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Good morning Chairman Grosso and members of the Committee on Education. My name is Judith Sandalow. I am the Executive Director of Children's Law Center¹ and a resident of the District. I am testifying today on behalf of Children's Law Center, which fights so every DC child can grow up with a loving family, good health and a quality education. With 100 staff and hundreds of pro bono lawyers, Children's Law Center reaches 1 out of every 8 children in DC's poorest neighborhoods – more than 5,000 children and families each year.

I am pleased to testify today regarding the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education. As the Committee knows, this office is under new leadership with Jennifer Niles. The Deputy's Mayor's role is to oversee the District-wide education strategy and manage interagency coordination. This is a complicated task. The Deputy Mayor must oversee and coordinate with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, the DC Public Schools, the DC Public Charter School Board, 55 Public Charter School Local Education Agencies (LEAs),² and the State Board of Education. The Deputy Mayor has a wide array of projects and tasks including being responsible for MySchoolDC.org (the District's centralized education and lottery resource), improving early childhood education (by, among other things, working with the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services on the Early Success Council), and managing facilities.³ Among all these responsibilities, one that is vital to the success of our students, and where I am going to focus today, is school engagement.

School Engagement

The District needs a comprehensive school engagement plan with the goal of ensuring that every student is in school every day. All of the education system's other goals for providing students with a high-quality education can't be achieved if a large percentage of students are not even engaged in their education. The Deputy Mayor in her oversight and coordinating role, and as the co-chair of the Truancy Taskforce with the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, is uniquely positioned to lead and move DC forward on this issue.⁴ In order to be successful, students need to be engaged in school, have strong relationship with teachers, attend schools with a positive school climate and receive high quality instruction. Suspension, expulsion and truancy all lead to students being out of school rather than in the classroom and learning. The Deputy Mayor should be the office to lead on this issue and bring agencies together to create and implement a comprehensive strategy to increase student engagement and educational outcomes.

Truancy

Children's Law Center with DC Lawyers for Youth just released a report on Truancy in DC.⁵ Many of the report's findings are sadly not a surprise. Truancy is a significant problem in the District of Columbia and has been for many years. The Truancy Taskforce which Deputy Mayor Niles now co-chairs was established in 2011 in response to this crisis.

During the 2013-14 school year, 18% of DCPS students and 15% of public charter school students had 10 or more unexcused absences and were thus classified as “chronically truant.”⁶ However, there is significant variation among students of different ages. During SY13-14, about 8% of DCPS elementary students were chronically truant, and about 10% of middle school students were chronically truant.⁷ While these rates are worrisome, the high school grades showed dramatically higher rates of unexcused absence, with 56% of high school students chronically truant.⁸ This is an improvement from the previous year, but still remains shockingly high.⁹

Students miss school for many reasons including personal factors (unmet physical or mental health needs; poor academic performance, sometimes due to special education needs, and a resulting lack of self-esteem; alcohol and drug use), home and community factors (family health or financial concerns that pressure the student to care for family members or work; lack of parental guidance or supervision; domestic violence; poverty; pressures arising from teen pregnancy or parenting; parental alcoholism or drug abuse; lack of transportation; safety issues such as violence near home or between home and school), and school factors (lack of effective and consistently applied attendance policies; push-out policies such as suspension as a punishment for truancy; teacher characteristics such as lack of respect for students and neglect of diverse student needs; unwelcoming atmosphere; unsafe environment).¹⁰

DCPS data from the 2013-14 school year provide some indication of what barriers to attendance are common in DC schools.¹¹ Meetings between school staff and parents identified the student's health as a barrier in 11% of cases, academics in 8% of cases, transportation in 6% of cases, the parent's health in 2% of cases, and school safety in 1% of cases. In 21% of cases, other barriers were identified, ranging from lack of clean clothing to lack of parental control.¹² In addition, local research has found that parental health and housing issues are more common barriers to attendance for younger students, while safety issues and childcare responsibilities are more common for older students.¹³ Student health, academics, and transportation are issues for students at all grade levels.¹⁴

The District currently has a number of interventions in place intended to get students with poor attendance back on track. Each intervention is triggered after a certain number of unexcused absences, and some responses differ depending on the age of the student. Individual schools, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), the Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE), the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), and the DC Superior Court Family Division (Family Court) are all responsible for carrying out some interventions.

