

# Join Us to Reform the Federal ESEA Law (“No Child Left Behind”)

**\* Stop Discipline Policies that Deny Education \***

**\* Create Positive School Environments \***

The Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC) is bringing together parents, students, educators, researchers and attorneys to change federal law to make positive improvements in school discipline.

## **What is the ESEA (aka “No Child Left Behind”)?**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, also known as No Child Left Behind), is the federal government’s main education law. The ESEA allows Congress to provide education funding to states, so long as states and school districts meet certain requirements set out in the law. We have an opportunity to make sure that under the new version of ESEA, school districts carry out positive school discipline reforms.

## **Why is Changing School Discipline Important?**

We believe Congress must pay serious attention to how school discipline affects the learning environment in schools and students’ right to education. Too many schools resort to zero tolerance policies – like suspensions, expulsions or arrests for minor misbehavior. Instead of addressing the causes of behavior incidents, zero tolerance policies simply throw students out of school and do little to prevent problems.

Over 3.3 million students are suspended every year across the country and 102,000 are expelled. Students of color and students with disabilities are 1.5 to 3.5 times as likely to be suspended as other students. Discipline policies that focus on excluding students from school hurt students academically, contribute to future behavior problems, and often lead to students dropping out or being pushed out of school.

## **How Can We Change Discipline to Guarantee Students’ Right to Dignity in Schools?**

Positive alternatives to zero tolerance -- like Positive Behavior Supports and Restorative Practices -- help students resolve conflict, provide needed support services, and create safer and healthier school climates. As Congress takes up the reauthorization of the ESEA law, we are asking that it:

- Require states and school districts to do a better job collecting and reporting data on discipline.
- Require states and school districts to help make positive changes in schools with high rates of suspension and other harsh discipline policies.
- Provide additional funding and support for practices that are effective in improving school climate.
- Encourage and support low-achieving schools to improve school climate instead of just punishing schools.
- Provide funding for school districts that involve parents, students and community partners in collaborations to reduce the flow of students from schools into the juvenile justice system.

### **Get involved!**



Join the Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC) ESEA Reauthorization Working Groups to demand change from your local members of Congress and make your voice heard.

For more information visit [www.dignityinschools.org](http://www.dignityinschools.org) or email [esea@dignityinschools.org](mailto:esea@dignityinschools.org)

**July 19, 2010: Participate in a National Day of Action with Alliance for Educational Justice ([www.ncqe.org](http://www.ncqe.org))**