

# Student Bill of Rights

*Written by the students of Youth Empowered in the Struggle (YES)*

## Student Power and Voice

- I. Students have the right to organize and have a voice in their school.
- II. Student representatives should be included in any decision-making that significantly affects the student body.
- III. Students have the right to full disclosure by administration, as do parents, teachers, staff, and the community.
- IV. Students have the right to organize across schools. The students of a district have the right to establish an inter-school organization in which the issues of different schools are shared and the entire student community can provide support to ensure that no school is isolated.
- V. Students and parents/guardians are to be informed of the students' rights. Students shall present the Student Bill of Rights peer-to-peer annually and have access to a copy.
- VI. Students have a right to a school environment where all teachers and staff have the right to collectively bargain.
- VII. Students have the right to a desegregated public education system that is not undermined by privatization.

## School and Classroom Environment

- I. Students have the right to a reasonable class size where the teacher can give adequate attention to each and every student.
- II. Students have the right to a focused and peaceful environment through mutual respect between teachers and students. This should translate into equal power dynamics in the classroom and expectations applied equally to both students and adults.
- III. Every student has the right to a quality education that meets his or her needs. Students have the right to additional support such as tutoring and support for students with disabilities.
- IV. Students have the right to hands-on and cultural activities to enhance their learning experience, including access to technology, arts, and music. Student input should be listened to in regards to teaching style and classroom activities in order to craft a classroom environment in which students learn best.
- V. Schools should hold events that foster a positive relationship between the school, parents, and the community. Schools should also foster inter-generational relationships in order to establish a stronger school community.
- VI. Students have the right to an affordable, nutritious, and dignified lunch that is properly cooked, as well as a lunch period that allows sufficient time to eat.
- VII. If a student's family financial situation prohibits them from paying school fees, they should have the right to financial assistance.
- VIII. All students deserve access to good transportation to and from school.
- IX. All students deserve a school facility that is a safe and adequate space for learning.

## **Bilingual Education**

- I. Students have the right to learn two languages, including their home language.
- II. Students who are in the process of learning English deserve access to their school's curriculum with support in their native language.
- III. Students who are proficient in English should still be given the opportunity to continue to develop their native language fluency and literacy skills.
- IV. Bilingual students deserve access to teachers who are certified in bilingual education by the Department of Public Instruction, bilingual curricular resources and materials, and bilingual guidance counseling.

## **Freedom from Discrimination**

- I. Students have a right to freedom from all forms of discrimination. This includes but is not limited to discrimination based on ethnicity, class, sex, disability, pregnancy, religion, native language, sexual orientation, gender expression, housing status, self-expression/personal style, or immigration status.
- II. Students have the right to teachers, staff, and administrators who understand the community in which they are working and have taken anti-racist/anti-bias training.
- III. Every student has the right to access high-level curriculum and advanced classes, and to be encouraged to take these classes.
- IV. Students have the right to a culturally diverse, anti-racist curriculum that values ethnic studies and reflects the student body and the diversity of the United States.
- V. Students have the right to form any student organization or group free from discrimination, as long as the group does not advocate discrimination or harm toward others.
- VI. Schools are required to equally enforce policies with all students (dress code, disciplinary actions, etc.), without discrimination or favoritism. Schools also must evaluate their policies to be sure they are not inherently discriminatory.
- VII. Schools must document the demographics of students who are reprimanded by police in school, suspended, or expelled, in order to track and protect against racial profiling.
- VIII. Students have the right to appeal if they feel they have been discriminated against.

## **Security and Discipline**

- I. Every student has the right to a school environment in which they feel safe.
- II. Schools should not reflect prison-like conditions or perpetuate this mentality towards the student body.
- III. Schools should attempt to resolve safety issues by investing in the culture of the school, through anti-bullying initiatives and other programs, rather than relying only on enforcement strategies.
- IV. Students have the right to be informed of security's reasonable cause before being singled out for searching or questioning.
- V. Any disciplinary action should seek to address the root of the problem the student is experiencing, instead of just removing them from the learning environment.
- VI. Schools should not rely upon the police to resolve issues that can be handled by mediation by students, administration, or faculty members through a restorative justice model.
- VII. Police and security officers cannot be aggressive, violent, or disrespectful toward students.

- VIII. Students have the right to a clear and simple complaint process that produces real results if they feel they have been unfairly searched or punished, or disrespected by an officer.

### **Life After School**

- I. All students have the right to qualified staff who will assist them through their college application process and encourage them to attain a post-secondary education.
- II. Students have the right to access college information such as scholarships, colleges to choose from, financial aid opportunities for low-income or undocumented families, and the positive impact of college education.
- III. Students have the right to organized counseling programs that will guide and advise them throughout their high school years. Students have the right to confidentiality in these programs with the exception of direct and imminent harm to the student or another person.
- IV. Students have the right to beneficial activities aimed at improving their self-esteem, physical well-being, and overall person. This includes the right to health information including full information about sexual health.
- V. Students have the right to be presented with unbiased truths that aid the students in the transition from school to higher education or the work force. Students who have plans to enter the work force should be provided with worker rights orientation in the same way that college-bound students receive support to continue their education.
- VI. Students have the right to know what kind of activities and courses favor them in the college admission process, and to have access to the courses and programs that colleges look for.
- VII. Undocumented students should have the right to access in-state tuition rates at the colleges and universities in their state of residence.

