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Report on Long Beach Schools Finds Troubling Racial Disparities in Suspension Rates and Police Contact – Provides Recommendations for Reforms

Long Beach, CA – Children’s Defense Fund-California (CDF-CA) and Public Counsel released a report Tuesday about educational equity and racial justice in Long Beach schools. The report, Untold Stories Behind One of America’s Best Urban School Districts, is a bold vision for Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) to build and foster positive learning environments for all students.

“The report combines a deep analysis of data and policies with the lived experiences of LBUSD students and community stakeholders who have long been advocating for higher commitment and investment in social emotional supports,” said Angelica Salazar, senior policy associate for CDF-CA and coauthor of the report. “A deep look at the district’s data found the racial disparity of suspensions issued to White and Black students continues to increase, while the written policies are primarily punitive, and community keeps asking for more school support staff such as counselors, restorative justice coordinators, and mental health professionals.”

Since 2012, California school districts have issued fewer suspensions but in some communities, including Long Beach, there are still concerns about persistent racial/ethnic disproportionality, school-based policing, and other forms of school pushout that are often harder to track.

Report findings include:

- Black students in Long Beach are almost 14 times more likely to be suspended than their White peers; Latinos and Pacific Islanders are four times more likely to be suspended than White students.
- Black and Latino students account for 86 percent of LBUSD’s student-police contact, despite accounting for 69 percent of LBUSD’s enrollment.
- The district has spent over $35 million on policing students between the 2011-12 and 2014-15 school years, compared to only $117,112 during the same time period to support its prevention-focused school climate program.

CDF-CA and Public Counsel have reviewed hundreds of documents received through a public records act request to highlight the persistent and untold stories of the practices and policies
that push Long Beach students out of the classroom, often toward the school-to-prison pipeline.

The findings and recommendations highlighted seek to encourage more district-community collaboration that supports learning, and a universal pathway to college and career for all LBUSD students — particularly high-need students.

“This is an important opportunity for LBUSD to embrace positive and trauma-informed school climate strategies that are more effective and racially just.” said Sarah Omojola, former Statewide Education Rights Advocate at Public Counsel and co-author of the report. “LBUSD is really behind the curve in investing in supportive programs instead of policing practices; years of research have shown us that in order to provide better educational opportunities for students, we must shift from punishment to prevention.”


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**Children’s Defense Fund-California (CDF-CA)** is a state office of the Children’s Defense Fund, a national child advocacy organization that has worked relentlessly for over 40 years to ensure a level playing field for all children. CDF-CA champions policies and programs that lift children out of poverty, ensure all children have access to health coverage and care and a quality education, and invest in our justice-involved youth. [www.cdfca.org](http://www.cdfca.org)

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