

EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY



*How to help a child with
school discipline issues*

Educational Advocacy

Children should be in school, in positive nurturing, learning environments, and able to be successful academically and socially. Often times, children experience many challenges in school or in their lives that negatively affect their educational success.

The goal of **Educational Advocacy** is to ensure that children have all the resources and support they need to be successful in the classroom both academically and socially.

Educational advocacy focuses on making sure school systems 1) provide children with the resources and support they need to be successful; and 2) abide by the laws that protect children's right to access public education. Educational advocacy does not focus on the child's home situation, because we cannot control their home situation. Instead educational advocacy focuses on the public entity- schools- that has a legal obligation to provide education for our children.

Educational advocacy is any action taken on behalf of a child to addresses challenges that are preventing the child from achieving academic and social success in schools. This can include, but are not limited to:

Assisting a child in enrolling in school

Assisting a child in re-enrolling in school after being suspended, expelled, arrested in school, returning from a detention center or youth prison, dropping out or being otherwise pushed out of school

Mediating meetings between a child and school staff

Mediating meetings between parents and school staff

Appealing a suspension

Assisting in the creation of alternatives to suspension and expulsion for a child

Defending a child in an expulsion hearing

Appealing a recommendation for expulsion that is upheld

Addressing concerns about police or school security with school or district personnel

Assisting in creating behavior intervention plans, or other supportive tools to help improve behavior

Addressing unmet academic needs

Addressing unmet academic needs that are causing a child to exhibit challenging behavior

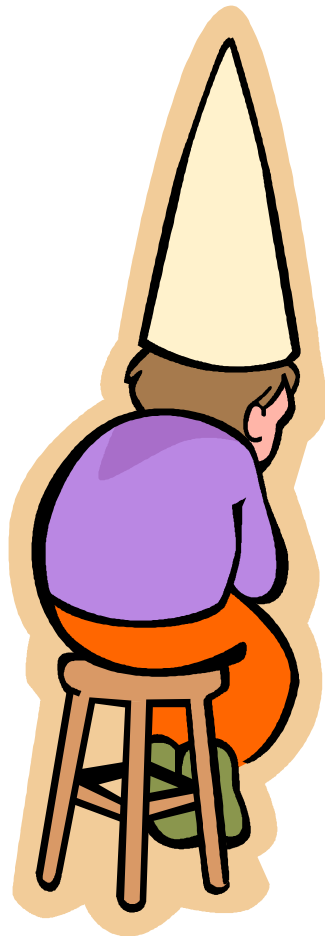
Bringing concern to district offices or other decision makers

Filing complaints with appropriate authorities

Connecting parents and children with community-based resources

Definition of Discipline

“Discipline” is defined as the steps or actions which teachers, administrators, support staff, parents and students follow to enhance academic and social success.



Understanding School Discipline Policies & Procedures

The district where your child attends school has developed a set of rules that are spelled out in the Student Code of Conduct. If you have not been provided with a copy of the Code of Conduct upon enrolling your child in school, you should request one from the school immediately. Navigating the Code of Conduct can be a difficult task, but the Code can be an important tool in advocating for your child in the school system.

Infractions and Consequences

The Code of Conduct typically includes a list of offenses or “infractions” which may lead to a student being disciplined. These infractions may range from minor offenses such as school bus disturbances and dress code violations to more serious violations such as possessing a weapon on school grounds. For each offense, the Code of Conduct will also include a list of consequences or disciplinary actions that the school may impose on a student if he or she violates the rules. These consequences also range from minor to more serious measures. For example, the school may choose to deal with an infraction by holding a parent-teacher conference. In contrast, if the violation is serious the principal may recommend the student for expulsion.

Ultimately, the school administration has the discretion as to what consequence your child will receive for an infraction of the Code of Conduct. In making this determination, the school will likely consider the child’s disciplinary history, the severity of the infraction, the frequency of the misbehavior, and the age of the student.

Due Process Requirements Upon Suspension or Expulsion

If the school administration makes the determination to suspend or expel your child, they must provide your child with “due process” protections prior to initiating the suspension or expulsion. This includes, at a minimum, notice of the accused misbehavior and an opportunity for the student to present his or her side of the story. The Recovery School District’s Code of Conduct, however, provides even more specific due process protections. Even with these protections written into the Code of Conduct, many times a school will simply tell a child not to return to school without following the appropriate procedures. As an advocate for your child, it is important that you remind the school to abide by the due process procedural policies set out in the Code of Conduct. The Recovery School District’s Code of Conduct specifies the following procedural protections:

A child is accused of a disciplinary violation and is recommended for expulsion.



