



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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Parents of Los Angeles, California students win humane discipline practices in high schools, 2006-2007

Time period notes: CADRE (Community Asset Development Re-defining Education) was founded in 2001, but this particular campaign began and ended in 2006-2007.

2006

2007

Location City/State/Province: Los Angeles, California

Goals:

To adopt proactive mediation practices and decrease reliance on exclusionary punishment like out-of-school suspensions.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 011. Records, radio, and television

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 011. Records, radio, and television

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 016. Picketing

Methods in 4th segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 016. Picketing

Methods in 5th segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 016. Picketing

Methods in 6th segment:

- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books

Notes on Methods:

CADRE went door-to-door and conducted interviews to obtain information and spread the word.

Classifications

Classification:

Defense

Cluster:

Human Rights

Group characterization:

- Parents of Students in the Los Angeles Unified School District

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Community Asset Development Re-defining Education (CADRE)

Partners:

not known

External allies:

Public Counsel Law Center, United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA)

Involvement of social elites:

not known

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

Groups in 2nd Segment:

- Public Counsel Law Center

Groups in 3rd Segment:

- United Teachers Los Angeles

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

- Public Counsel Law Center (exit)
- United Teachers Los Angeles (exit)

Segment Length: 2.5 months

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Board of Education

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

not known

Campaigner violence:

not known

Repressive Violence:

not known

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

6 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

2 points out of 3 points

The Los Angeles, California, Unified School District had one of the highest high school drop-out rates in the entire United States in 2000. Parents of Latino and African American students were deeply worried about how their children were being punished and the relationship between punishment and dropping out.

In 2001 they formed an organization to empower themselves to act, named Community Asset Development Re-defining Education (CADRE).

The new group had three major goals: “Include and respect the cultures of their families and communities; genuinely engage parents in decision-making regardless of race, income, language, immigration status, or age; actively maintain equal power with parents who effectively hold them accountable.”

In 2005, CADRE discovered that school policies toward misbehavior did in fact correlate with high drop-out rates and poor educational outcomes for students. CADRE also noticed that 92% of suspended students were of color in the 2005-2006 year, and the rate of suspension for African American students was higher than the rates of other students. CADRE began a campaign to decrease suspension rates.

In January 2006, CADRE members began going door-to-door, conducting interviews, and taking surveys to investigate the problem. After hearing many personal accounts, CADRE concluded that lack of parental involvement and exclusionary punishment were the roots of the problem.

Exclusionary punishment includes sending students out of the classroom, sending them to the principal’s office, suspending them, expelling them, and forcing them to transfer schools. It decreases student’s time in the classroom, thus making it harder for

them to get an education. The problem was aggravated by some schools' "zero tolerance" policy, which led to students being suspended for minor incidents.

Around this time, the School District proposed a new program that focused on positive behavior support. CADRE changed its goal to making sure that this new policy was implemented fully. The new program was called School-wide Positive Behavior Support.

One parent summarized the proposed program as teachers showing students that the teachers care. Instead of punishing students, the program would attempt to remove the "environmental triggers" that cause misbehavior. As the program explained, "Examples of positive behavior support include rewarding good behavior, posting behavior standards in the classroom, and talking with students about the reasons for their misbehavior."

On 14 June 2006 CADRE presented a case against exclusionary punishment in the South LA People's Hearing, to the board of the Los Angeles school district. However, a vote on the policy was postponed because a new district superintendent was being elected and some school board members did not support the policy.

For the next six months CADRE held demonstrations in front of school district offices. CADRE members also met with district officials including the new superintendent, with school board members, and with leaders of the teachers union.

CADRE released a paper titled, "More Education. Less Suspension—A Call to Action to Stop the Pushout Crisis in South Los Angeles". It was based on 50 personal interviews and 120 surveys of high schools students who did not complete high school. Much of the campaign also involved interaction with the media and meeting allies and other organizations across the country to heighten support for the new Positive Behavior Support program. Allies included LA Voice – PICO, InnerCity Struggle, Parents for Unity, and Public Counsel Education Attorneys.

Some teachers did not support the policy, because they were concerned it would reduce the teachers' ability to punish students. CADRE and the teachers' union worked together to make sure the new policy changed schools' approach toward punishment rather than reduce a teacher's right to punish students.

The Board of Education approved the "Discipline Foundation Policy: School-Wide Positive Behavior Support" after a unanimous vote on 27 March 2007. The campaign was a success, as CADRE achieved its goal of having a positive behavior policy implemented.

Research Notes

Influences:

not known

Sources:

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