


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY TOOLKIT



THE GEORGIA
COALITION
WORKING TO
END THE SCHOOL
TO PRISON
PIPELINE (STPP)

September 2021

The Georgia Project Partners

GCDD NoFA 21ED2

ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

The Community Engagement & Advocacy Toolkit includes resources that communities need to host their own forums and events. The toolkit includes items like a sign-in sheet to gather contact information from participants, a Georgia-specific sample open records request to gather data on the school system, a template to translate raw data into talking points and easily recognizable measurement factors, a sample meeting agenda, and more to hold regular community meetings and survey tools to evaluate programs.

The toolkit is made possible through the support of a project with the Georgia Council for Developmental Disabilities (GCDD). The goal of the project is to expand and leverage the existing grassroots, community-based coalition managed by Gwinnett Parent Coalition to Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline ("Gwinnett SToPP") to develop and implement a plan utilizing a collective impact model to reduce the number of African American males in special education at risk of being pushed out of school and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems--a trend known as the "school to prison pipeline" (STPP).



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Meaningful

Community Engagement

Community Engagement is...the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people. It is a powerful vehicle for bringing about environmental and behavioral changes that will improve the health of the community and its members. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices (CDC, 1997).¹

Five Primary Lessons for Community Engagement²

1. Make engagement a priority and establish an infrastructure.
2. Communicate proactively with the community.
3. Listen to the community and respond to its feedback.
4. Offer meaningful opportunities to participate.
5. Turn community supporters into advocates and leaders.

Six Emotional Community Engagement Tips³

1. Get people to share stories.
1. Use images that illustrate the issue.
2. Be a responsive community engagement leader.
3. Make sure that your contributions stay grounded.
4. Community engagement starts with understanding and adding value.
5. Fall back on entertaining and educational content.

Resources:

1. <https://aese.psu.edu/research/centers/cecd/engagement-toolbox/engagement/what-is-community-engagement>
2. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/strategies-for-community-engagement-in-school-turnaround.pdf>
3. <https://www.i-scoop.eu/community-engagement-6-tips-engage-community/>

OPEN RECORDS REQUEST TEMPLATE

[Delivery should be by hand delivery, email or certified mail-return receipt requested.]

[Writer's Name]

[Writer's Street Address]

[City, State, Zip]

[Date]

[Records Custodian's Name]

[School System Name]

[Street Address]

[City, State, Zip]

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to request an electronic copy of the following public records for **[School/System Name]** pursuant to the Georgia Open Records Act, O.C.G.A §50-18-70 et seq.: **[Requesting electronic records eliminates copying fees.]**

1. **[Describe the records you are seeking or refer to an attached list.]**

If this request is denied in whole or in part, I ask that you cite in writing the specific statutory exemption upon which you have relied, as required by law. I also ask that you release all separate portions of otherwise exempt material. Please waive any costs associated with this request as this information is of public interest. If not, please advise me of the costs prior to compiling the records. **[When seeking records, you might start by asking for a fee waiver, and let the agency respond. Agencies cannot charge for the first 15 minutes of the time it takes to fulfill your request.]**

As you know, the law requires a response by you within three business days of your receipt of this letter and provides sanctions for non-compliance. I look forward to hearing from you. I can be reached at [your phone number] or via email [your email address].

Sincerely,

[Writer's Name]

SAMPLE OPEN RECORDS REQUEST

Tariq Davis
1234 Main St.
Atlanta, GA 30301

September 1, 2021

Julie James
Georgia Department of Education
2052 Twin Towers East
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, SE
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Ms. James,

This letter is to request an electronic copy of the following public data for all Georgia public schools pursuant to the Georgia Open Records Act, O.C.G.A §50-18-70 et seq.:

1. Records by school system indicating the number of in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, referrals of students to alternative schools for disciplinary reasons, and offenses in the districts' schools from the 2019-2021 school year to the present, disaggregated by as many of the following variables as possible: a) school; b) age; c) grade; d) gender; e) race/ethnicity; f) English Language Learner status; g) socio-economic status; h) disability; i) date; and j) length of punishment/outcome.

If this request is denied in whole or in part, I ask that you cite in writing the specific statutory exemption upon which you have relied, as required by law. I also ask that you release all separate portions of otherwise exempt material. Please waive any costs associated with this request as this information is of public interest. If not, please advise me of the costs prior to compiling the records.

