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Dear Parents, Legislators, School Boards and Others:

We are pleased to announce the release of the *National Resolution for Ending School Pushout*, a call to action for our school systems to end the harsh discipline and law enforcement tactics that push too many young people out of school each year. The National Resolution calls for schools to implement positive alternatives that protect the human rights of young people and keep students in school.

The Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC) is a coalition of advocates, organizers, youth, parents, and educators, united to present human rights solutions to school pushout. The DSC's members and supporters drafted this National Resolution. Over 180 organizations and individuals have signed on to support it.

School pushout is the result of policies and practices that disengage students from learning and remove them from instruction, including disciplinary practices such as suspensions, expulsions, and school arrests. The overuse of these practices is reaching crisis level in our nation's schools. Our current disciplinary rates are the highest in the nation's history, and have more than doubled over the past three decades. Historically disenfranchised youth, including students of color, students with disabilities, and students in poor communities, are impacted the most by these policies.

While none question the need to keep schools safe, there is reason to question the efficacy of these exclusionary discipline practices. According to the American Psychological Association, the use of these practices does not improve behavior, but can instead increase the likelihood that students will fall behind academically, have future behavior problems, become withdrawn and dropout of school. These practices affect not only the student being disciplined, but the health and success of the school as a whole: schools with high suspension rates score lower on state accountability tests, even when adjusting for demographic differences.

The National Resolution details efforts that our schools, districts, and states can take to end school pushout. Research shows that schools using proactive, positive approaches to discipline have been able to reduce suspensions and expulsions while improving student achievement and perceptions of school safety. Across the country, the signatories to the National Resolution are raising awareness about school pushout and ways to counter it in their schools and communities.

Please help our schools and students by supporting these efforts in your state and your community.

Sincerely,

Kayla A. Bower, JD  
Executive Director  
Oklahoma Disability Law Center, Inc.