

STRONG ATTENDANCE FOR EVERY (S.A.F.E.)

STUDENT ACT

ENDING SCHOOL PUSHOUT
FOR YOUTH OF COLOR



eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

CREATED BY YWCA KALAMAZOO IN
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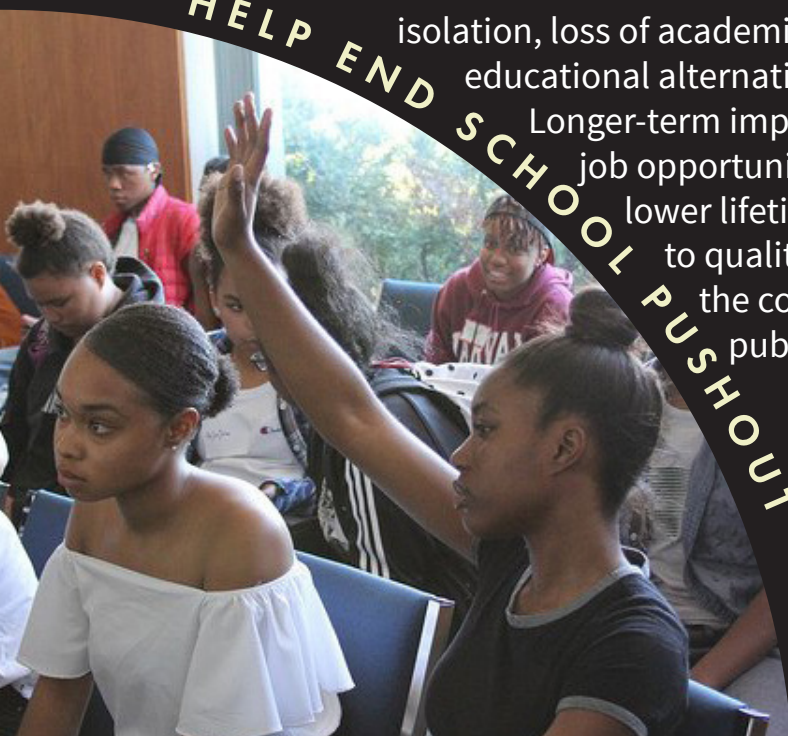
SCHOOL PUSHOUT

Schools can be supportive and nurturing places for many students allowing them to succeed and achieve their educational goals. For others, schools may create unwelcoming and unsafe school environments creating barriers to accessing and reaching their educational pursuits. School pushout refers to the policies, practices, and environments which prevent or discourage students and youth from completing their educational goals. Bullying, a lack of school-based resources, and the use of zero-tolerance and exclusionary disciplinary policies – primarily suspension and expulsion – prevent or discourage youth from completing their education. Often, these policies and practices result in the criminalization of various student behaviors and actions with youth of color, particularly Black and Brown girls, being disproportionately impacted.

For example, The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reports that Black students, Latino students, and Native American students “receive substantially more school discipline than their white peers and receive harsher and longer punishments than their white peers receive for like offenses” [1]. Within the last decade, Native or Indigenous students were three times as likely as white students to be referred to law enforcement [2]. Black girls are 6.1 times more likely to experience expulsion than white girls [3].

School pushout can have lifelong impacts on students. Continued expulsions or suspensions may cause a student to fall behind academically. Additionally, students may have decreased access to critical services like counseling or health services when removed from a school. Students may also experience social isolation, loss of academic or educational supports, or be forced into educational alternatives that do not meet their needs. Longer-term impacts of school pushout may result in fewer job opportunities, decreased access to higher education, lower lifetime earnings, and decreased health or access to quality care. These long-term issues also impact the community as a whole: lower tax revenue, less public funding, lower rates of job growth, etc.

HELP END SCHOOL PUSHOUT



THE S.A.F.E. STUDENT ACT

Strong Attendance for Every (S.A.F.E.) Student Act would amend current Michigan school code section under Act 451 of 1976 to better address and understand the impact of school pushout on Michigan students in three ways.

ONE

Mandating no student is disciplined - either suspended or expelled - for solely being truant or chronically absent.

TWO

Accountability through data reporting: The S.A.F.E. Student Act would require school boards across Michigan to submit a report with disaggregated data to the respective superintendent. Such reports must include the following; the number of student expelled, suspended, chronically absent, disciplinary absent, or truant during the preceding school year; a written description with participants and disciplinary outcome of each incident; specific demographics of those students expelled, suspended, chronically absent, disciplinary absent, or truant.

THREE

This legislation also establishes a multidisciplinary advisory committee which shall aid in the determination of the form and manner of the aforementioned report.

In addition to changes in school policy and reporting, the S.A.F.E. Student Act looks to define a number of terms, including, but not limited to, what constitutes as “in attendance,” “chronically absent,” “disciplinary absence,” and “excused absence”



WHY MICHIGAN MATTERS

In Michigan, Black students make up 18% of the student population, but make up 45% of the state's "out-of-school" suspensions [4].

In Michigan, Black students are 4.1 times as likely to be suspended as White students [5].

Michigan ranks within the top ten states for the highest rates of suspensions for students with disabilities, "with Black students having disabilities being suspended at a rate of 26.8%" [6].

"At 660 schools in the state of Michigan, more than 30% of the students are chronically absent" [7].

According to the Michigan League for Public Policy, "Michigan is third-worst in the nation for the share of bachelor's degrees earned by Black students relative to its share of Black residents" [8].

"While 1 of every 3 Michigan students is a child of color, more than 90% of teachers and 80% of school administrators are White" [9].

Due to COVID-19, increasing strains on the financial, health, and technological capabilities of families may result in increased drop-out rates or decreased rates of attendance.

END NOTES

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4. ProPublica., (2019) Michigan: Discipline., In Miseducation. Retrieved from projects.propublica.org/miseducation/state/MI
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