



Dignity in Schools Campaign School Discipline Reform & NCLB

Friday, March 19

1pm est / 12pm cst / 10am pst



Dignity in Schools Campaign ESEA Reauthorization Teleconference

Moderators:

- Joyce Parker, Citizens for a Better Greenville, Mississippi
- Marlyn Tillman, Gwinnett Parent Coalition to Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline

Speakers:

- Matthew Cregor, Safe Schools Strategist, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund
- Udi Ofer, Advocacy Director, New York Civil Liberties Union
- Jim Freeman, Staff Attorney and Project Director, Advancement Project
- Maisie Chin, Co-Founder and Director, Community Asset Development Redefining Education (CADRE)



The Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

What is it?

- Congress's main education law – providing federal funds in return for states' compliance with federal education requirements.
- The ESEA includes Title I, Safe and Drug-Free Schools, and a number of funding sources related to discipline.



Reauthorizing the ESEA

- First passed during the Johnson administration
- Last reauthorized during the Bush administration as “No Child Left Behind”
- With each reauthorization, opportunity to change federal education requirements



The Reauthorization Process: Guidance from ED & the White House

- The US Department of Education has offered its “blueprint” for reauthorization, calling for the Obama administration’s educational priorities:
 - Competitive Title I funding
 - Broader measures of accountability
 - Measuring teacher effectiveness by student achievement
 - More money, and different models, for turning around the lowest achieving schools

Link to ED’s [Blueprint](#)

Link to Sec. Duncan’s House [testimony](#)



The Reauthorization Process: Movement in Congress

- Senate has announced plans for hearings on ESEA reauthorization to take place this spring
- House has announced similar plans and has set a comment deadline (March 26th) for interested parties to weigh in on reauthorization



Dignity in Schools & Reauthorization

What DSC has been doing:

- Over the listserv, asked interested individuals and groups to join an ESEA working group
- Held conference calls on both the content and strategy for incorporating school discipline reform into the ESEA
- Drafted a sign-on letter on school discipline and the ESEA



DSC ESEA Sign-On Letter

Goal:

- Develop a concise statement
- Of broad principles
- And recommendations
- For including discipline reform in ESEA

See whose interest we capture in Congress



Dignity in Schools & Reauthorization

Goals for today's call:

- Bring all of us up to speed on reauthorization and our work
- Present the sign-on letter for your review
- Identify next steps for moving forward together



Dignity in Schools & Reauthorization

On this call we will review the work of several DSC groups:

1. Accountability Group Recommendations
2. Data Group Recommendations
3. Grants for Community-Based Solutions Recommendations
4. Local Advocacy Strategies Group



1. DSC ESEA Accountability Group

What we've done:

- Met by phone several times over last month
- Identified potential hooks for incorporating school disciplinary accountability in current federal law and administration priorities
- Drafted recommendations on discipline



DSC ESEA Accountability Group

Hooks we've examined:

- Adequate Yearly Progress
- Turnaround Schools
- Persistently Dangerous Schools
- Principal Effectiveness
- IDEA's disciplinary provisions



DSC ESEA Accountability Rec. #1

Support Best Practices for Improving School Climate:

- Incorporate the Positive Behavior for Safe and Effective Schools Act (HR 2597) into the ESEA
- Require turnaround schools to review disciplinary data and encourage use of best practices to improve school climate



DSC ESEA Accountability Rec. #2

Signs of poor school climate should trigger local and state support:

- AYP was not broad enough – and fostered pushout
- Need a “balanced scorecard,” or similar measures, that covers school discipline and climate as well
- Poor scores on climate trigger assistance and support in implementing evidence-based approaches to improving school climate



DSC Accountability Group Next Steps

Next Steps:

- Further hone our recommendations to present to interested Members of Congress
- Review and respond to proposals for accountability in ESEA

Please get involved!



