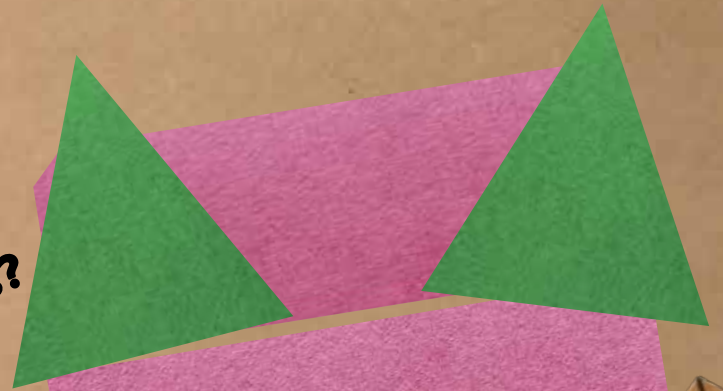
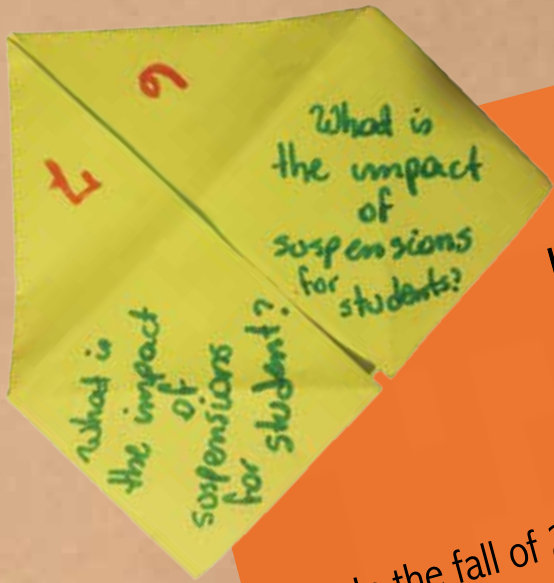


Is Suspension The Solution?

How do suspensions impact students?





In New York City there were over 36,000 suspensions in 2018, an increase of four percent from the previous year.

In the fall of 2018, CUP collaborated with Teaching Artist Ro Garrido and the International Community High School's 11th grade to learn about suspensions and their impact on school communities. To investigate, students got out of the classroom to speak with their peers and community members about school suspensions.

Students created this booklet to teach others what they learned and to help students, educators, and families navigate school suspensions.



Are suspensions fair?

How do suspensions impact students, their families, and the school community?

Are there alternatives to suspension?



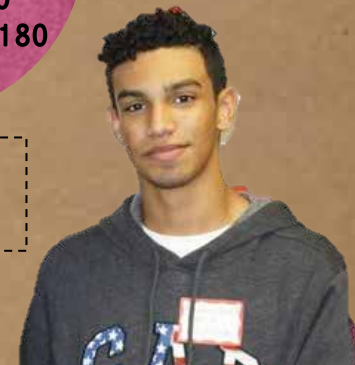
What is suspension?

Principal suspensions, commonly known as 'in-school suspension', are one to five days.

Suspensions occur when a school disciplines a student by temporarily removing them from class.

Superintendent suspensions can last anywhere from six to 180 days.

Maximum days of suspension by city:
Chicago: 10
Los Angeles: 20
New York City: 180



Why do students get suspended?

Except for a very small number of instances, suspension should not be a school's first response when a student violates the Discipline Code. Schools should use progressive discipline and restorative justice practices. Read on to learn more about restorative justice!

The Discipline Code describes behavior that is prohibited in schools and actions schools can take, including suspension, when students violate the discipline code.

For principal suspensions, the principal decides the length of suspension.

"If you get a superintendent suspension, you're supposed to receive a suspension notice that tells you that you've been suspended and the reason why you've been suspended."

— Rohini Singh, Staff Attorney, School Justice Project at Advocates for Children

"In terms of superintendent suspensions, [the principal] decides how many days we're requesting. But it's the hearing officers that gets to decide how many days are actually given."

— Berena Cabaracas, Principal, ICHS

"You have the right to a hearing and if you don't win at that hearing then you can appeal."

— Rohini Singh

Who decides if a student can be suspended?



What are your rights if you are suspended?