These obligations for schools and agencies come from a number of different sources, including DC law, DC municipal regulations, and DCPS internal policy. Last

year, the Council passed the *Attendance Accountability Amendment Act*, which lowered the threshold for referral by the school to Family Court from 25 absences to 15 absences for students aged 14 and up.¹⁵ Students aged 5 to 13 must be referred to the Child and Family Services Agency upon ten (10) days of unexcused absences.¹⁶

The current regulatory scheme calls for a great deal of intervention at the school level before students or parents are referred to CFSA or the Family Court.

Unfortunately, this is not happening in practice. Most importantly, regulations require that all schools have a procedure to refer any student who accumulates five absences to an SST,¹⁷ defined as “a team formed to support the individual student by developing and implementing action plans and strategies that are school-based or community-based, depending on the availability, to enhance the student's success with services, incentives, intervention strategies, and consequences for dealing with absenteeism.”¹⁸

DCPS data from SY13-14 showed that 8,105 students were legally required to have an SST meeting through January of 2014.¹⁹ Only 36% of these students had actually received an SST meeting and only 14% had meetings that identified barriers to attendance – the meetings’ stated purpose.²⁰ This school year (through January 2015, DCPS had a compliance rate for holding SSTs of 38%.²¹ The Public Charter School Board does not track compliance with SST referrals at five absences,²² so it is not possible to assess the extent to which charter schools are holding SST meetings. The low rate of

compliance with SST meetings calls into question whether students are receiving meaningful school- or community-based intervention.

The Truancy Taskforce has piloted some programs that provide services to children and families struggling with the underlying issues that lead to absenteeism. Unfortunately, there is not yet a citywide strategy to evaluate these pilots and scale up the ones that are working so that the thousands of children and families who need services and support may access them. This leaves the District with a variety of patchwork programs that are not coordinated to serve all students in the District and are not adequately evaluated. Further, the number of students served by these programs has been a fraction of the number of students struggling with attendance issues.

Current programs or initiatives operating under the coordination of the Truancy Taskforce include the following:

- Alternative to the Court Experience (ACE) Diversion Program: ACE is an interagency initiative run by PASS with DBH in collaboration with community-based behavioral health service providers. It launched in the summer 2014 and offers a range of diversion services, including behavioral health treatment, as alternatives to prosecution for youth who are facing truancy or delinquency charges.²³ Between June and November 2014, the program received approximately 140 truancy diversions.²⁴
- Parent and Adolescent Support Services (PASS) Program: The Mayor allocated \$1 million to the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services in the FY14 budget for truancy reduction and it was used to expand the PASS program. The program is run by the Department of Human Services. The additional funds are being used to serve students who are first-time or repeat 9th graders at Anacostia and Dunbar Senior High Schools, and middle school students at Maya Angelou and Friendship Public Charter School.²⁵ As of November 2014, PASS reported capacity to handle 300

cases per year, though some cases are based on allegations of running away, curfew violations, or extreme disobedience rather than truancy.²⁶ In FY14, PASS closed 67% of its cases successfully.²⁷

- Show Up, Stand Out: The Justice Grants Administration's community-based truancy reduction demonstration project has served over 2,500 students in 45 elementary and middle schools²⁸ and is projected to serve over 5,000 students in SY14-15.²⁹ The program connects families of elementary-school students with frequent school absences to community-based services that promote attendance³⁰ and provides in-school activities for middle school students to increase their engagement with school.³¹ An evaluation of the program's first year found that 73% of the students who came in contact with the program in SY12-13 increased their attendance from SY11-12. Of the 99 students who received comprehensive services through the program, 79% increased their attendance from the year before they were referred to the program, with the attendance increases ranging from 1% to 69%.³²
- Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP): The Taskforce partnered with the Department of Employment Services to implement an attendance policy for SYEP. During summer 2013, for the first time in SYEP's history, school attendance was tied to a student's eligibility for the program.³³
- Transportation Subsidies: The Department of Transportation has expanded its Student Transit Subsidy Program to include free bus services for DC students³⁴ because data showed that lack of access to free transportation was a barrier for many students attending school. However, the program does not provide free travel on Metrorail,³⁵ a limitation that continues to be identified as an attendance barrier in SST meetings.³⁶
- Truancy Intervention and Prevention Mediation Pilot Program: DCPS has entered into a memorandum of understanding with ACCESS Youth to pilot truancy intervention after five absences with students at H.D. Woodson and Ballou High School. An ACCESS Youth attendance counselor holds a mediation session with the student and his or her parents to identify the root causes of poor attendance and develop an attendance plan. This is followed by weekly check-ins and student participation in activities designed to promote attendance and pro-social behaviors.³⁷ During the 2014-15 school years, the pilot is projected to 120 students.³⁸

