

School Climate

Solutions Not Suspensions

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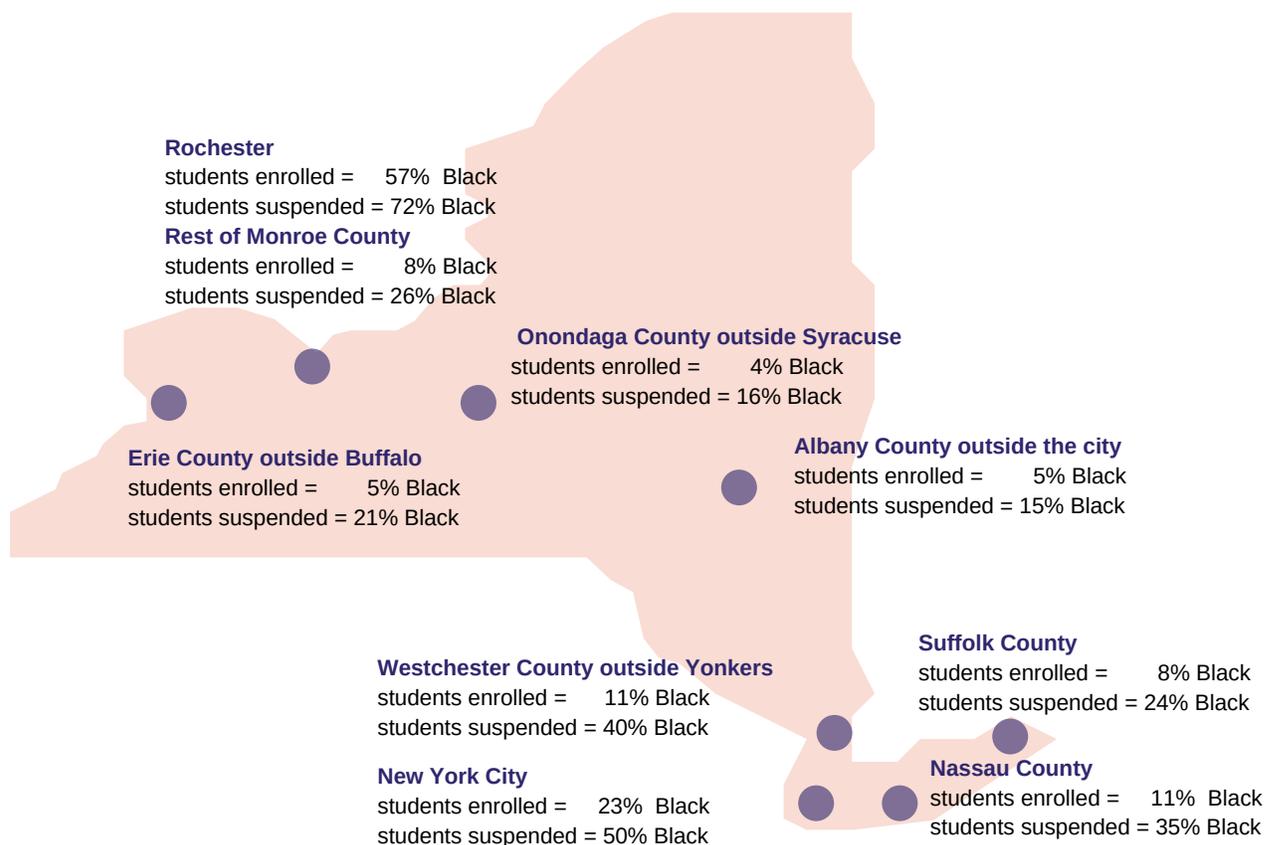
The Need

Schools should be places where students are welcomed and supported in their learning and development. But across New York, children as young as kindergarten lose out on instruction each year because of suspensions, often for normal, youthful behavior.

The Solution

New York state must end the reliance on suspensions as the default way to discipline students and instead hold students accountable for their behaviors through age appropriate, restorative and trauma-informed interventions that help children learn from mistakes and continue learning.

Students who miss 20 days or more in a year are significantly less likely to graduate from high school. In New York, suspensions can last up to an entire school year and disproportionately impact students of color.



Source: The Education Trust - New York, 2018

Policy Changes Needed

1

Require school codes of conduct to include restorative approaches to discipline and proactively foster a positive school climate

2

Limit the use of suspensions in Kindergarten through 3rd grade to only the most serious behaviors

3

Shorten the maximum length of suspension from 180 to 20 school days (except when required by federal law)

4

Prohibit suspensions for minor infractions such as tardiness, dress code violations, or insubordination

5

Require that students who are suspended receive academic instruction and the opportunity to complete assignments, take exams and earn credit

6

Require charter schools to follow state education law on student behavior and discipline

Evidence the Solution Works

In 2016, the Rochester City School District adopted a new code of conduct that included restorative practices. Over the next two years school saw...



27% drop in suspensions
3,032 fewer suspensions



47% drop in suspensions for "other disruptive incidents" that include non-violent, non-intimidating behaviors like wandering halls, talking back to teachers, fooling around in class, etc.



28% drop in courses failed by students who were suspended
2,066 fewer courses failed

Source: *Breaking the School to Prison Pipeline*, 2019

Public Support

61%

of Monroe County parents support eliminating or reducing suspensions in Kindergarten - Third Grade

Source: *The Children's Agenda* poll of Monroe County parents, 2022

Statewide Organizational Support

Advocates for Children of New York
Alliance for Quality Education
Brooklyn Defender Services
Bronx Defenders
Center for Family Representation
Children's Defense Fund - NY
Citizen Action of New York
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families
Families Together
Girls for Gender Equity
Legal Aid Society
Mobilization for Justice
New York Civil Liberties Union
Urban Youth Collective
We the Parents - Buffalo
Westchester Children's Association
The Children's Agenda
YWCA of Brooklyn