in school”), and two matched neither (“Avoiding drugs and alcohol to live a healthier lifestyle,” and “How exercise and healthy eating can be helpful”). We examined the percentage of participants who identified the response option that matched their condition.

School records (primary). Given the high rates of recidivism and school dropout in this population (Kubek et al., 2020), the primary outcomes focused on students’ opportunity to participate in mainstream schooling—that is, to not recidivate to juvenile detention—and conflicts they might experience that could imperil this—school-discipline citations. Both outcomes were assessed in the semester of release and through the next academic semester. We chose to define the assessment period by the school calendar, rather than as a fixed time period

(e.g., 6 months), since the intervention focused on students' relationships in school and one of the two outcomes was tied directly to school. We are also able to control for time since release in analyses.

Data were obtained from official school records and the Juvenile Justice Center. We also obtained other school records, including attendance (e.g., absences) and achievement (e.g., credits attained, grade-point-average) but, given our focus simply on participation in mainstream schooling, these are not included in the present report.

Self-report measures (secondary). In an effort to detect any immediate psychological change, students completed a brief survey following the randomized procedure assessing their experiences in and perceptions of school along a variety of established self-report measures (e.g., belonging, possible academic selves, school identification; see Walton & Cohen, 2007). However, when we examined basic psychometric qualities of these measures, we found them lacking. For the two measures that included both positively and negatively worded items (self-efficacy and the perceived payoff of education), these items did not correlate, raising doubt about their reliability and validity. We suspect this arose due to inattention among participants following the (more personally relevant) randomized materials. For this reason, we consider these measures secondary and report them in the Supplementary Online Material-Reviewed (Table S6). For items, see Supplementary Online Material-Unreviewed.

We also attempted to survey students some weeks later, using similar items. However, given pragmatic challenges associated with the instability of students' lives as well as the need to focus on intervention delivery to new students, we were able to reach only 33 students (79%), with a wide range of time to follow-up (22-122 days; $M=43.8$, $SD=18.8$). Because this follow-up survey is, thus, quite underpowered, we do not report it further.

Results

Data Availability

A limited data set is available at <https://osf.io/dbn7e/>. Analyses are available at <https://osf.io/yjbge/>. The dataset is limited to protect the confidentiality of participants, who are underage and by definition involved in the juvenile justice system. It allows for the reproduction of the Model 1 test of the condition effect on recidivism (i.e., raw analysis) and the primary test of the condition effect on school-discipline citations but it does not include additional variables whose inclusion could risk violating participant confidentiality.

Success of Random Assignment

To assess the success of random assignment, we tested whether the 4 baseline psychological measures, 8 demographic factors, and 2 behavioral measures, school-disciplinary citations in the semester prior to incarceration and the number of days in custody, varied by condition. See Table S2 (Supplementary Online Material-Reviewed). On 12 of 14 measures, there were not baseline differences by condition. The two exceptions were that students in the student-treatment conditions, as compared to those in the control condition, endorsed a fixed theory of personality more and reported that their mothers were somewhat more educated. Therefore, we include models that control for these measures.

Manipulation Check

Most participants in each condition correctly identified the primary theme of the stories they read for their condition (control: 94%; student treatment: 60%; student treatment + letter: 73%). We suspect that the descriptively lower rates in the student-treatment conditions reflect limits in students' attention following the randomized materials and order effects—the control

theme was the first option presented, and 79% of participants in the student-treatment conditions who did not select the correct response option for their condition chose this option.

Qualitative Measures: How Did Students Describe Themselves in Response to the Intervention Prompts?

First, we examined whether the intervention provided students a structure in which they could effectively (1) articulate their positive and prosocial selves, (2) describe challenges they faced and how they could overcome these by building relationships with educators, and (3) introduce their positive and prosocial selves and challenges to an educator of their choosing.

Values students endorsed. When asked about values that were important to them, most students (76.67%) endorsed and described at least one interdependent value. Often, these involved family. See Table 1.

Table 1. Representative *values* selected by students in reentry as important to them, and their open-ended elaboration (Study 1).

<i>What's important to you? (value(s) circled)</i>	<i>Pick one you circled above. Tell us why this is important to you.</i>
1. Make my parents proud of me 2. Try my best in school 3. Help support my family	I wanna help and support my family because I know some of them need help (!! It's important because I want the best for my little sister.
1. Learn skills that could help me get a good job 2. Make my parents proud of me 3. Prepare myself for college	prepare for college is important because you will have to get use to college so you can pass, get a good job and have a family and be able to support them
1. Learn skills that could help me get a good job 2. Make my parents proud of me 3. Help support my family	The most important 1 is "help support my family" because if that you should do whatever you have to do to provide for family because family is everything.
1. Be a good role model for my younger brother or sister	Because you don't want your little brother or sister grow up to be going to jail in and out messing up their future.

Challenges students perceived in reentry and the role of relationships with educators. Our student participants perceived many challenges, including being behind in coursework, getting in trouble, self-doubt, and managing relationships with adults. Yet, consistent with the focus of the intervention, they also endorsed relationships with educators as a way to address these challenges. See Table 2.

Table 2. Representative *challenges* students in reentry identified and how relationships with educators can help in response to open-ended intervention prompts (Study 1).

<i>What challenges do students face when coming back to school in Oakland from the Juvenile Detention system? (e.g., embarrassed by GPS, teachers treat you differently, behind on school work).</i>	<i>Older students said that they were able to address these challenges by connecting with adults in school. How can positive relationships with teachers and other adults in school help students have a better experience in school?"</i>	<i>How can students develop better relationships with teachers and other adults in school? (e.g., "Go to the teacher's class early, so she knows you care," "Tell them something about your life.")</i>
They worry about going back to Juve or messing up in school because they fell behind	It can help if they need help in class or even a tutor and it can help by making the teacher more lenient towards their work assignments	by communicating with what they need help on and why, or showing some of their struggles
afraid they might can't get better. They feel like they might not make it in life. They people might look them different.	It's easier for them to learn. They're not scared anymore.	By talking to your teacher. An doing it cared and respect. Show them that you want to get far in life.
Students face challages coming back to school when they know they have to catch up on work they missed and it hard because the teachers are pressuring them about it and when they forget to do it the teachers are mad and also teachers set time limits and if the kids don't finish in that amount of time there frusturated because they feel like it wasn't enough time to complete it all.	because if you are able to trust someone and be able to reach out to someone you don't have to hold all the stress in and plus you have some to talk to everyday	you could go before or after class depending on how you are feelling but it's always good to talk to someone.
catching up on school, graduating, embarrassed	That we not alone and there're helping us.	What I want to be in life and how I get there
I think those who are on gps struggle with being inside an invisible cage. A some students are in juve so long they give up on school	It can help because negative energy can affect those around you. If someone always angry no one wants to be around them. If they're positive the student will be too	By giving respect so you can get it back. Giving them all your attention

Audio-recorded message for future students in reentry. Participating students

conveyed the same themes in their audio-recordings for future students in reentry. See Table S3 (Supplementary Online Material-Reviewed).

Self-introduction to an educator (piped into the letter). In general, what students wrote in introducing themselves to an educator they nominated as someone who could be an important source of support was deeply moving. Students said, in essence, "I'm a good person, I work hard and want to succeed, but it's very hard. Please help." See Table 3.

Table 3. What students in reentry want an adult in school to know about them (sample open-ended responses; Study 1).

<i>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>	<i>What would you like your teacher to know about your goals in school? Write 1-2 things.</i>	<i>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>
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
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
one thing I would want my teachers to know is that I care about school and my grades.	I want to graduate from high school.	When I come to school late or some is hard to get the missing work.
One thing I would like my teacher to know & she probably already knows this but it that I do work & it good quality it just that I have a problem with being consistent so I need help & my grades are important.	I would want her to know that my only goal in school is too build positive relationships & just to show everyone that I try my best & that I would try on my own before I ask for help.	be being consistant is the only thing I would need help with and I would be good.
Im a smart person when it comes to math but I haven't really been to school so it's kinda hard to focus.	My goals are to graduate and go to college at LSU.	Like some of the work in class I don't understand sometimes.
I would like them to know that I'm a serious person about my school and graduating and play football but I just have problems catching up fast.	I would want them to know that I want to have all (As, Bs) and that 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 going slowly through the process.
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

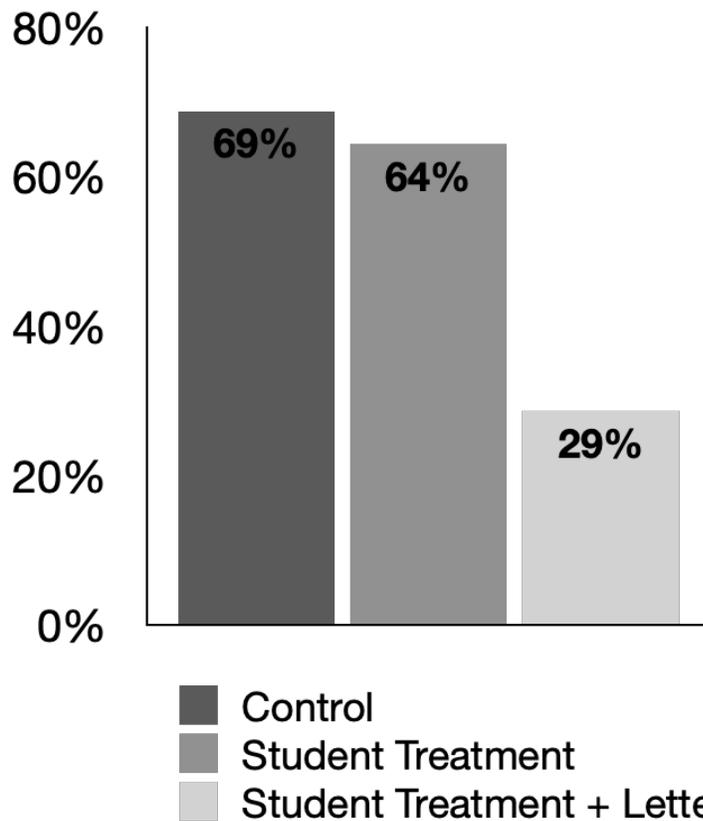
Quantitative Measures: Did the Randomized Intervention Reduce Recidivism to Juvenile

Detention and School Disciplinary Citations?

Recidivism to juvenile detention. Primary analyses examined recidivism obtained from official juvenile detention records using logistic regression.

Model 1. Raw figures showed that, whereas 69% of children in the control condition recidivated during the assessment period, just 29% of those in the letter condition did, a significant reduction, $OR=0.18$, $z=2.13$, $p=0.033$. In the student-treatment only condition, 64% of children recidivated, which did not differ from the control condition, $OR=0.82$, $z<1$, $p=0.796$. Only when students and educators were both oriented toward positive relationships with each other did recidivism drop significantly. See Fig. 3 and Table 4.

Figure 3. Recidivism to juvenile detention during the semester of release and the subsequent academic semester (Study 1).



Note. Results from Model 1 (raw values). Outcomes obtained from official juvenile detention records. $N=44$ (16, 14, 14, respectively)

Robustness tests. Given the small sample available, it was particularly important to subject the analysis to additional tests, to ensure the effect was not overly dependent on specific analytic decisions. When we did, we found it was robust across models.