A student conference is conducted by Principal or designee. Your child tells what happened.

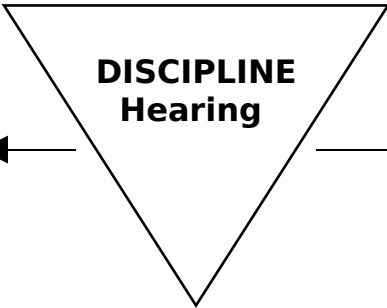


School shall contact and conduct a conference with parent/guardian about alleged incident to discuss the

If parent/guardian refuses to attend/respond to the conference, the student shall be removed and a notice shall be sent home by certified mail.



The school determines disciplinary action to be taken. Principal completes and signs documentation. Documentation is mailed to parent within 24 hours and a copy is sent to the Student Hearing Commission.



Expulsion recommendation upheld.

Your child is expelled. Write an appeals letter within 5 calendar days.

Expulsion recommendation refused.

Your child goes back to school. Hooray!!

Other corrective disciplinary actions taken.

The hearing officer decides to use an alternative to expulsion.

The hearing officer decides to use an alternative to expulsion.

Special Education Discipline Process

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Question:

What should I do if my child has been suspended?

Answer:

If this is the first suspension and it is for less than 10 days, the child serves his suspension the same as if he were not a child with a disability. You should keep track of the suspensions and removals. If they total more than 10 days in a school year, you should request a new Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting for the purpose of making changes related to behavior and possibly revising the behavior plan to address the behavior that caused the student to be suspended. All of the appeal rights described in the general discipline process applies to students receiving special education services.

2. Question:

Do I have to pick my child up if the school calls me because of a behavior problem?

Answer:

You do not have to pick up the child, but you may want to. If you decide to pick the child up because you fear that the problem may get worse, ask for something in writing from the school stating that your child is being sent home due to behavior. Explain to the school that due to truancy laws, you want to be protected if anyone accuses you of keeping your child out of school. If the school calls you to pick up your child often and it's accumulated to be 10 days or more, the school must meet to revise your child's IEP and do a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

3. Question:

Who writes the behavior plan for my child?

Answer:

The Behavior Plan is written by a team of people at the school that should include the teachers who will be responsible for implementing the plan, the parent and any other school personnel with special knowledge about the child and behavior strategies.

4. Question:

How can I get my child's school records?

Answer:

You should make a written request to review and obtain copies of your child's records. Make sure to ask for any disciplinary records and any records contained in a separate special education folder in addition to the records in the cumulative file. You may not want copies of everything in the file, since the school can charge you for each page requested. It's important to review these records and ask that any inaccurate information be removed. Remember to make all requests in writing. You may request a hearing to correct or challenge misleading or inaccurate information. It's a good idea to review all educational records when preparing for an IEP meeting or discipline hearing. Read the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** for more information.

5. Question:

My child is not in Special Education, but he does have a behavior problem, can they suspend him?

Answer:

The school can suspend your child if he violates the Student Code of Conduct. However, if you have made a written request to the school that you have concerns about your child's behavior interfering with his/her learning, the school must implement behavioral interventions to help with that behavior. All of the protections related to behavior in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) apply to your child. Also, if you have already signed to have your child evaluated and that evaluation is not yet completed, IDEA protections apply to your child. It's also important to understand that if the evaluation has been completed and you have refused special education services, the school does NOT have to apply the IDEA protections to your child for future violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

6. Question:

How long can my child be removed from school?

Answer:

A student can be removed from school for up to **10** days in a school year without the continuation of educational services. If there has been a pattern of removals related to behavior that show a pattern, the IEP team must meet, there should be a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) to determine if the behavior is related to the child's disability. If the student brought *illegal* drugs, a weapon to school, or if they committed "serious bodily injury", the child can be removed to an Interim Alternative Setting for **45** days. If after a MDR it is determined that the behavior was NOT a manifestation of the student's disability, the student may be removed in the same manner as a student without a disability. However, the student's educational services must continue. Parents are a part of the MDR team.

