

# Parent Organizing, HIAs, and Countering Structural Racism in South LA Schools

*2<sup>nd</sup> Annual National HIA Meeting – September 25, 2013*  
*Presented by Maisie Chin, Executive Director/Co-Founder*



## **BACKGROUND & CONTEXT**

## CADRE Parent Organizing

Structural Racism  
Blaming of Low-Income African American and  
Latino Parents  
for School Conditions

Door to door and school-front  
canvassing

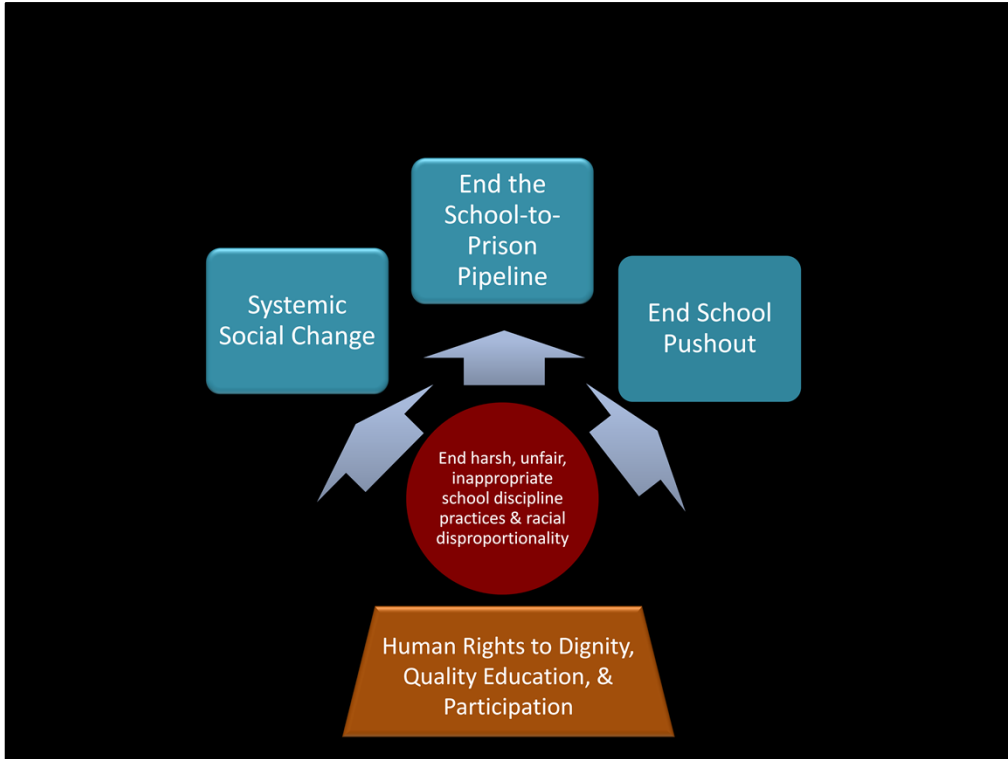
Training and capacity  
building through critical  
analysis

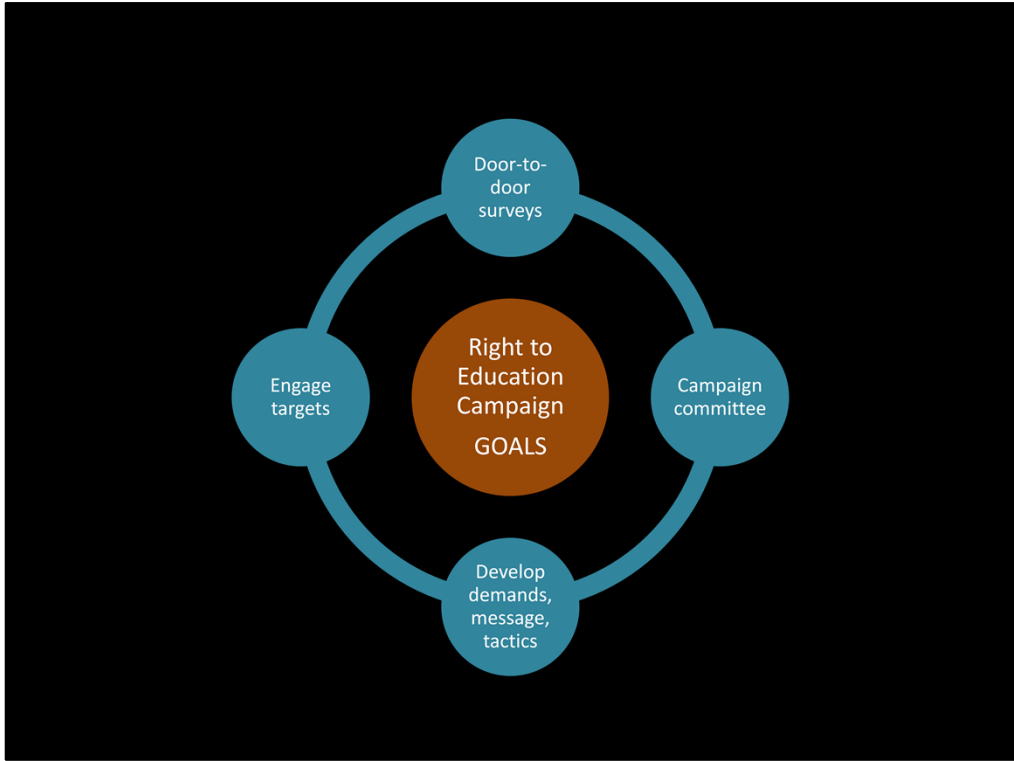
Strategic campaigns that  
use parents' rights in  
creative ways to alter the  
perception and power of  
low-income parents and  
families of color



