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Pennsylvania Advisory Committee Submits Civil Rights Report to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

Washington, DC – A report of the 2016 – 2020 Pennsylvania Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights titled, *Disparate and Punitive Impact of Exclusionary Practices on Students of Color, Students with Disabilities and LGBTQ Students in Pennsylvania Public Schools* (April 2021), has been published on the agency’s public website: <https://www.usccr.gov/files/2021/04-09-Pennsylvania-Public-Schools.pdf>.

The report is based on a record generated at two public briefing meetings, as well as additional reference materials. The first hearing was conducted via conference call on November 19, 2019 – where school discipline experts presented a national perspective. The second in-person, day-long hearing was conducted on November 21, 2019, in Philadelphia – where those with more Pennsylvania-specific information and data informed the Advisory Committee and shared their expertise.

Patricia Hopson-Shelton, Chairperson of the PA Advisory Committee during this project said, “This report advises the Commission about how our federal, state, and local policy makers can dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline and address the disparate discipline of students of color, students with disabilities, and LGBTQ youth.”

Based on extensive research and testimony, the report’s key recommendations are to:

- Expand the use of positive interventions in place of exclusionary practices and expand the use of restorative practices focusing on trauma-informed relational repair rather than punishment,
- Ban the use of exclusionary discipline for non-violent offenses and limit the use of exclusionary discipline generally,

- Limit opportunities for the imposition of disparate discipline,
- Improve the collection of robust, verifiable, and intersectional data on students and the use of exclusionary discipline, and
- Commit funding to districts so schools have the resources to create positive school climate, eliminate disproportionalities in school discipline, and elevate alternatives to exclusion.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. The Commission: in our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. For information about the Commission, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).