

Grace Dolan-Sandrino

Student Activist & Co-Author of
Dress Coded: Black Girls Bodies
& Bias in DC Schools

Nia Evans

National Women's Law Center

Kelli Garcia

National Women's Law Center

Mariko Miki

If/When/How

**If you care about
stopping school pushout,
you should care about
reproductive justice**



NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

Upcoming Webinars

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

If You Care About Immigrant Justice,
You Should Care About Reproductive Justice



if
when
how

Lawyering for
Reproductive
Justice

What is reproductive justice?

NOTHING IS BEYOND MY REACH.
WE MADE THESE SYSTEMS,
AND WE HAVE THE POWER
TO DISMANTLE THEM.



[Repeal Hyde Art Project](#)

REPEAL HYDE ART PROJECT

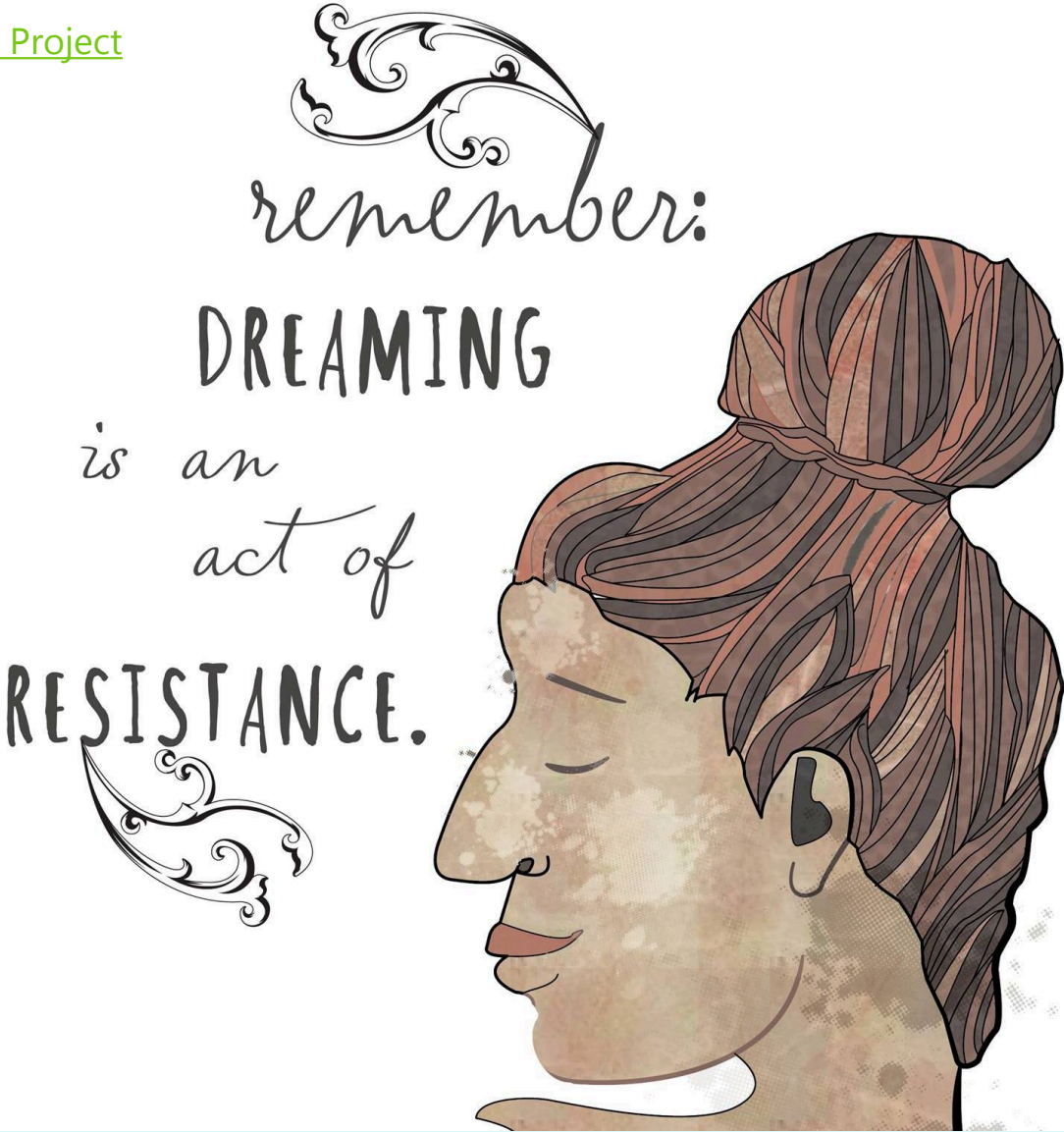


THEY DO NOT KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

THEY WILL TRY TO
DEFINE YOU.