First, because students were released from juvenile detention at different points during the semester, the assessment period (the semester of release plus the next semester) varied some, thus giving some students more time in which to recidivate than others. There was also some variability in how long students had been in custody prior to release (Table S1), which may reflect the significance of the past crime committed and be of importance unto itself (Aizer & Doyle, 2013). Controlling for these variables, separately or together, did not alter the results (Models 2A, 2B, and 2C, Table 4).

Table 4. Recidivism to juvenile detention in the semester of release and the next academic semester, from official juvenile detention records (Study 1).

Model	Covariates	Student Treatment vs. Control	Student Treatment + Letter vs. Control	Student Treatment + Letter vs. Student Treatment
Model 1	None	OR=0.82, $z < 1, p = 0.796$	OR=0.18, $z = -2.13, p = 0.033$	OR=0.22, $z = -1.85, p = 0.064$
Model 2A	Months after release from juvenile detention	OR=0.82, $z < 1, p = 0.797$	OR=0.18, $z = -2.11, p = 0.035$	OR=0.22, $z = -1.82, p = 0.069$
Model 2B	Days in Custody	OR=0.84, $z < 1, p = 0.827$	OR=0.19, $z = -2.05, p = 0.040$	OR=0.23, $z = -1.81, p = 0.070$
Model 2C	Months After Release and Days in Custody	OR=0.84, $z < 1, p = 0.823$	OR=0.19, $z = -2.01, p = 0.044$	OR=0.23, $z = -1.76, p = 0.079$

Note. $N=44$ in all models. See Tables S4 and S5 for additional robustness tests.

Additional models included all baseline demographic and psychological measures (Model 3) or only those that were either predictive or that differed by chance by condition at baseline (Model 4). Additionally, because four participants were missing values on baseline measures (mother's education), we tested these models both dropping these participants (Models 3A and 4A) and imputing missing values with the sample mean to retain them (Models 4B and 4B). Because models with more variables are more complex and may be unstable, we report them in the supplement. Nonetheless, in all cases, the effect of the student-treatment + letter condition was significant, $Z_s > 2.25, p_s < 0.025$. In none was the student-treatment alone significant. The difference between the student-treatment and the student-treatment + letter condition fluctuated some across models, ranging from significant to marginally significant. See Table S4.

Three children were missing official recidivism records. To further test the robustness of the effect, we also used official district attendance records to infer recidivism. While this allowed us to retain the full sample, school officials warned that attendance records may fail to identify some students who had recidivated as such. Nonetheless, across all eight models, the effect of the student-treatment + letter condition versus control was stable, $0.092 \leq p_s \leq 0.012$. See Table S5.

School-discipline citations from official school records. Discipline citations were analyzed using negative binomial regression, given the skew present in these data (Goyer et al., 2019). We represent the effect size as an incident rate ratio (IRR), which is a proportional change that is the exponentiated form of the corresponding log-count regression coefficient (alternatively, the IRR - 1 expresses the same ratio as a percentage change). To avoid overfitting and given that we had a baseline assessment of the outcome, we limited the control variables to (1) the number of disciplinary citations in the semester prior to juvenile detention, and (2) the two variables that differed at baseline, mother's education and fixed theories of personality.

In a base model without controls the student treatment + letter on raw citation counts did not reach significance, $b=-0.73$, $z=-1.33$, $p=0.185$, $IRR=0.48$ 95% CI [0.16-1.43]. However, including the control variables, the student treatment + letter caused a 91% reduction in school disciplinary citations, $b=-2.37$, $z=-2.63$, $p=0.008$, $IRR=0.09$ 95% CI [0.02-0.55]. There was also a marginal reduction in the student-treatment only condition, $b=-1.44$, $z=-1.75$, $p=0.080$, $IRR=0.24$ 95% CI [0.05-1.19]. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Mean disciplinary citations in the semester of release and the next academic semester, from official juvenile detention records (Study 1). SEs shown in parentheses.

Control Condition	Student Treatment	Student Treatment + Letter
1.94 (0.72)	1.30 (0.42)	0.93 (0.36)

We also examined several additional models. First, given the skew present in discipline citations, we examined the same model having subjected both the baseline and the dependent measure of discipline citations to a natural log transformation (natural log of 1 + the original variable). Second, we took into account ten participants, who were missing data on the baseline measures, primarily on pre-incarceration disciplinary citations. These were evenly distributed across condition ($N_{\text{missing-control}}=5$, $N_{\text{missing-treatment}}=3$, $N_{\text{missing-treatment+letter}}=2$) and missingness seemed to be completely at random, as across the 14 baseline psychological and demographic

measures (Table S2), it correlated significantly only with one (grit, $r=0.288$, $p=0.049$). We thus also tested a model imputing the missing variables, retaining them. However, with both the log-transformation and imputation, the control variables, and the model as a whole, became markedly less predictive than the model with controls, Nagelkerke's R^2 s: base=0.06; base with controls: 0.44; with log-transformations: 0.35; with imputation: 0.19). Therefore, we report the base model with controls primarily. For completeness, the effect of the student treatment + letter condition in the alternative models becomes statistically weaker, consistent with the interpretation that less error variance is accounted for by the control variables (with log-transformations: $b=-1.35$, $z=-1.75$, $p=0.081$, IRR=0.26 95% CI [0.05-1.14]; with imputation: $b=-1.02$, $z=-1.61$, $p=0.11$, IRR=0.36 95% CI [0.11-1.13]).

Thus, despite some variability across models, there is evidence that the student treatment + letter condition reduced post-release disciplinary citations as well as recidivism.

Summary

An important finding in Study 1 was how powerfully children described their positive and prosocial hopes in school and challenges they faced through the student-treatment exercise. These responses offer a completely different perspective on students in reentry. They are revealed to be not the surly, anti-social, disruptive students they are often seen as, but as vulnerable students facing an important transition with specific hopes and concerns actively seeking support. Moreover, when this self-introduction was provided to an educator of students' choosing, students' rate of recidivism to juvenile detention dropped by 40 percentage-points. The sample is small so the experimental effect is preliminary; yet, it was robust across models. Among students in a very difficult circumstance where every improvement matters, the findings suggest the potential impact of the relationship-orienting intervention.

Study 2: How the Letter Shifts How Teachers Perceive Students in Reentry

How might educators' initial response to a student in reentry shift if only they knew of the student's hopes, goals, and challenges as presented in the letter? Study 2 addresses this question.

Methods

Participants and Design

We aimed to recruit 350 participants, so as to achieve 80% power to detect an effect of $d=0.30$ (two-tailed, two-sample t-test). A total of 349 teachers (66% female, 32% male, 1% nonbinary) were randomized to condition from an online pool. Teachers reported having taught for an average of 16.8 years ($SD=7.57$). Most taught middle school (23%) or high school (81%) (some taught at multiple levels). Teachers completed materials online in exchange for a small payment.

The online pool and the participant sample were developed without reference to juvenile justice or any other specific subject, thus mitigating selection factors into the study. We collected email addresses from public school district websites and invited teachers to participate in paid online research surveys the content of which was not specified. All teachers who agreed to participate in these surveys, and who indicated that they taught middle or high school, were invited to participate in the present study, which was described generically ("our brief research study that will take 15-30 minutes to finish").

Participants were randomized to a letter vs. no-letter condition nested within one of 30 targets, corresponding to students in the student-treatment and student-treatment + letter conditions in Study 1. The study was preregistered at <http://osf.io/2p67z>.

Procedure and Materials

Upon beginning the study, teachers were told that we were interested in “teachers’ thoughts and experiences about students as they come back from juvenile detention” and that they would read about “an actual student who returned to school from juvenile detention.” They were told that the student’s name had been changed to protect his or her identity, as was the case. They read:

Imagine the school year is underway and you are teaching your normal subjects. One day, you receive word from the principal’s office that a new student, who has been incarcerated at the local Juvenile Detention center, is returning to your school. The student’s name is [student name], and [student gender pronoun] is [student race-ethnicity]. [Student gender pronoun] will enter your class next week.

No information was given about the student’s criminal history. However, students’ race-ethnicity and gender were made explicit because in real-world settings, as in Study 1, this is apparent to teachers.

In addition, in the letter condition only, teachers read:

You also learn that the student has decided to participate in a program called, “Lifting the Bar,” designed to help students in their transition back to school from juvenile detention. You receive a letter from Lifting the Bar with more information. Please take a moment to read this letter. We’ll ask you about it later.

Teachers then received the same letter used in Study 1, piping in the (changed) student name and the personal introduction students shared. To ensure teachers began reading the letter, the page

did not allow teachers to advance until 30 seconds had elapsed. To encourage active processing, we asked teachers after viewing the letter, “What themes does this letter describe?”

To protect students’ identity while preserving personalization, realism, and race-ethnicity information conveyed by names, we swapped first and last names of participating students in Study 1 within race-ethnic groups as much as possible in presenting names in Study 2. Thus, for instance, same-race participants in Study 1 named John Williams and Michael Smith would be presented as “John Smith” and “Michael Williams” in Study 2. The content of students’ personal introductions was additionally randomized so that it was not associated with either the original respondent’s true first or last name.

Primary and Secondary Outcomes: Perceptions of the Target Student

Measures were assessed in the order listed below. Items referring to the target student piped in the target student’s ostensible first name and gender pronoun. All items are reported in Supplementary Online Material-Unreviewed. In parentheses below we indicate whether each measure was pre-registered as primary or secondary. In pre-registration, we predicted significant effects of the letter on all seven primary outcomes. Secondary (and tertiary) outcomes were pre-registered as exploratory. Open-ended responses were not pre-registered.

Commitment to the target student (pre-registered as primary). Teachers were asked how “responsible” they would feel for, how “motivated” they would feel to help, and how “committed” they would feel to helping the target student in returning to school (3-items; $1=not\ at\ all, 7=extremely; \alpha=0.90$).

Open-ended responses (not pre-registered). Teachers were given space to respond to two open-ended prompts: (1) “Please describe the thoughts and feelings you might have about [student name] entering your class in more detail. How might you react to this news? What

would you anticipate about your experiences with [student name] as [he/she] comes to your class?” and (2) “Please describe what, if anything, in particular you would do as [student name] enters your class.”

We examined these responses in two ways. First, we examined teachers’ references to the letter in the letter condition, to identify the valence of their response to it and themes they highlighted. Second, one goal of the letter was to sideline biases associated with the student’s criminal background in how teachers perceive and treat the student. To index this, two independent trained coders, who were unaware of participants’ condition, coded whether each teacher expressed curiosity about the crime the student had committed, whether for unspecified reasons, out of a stated desire to support the student, or out of a stated desire to protect others, Cohen’s Kappa=0.95. While these reasons differ, we combined them because, in each case, the teacher is expressing that their thoughts, feelings, and behavior toward or with respect to the student would be predicated on the crime he or she committed.

Emotions about the target student entering their class (pre-registered as primary).

Teachers were asked how much they would feel five positive and seven negative emotions about the target student entering their class: *enthusiastic, excited, glad, hopeful, and prepared* and *afraid, angry, annoyed, apprehensive, challenged, frustrated, and overwhelmed* (1=*not at all*, 7=*extremely*). Order of items was randomized. We examined both overall emotions, by averaging the positive and reverse-coded negative items ($\alpha=0.84$), and positive ($\alpha=0.89$) and negative emotions ($\alpha=0.83$) separately.

