Gearing Up for National Week of Action: News from the Educational Equity Project

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Power of Voice
Support the work of the Educational Equity Project next Thursday, October 20 at the Chicago History Museum: tiny.cc/powerofvoice

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https://us7.campaign-archive.com/?u=811a46f526453227512778957&id=c60aba356b
New School Policies in Illinois

In the last two years, school discipline reform advocates have achieved major wins through the passage of two bills now in effect throughout Illinois: SB 2793 and SB 100.

SB 2793, **or the Discipline Data Bill**, requires that schools throughout the state report the total number of out-of-school suspensions, expulsions and removals to alternative schools. The schools are also required to break down these statistics by race/ethnicity, gender, age, grade level, limited English proficiency, incident type and length of time.

SB 100, **the more recent Discipline Reform Bill**, puts in place new measures that minimize exclusionary school discipline policies. In accordance with this new law, schools must avoid exclusionary discipline policies to the greatest extent practicable and do so only after considering non-exclusionary measures.

If you would like to arrange a community training or to learn more about these recent policy changes, please contact the Educational Equity Project (EEP) at eep@clccrul.org.
Dignity in Schools Week of Action

The Educational Equity Project joins the 7th Annual Dignity in Schools' National
dignity in Schools Week of Action: Updates from the Educational Equity Project

As part of the Week of Action, the Educational Equity Project will co-facilitate a Know Your Rights Workshop at the Albany Park Theater Project on Monday, October 17, 6-8 pm at Ellen Gates Starr High School. EEP will also facilitate a workshop with Communities Organizing and Family Issues on Saturday, October 22 from 2-4:30 pm.

Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Twitter next week to join the National Week of Action conversation on how to #EndSchoolPushout and #RethinkDiscipline.

Transforming School Discipline Collaborative: Administrator Academies

The Chicago Lawyers’ Committee continues to serve as an active member of the Transforming School Discipline Collaborative (TSDC). This interdisciplinary
implement equitable and non-exclusionary discipline policies.

As part of this work, the team facilitates Administrator Academy trainings in the Chicagoland area and throughout the state, including past training sites in Ottawa, Galesburg, Joliet and South Cook. In the past year alone, TSDC has trained over 700 administrators, educating them on the implications of recently passed school disciplinary laws and on best practices using a prevention-oriented approach. The trainings are led by a lawyer, school psychologist and restorative justice practitioner, and draw on district-specific discipline data to make trainings timely and relevant for participants.

**Upcoming Trainings:**

- **Thursday, November 17 at North Cook Intermediate Service Center (2340 Des Plaines River Rd, Des Plaines, IL 60018)**
- **Monday, November 21 at South Cook Intermediate Service Center (253 W Joe Orr Rd, Chicago Heights, IL 60411)**

For more information on TSDC and its partners, including a Model Code of Conduct and a complete list of upcoming trainings, please visit [http://www.transformschooldiscipline.org/](http://www.transformschooldiscipline.org/)

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**Know Your Rights Trainings and Workshops**
In late September, the Educational Equity Project (EEP) partnered with the Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP) to deliver a bilingual Know Your Rights Workshop to over 100 parents. The workshop was part of a larger multi-day training for community members who were new to SWOP’s Parents as Mentors which places parent advocates throughout schools on the Southwest Side.

Our staff attorneys Candace Moore, Jessica Schneider and Cunyon Gordon also traveled to East St. Louis to help facilitate a training for family advocates at the Ubuntu Center for Peace alongside community organizations Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) and Join Hands. Alongside these partners, EEP staff led a Know Your Rights and Action Planning training relating to the recent changes in statewide school discipline laws.

Click to watch EEP staff attorney Candace Moore address a press conference with Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE) on September 6, 2016.

Pro Bono Profile: Susan Ritacca
Law Office. Susan has represented students in several expulsion hearings, including in Chicago Public Schools and charter schools. Below, Susan reflects on her experiences with the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights.

The Chicago Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights (CLC) has always been on the right side of history. Whether through their efforts in advocacy or litigation, their leadership sets the bar. And I’m proud to be part of those efforts. CLC hosted me as a law student intern in 2012, where I worked with the Employment Opportunity and Fair Housing programs. I gained invaluable experience working on federal civil rights cases and conducting client intakes.

Throughout law school, I stayed connected to CLC by volunteering with the Voting Rights Project to help provide oversight and election integrity. In 2015 I joined the staff on their journey to Selma in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Bloody Sunday. What an honor to join
Today I practice civil and criminal law. In my free time, I volunteer with the Educational Equity Project to represent students in their discipline hearings.

The rate at which schools in our communities are willing to suspend or expel the most vulnerable students is of grave concern. EEP has responded to this crisis by training and deploying attorneys like me to defend students victimized by this school-to-prison pipeline.

I'm extremely grateful for CLC's leadership on this issue and for their advocacy in educational equity. I am proud to stand with CLC on this side of history and to add my voice in pushing the movement forward.

-Susan Ritacca