7. Question:

What is "serious bodily injury"?

Answer:

Serious Bodily Injury involves a substantial risk of death; extreme physical pain; protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or faculty (18 USC Section 1365 (3)(h)).

8. Question:

How can I get my child back in school?

Answer:

A child with a disability should never be out of school past 10 days in one school year unless the removal involves drugs, weapons and serious bodily injury. You should contact the school district's compliance officer and let them know that your child's placement was changed without reviewing and revising the IEP and doing a MDR. You should contact an advocate to help in this process.

9. Question:

Should all of my child's teachers have a copy of his IEP?

Answer:

Each of your child's teachers should have access to his IEP. Also, if the student has behavior problems and has a behavior plan, the teacher should help to develop that plan.

10. Question

Can I bring someone with me to an expulsion hearing?

Answer:

Yes, you can bring an advocate or anyone you feel you need to help support your and your child in the expulsion hearing. It's also important to bring witnesses to the incident.

Alternatives to Suspensions/Expulsions

If your child violates the Code of Conduct, the school may choose to suspend or expel him/her. Many times the school jumps directly to the most severe consequences for a student's misbehavior without considering less severe options. As an advocate for your child, it is important that you are familiar with these options so that you may persuade the school to pursue a less severe consequence. Some less severe consequences that you can suggest:

- Conference with student
- Parent contact- letter to the parent or guardian about the behavior
- Loss of class privileges (e.g., computer time)
- Conference with the student, administrator, counselor, guardian, and/or parent of the child about the behavior
- Re-teach the behavioral expectations
- Create a behavior contract that includes expected student behaviors, as well as consequences for infractions and incentives for demonstrating expected behavior
- Require daily or weekly check-ins with administrator for a set period of time
- Identify a mentor and establish a schedule of activities related to school performance
- Require the student to complete a community service task
- Have the student choose a method of apologizing or making amends to those harmed or offended
- Provide a reflective activity
- Referral to the Response to Intervention Committee
- In-school referral to the counselor
- Detention, during which the student completes work
- Supervised work assignments
- Saturday detention
- In-school suspension; during which the student completes work
- Restitution
- Arrange linkage with counseling or mental health agency
- Short-term placement in the alternative school
- Adjustment of student's schedule



Appealing an Expulsion Decision

After a child is expelled, parents, tutors and legal guardians have the right to appeal an expulsion decision by a hearing officer. To appeal the decision, you must submit a written appeal letter within five (5) days after the decision is rendered to the appropriate entity for your school or school district:

- for RSD-operated or RSD-chartered schools, send the letter to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- for OPSB-operated or OPSB-chartered schools, send the letter to Orleans Parish School Board.

If you do not appeal the expulsion decision within five days, that decision will be considered final. Your appeal letter should include the following information:

- Child's name
- School child attended before expulsion
- Grade level before expulsion
- Date of expulsion hearing
- Indicate that you are requesting a hearing before the entire OPSB or BESE; also state that you will not accept a hearing by Board's designee.
- List any dates and times that you cannot attend a hearing
- Include a telephone number where you can be reached at all times.

While you do not need to explain why you are appealing the expulsion, you should at least be thinking about how you will make your case to the school board. For example, was the hearing fair? Did you have enough notice about the hearing in order to prepare? Was there evidence that you did not have at the time that you could now use to help your child? Did the hearing officer refuse to consider evidence you think was relevant?

After the Appeal

So you have exhausted your administrative appeals, that is, either OPSB or BESE has upheld your child's expulsion. What are your alternatives now? Before taking the next step, you will have several difficult decisions to make. Here are some of your options:

1. Accept the alternative education placement

Your child should have been offered an alternative education placement as soon as he/she was recommended for expulsion. Because most expulsions are for the remainder of the school year, your child should be able to remain in the alternative setting for the remainder of that school year, and then be re-admitted to the school system at the beginning of the next school year. However, children with special learning needs who have been expelled should not be placed in alternative education placement for more than 45 days. After the 45 days in the alternative setting has elapsed, your child has a right to return to a regular school setting.