Anticipated success and positive influence (or failure and negative influence) in class (pre-registered as primary). Teachers were asked how likely the target student would be to succeed and be a positive influence in class (5-items, e.g., “Be a positive influence on other

students in class,” “Distract other students in class” [reverse-coded], “Interfere with your teaching” [reverse-coded]; $1=not\ at\ all\ likely$, $6=extremely\ likely$; $\alpha=0.78$). We also examined the positive items ($r=0.64$) and negative items ($\alpha=0.87$) separately.

Anticipated success and positive influence (or failure/violence and negative influence) in school (pre-registered as primary). Teachers were asked how likely the target student would be to succeed and be a positive influence in school (5-items, e.g., “Be successful upon returning to school,” “Be a danger to others” [reverse-coded], “Have significant disciplinary problems in school in the future” [reverse-coded]; $1=not\ at\ all\ likely$, $6=extremely\ likely$; $\alpha=0.80$). We also examined the positive items ($r=0.75$) and negative items ($\alpha=0.87$) separately.

Anticipated success and positive influence (or failure/violence and negative influence) in society (pre-registered as primary). Teachers were asked how likely the target student would be to succeed and be a positive influence in society in the future (4-items, “Contribute positively to society,” “Commit another crime” [reverse-coded], “Be reincarcerated in the future” [reverse-coded], and “Be violent in the future” [reverse-coded]; $1=not\ at\ all\ likely$, $6=extremely\ likely$; $\alpha=0.79$). We also examined the positive item and negative items ($\alpha=0.89$) separately.

Feelings of love, hope, respect, and trust (pre-registered as primary). Teachers were asked how much “love,” “hope,” “respect,” and “trust” they would feel for the target student (4-items, $1=none$, $6=a\ great\ deal$; $\alpha=0.86$).

Opportunity to realize goals as an educator (pre-registered as secondary). Teachers were asked the extent to which the target student presented them an opportunity “to do

something meaningful as an educator” and “to reach my goals as an educator” (2-items, $1=not\ at\ all$, $6=a\ great\ deal$; $r=0.79$).

Negative judgment following a minor misbehavior (pre-registered as primary).

Teachers were asked to imagine that, a week after entering their class, they found the target student sleeping in class and, when they tried to wake him or her up, he or she refused to do their work. First, teachers were asked how they would respond to this behavior (open-ended). Next, they completed three items: how worried they would be that the student would “be a problem student,” that their behavior “could get worse over time,” and that they “might have to refer [student name] to law enforcement in the future” (3-items, $1=not\ at\ all$, $7=extremely$; $\alpha=0.88$).

Perceived age (pre-registered as secondary). Teachers were asked to guess how old the target student was with options ranging from 10 to 18. (Student age was not provided elsewhere.)

Tertiary Outcomes: Probing General Beliefs

While our primary goal was to understand teachers’ responses to the target student, we also took the opportunity to assess teachers’ beliefs about the prospects for success of students in reentry from juvenile detention in general as well as their beliefs about adult offenders reentering society. On the one hand, it is possible that the letter could have a positive general effect on teachers’ beliefs about students in reentry in general, if they generalize from the positive self-presentation of the target student to others. On the other hand, the letter could lead teachers to see the target student as exceptional and thus highlight a negative comparison with others. To explore these possibilities, following the primary and secondary measures, we assessed the success teachers anticipated among students in reentry from juvenile detention in general in returning to school as well as that of adult offenders in reentry from prison. The former measures were identical to the anticipated success measures for the target student. The latter drew on and

extended the measures assessing anticipated success of students in reentry in society. The measures are described in full in the Supplementary Online Material-Unreviewed.

Results

Data Availability

Data and analyses available at <https://osf.io/dzw5b/> and <https://osf.io/eykhu/>, respectively.

Success of Random Assignment

We tested for baseline condition differences in teacher demographics, the proportion of White and Black students teachers reported among students in their school, teachers' experience teaching students in juvenile detention, and the school level and subject they taught. As shown in Table S7 (Supplementary Online Material-Reviewed), 10 of 11 measures showed no condition differences. The exception was that teachers in the letter condition reported that somewhat more students in their schools were White. Thus, analyses controlled for this measure.

Open-Ended Measures (not pre-registered)

Response to the letter. First, we examined teachers' response to the letter. As Table 6 indicates, responses were almost uniformly positively. Teachers emphasized (1) that the student had chosen them personally; (2) the value of learning that the student wanted to succeed; (3) their feeling of connection to the student; and (4) their desire to help the student achieve their goals.

Table 6. Sample open-ended responses of teachers to the letter (letter condition, Study 2).

Please describe the thoughts and feelings you might have about [student name] entering your class in more detail. How might you react to this news? What would you anticipate about your experiences with [student name] as [he/she] comes to your class?

First thoughts, in complete honesty, would be "oh great" or "why me". I would think about what problems he may add to my class. But, as I read more of the letter and see that [student name] CHOSE ME to be his mentor/confidant, I am immediately reminded that he is a child that has made some mistakes and wants to change. He deserves that chance and, if I can, I want to help. Reading about his passions made me see him more as a person than just another student with problems.

I would feel very connected to the student after reading this letter. I would feel passionate about being his advocate. I would feel protective over the student and would want to go above and beyond to help him succeed
Great idea to have a preview letter, would really want to have a meeting to get to know [student name] prior to entering the classroom for 1) to begin the developing a relationship, 2) to discuss expectations for class, and 3) to identify and discuss any concerns she may have entering the school.
The letter is a great way to start. It would give me hope that [student name] wants to change and will be open minded to this experience. I feel that I would be very welcoming and more understanding to [student name] after receiving this letter.
Sharing with his teacher that he *wants* to succeed is especially important and I feel that is the most important piece of information that he provided. Many teachers might perceive his struggles as apathy, so this letter would help a teacher understand that there is much more than just "he doesn't care."
Part of the news about [student name] is that I have been chosen as a mentor. I think that any fears I might have had regarding conflict with a student recently released from a JJC would be ameliorated by this fact. The introduction letter would lead me to anticipate a positive relationship. [student name] has goals and he has challenges. My job as an educator is to help students meet their goals and overcome their challenges. I would look forward to working with [student name].

Crime Curious. Consistent with our theorizing that introducing the student personally through the letter would reduce the extent to which teachers perceived the student in terms of their criminal background (“as a person [rather] than just another student with problems,” Table 6), teachers were less likely to express curiosity about the student’s criminal background in the letter condition as compared to the control condition (Tables 7 and 8). Each of the subcategories showed the same pattern (Table S8).

Table 7. Sample expressions of curiosity among teachers about the crime the student committed (Study 2).

<i>Please describe the thoughts and feelings you might have about [student name] entering your class in more detail. How might you react to this news? What would you anticipate about your experiences with [student name] as [he/she] comes to your class?</i>
I would have some concerns about the safety and well being of my other students depending on his reasons for entering Juvie.
I would have concerns about the nature of his crime that got him sent to detention, but would give him the same opportunity that I give all students.
I would be nervous because I know I cannot ask [name] about his experiences when he was out of school, but those details would help me be more aware of his needs for re-entry.
I would be apprehensive, as I am unfamiliar with [student name’s] history--what led to him being in juvenile detention center in the first place and how long was he in custody. For instance, did he commit a violent crime? Will he have outbursts? Will he be disruptive?

Primary and Secondary Quantitative Analyses: Perceptions of and Response to the Target Student in Reentry

Analyses controlled for teachers’ reports of the percentage of White students who attended their school. We also tested a random intercept for the target student; however, this

explained little to no variance and consistently increased the AIC (see Table S9) and therefore was dropped. Both retaining the random intercept and simple t-tests yield the same results. Effect sizes are calculated as the raw condition difference divided by the pooled standard deviation. The means and standard deviations reported are unadjusted.

Primary outcomes (preregistered). A MANCOVA across the seven primary pre-registered outcomes found a significant overall effect of the letter condition, $F(7, 334)=375$, $p<0.001$. Moreover, as seen in Table 8, this effect was significant along each outcome. The letter increased teachers' commitment to the student; enhanced positive feelings about the student entering their class; increased their anticipated success for the student in class, school, and society; and even increased their feelings of love, hope, respect, and trust for the student.

Of particular interest, the letter also mitigated negative judgment of the student following a minor misbehavior—a critical process in the escalation of conflict and mistrust between students and teachers (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015; Okonofua et al., 2016a; Okonofua et al., 2020).

Table 8. Teachers' responses to a student in reentry (Study 2).

Construct	Valence	No Letter	Letter	Statistical Test
Commitment to the student (1-7 scale)*	Positive	5.35 (0.98)	5.62 (1.09)	$t(343)=2.49$, $p=0.013$, $d=0.26$, 95% CI [0.05, 0.47]
Crime curious (coding of open-ended responses)	n/a	17.24%	4.62%	$\chi^2(1)=12.90$, $p<0.001$
Emotions about the student entering class (1-7 scale)*	Composite	5.09 (0.81)	5.35 (0.75)	$t(343)=3.30$, $p=0.001$, $d=0.34$, 95% CI [0.13, 0.55]
	Positive	3.89 (1.34)	4.56 (1.25)	$t(343)=4.82$, $p<0.001$, $d=0.51$, 95% CI [0.30, 0.73]
	Negative	2.07 (0.85)	2.08 (0.74)	$t(343)<1$, $d=0.01$, 95% CI [-0.20, 0.22]
Anticipated success/positive influence (vs. failure/negative influence) in class (1-6 scale)*	Composite	3.88 (0.82)	4.21 (0.68)	$t(343)=4.32$, $p<0.001$, $d=0.44$, 95% CI [0.23, 0.65]
	Positive	2.83 (1.01)	3.33 (0.94)	$t(343)=5.15$, $p<0.001$, $d=0.52$, 95% CI [0.30, 0.73]
	Negative	2.42 (1.00)	2.20 (0.81)	$t(343)=2.37$, $p=0.018$, $d=-0.24$, 95% CI [-0.03, -0.46]
Anticipated success/positive influence (vs. failure/negative	Composite	4.15 (0.79)	4.45 (0.58)	$t(343)=4.12$, $p<0.001$, $d=0.43$, 95% CI [0.22, 0.64]

influence) in school (1-6 scale)*	Positive	3.38 (1.05)	3.72 (0.86)	$t(343)=3.38, p<0.001, d=0.35,$ 95% CI [0.14, 0.56]
	Negative	2.33 (0.89)	2.05 (0.64)	$t(343)=3.32, p<0.001, d=-0.35,$ 95% CI [-0.14, -0.57]
Anticipated success/positive influence (vs. failure/negative influence) in society (1-6 scale)*	Composite	4.23 (0.79)	4.54 (0.64)	$t(340)=4.00, p<0.001, d=0.42,$ 95% CI [0.21, 0.64]
	Positive	3.39 (1.04)	3.78 (1.09)	$t(340)=3.59, p<0.001, d=0.36,$ 95% CI [0.15, 0.58]
	Negative	2.48 (0.90)	2.21 (0.70)	$t(340)=3.13, p=0.002, d=-0.34,$ 95% CI [-0.13, -0.55]
Feelings of love, hope, respect, and trust for the student (1-6 scale)*	Positive	4.06 (1.00)	4.44 (0.90)	$t(342)=3.63, p<0.001, d=0.40,$ 95% CI [0.19, 0.61]
Opportunity to realize goals as an educator (1-6 scale)	Positive	4.73 (1.16)	4.86 (1.11)	$t(343)=0.96, p=0.335, d=0.11,$ 95% CI [-0.10, 0.32]
Negative judgment following a minor misbehavior (1-7 scale)*	Negative	2.84 (1.16)	2.33 (0.99)	$t(343)=2.68, p=0.008, d=-0.26,$ 95% CI [-0.05, -0.47]
Perceived age of student (years)	n/a	15.06 (1.49)	15.37 (1.37)	$t(339)=1.97, p=0.050, d=0.21,$ 95% CI [0.00, 0.42]

Note. Composites include positive items and reverse-coded negative items. *SDs* depicted in parentheses. *Ns*=344-348. Effect sizes calculated as the difference between the raw means divided by the pooled standard deviation.