Since 2001, we have been organizing African American and Latino parents/caregivers in South Los Angeles whose children attend schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). We especially target the neighborhoods that are served by Fremont High School and its feeder and relief schools.

We have over 200 members and several committees of our most active leaders. We have trained nearly 1,000 parents and canvassed over 100 different blocks in South LA.



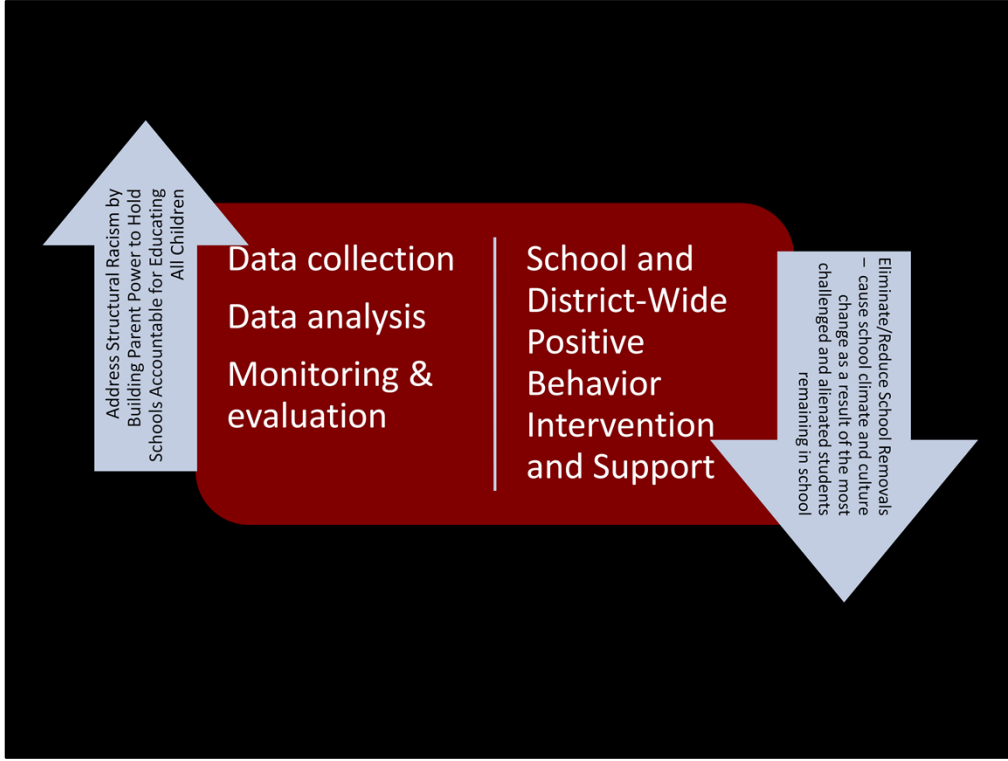


## After a one-year campaign, in 2007:

- CADRE's door-to-door collection of families' suspension stories, people's hearing, mobilization of letters from allies from around the country, repeated presence at school board meetings, and negotiations with the teachers union...
- Helped secure LAUSD's adoption of a new District-wide "Discipline Foundation Policy", based on "School-Wide Positive Behavior Support"
- And led to the success of our organizing and partnership model with attorney advocates giving rise to the national Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC)

