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1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, While the School Code authorizes school boards to  
3 suspend and expel students if they are found guilty of gross  
4 disobedience or misconduct, there are no statewide policies and  
5 procedures for school boards to follow in order to carry out  
6 their duties; and

7 WHEREAS, There is a correlation between the number of  
8 students suspended, expelled, and truant and high school  
9 dropout rates; numerous studies have shown that the main  
10 reasons students dropped out of school often focused on being  
11 bullied at school, a lack of interest in school, behavioral  
12 problems, family problems, and financial problems; and

13 WHEREAS, The increasing number of students who are  
14 suspended, expelled, and truant is of great concern in the  
15 African-American and Hispanic communities; according to the  
16 State Board of Education, a total of 3,451 students were  
17 expelled during the 2006-2007 school year; of this number, 39%  
18 (1,359) were Caucasian, 43% (1,467) were African-American, and  
19 12% (511) were Hispanic; and

20 WHEREAS, During the same school year, Chicago Public  
21 Schools had a total of 549 students expelled, with 79% (436) of  
22 them African-American, 15% (81) Hispanic, and 1.6% (9)

1 Caucasian; and

2 WHEREAS, For public school districts in selected townships  
3 (Bloom Rich, Bremen, and Thornton) of south suburban Cook  
4 County (referred to as "the Townships"), the numbers were just  
5 as alarming; both Caucasian and Hispanic students made up 10.4%  
6 (14) of students expelled, while African-American students  
7 made up 79.2% (107) of expelled students; and

8 WHEREAS, This issue is not restricted to the Chicago area;  
9 the total numbers of students expelled during the 2006-2007  
10 school year for selected downstate counties were as follows:  
11 Champaign County had a total number of 18 students expelled for  
12 the 2006-2007 school year, with 13 of them being  
13 African-American; in Peoria County, 231 students were  
14 expelled, of which 68% (156) were African-American, 0.1% (3)  
15 were Hispanic, and 29% (68) were Caucasian; a total of 74  
16 students were expelled in Sangamon County, with 65% (47) being  
17 African-American and 32% (24) Caucasian; and in Winnebago  
18 County, 186 students were suspended, of which 55% (103) were  
19 African-American, 25% (47) were Caucasian, and 14% (26) were  
20 Hispanic; and

21 WHEREAS, The total numbers of students suspended statewide  
22 during the 2006-2007 school year was 174,930; of this number,  
23 31% (54,550) were Caucasian, 49% (84,995) were

1 African-American, and 17% (30,306) were Hispanic; and

2 WHEREAS, Chicago Public Schools had a total of 45,288  
3 students suspended (1,721); 4% of the students suspended were  
4 Caucasian, 72% (32,715) were African-American, and 20% (9,131)  
5 were Hispanic; and

6 WHEREAS, Within the Townships, 7,437 students were  
7 suspended; of this number, 83% (6,199) were African-American,  
8 8% (610) were Caucasian, and 7% (544) were Hispanic; and

9 WHEREAS, Totals for selected downstate counties were as  
10 follows: Champaign County suspended 1,993 students during the  
11 2006-2007 school year; 36% (717) were Caucasian, over half, 57%  
12 (1,143), were African-American, and 2.8% (56) were Hispanic; in  
13 Sangamon County, a total of 2,981 students were suspended; 45%  
14 (1,344) were Caucasian, 50% (1,508) were African-American, and  
15 0.7% (22) were Hispanic; in Winnebago County, 6,848 students  
16 were suspended; of this number, 36% (2,476) were Caucasian, 47%  
17 (3,210) were African-American, and 13% (873) were Hispanic; and  
18 4,274 students were suspended in Peoria County; within Peoria  
19 County, Caucasian students made up 25% (1,059) of those  
20 suspended, while African-American students made up 71% (3,056)  
21 of those suspended and Hispanic students made up 2% (101) of  
22 those suspended; and

1           WHEREAS, The total number of truant students statewide for  
2 the 2006-2007 school year was 392,058; the number of truant  
3 students in the Chicago Public Schools was 71,789; the total  
4 number of truancies within the Townships was 13,270; in  
5 downstate Illinois, Champaign County had 6,595 truant  
6 students, Peoria County had 8,918 truant students, Winnebago  
7 County had 25,032 truant students, and Sangamon County had  
8 7,356 truant students; and

