

# SPRING 2009 COMMUNITY REPORT

## SOUTH LA PARENTS MONITORING SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IN LAUSD

### How we have collected our information so far:

- Filed 2 public records act requests regarding the implementation of Positive Behavior Support, LAUSD-wide & in Local District 7
- Conducted 7 classroom observations
- Surveyed 121 parents across Local District 7
- Worked with students from Loyola Marymount University to interview administrators responsible for implementing Positive Behavior Support around the country



## The need for proactive, positive, preventive, and restorative discipline in South LA schools

We are losing funding for our schools but long before this budget crisis we have been losing students, especially in South LA, and in Local District 7. As much as we need to restore funding to our schools, we must never give up the fight to restore dignity to our children’s education. Well before a student gets expelled, we want schools that can tell when our children need support rather than being treated like criminals.

We, as South LA parents and the leaders of our organization, CADRE, want LAUSD to live up to its own policies and implement high quality Positive Behavior Support in all South LA schools in order to end dropout, pushout, and the “school-to-prison train,” so that we can fulfill our communities’ *human right to a quality education*.

**It starts with changing school culture – parents want to be involved so our children will have a chance to live and thrive.** We surveyed over 120 parents

**Parents want to be involved so our children will have a chance to live and thrive.**

across Local District 7 this spring and we have found so far that:

**1. A school community will not have trust without healthy discipline practices and a welcoming environment for parents to help make decisions.**

- 29 percent of parents surveyed said that the way students are disciplined at their children’s schools affects their relationship with the school staff most of the time, and over 45 percent said that it affects most of the time how their children feel about school.

- 37 percent of parents surveyed said they only sometimes or never feel welcome when they enter the school and interact with school staff. 41 percent of parents surveyed said they are sometimes or never encouraged to help make decisions at the school.

**2. A school community will not be strong if schools fail to prevent misbehavior by not teaching and providing students time to learn the expected behavior.**

- Over 35 percent of parents surveyed feel that their schools sometimes or never do enough to prevent misbehavior by their children or teach their children the expected behavior.

**3. A school community is weakened if classroom discipline practices lead most often to suspension as the common punishment.**

4. Nearly 69 percent of parents surveyed indicated that suspensions are the consequences for student misbehavior that they hear about.



CADRE—Demonstrating parent power to end the “school-to-prison train” since 2001

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### ATTENTION LOCAL DISTRICT 7:

We have a human right to participate in our schools, and only by monitoring LAUSD's Positive Behavior Support policy will it be effectively implemented in South LA (LD7), where it is needed the most, faces the most complex obstacles, and deserves a strong, highly-qualified new Local District Superintendent to lead the charge.

Local District 7 is where the best LAUSD policies die in implementation, and as a result, our children are dying.

We have all the research we need to turn Local District 7 around, now we need the leadership and courage. We expect and demand that strong leaders take the helm of Local District 7, individuals who

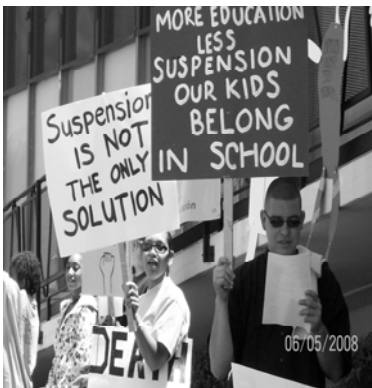
are committed to changing school culture. We cannot wait any longer – Local District 7 is losing many of its new teachers, who come from the community and have the will to connect with our children.

*CADRE parents have found that Positive Behavior Support can help fulfill the human*

*right to a quality education in South LA.*

**IN ORDER FOR THIS TO HAPPEN WE DEMAND that LAUSD take into serious consideration the following demands and accompanying recommendations:**

#### ❶ ONE: WE WANT **ENFORCEABLE ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE DISTRICT AND SCHOOLS TO PARENTS** – RATHER THAN ACTIVELY DISEMPowering THEM



**A)** In order to foster a positive school climate, and to create and maintain meaningful relationships, accountability and mutual trust, **the independent auditor monitoring the implementation of Positive Behavior Support should ALSO be responsible and accountable to parents.** Their duties should include but are not limited to:

- School visits
- Handling parent complaints in a timely manner
- Including parents as part of their investigations of complaints
- Having their contact information given to all parents

The subjects, dates, and schools of both success stories and complaints must be logged and made available as public record.

**B)** In order for parents to have more involvement with the schools' discipline practices, **schools must make data on disciplinary practices, procedures, and outcomes available on a monthly basis for parents and the community**, including but not limited to regular incident reports about discipline issues and how they were handled. The data should be broken down by ethnicity, gender, age, school, offense, and punishment. The data should be accessible to parents through understandable language, terminology, and physical access (i.e. electronic and paper).

**② TWO: WE WANT PARENTS INCLUDED IN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE SO THAT IT IS FAIR, APPROPRIATE, AND BUILDS COMMUNITY — RATHER THAN DESTROYS IT**



**A) The District must provide a parent-friendly manual on LAUSD’s Positive Behavior Support Policy and several opportunities to be trained in Positive Behavior Support.** The manual must be translated, include a clear list of what schools are expected to do according to the policy, and be accessible to all parents electronically or

on paper by request. Trainings should be offered after work, evenings and Saturdays, and have translators. If necessary, each school should set up a paper pool where parents donate paper to help with the cost of printing the Policy for parents. There needs to be a system for parents who have email

addresses to be able to submit them to the District for faster communication. **The District must also mandate that the Discipline Policy be translated into multiple languages by the start of the 2009-2010 school year.**

**B) Regular times in the evening or on weekends must be set aside for schools and parents to discuss behavior and school climate** on a monthly basis as needed, to address positive or negative behavior BEFORE things escalate. In order to build relationships and discuss strategies for

improving school climate, schools should have a **community day at least twice during the school year** that brings together the local school staff, parents, students, community members, and community organizations.

*CADRE will be continuing our monitoring efforts during 2009-2010*

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**③ THREE: WE WANT THIS DISTRICT TO COMMIT TO PROMOTING THE HUMAN RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND THE FULL DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS—RATHER THAN ALLOWING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON TRAIN TO RUN THROUGH SOUTH LA**

**A) The District should mandate all schools to use the “Top Ten Alternatives to Suspension”** in their discipline practices.

**B) The District must mandate staff training in child and youth development,** especially in the areas of how students learn behavior and how to promote the full development of the child in the classroom.

**IN CONCLUSION, parents want to be involved so our children will have a chance to live and thrive.** We have a human right to participate and ensure our children’s human right to a quality education. In response to our findings and recommendations, we are asking the LAUSD Board to schedule a special ad hoc meeting in fall 2009 to specifically discuss school discipline, the negative effects of zero tolerance, and alternatives to suspension and unnecessary school policing, at which *parents and students will equally participate and be heard.*