“ [Students] have to get classwork. They have the right to sit for exams including Regent’s exams while they’re on suspension. They have to get instruction. ”
— Alyssa Perrone, Staff Attorney, School Justice Project at Advocates for Children

Right to school work

“ The student is supposed to remain in school until the principal holds a conference with the parent. ”
— Rohini Singh

Right to remain in school until a parent conference

Right to appeal

Right to receive notice



Right to an advocate at the suspension hearing

“ [You can appeal] by writing a letter to the head of the Office of Safety and Youth Development and the Department of Education. ”
— Rohini Singh

“ The parent has to be called within 24 hours for a principal suspension, and then has to get notice in writing. ”
— Rohini Singh

“ Parents are entitled to have representation at suspension hearings and have the right to bring an advocate even if it’s not a superintendent suspension. ”
— Alyssa Perrone

Are suspensions effective?

How do suspensions impact the entire school community?

“Historically suspensions, detentions, all of those things have been used in schools for bad behavior. But what we know [now] is that when you use those tools, [students] feel like they're no longer part of the community.”
— Berena Cabaracas



Suspension can affect your family daily routine

“What a suspension does sometimes is provide time for the student and the staff to calm down and problem solve and create a plan for coming back together and trying again. Sometimes that has been successful.”
— Berena Cabaracas



“We often see that if there's been a fight and there's a student who has been suspended, and if there hasn't been any sort of mediation or any sort of conversation, then it's just going to happen again.”
— Kate McDonough, Director, Dignity in Schools New York



“[There] have been studies that say that students that are suspended are at higher risk of not graduating, dropping out of school, and at higher risk of potentially entering the criminal justice system.”
— Rohini Singh

Suspension can affect your grades at school.

Are suspensions fair?

Does race and gender affect suspensions?

“ Black and Latinx students are being suspended at higher rates [and] receiving more serious suspensions for the same thing than when they are compared to their white peers. There is this entrenched racism within the system. ”
— Kate McDonough

What is the school-to-prison pipeline?

The **school-to-prison pipeline** describes a system in which students are pushed into the criminal justice system for violating school rules. This system disproportionately targets youth of color and youth with disabilities.

“ Black boys are 3 times more likely to be suspended than their white peers and black girls to their white peers and they’re 6 times more likely. A lot of that has to do with like both perceptions around race and gender at the same time. ”
— Kate McDonough

“ If you're not in school and you're not being supported and you're out on the street it's more likely that NYPD will be harassing you and arresting you and you will be within the criminal justice system. ”
— Rohini Singh



Organize your community.

Become involved in school.

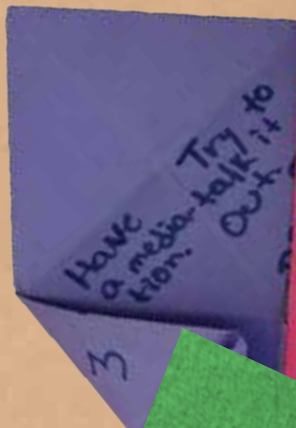
How can we change things?

“ [Come] together, identify the problem, state what [you] want, and then find creative ways to get it. ”
— Kate McDonough

Don't feel lonely when you are suspended, you are never alone

Don't Give Up!





What are alternatives to suspension?



Center youth voices and compassion

"I believe we can live in a system where students are not criminalized. I believe we can live in a system where the voices of the youth are the ones leading the change they want to see and that there can be good conversation between adults and youth."
— Jorky Badillo, Youth Organizer, Sistas and Brothas United



