

Press Release...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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Ford Calls Punishment For Student Overreaching

OAK PARK- Illinois State Representative La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, calls for better action toward a 10 year old student in Oak Park School District 97. The student received an out-of-school suspension lasting 1.5 days for verbally disagreeing with another student's answer while in class. Ford believes the punishment is overreaching for a 10 year old student. District 97's Bylaws and Policies currently state that a student may be suspended for up to 10 days per incident.

"A suspension has a strongly negative impact on a child's mental health, and suspensions may do more harm than good for the student," said Ford. "I believe there may be other remedies, such as notifying the parents or holding a parent-teacher conference. The punishment is overreaching for a 10 year old student, and it risks degrading their confidence and education."

According to an article in Time magazine, Pamela Fenning and her colleagues noted in the April 2012 Journal of School Violence that most school districts continue to use out-of-school suspensions even for minor disciplinary issues, even though they tend to actually exacerbate problem behaviors and also may lead to academic problems.

The family of the child, the Humphreys, was in shock at the school's response. "We have never heard of a student being suspended from school for such an incident," said a Humphrey family member. "We believe if and/or when a student misbehaves, they should be reprimanded accordingly, making sure that the consequences fit the behavior. Our son was suspended unfairly, and we believe a more effective response or a simple corrective consequence should have been in place. To suspend a student for an outburst DOES NOT fit the category of either an effective response or a corrective consequence. The teacher, principal and support specialist should have done much better by our son."

Time magazine article:

<http://ideas.time.com/2012/12/05/does-suspending-students-work/>

Oak Park School District 97 Bylaws:

<http://www.op97.org/board-of-education/documents/Policy5600-StudentDiscipline.pdf>

For more information, contact one of Ford's constituent service offices: 816 S. Oak Park Avenue in Oak Park at [708-445-3673](tel:708-445-3673), 4800 W. Chicago Avenue in Chicago at [773-378-5902](tel:773-378-5902) or in the Stratton Office Building in Springfield at [217-782-5962](tel:217-782-5962), or visit www.lashawnford.com.

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