2. Challenge the expulsion decision in court

Parents, tutors or guardians have the right to challenge the final expulsion decision by filing a lawsuit in state Civil District Court or in federal court within ten (10) days. If you plan to pursue a civil case, it is time to seek legal advice from an attorney, prior to filing your claim. There are downsides to pursuing a court action. First, the legal action may take as much time, if not longer, than the period your child would otherwise be in an alternative educational placement. Second, the route to legal redress is not inexpensive, and you will expend extraordinary time and resources in filing and pursuing your claims in court.

3. Other Alternatives to Seek Justice

The fight for justice may be slow, and often as parent advocates you will be faced with the decision of whether to fight only for your child, or for the benefit of all children. Even though you may not be able to afford the time and expense of a civil action, you may consider filing a federal administrative complaint with the Louisiana Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR).

About OCR Complaints

The OCR enforces several federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that received federal financial assistance from the Department of Education. Anyone who believes that an educational institution that receives federal financial assistance has discriminated against someone on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age, may file a complaint. Keep in mind that the complaint must be filed within 180 days of the discriminatory act. In filing an OCR complaint, as a parent you must understand that route most likely will not resolve your child's expulsion issue – at least not immediately. But if you believe your child's expulsion is just an example of a larger problem involving discrimination against certain classes of students (e.g., special needs students, or students in a racial minority group) you may consider filing this OCR complaint to obtain relief for all children fitting this classification.

For more information, contact OCR's Southern Division office:

Office for Civil Rights, Dallas Office*

U.S. Department of Education

1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620

Phone: (214) 661-9600 Fax: (214) 661-9587

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>

** this office handles complaints from Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas*

Why I Want to go Back to School: Example

January 27, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Joshua and I have been recommended for expulsion. I really want to go back to school. I want to go back because I want to get an education and become a computer technician. I also want to go back to school because I like my teachers and my friends. I understand what I need to do to stay out of trouble. I am sorry for any trouble I caused everyone here, especially my mother, and you too. Please give me another chance.

Thank You,
Joshua

Letter of Support: Example

January 27, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Albert Martin. I am the computer graphics teacher at Reed Senior High School. I am writing in support of Joshua Harris who appears before you today. Joshua is in my fourth period class and is currently earning a "B".

Joshua's hard work in computer graphics has been consistent throughout this school year. In fact, I have asked Joshua on several occasions to assist me in taking care of the equipment in the computer lab after school. Joshua is extremely helpful in class and often assists other students in their efforts to learn class material. In addition, Joshua is always respectful in my class.

I urge you to give Joshua a chance to return to Reed and prove that he can maintain his usual positive attitude.

Thank you for your time,
Albert Martin
Teacher, Reed Senior High School
504-555-1212

“Expulsion Appeal Letter”: RSD Example

[DATE]
Re: [STUDENT’S NAME]
[STUDENT’S DATE OF BIRTH]

Paul Vallas
Superintendent
Recovery School District
1641 Poland Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70117

Dear Mr. Vallas:

This letter is to formally appeal the expulsion of [STUDENT’S NAME], a [CHILD’S GRADE LEVEL] student at [STUDENT’S SCHOOL]. [STUDENT’S NAME] was expelled on [DATE] by [HEARING OFFICER’S NAME], a hearing officer for the Recovery School District. I do not believe that [STUDENT’S NAME] should have been expelled. So I am requesting a hearing before the entire school board. I will not accept a review by a designee from the school system. I hereby request that the school board set a time to review the findings of this expulsion hearing.

As [STUDENT’S NAME] has been out of school for [PERIOD OF TIME], I respectfully ask that this matter be handled as quickly as possible. However, I will not be available on [DAY(S)] at [TIME] due to prior obligations; so please schedule around that [DAY/ TIME].

If you have any questions, please contact me at (504) - ___ - ____.

Sincerely,

[PARENT OR GUARDIAN’S NAME]
Parent/ Guardian of [STUDENT’S NAME]

[STUDENT’S NAME]
Student
[STUDENT’S SCHOOL]

CC:
Paul Pastorek, State Superintendent, State Department of Education
Linda Johnson, President, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

“Expulsion Appeal Letter”: NOPS Example

[DATE]
Re: [STUDENT’S NAME]
[STUDENT’S DATE OF BIRTH]

Torin Sanders
President, Orleans Parish School Board
3520 General DeGaulle Drive
New Orleans, LA 70114

Dear President Sanders,

This letter is to formally appeal the expulsion of [STUDENT’S NAME], a [CHILD’S GRADE LEVEL] student at [STUDENT’S SCHOOL]. [STUDENT’S NAME] was expelled on [DATE] by [HEARING OFFICER’S NAME], a hearing officer for the Orleans Parish School Board. I do not believe that [STUDENT’S NAME] should have been expelled. So I am requesting a hearing before the entire school board. I will not accept a review by a designee from the school system. I hereby request that the school board set a time to review the findings of this expulsion hearing.

