

THE AVENGERS, PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

September 2021

A PLI TheRemix Project

GCDD NoFA 21ED2



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

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PLI TheRemix! participants work in teams to complete an advocacy project during their time in the institute. The advocacy projects provide participants with the experience of creating, designing and implementing an advocacy campaign. The projects require participants to perform research, analyze data, create campaign materials and engage identified targets and/or communities. The following is a description of team Avengers' project and expected benefits.

Vision/Purpose: Advocate for a House Education Study Committee on HB 740 "Too Young to Suspend" rule.

Project Description: The goal of the project is to assess progress of the implementation of the 2018 Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) rule regarding suspension and expulsion of pre-kindergarten/preschool through third grade students, in particular, African American students with a "Student with Disability" (SWD) assignment.

Funding for the multi-tiered services required by HB 740 for children and their families who are affected by out-of-school suspensions must be commensurate with the need in local school districts.

Engagement Targets: Members of Georgia House Education Committee and GaDOE

Anticipated Outcome: Establish standard methodology for providing for the implementation, monitoring, recording/tracking and disaggregated data reporting of the suspension and expulsion rule in Georgia's public school systems; establish measures to bring non-compliant systems into compliance with the rule.



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The following letter and fact sheet are examples of the campaign materials that were developed by the Avengers team. The letter and fact sheet were sent to Georgia State Representatives Wayne "Henry" Howard, District 124, Augusta-Richmond County and Randy Nix, District 69, Carroll County, Heard County, and Troup County, Democratic and Republican members, respectively, of the Georgia House Education Committee and the primary sponsors of HB 740 (Too Young to Suspend).

Dear Representatives Howard and Nix,

We, the participants of the Parent Leadership Institute, would like to express our appreciation for your sponsorship of HB 740, during the 2018 legislative session. The bill was designed to ensure that our youngest learners could remain in the learning environment, rather than being expelled or given an out-of-school suspension. Thank you for understanding the importance of and need for this legislation.

Our group is made up of four (4) Georgians with backgrounds that bring a depth of understanding to the negative impact of the school to prison pipeline on our children. Three of us are parents of school-aged children, two are parents of children on the Autism spectrum, and three have backgrounds in psychology and one in law. As parents and as advocates, we would be remiss if we did not address an important issue with the law. We are seeking accountability for the proper implementation of Rule 160-4-8-.15 (effective November 28, 2018) by the Georgia Department of Education.

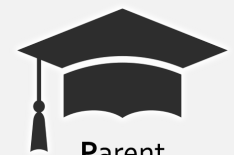
Our primary concerns are: (1) determining when or if implementation of the rule has occurred; (2) determining if appropriate services have been provided; (3) determining if the implementation is working in reducing the number of out-of-school events in preschool through third grade; and (4) if the Department has a method to determine compliance.

Therefore, we are asking for your support in establishing a House Education Study Committee in the 2022 legislative session to ensure that the measures outlined in the law are being implemented in a meaningful and impactful manner. Please find accompanying this letter a fact sheet outlining our concerns and research in detail. We look forward to your response and will follow up with you by phone to discuss a future meeting.

Again, thank you for your service to our children and families.

