

New Data Affirm Dire Need for Federal Efforts to Support School Success for All Children

Washington -- March 7, 2012 -- New national survey data released by the U.S. Department of Education reinforces the need for Congress to pass legislation that expands the use of school-wide positive behavior supports and that provides minimum standards on the use of restraint and seclusion in our nation's schools. A summary of the data is available from the Department of Education.

"The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law applauds the leadership of those senators and representatives sponsoring and supporting the Positive Behavior for Safe and Effective Schools Act (HR 3165), Achievement Through Prevention Act (S. 541) and Keeping All Students Safe Act (H.R. 1381, S. 2020)," stated Laurel Stine, director of federal relations with the Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law. "Enacting these important bills would help address the new survey's troubling findings on inequities associated with school discipline," Stine added.

"Creating a school climate that is conducive to learning for all students must be at the top of our nation's education agenda," stated Lewis Bossing, senior staff attorney with the Bazelon Center. "But according to the new data, students with disabilities are suspended at a rate twice that of students without disabilities, and represent 70% of those physically restrained by adults in school settings."

"When school-wide positive behavior supports are implemented effectively," explained Stine, "it results in greater academic achievement, significantly fewer disciplinary problems, lower expulsion and suspension rates, and increased teacher instruction time, all of which are beneficial for all students."