*Preregistered hypotheses; other variables were exploratory.

In general, positive and negative items yielded similar effects. The one exception was for emotions, where the condition difference was driven by an increase in positive emotions with no reduction in negative emotions. It is possible that this pattern reflects the letter's effect. Yet teachers may also have been unwilling to report significant negative emotions about a student entering their class from juvenile detention, perhaps especially in the context of a scenario. Indeed, the mean level of negative emotions reported in both conditions is notably low.

Secondary outcomes (exploratory). The condition effect on teachers' reports of the degree to which the target student presented them an opportunity to realize their goals as an educator did not reach significance (Table 8).

The second secondary measure, teachers' perception of the student's age, showed a small increase with the letter treatment. Originally, we had included this measure from an interest in the way that Black boys are seen as older and less childlike than White boys (Goff et al., 2014). We anticipated that humanizing the student in reentry through the letter might lead teachers to perceive the child as younger and thus to take more responsibility for him or her. Yet, in

combination with the primary outcomes, this finding raises the intriguing possibility that the letter may have led teachers to view the child as more responsible, consistent with their emphasis on the child's desire to succeed (Table 6) and greater expectations and feelings of love, hope, respect, and trust for them. If so, perhaps the greater commitment that teachers express toward the student with the letter reflects a sense of partnership with the student and respect for his or her agency and autonomy rather than the assumption of a caretaking role that would be more appropriate for a younger child.

Exploratory tests of moderation. Exploratory analyses examined if the results differed by teacher characteristics, specifically by whether teachers reported experience teaching students in reentry from juvenile detention. No such moderation was found, $t_s < 1.95$, $p_s > 0.055$. The one marginal pattern was for negative judgments following a minor classroom misbehavior, where marginally greater treatment effects were shown by teachers without experience teaching students in reentry, as compared to those who were unsure or had such experience. However, because no other interaction approached significance ($t_s < 1.55$, *ns*), we do not interpret this pattern further.

Tertiary Analyses: Anticipated Success of Students in Reentry in General and Adults in Reentry

The measures assessing teachers' expectations of success for students in reentry in general and for adults in reentry from prison were directionally more positive with the letter than without for every outcome but in most cases the condition effect did not reach significance. When the three measures assessing the anticipated success of students in reentry in general were pooled, however, there was a marginally significant positive effect of the letter condition, $t(444) = 1.64$, $p = 0.101$, $d = 0.16$, 95% CI [-0.05, 0.37]. Details are reported in the Supplementary

Online Material-Reviewed (see Tables S10-S12). Thus, if anything, the results thus point more to the generalization process than to a subtyping process, with potentially broader benefits for person perception.

General Discussion

Students in reentry are among the most stigmatized in school. The present research shows how we can orient educators and students in reentry from juvenile detention toward each other as positive relationship partners. In Study 1, with a structured exercise, students were able to introduce themselves powerfully and positively to an educator of their choosing. In a small field-experimental test, providing this self-introduction to the educator reduced recidivism to juvenile detention and, in some models, school-discipline citations through the next semester. Informing process, in Study 2, the educator letter increased the initial receptivity of teachers to a student in reentry, including greater commitment to and feelings of “love” and “respect” for predominately Black boys returning to school from juvenile detention. This response is particularly significant given how readily teacher-student relationships become self-fulfilling, especially in contexts of stereotypes and stigma.

For policy and practice, the improvements in children’s outcomes are highly promising yet preliminary. It is essential to replicate the field-trial with larger samples to further understand effectiveness, to track psychological processes and teacher-student relationships in vivo, and to explore contextual heterogeneity. Indeed, psychological interventions are not magic bullets that work uniformly across contexts (Walton & Wilson, 2018; Yeager & Walton, 2011) but depend on affordances in social contexts for their effectiveness (Walton & Yeager, 2020).

One contribution of the present research is to shed light on the psychological experience of children in reentry—a severely disadvantaged population at a critical juncture we know little

about. Study 1 revealed that, with the relationship-orienting procedure, children beginning reentry could articulate positive and prosocial hopes for themselves, challenges they faced, the kinds of people they would like to become, and the relationships they would like to form in school. Study 1 shows how we can elevate students' voices. Study 2 shows that doing so can elicit greater support from critical people in the school environment.

A second contribution addresses a critical question for the field: How can we reach adults effectively who hold power over students—to shift *adults' mindsets* to create more supportive environments for students? While strategies to support students' belonging and confidence in school can be effective (Walton & Brady, 2020), there is also an opportunity—and sometimes a need—to improve school contexts, including to mitigate biased perception and treatment. Past research has developed training programs to reduce bias but the effects are often limited (Forscher et al., 2017; Lai et al., 2016). Instead, understanding that bias is triggered by the social environment (Eberhardt, 2019), we altered that environment by orienting students and educators toward positive relationships with each other. To accomplish this, the relationship-orienting intervention went beyond simply creating a point of connection between teachers and students (Gehlbach et al., 2016). Instead, it aligned teachers' and students' goals in school with a positive relationship (see Fitzsimons & Finkel, 2018). For teachers, it evoked a professional commitment toward the student for which bias would be nonfunctional. Thus, our aim was to sideline bias (Okonofua et al., 2020), to reduce its hold on teachers' behavior toward children during a critical period. Suggesting this process, in Study 2 the letter reduced the likelihood that teachers considered the crime the youth had committed in reflecting on how to think, feel, and behave toward him or her. The results suggest basic research exploring how strategies to sideline bias, including by elevating alternative valued goals and identities, may mitigate the expression of bias

in behavior. They also invite us to consider where else in society we can sideline bias through relationship-orienting strategies.

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Supplementary Methods and Results

Data Access

A limited data set from Study 1 can be accessed at <https://osf.io/dbn7e/>. Analyses can be accessed at <https://osf.io/yjbge/>.

This dataset is limited to protect the confidentiality of study participants, who are underage and by definition involved in the juvenile justice system. The data set will allow for the reproduction of the Model 1 test of the condition effect on recidivism (i.e., raw analysis) and the primary test of the condition effect on school discipline citations. However, it does not include additional control (e.g., demographic) variables used (1) to characterize our sample, (2) to determine the success of random assignment, and (3) in robustness tests of the condition effect on recidivism. Their inclusion would risk violating participant confidentiality. For instance, given the skewed distribution of boys and African American students in reentry (i.e., few students in our sample and in this population are female and not African American), identifying demographic factors could allow for the identification of individuals in our data set.

Data from Study 2 can be accessed at <https://osf.io/dzw5b/>. Analyses can be accessed at <https://osf.io/eykhu/>.

Development of the Intervention (Study 1)

Through the development process, we aimed to learn from children with experience in juvenile detention in Oakland. Although this process began with open-ended focus groups, we found early on that students opened up about their experiences more one-on-one. Questions focused on students' experiences in school, how they felt they were perceived, what challenges they experienced, how they responded to these challenges, and the kinds of relationships students formed and wanted to form in school. As we heard stories articulating these experiences, we began to reproduce students' stories as draft experimental materials and solicited reactions to them from more pilot participants. We asked students what they liked or disliked, what was confusing, and what was or was not realistic in the draft stories. Throughout, we gave agency and voice to students, emphasizing that we did not know what it was like to go through juvenile detention and reenter schools, but they did and their responses would help future students.

Over this process, the draft materials changed significantly. Early on, we had hoped to address both peer and educator relationships, and thus included stories about the latter as well as the former. In one, for instance, a student in reentry chose to no longer spend time with old friends who influenced him negatively. Yet this was deemed inauthentic by pilot participants. Thus, we revised the story to depict a student who kept old friends but added new ones too. Again, it was deemed "not real," not a genuine representation of local youth culture and values, and the protagonist disloyal. Only when we dropped all mention of peer relationships to focus exclusively on adults in school (i.e., educators) who could understand children and support them did pilot participants strongly connect with the stories and endorse them. Although peer relationships are certainly important in reentry, we concluded that we could not address them adequately and authentically in the opportunity we would have to interact with students in reentry.

Discontinued Prompt to Solicit Content for the Teacher-Letter (Study 1)

At the end of the student-facing treatment, after identifying one or more adults in their school who was not yet but could be a support for them, student participants were asked, "What

would you like one of these adults to know about you?” and given three specific questions described in the main text concerning what they wanted this person to know about them as a person, what they wanted them to know about their goals in school, and what they wanted them to know about what was difficult for them in school, so they could help.

Instead of these three questions, five treatment-condition participants responded to a single question that was subsequently discontinued: “Imagine you are talking with one of the adults you listed. What would you like him or her to know about you?”.

Table S1. Demographics and background of participant sample and comparison with full population of students in reentry, Study 1.

		Participant Sample (N=47)	Full Population* (N=238)	Statistical Comparison
Age	Mean (SD)	15.93 (1.26)	15.57 (1.28)	$t(283)=3.28$, $p=0.0012$, $d=0.28$
	11	0%	0.42%	-
	12	0%	0.42%	-
	13	10.64%	5.04%	-
	14	10.64%	14.29%	-
	15	29.79%	26.05%	-
	16	25.53%	25.21%	-
	17	23.40%	26.47%	-
	18	0%	2.10%	-
Gender	Male	87.23%	77.73%	$\chi^2(1)=2.16$, $p=0.142$
	Female	10.64%	22.69%	$\chi^2(1)=3.47$, $p=0.062$
	Non-binary	2.13%	-	-
Race/ Ethnicity**	African/African American	61.70%	76.47%	$\chi^2(1)=4.45$, $p=0.035$
	Asian/Asian American	0%	2.10%	-
	Hispanic/Native American	8.51%	20.17%	-
	Multiple	21.28%	-	-
	Native American	6.38%	-	-
	Not Reported	0%	2.52%	-
	White/European American	2.13%	0.84%	-
Highest level of education completed by mother/ primary guardian***	Mean (SD); Codes below	2.19 (0.76)	2.75 (1.34)	$t(102)=2.47$, $p=0.0151$, $d=-0.49$
	Less than high school (1)	17.02%	28.33%	-
	High school or GED (2)	42.55%	11.67%	-
	Vocational/Technical School or Some College (3)	21.28%	26.66%	-
	Associate's Degree (3)	8.51%		-
	Bachelor's Degree (4)	2.13%	25%	-
	Graduate or Professional Degree (5)	0%	8.33%	-
	Missing	8.51%	76.47%	-
Native Language	English	96%	82.72%	$\chi^2(1)=5.15$, $p=0.023$
	Spanish	4%	14.34%	$\chi^2(1)=3.58$, $p=0.059$
	Other	0%	2.94%	-
Justice Records	Mean Number of Days in Custody, Last Stay (SD)	14.64 (11.66)	7.46 (9.24)	$t(283)=4.65$, $p<0.0001$, $d=0.72$

Note. *The full population includes all students who transitioned from the Alameda Juvenile Justice Transition Center to OUSD schools in the same two academic years as the participant sample except students in the participant sample. **Race-ethnicity was assessed differently in the two samples. In the participant sample, students were specifically invited to list multiple race-ethnicities, which likely explains why more students are listed as multiracial in this sample than in the full population. All multiracial students in the participant sample were African American with one or more other race/ethnicity; therefore, we do not view the difference between populations on percent African American as meaningful. Additionally, because the assessments differed, the multiracial and Native American categories became less than zero in the full population when the participant sample was removed. ***For

mothers' education, data were unavailable (listed as "decline to state" in institutional records) for 76.47% of students in the full population. The percentages for this variable for the full population reflect the 23.53% of students for whom these data were available. Because it is unclear whether these data are missing at random or more often missing for students with mothers with lower levels of education, we do not draw strong conclusions from the difference between populations in average mother's education. Additionally, in the institutional data, "some college" and "Associate's Degree" were combined.

