



PROBLEM



WHAT IS SCHOOL PUSHOUT?

EVERY CHILD HAS A RIGHT TO A QUALITY EDUCATION AND TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY. Yet, the way our schools approach discipline often pushes young people out of school through suspensions, expulsions and even arrests for minor misbehavior. These zero-tolerance practices increase the likelihood

that students will fall behind academically, dropout or become involved in the juvenile justice system. While these approaches negatively impact all students, students of color, students with disabilities and LGBTQ students are pushed out at higher rates. Students cannot succeed in their education if they are not in school to learn.

Statistics on the National Pushout Problem

- States spend \$5.7 billion a year on the juvenile justice system instead of our schools. On average, states spend \$88,000 to incarcerate a young person, but only \$10,000 to educate one.
- 3 million students are suspended from school each year. The vast majority of suspensions are for minor, subjective infractions.

Disparities in School Discipline

- Black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students.
- 70% of students arrested or referred to police at school are Black and Latino. While Black students represent 16% of enrollment, they represent 31% of school-related arrests.
- Students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension than students without disabilities.

SOLUTIONS

dignityinschools.org

AT DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS, WE PROMOTE MORE POSITIVE AND COMMON SENSE APPROACHES TO DISCIPLINE THAT HOLD YOUNG PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE WHILE KEEPING THEM IN SCHOOL.

Positive approaches to discipline build relationships between students and adults and use discipline as a teaching moment for young people to reflect on how their actions impact others and repair the harm that was caused. Schools provide students with interventions and services to meet their needs and involve both students and parents in the decision-making process.

When school climates celebrate the dignity of every student and strive to keep them in school, young people can reach their fullest potential and succeed in education, employment, and life.



DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS IS PUSHING BACK ON SCHOOL PUSHOUT

RESOURCES FOR POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

The **Model Code on Education and Dignity** presents a set of recommended policies to schools, districts and legislators to reduce the use of suspensions, expulsions and law enforcement in schools and implement positive approaches to discipline--like Restorative Practices and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)--proven to improve school climate and increase educational outcomes.

The **Solutions Not Suspension Initiative**, launched by the Dignity in Schools Campaign and Opportunity to Learn Campaign, calls on schools and districts to place a moratorium on the practice of out-of-school suspensions and provide training and support for educators to implement alternatives.

Recommendations for Policy Change

- Ensure that all schools adopt school-wide, preventive and positive discipline policies, such as Restorative Practices and school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports.
- Revise codes of conduct to limit suspensions, expulsions and other removals to be used only for the most serious behaviors and only as a last resort.
- Limit the presence and role of any law enforcement personnel in schools to ensure they are not involved in school disciplinary matters, and invest instead in counselors and other support staff in schools.
- Ensure that students and parents have a right to participate in decision-making affecting school policies.
- Provide regular training and supports on positive approaches to discipline for all school personnel – including teachers, principals, support staff, and school-based law enforcement officers.