## Current Targets & Demands

- *Primary Target:* Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Board of Education
  - *Secondary Target:* United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA), our local teachers union
  - *Secondary Target:* Media
1. Full implementation of SWBPS & 2013 School Climate Bill of Rights
  2. Reduce suspensions in South LA and LAUSD by 50%
  3. Reduce African American suspensions in South LA and LAUSD by 50%





**INTEGRATING HEALTH IMPACT  
ASSESSMENT AS PART OF COMMUNITY  
MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION**

## A Health Frame

School pushout is emblematic of exclusionary school discipline (ESD) policies, which:

Remove students from the classroom via automatic punishments for infractions, regardless of intent or circumstances

Previous research has shown that ESD is

Associated with lower academic achievement and drop-out

Ineffective at preventing future misbehavior and violence

Harmful to student mental health

Associated with incarceration

Disproportionately used with African American students for less serious or more subjective reasons

Used for nebulous offenses such as “defiance”

ESD is also called Zero Tolerance. It's an inflexible disciplinary environment

Defiance issue: explain to Jonathan

## Alternatives to ESD policies

### Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS or SWPBS)

Fosters a healthier school climate of trust by establishing expectations and reinforcing positive behavior

### Restorative Justice (RJ)

Seeks to repair harm done via open communication and respect agreements between all involved parties

*Both alternatives have been shown anecdotally to reduce disciplinary events, improve school climate, and foster positive relationships*



### Challenges

Requires extensive staff training and resources

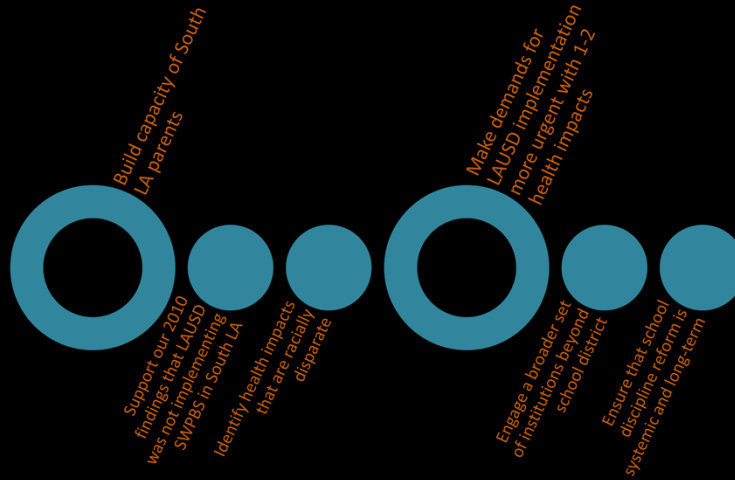
Both work best when a champion exists at the top level of administration

Student buy-in is key and necessary

SWPBS=school wide positive behavior supports. This is specifically a “school wide” approach, as implied. This is what LA calls their program. I’ve seen this term used in other places too

A verbal add-on for the 1<sup>st</sup> challenge listed: a rule of thumb for both policies is that they take 3 years to really incorporate into a school

# CADRE's Reasons for an HIA



## Goals of School Discipline HIA

- Determine health impacts of ESD policies and potential impacts of PBIS and RJ
- Recognize where gaps in equity occur
- Provide recommendations for school districts
- Increase awareness of ESD alternatives
- Increase HIA as a tool for policy decisions

# HIA Scope



Both quantitative (PBIS reduced suspensions) and qualitative (focus groups – important!)

# Methodology

Parent surveys

Parent & student focus groups

Analysis of quantitative data on health determinants

## Key Finding from Parent Survey

Stress, anxiety, & depression

63% of parents selected Stress, Anxiety, or Depression as a top health issue and 68% of parents agree or strongly agree that suspension and expulsion practices lead to their children having stress, anxiety, or depression.



## Key Finding from Parent Survey

Contact with law enforcement

68% of parents agree or strongly agree that suspension and expulsion practices increase the chances of their child coming into contact with law enforcement.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZING &  
FRAMING OF CAMPAIGN DEMANDS**

# CADRE Right to Education Campaign

Full SWPBS implementation resulting  
in reduction in racial disparities

Mental Health - Stress,  
anxiety, & depression

School  
suspensions/pushout

Contact with law  
enforcement

## For more information:



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