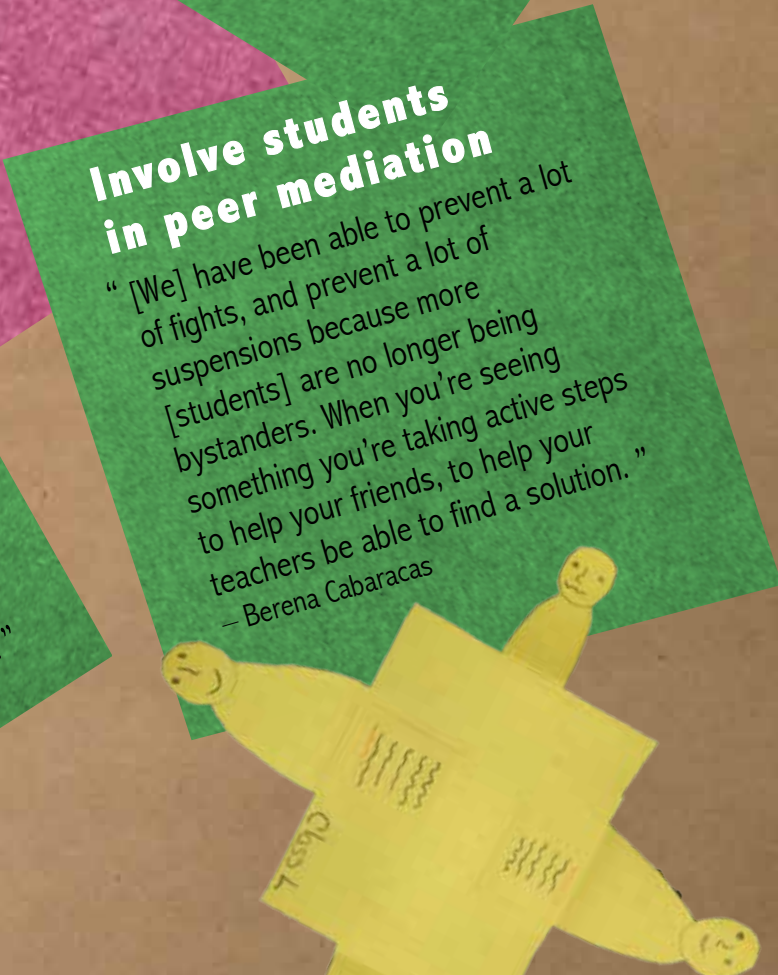
Practice restorative justice

"The New York City DOE Discipline Code talks about how schools should really be implementing progressive discipline — trying as much as possible to implement restorative practices or guidance or interventions and supports before they suspend a student."
— Alyssa Perrone



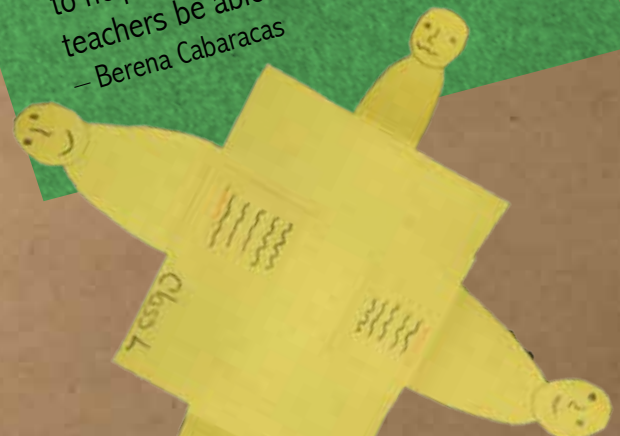
Provide schools with more resources

"Unfortunately what we see is sometimes schools are just not equipped to be able to put [restorative justice] practices in place. They need more resources [and] more funding to get better mental health practitioners for their school. [In] New York City, 45% of schools don't even have one social worker on staff."
— Alyssa Perrone



Involve students in peer mediation

"[We] have been able to prevent a lot of fights, and prevent a lot of [students] are no longer being bystanders. When you're seeing something you're taking active steps to help your friends, to help your teachers be able to find a solution."
— Berena Cabaracas



68% of students surveyed know someone who was suspended.

85% of students surveyed believe there are valid reasons for a student to be suspended. The top three examples included: fighting/being violent, bullying, and cyber bullying.



What do students think?

In the fall of 2018, ICHS students surveyed their peers about school suspensions.

86% of students surveyed believe there should be alternatives to suspension. The top three examples included: mediation, counseling, and community service.

58% of students surveyed believe that students should only be suspended for two to three days or one week maximum.

Respect
Others so you
can be respected

Talk with someone
when you feel
alone!

don't give up
about learning
your mistakes.



More student voices!