As [STUDENT’S NAME] has been out of school for [PERIOD OF TIME], I respectfully ask that this matter be handled as quickly as possible. However, I will not be available on [DAY(S)] at [TIME] due to prior obligations; so please schedule around that [DAY/ TIME].

If you have any questions, please contact me at (504) - ___ - ____.

Sincerely,

[PARENT OR GUARDIAN’S NAME]
Parent/ Guardian of [STUDENT’S NAME]

[STUDENT’S NAME]
Student
[STUDENT’S SCHOOL]

CC:
Darryl Kilbert, Superintendent
OPSB Members:
Heidi Lovett Daniels – District 1 (VP)
4
Cynthia Cade – District 2
Limmv Fahrenholtz – District 3

Lourdes Moran – District
Una Anderson – District 6

GENERAL ADVOCACY TIPS



1. **Get the Facts and Give the Facts:** Always get all the information you can about what happened. Ask your child as many questions as you can think of about the situation. Write down everything your child tells you. When you speak to someone about the situation, make sure you give them all the facts including your name and how to reach you.



2. **Make a "Paper Trail"** Get a folder, envelope or box that you use to can keep any papers about your child. Save any papers the schools sends you or send home with your child. These papers are **VERY** important.



3. **Create a "Contact Log":** Keep track of every person you call, what day you called them, what time you call them, what they tell you, or what they commit to doing to follow-up with you. Make sure you get the full name, position, and phone number of anyone you talk to. Write information on one sheet of paper and put the paper in your child's folder.



4. **Make Friends in High Places:** Find out the names of the people in charge of your child's school and school district. Don't be afraid to ask to talk to the principal, the superintendent, or a member of the school board.



5. **Put it in Writing:** When an employee of the school tells you any piece of important information, ask them to put it in writing. For example, if the principal tells you, "We think your child is too much trouble and would be better off in another school," say, "could you please put that in writing?" If they will not put it in writing, send them a letter summarizing what they said and thanking them for speaking with you.



6. **Get a Commitment:** When you speak to someone about your situation, get them to commit to following up with you in some way. Set a date for the follow-up to happen by. Make sure to review their commitment to you before you end your conversation.



7. **Keep your Cool:** Chances are that someone will make you very mad during this process. You have every right to be upset. Use your anger to be strong and clear and you will have a better chance of getting what you want. If you get angry and curse someone out, you may make the situation worse.



7. **Share the strength:** Good advocates know when to empower others to be a self-advocate. Think about the most appropriate times to step back and let the people you are advocating for speak for themselves.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL ARRESTS

Q: What are my child's rights if he/she is arrested at school?

A: Your child has basically all the same rights if arrested at school as in the community. This means that police officer arresting your child must inform your child of his/her MIRANDA rights. MIRANDA rights include the:

1. **Right to remain silent.** *Your child has the right to not give any information to school officials, police, security, or anyone else. Tell your child to request **a lawyer and a parent** if he/she is ever facing arrest. You should choose whether or not to speak with police and school officials after consultation with a lawyer. The police **cannot** question your child if your child has asked for a lawyer. The police should not question your child without a parent present.*
2. **Right to not sign anything.** *As part of the right to remain silent, you and your child do not have to sign any papers. You and your child should consult a lawyer before deciding whether or not to sign any documents.*
3. **Right to an attorney.** *Your child has the right to a lawyer even if you can't afford to pay for one. The court will appoint a public defender in the event that you can't afford a lawyer. You can hire a private lawyer at any point, if you can afford it.*

Q: What should I do if the school calls to tell me my child is being arrested?