Without a comprehensive strategy to evaluate existing programs and make them

available to the thousands of students who need them, the root causes of poor school

attendance will continue to go unaddressed, and the number of students chronically absent from class will remain stubbornly high. We are hopeful that Deputy Mayor Niles will lead the effort to build a comprehensive strategy.

We believe the following steps are necessary for a successful strategy:

1. Improve the school climate and student engagement at high-truancy schools.

Students who are engaged in school are more likely to attend class, have strong academic performance, and use their out-of-school time in productive ways.³⁹ Students are more likely to be engaged if they have clear and consistent classroom goals, strong academic and interpersonal support from their teachers, and interesting classwork.⁴⁰ Policy-makers should develop initiatives to provide such schools with opportunities to evaluate and improve their current school climate.⁴¹

2. Strengthen existing school-based early interventions.

The District should fully fund and implement the early school-based attendance interventions required by current law. Chief among these is the Student Support Team (SST) meeting. District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is not holding SST meetings in the majority of required cases, and states that it cannot do so under the current staffing model.⁴² The District should provide funding for the staff time necessary to robustly intervene with students and families prior to CFSA or Family Court referral.

3. Implement evidence-based programs proven to reduce truancy.

There are many evidence-based programs that have been proven to reduce truancy. A central authority should oversee the implementation in a structured manner so that programs are implemented with fidelity, properly evaluated, improved from year to year, and replaced if they prove unsuccessful. Some well-regarded programs include Check and Connect⁴³ and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports.⁴⁴

4. Expand mental health services to all schools.

Many students and families experiencing truancy have unaddressed mental health issues.⁴⁵ In addition to school social workers and psychologists employed by the schools themselves, the Department of Behavioral Health's School Mental Health Program (SMHP) provides prevention, early intervention and clinical services to children of all ages in the District's schools.⁴⁶ In addition, DCPS now offers several evidence-based mental health programs.⁴⁷ The District should ensure these programs are offered to students in charter schools as well as DCPS schools, and that all students who are eligible for these programs are able to access these services before they become chronically absent.

5. Revise the "80/20 rule" to allow schools to better distinguish between students who are chronically tardy and chronically absent.

The regulation that defines missing more than 20% of regular school hours as an absence⁴⁸ is colloquially known as the "80/20 rule."⁴⁹ This rule, combined with the new, lower threshold for chronic truancy, can cause a student who is late once each month of the school year to be classified as chronically truant. The 80/20 rule thus limits schools'

and other agencies' ability to distinguish between students who are chronically absent and chronically tardy.

6. Require meaningful school- or community-based intervention before students can be referred to court for poor school attendance.

The court simply was not created to address the root causes of poor school attendance, and also lacks the capacity to process the thousands of youth who accumulate 15 absences each year.⁵⁰ The evidence demonstrates that earlier community-based interventions are more effective. We recommend two statutory changes: 1) that a school's failure to provide school- and community-based interventions be made an affirmative defense to truancy petitions, and 2) that schools be prohibited from referring students to court absent such intervention. These changes would encourage schools to offer meaningful early intervention services and protect the rights of students referred to court for attendance matters.

Reducing Suspension and Expulsion

The other, and very connected, side of student engagement is reducing time spent outside of school because of suspensions and expulsions. One of the causes of truancy is the overuse of suspension and expulsion.⁵¹ Out of school suspensions and expulsions have an extremely negative impact on the student being disciplined. Research shows that suspension does not produce the desired effect – a student doesn't learn from his or her behavior and come back to school ready to behave and learn. In fact, just the opposite is true -- suspension and expulsion is correlated with decreased

academic performance, dropping out, substance abuse and criminal activity.⁵² A study of nearly one million students in Texas study found that 31% of students who were suspended or expelled repeated a grade at least one time.⁵³ This same study showed that students who have been suspended or expelled were almost three times as likely to be referred to the juvenile justice system the following year.⁵⁴

