

Advocates for Equity in Schools

Workshop

School Push-Out: The impacts on students with special needs & their families

Facilitators: 2-3 workshop facilitators (optimal)

Time: 60-90 Minutes

Materials: Markers, Chart Paper, Name Tags

Activity A: **Gallery Walk** (10 min)

As participants come into the space, give them a marker and ask them to write & respond to questions on the chart papers placed around the room.

Preparation: Chart Paper Titles / Questions:

- ✓ Youth with special needs & school pushout: What do you know? What questions do you have?
- ✓ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs): What do you know? What questions do you have?
- ✓ “Disability”: What do you know? What questions do you have?
- ✓ Discipline issues & Individualized Education Programs (IEPs): What do you know? What questions do you have?
- ✓ Special Ed Services & Resources: What do you know? What questions do you have?
- ✓ Facts on pushout: (“In New York City schools, black and Hispanic youth account for 70% of students, yet represent over 90% of all suspensions. Students with special needs make up 12% of the student population, yet receive 1/3 of all suspensions—in some Brooklyn schools, they account for upwards of 90% of suspensions.”) / and excerpts from [Dignity in Schools Model Code](#))

Facilitators briefly introduce themselves & share goals for session (5 min)

Context: disparities, pushout & pre-school-to-prison pipeline, not enough resources, Special Ed reform, vision for reimagining Special Ed... (not knowing everything (e.g. laws, policy), differences state to state and district to district)

Goals:

- Learn about the most pressing issues and questions from participants on this issue (and answer those we can)
- Build community and share stories to inform our perspective and learn what’s happening across the country
- Share strategies and resources for pushing back against pushout for students with special needs & their families

Circle with participants: (20 min)

- ✓ First Round: Name, org & role, what ice cream flavor you would be
- ✓ Second Round: Share one response or take-away from the Gallery Walk OR share a question you're coming with today about pushout & youth with special needs & their families (chart questions that aren't already written in the gallery walk questions)

“Know Your Rights” Snapshot (20 min)

When schools attempt to push out students with special needs, how can students and parents be proactive? How do we address pushout from a Special Ed perspective?

- ✓ IEP's / 504 Plans
- ✓ Manifestation Determination Review Meetings
- ✓ Behavioral Intervention Plans
- ✓ Due Process hearings
- ✓ IEPplan.com for additional resources on Special Education legislation, protections and processes

Open Space Protocol (30 min):

Facilitator will explain breakout groups & their purpose (“open space” model)

- Each "convener" of a breakout session takes responsibility for naming the issue & kicking off the conversation (doesn't have to be an expert AT ALL—just volunteers to convene the conversation based on a topic or question)
- Allow participants a moment to think about what they might like to “host” (e.g. based on a question they have perhaps!)
- Go around in a circle and people can share their ideas if they want to lead one and the facilitator can write them on chart paper). Not everyone has to do this! People can pass.
- Then people scatter in groups around the room (remind people that they can move to a different group at any time)
- Give each group chart paper & markers to take notes
- When reconvening to the larger circle, have participants place their chart papers on the wall or in the middle of the circle so people can see / take photos

Closing Circle (5 min): Ask participants to name one takeaway, hope, or commitment they are leaving with today