Why we need a

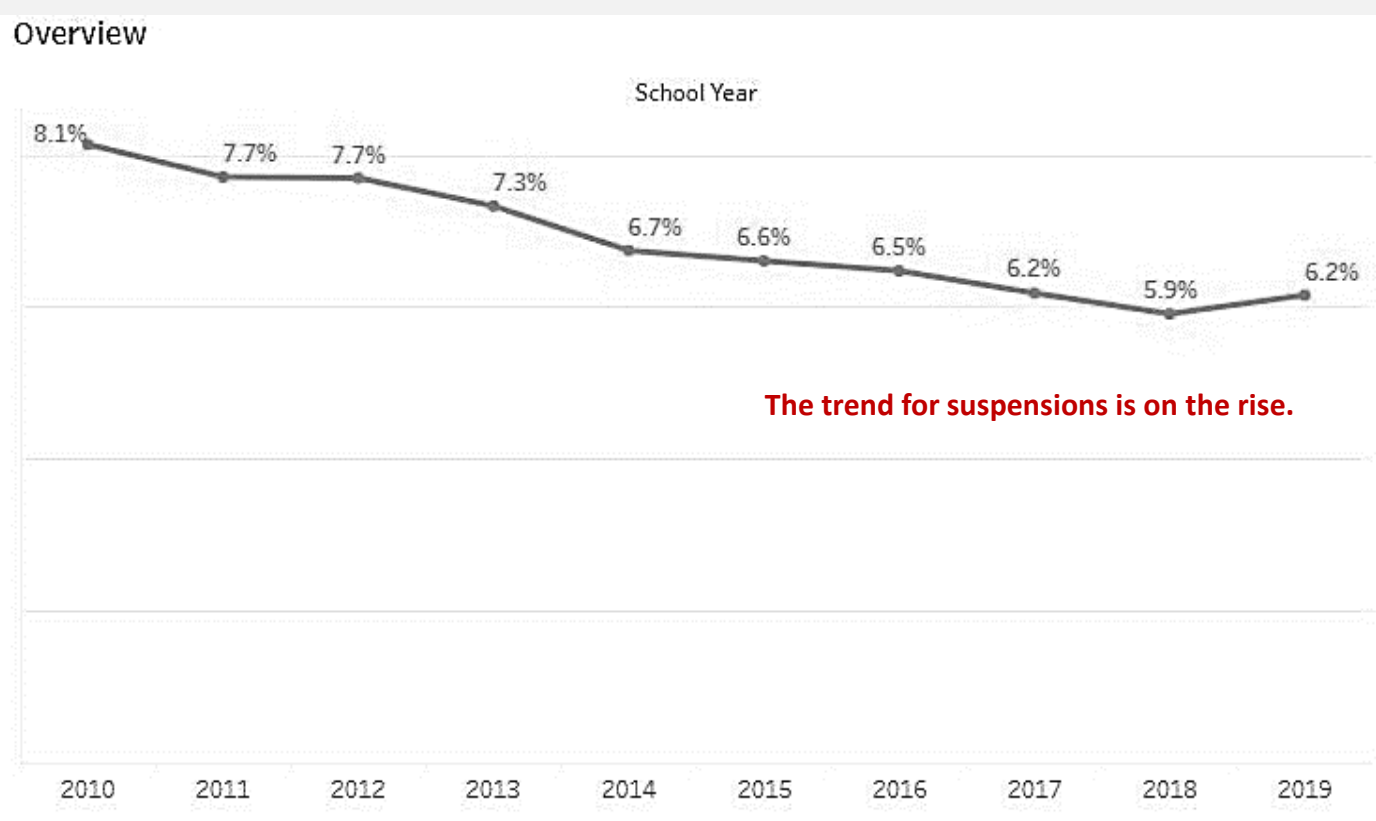
Study Committee to Review the Implementation of Too Young to Suspend - HB 740 (2018)



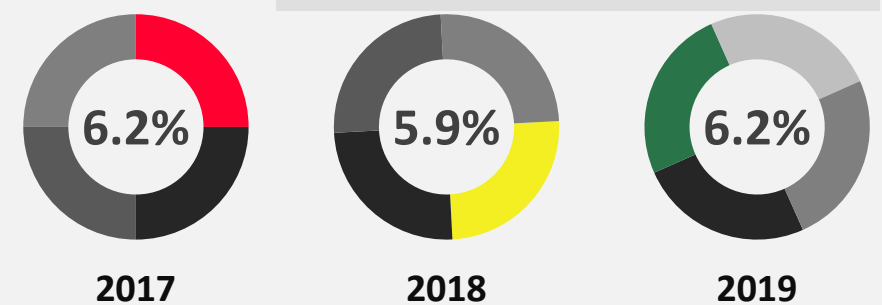
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GA School Suspensions 2010-2019



School Suspension Rate Three-year Trend



More than 18,000 Georgia pre-k through third graders experienced in-school and/or out-of-school suspensions during the 2019 school year. "Too Young to Suspend" (HB 740), passed in 2018, required that: "Local school boards implement a multi-tiered system of supports prior to expelling preschool to third grade students for more than five days with some exceptions. "

However, there are no requirements for reporting on the implementation of this rule to determine if school systems are abiding by the terms of the law and no means to determine its effectiveness when implemented with fidelity.

5.8%
of In-School
Suspensions

Pre-K - 3rd Grade

2019 School Year: Ages 0-9 as reported by GaDOE. No pre-k numbers were provided in the report; therefore, the number of students given ISS could be higher. Data not disaggregated by age for students with disabilities.

9,310

7.6%
of Out-of-School
Suspensions

Pre-K - 3rd Grade

2019 School Year: Ages 0-9 as reported by GaDOE. No pre-k numbers were provided in the report; therefore, the number of students given OSS could be higher. Data not disaggregated by age for students with disabilities.

8,792