Table S2. Baseline psychological and demographic measures by condition, Study 1.

Measure	Control Condition	Student Treatment	Student Treatment + Letter	Statistical Test
Grit (5-point scale)	3.86 ^a (0.73)	4.03 ^a (0.32)	3.92 ^a (0.55)	$F < 1$
Fixed theory of personality (5-point scale)	3.90 ^a (1.00)	5.04 ^a (0.97)	4.89 ^a (0.85)	$F(2, 44)=6.97, p=0.002$
School identification (7-point scale)	5.79 ^a (1.48)	6.27 ^a (0.94)	5.80 ^a (0.96)	$F < 1$
Sensitivity to incarceration-based rejection (1 to 36 scale)	14.24 ^a (9.80)	13.00 ^a (9.66)	14.60 ^a (7.23)	$F < 1$
Number of parents born in the U.S. (0-2)	1.65 ^a (0.79)	1.87 ^a (0.52)	1.60 ^a (0.74)	$F < 1$
Number of grandparents born in the U.S. (0-4)	2.31 ^a (1.45)	3.00 ^a (1.25)	2.57 ^a (1.70)	$F < 1$
English as a first language (%)	100% ^a	93.3% ^a	93.3% ^a	$\chi^2(2) < 1.20$
Highest level of education completed by mother/primary guardian (6-point scale; 1=less than high school, 2=high school, 3=some college...)	1.82 ^a (0.64)	2.58 ^a (1.08)	2.64 ^a (1.01)	$F(2, 40)=3.97, p=0.027$
Highest level of education completed by father/secondary guardian (same 6-point scale)	2.00 ^a (1.00)	2.42 ^a (1.24)	2.83 ^a (1.85)	$F < 1.25$
Male (%)	82% ^a	93% ^a	87% ^a	$\chi^2(2) < 1$
African/African American (%)	47% ^a	67% ^a	73% ^a	$\chi^2(2) < 2.60, p > 0.25$
Age (years)	15.96 ^a (1.01)	16.02 ^a (1.46)	15.80 ^a (1.38)	$F < 1$
Disciplinary citations in the semester prior to juvenile detention	0.93 ^a (1.54)	1.17 ^a (1.95)	0.86 ^a (1.66)	$F < 1$
Number of days in custody	16.29 ^a (11.95)	14.73 ^a (12.75)	12.67 ^a (10.66)	$F < 1$

Note. $N_s=39-47$. SDs indicated in parentheses. Means and percents with different subscripts differ at $p < 0.05$.

Table S3. Audio-recorded challenges and relationships (sample open-ended responses), Study 1.

<i>What kinds of challenges do students often experience when they return from Juvenile Detention?</i>	<i>We're interested in how students deal with these challenges. One thing older students said was that it helps to reach out to teachers and other adults. How does this help?</i>	<i>What do students do to get to know adults in school better? What are good ways to get to know adults in school better?</i>
<p>they be scared and they don't know like, how the teacher will act I guess</p> <p>[When you say scared, what are they scared of?]</p> <p>They scared of the people</p> <p>[People, like...]</p> <p>Like the principals and stuff</p>	<p>it helps cuz they will, I think they will feel safer</p> <p>[They feel safer if they reach out to teachers and other adults?]</p> <p>Mhm</p>	<p>Just walk, just like if he probably like talked to his counselor, and his counselor introduced him to other people</p>
<p>Say it right here?</p> <p>[yeah you can just talk]</p> <p>They have problems with people embarrassing them with, by having a GPS or grades being bad, coming back while their friends, coming back with their friends and their friends have good grades and you don't.</p>	<p>Because they, because they know everybody and have more options to get help from. You know more teachers around the school so you have more options to ask for help, or maybe you might not know something that, you don't have a class or something like that you can just get help from them.</p>	<p>They go to talk to the teachers, I mean they go to talk to teachers after school or at lunch for help, or any questions they need to ask. Any questions you may need to ask.</p>
<p>Um, I mean people, people will they're gonna ask you questions about what happened and about what like and then they're going to ask you questions and they're just going to judge you about what happened and if they find out what you did, they're gonna they're gonna take that and use it as, um, what's it called, as like a weapon for you like you'll feel bad like well I should never like, they'll just try to judge you what you did and then when you get on, like I was on ankle monitor and then they just thought I was, they thought that I thought I was cool because I was on ankle monitor but I really didn't, cause i don't even like being on it.</p>	<p>hm. um, I really I don't I really don't do nothing, I just keep doing what I'm doing. Like I don't care what they say, I mean I did it so like I can't be mad at them but just...</p>	<p>Um, you you can you can my teachers, I didn't think my teachers were there for me but they really were like I just kept pushin them away and um they told me all them if you need help, I'm here for you and all that stuff but I really didn't think they was going to be there for me so I was just like, you know what ya ya all right but then when I really them when I came back , they was always there for me they would tell me what I needed all you need to do this in order to do that or you need to do that in order to do this and it was helping me feel like I was getting overwhelmed because like with all the work I had to do to catch up but I mean it's worth it cause, cause it's not really that hard if you pay attention it's not that hard cause we on a new lesson right now and I wasn't even there when they teached it and now I'm already on top of it. It's not hard. You just gotta listen.</p>

<p>They basically face grades dropping, and so basically they're gonna be frustrated on how that affects them in the future, such as certain activities they won't be able to do, and if they want to play sports that can affect them because of their grades dropping because of them being in juvenile, so when they know they gotta work hard in order to get that back up.</p>	<p>This one? So I basically put connecting with teachers and stuff, so you could basically tell them how you feel, and y'all can basically work something out basically. Like letting them know what happened, talking to them, like I got a teacher Mr. [teacher name], he knew what happened and we was talking, and we basically worked something out like study hours, like at lunch I go to him, and I do like extra credit work and papers I could do and makeup that brought me back to what it was, my grade.</p>	<p>Basically tell them how you feel and what went down and they, y'all share basically similar stories. Like how I did with the other teacher, and they told me how, what happened to them at my age, how they had some troubles and what they did to overcome it, so that's what I did with teachers.</p>
<p>A challenge that I personally faced was, you know, I had a lot of kids coming up to me asking me like "what'd you do" and stuff like that, but I don't want to let my business out there because it's not something you should be proud of and let other kids know, you know? And then you got to wear baggy pants and stuff so you can't show your GPS or nothing like that, so you know, it's hard, but you know you just got to mind your own when you're going to school and do right.</p>	<p>You know when you reach out to teachers, you got to find the right teacher you know, someone that can sit down and actually talk to you and feel the position that you were in, because, for me, letting it out helped me, because I mean for me, letting it out helped me because just keeping it in is just, I needed somebody to talk to. But then it's hard though, some teachers probably won't worry about what you did wrong, but you know once you find that right teacher, it's gonna feel good to let out your experiences.</p>	<p>Just show them that you're trying to do good in school now, because if you come out of juvenile hall and you still are lollygagging in class, it's gonna show them you're not really trying to do something better for yourself. But you know, once you go to the teacher, asking them for help with your homework, asking for help with class problems, they're gonna find out that you're really trying to succeed, and you know that's what makes them wanna get closer to you and help you, and that's good.</p>
<p>Well, like I don't know what other things do and experience, but I know like for me, it was kind of hard for my family, because like when I got back it was all these emotions, like sad emotions, and then I came to school and the teacher had the same attitude against me. I had a lot of work to catch up on. It was just hard, but now, I did all my work, I got a stronger relationship with my family now, and I'm playing basketball now and that's what I like to do, so my experience is good right now.</p>	<p>I mean they know a lot, so you can just ask them, and they help you, do your work. I mean it's like work, and they probably know how to do it, so you ask them and they can help you out with it.</p>	<p>Do what you gotta do in class, and like just ask. Just ask for a lot of stuff in class, raise up your hand every time she says answer something, and she will probably come to you, or he probably come to you, and tell you, and start a conversation with you, and maybe y'all will get close.</p>

Additional Robustness Tests of the Effect of Condition on Recidivism (Study 1)**Table S4.** Additional robustness tests of the effect of condition on recidivism reported in official juvenile detention records, Study 1.

Model	Covariates	Imputation of missing baseline measures	Student Treatment vs. Control	Student Treatment + Letter vs. Control	Student Treatment + Letter vs. Student Treatment
Model 3A (N=40)	All potentially relevant baseline psychological and demographic measures	No	OR=0.60, $z < 1$, $p=0.695$	OR=0.03, $z=-2.46$, $p=0.014$	OR=0.04, $z=-2.34$, $p=0.019$
Model 3B (N=44)	All potentially relevant baseline psychological and demographic measures	Yes	OR=0.37, $z < 1$, $p=0.346$	OR=0.07, $z=-2.33$, $p=0.020$	OR=0.20, $z=-1.74$, $p=0.083$
Model 4A (N=40)	Predictive baseline measures or those differing by chance	No	OR=0.50, $z < 1$, $p=0.555$	OR=0.03, $z=-2.53$, $p=0.011$	OR=0.07, $z=-2.33$, $p=0.020$
Model 4B (N=44)	Predictive baseline measures or those differing by chance	Yes	OR=0.47, $z < 1$, $p=0.439$	OR=0.09, $z=-2.29$, $p=0.022$	OR=0.20, $z=-1.82$, $p=0.069$

Note. Models 3A and 3B controlled for: (1) months after release from juvenile detention, (2) baseline grit, (3) baseline fixed theories of personality, (4) baseline school identification, (5) baseline sensitivity to incarceration-based rejection, (6) gender, (7) age, and (8) mother's education. Models 4A and 4B controlled for: (1), (3), (6), (7), and (8). Models 2B and 3B imputed missing values on mothers' education with the sample mean for four participants missing this variable. Models 3A and 4A did not.

As noted in the main text, three children were missing official recidivism records. To retain them, we examined recidivism inferred from official attendance records. The effect of the student-treatment + letter condition versus control was stable across models.

