

*Copy and paste this email template about ACEs and suspensions:*

Dear [Insert School District Board],

Our youth are owed respect, dignity, and acknowledgement as individual persons with individual experiences. Racial inequities have adverse impacts on the health of youth who are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and cause toxic stress and trauma which results in youth experiencing anxiety, depression and PTSD. This must be recognized by schools to adequately provide a healthy learning environment for all students. We must stop the school-to-prison pipeline. There are a variety of ways to respond to an incident of crime, yet we choose the response of the deprivation of Liberty for a historically aggrieved group whose Liberty in the United States was never firmly established to begin with. BIPOC are disproportionately targeted for disciplinary action and are incarcerated at higher rates. We can't ignore the connection between school disciplinary actions and incarceration.

Kitsap County has done so much in building a supportive net for youth and constructing positive learning environments – not to mention acclimating to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we can do better.

All educators need to receive training in ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences). This training is offered by [Kitsap Strong](#) and will equip educators with the knowledge needed to advocate for and with their students.

Further, suspensions should be eliminated as a form of punishment and replaced with trauma-informed approaches to identify needs for students including, but not limited to, mental health support, mentorship and substance use disorder rehabilitation resources and programs.

Kitsap County Schools have the opportunity to be a change agent and set the bar for all other schools to look to for inspiration and leadership in the area of dismantling racism in educational institutions. Every student deserves the attention, support, resources and tools as needed to succeed. Some may require more individualized plans than others. “Bad behavior” does not equal bad students. Suspensions do not cure toxic stress and trauma. Our youth depend on you to shape their future. Intentional intervention and affirming practices provide opportunities for successful and healthy outcomes. We implore you to do the right thing and replace the school-to-prison pipeline with a school-to-scholar pipeline by training every single Kitsap County educator in ACEs and replacing suspension as a disciplinary action with trauma-informed approaches to identify student needs for success.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kitsap County Community Member,

[Insert name]