As you know, the law requires a response by you within three business days of your receipt of this letter and provides sanctions for non-compliance. I look forward to hearing from you. I can be reached at 404-555-1212 or via email at tariqdavis@mymail.com.

Sincerely,

Tariq Davis

STORY COLLECTION FORM

Quick Release

Before we gather your story, we need a quick release to share your story.

1. May we share/disclose your story with others?

- Yes No

2. May we share/disclose your personal identity, such as name, age, school system, and county?

- Yes No

If yes, would you share/disclose:

- Name
- Age
- School system
- County

3. May we contact you in the future to be part of ongoing media projects, such as photographs, video, guest speaker? Your personal identity will be shared/disclosed for these projects.

- Yes No

If yes, would you like to:

- Be photographed
- Make a video
- Speak with elected officials
- Be a part of a parent-led advocacy group
- Other (please specify):

Interview Guide

Please provide us with your child's (or your) demographic information.

1) What sex is your child (or you)?

2) What gender does your child (or you) identify as?

- 3) What race is your child (or you)?
- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White (Non-Hispanic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Islander | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino | <input type="checkbox"/> Alaskan Native | <input type="checkbox"/> Bi-Racial | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
- 4) What school does your child (or you) attend?
- 5) Has your child (or you) ever been suspended from school?
- 6) Has your child (or you) ever been expelled from school?
- 7) How old was your child (or you) when the suspension/expulsion took place?
- 4yrs – 7yrs 8yrs – 10yrs 11yrs – 13yrs 14yrs – 17yrs 18yrs/+
- 8) What grade was your child (or you) in when the suspension/expulsion took place?
- K 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th/+

Please tell us about the things that might have influenced your child (or you) in the School to Prison Pipeline.

- 9) Has your child (or you) been tested for a (select all that apply):
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |
- 10) Has your child (or you) received a diagnosis of a (select all that apply):
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

Only answer the following questions if your child has received a diagnosis, otherwise, skip to the next section.

- 11) Has your child (or you) undergone treatment for a (select all that apply):
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioral Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |
- 12) Describe your child's (or your) diagnosis:

13) Has the school provided an IEP (Individual Education Program) for your child's (or your) diagnosis?

Yes No

a. If yes, does the IEP include a BIP (Behavioral Intervention Plan)?

Yes No

b. If yes, does the BIP (Behavioral Intervention Plan) include positive interventions/reinforcements?

Yes No

14) What type of services and goals does your child's (or your) IEP provide?

a. Services:

b. Goals:

Do you think that your child's (or your) diagnosis played a part in the incident(s) that led to the suspension or expulsion?

15) Is there anything else you would like to mention about your child's (or your) diagnosis and/or disability(ies)?

Please tell us about your child's (or your) history in the disciplinary system.

16) Is this your child's (or your) first encounter with the disciplinary system?

Yes No

a. If no, how many other incidents have there been?

1 – 2 3 – 4 5 – 6 7 – 8 9 – 10 11/+

17) Was your child's (or your) incident referred to the:

Local School Board

Court System: Juvenile

Local School's Tribunal System

Court System: Criminal

18) Was your child (or you) represented by legal counsel?

19) Do you think that your child (or you) was given due process – treated fairly?

20) What was the final decision made for your child (or you)?

21) Is there anything else you would like to mention about the disciplinary system?

On the next questions, we are interested in your child's (or your) involvement in the School to Prison Pipeline. These questions will help tell your child's (or your) story. In addition, we are interested in finding out what you think might be able to be done to dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline.

- 22) Please describe, in detail, the incident that caused your child (or you) to be part of the School to Prison Pipeline. How has this incident affected your child (or you)?
- 23) Who do you think in your local school system/in your community is able to handle your concern(s)? What would you say to those persons if you had an opportunity to meet with them?
- 24) Based on your experience, what do you believe would have been most helpful to you in handling your child's (or your) issue?
- 25) What are your suggestions to other parents to keep their children from having the same experience?
- 26) In your opinion, what needs to change in your local school system/in your community/in your home to stop these types of actions from happening again? What resources would you need in your local school system/in your community/in your home to have a better outcome for your child (you)?
- 27) Do you have any final comments?

WHAT IS A FACT SHEET?

A fact sheet is a document that provides information and data that can highlight direction, change, progress, disparity of/in a particular issue.