GROUND YOURSELF IN
YOUR TRUTH AND
WHOLENESS.

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO
LISTEN.



Title IX

LET HER LEARN

Stopping School Pushout



Nia Evans, Campaign Manager for Education at the National Women's Law Center

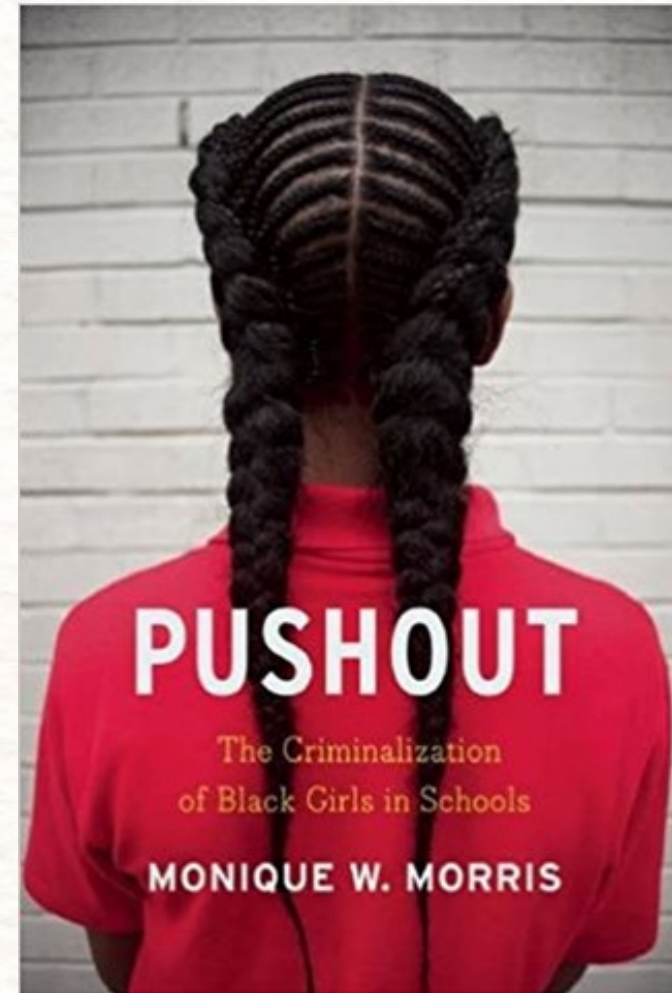
Grace Dolan-Sandrino, Student activist & co-author of Dress Coded: Black Girls, Bodies, and Bias in DC Schools

THE PLAN

- The problem
- The research
- The campaign
- The student impact
- The solutions

WHAT IS SCHOOL PUSHOUT?

