Published on *Gay-Straight Alliance Network* (http://www.gsanetwork.org)

Push Out Victories -- and More Work Ahead

Sep. 28, 2012 ? yvonna

Heading into this weekend?s fall Statewide Advocacy Council retreat, we?ve got some exciting updates from Sacramento. One of the bills we fought for at Queer Youth Advocacy Day, Assemblymember Ammiano?s AB 1729, has been signed into law by Governor Brown!

AB 1729 strengthens alternatives to suspension and expulsion, so that removing a student from school is not the first resort when there?s a discipline issue. Along with a slate of other great school discipline bills signed by the Governor (see more here [1]), this new law will move us closer to California schools where all students can stay in class, learn, and succeed.

Unfortunately, another key bill did not make it past the Governor?s desk. Governor Brown vetoed AB 2242, which would have helped limit long-term suspensions and expulsions to serious offenses, rather than the subjective category of ?willful defiance.? Currently, 40% of suspensions in California involve willful defiance ? a category that could mean anything from failing to turn in homework to refusing to change out of gender-nonconforming clothing.

We?re not giving up on the campaign against ?willful defiance? suspensions and expulsions. And there are encouraging signs that we and our partners in the statewide Alliance for Boys and Men of Color

[2] are making progress. Oakland, for example, just agreed to work with the Office of Civil Rights [3] to reduce suspensions, with a focus on reducing defiance-related suspensions. You can help out with our work by letting us know when you see willful defiance being unfairly used to punish students, particularly for their gender expression and sexual orientation.

In the meantime, thank you to the amazing youth activists who made these new laws possible, and who we know will continue to speak out against harsh school discipline that harms LGBT youth.

Source URL: http://www.gsanetwork.org/news/blog/push-out-victories-and-more-work-ahead/09/28/12

Links:
[1] http://www.fixschooldiscipline.org/2012/09/yes-governor-brown-signs-first-school-discipline-bills/
[2] http://www.facebook.com/AllianceforBMOC
[3] http://www.insidebayarea.com/oakland-tribune/ci_21655379/oakland-schools-enter-agreement-reduce-suspensions-black-students