



Lawsuit Settlement Significant for Education of Expelled Students

July 30, 2018

Alicia B. vs. Malloy, the Center for Children's Advocacy [lawsuit](#) challenging the inadequate education of expelled students in Connecticut, has settled. This settlement is a significant step forward for the education of expelled students in Connecticut, who are disproportionately students of color.

The Center for Children's Advocacy (CCA), with co-counsel National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) and K&L Gates LLP, represented two Black middle school students who effectively received no education during their expulsions, despite their right to education established by the Connecticut State Constitution.

The Complaint was brought to enforce the students' rights to education and to equal protection under Connecticut and Federal laws.

For years, expelled children's substandard education caused them to fall behind educationally, increasing the likelihood that they would disengage from school and ultimately drop out. Selective enforcement of disciplinary policies in school districts throughout Connecticut results in Black children disproportionately expelled and, consequently, disproportionately deprived of their right to an education under the Connecticut State Constitution.

As a result of *Alicia B.* litigation, the State passed legislation requiring that expelled students be educated in accordance with [standards](#) developed to ensure they can access education in a meaningful way rather than fall behind and disengage from their education altogether.

[The settlement](#) requires that the State issue guidance to school districts; provide resources on reducing expulsions to districts, families and the community; and monitor and address racial disparities in expulsions.

CCA attorney Marisa Halm, director of the Center's Juvenile Justice Project, says, "This a huge step forward for children who are expelled. Education is key to their future independence, and we must ensure that all students, including those high-risk students subject to harsh school discipline, are afforded the opportunity to access an education that keeps them on track for graduation."

"While Connecticut's legislation to ensure expelled students receive an adequate education was a significant and much needed reform, the State hadn't taken any steps to ensure that students - especially students of color - are not subjected to arbitrary and harmful disciplinary measures in the first place, until now," says NCYL Senior Attorney Hannah Benton.

The State has also agreed to scrutinize disproportionality in school discipline, and draft policy that addresses racial disparities in expulsions throughout Connecticut schools.

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The Center for Children's Advocacy is a nonprofit law firm that provides legal representation for the most at-risk children and youth in Connecticut. The Center has offices in Connecticut's largest and poorest cities, and the Mobile Office brings legal services directly to youth in their communities. For more information, please visit cca-ct.org.

The National Center for Youth Law is a non-profit law firm that helps marginalized children achieve their potential by transforming the public agencies that serve them. For more information, please visit youthlaw.org.

K&L Gates LLP is a global law firm with 45 offices around the world. K&L Gates prides itself on its commitment to public service and dedication to serving local communities in need.