



# TELL YOUR STORY

Without your voice, the student experiences that data represent are just numbers on a page.

You can tell your story at school board meetings, city council meetings, or even a small meeting with your school administrators. Here is a simple story telling format you can use:

1. **Introduce yourself** and the organization you are affiliated with, if any
2. **State** what school you or your child attends, and what grade you or your child are in
3. **Explain** what happened to you or your child
4. **Provide** data illustrating how common your story or your child's story is
5. **Offer** solutions and ask the decision-maker to work with you
6. **Thank** the decision-maker

You can find examples on the Dignity in Schools Campaign website, available here: <http://www.dignityinschools.org/our-work/school-pushout-story-bank>.

Using data to support the stories you've collected is an effective tactic to move the needle toward non-punitive school discipline practices.

## DATA RESOURCES

### NATIONWIDE DATA

**OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS DATA COLLECTION (CRDC)** has information about suspension and expulsion rates nationwide, broken down by race, ethnicity, and gender. Visit <http://ocrdata.ed.gov>.

**THE CENTER FOR CIVIL RIGHTS REMEDIES** has suspension rates for different states and districts, based on data from CRDC. Visit [schooldisciplinedata.org](http://schooldisciplinedata.org).

### CALIFORNIA SPECIFIC DATA

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (CDE) DATAQUEST** has basic data related to suspensions, expulsions, and truancy for each school and school district in California. The data can also be broken down by race, ethnicity, gender, and offense. Visit <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest>.

**CALIFORNIA SCHOOL DASHBOARD** shows how districts and schools are performing on several indicators including suspension rates, test scores, graduation rates and other measures. Visit <https://www.cadashboard.org>

**CALIFORNIA HEALTHY KIDS SURVEY** has information about students' perceptions of safety and violence in school, as well as information about their physical health. Visit <http://chks.wested.org/reports/search>.

**CALIFORNIA SCHOOL STAFF SURVEY** has specific information related to how teachers, administrators, and other school staff perceive school climate. Visit <http://csss.wested.org/reports/search>.

While collecting and reviewing your data, the following questions can help

you locate trends to lift and incorporate into your advocacy:

**What kinds of offenses** are producing the highest number of suspensions and expulsions?

**Are the majority of students** at a particular school being disciplined for dangerous offenses, or for non-dangerous and/or vague violations like disrupting class or willful defiance?

**Are certain demographics** of students, such as students of color or disabled students, suspended more often than their peers?

**How many days of school** are lost to suspension? A school loses between \$30 and \$50 for each day a student is suspended. How much money is a school district losing because of suspensions?