2. DSC Data Group - Mandatory Reporting on School Discipline

- Better information = better policies
- Federal reporting mechanisms already in place
 - Gun Free Schools Act
 - Civil Rights Data Collection
 - Individuals with Disabilities Act
- Additional discipline reporting varies by state and school district
- Now need a more informative, and unified discipline reporting system
- Bolster transparency and accountability



Mandatory Reporting on School Discipline

- Suspensions, expulsions, corporal punishment, arrests and disciplinary alternative schools
- Information on school climate, such as truancy, stability, and attendance rates, and parent/student/teacher surveys
- Disaggregated by race, gender, special education and socioeconomic status, and English proficiency
- Cross-tabulated for better review



DSC Data Group Next Steps

Want to Share Your Thoughts?

- Email me at uofer@nyclu.org
- Call me at 212-607-3342



3. Grants for Community-Based Solutions

- Background:
 - Complex problems, involving multiple stakeholders
 - Real, sustainable solutions often require participation and buy-in from school systems, police, juvenile court, and prosecutors



Grants for Community-Based Solutions

- Many recent successes that have done just that:
 - Denver, Colorado
 - Clayton County, Georgia
 - Florida
 - Birmingham, Alabama
 - Baltimore, Maryland
- How do we take these successes to scale?



Grants for Community-Based Solutions

- We propose that ESEA include a competitive grant program for community-based solutions to these problems.
- Funds would go toward the development and implementation of multi-year, comprehensive local or regional plans to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline and the number of youth entering the juvenile and criminal justice systems.



Grants for Community-Based Solutions Next Steps

- Next steps:
 - Working out the details
 - Building support within Congress
 - If you'd like to be involved, please contact alternatives@dignityinschools.org, or me at jfreeman@advancementproject.org.



4. Local Advocacy Strategies Group

- A smaller group of individuals from within the existing working group (“Alternatives to Zero Tolerance”) within the DSC
- Conversations have taken place since the beginning of March 2010
- Primary individuals involved to date: *Jim Freeman, Kimi Lee, Liz Sullivan, Marlyn Tillman, Joyce Parker, Chris Tan, Damekia Morgan, Matt Cregor, and Maisie Chin*



Local Advocacy Strategies Group

Main Objectives:

- To ensure that local and federal advocacy strategies are mutually reinforcing
- To centralize the role of grassroots groups/voices and local campaigns around the country in the overall advocacy strategy

Our Progress to Date:

- Drafted a brief survey to be used as a tool for immediately engaging local 10-15 base-building groups in DSC's recommendations
 - *Assessing whether or not they connect to and would benefit local campaigns and communities*
 - *Soliciting feedback/ideas from local groups*
 - *Collecting testimonies, quotes, etc., in the process*



Local Advocacy Strategies Group

Our Progress to Date (continued):

- Drafted a letter to legislators that we can use to target legislators in our districts, especially those who we strategically need to influence –we have compiled a list of these legislators, their districts, and who we know there
- Beginning to plan a collection of video testimonies from 3-4 groups around the country that will be uploaded onto a YouTube channel for dissemination on March 26th, with ongoing collection and dissemination thereafter
- Scheduled our next meeting on March 24 at 3pm EST



Local Advocacy Strategies Group

Next Steps

WE INVITE YOU TO:

- Complete the survey on behalf of your local group - http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/esea_survey
- Invite groups in your local area to complete the survey and get involved
- Send and collect additional letters directed to your legislators
- Join our call next week: Wednesday, March 24th, 12 pm PDT/1 pm MT/2pm CDT/3 pm EDT
- On our call next week we will discuss progress with the video testimony collections
- Email Matt Cregor at alternatives@dignityinschools.org or Liz Sullivan at liz@nesri.org



Discipline & ESEA Reauthorization

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **SIGN** the DSC letter to the House by Thursday, 3/25 at 5pm edt
- **CIRCULATE** it to others who may wish to sign
- **ANSWER** the survey linked here
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/esea_survey
- **JOIN** the DSC ESEA Working Group, email:
alternatives@dignityinschools.org
- **CALL** in for the next Local Advocacy Working Group Call (Wed. March 24 at 3pm edt: 605-477-2100; pass: 194173#)
- **WRITE** your Congresspersons
- **ENGAGE** in local advocacy