A: Here are some suggestions:

1. **If possible, go to the school.** *Do not reprimand your child in front of law enforcement or school officials.*
2. **Tell your child to remain silent.** *Tell police and school officials, "Do not question my child." You should choose whether or not to speak with police and school officials after consultation with a lawyer.*
3. **Do not sign anything.** *You don't have to sign anything. You and your child should consult a lawyer before deciding whether or not to sign any documents. If you cannot afford a lawyer, the court will appoint a public defender to your child's case if the DA decides to file a petition.*
4. **If your child is detained,** *call Juvenile Regional Services (JRS) as soon as possible at 504-207-4577.*
5. **If your child is not detained,** *wait until you receive a subpoena from the court and then call JRS at 504-207-4577.*

6. **If your child has an open case in juvenile court and gets arrested at school call JRS as soon as possible at 504-207-4577.**
7. **If your child is receiving **Special Education** services, be sure to tell your child's lawyer!**

Q: Is the school required to call to me if my child is being arrested?

A: Yes, if the child is less than 17 years old. If your child is 17 or older, the school is not required to notify you.

Q: What should I do if my child has a case in juvenile court that I have not heard about in a long time?

A: Call Juvenile Regional Services at 504-207-4585. Someone there can assist you in finding out the status of your child's case.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE **LIST**



Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

Louisiana Department of Education
PO Box 94064
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064

Recovery School District Schools

New Orleans Central District Office
1641 Poland Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70117
Phone: 504.872.0600
Fax: 504.309.3654

ORGANIZATIONS

Catholic Charities- Archdiocese of New Orleans

1000 Howard Avenue, Suite 1000
New Orleans, LA 70113
504.523.3755
(adult education, counseling, therapeutic individual family services, family care partners)

Family Services of Greater New Orleans

2515 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119
504.822.0800
(support for parents)

Youth Empowerment Project

1604 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70113
Project
504.522-5430
(wrap-around services for youth exiting secure care)

Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children **Contact: Damekia Morgan or Ashana Bigard**

Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children is a statewide membership-based organization dedicated to creating a better life for all Louisiana's youth, especially those who are involved, or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.

Pyramid Parent Resource Center

The mission of the Pyramid Parent Resource Center is to strengthen the community by

New Orleans Public

3520 General deGaulle Drive
New Orleans, LA 70114
Phone: 504.304.5680
Fax: 504.309.2873
www.nops.k12.la.us

Covenant House

611 N. Rampart Street
New Orleans, LA 70112
504.584.1111
(at-risk youth, family &

counseling, health services, advocacy)

Kingsley House

1613 Constance Street
New Orleans, LA
504.523.6221
(teen after-school program, family assessments, drug prevention activities, home-based family therapy)

Young Child Trauma

1430 Tulane Ave., Room M731
New Orleans, LA 70122
504.988.5268
(counseling for children ages 3-6)

www.fflic.org
504.522.5437

504.899.1505

reaching underserved families of children and young adults with disabilities with the information, training and support they deserve to achieve their maximum potential. Pyramid provided one to one assistance to parents of school aged children preparing for IEP, 504 and discipline meetings. Pyramid also provides workshops and IDEA Roundtable meetings to help parents understand their rights under special education law.

NAACP Gulf Coast Advocacy Center

504.899.1889

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is the nation's oldest civil rights organization. The Gulf Coast Advocacy Center's mission is to bring civil rights initiatives in the Gulf Coast region to the forefront, melding what may have been separate struggles over housing, education, voting, criminal justice, worker rights and economic development.

Southern Poverty Law Center School-to-Prison Reform Project

504.486.8982 ext. 226

Contact: Eden B. Heilman, Esq.

eden.heilman@splcenter.org

The Special Education Project is staffed by a team of attorneys from JJPL, Southern Poverty Law Center and the Southern Disability Law Center who work collaboratively to address special education issues statewide. The project is designed to stem the flow of students classified as "emotionally disturbed" in the school-to-prison pipeline by significantly improving the quality of special education in Louisiana. In addition to legal representation, the special education project team conducts trainings and seminars for parents, advocates, and service providers, and coordinates with other attorneys and advocates around the state to address issues affecting students with disabilities.

School disciplinary actions and hearings (suspensions, expulsions)
Meetings with school-site or school district personnel to address unfair discipline practices
Meeting with school-site or school district personnel to address security and law enforcement concerns
Filing complaints about school law enforcement and security
Inappropriate referrals to juvenile justice agencies (school arrests)

To learn more about our advocacy efforts, please call Ellen Tuzzolo at 504-522-5437 x246.