Not only does school exclusion negatively impact the individual student, it is also detrimental for the entire school community. One might think that pushing out students who misbehave would at least be helpful for the well-behaved students in that it would allow them to learn in a more orderly environment. But this actually is not the case. Studies have found that higher rates of suspension and expulsion do not increase school safety or academic performance for the rest of the student body.⁵⁵ When a school relies on suspension and expulsion as its means of discipline this can erode the trust between students and school staff and undermine efforts to create the positive school climate that is needed to engage students and achieve academic success.⁵⁶ A study of almost 20,000 middle and high school students who had not been suspended found that *their* test scores significantly decreased if they attended schools that had high rates of suspension and expulsion.⁵⁷

In its recent report on suspension and expulsions in the District, OSSE revealed some highly troubling statistics.⁵⁸ I want to highlight a few of those findings:

- There were 10,000 students of all ages suspended during the 2012-2013 school year.
- Children are suspended throughout the elementary school years, but there is a big spike in 6th through 9th grade.
- Students under the care of DC's child welfare system were more than two times more likely to be disciplined than other students.
- Student who are low-income were also more likely to be disciplined than their wealthier peers.⁵⁹
- Students who have disabilities and receive special education services also experienced higher rates of discipline.

One of the most upsetting statistics that the OSSE report uncovered was that African-American students in the District were almost 6 times as likely to be suspended or expelled as white students. School push-out is not just a school discipline issue, it is very much an issue of racial justice.

Let's be clear about who these students are who are being disciplined. When the Every Student Every Day Coalition analyzed additional data from the 2011-2012 school year (the most recent school year for which should data is currently available), it found that the vast majority of DCPS suspensions were for nonviolent offenses – situations involving no weapons, no drugs and no injury to another students. The three most common behaviors that resulted in school suspension from DCPS were 1) causing

disruption on school property or at a DCPS-sponsored or supervised activity; 2) fighting involving no injury and no weapon; and 3) engaging in reckless behavior that could cause harm to self or others.⁶⁰

Suspension and expulsions, except for as a last resort for students who pose an imminent danger to others, are inappropriate tools for holding students accountable. In order to help all students learn, schools should employ more effective methods for preventing and addressing misbehavior. This is hard work and we should acknowledge this. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said it well in his Department's Introduction to *Guiding Principles, A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline*, "it is difficult work to create schools that are safe and free of violence, where teachers can concentrate on teaching and, to the greatest extent possible, all students are in class and focused on learning. But it is possible."

There are many evidence-based positive disciplinary approaches that keep students in school while also setting limits, teaching responsibility and appropriate behavior. DC already has a few of these programs in some of our schools and we need to bring them to scale. For example one way OSSE is working to reduce suspension and expulsion is by finding ways to address the traumatic experiences children in the District of Columbia bring with them into the classroom, an underlying problem behind student misbehavior. OSSE has worked with both the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) and the Children and Family Services Agency (CFSA) to train over 350 educators

on strategies to provide positive interventions to disruptive behavior and over 400 on trauma informed practices.⁶¹ Transforming schools to make all children feel safe has benefits for the entire student and staff population. If schools are equipped to handle trauma, with staff trained in its effects and who are able to make strong linkages to mental health providers, teachers will be able to focus on teaching rather than continuously managing behavior issues.

Another example is the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) Healthy Futures program⁶² in 26 child care centers. Healthy Futures clinicians work with child care providers and coach them on how to work with children who are exhibiting difficult behavior rather than resorting to suspension or expulsion. But this program is only in 5% of the District's child care centers. The same is true for DBH's school-based mental health program which is only in 33% of District schools.⁶³ Additionally, there are school-wide programs that work to create a better school climate such as positive behavioral intervention and supports (currently in nine schools in the District⁶⁴) and restorative justice models.⁶⁵

Other cities and states are leading the way in school discipline and showing us what is possible. For example, San Francisco Public Schools cut their suspension rate by 50% in three years by expanding support programs for students and adopting a new Safe and Supportive Schools policy that favors restorative practices over suspension.⁶⁶ Denver Public Schools reduced out-of-school suspensions by 40 percent by replacing

punitive measures with practices like restorative justice.⁶⁷ Pittsburgh Public Schools will implement restorative practices in half of its 50 public schools in 2015-17.⁶⁸

As with truancy, the Deputy Mayor is in a uniquely positioned to be a leader on this issue. We urge that she work with the education agencies to ensure schools have the training, support and funding to implement alternative programs that promote a positive school climate and appropriate disciplinary approaches.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I welcome any questions.