Before creating a fact sheet, you should always be crystal clear about the purpose of creating it and its intended audience.¹

Things to Keep in Mind when Creating a Fact Sheet ²

1. A fact sheet should preferably be a single page long.
2. The information mentioned in the fact sheet should be brief and concise.
3. Since visual information is easy to grasp, a fact sheet should be visually appealing comprising tables, charts, graphs, and bullet points.
4. Fact sheets should be easily readable.
5. An effective fact sheet anticipates questions and addresses some of the most important and most common concerns.³
6. Add a clear call to action at the end and your contact information (phone number, your email address, your social media links, etc.).

Importance of a Fact Sheet ⁴

1. Saves time – fact sheets provide readers all of the key information (without missing out on vital information) on a single page; readers can skim through a lot of information and facts quickly and easily.
2. Easy to read – fact sheets comprise lots of white spaces, bullet points and bold headings, with key information presented using tables, graphs and charts that are easy to read and understand.
3. Cost-effective – since fact sheets are often only a page long, they are less costly to produce.

Resources:

1. <https://blog.bit.ai/how-to-create-a-fact-sheet/>
2. <https://blog.bit.ai/how-to-create-a-fact-sheet/>
3. <https://www.etc-online.com/news/2018/5/18/the-makings-of-an-effective-fact-sheet>
4. <https://blog.bit.ai/how-to-create-a-fact-sheet/>

FACT SHEET TEMPLATE

Insert your name and organization here

Mission & Vision

Your Position
on the Issue

Bulleted information about the issue/entity

Graph / Table
(with caption explaining
the data)

Graph / Table
(with caption explaining
the data)

Statistics / Metrics about the issue

Bulleted Call to Action - What are your recommenda-
tions about the issue?

Your / Your Organization Information (phone number,
email address, social media links)

Footnotes - List all of the resources you used in your fact sheet

GETTING THE WORD OUT

You've created a fact sheet or planned a community event and need a flyer as well as a means of getting the word out. Social media, texting, and email help in getting the word out. Use Canva to create engaging flyers and social media posts. Canva is a free easy-to-use online design tool with lots of templates for creating flyers and social media posts. Sign up at <https://www.canva.com/>.

Here are a few tips for creating an engaging event flyer or social media post.



Flyer Tips

- ✓ Keep it short and simple. Don't overwhelm the reader with a lot of words. Include only the essentials.
- ✓ Create a catchy headline or title to get people's attention.
- ✓ Create sections of information so the flyer is digestible. Use sub-headings, bullets and lists. Be mindful of maintaining white space on the flyer.
- ✓ Make it engaging and attractive by using graphics or pictures.
- ✓ Proofread for errors.



Social Media Tips

- ✓ Also use above tips when creating your social media post.
- ✓ Tag other people/organizations you follow or follow you to get your message out to a wider audience.
- ✓ Repurpose a hashtag that matches your content and you've seen used in the audience you're trying to attract. Note, using hashtags on Facebook (FB) doesn't have the same effect as on Instagram (IG) or Twitter.
- ✓ Consider posting an IG or FB Story about your event or information. Canva also has Story templates. Stories are images and short videos that are only available for 24 hours but attract a wide audience. You may want to repost the story at different times if it's being used to publicize an event.
- ✓ Proofread for errors before posting. Some social media platforms do not have editing capabilities once the post is live.



VIDEO CONFERENCING

Some of the Top Video Conferencing Services

Disclaimer: This document is not a product of any company represented below. The information is derived from the provided websites. Prices and features are subject to change at the discretion of the individual companies.

	Free version available	Meeting participants (default)	Screen-sharing	Whiteboard	Meeting recording	E2E encryption	Plans from (p/m)	Mobile app
Zoom	Yes	100	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	\$14.99	Yes
Microsoft Teams	Yes (Limited time only)	250	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	\$5.00	Yes
Google Meet	Yes	100	Yes	No	Yes	No	\$6.00	Yes
Skype	Yes	50	Yes	No	Yes	Yes (optional)	\$2.99*	Yes
Cisco Webex	Yes	200	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (optional)	\$13.50	Yes
BlueJeans	No	100	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	\$9.99	Yes

*Skype for Business is being replaced by Microsoft Teams - <https://www.techrepublic.com/article/zoom-vs-microsoft-teams-google-meet-cisco-webex-and-skype-choosing-the-right-video-conferencing-apps-for-you/>

CONFERENCE CALL SERVICES

Some of the Top Conference Call Services

Disclaimer: This document is not a product of any company represented below. The information is derived from the provided websites. Prices and features are subject to change at the discretion of the individual companies.

