

# Gwinnett Parent Coalition

## Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline

CONTACT: Marlyn Tillman, Gwinnett STOPP  
(404) 590-7877, [info@gwinnettstopp.org](mailto:info@gwinnettstopp.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 20, 2011

### Parent-Led Coalition Files OCR Complaint Against Gwinnett County Public Schools IE<sup>2</sup> Partnership Contract

Georgia – The Snellville, GA-based Gwinnett Parent Coalition to Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline (Gwinnett STOPP) announced Wednesday, July 20, 2011, the filing of a discrimination complaint in the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Education against Gwinnett County Public Schools regarding its Investing in Educational Excellence Partnership (IE<sup>2</sup>) contract. The parent-led coalition contends that the IE<sup>2</sup> contract is discriminatory against Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners (ELL), and students according to race and national origin.

The complaint alleges that Gwinnett County Public Schools' (GCPS) IE<sup>2</sup> contract violates Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title 34-Education of the Code of Federal Regulations, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

The accountability and performance objectives featured in the IE<sup>2</sup> contract, which allow GCPS to bypass several existing state laws—regarding education certification requirements for teachers, class size requirements, expenditure controls, and ELL program requirements, among others—are dependent upon different aggregate performance benchmarks segregated by race.

“Gwinnett teachers and administrators do not have to cheat. Our superintendent and local board of education did it for them with the IE<sup>2</sup> contract. Gwinnett County Public Schools bartered away high academic performance IE<sup>2</sup> goals for students with disabilities, black students and English Language Learners in order to achieve the greater good for all children in our schools—freedom from state education laws,” said Marlyn Tillman, of Gwinnett STOPP.

The IE<sup>2</sup> legislation, HB1209, was signed by Governor Perdue and approved during the 2008 session of the Georgia Legislature. In December 2008, Gwinnett County Public Schools pursued an IE<sup>2</sup> contract with the Governors' Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) and the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE). The contract is to include accountability for each school within the district that exceeds performance requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in exchange for flexibility across educational rules established by GDOE. By 2015, over 180 Georgia school districts are required to “opt in” or “opt out” of this legislation. If you “opt out”, a district's ability to obtain educational waivers from the GDOE rules is significantly restricted.

The Gwinnett STOPP complaint contends that the methodology used to establish increased aggregate performance targets over a five-year period is discriminatory for each subgroup of students defined in the contract because it compares subgroups against themselves while Students with Disabilities and ELL students are held to separate flattened performance targets. Because of the term of this contract, the effects will be ongoing through the 2013-2014 school year with an auto-renewal clause for five additional years.

#### Our Coalition Partners

ACLU of Georgia

Rho Kappa Lambda Chapter  
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc

Georgia State Conference NAACP

Gwinnett STOPP is on Facebook and you can become a fan!

[www.stopschooltojails.org/content/gwinnett-parent-coalition-dismantle-school-prison-pipeline](http://www.stopschooltojails.org/content/gwinnett-parent-coalition-dismantle-school-prison-pipeline)  
(404) 590-7877

As in *McLaurin v. Oklahoma Board of Regents of Higher Education* (1950), Gwinnett County Public Schools and the Georgia Department of Education expect students to enter the same building yet sit at separate academic tables. Different academic standards for subgroups amount to state-sponsored segregation in public schools, which is counter to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The academic achievement gap that the IE<sup>2</sup> contract purports to close will never happen. “I have a real concern for the future of our children when state and district educational leaders feel comfortable sanctioning lower aggregate academic performance goals for students whose skin is black or brown instead of white. I don't care if we are talking about meeting or exceeding expectations on a state test —different aggregate performance goals based on the color of your skin and zip code is wrong,” said Jennifer Falk, another coalition leader of Gwinnett STOPP. “In the urban district of Atlanta, schools systemically cheated —here in the suburbs, we just convince lawmakers to sanction lower aggregate performance expectations in a contract. In my mind, there is little difference between the two.”

Gwinnett STOPP is a grassroots parent-led, community-centered organization in Gwinnett County. Members of the coalition, in addition to parents, include the ACLU of Georgia, the Georgia State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Rho Kappa Lambda Chapter of the of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., and other community stakeholders. Gwinnett STOPP is an active member of the Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC) and regularly partners with other state and local organizations.

###