



# DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS

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## **Suspensions in NYC are Rising and Targeting Students of Color**

- In 2008-2009, there were 73,000 suspensions in NYC public schools.<sup>i</sup> That year, more than 20% of suspensions lasted more than a week, compared to 14% in 1999-2000.<sup>ii</sup>
- Between 2001 and 2010, the number of infractions in the Discipline Code increased by 49% and the number of zero tolerance infractions (which require a suspension) increased by 200%.<sup>iii</sup>
- In the last decade, Black students, who represent 33% of the student population, received 53% of suspensions, and were more likely to be suspended for minor misbehavior.<sup>iv</sup> Black students received 51% of suspensions for profanity and 57% of suspensions for insubordination.<sup>v</sup>
- Students with disabilities are four times more likely to be suspended than their peers.<sup>vi</sup>
- Research by the American Psychological Association found that students who are suspended in school are more likely to dropout or graduate late.<sup>vii</sup>
- 43,643 NYC students who entered ninth grade in 2006 did not graduate in four years.<sup>viii</sup>

## **NYC is Prioritizing Policing and Metal Detectors over Support for Students**

- There are over 5,000 School Safety Agents in NYC schools, but in 2008-2009 there were only 3,152 guidance counselors.
- 100,000 students pass through permanent metal detectors to enter school each day, and schools with metal detectors spend at least \$2000 less per student each year than average NYC schools.<sup>ix</sup>
- High schools with permanent metal detectors issued 48 percent more suspensions than schools without metal detectors.<sup>x</sup>
- Police and School Safety Agents get involved in twice as many non-criminal incidents in schools with permanent metal detectors than in schools without them.<sup>xi</sup>
- 82% of students in high schools with permanent metal detectors were Black or Latino.<sup>xii</sup>
- Since 2002, the city's budget for police and security equipment in schools has increased by 65% to more than \$221 million.<sup>xiii</sup>

## **Positive Alternatives to Suspension & Policing Reduce Violence & Improve Learning**

- In a study of seven NYC schools using positive approaches to discipline, like restorative practices, peer mediation and conflict resolution, researchers found that those schools had:
  - A 12.2% drop out rate compared to the 17% drop out rate in schools with metal detectors.<sup>xiv</sup>
  - Only 1 non-criminal incident per 100 students compared to 12.4 incidents per 100 students at schools with metal detectors.<sup>xv</sup>
  - 69.8% of students planning to attend college compared to 44.7% of students at Impact Schools.<sup>xvi</sup>
- In a survey of more than 300 NYC public school teachers from 130 schools, over 80% said that conflict resolution and peer mediation are effective or very effective for improving discipline and safety, while only 40% said that suspensions are effective.<sup>xvii</sup>
- In Denver Public Schools, the district-wide implementation of restorative practices resulted in a 40% drop in out-of-school suspensions and a 68% drop in police tickets in 2008-2009.<sup>xviii</sup>
- In 102 Florida schools implementing Positive Behavior Supports, disciplinary referrals fell by 25%.<sup>xix</sup>
- At West Philadelphia High School, after using restorative practices for one year, suspensions were down by 50%<sup>xx</sup> and violent acts and serious incidents dropped by 52%.<sup>xxi</sup>

## Endnotes

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- <sup>i</sup> NYCLU. (2011). "Education interrupted: The growing use of suspensions in New York City's public schools," pg. 3.
- <sup>ii</sup> NYCLU. (2011). "Education interrupted: The growing use of suspensions in New York City's public schools," pg. 3.
- <sup>iii</sup> NYCLU. (2011). "Education interrupted: The growing use of suspensions in New York City's public schools," pg. 3.
- <sup>iv</sup> NYCLU. (2011). "Education interrupted: The growing use of suspensions in New York City's public schools," pg. 3.
- <sup>v</sup> NYCLU. (2011). "Education interrupted: The growing use of suspensions in New York City's public schools," pg. 19.
- <sup>vi</sup> NYCLU. (2011). "Education interrupted: The growing use of suspensions in New York City's public schools," pg. 3.g
- <sup>vii</sup> Skiba, R., et al (2006). Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools? A report by the American Psychological Association Task Force, p. 63.
- <sup>viii</sup> Dignity in Schools Campaign (2010). "Fact sheet on Federal Accountability."
- <sup>ix</sup> NYCLU. "A Look at New York City School Safety," pg. 1. [http://www.nyclu.org/files/a\\_look\\_at\\_new\\_york\\_city\\_school\\_safety.pdf](http://www.nyclu.org/files/a_look_at_new_york_city_school_safety.pdf).
- <sup>x</sup> NYCLU. "A Look at New York City School Safety," pg. 1. [http://www.nyclu.org/files/a\\_look\\_at\\_new\\_york\\_city\\_school\\_safety.pdf](http://www.nyclu.org/files/a_look_at_new_york_city_school_safety.pdf).
- <sup>xi</sup> NYCLU. "A Look at New York City School Safety," pg. 1. [http://www.nyclu.org/files/a\\_look\\_at\\_new\\_york\\_city\\_school\\_safety.pdf](http://www.nyclu.org/files/a_look_at_new_york_city_school_safety.pdf).
- <sup>xii</sup> NYCLU. "A Look at New York City School Safety," pg. 1. [http://www.nyclu.org/files/a\\_look\\_at\\_new\\_york\\_city\\_school\\_safety.pdf](http://www.nyclu.org/files/a_look_at_new_york_city_school_safety.pdf).
- <sup>xiii</sup> NYCLU. "A Look at New York City School Safety," pg. 1. [http://www.nyclu.org/files/a\\_look\\_at\\_new\\_york\\_city\\_school\\_safety.pdf](http://www.nyclu.org/files/a_look_at_new_york_city_school_safety.pdf).
- <sup>xiv</sup> NYCLU, Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Make the Road New York (2009). "Safety with Dignity Report," pg. 13.
- <sup>xv</sup> NYCLU, Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Make the Road New York (2009). "Safety with Dignity Report," pg. 22.
- <sup>xvi</sup> NYCLU, Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Make the Road New York (2009). "Safety with Dignity Report," pg. 19.
- <sup>xvii</sup> NESRI and Teachers Unite (2008). "Teachers Talk: School Culture, Safety and Human Rights, pg. 16.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Advancement Project, Stop the Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track. <http://www.stopschoolstojails.org/padres-jovenes-unidos-denver.html>
- <sup>xix</sup> Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project Annual Report 2007-2008. <http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/index.asp>
- <sup>xx</sup> Caralee Adams, "The Talk It Out Solution: How can you promote safety? Try getting rid of the metal detectors," *Scholastic Administrator*, November/December 2008. See video: "The Transformation of West Philadelphia High School: A Story of Hope" <http://www.iirp.org/westphilahigh/>
- <sup>xxi</sup> Sharon Lewis, Ed., "Improving School Climate: Findings from Schools Implementing Restorative Practices," International Institute for Restorative Practices, May 19, 2009. <http://www.iirp.org/pdf/IIRP-Improving-School-Climate.pdf>