

THIS MEETING DID NOT CONTAIN A PRESENTATION
JJPOC SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION SUBGROUP MEETING
JUNE 28TH, 2024
11:00 AM- 12:00 PM
Web Based Meeting- Zoom

Attendance

TJ NUCCIO
JANEEN REID
EMILY LEEN
FRAN RABINOWITZ
KATHRYN MEYER
REP. ROBYN A. PORTER
SHARMESE WALCOTT

TYJI Staff

BRITTANY LAMARR
PAUL KLEE

Meeting Summary:

-Framing Priorities of this Subgroup

- Workplan
 - This group has already decided to recommend legislation limiting preschool-second grade suspension to 5 days
 - Other possible areas of focus
 - What therapeutic services are offered for students during in-school suspension?
 - Subgroup could push for more services.
 - Subgroup could look to communities with successful implementation of therapeutic services during In-School Suspension
 - What is available for expelled students as far as alternative programming goes?
 - How are state resources being dispersed to school districts?
 - Special emphasis should be placed on maximizing available funding in the wake of consistent education budget cuts.
 - Workgroup should also begin thinking about where the state can save money in other areas to prioritize schoolwide trainings, restorative practices, and other de-escalation programs in schools
 - Abolishing suspensions all together is a big ask right now, instead the group needs to focus on limiting them little by little

- Regarding the additional language of “serious” to physical harm in expulsion standards
 - Language was not meant to broaden use of suspension and expulsion for younger students
 - In preparation for next legislative session The Center for Children’s Advocacy will be working with the Connecticut State Department of Education to clarify the messaging of this statute
 - This clarification will most likely involve defining serious physical harm

-Connecticut State Department of Education’s Discipline Report

- Committee Members received this report in preparation for this meeting
- Considering the data, what solutions can the subgroup begin to consider?
 - The State Department of Education has a best practice guide for suspension and expulsion, but it’s outdated
 - In the long run this group would like to update this guide, but in the foreseeable future, the group could ask the Department of Ed to redistribute this guide to schools before the school year starts as a reminder
 - The State Department of Education could also send a notice out to school districts over the summer reasserting the districts’ responsibility to use In School Suspension instead of Out of School Suspension whenever possible.
 - The Tow Youth Justice Institute will reach out to the State Department of Education about these asks in an email.
- There was a suggestion to mandate school’s completion of a form explaining why they are choosing to use Out of School Suspension instead of In School Suspension with a direct citation of statute regarding suspension standards
 - It was offered that the State Department of Education should start putting districts on notice of noncompliance if they are utilizing out of school suspension in inappropriate situations.
 - Concerns
 - Would requiring more paperwork really decrease the occurrence of out of school suspension?
 - Is this the right time to be asking this of schools with budget cuts continuing?
 - Emphasis was placed on this paperwork not becoming the responsibility of teachers as they already have a lot on their plates
- There was a suggestion to refocus on positive reinforcement in schools through initiatives like student of the month/year
- The Subgroup needs to focus on the following long term:

- Payment of Teachers
 - Working Conditions
 - Class Size
 - RED
- Concern was raised that this group isn't considering any legislative recommendations
 - A member brought up the possibility of legislation that will mandate schools to hold expulsion hearings during a period of suspension, or lose the ability to expel
 - Pros
 - Will prevent schools from dragging the disciplinary process out
 - Cons
 - Evidence could be put together quickly and haphazardly
 - Will be difficult for parents to obtain representation in that short time period
 - If we give schools the choice between prompt expulsion or no expulsion, they may be more likely to expel hastily than suspend so they don't lose the ability to do it later
 - This will be overwhelming for students and families if they are forced to come to terms with suspension, prepare representation, and additionally receive an expulsion notice
- Legislation limiting class size was discussed but it was decided that this is difficult to accomplish with limited funding and resources
 - However, this would require less specialists because teachers could be more engaged with students individually
 - It was suggested that the issue of suspension and expulsion doesn't exist because of lack of legislation, but lack of implementation of legislation
 - We fix that by improving communication between schools and parents
 - Past initiatives
 - A video for parents explaining YSBs and JRBs
 - Possible Things TYJI could create
 - A list of effective ways to communicate with families that would be sent out to schools
 - Examples could be
 - Weekly email with attendance
 - Newsletter
 - Could be done before next meeting



Making connections. Informing solutions.

- Would allow for districts to pick solutions that they could reasonably implement giving their specific resources
- The group needs to be careful to not take away municipal autonomy when it comes to solutions to these issues

Next Meeting: August 16TH, 11:00 AM-12:00 PM