	Best for	Caller Limit	Features	Free Trial	Price
GoTo Meeting	Small to large businesses & freelancers.	For free plan 3 participants. Max. 250 participants.	Hand Over Control, HD Video Conferencing, Built-in Audio, Toll-Free Option.	Available for 14 days.	Free plan Starter: \$19/month. Pro: \$29/month. Plus: \$49/month.
Uber Conference	Small to large businesses and freelancers.	10 for the free plan. 100 with the business account.	Web Conferences, Free call recording, Screen Sharing, International calling, etc.	Free plan Available	Free plan. Business: \$15/user/month.
FreeConference.com	Small to medium-sized businesses.	Max. 100 participants	Conference calls, Video conferencing, Screen Sharing, Dedicated Dial-in, Mobile Apps, Toll-Free Dial-ins.	Free plan Available	Free plan Starter: \$9.99/month Plus: \$24.99/month. Pro: \$34.99/month.
FreeConferenceCall.com	Small to large businesses.	1000 with the paid version.	Audio Conferencing, Online Meetings, Meeting wall, Integration with apps like slack, Video Conferencing and Screen Sharing, etc.	Free plan Available.	Free, Paid version: \$6.95 for individual accounts.
FreeConferenceCalling.com	Small to large businesses.	1000 callers	1000 callers anytime, Contacts Address Book, Host Phone Controls, Free Conference, Call recording.	--	Free

<https://www.softwaretestinghelp.com/conference-call-services/>

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA



Powered by the Georgia Coalition Working to End the School to Prison Pipeline

Include a title. Example:
**The Tools You Need to Bring
about the Change You Need**

[Date]

10:00 a.m. – 10:05 a.m.

Welcome/Introductions/Community Agreement

[Assign to a team member]

Example: Community Agreement of how you will engage

10:05 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.

Check-in/Check-out

[Assign to team member]

Example: Review current assignments and upcoming tasks

10:50 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.

Icebreaker

[Assign to team member]

11:05 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Topic Name #1

[Presenter(s) Name]

Example: Include a description of the presentation

11:45 a.m. – 11:55 a.m.

Break

11:55 a.m. – 12:55 p.m.

Topic Name #2

[Presenter(s) Name]

Example: Include a description of the presentation

12:55 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Evaluation Form

[Assign to team member]

Example: Provide a link to the evaluation form or conduct the evaluation via a poll in Zoom or another conferencing platform

PROGRAM EVALUATION

EVALUATION FORM

Name:					
Evaluation: Please check the box that closest meets your experience.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. You experienced a welcoming environment from the facilitators.					
2. Facilitators provided an agenda and other relevant materials to participants.					
3. Facilitators were knowledgeable about the issue.					
4. The orientation was informative and increased your understanding about the issue.					
5. You feel more comfortable about your ability to address this issue.					
6. You feel less comfortable about your ability to address this issue.					
Comments:					
Evaluation: Please circle one number in the scale for each question.					
Question	High			Low	
How clear are you about today's purpose & next steps?	5	4	3	2	1
To what extent was the agenda appropriate for the time allotted?	5	4	3	2	1
To what degree was the agenda followed?	5	4	3	2	1
To what degree did people listen to each other?	5	4	3	2	1
To what extent did you contribute to the program today?	5	4	3	2	1
To what degree is your feeling of satisfaction with this program?	5	4	3	2	1
Comments (use the reverse for more space – include comment number)					
1. The strengths of the program were -					
2. The program could have been improved by –					
Using a full tank to indicate motivation to progress and an empty tank to indicate depletion of motivation, check which tank best captures your outlook after participating in today's program...	Full	¾ Tank	½ Tank	¼ Tank	Empty

Thank you!