Table S5. The effect of the student-treatment vs. control on recidivism inferred from official attendance records, Study 1.

Model	Covariates	Imputation of missing baseline measures	Student Treatment + Letter vs. Control
Model 1 (N=47)	None	n/a	OR=0.22, $Z=-1.86$, $p=0.063$
Model 2A (N=47)	Months after release from juvenile detention	n/a	OR=0.24, $Z=-1.68$, $p=0.092$
Model 2B (N=47)	Days in Custody	n/a	OR=0.19, $Z=-1.99$, $p=0.047$
Model 2C (N=47)	Months After Release and Days in Custody	n/a	OR=0.21, $Z=-1.79$, $p=0.074$
Model 3A (N=43)	All potentially relevant baseline psychological and demographic measures	No	OR=0.02, $Z=-2.50$, $p=0.012$
Model 3B (N=47)	All potentially relevant baseline psychological and demographic measures	Yes	OR=0.04, $Z=-2.35$, $p=0.019$
Model 4A (N=43)	Predictive baseline measures or those differing by chance	No	OR=0.02, $Z=-2.48$, $p=0.013$
Model 4B (N=47)	Predictive baseline measures or those differing by chance	Yes	OR=0.05, $Z=-2.33$, $p=0.020$

Note. Models 3A and 3B controlled for: (1) months after release from juvenile detention, (2) baseline grit, (3) baseline fixed theories of personality, (4) baseline school identification, (5) baseline sensitivity to incarceration-based rejection, (6) gender, (7) age, and (8) mother's education. Models 4A and 4B controlled for: (1), (3), (5), (6), (7), and (8). Models 2B and 3B imputed missing values on mothers' education with the sample mean for four participants missing this variable. Models 3A and 4A did not.

Table S6. Immediate self-report survey measures by condition, Study 1.

Measure	Control Condition	Student Treatment	Student Treatment + Letter	Omnibus Statistical Test
State belonging (1-6 scale)	5.06 (0.92)	4.77 (0.86)	4.85 (0.76)	$F < 1$
Belonging uncertainty (1-5 scale)	4.12 (1.11)	4.07 (1.00)	3.73 (0.80)	$F < 1$
Anxiety in class (1-7 scale)	3.12 (1.86)	3.47 (1.79)	2.87 (1.85)	$F < 1$
Anticipated procedural justice (1-7 scale)	4.44 (1.27)	4.40 (1.62)	4.00 (1.07)	$F < 1$
Perceived safety in school (1-4 scale)	3.12 (0.89)	3.43 (0.72)	3.43 (0.61)	$F < 1$
Possible selves (1-7 scale)	5.75 (0.87)	6.08 (0.55)	6.15 (0.67)	$F < 1$
Anticipated enjoyment of academic work (1-7 scale)	4.82 (1.07)	4.87 (1.46)	4.57 (1.22)	$F < 1$
School identification (1-7 scale)	5.82 (1.21)	6.10 (1.04)	5.87 (1.19)	$F < 1$
School identification, controlling for baseline (1-7 scale)	5.95 (0.82)	5.95 (0.83)	5.95 (0.82)	$F < 1$
Academic self-efficacy (1-7 scale)	5.38 (0.99)	5.13 (1.13)	5.63 (0.99)	$F < 1$
Perceived parent academic expectations (1-7 scale)	5.78 (1.78)	5.91 (0.92)	5.60 (1.51)	$F < 1$

Note. $N_s=46-47$. No mean differs significantly from another in the same row at $p < 0.05$. SDs indicated in parentheses. Analyses control for mothers' level of education achieved and baseline fixed theories of personality.

Timing of Study 2

Study 2 was conducted in February 2020, just prior to the spread of COVID-19 in the United States and well-publicized incidents of racial violence, including the killing of George Floyd, which may have shifted societal feelings about race and criminal justice.

Table S7. Baseline measures by condition, Study 2.

Baseline Measure	No Letter	Letter	Statistical Test
Years teaching	17.07 (7.46)	16.52 (7.69)	$t < 1$
Teacher gender (% female)	62%	71%	$\chi^2 < 1$
Teacher race-ethnicity (% White)	84%	85%	$\chi^2 < 1$
% White students in school	48.7% (30.49)	55.5% (29.42)	$t(345)=2.12,$ $p=0.035, d=0.23$
% Black students in school	17.11% (20.97)	19.73% (23.52)	$t < 1.10$
Have you ever taught a student who had experience in Juvenile Detention? (% yes)	70%	67%	$\chi^2 < 1$
How often do students with experience in Juvenile Detention come to your school? (1-6 scale)	3.25 (1.25)	3.28 (1.16)	$t < 1$
% teaching elementary school (K-5)	3%	1%	$\chi^2 < 1.10$
% teaching middle school (6-8)	23%	23%	$\chi^2 < 1$
% teaching high school (9-12)	80%	81%	$\chi^2 < 1$
% teaching art	6%	4%	$\chi^2(6)=11.17,$ $p > 0.08$
% teaching English	23%	29%	
% teaching foreign language	5%	6%	
% teaching general	5%	8%	
% teaching math	20%	26%	
% teaching science	23%	17%	
% teaching social studies	19%	10%	

Note. Nno-letter=175, Nletter=173.

Table S8. Crime curious coding, Study 2.

		Sample Response	Control	Letter
Not Crime Curious		-	82.76%	95.38%
Crime Curious	Any subcategory	-	17.24%	4.62%
	Crime curious, without reason	I would have concerns about the nature of his crime that got him sent to detention, but would give him the same opportunity that I give all students.	6.32%	1.73%
	Crime curious, to support student	I would be nervous because I know I cannot ask [name] about his experiences when he was out of school, but those details would help me be more aware of his needs for re-entry.	4.03%	1.16%
	Crime curious, to protect others	I would be apprehensive, as I am unfamiliar with [student name's] history--what led to him being in juvenile detention center in the first place and how long was he in custody. For instance, did he commit a violent crime? Will he have outbursts? Will he be disruptive?	6.90%	1.73%

Note. Two research assistants trained in qualitative coding and blind to condition independently coded a random sample of 100 responses. They achieved a high reliability (for not crime curious vs. crime curious: Cohen's Kappa=0.95; for not crime curious vs. each of the three subcategories of crime curious: Cohen's Kappa=0.91). One of those research assistants then coded the remainder of the responses. $N_{\text{control}}=174$. $N_{\text{letter}}=173$.

Table S9. Comparison of models with and without random intercept for target student, Study 2.

Construct	Valence	Selected Model AIC	Model with random intercept AIC
Commitment to the student (1-7 scale)	Positive	1012.38	1031.60
Emotions about the student entering class (1-7 scale)	Composite	820.41	840.25
	Positive	1166.27	1182.60
	Negative	829.65	850.46
Anticipated success/positive influence (vs. failure/negative influence) in class (1-6 scale)	Composite	790.63	809.96
	Positive	963.85	979.44
	Negative	917.48	937.52
Anticipated success/positive influence (vs. failure/negative influence) in school (1-6 scale)	Composite	733.83	749.87
	Positive	957.70	975.55
	Negative	815.60	834.01
Anticipated success/positive influence (vs. failure/negative influence) in society (1-6 scale)	Composite	751.00	769.30
	Positive	1019.24	1038.29
	Negative	834.13	851.82
Feelings of love, hope, respect, and trust for the student (1-6 scale)	Positive	953.76	972.51
Opportunity to realize goals as an educator (1-6 scale)	Positive	1073.77	1091.52
Negative judgment following a minor misbehavior (1-7 scale)	Negative	1032.77	1057.65
Perceived age of student (years)	n/a	1222.71	1239.94

Tertiary Measures and Analyses in Study 2: Generalization Beyond the Target Student Measures

After completing the items referencing the target student named in the letter, teachers completed identical items assessing their expectations for students in reentry from juvenile detention in general and similar items assessing their expectations for adult offenders in reentry.

Anticipated success (or failure) of students in reentry in general in class, school, and society. First, we asked teachers about how much success they anticipated among “students in general who have experience in the juvenile detention system and are returning to school” in class, school, and society, along the same items assessed for the target student. The measures were reliable (5-items re class: composite: $\alpha=0.82$; positive items: $r=0.66$; negative items: $\alpha=0.92$; 5-items re school: composite: $\alpha=0.78$; positive items: $r=0.72$; negative items: $\alpha=0.86$; 4-items re society: composite: $\alpha=0.80$; one positive item; negative items: $\alpha=0.90$)

Anticipated success (or failure) of adults in reentry in society. Finally, we asked teachers how likely “adults who have been convicted of a crime and imprisoned and are returning to society” would be to succeed and be a positive influence in society, along items similar to those assessed for the anticipated success for students returning to school from juvenile detention, except dropping school-specific items (10-items, 1=not at all likely, 6=extremely likely; $\alpha=0.89$). We also examined the positive items ($\alpha=0.90$) and negative items ($\alpha=0.90$) separately.

Results

As with the primary analyses, analyses controlled for the percentage of White students teachers reported who attended their school, as this differed slightly by condition at baseline.

Anticipated success (or failure) of students in reentry in general. While teachers’ beliefs about students in reentry in general trended more positively in every analysis, only one analysis reached significance. See Table S9. Thus, the letter did not robustly shift expectations of students in reentry in general, either positively or negatively. Instead, it functioned primarily to improve expectations specifically for the target student.

Table S10. Teachers’ expectations of success for students in reentry in general, by condition, Study 2.

Construct	Measure	No Letter	Letter	Statistical Test
Anticipated success/positive influence (vs. failure/negative influence) in class (1-6 scale)	Composite	3.58 (0.87)	3.70 (0.73)	$t(343)=1.62, p=0.107, d=0.15, 95\% \text{ CI } (-0.06, 0.36)$
	Positive items	2.61 (0.94)	2.74 (0.84)	$t(343)=1.53, p=0.127, d=0.15, 95\% \text{ CI } (-0.06, 0.38)$
	Negative items	2.78 (1.06)	2.66 (0.95)	$t(343)=1.23, p=0.220, d=-0.11, 95\% \text{ CI } (0.10, -0.32)$
Anticipated success/positive influence (vs. failure/negative influence) in school (1-6 scale)	Composite	3.89 (0.77)	3.94 (0.71)	$t(342)<1, p=0.459, d=0.08, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.13, 0.29]$
	Positive items	3.09 (0.96)	3.13 (0.97)	$t(343)<1, p=0.693, d=0.04, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.17, 0.25]$
	Negative items	2.58 (0.95)	2.50 (0.79)	$t(341)<1, p=0.374, d=-0.10, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.12, -0.31]$
Anticipated success/positive influence (vs. failure/negative influence) in society (1-6 scale)	Composite	4.05 (0.79)	4.21 (0.75)	$t(343)=1.86, p=0.064, d=0.21, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.00, 0.42]$
	Positive item	3.13 (0.98)	3.38 (1.11)	$t(343)=2.32, p=0.021, d=0.24, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.03, 0.45]$
	Negative items	2.65 (0.90)	2.51 (0.86)	$t(343)=1.31, p=0.191, d=-0.16, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.05, -0.37]$

Note. 1-6 scale; SDs depicted in parentheses. $N_s=346-348$.

