

HB17-1211 Educators Professional Development Discipline Strategies

Representatives **COLEMAN, ARNDT, BUCKNER, LONTINE, PETERSEN, SIAS, WILSON**

Senators **PRIOLA, FIELDS, MARTINEZ HUMENIK**

PURPOSE

This bill seeks to reduce the degree to which exclusionary discipline practices including suspension and expulsion are utilized in grades PreK-3, while simultaneously promoting the use of evidence-based discipline strategies. The bill will also promote sociocultural responsive school environments that are focused on best strategies for achievement for all students.

BACKGROUND

- Studies have consistently shown that children, and particularly young children, who are suspended or expelled from school are less likely to achieve their fullest academic potential and are at an increased risk of academic failure. These students are more likely to harbor negative attitudes towards school and are more likely to be chronically absent or drop out. These same at-risk students are more likely to be incarcerated later in life. Moreover, up to half of students who experience exclusionary discipline will go on to be suspended or expelled again.^{1,2}
- Data by the U.S. Department of Education shows that black and Hispanic boys make up a disproportionate percentage of those students suspended, relative to their overall enrollment.³
- Teachers often cite the lack of training and support on developmentally appropriate strategies for dealing with challenging behaviors.

BILL ACTION

- This bill creates the Discipline Strategies Pilot Program to provide school districts, boards of cooperatives, and charter schools with resources to sponsor their pre-school through third grade teachers in receiving evidence-based, culturally responsive disciplinary training.
- This program will be administered through the Colorado Department of Education, who will review applications, award grants to those applicants they deem qualified, and to generate an annual report for every year that the program is in place.
- This program will be funded exclusively through gifts, grants and donations and cost no state dollar.

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BCDI
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1. H. Lamont and others, "out-of-school suspension and expulsion," *Pediatrics* 131 (3) (2013): 1000-1007; L. Raffaele Mendez, "Predictors of suspension and negative school outcomes: a longitudinal investigation," *New Directions for Youth Development* 99 (2003): 17-33

2 American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Gordon, Della, Piana & Keleher, 2000

3 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education. "Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Settings."

The following organizations agree with this premise and support our bill:

- Advocacy Denver
- Black Child Development Institute
- Colorado Children's Campaign
- Colorado League of Charter Schools
- Democrats for Education Reform
- Institute for Racial Equity and Excellence
- Padres & Jóvenes Unidos
- Public Education and Business Coalition
- Clayton Early Learning
- Colorado Education Association
- Hope Center
- Qualistar Colorado
- Kempe Foundation
- Junior League of Denver
- Together Colorado
- Mental Health Colorado