



February 17, 2021

RE: SB 236 – Eliminating suspension and expulsion.

Dear Chair Dembrow and members of the Senate Education Committee,

As the Future Generations Collaborative with the mission to promote healthy Indigenous children and families, it is our privilege to offer the following outline in response to Oregon Senate Bill 236, Eliminating Suspension and Expulsion. This outline reflects the four components of the bill asking the questions: (1) “What does it mean,” (2) “Where does this happen,” (3) “What is to be done,” (4) “How do we end the practice of suspension and expulsion?”

- ❖ (“What does it mean?”) The language and terminology of expulsion, exclusion, and equity require that we understand:
 - Expulsion is not an intervention
 - Expulsion is a consequence of failed inclusion
 - Expulsion often becomes a sentence for failed achievements and becomes a predictor for a failed future educational experience
 - Expulsion, with its embedded degrees of suspension, tells the story of the intersectionality of racism and disability... the stigma and shame that exists within implicit bias of both ethnicity and disability
 - Equity is created by thoughtful, contextual careful consideration of all of the elements necessary to produce successful student outcomes

- ❖ (“Where does this happen?”) When a commitment to equity is applied to the practices of suspension and expulsion, we recognize their punitive dissonance and we are all called upon to understand and acknowledge that:
 - Behavior is communication
 - Behavior reflects both neuro-developmental trauma and environmental trauma... understanding the health and social disparities born of determinants which reflect and create a cyclical nature of negative impacts
 - Students of color face harsher discipline (IDEA data 2018)
 - Students of color may be more likely to be identified with special needs (NAEYC 2017)
 - Oregon is one of the states with public preschools with an identified disability rate of 52% served by IDEA, but often not appropriately protected and served by its mandates
 - Oregon kindergarten retention data reflects:
 - 7% of AI/AN students are retained
 - 2% of White students are retained
 - 2% of Black students are retained
 - 2% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students are retained
 - 2% of Hispanic students are retained
 - 2% of mixed-race students are retained
 - (From CDRC (Civil Rights Data Collection) 2018)
 - Preschool students are suspended and expelled at three times the rate of K-12 students
 - Preschoolers who are expelled are ten times more likely to drop out prior to graduation
 - K-12 suspension and expulsion are highly predictive of future suspension and expulsion. Suspension and expulsion is also an indicator of future struggles within legal systems and that is why the Preschool to Prison pipeline is not an exaggeration or hyperbole but expresses the failure of the educational system to understand and meet the needs of our youth.
 - Prevalency data on suspension and expulsion lacks reflection on who is excluded and what has occurred to create this exclusion
 - We have preschool to support children's critical development in their earliest years. We have built programs like Head Start, Early Head Start, and Preschool Promise to ensure that low-income students from BIPOC communities are involved in the DHS systems, have their disabilities served, and are included and belong. These are need-based programs and yet we are still turning our children away.

- ❖ (“What is to be done?”) Training and increased professional development have the opportunity to deliver effective approaches that can extend and implement holistic understanding of social-determinants and neuro-developmental applications for a specific application within Early Childhood/Early Learning settings:
 - Classroom capacity and climate
 - Physical space and environmental design
 - Teacher/student ratio
 - Paraprofessional/special needs ratio of support
 - Parent inclusion and engagement nurturing teacher to family relationships
 - Strength-based cultural congruence within the context of both curriculum and instructional affect
 - Professional development and training
 - Training in developmentally-appropriate discipline
 - Training in social/emotional behavioral observations
 - Training in reflective practice and adaptive teaching techniques
 - Training in technical assistance in IFSP and individualized interventions that reflect behavioral observations
 - Integration of Early Intervention providers and service delivery within classroom and childcare settings
 - Incorporate models in which EI specialists like SLP, PT, and OT engage through both individual IFSP delivery, modeling overall classroom strategies as well as giving specific training and TA to both professional and paraprofessional staff from these specialists (Ex. Coos County Head Start and OTSD/ECE)
 - Incorporate community engagement and guidance within the classroom/childcare teams, creating strength-based cultural congruence and use to create teaching support
 - Access to assessment that implements non-stigmatic delivery using universal developmental and behavioral screening and family-involved tools such as the ASQ for nurturing and empowering parents with knowledge of their child’s development
 - Create an understanding of assessment and diagnostic tools for understanding, not for labeling
 - Identify and honor parents and families as a primary resource for understanding and supporting child development
 - Explore and implement cultural considerations when using screening, monitoring, and developmental support for IFSP design
 - Access for all preschool staff to special supports and consultants in concert with family engagement
 - For children with disabilities and suspected delays have the right to inclusion. Suspension and expulsion reflects the failed inclusion of children with disabilities and its failure is the result of being under-resourced, under-regulated, and lacking in staff training

❖ (How do we end the practice of suspension and expulsion?) Promoting effective policies that deliver both “evidence-based practice” and “practice-based evidence” by providing:

- Culturally congruent strength-based strategies
- Recognition of the authenticity and efficacy of collaborative, team-based instructional design (inclusive of parent and community engagement)
- Recognition of the cyclically reinforcing negative impacts of racial, physical health, behavioral health, and socioeconomic disparities
- Recognition of the organicity of brain development and its expression through neuro-developmental behaviors
- Creation of nurturing classroom and childcare settings with a climate promoting and reinforcing the mapping of positive behaviors
- Real inclusion by raising our practice standards and by retaining all young children in all of our Early Learning and Childcare programs

The Future Generations Collaborative urges the passage of SB 236. We are grateful to those who have authored and sponsored SB 236. We appreciate the thought and consideration that they and so many are committing to the evolution of the content of this bill and we are very much looking forward to the opportunity to participate and engage in its process outcomes for the benefit of our young children, our families, and our communities, for now, and for future generations.

In gratitude,

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