Comparing teachers' expectations for the success of the target student and students in reentry in general was informative. To do so, we averaged the measures of anticipated success in class, school, and society for the target student ($\alpha=0.86$) and for students in reentry in general ($\alpha=0.88$). We then conducted a mixed-model ANCOVA treating the anticipated success of the target student vs. students in general as a within-subjects factor and condition as a between-subjects factor, and controlling for the percentage of White students teachers reported who attended their school. The analysis yielded an interaction, $t(344)=3.85$, $p=0.0001$. While the letter condition caused a highly significant and medium-sized improvement in teachers' expectations for the target student, $t(444)=4.43$, $p<0.001$, $d=0.50$, 95% CI [0.28, 0.70] this difference was smaller and only marginally significant for students in reentry in general, $t(444)=1.64$, $p=0.101$, $d=0.16$, 95% CI [-0.05, 0.37].

We also compared expectations within condition. Of particular interest, even in the no-letter condition, teachers anticipated greater success by the target student than by students in reentry in general, $t(344)=7.02$, $p<0.0001$, $d=0.34$, 95% CI [0.05, 0.64]. This difference only expanded in the letter condition, $t(344)=12.41$, $p<0.0001$, $d=0.76$, 95% CI [0.45, 1.07]. Thus, simply considering an individual student in reentry, rather than the category of students in reentry category, led to more positive expectations, with further improvement caused by the letter. See Table S7.

Table S11. Teachers' composite expectations of success for the target student and for students in reentry in general in class, school, and society, by condition, Study 2.

Measure	No Letter	Letter	Between-Subjects Contrast
Target student	4.09 (0.71)	4.40 (0.54)	$t(444)=4.43$, $p<0.001$, $d=0.50$, 95% CI [0.28, 0.70]
Students in reentry in general	3.84 (0.74)	3.96 (0.63)	$t(442)=1.64$, $p=0.101$, $d=0.16$, 95% CI [-0.05, 0.37]
Within-Subjects Contrast	$t(344)=7.02$, $p<0.0001$, $d=0.34$, 95% CI [0.05, 0.64]	$t(344)=12.41$, $p<0.0001$, $d=0.76$, 95% CI [0.45, 1.07]	

Note. 1-6 scale; SDs depicted in parentheses. $N=348$.

Anticipated success (or failure) of adults in reentry. As with teachers' expectations for students in general in reentry, expectations for the success of adults in general in reentry to society from prison trended more positively in the letter condition but did not reach significance. See Table S8.

Table S12. Teachers' expectations for the success of adult offenders in reentry, Study 2.

Measure	No Letter	Letter	Statistical Test
Composite	3.69 (0.70)	3.76 (0.66)	$t(343)=1.20$, $p=0.232$, $d=0.10$, 95% CI [-0.11, 0.31]
Positive items	3.21 (0.85)	3.30 (0.80)	$t(343)=1.16$, $p=0.248$, $d=0.11$, 95% CI [-0.10, 0.32]
Negative items	2.83 (0.87)	2.77 (0.79)	$t(343)=0.86$, $p=0.391$, $d=-0.07$, 95% CI [-0.28, 0.14]

Note. 1-6 scale; SDs depicted in parentheses. $N=348$.

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Survey Measures (Study 1)

Baseline Measures at the Juvenile Justice Center

Baseline Psychological Measures

<i>Grit</i> ($\alpha=0.70$) (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009)¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I finish whatever I start • I stick with projects and activities for more than a few weeks • I try very hard even though I fail sometimes • I stay committed to my goals, even when they take a long time to complete • I keep working hard even when I feel like quitting
1=Not at all like me, 2=Not much like me, 3=Somewhat like me, 4=Mostly like me, 5=Very much like me

<i>Fixed theories of personality</i> ($\alpha=0.53$) (Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1997; Dweck, 1999)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that. • As much as I hate to admit it, you can't teach an old dog new tricks. People can't really change their deepest attributes. • People can do things differently, but the important parts of who they are can't really be changed.
1=Not true at all, 2=False, 3=Somewhat false, 4=Neither true nor false, 5=Somewhat true, 6=True, 7=Very true

<i>School identification</i> ($r=0.93$) (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing well in school is important to me • Being successful at school is important to me
1=Not at all, 2=A little bit, 3=Somewhat, 4=A moderate amount, 5=A lot, 6=A great deal, 7=Extremely

<i>Sensitivity to incarceration-based rejection</i> (inspired by Mendoza-Denton, Downey, Purdie, Davis, & Pietrzak, 2002)
<p>Imagine there is a fight at lunch and an administrator at school is coming to see who started it. They are randomly questioning students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How concerned/anxious would you be that the administrator might question you because of your time spent in Juvenile Detention? • I would expect that the administrator might question me because of my time spent in Juvenile Detention.
1=Very unconcerned/unlikely, 2=Unconcerned/Unlikely, 3=Somewhat unconcerned/unlikely, 4=Somewhat concerned/likely, 5=Concerned/Likely, 6=Very concerned/likely; Scores on the two items are multiplied.

Baseline Demographic Questions

Parents' national background
How many of your parents were born in the United States? Circle one.
None, One, Both

Grandparents' national background
How many of your grandparents were born in the United States? Circle one.
None, One, Two, Three, Four

Language background
Is English the first language that you learned?
Yes, No. If not, What is the first language that you learned? (open-ended)

Mother's Education

¹ Complete references can be found in the SOM-R document.

What is the highest level of education completed by your mother (or primary guardian)?
Less than high school, High school or GED, Vocational/technical school or some college, Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, Graduate or professional degree

Father's Education
What is the highest level of education completed by your father (or secondary guardian)?
Less than high school, High school or GED, Vocational/technical school or some college, Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, Graduate or professional degree

Gender
What is your gender? Circle one
Male, Female, Not Sure, Other (please specify):

Race/Ethnicity
What is your race/ethnicity? Circle one. If you choose "Other/Multiple" please specify.
African/African American, Asian/Asian American, Hispanic/Latino American, Native American, White/European American, Other/multiple:

Self-Report Measures in the Intervention Session, Immediately Following Randomized Content

<i>Manipulation check</i>
What was the primary idea of the stories you read? Circle one
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's helpful to learn new study skills to do better on tests and homework assignments in school. • Avoiding drugs and alcohol to live a healthier lifestyle. • Developing positive relationships with teachers and other adults in school who can help you achieve your goals. • How exercise and healthy eating can be helpful.

<i>State belonging ($\alpha=0.77$) (Walton & Cohen, 2007)</i>
Think about the school you are currently enrolled in. For each question or statement, mark the response that is the most true for you.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right now, I feel like I belong at my school. • Right now, I fit in well at my school. • Right now, I feel like an outsider at my school. (<i>reverse coded</i>) • Right now, I feel comfortable at my school.
1=Strong disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Somewhat disagree, 4=Somewhat agree, 5=Agree, 6=Strongly agree

<i>Belonging uncertainty (Yeager, Walton, et al., 2016)</i>
Think about the school you are currently enrolled in. For each question or statement, mark the response that is the most true for you.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "When you think about your school, how often, if ever, do you wonder: 'Maybe I don't belong here'?"
1=Always, 2=Frequently, 3=Sometimes, 4=Hardly ever, 5=Never

<i>Anxiety in class ($r=0.56$) (Walton & Cohen, 2007)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How anxious would you feel about approaching a teacher about something you do not understand in class? • How anxious would you be about asking a question or making a comment in front of the whole class?
1=Not at all, 2=A little bit, 3=Somewhat, 4=A moderate amount, 5=A lot, 6=A great deal, 7=Extremely

<i>Anticipated procedural justice ($r=0.37$) (Goyer et al., 2019)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking ahead, how fairly do you think you will be evaluated in your school? • Looking ahead, how fairly do you think discipline will be assigned in your school?

1=Not at all, 2=A little bit, 3=Somewhat, 4=A moderate amount, 5=A lot, 6=A great deal, 7=Extremely

Perceived safety in school ($\alpha=0.91$)

How safe do you feel...

- Outside around your school?
- Traveling between home and school?
- In the hallways and bathrooms of your school?
- In your classes?

1=Not safe, 2=Somewhat safe, 3=Mostly safe, 4=Very safe

Possible academic selves ($\alpha=0.79$) (Markus & Nurius, 1987)

In the future... Probably everyone thinks about the future to some extent. When doing so, we often think about the kinds of experiences that are in store for us. Some of these experiences are probably quite likely to occur, while others are not. Use the following scales to say whether each statement is possible or not possible for you to BE, or to DO in the future.

- In the future, I could see myself being successful in my school.
- In the future, I could see myself using doing well academically in my school.
- In the future, I could see myself having a good relationship with at least one teacher or other adult in my school.
- In the future, I could see myself learning valuable skills and knowledge in my school.
- In the future, I could see myself having a job or career that inspires me.

1=Strong disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Moderately disagree, 4=Neutral 5=Moderately agree, 6=Agree, 7=Strongly agree

Anticipated enjoyment of academic work ($r=0.70$) (Walton, Logel, et al., 2015)

- Looking ahead, how much do you think you will enjoy course work in your school?
- Looking ahead, how interesting do you think classes in school will be for you?

1=Not at all, 2=A little bit, 3=Somewhat, 4=A moderate amount, 5=A lot, 6=A great deal, 7=Extremely

School identification ($r=0.76$) (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999)

- It is important to me to do well in my school.
- Being successful at school is important to me.

1=Not at all, 2=A little bit, 3=Somewhat, 4=A moderate amount, 5=A lot, 6=A great deal, 7=Extremely

Self-efficacy ($r=0.04$) (Walton & Cohen, 2007)

- I feel confident that I have the ability to do well in my school.
- I feel that I have less ability than others in my school. (*reverse-coded*)

1=Not at all, 2=A little bit, 3=Somewhat, 4=A moderate amount, 5=A lot, 6=A great deal, 7=Extremely

Perceived payoff of education ($r=-0.08$)

- My parents say education does not help people like us get paid or promoted. (*reverse-coded*)
- For people like me, studying in school pays off with good jobs.

1=Not at all, 2=A little bit, 3=Somewhat, 4=A moderate amount, 5=A lot, 6=A great deal, 7=Extremely

Perceived parent academic expectations ($\alpha=0.94$)

- My parents/guardians believe I will graduate from high school.
- My parents/guardians believe I will go to college.
- My parents/guardians believe I will graduate from college.

1=Not at all, 2=A little bit, 3=Somewhat, 4=A moderate amount, 5=A lot, 6=A great deal, 7=Extremely

Intervention Stories (Study 1)

All stories were audio recorded by youth in after school groups in the local community. Audio recordings were played and transcripts were provided to participants.

Story 1

“I knew that coming back from Juve was going to be hard. Sometimes it felt like if I made one wrong step I’d be right back in jail. I knew I never wanted that. I needed to find a way to do better in school, but it seemed so hard to catch up. I was so far behind, and I was pretty mad at the system.

After I got out, I talked to my neighbor. He had been to Juve too, but he still graduated. I thought things hadn’t been bad for him, but he told me that he struggled too, especially at first. He said things started getting better when he talked to his math teacher, Ms. C. She got that he was trying. Later she helped him get a job and worked with so he could catch up in her class. When I thought about myself and what kind of person I wanted to be, I realized I needed a diploma to get there. Oh and I also cared a lot about being a positive role model for my younger sister. She’s ten.

