

# CENTER FOR LAW AND EDUCATION

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## Access to Justice Through Lay Advocacy

**Parents, families, and students:** If you have a child (or are a student) who is facing a disciplinary suspension of 10 school days or less for a non-violent, non-drug, non-criminal related school code offense and need assistance, **please contact** the Center for Law and Education’s *Access to Justice through Lay Advocacy* project by phone (617-451-0855) or e-mail ([skochenour@cleweb.org](mailto:skochenour@cleweb.org)).

The Center for Law and Education, Inc. (“CLE”) is a non-profit resource and support organization that provides free legal assistance to attorneys representing students from low-income families and works with families, advocates, and educators to improve the quality of education for all students, in particular, students from low-income families.

CLE has received a multiyear grant from the Cummings Foundation to reduce short-term school disciplinary suspensions (10 school days or less) by supporting BPS students at their disciplinary hearings. Many of these students struggle academically and cannot afford to miss any days of school. High rates of disciplinary exclusion and missed school days are associated with poor academic achievement, higher drop-out rates, lower graduation rates, and decreased college and career readiness.

Through its *Access to Justice through Lay Advocacy* project, CLE has prepared a group of non-attorney advocates – university students and retirees – to assist BPS students subject to short-term exclusions from school (10 school days or less) for non-violent, non-drug, non-criminal related school code offenses at their disciplinary hearings. All our lay advocates have participated in a training program developed and provided by CLE attorneys, who will be available to provide them with ongoing backup support.

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