



## DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHING WEEK OF ACTION IN 15 CITIES

### Communities take action to expose school pushout crisis and demand solutions

During the week of October 11-17, 2010, members of the [Dignity in Schools Campaign](#), a national coalition of parents, youth, advocates and educators from around the country, are organizing actions in 15 cities to expose the school pushout crisis in our nation and advocate for the human right of every young person to a quality education and to be treated with dignity.

Communities will hold town hall meetings, speak with local, state, and federal policymakers and collect testimonies from parents, youth, and educators for our on-line [DSC School Pushout Story Bank](#).

Joyce Parker, a Dignity in Schools Campaign and Mississippi Delta Catalyst Roundtable member in Mississippi, said, "The Week of Action is happening because youth and parents have been fighting to end school pushout for decades. The Week of Action brings us together to lift our voices and say, 'Enough is enough.'"

Nationwide, an alarming number of students are being denied educational opportunities as they are pushed out of school by degrading environments and an over reliance on zero-tolerance practices, law enforcement tactics, and punitive measures such as suspension and expulsion. The latest report from the National Center for Education Statistics found that more than [3.3 million students were suspended out-of-school](#) at least once and 102,000 were expelled in one year alone.

This crisis impacts historically disenfranchised youth at higher rates. In middle schools, black male students are three times more likely to be suspended than their white peers, based on data from the Department of Education. These punitive practices do not reduce misbehavior but put students at greater risk of failing classes and dropping out. According to Education Week, each year, 1.3 million students that enter high school will not graduate.

[Raheem Gladney](#) was involuntarily transferred by school administrators at his Philadelphia middle school to an alternative disciplinary school that has since been shut down. He said: "I've endured so much pain from that school emotionally and physically. That school really put a whole halt in my life; it really messed me up; it slowed me down, completely." Now working with Youth United for Change in Philadelphia, Raheem said, "The main thing I learned is I'm not by myself. There are organizations that really support students who've been pushed out and they pursue what we need to be pursuing."

During the [Week of Action](#) communities around the country will be calling on local, state and federal policy-makers to adopt positive models, like restorative practices and positive behavior supports, which are shown to reduce suspensions by 50 percent and improve school climate and academic achievement. Local actions will be held in California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C.

The Dignity in Schools Campaign encourages everyone to take at least one action during October 11-17:

- Sign and share the [National Resolution for Ending School Pushout](#), a call to action signed by more than 200 individuals and organizations from 50 states and groups like the National Education Association and School Social Work Association of America
- Hold an event, show a video or teach a lesson on school pushout in your classroom or community
- Post your own story on school pushout on our national on-line DSC School Pushout Story Bank at [www.youtube.com/dignityinschools](http://www.youtube.com/dignityinschools)