

To be effective, programs must be delivered in a respectful and supportive school environment that incorporates the views of parents and students and is accountable to the community for student outcomes.

In reality, disproportionate numbers of children: children of color and those who are poor or have special needs, do not have these experiences. They are frequently under-educated and excluded by the schools which should serve them.

Schools and parents often need the independent intervention of Educational advocates to produce improvements in the following areas:

- Assessments / Tests
- Attendance / Grade Reduction
- Corporal Punishment
- Discipline
- Discrimination
- Dropouts / Pushouts
- Due Process
- Enrollment / Transfer
- Special Education
- Student Records
- Suspension / Expulsion
- Tracking
- Zero Tolerance

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"Only the educated are free" ~ Epictetus

# The Student Advocacy Center

A strategic approach to improving the educational success of children in public schools



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The Student Advocacy Center upholds the principle that sound public education policy requires: Equal access by all children to educational programs which develop their full human potential.

We are concerned for children who are chronically underserved by public schools. Decades of educational research proves that programs that serve these children well benefit the entire school population.

We challenge Zero Tolerance policies that put our most vulnerable children on the streets with neither service nor supervision. We strive to reinstate the commitment to universal public education.

An involved educational advocate can enhance a child's school performance by providing the following services:

- Work with families whose children are in general or special education
- Identify children with disabilities, both diagnosed and undiagnosed
- Serve as a catalyst to start evaluations, support services and accommodations to prevent school disengagement and failure

- Insure that students secure educational and due process rights
- Develop productive partnerships with school personnel
- Provide creative curriculums to help youth graduate on schedule and prepare for college and post-secondary training
- Improve communication between school personnel and parents
- Accompany student and parents to school IEPT meetings, program planning sessions, and disciplinary hearings
- Encourage and promote school policies and practices that work for children and challenge those that have a harmful impact

Educational advocates are not employees of the school and work toward assuring equal and excellent education for all children

The Student Advocacy Center was established in 1975 to focus on students' in-school experiences, identify policies and practices that work — and those that don't work — and help eliminate barriers to effective services. Michigan's only organization advocating on behalf of public school students in general and special education programs, the Student Advocacy Center serves children having difficulties accessing needed educational services, explores the effects of their circumstances and offers information about possible remedies to policy makers, educators and the public. Using a strength-based approach, the center works in partnership with parents to encourage and promote school policies and practices that work for children and challenge those that, however well intentioned, have a hurtful impact.

### **Mission Statement**

The Student Advocacy Center of Michigan operates with the conviction that a vigorous public school system that serves all children well is an essential component of a robust democracy. Toward that end, the Student Advocacy Center advocates on behalf of, and in partnership with, Michigan's school age children and their families in order to ensure that those who are educationally unserved, underserved, or ill-served receive a free, individualized and equitable public education and become fully participating members of their communities.

