

DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN

MODEL CODE WEBINAR: ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS



November 25, 2013

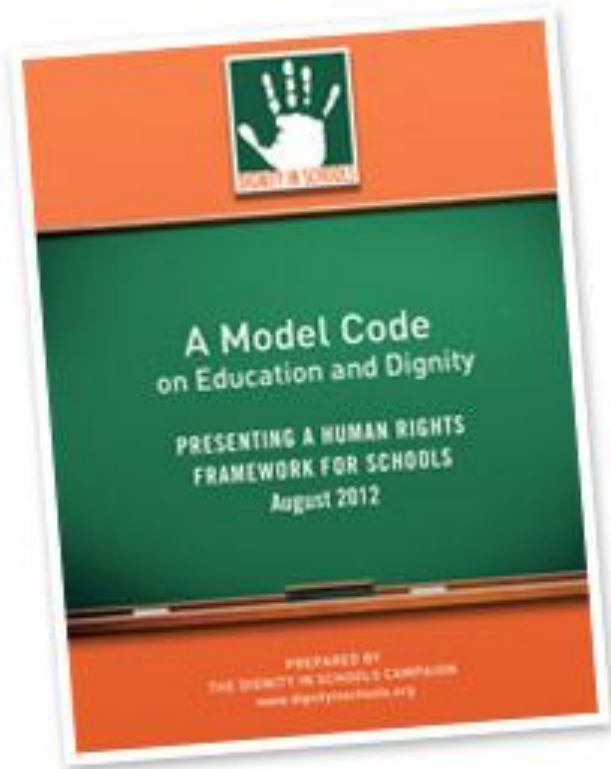
DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN (DSC)

- Challenges the systemic problem of pushout and advocates for the human right of every young person to education and dignity
- More than 74 organizations from 22 states
 - Youth and parent base-building
 - Legal and advocacy
 - Teachers and educators
 - Researchers



DSC MODEL CODE

- Model policies for schools, districts and legislators to address school pushout and create safe and positive climates for learning
- Based on research, best practices and on the ground experiences of students, parents and educators
- Rooted in fundamental human rights principle that the goal of education is to develop each young person to their full potential

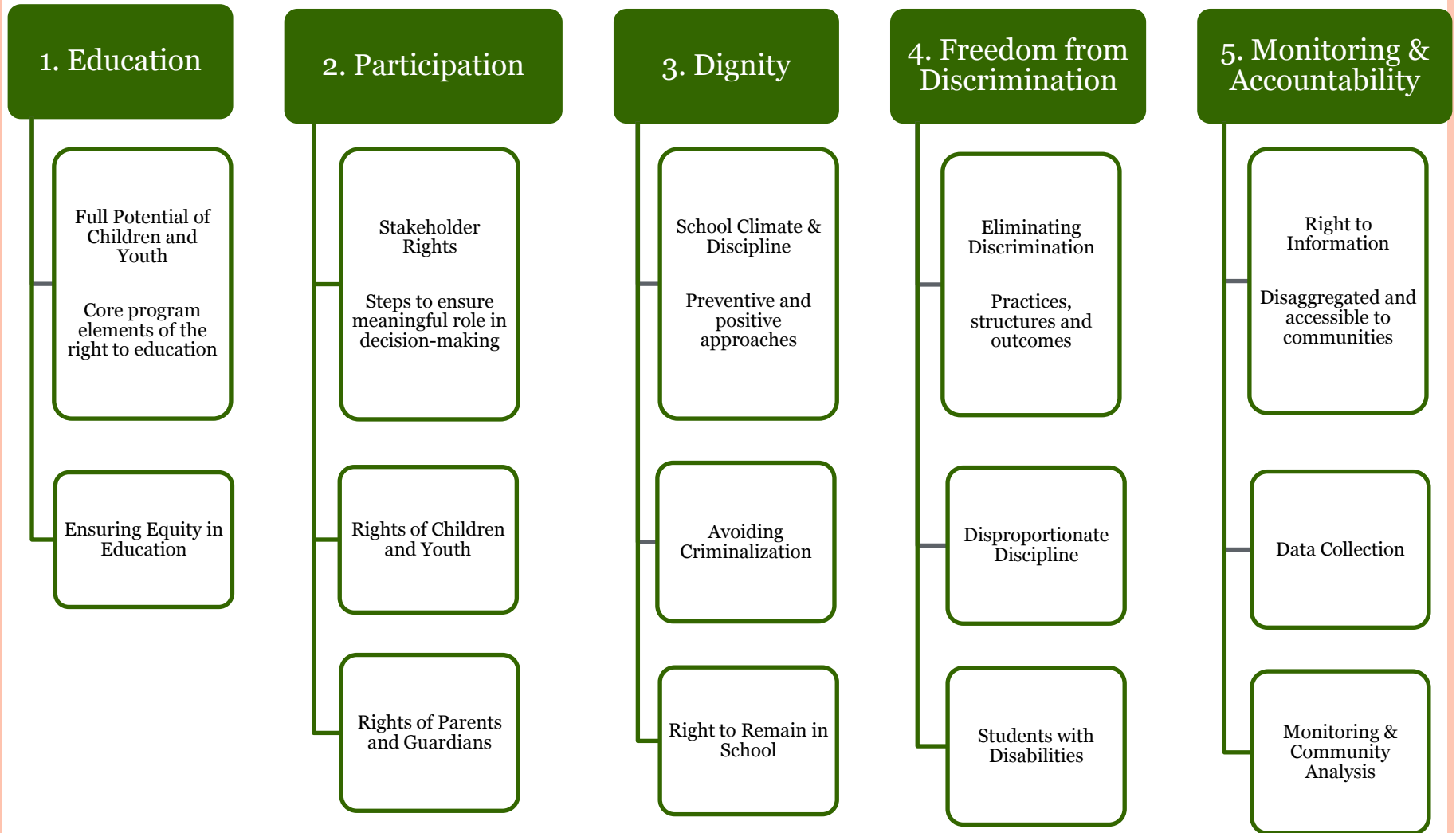


HOW WAS THE MODEL CODE DEVELOPED?