¹ Children’s Law Center fights so every child in DC can grow up with a loving family, good health and a quality education. Judges, pediatricians and families turn to us to be the voice for children who are abused or neglected, who aren’t learning in school, or who have health problems that can’t be solved by medicine alone. With 100 staff and hundreds of pro bono lawyers, we reach 1 out of every 8 children in DC’s poorest neighborhoods – more than 5,000 children and families each year. And, we multiply this impact by advocating for city-wide solutions that benefit all children.

² OSSE FY13 Oversight Responses, Q 32. Note for some purposes there are 62 Local Education Agencies. See OSSE FY Oversight Responses, Q35.

³ DME FY14 Performance Oversight Responses.

⁴ DME FY14 Performance Oversight Responses, Q1.

⁵ A copy of the report is attached to my testimony.

⁶ *Truancy Taskforce Summative Data for SY2013-2014*, 7.

⁷ DCPS FY14 Performance Oversight Responses: Q47_Attachment_Unexcused Absences SY12-13, SY13-14 & SY14-15.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ DCPS FY214 Performance Oversight Responses Q47 attachment.

¹⁰ *The National Center for School Engagement, Factors Contributing to Truancy*, available at: www.truancyprevention.org ; *Truancy Reduction: Keeping Students in School* (2001), available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/188947.pdf>.

¹¹ Note that the Public Charter School Board does not compile data on the causes of truancy identified in SST meetings in its schools, or indeed whether SST meetings are held at all.

¹² These percentages do not add up to 100%, as many SST meetings failed to identify any attendance barriers or did not report data on barriers that were identified. DCPS FY13 Performance Oversight Responses, 87–88.

¹³ *Attendance Matters Truancy Prevention Guide: A Resource Guide for Parents and Legal Guardians*, 5.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ See *Attendance Accountability Emergency Amendment Act of 2013*, DC Act 20-0072.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ 5-A DCMR , §A 2103.2(c)(3) (2014).

¹⁸ DC Code § 38-201(3B), .

¹⁹ DCPS FY2013 Performance Oversight Responses, Q88.

²⁰ Ibid., Q87.

²¹ DCPS FY14 Performance Oversight Questions, Q52.

²² *Testimony of Rashida Kennedy, Moving Past Truancy: Chronic Absenteeism in the District of Columbia, Public Roundtable before the District of Columbia State Board of Education, Truancy and Student Engagement Committee*, June 12, 2014.

²³ Hilary Cairns, Program Manager, Parent and Adolescent Support Services Program (PASS), DC Department of Human Services--Family Services Administration, Presentation at DBH Children's System of Care Roundtable Meeting (December 5, 2014). The current capacity is 6-12 cases per week.

²⁴ *Truancy Taskforce Presentation* (Citywide Truancy Taskforce, November 20, 2014), 23. Slides on file with DC Lawyers for Youth.

²⁵ Deputy Mayor for Education FY13 Performance Oversight Questions , Q 30, .

²⁶ *Truancy Taskforce Presentation* (Citywide Truancy Taskforce, November 20, 2014), 22.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ *Truancy Taskforce Meeting 3rd Advisory Period - Powerpoint Presentation* (District of Columbia Truancy Task Force, May 14, 2014), 47.

²⁹ Melissa Hook, *Public Roundtable on Truancy and the Implementation of Truancy Reform Initiatives* (Washington, DC, 2014), 01:17:35, http://dc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=4&clip_id=2489.

³⁰ Alexandra Caceres, *FY2015 Show Up, Stand Out (Community-Based Truancy Reduction Grant - CBTR), Youth Service Provider Request for Applications* (Justice Grants Administration, July 12, 2014), http://jga.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/jga/service_content/attachments/Youth%20Service%20Provider%20RFA%20%28final%29.pdf.

³¹ Melissa Hook, *Public Roundtable on Truancy and the Implementation of Truancy Reform Initiatives*, 01:10:10.

