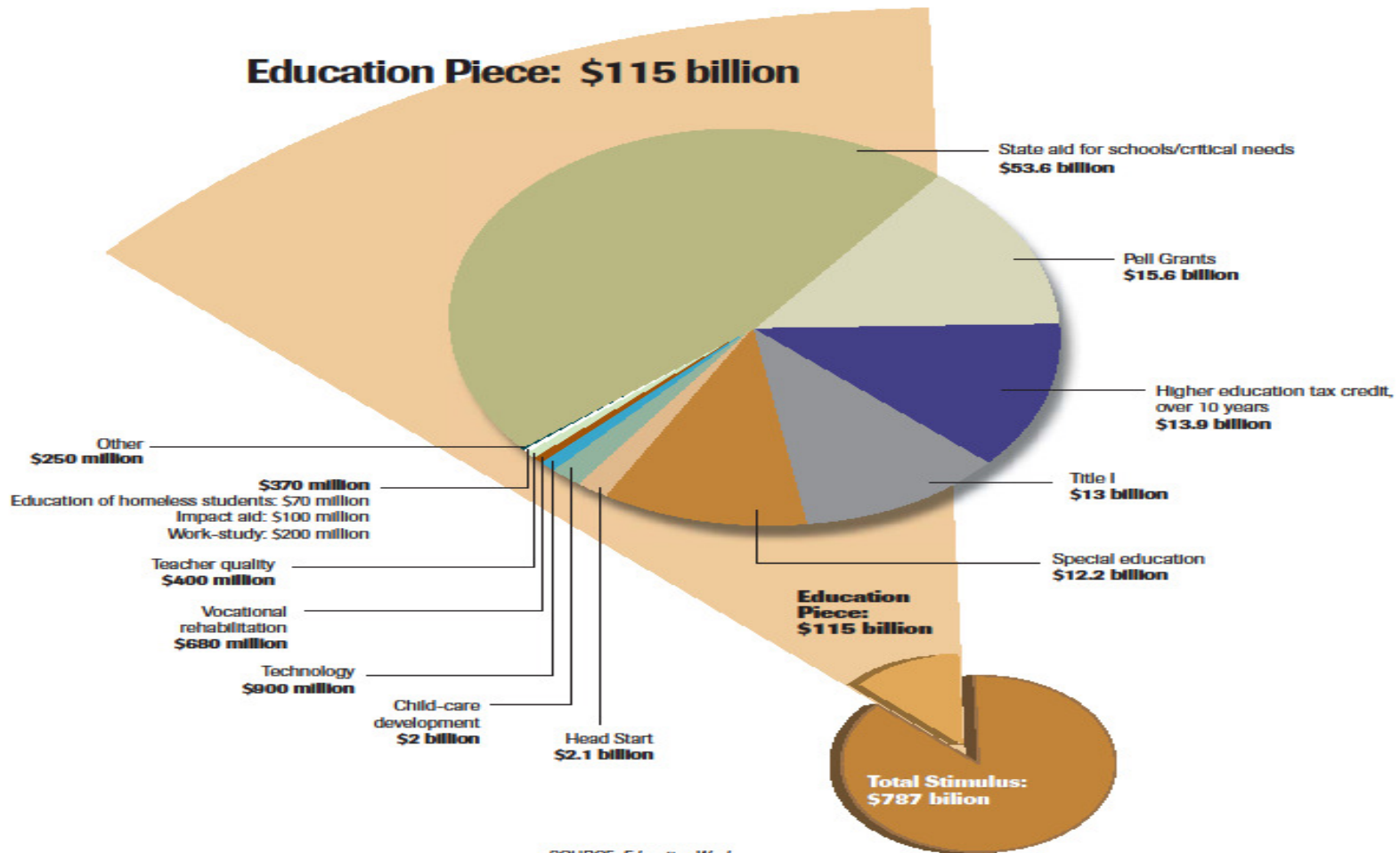


# **How Students with Disabilities Are Being Pushed Out of School**

**How Education Stimulus  
Dollars Can Be Used to Solve  
Part of the Pushout Problem**



# The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act Contains \$115B in Education Funds:



# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

There are three main sources of stimulus funding that can go toward improving school climate:

- State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (\$53.6B)
- Title I Recovery Fund (\$13B)
- IDEA Recovery Fund (\$12.2B)

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

The first wave of stimulus funds have been released to states and will reach school districts by the end of the month:

- 50% of the Title I Recovery Fund (\$5B)
- 50% of the IDEA Recovery Fund (\$6.1B)
- 67% of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (\$32.5B)

**NOTE:** A school district does not have to submit a new application to receive the first installments of Title I and IDEA Recovery Funds. However, they will have to apply for the remainder (to be released this fall).