- Drafted and reviewed by members of the Model Code Working Group
- Reviewed at two American Bar Association summits
- Reviewed and edited at community engagement sessions with students, parents and teachers in 8 different states (CA, FL, GA, IL, LA, MS, NY, PA)



OVERVIEW OF THE MODEL CODE



3.3.B ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Human Rights Goal:

- Alternative schools offer alternative learning experiences beyond those provided in traditional schools and shall be based on personal need and preference and be provided to students who need extra supports.
- Must work to help students who are struggling to be successful in a traditional school setting and must not operate to punish students.
- Any decision to transfer a student shall require full consideration of the child's right to an education and to develop his or her full potential.
- Schools must ensure children, youth and their families have a right to be heard and to participate in the decision to transfer a student.

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 3.3.B

A. Definition of Alternative School

- Any educational setting designed to accommodate educational, behavioral, or medical needs of children and adolescents that cannot be adequately addressed in a traditional school environment and that is meant to be the primary source of education for those students.

B. Standards for Alternative Schools

- Same requirements and standards as any traditional public school regardless of whether they are described as a school or program.
- Must operate for a full school day of equal length to that provided to all other students (night programs or other programs designed to accommodate students' work or family obligations may use a flexible schedule as long as the same total number of instructional hours are provided).

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 3.3.B

C. Voluntary Placement

- Shall be allowed where initiated by the student and their parent or guardian, including but not limited to students who are:
 - a. Struggling to succeed in traditional school environments
 - b. At-risk of being pushed out, including over-age and/or under-credited students
 - c. Returning to school after having dropped out or faced a period of incarceration
 - d. Facing behavioral or disciplinary problems in schools

- Districts and schools must respond to requests for transfer by considering an alternative learning strategy within the traditional school to determine if transfer is necessary. An alternative learning strategy can include:
 - i. Low student-teacher ratio
 - ii. Individualized instruction and assessment
 - iii. Maximum collaboration with school district support service resources, including, but not limited to, school psychologists, academic counselors and school counselors

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 3.3.B

D. Involuntary Placement

- Prohibited for academic purposes only, including for students who are over-age or under-credited.
- Can only occur for disciplinary reasons after a full hearing has been conducted and the students' due process rights (Section 3.1.d) have been fulfilled.
- Prohibited for students under the age of 10 for disciplinary reasons.

E. Content of Alternative Programs

- Must include proven approaches in both academic and behavioral areas , e.g.:
 - a. Individualized academic plans, instruction and assessment
 - b. Experiential and service-based learning
 - c. Support service resources, including counseling and mentoring
 - d. Positive behavioral supports and restorative approaches to discipline
- Establish clear performance targets relative to student outcomes, both academic and behavioral, and align data collection and assessment to these targets.

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 3.3.B

F. Services to Students with Disabilities

- Alternative schools shall be closely monitored to ensure they are in compliance with laws ensuring the rights of students with disabilities, including but not limited to monitoring:
 - a. Number of students with disabilities served and types of disabilities represented
 - b. Nature of the programming provided for students with disabilities
 - c. Availability of related services

- Monitoring of alternative schools must include frequent site visits. Where monitoring reveals deficiencies in programming for students with disabilities, prompt correction must follow.

G. Services to English language learners (ELLs)

- Must provide quality services for ELL students and report on the numbers served and the services offered.

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 3.3.B

The Model Code also contains recommendations on:

- H. Staff Qualifications-** Establish competencies and preparation requirements and monitor compliance; Personnel must be certified as “highly qualified teachers” as defined by federal law.
- I. Progress Reviews and Length of Stay-** Review progress at least once a semester with participation of students, parents and home school; Adopt performance targets relative to students’ length of stay.
- J. Parent and Guardian Participation-** States, districts and schools shall develop requirements and performance measures for parent and/or family participation and monitor compliance.
- K. Public Reporting and Accountability-** States, districts and schools shall make publicly available the data that it collects concerning alternative schools.

Rukiya Dillahunt
Education Justice Alliance
Raleigh, North Carolina



Alberto Cazarez, Karla Fuentes Quiroz
and Jaime Alvarado
Youth Justice Coalition
Los Angeles, California



Joyce Parker
Citizens for a Better Greenville
Greenville, Mississippi



Question & Answer

LEARN MORE ABOUT DSC

- Read the Model Code and share with others
<http://www.dignityinschools.org/our-work/model-school-code>
- Hold a Model Code training in your community
Contact Fernando, DSC Field Organizer
fernando@dignityinschools.org, 205-960-3498
- See highlights from the DSC National Week of Action
<http://www.dignityinschools.org/our-work/week-of-action>
- Learn about Solutions Not Suspensions:
A Call for a Moratorium on Out-of-School
Suspensions, DSC and OTL
<http://www.stopsuspensions.org/>



CONTACT INFORMATION

www.dignityinschools.org

Natalie Chap, Dignity in Schools Campaign

Natalie@dignityinschools.org, 646-379-6499

Joyce Parker, Citizens for a Better Greenville

jparker2@bellsouth.net, 662-332-4497

Rukiya Dillahunt, Education Justice Alliance

rukiyad@mindspring.com

Kim McGill, Youth Justice Coalition

freelanow@yahoo.com, 323-235-4243