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Students Demand Preservation of the Discipline Guidance
*The Children's Defense Fund – New York Remains Strongly Opposed to Rescinding
the Federal Guidance Package*

NEW YORK, NY – This morning, the Federal Commission on School Safety recommended rescinding the joint school discipline guidance released by the Department of Education and Justice in 2014. The Children's Defense Fund – New York (CDF-NY) joins organizations and communities across the country in calling on the U.S. Department of Education to maintain this important guidance package.

The school discipline guidance package seeks to end discriminatory school discipline practices and help schools identify and take steps to address racial disparities, such as providing school-based interventions for students rather than resorting to more exclusionary or harsh forms of punishment.

“I’m a young Black student working through many trials and tribulations in the school system; I know the guidance is a creative tool that assists schools and will continue to play a very important role in many students’ lives,” said Gary Edwards, a current high school senior in Brooklyn and Education Justice Policy Intern at CDF-NY. “I witness many of my peers getting suspended and I’m convinced that suspensions have caused great harm and prevent students from achieving greatness. Decision makers should come together to do what’s best for children.”

Racial disparities in school discipline continue to be well documented. Just this month, the New York Equity Coalition released a report on the New York State suspension crisis, finding that Black students statewide, outside of New York City, experienced out-of-school suspensions at more than four times the rate of white students. Meanwhile, in New York City, Black students were 3.4 times more likely to be suspended, and 5.0 times more likely to receive a suspension lasting longer than five days.

“The federal guidance recognizes that there are options better than relying on suspensions,” said Shawne Robinson, a high school sophomore in Brooklyn and an Education Justice Policy Intern. “I know what it feels like getting suspended and I know school is supposed to be a place for learning. The longer suspensions continue to be relied on the less students will be in school and the less sure we are of having a brighter future.”

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The Children's Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.