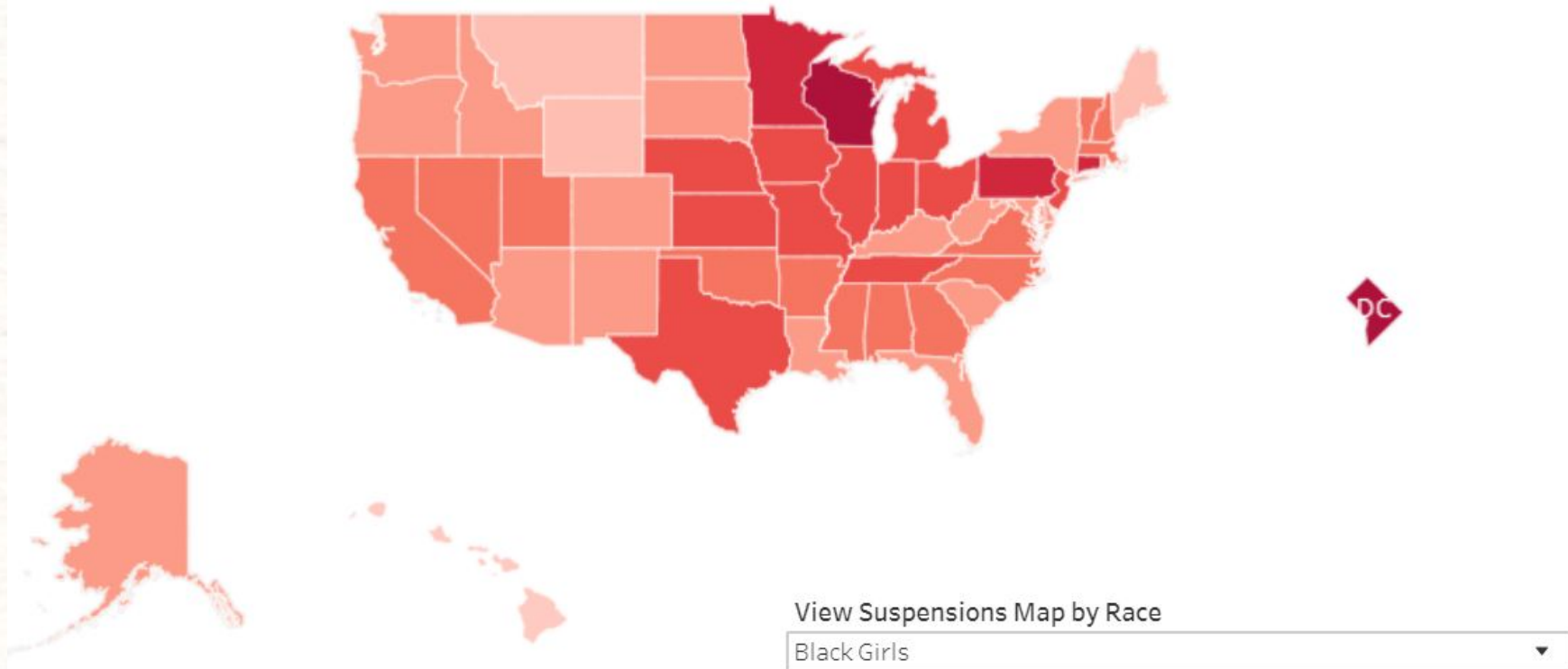
School pushout refers to policies, practices and actions that overwhelmingly target certain students—particularly Black girls—and push them out of school through suspensions, expulsions, and school-based arrests.



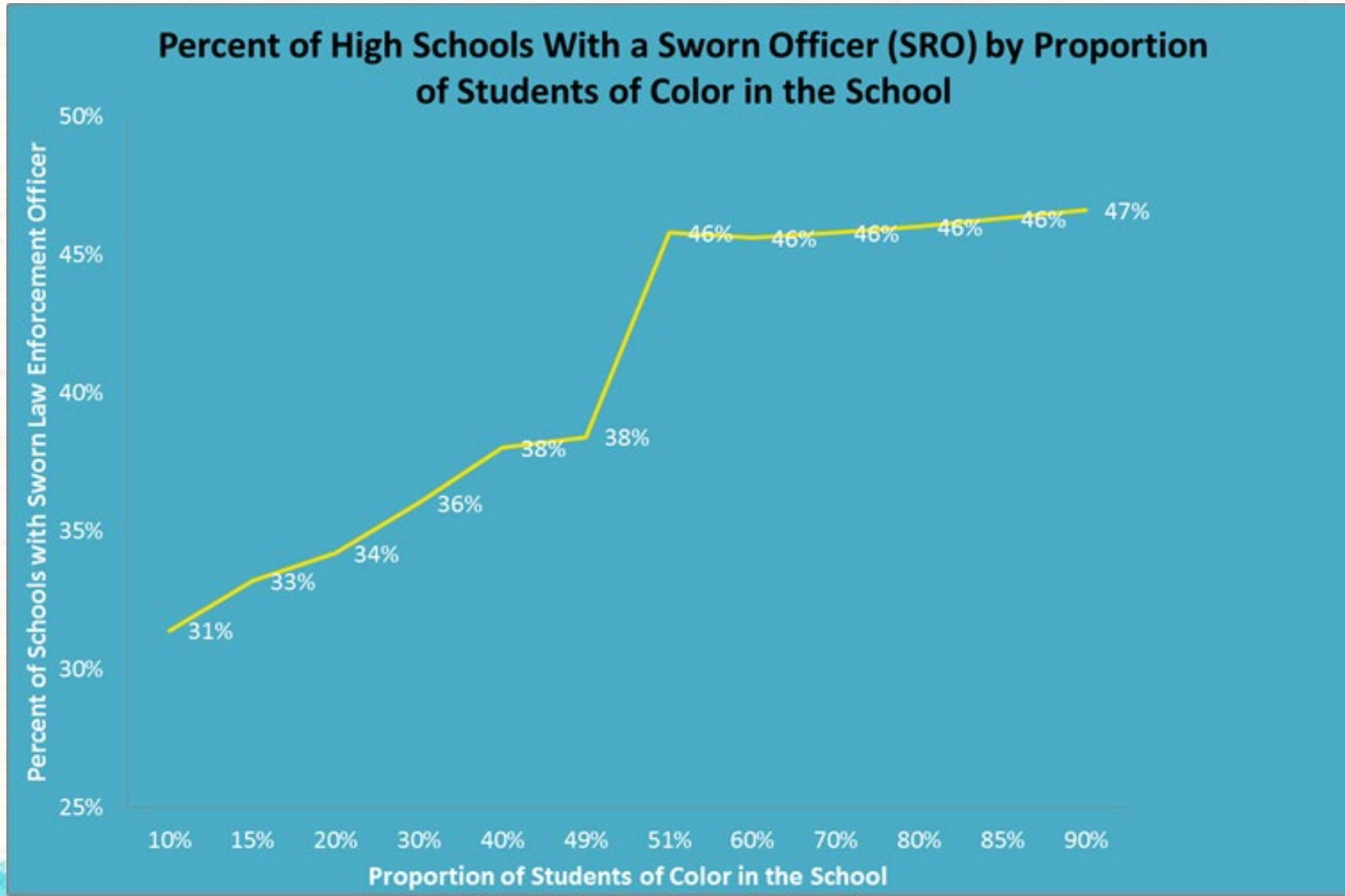
Nationally, Black girls are almost 6X more likely and Native American girls are 3X more likely to be suspended from school than white girls