³² *Show Up, Stand Out, An Attendance Program of the District of Columbia Justice Grants Administration, Year 1 (2012-2013) Top Line Evaluation Findings* (Choice Research Associates, n.d.), <http://www.scribd.com/doc/239183119/SUSO-Evaluation>.

³³ Deputy Mayor for Education FY13 Performance Oversight Q30, .

³⁴ "School Transit Subsidy Program," *District Department of Transportation*, 2014, <http://ddot.dc.gov/page/school-transit-subsidy-program>.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ DCPS FY14 Performance Oversight Q51, -.

³⁷ Jodi Ovca, *Public Roundtable on Truancy and the Implementation of Truancy Reform Initiatives* (Washington, DC, 2014), 01:24:10, http://dc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=4&clip_id=2489.

³⁸ DCPS FY14 Performance Oversight Questions, Q56.

³⁹ Laura Lippman and Andrew Rivers, *Assessing School Engagement: A Guide for Out-of-School Time Program Practitioners* (Child Trends, October 2008), 1–2, <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2008-39AssessingSchoolEngagement.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Jennifer A. Fredricks, Phyllis C. Blumenfeld, and Alison H. Paris, "School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence," *Review of Educational Research* 74, no. 1 (2004): 73–80.

⁴¹ For an example of such a process, see "School Climate Implementation Road Map Overview," *School Climate Resource Center*, 2014, <http://scrc.schoolclimate.org/roadmap.html>.

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- ⁴² DCPS FY2013 Performance Oversight Questions, Q 88, .
- ⁴³ “Check and Connect,” *Social Programs That Work*, accessed August 13, 2014, <http://evidencebasedprograms.org/1366-2/check-and-connect>.
- ⁴⁴ Lucy Bridges, “Positive Behavior Intervention and Support: An Alternative Approach,” *Dissertations*, 2012, http://ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1330&context=luc_diss.
- ⁴⁵ Myriam L. Baker, Jane Nady Sigmon, and M. Elaine Nugent, *Truancy Reduction: Keeping Students in School* (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, September 2001), 2, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/188947.pdf>.
- ⁴⁶ *2014 Report Card: Children’s Mental Health in the District of Columbia* (Children’s Law Center, n.d.), 13, http://www.childrenslawcenter.org/sites/default/files/CLC%202014%20Mental%20Health%20Report%20Card%20--%20High%20Resolution%20for%20Printing-%20corrected%20typo_0.pdf.
- ⁴⁷ Soumya Bhat and Jenny Reed, *Unlocking Opportunities: Services That Help Poor Children Succeed in the Classroom* (DC Fiscal Policy Institute, October 8, 2014), 5, <http://www.dcfpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Issue-Brief-4-Mental-Health-Services.pdf>.
- ⁴⁸ 5 DCMR § A2199.1 .
- ⁴⁹ Michael Alison Chandler, “Educators, Parents Sound Off About D.C. Truancy Laws,” *The Washington Post*, November 18, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/educators-parents-sound-off-about-dc-truancy-laws/2014/11/18/8b6c6266-6f58-11e4-8808-afaa1e3a33ef_story.html.
- ⁵⁰ Akiva Liberman and Meaghan Cahill, *Variation in 2010-11 Truancy Rates Among District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) High Schools and Middle Schools* (District of Columbia Crime Policy Institute, Urban Institute, November 2012), i.
- ⁵¹ Tonisha Jones and Nicholas Lovrich, *Updated Literature Review on Truancy: Key Concepts, Historical Overview, and Research Relating to Promising Practices – with Particular Utility to Washington State* (Center for Children and Youth Justice, June 30, 2011), 10, <http://www.ccyj.org/uploads/PPO/WSU%20Literature%20Review.pdf>.
- ⁵² “Out-of-school suspensions and expulsions can affect a student’s future emotional and educational well-being, as research suggests that school exclusion actually increases the likelihood that students will misbehave in the future, become truant, fail to graduate, develop substance abuse issues, or encounter the juvenile justice system.” Office of the State Superintendent of Education, *Reducing Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions in District of Columbia Public and Public Charter Schools*, 9 (June 2014). http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/OSSE_REPORT_DISCIPLINARY_G_PAGES.pdf.
- ⁵³ Justice Center, Council of State Governments and Public Policy Research Institutes, *Breaking Schools’ Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Students’ Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement*, 13 (July 2011). http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Breaking_Schools_Rules_Report_Final.pdf
- ⁵⁴ Justice Center, Council of State Governments and Public Policy Research Institutes, *Breaking Schools’ Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Students’ Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement*, 14 (July 2011). http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Breaking_Schools_Rules_Report_Final.pdf
- ⁵⁵ A review of quantitative research conducted by the American Psychological Association found that more frequent usage of suspension and expulsion was associated with lower academic achievement across the school’s entire student body, even when controlling for demographic factors and socioeconomic status. Russell Skiba et al., American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, *Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools*, 5 (Dec. 2008). <http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/zero-tolerance-report.pdf>

