



NEPC DISCIPLINE RESOURCE SHEET

Federal Policy Recommendations to Promote Fair and Effective School Discipline

This is a summary of the report Discipline Policies, Successful Schools, and Racial Justice, written by Daniel J. Losen, published by the National Education Policy Center and funded by the Ford Foundation and the Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice.

The complete report, along with suggested statutory changes to implement the report's recommendations, will be available as of October 5, 2011, at: <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/discipline-policies>.

Federal legislation is an important lever for improving the equity and efficacy of school, district, and state discipline policies. Legislation should ensure that all students are treated fairly, regardless of race, gender, or class. Following are three recommendations for changing federal legislation to accomplish this goal.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Strengthen Support and Training for Teachers to Improve Classroom and Behavior Management

Teachers in all schools and districts, especially schools or districts with high exclusion rates, should receive technical assistance on classroom and behavioral management and positive behavior supports.



POSSIBLE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

- Add incentives to Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to encourage districts to adopt Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) and provide training in classroom and behavior management.
- Strengthen and enforce the ESEA's requirement that low-income and minority students are not more likely than their higher-income and White peers to be taught by inexperienced, unqualified or "out-of-field" teachers. This requirement ensures that all students have equitable access to teachers who deliver effective, engaging instruction.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Improve Annual Collection and Public Reporting of Discipline Data

Annual reporting should include all types of disciplinary actions taken and their frequency and duration. Annual reporting should also include disciplinary actions taken by type of offense (weapons and violence, but all minor violations as well), disciplinary actions taken for first-time offenses, and the number of students suspended more than once per school year.

All of the above should be reported at the school, district, and state level and be disaggregated by race, gender, disability status, ELL status, and socio-economic status.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Align Discipline Policy With Academic Achievement Goals by Helping Schools Reduce High Suspension Rates

All schools and districts in the bottom 15 percent of academic achievement whose suspension rates exceed the state average should be required to adopt research-based behavioral supports such as PBIS and provided with financial and technical support to ensure successful implementation. Federal and state legislation should also trigger particular interventions for schools and districts when high suspension rates – for all students or for subgroups – exceed a certain threshold.

POSSIBLE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

- Amend Title IV of the ESEA using wording such as that contained in S. 919, the Safe, Successful, and Healthy Students Act (SSHSA).
- Amend the Annual State Report Card requirements in Title I of the ESEA to incorporate the annual and disaggregated collection and reporting requirements from the Individuals with Disabilities Act. This way, the current requirements for students with disabilities would apply to all students.