

**RETHINKING SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS –
PARTICULARLY FOR BLACK AND BROWN BOYS**

*A Joint Symposium Hosted by Detroit Public Schools
& The Michigan State University College of Education*

*March 19, 2014, 9:00am – 3:00pm
Michigan State University Detroit Center*

PROBLEM:

“Ensuring that our educational system is a doorway to opportunity – and not a point of entry to our criminal justice system – is a critical and achievable goal,” Attorney General Holder said in a statement last summer. By bringing together government, law enforcement, academic, and community leaders, I’m confident that we can make certain that school discipline policies are enforced fairly and do not become obstacles to future growth, progress, and achievement. (Secretary Duncan, 2011)

No truer words have been spoken, with respect to how *government, law enforcement, academic, and community leaders* should respond to what is an unprecedented increase in the removal of Black and Brown boys from traditional public school. Suspensions and expulsions have left a trail of tattered lives of children placed into alternative schools that simply serve as ‘holding tanks’ until their inevitable trek to youth detention centers and eventually adult incarceration facilities (Dunbar, 2013).

AGENDA FOR THE SYMPOSIUM

9:00 – 9:10

WELCOME

Representatives from Detroit Public Schools & Michigan State University College of Education

9:10 – 9:40

RETHINKING SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS – OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

Dr. Christopher Dunbar, Michigan State University

9:40 – 10:20

BRINGING IT HOME – IDENTIFYING SCHOOL-LEVEL PROBLEMS & GOALS

School Teams – Guided working session using school-level data to identify problem or goal related to suspension or student behavior

10:20 – 10:35

REFRESHMENT BREAK

10:35 – 11:25

YOUTH PANEL FROM DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS – THE IMPORTANCE OF RETHINKING SUSPENSIONS

Representatives from Detroit Public Schools

BREAKOUT SESSIONS – ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSIONS & EXPULSIONS

Round 1 – 11:30 – 12:20

(Pick up a box lunch on the way to round 2)

Round 2 – 12:40 – 1:30

Breakout Session Options – Individuals Select One to Attend During Each Round

SESSION A – MICHIGAN'S INTEGRATED BEHAVIOR AND LEARNING SUPPORT INITIATIVE (MiBLSi)

Dr. Steven Goodman the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Dr. Sheila White Behavior Specialists Detroit Public Schools

SESSION B – POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS (PBIS)

Panel of educators from Detroit Public Schools who are successfully implementing PBIS

SESSION C – RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Henry McClendon from the Skillman Foundation

SESSION D – RESEARCH ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & DROPOUT PREVENTION STARTING AS EARLY AS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Dr. Terah Venzant Chambers & Dr. Kristy Cooper, Michigan State University

1:30 – 2:00

CHANGING SCHOOL CULTURE & CLIMATE – HOW AN EQUITY AUDIT CAN HELP REDUCE SUSPENSION & EXPULSION ON YOUR CAMPUS

Dr. Muhammad Khalifa, Michigan State University

2:00 – 2:40

BRINGING IT HOME – PLANNING TO ADDRESS SCHOOL-LEVEL PROBLEMS & GOALS

School Teams – Guided working session to integrate learning and thinking from today's sessions into school-level action plans

2:40 – 3:00

LOOKING AHEAD – SHARING YOUR PLANS WITH OTHERS

Pairs of School Teams – Guided working session to share your ideas with colleagues at another school and brainstorm how you might address potential challenges and celebrate your wins