



Ensuring that our educational system is a doorway to opportunity – not a point of entry to our criminal justice system – is a critical, and achievable, goal.

**U.S. Attorney General
Eric Holder**

School Discipline Guidance
Release, January 2014

What is the SSDI?

The **Supportive School Discipline Initiative (SSDI)** is an unprecedented cross-sector effort to promote use of school discipline practices that foster safe, supportive, and productive learning environments. Attorney General Holder & Education Secretary Duncan announced this bold interagency collaboration in July, 2011.

Through the SSDI, the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Justice (DOJ), in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), other federal partners, philanthropy & experts from the field, are promoting awareness, and supporting development of policies and practices that keep students engaged in school while holding them appropriately accountable for their actions.

Why is the SSDI necessary?

The SSDI was launched two days after the release of the Council of State Government's groundbreaking study of nearly one million Texas students, *Breaking Schools' Rules*, which revealed in a state with the second largest public school system in the country:

- ⇒ **Overuse of punitive discipline:** the majority of public school students were suspended or expelled at least once between 7th-12th grade. Disciplined students averaged eight suspensions and/or expulsions and 15 percent were disciplined 11 or more separate times.
- ⇒ **Discipline disparities:** Black students had a 31 percent higher likelihood of being disciplined for the same discretionary violation as did white students, and nearly three-quarters of students who qualified for special education services were suspended or expelled at least once.
- ⇒ **Justice system involvement:** Students suspended or expelled for a discretionary incident were nearly three times as likely to be in contact with the juvenile justice system in the next year.

The 2011-2012 ED Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) further confirmed that students of certain racial or ethnic groups & students with disabilities are disciplined at far higher rates than their peers, beginning in preschool, and, a growing number of students are losing crucial instructional time due to exclusionary discipline.

Where can I find SSDI resources?

Below are a sample of SSDI resources. We encourage you to sign up for both the DOJ OJJDP JuvJust e-newsletter (ojjdp.gov) & ED's Supportive School Discipline E-Digest (see *SSDCOP link below*) for updates and information.



Federal School Discipline Guidance package

www.ed.gov/school-discipline

This package includes a Dear Colleague letter that outlines school districts' legal obligations to equitably administer student discipline, a guiding principles document with links to research & best practices for improving school climate and discipline, & a searchable compendium of school discipline laws & regulations.

Civil Rights Data Collection

www.ocrdata.ed.gov

The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is a biennial survey required by ED's Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

School Discipline Consensus Report

csgjusticecenter.org/youth/school-discipline-consensus-report/

In June '14, the Council of State Governments released this comprehensive roadmap to reforming school discipline.

Letter to Chief State School Officers & State Attorneys General

www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/140609.html

This letter from ED & DOJ, issued in June '14, clarifies approaches & practices that are needed to appropriately serve youth educational needs in correctional education settings.

Supportive School Discipline Communities of Practice (SSDCOP)

ssdcop.neglected-delinquent.org/about

The SSDCoP bring together education & justice leaders to share & learn from each other & keep kids out of courts.

What are SSDI partners doing?

Building consensus among education & justice stakeholders

Developing guidance for the field

Collaborating on research & data collection

Building awareness of evidence-based practices

Integrating SSDI work into federal grant-making

By teaming up with stakeholders on this issue ... we hope to promote strategies that will engage students in learning and keep them safe.

U.S. Secretary of Education

Arne Duncan

Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice, July 2011

New Federal Grant Programs

grants.gov

In Fiscal Year '14, Congress appropriated funds to help schools & their partners better support mental health & behavior while improving safety.

DOJ - School Justice Collaboration Program

www.ojjdp.gov/grants/solicitations/FY2014/SJCPKeepingKidsinSchool.pdf

DOJ - Comprehensive School Safety Initiative

nij.gov/topics/crime/school-crime/Pages/school-safety-initiative.aspx

ED - School Climate Transformation grant programs

www2.ed.gov/programs/schoolclimatelea/applicant.html

HHS - Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness And Resilience in Education)

beta.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-14-019