"Suspensions will later on create behavior patterns that will affect the students' learning and comprehension. Knowledge is power and it is being interrupted so it'll definitely affect the way that knowledge is being obtained."
— Amanda Marte, ICHS student

"There is no excuse for schools to not punish (suspend) students who seek to commit crimes and spread fears among other students."
— Asmaa Alomari, ICHS student

"When a student is always suspended for misbehaving, then they'll feel that they're hated in the school. Suddenly, they won't be comfortable to talk to school members about their [troubles] in school, which might lead them to terrible situations."
— Abdoullahi Bah, ICHS student

"Some suspensions are a very long time so as a result suspensions may do more harm than good because students do not take responsibility of their conduct."
— Gerilynn Castillo, ICHS student

"There is a great possibility that students will drop out of the school because of school suspensions. Students may deviate into a dangerous situation and could end up [in] criminal [gangs]."
— Wafa Alzebidi, ICHS student

"We can give the student a different alternative besides suspension, where they will learn and they will think before they do the same mistake again."
— Nadia Ripa, ICHS student

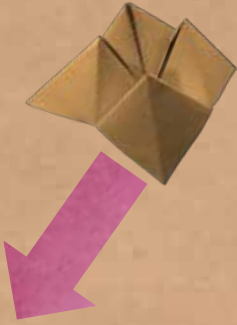


How to make it!

Make your own restorative justice paper fortune teller!

How to play!

1. On the next page, fill out the empty triangles in the fortune teller with your ideas for alternatives to suspension.



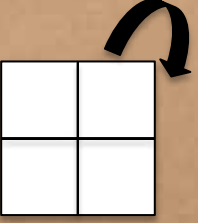
2. Cut out fortune teller along the dotted line.



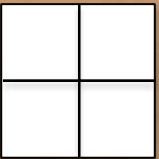
3. You now have a square of paper. Turn paper face down with the numbers facing away from you.



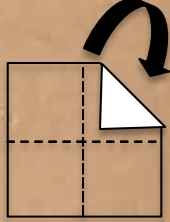
4. Fold paper in half both ways, to establish center crease.



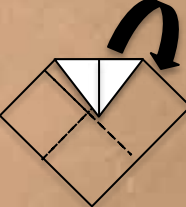
5. Open paper up again with numbers facing away from you.



6. Fold all four corners to meet in center.



7. Flip paper over and do the same on the other side.



8. Fold in half again with questions facing you.



9. Insert thumb and forefinger of each hand under corner flaps and expand paper by pushing corners to center.



10. Now you're ready to play the game!

**Pick a color!
Pick a number!**

1. Imagine a scenario in which a student could be suspended. Look at the last page for some examples.

2. Pick a color.

3. Spell out the color as you move the fortuneteller back and forth with your fingers. For example: G-R-E-E-N has five letters, so move five times.

4. Pick a number from the inside and move the fortune teller that many times.

5. Choose another number and open the flap.

6. Read the strategy and discuss how it would impact the whole school community.



CUT HERE

What are alternatives to suspension?

2

What are alternatives to suspension?

3

1

Peer mediation

Re-entry circle

4

Community service

8

Peace-making circle

5

What are alternatives to suspension?

7

What are alternatives to suspension?

6



CUT HERE





What is restorative justice?

Restorative justice is an approach to resolving conflict. It brings together all stakeholders to meet, address needs, and repair harm.

Learn more about restorative justice and student rights:

- advocatesforschildren.org
- dignityinschools.org
- northwestbronx.org/sbu
- restorativejustice.org



Think about these suspension scenarios!

You are a 12th grade student named E.

E stayed up late all week to finish a big science project and overslept this morning. E rushed to school but was an hour late. E receives detention but can't go because he has to pick up his siblings from school. E receives another detention but again has the same problem.

You are an 11th grade student name S.

Lately, S has been sad and angry. S has been dealing with a lot of issues at home. At school S overhears someone making a joke about S's clothes. Without thinking, S curses and punches the person and they start to fight.

You are a 9th grade student named M.

M is hanging out with his friends in the school's parking lot. M and his friends are skateboarding and listening to music. A teacher sees them and alerts the security guard who brings them all in to the principal's office. The security guard tells the principal that a teacher saw them smoking weed in the parking lot.

You are a 10th grade student name L.

L is new at school and doesn't have many friends. L feels bored at school and often wishes they could be somewhere else. L skips school a few times and eventually skips school more and more.



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Council on the Arts

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement, particularly among historically underrepresented communities.

ICHS

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City Studies are CUP's project-based, in-class and afterschool programs that use design and art as tools to research the city. To learn more, visit welcometoCUP.org.

The **International Community High School (ICHS)** is a progressive public school for English Language learners in the South Bronx. To learn more, visit ichs.weebly.com.

CUP

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