9           WHEREAS, According to the American Civil Liberties Union's  
10 (ACLU's) report on "Best Practices for Dismantling the School  
11 to Prison Pipeline", students who are suspended or expelled are  
12 far more likely than other students to drop out of school, and  
13 these students are 3 times more likely to be incarcerated than  
14 their peers; and

15           WHEREAS, In May 2003, The Illinois African-American Family  
16 Commission interviewed 119 detainees at Cook County Jail; of  
17 the detainees, 61% were male, 39% were female, 82% were between  
18 the ages of 17 and 29, 14% were between the ages of 30 and 39,  
19 4% were between the ages of 40 and 49, 78% were Black, 12% were  
20 Hispanic, 7% were White, and 3% were Other; the results from  
21 that study showed that most of those interviewed had low levels  
22 of education; indeed, 10% reported that they had dropped out of  
23 elementary school, 69% reported that they had dropped out of  
24 high school, 20% had received a high school diploma, and 1% had

1 graduated from college; therefore, be it

2           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
3 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE  
4 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that there is created the School  
5 Success Task Force, consisting of the following members:

6           (1) one member appointed by the President of the  
7 Senate;

8           (2) one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
9 Senate;

10           (3) one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
11 Representatives;

12           (4) one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
13 House of Representatives;

14           (5) one member of the Governor's staff, appointed by  
15 the Governor;

16           (6) one member appointed by the Joint Chair of the  
17 Illinois Legislative Black Caucus;

18           (7) one member appointed by the Joint Chair of the  
19 Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus;

20           (8) one member from each of the following State  
21 agencies and commissions appointed by their respective  
22 director or secretary:

23           (A) the Department of Children and Family  
24 Services;

25           (B) the Department of Human Services;

1 (C) the State Board of Education;  
2 (D) the Department of Corrections;  
3 (E) the Department of Juvenile Justice;  
4 (F) the Department of Commerce and Economic  
5 Opportunity;  
6 (G) the Board of Higher Education; and  
7 (H) the Illinois African-American Family  
8 Commission; and  
9 (9) 4 public members, including a representative from  
10 Link & Option Center, Inc., appointed by the head of Link &  
11 Option Center, Inc., and the 3 remaining public members  
12 appointed by the Governor and representing the interests of  
13 child welfare advocates, education personnel,  
14 community-based organizations, faith-based institutions,  
15 criminal justice advocates, parents, and students; and be  
16 it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall meet initially at the  
18 call of the Speaker and the President and that members of the  
19 Task Force shall select a chairperson at that initial meeting;  
20 and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education shall provide  
22 staff and administrative support to the Task Force; and be it  
23 further

1           RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall examine issues and make  
2 recommendations related to current State Board of Education  
3 policies regarding suspensions, expulsions, and truancies,  
4 including without limitation the following:

5           (1) studying how current State Board policies impact  
6 student's statewide;

7           (2) studying how school districts create, interpret,  
8 and administer their own disciplinary policies;

9           (3) hearing testimony from school officials, parents,  
10 students, and community-based providers on the effects of  
11 suspension and expulsion policies; and

12           (4) studying annual reports on the number of children  
13 who reenroll in school after being suspended and expelled,  
14 by age, race, and education level; and be it further

15           RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall identify different  
16 strategies and approaches to help educators work effectively  
17 with the families of students of color, promote professional  
18 development and other learning opportunities that will equip  
19 school personnel with the skills and knowledge necessary to  
20 reduce factors that often contribute to suspensions,  
21 expulsions, and truancies, and support community-based  
22 organizations and parents in their ongoing efforts to encourage  
23 youths to adopt and practice positive social behaviors that  
24 will allow them to be successful in school and in their  
25 communities; and be it

1           RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall hold public hearings in  
2 every legislative district it deems necessary and shall report  
3 its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly before  
4 December 31, 2010; and be it further

5           RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
6 delivered to the Governor, the Department of Children and  
7 Family Services, the Department of Human Services, the State  
8 Board of Education, the Department of Corrections, the  
9 Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Commerce and  
10 Economic Opportunity, the Board of Higher Education, the  
11 Illinois African-American Family Commission, and Link & Option  
12 Center, Inc.