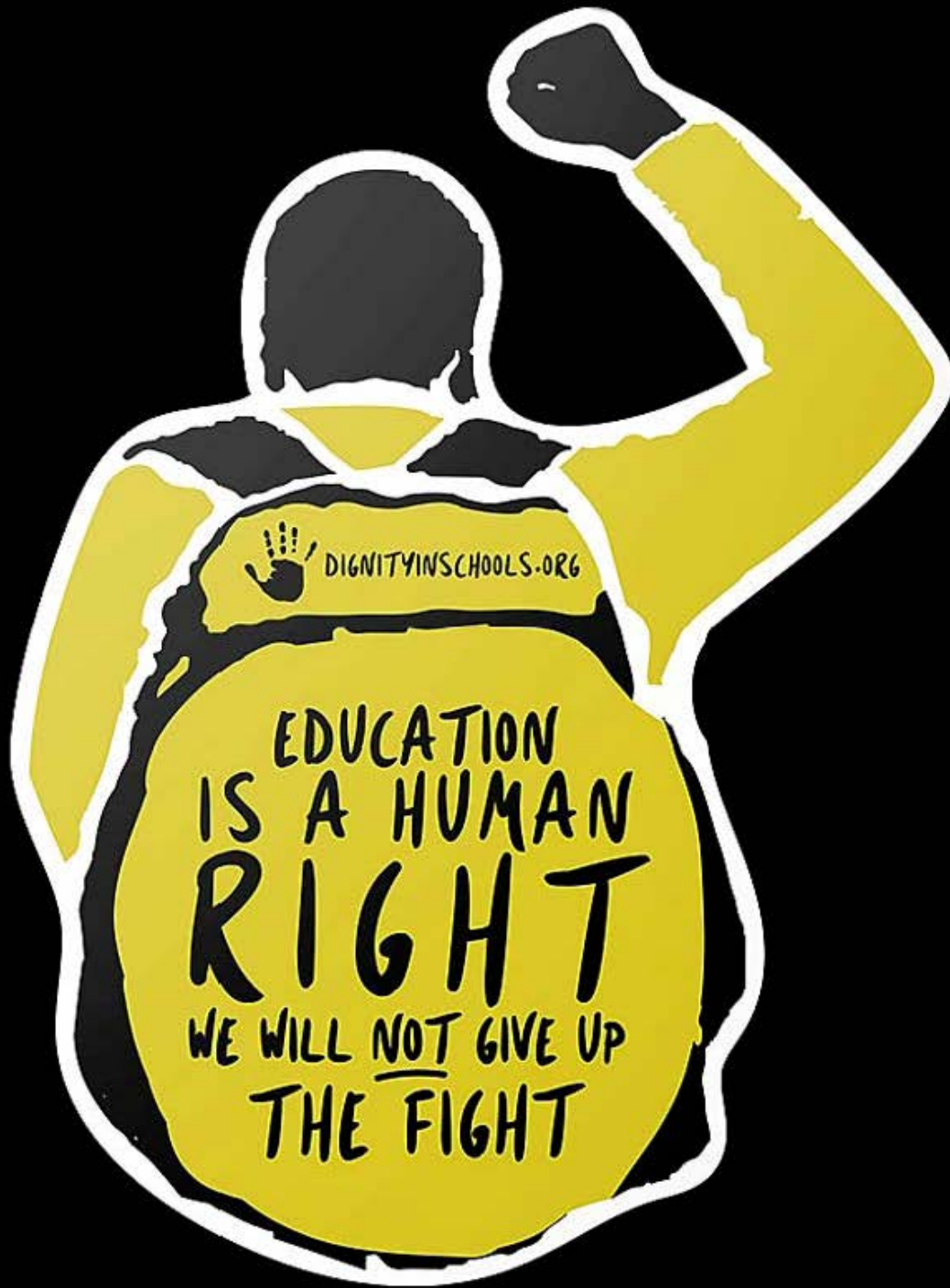
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Gwinnett SToPP

The Gwinnett Parent Coalition to Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline (Gwinnett SToPP) is a parent-led community-centered advocacy group focused on reversing the School to Prison Pipeline (STPP) trend. The organization was formed in April 2007 by two parent advocates seeking to answer the growing frustration of the number of schools relying on harsh punishment and law enforcement to address minor school misconduct.

Project Director – Pamela Perkins Carn

Pamela Perkins Carn is one of the original conveners of the End Mass Incarceration Georgia Network and the former executive coordinator of a child advocacy nonprofit, where she led the statewide education and juvenile justice initiatives to address ending the school to prison pipeline and implement juvenile justice reform in Georgia.



WWW.GWINNETTSTOPP.ORG