

# Keep Young Students in Class

## Support Austin ISD's Proposal to End Suspensions for Pre-K-2nd Graders

The School Board will vote on February 27, 2017!

### The Problem:

Austin ISD uses harmful classroom removals, like out-of-school suspensions, to punish very young students. Black students and students who receive special education services are over-represented in this discipline system.

Austin ISD's youngest students are facing in-school and out-of-school suspensions and alternative school placements for completely age-appropriate behaviors and for behaviors that should be addressed with services and positive supports.

### Austin ISD's Proposed Policy:

On February 27th, AISD Trustees will vote on a district-wide policy that will prohibit discretionary suspensions, alternative school placements, and expulsions of AISD's pre-K through 2nd grade students for minor behaviors that do not, by law, require punishment. The policy will also provide training and supports so that students can receive appropriate services and educators can manage their classrooms more effectively and improve school climates.

### You Can Help:

1

#### CALL YOUR TRUSTEE

Let your Trustee know that you support keeping young AISD students in class!

2

#### VISIT YOUR TRUSTEE

Let your Trustee see who you are! Let him or her know you support this policy!

3

#### TESTIFY

Join other supporters and testify at the **Austin ISD School Board Meeting on Feb. 27th!**



#### Out-of-School Suspensions:

Over **200** in 2015-16 for Austin PK-2nd graders.



#### Black Students (2015-16):

7% of PK-2 students, but **42% of out-of-school suspensions.**



#### Special Ed (2015-16):

9.9% of students, but **28% of PK-2 out-of-school suspensions.**

## Important Points:

When you call your Trustee, visit your Trustee, or Testify at the School Board Meeting, here is some useful information:

**Studies show that unnecessary suspensions and expulsions negatively impact students.** Suspensions and expulsions do not correct or address the root causes of student misbehavior and are often used to punish completely normal behavior for young children. Classroom removals set students up to fall behind. Studies show that students who are suspended or expelled are far more likely to carry negative attitudes about school, fail academically, and drop out of school.

**Current discipline policies especially hurt students of color and students with disabilities.** Data show that black children, boys, and special education students are suspended at disproportionately high rates, compared to their school enrollment. This is true even though both common sense and research show that black students are not more

likely to misbehave than their peers and kids who receive special education services may need additional behavioral supports, not suspensions, to address their disabilities.

**Students who remain in the classroom do not benefit when a peer is removed.**

Research, including a study by the American Psychological Association, shows that ALL students suffer when schools rely on classroom exclusions to discipline students. An increased use of these exclusions is associated with negative school climate ratings and overall decreased academic achievement.

**Evidence- and research-based alternatives to suspensions and expulsions are effective ways to teach and encourage positive behaviors.** Young students need the opportunity to learn appropriate behaviors in a supportive environment. Sending them out of class disrupts the learning process. Instead of suspending or expelling students, teachers and administrators can use tools like Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, Restorative Justice, and Social and Emotional Learning to model positive student behavior.

## CONNECT WITH THE COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS

- **Texas Appleseed:** [www.texasdisciplinelab.org](http://www.texasdisciplinelab.org) @TexasAppleseed
- **Texas Organizing Project:** [www.organizetexas.org](http://www.organizetexas.org) @TXOrgProject
- **ACLU of Texas:** [www.aclutx.org](http://www.aclutx.org) @ACLUTx
- **Excellence and Advancement, Inc.:** [www.breakthepipeline.com](http://www.breakthepipeline.com)
- **Educators in Solidarity:** <https://educatorsinsolidarity.wordpress.com/>