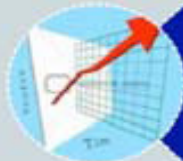
## Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

While most of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund will be devoted to averting teacher layover and restoring state education budgets, the IDEA & Title I Recovery Funds are intended to reach school districts quickly in order to enable districts to implement innovative practices.

# The US Dept. of Ed. Has Offered Limited Guidance on How School Districts Should Spend These Funds:



Spend Quickly to Save and Create Jobs



Ensure Transparency and Accountability



Thoughtfully Invest One-time Funds



Advance Effective Reforms



# The Ed. Dept. is encouraging school districts to use their stimulus funds to implement PBS.

Specifically, the Ed. Dept. suggests that school districts use their IDEA Recovery Funds to:

Provide intensive district-wide professional development for special education and regular education teachers that focuses on scaling-up, through replication, proven and innovative evidence-based school-wide strategies in reading, math, writing and science, and **positive behavioral supports** to improve outcomes for students with disabilities

# Other programs and approaches to improving school climate can be implemented using stimulus funds

Restorative practices, conflict resolution, peer mediation, check & connect, etc, can be implemented *at least* using Title I Recovery Funds:

- Schoolwide Programs under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 6314) (Title I Recovery and SFSF Funds)
- School Improvement under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 6316) (Title I Recovery and SFSF Funds)
- Professional Development Grants under Title II, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 6622(b)(9)(B) (SFSF Funds)

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

## Negative Uses:

The State Fiscal Stabilization Fund contains money to improve public safety that can be put toward hiring school resource officers. Some school districts are taking advantage of this option – creating a dangerously unsustainable discipline structure.

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

## Advocacy Strategies:

- Local/District
- State
- Federal/National

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

## District Advocacy:

- IDEA & Title I funds are intended almost entirely for school district use, and districts are given broad discretion in how to use them.
- Funds can be used to implement approaches to improving school climate as well as data systems that track school discipline information
- Key: Identifying district-level decision makers and those people/organizations that influence them.

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

## Key District-Level Personnel:

- Superintendents
- Board of Education Members
- Special Education Coordinators
- Student Services Coordinators
- PTAs

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

Sources of influence:

- Media
- Organized public constituents
- State departments of education
- State-level education associations and organizations

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

## State-Level Strategy I:

To support local efforts:

- State DOE Administrators:
  - “Suggest, not direct” how districts use stimulus funds
- State-level associations:
  - Teachers unions
  - State associations of school boards
  - State PTAs

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

## State-Level Strategy II:

- Encourage state-level administrators to pursue competitive stimulus grants to improve school climate.
- Encourage state-level administrators to develop state-level longitudinal data systems that are capable of tracking discipline information using stimulus funds.

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

## Federal/National Strategy I:

- Advocate for the US Ed. Dept. to include disciplinary reductions as a factor in awarding incentive grants.
- Advocate for the US Ed. Dept. to encourage states and districts to track discipline information as part of the longitudinal data systems they must implement to receive State Fiscal Stabilization Funds.

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

## Federal-Level Strategy II:

- Sign-on letter to US Dept. of Education
- Advocacy materials to national education associations (National Education Association, National Association of School Boards, etc)

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

## Timing:

- All funds must be obligated by September 30, 2011.
- To take full advantage of funds for professional development, a district would ideally begin training staff this summer/fall and should make funding decisions by the end of this school year.
- There is still a great deal of confusion at the district level as to how much funding will be received and how to spend it.
- **BOTTOM LINE:** Our advocacy window is open.

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

## Trouble States/Waivers/Inappropriate Use:

- Some states (e.g., KS, RI, ID) have declared intentions to use education stimulus funds in ways not approved by the Ed. Dept. and the Ed. Dept. is threatening to withhold the next installment of stimulus funds from these states.
- Some states (e.g. FL & CA) face desperate financial crises that may test the boundaries of the Ed. Dept.'s ability to grant waivers for stimulus fund-use.
- Bottom line: some states/districts will be more hesitant than others in how and when to use the stimulus funds.

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

## Resources:

- Advocacy materials:

[www.dignityinschools.org/alternatives](http://www.dignityinschools.org/alternatives)

- Information on restorative practices:

[www.iirp.org](http://www.iirp.org)

- Information on positive behavior supports:

[www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)

- Detailed stimulus information:

[www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/index.html#apps](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/index.html#apps)

# Using Economic Stimulus Funds to Improve School Climate

Please feel free to contact me:

Matthew Cregor

Staff Attorney

Southern Poverty Law Center

334-328-7580

[matthew.cregor@splcenter.org](mailto:matthew.cregor@splcenter.org)