

A.8396 – A BILL FOR SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS

Every child deserves a safe school where they will have supportive, nurturing relationships with adults. Schools must create a climate where every teacher can teach and every student can learn.

Too many students are suspended from school, often for minor infractions. State policies require cookie cutter approaches to discipline that take away the ability of local communities and local educators to deal with students in a common sense way.

Today's schools need today's solutions for the many challenges schools, families and children face. This common sense legislation will reduce the use of suspensions as a disciplinary tool, and will help schools to embrace restorative and trauma informed practices that keep children in the classroom and on a path towards graduation. By changing state policies, we can increase local control in order to help teachers focus on teaching and keep students in school and learning.

Every child deserves a safe school where they will have supportive, nurturing relationships with adults. Schools must create a climate where every teacher can teach and every student can learn.

- All children make mistakes, its part of growing up. Schools must help each child learn to grow from their mistakes.
- School discipline policies should support students and teachers and ensure that every child and every educator is treated with respect

Too many students are suspended from school, often for minor infractions. State policies requiring cookie cutter approaches to discipline take away local communities' and local educators' ability to deal with students in a common sense way. These policies even cause high suspension rates for little children in kindergarten and first grade.

- Everyone wants to keep every student in school so they can learn, grow and graduate. But we are not giving our teachers and our schools the tools they need to support and nurture every child.
- Excessive use of suspensions is not working for teachers, students or schools. Students who are suspended just once are twice as likely to drop out.
- Instead of making schools safer, high rates of suspensions lead to more discipline problems and a school climate that feels less safe.
- The racial disparities in suspensions are so severe that both the New York State Attorney General and the Federal Government intervened in order to protect the civil rights of students in New York. By eliminating ineffective state mandates this bill will help local schools create fair and equitable discipline policies.

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- This legislation will create strong state policies that support schools and teachers in teaching our students mutual respect, personal responsibility and how to deal with conflict.
- This legislation will get rid of inflexible state mandates and give local communities the ability to implement more successful approaches to discipline.
- This legislation will increase student achievement and create classrooms where all children can learn.