⁵⁶ U.S. Department of Education, *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate*, 8 (Jan. 2014). <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>

⁵⁷ Brea L. Perry, Edward W. Morris, *Suspending Progress: Collateral Consequences of Exclusionary Punishment in Public Schools*, *American Sociological Review*, Vol.79(6), 1067-1087 (2014).

⁵⁸ Office of the State Superintendent of Education, *Reducing Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions in District of Columbia Public and Public Charter Schools* (June 2014). http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/OSSE_REPORT_DISCIPLINARY_G_PAGES.pdf.

⁵⁹ Students from low-income families in DC schools, as measured by eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch, were 1.3 times more likely to be disciplined than students whose families were not low income. Students from families eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program were 1.5 times more likely to be disciplined than students not participating in these assistance programs. Students who were homeless at some point during School Year 2012-2013 and attending DC schools, were nearly 1.2 times more likely to be disciplined than those who were not homeless. *Id.* at 7.

⁶⁰ DC Lawyers for Youth, *District Discipline: The Overuse of Suspension and Expulsion in the District of Columbia*, 6 (June 20, 2013). http://www.dcly.org/district_discipline.

⁶¹ *Id.* Presentation by Yuliana Del Arroyo, OSSE, to the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect (MACCAN), February 24, 2015.

⁶² Deborah F. Perry, Sarah Deardorff, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, *Healthy Futures: Year Two Evaluation Report*, Prepared for the District of Columbia Department of Mental Health (Sept. 2012). Through the Healthy Futures Project licensed mental health professionals provide weekly on-site mental health consultation services to directors and staff at child development centers. These consultations are aimed at building the capacity of staff to reduce children's challenging behaviors and promote positive social-emotional development. The evaluation found that the program is overall very successful in improving the emotional climate of the classrooms, improving staff's ability to respond appropriately to children in distress and refer children and families to mental health services.

⁶³ Legislation adopted in 2012, the South Capitol Street Memorial Amendment Act, set a goal of having mental health programs in 50 percent of DC schools by school year 2014-15 and in all schools by 2016-17. Yet funding through FY 2015 is only sufficient to locate the program in 77 schools (36 percent of all schools). Soumya Bhat and Jenny Reed, DC Fiscal Policy Institute, *Unlocking Opportunities: Services that Help Poor Children Succeed in the Classroom*, Part 4 Helping Students Facing Mental Health Challenges, (Oct.8, 2014).

⁶⁴ *Id.* .

⁶⁵ During the 2014-2015 school year, OSSE's Division of Elementary, Secondary and Specialized Education, in partnership with the non-profit community justice organization Community Conferencing Center, is hosting professional development opportunities for LEAs on building a positive school climate through restorative practices and positive behavior supports. OSSE is hosting a two all-day trainings and 6 follow-up sessions. LEA teams are brought together monthly. http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/event_content/attachments/Restorative%20Practices%20Application%2010.21.pdf

⁶⁶ Laura Dudnick, *SFUSD cuts student suspension rate in half*, *San Francisco Examiner* (July 3, 2014). <http://www.sfexaminer.com/sanfrancisco/sfusd-cuts-student-suspension-rate-in-half/Content?oid=2841429>

⁶⁷ Dignity in Schools, *Fact Sheet: Creating Positive School Discipline* http://www.dignityinschools.org/sites/default/files/Creating_Positive_Discipline_Fact_Sheet.pdf

⁶⁸Joshua Wachtel, Pittsburg in groundbreaking project to make schools safer, Restorative Works learning network (October 15, 2014). <http://restorativeworks.net/2014/10/pittsburgh-public-schools-groundbreaking-project-make-schools-safer/>.