I used to not get along with my teachers, but I decided to make more of an effort. Some of my teachers didn’t seem to listen, but eventually I found some I could trust and talk about things I care about. They helped me a lot, and I was able to raise some of my grades. So now I’m a senior, and I’m walking at graduation this spring. My mom is so proud of me, so is my sister, and I’m proud of the progress that I’ve made.”

-12th grade student, class of 2017

Story 2

“After Juve, I got put on GPS so my house just felt like another cage. I couldn’t do anything or go anywhere without asking my probation officer for permission. I hated how it made me feel. Sometimes I wanted to cut off the GPS, even though I knew that would be bad for me in the long run. It felt like a trap, because there were a million rules and I didn’t always know what they were. And the only time I could leave the house was to go to school.

So, I tried to figure out how to make school interesting. I always loved music, and wanted to learn more about how to create it. I thought about joining the choir, so I talked with some of the students. I wanted to get more involved, but I didn’t know the director. One time I tried talking with him about my interest but he just said he was busy and maybe he would meet with me later. That kind of hurt, like he just didn’t think I had something to say.

Later, I tried to mix some music on my computer at home, but I couldn’t figure it out. I felt really frustrated when I woke up the next day. When I got to my first class I just put my head down. After class, my teacher pulled me aside and asked what was wrong. I told her I wanted to learn how to work with sound equipment, but I didn’t think the choir director would want to help. She said that the director really likes to work with students who love music but he’s just busy, and I should try to talk to him again. I still felt worried that he wouldn’t want to help, but I decided to

try.

That day after school, I talked to the director. I told him that I wanted to learn how to work sound equipment and to record and edit music, and I asked if he would teach me some things. I was surprised because he seemed really happy to help me. He started to show me how to work with the equipment. I ended up joining the choir. And later that semester, he showed me even more respect by letting me help run sound during the talent show. After I graduated, I got a job working with sound equipment at a recording studio. The people at my work respect my talent and knowledge. Music has helped me stay out of trouble.”

- Recent graduate, class of 2014

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

Story 4

“A few days ago, I was walking to BART with my little brother, who is six, and I noticed a cop was walking toward us. He didn’t look like he was approaching us, but as soon as my little brother saw him, he reached up and grabbed my hand and squeezed it. I could tell he was scared.

It reminded me of how I felt when I first left Juve. It felt like cops and other adults didn't respect me and were out to get me, like the system was rigged against me. Sometimes it felt like a target was on my back—and there was nothing I could do about it.

When I looked down at my brother, I thought of an art project I did that helped me feel more respected by adults, and more in control. When I first got out of Juve, I heard about this program where teenagers learn about their community's history and paint murals about it. I talked to my art teacher about doing something like this in my school. She agreed to work with me on it. We met once a week for a semester to research the design. The process was challenging but I learned more about my community and how to depict it. It was cool to see my teacher was impacted. After I painted the mural, some other students wanted to do murals, and she asked me to talk with them about how I did it. It felt good to earn respect.

When my little brother got scared of the cop at BART I remembered that feeling. I looked the cop in the eye and calmly said, "Good afternoon." The cop seemed surprised but he said, "Good afternoon" right back to me. My little brother couldn't believe it. I told him I knew that feeling. It's normal to feel scared and like you can't control things around you, but it's also possible to earn respect and move ahead. For me, the mural project helped give me confidence when talking with adults, in a lot of different situations."

- 10th grade student, class of 2019

This student described working with an art teacher, so we asked her about her experience to learn more. Here is what she said:

Teacher Story

"I became a teacher because I love to see kids grow and improve. So that mural project is one of my favorite experiences as a teacher.

That student was coming back to school from Juvenile Detention, and he'd been through some things. But I could see that he was more committed. He started coming to class more. Sometimes he even came a few minutes early to work on homework.

One day, he approached me after class and said that he wanted to paint a mural about a part of his community's history. He asked me to work with him on the design, and help him find a place to paint it. I was glad that he reached out to me. As I got to know him better, I was impressed with how seriously he took his work. I did my best to help him, because I could tell it was important to him. He did a great job.

He made a lot of progress in my class and others, and he's doing really well now. I have so much respect for him and what he's accomplished. He's worked really hard to reach his goals."

-Art teacher, Oakland Unified School District

Study 2 Complete Measures

PRIMARY MEASURES (Pre-Registered)

Primary Measures (Pre-Registered): Perceptions of the Target Student

Measures are listed in the order administered. Measures assessing perceptions of the target student that were pre-registered as secondary are indicated in brackets and described subsequently.

Commitment to the target student ($\alpha=0.90$)					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How responsible would you feel for (name) as (he/she) returns to school? How motivated would you feel to help (student) as (he/she) returns to school? How committed would you feel to helping (student) succeed in returning to school? 					
1=Not at all, 2=A little bit, 3=Somewhat, 4=A moderate amount, 5=A lot, 6=A great deal, 7=Extremely					
Thoughts and feelings (open-ended)					
Please describe the <u>thoughts</u> and <u>feelings</u> you might have about [student name] entering your class in more detail. How might you react to this news? What would you anticipate about your experiences with [student name] as [he/she] comes to your class?					
Behaviors (open-ended)					
Please describe what, if anything, in particular you would <u>do</u> as [student name] enters your class.					
Emotions about the target student entering their class (all: $\alpha=0.84$; positive: $\alpha=0.89$; negative: $\alpha=0.83$; order of items randomized)					
To what extent would you have each of the following feelings about [student name] entering your class?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enthusiastic excited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> glad hopeful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prepared afraid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> angry annoyed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> apprehensive challenged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> frustrated overwhelmed
1=Not at all, 2=A little bit, 3=Somewhat, 4=Moderately, 5=Quite a bit, 6=Very, 7=Extremely					
Anticipated success (or failure) and positive (or negative) influence in class (all: $\alpha=0.84$; positive: $r=0.64$; negative: $\alpha=0.87$)					
Think ahead to what [student name] might do or what he/she might experience in the future in class.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distract other students in class? Be a positive influence on other students in class? Interfere with your teaching? Be motivated to work hard in class? Influence other students in a negative way? 					
1=Not at all likely, 2=A little bit likely, 3=Somewhat likely, 4=Moderately likely, 5=Very likely, 6=Extremely likely					
Anticipated success (or failure) and positive (or negative) influence in school (all: $\alpha=0.80$; positive: $r=0.75$; negative: $\alpha=0.87$)					
How likely is [student name] to...					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be successful upon returning to school? Develop positive relationships with other teachers in school? Be a danger to others in school? Have significant disciplinary problems in school in the future? Be suspended in the future? 					

1=Not at all likely, 2=A little bit likely, 3=Somewhat likely, 4=Moderately likely, 5= Very likely, 6=Extremely likely

<i>Anticipated success (or failure) and positive (or negative) influence in society (all: $\alpha=0.79$; negative: $\alpha=0.89$)</i>
How likely is [student name] to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be reincarcerated in the future? • Contribute positively to society? • Commit another crime? • Be violent in the future?
1=Not at all likely, 2=A little bit likely, 3=Somewhat likely, 4=Moderately likely, 5= Very likely, 6=Extremely likely

<i>Feelings of love, hope, respect, and trust for the student ($\alpha=0.86$)</i>
How might you feel about [student name]?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much <u>love</u> would you feel for [student name]? • How much <u>hope</u> would you feel for [student name]? • How much <u>trust</u> would you feel for [student name]? • How much <u>respect</u> would you feel for [student name]?
1=None, 2=A little, 3=Some, 4=A moderate amount, 5=A lot, 6=A great deal

[Opportunity to realize goals as an educator (secondary, described below)]

<i>Responses to a minor misbehavior ($\alpha=0.88$)</i>
Imagine it is a week after [student name] has entered your class and you find [him/her] sleeping in class. When you try to wake [him/her] up [he/she] refuses to do [his/her] work.
How would you respond to this behavior? (<i>open-ended</i>)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How worried would you be that [student name] will be a problem student? • How worried would you be that [student name]'s behavior could get worse over time? • How worried would you be that you might have to refer [student name] to law enforcement in the future?
1=Not at all, 2=A little bit, 3=Somewhat, 4=A moderate amount, 5=Quite a bit, 6=Very, 7=Extremely

[Perceived age (secondary, described below)]

**SECONDARY MEASURES
Pre-Registered as Exploratory**

Perceptions of the Target Student

<i>Opportunity to realize goals as an educator ($r=0.79$)</i>
How might you feel about [student name]?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Student name] presents an opportunity for me to do something meaningful as an educator. • [Student name] presents an opportunity for me to reach my goals as an educator.
1=Not at all, 2=A little bit, 3=Somewhat, 4=A moderate amount, 5=A lot, 6=A great deal

<i>Perceived age</i>
How old do you think [student name] is?
Drop down list: 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

**TERTIARY MEASURES
Pre-Registered as Exploratory**

Perceptions of Students in Reentry from Juvenile Detention in General

Instructions: *Next, we'd like to ask some questions about your thoughts about **students in general who have experience in the juvenile detention system and are returning to school.***

Anticipated success (or failure) and positive (or negative) influence in class (all: $\alpha=0.82$; positive: $r=0.66$; negative: $\alpha=0.92$)
How likely is the typical student returning to school from juvenile detention to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distract other students in class? ● Be a positive influence on other students in class? ● Interfere with teaching? ● Be motivated to work hard in class? ● Influence other students in a negative way?
1=Not at all likely, 2=A little bit likely, 3=Somewhat likely, 4=Moderately likely, 5= Very likely, 6=Extremely likely

Anticipated success (or failure) and positive (or negative) influence in school (all: $\alpha=0.78$; positive: $r=0.72$; negative: $\alpha=0.86$)
How likely is the typical student returning to school from juvenile detention to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be successful upon returning to school? ● Develop positive relationships with teachers in school? ● Be a danger to others in school? ● Have significant disciplinary problems in school in the future? ● Be suspended in the future?
1=Not at all likely, 2=A little bit likely, 3=Somewhat likely, 4=Moderately likely, 5= Very likely, 6=Extremely likely

Anticipated success (or failure) and positive (or negative) influence in society (all: $\alpha=0.80$; negative: $\alpha=0.90$)
How likely is the typical student returning to school from juvenile detention to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be reincarcerated in the future? ● Contribute positively to society? ● Commit another crime? ● Be violent in the future?
1=Not at all likely, 2=A little bit likely, 3=Somewhat likely, 4=Moderately likely, 5= Very likely, 6=Extremely likely

Anticipated Success (or Failure) of Adults in Reentry

Instructions: *Next, we'd like to ask some questions about your thoughts about **adults in general who have been convicted of a crime and imprisoned and are returning to society.***

Anticipated success (or failure) of adults in reentry (all: $\alpha=0.89$; positive: $\alpha=0.90$; negative: $\alpha=0.90$)
How likely is the typical adult with experience in prison to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be successful upon returning to society? ● Influence others in a negative way? ● Be a positive influence on others? ● Be a danger to others? ● Be motivated to work hard? ● Develop positive relationships with other adults? ● Be reincarcerated in the future? ● Commit another crime? ● Contribute positively to society? ● Be violent in the future?
1=Not at all likely, 2=A little bit likely, 3=Somewhat likely, 4=Moderately likely, 5= Very likely, 6=Extremely likely