2015-16 Suspension Rates for Black Girls by State

An interactive map of out-of-school suspensions



Law enforcement is more likely to be present in high schools with majority students of color than in majority white schools



COMMON MYTHS ABOUT SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

MYTH: Students are excluded from the classroom for seriously disruptive behavior.

- This is not true. Schools use a growing number of out-of-school suspensions for day to day disruptions like defiance, non-compliance, lateness, truancy, and dress code violations.

MYTH: Suspensions and expulsions bring order to schools.

- This is not true. Schools that have moved away from these practices experience higher ratings of safety, student engagement, attendance and achievement.

MYTH: Poverty and crime are the reasons why Black and Latina students are suspended.

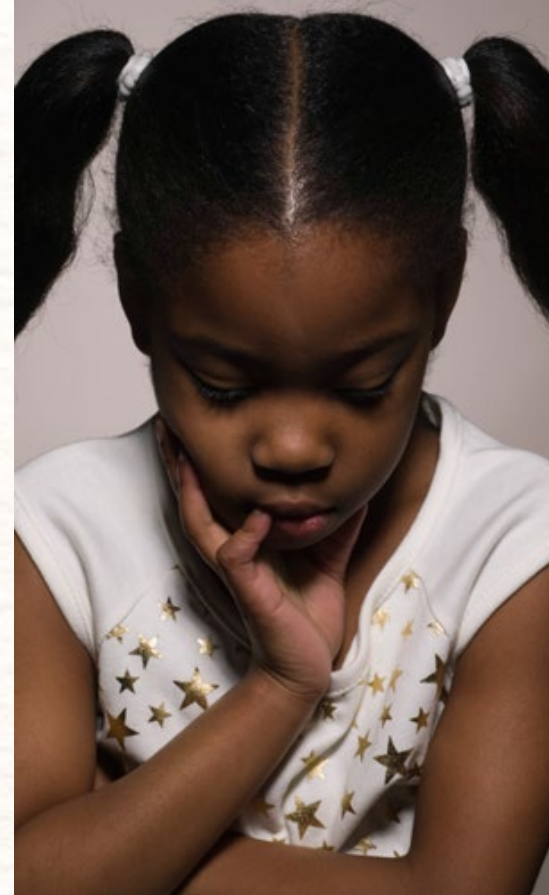
- This is not true. Studies have found that **race** and not poverty is the driving predictor for school pushout. Students of color are still suspended in well-resourced suburban districts.

ROOTS OF THE PROBLEM

- Stereotypes
- Vague policies
- Punishing trauma

WHY STOPPING SCHOOL PUSHOUT MATTERS

- Lost class time that leads to lower grades
- Higher retention rates
- Lower graduation rates in high school and college
- Interaction with criminal justice system
- Stuck in the school-to-poverty pathway: limited job prospects, low-wage work, poorer health, etc.



