

SENT DOWN THE DRAIN

ZERO TOLERANCE & THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE



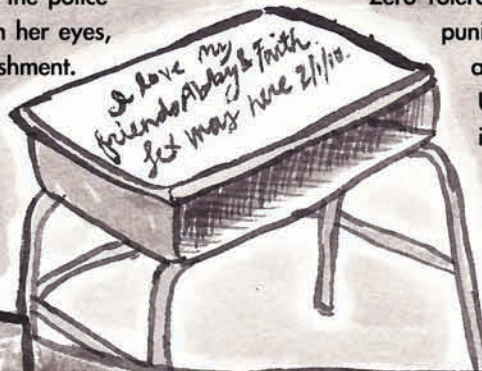
Alexa Gonzales, a 12 year-old student at Forest Hills Junior High, New York, was arrested in front of her fellow students in February, 2010. Alexa, an outgoing and artistic student, found herself face to face with a police officer after breaking a school rule... she wrote on her desk!



It seems that doodling the words "I love my friends Abby and Faith. Lex was here 2/1/10" was considered a threatening and criminal act by the school principal, who immediately called the cops.

She was escorted to the police precinct with tears in her eyes, shocked at this punishment.

Why was Alexa arrested for drawing on her desk? She was punished under a "Zero Tolerance" policy.



"Zero Tolerance", a practice of strict automatic punishment for rule-breaking, has been adopted by school districts all over the U.S.A. Although these policies are implemented with the supposed goal of creating "safer" & more "peaceful" schools, they have done more to criminalize youth than they have to protect them. "Zero Tolerance" policies create school environments in which young people can easily be pushed out of schools and into prisons for minor non-violent offenses.