LET HER LEARN CAMPAIGN

GOALS

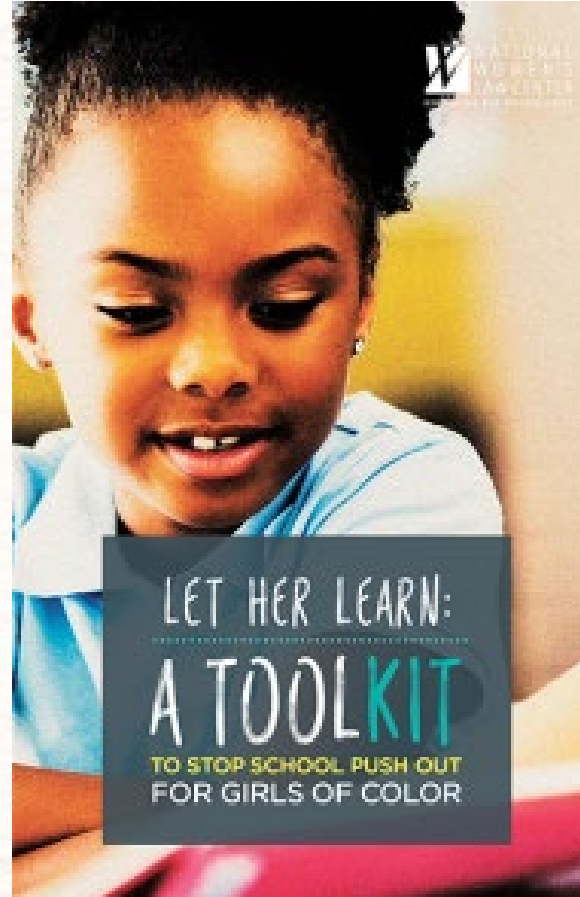
- Educate the public on school pushout
- Provide tools and resources to communities pushing for change

STRATEGIES

- Community education
 - Know Your Rights trainings
 - Policy workshops
 - Community forums
- Participatory action projects
- Advocacy tools

LET HER LEARN TOOLKIT

- Will help ID biased policies and practices in your school or district
- Most common race and sex-based policies
 - Dress code infractions
 - Defiance/insubordination
 - Sex codes
- Download toolkit from letherlearn.org



DRESS CODED: BLACK GIRLS, BODIES, AND BIAS IN DC SCHOOLS



D.C. Girls Claim Discrimination In School Dress Codes



Sasha-Ann Simons



High school seniors Fatimah (left) and Nasirah Fair are calling for an update to the school dress code.

teenVOGUE

NEWS AND POLITICS

FASHION

ENTERTAINMENT

BEAUTY

LIFESTYLE

WELLNESS

HOME COMING

Like (16)

School Dress Codes Are Disproportionately Enforced Against Black Girls, Samantha O'Sullivan Writes

"The problem begins with a culture which celebrates thinness and hyper-sexualizes Black bodies."



SAMANTHA O'SULLIVAN
APR 24, 2018 3:54PM EDT



Students are waging war on sexist and racist school dress codes — and they're winning

Traditional dress codes punish marginalized students disproportionately, but this anti-racist, anti-sexist dress code could fix that.

By Nadra Nittle | Sep 13, 2018, 7:10am EDT

DRESS CODED: BLACK GIRLS, BODIES, AND BIAS IN DC SCHOOLS

- Rooted in stereotypes
- Overly strict
- Interrupt educations
- Use subjective language
- Present a financial burden
- Shame bodies
- Can promote discrimination

STUDENT IMPACT

Grace Dolan-Sandrino, Student activist and co-author of Dress Coded: Black Girls, Bodies and Bias in DC Schools

Policy solutions

- **Dress Codes**
 - Focus on appearance instead of learning
 - Body shaming
 - Reinforce sex and race stereotypes
- **Good Dress Codes**
 - Don't exclude students from school or class
 - Celebrate body diversity and expressions of diverse cultures
 - Maintain gender neutrality
 - Enforced equally regardless of race or gender
 - Invite students to participate in revision/policy evaluation
- **School pushout**
 - Ban suspensions for willful defiance for students of all grades
 - End exclusionary discipline for dress code violations and ban "hair codes"
 - Require schools to stock free uniforms for student use
 - Guarantee amnesty for students who must disclose potentially rule-breaking behavior to report harassment
 - Eliminate arresting power of police in schools
 - Divest in police, invest in counselors
 - Require anti-bias training for teachers and school staff

JOIN THE MOVEMENT TO STOP SCHOOL PUSHOUT

- Check out www.letherlearn.org to get started
- See how your state treats girls of color
- Evaluate your school's practices and policies
- Reach out to NWLC if you see problems
- Organize your community and push for change



Questions?

Mariko Miki

Professional Development Coordinator
If/When/How
mariko@ifwhenhow.org
ifwhenhow.org
@ifwhenhow

Kelli Garcia

Director of Reproductive Justice Initiatives &
Senior Counsel
National Women's Law Center
kgarcia@nwlc.org
nwlc.org
@nwlc

Nia Evans

Campaign Manager for Education
National Women's Law Center
nevans@nwlc.org
letherlearn.org
@nwlc