



# Reclaiming the Future for Our Sons and Daughters

## Reducing Georgia's School Suspensions and Expulsion Rates as a School Safety and Crime Prevention Strategy

### Origin

At the 2017 National Convention of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, the Marietta-Roswell Alumnae Chapter (MRAC) was successful in having its resolution, Preparing Black Males for Educational Success: Reducing the High Rates of School Expulsion and Suspensions of Black Males in Southern States, adopted by the national organization. With that action, MRAC embarked on the task of learning the magnitude of the issues that disrupt the educational process and place many Black children in the “school-to-prison pipeline.” The key source document for this work is the report called “Disproportionate Impact of K-12 School Suspension and Expulsion on Black Students in Southern States” by Edward J. Smith and Shaun R. Harper, Penn Graduate School of Education, Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education (the Smith-Harper report).

### Assessment

The correlation between low educational achievement and the propensity among youth to engage in criminal activity has been well-documented in numerous academic and public policy reports. But while there seems to be consensus among policy makers, academics, law enforcement officials, parents, and various groups within the larger “community” that educational attainment can be a deterrent to criminal activity, often policies and practices at the local district and school that focus on removing students from the learning environment can seem to be in conflict with those beliefs and ideals of the larger community.

### Our Proposed Model

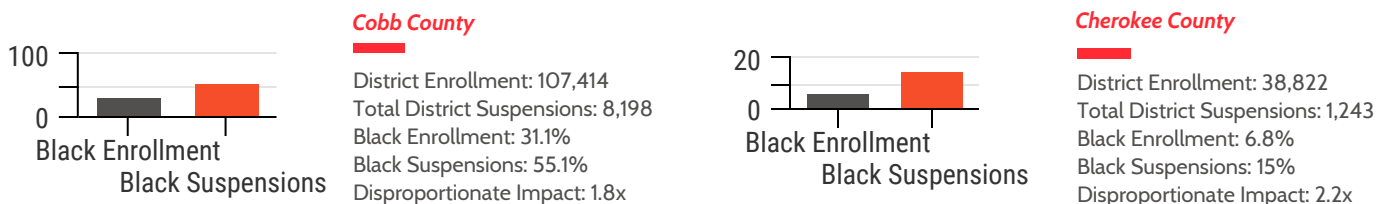
While multiple organizations and individuals are working on this complex set of issues, there appears to be an absence of conveners/facilitators dedicated to maximizing the sum of the individual efforts through coalition-building. MRAC can play that role and document the strategies and experiences for replication in other service areas.

The model will include strategies in four areas:

- Advocacy and Public Policy
- School District/School Site and Teacher Support and Accountability
- Parent Support and Community Awareness
- Student Support: In-school and In-Community

### Out-of-School Suspension Rates for Districts in MRAC's Service Area

Statewide in Georgia, 101,813 Black students were suspended from GA K-12 public schools in a single academic year (2011-12), Blacks were 37% of the student enrollment, *but comprised 67% of suspensions and 64% of expulsions.*





## The Plan

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Given the complexity of the issues contributing to the negative educational experiences of African-American students, MRAC's Social Action and Political Awareness and Involvement committees, have outlined an initial three-year work plan focused on coalition building to strengthen efforts to support students, families, teachers, and schools while reducing the disproportionality of disciplinary actions toward the goal of disrupting the "school-to-prison pipeline."

## The Goal

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The overarching goal of this work plan is to develop a model for community engagement, piloted in MRAC's service area of Cobb, Cherokee and North Fulton counties, which can be replicated in the service areas of the other metro Atlanta chapters of the sorority, and chapters throughout Georgia and the states that make up the Southern Region.

## The Impact

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The Smith-Harper report stated that "55% of all Black suspensions from US public schools occurred in 13 Southern states." Successful development and implementation of this engagement model has the potential to significantly reduce the numbers of students vulnerable to the disruption of their education due to suspensions and expulsions.

## About Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

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Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide assistance and support through established programs in local communities throughout the world. Founded on January 13, 1913 by 22 collegiate women at Howard University, the sorority is currently a sisterhood of more than 200,000 predominately Black college educated women. This includes over 900 chapters located in the United States, England, Japan, Germany, the Virgin Islands, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and the Republic of Korea.

The major programs of the sorority are based upon the organization's Five-Point Programmatic Thrust:

1. Economic Development
2. Physical and Mental Health
3. Educational Development
4. Political Awareness and Involvement
5. International Awareness and Involvement

For more information, visit our national website at [www.deltasigmatheta.org](http://www.deltasigmatheta.org).

## About Marietta-Roswell Alumnae Chapter

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The Marietta-Roswell Alumnae Chapter (MRAC) of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., is a service organization with stellar programming addressing diverse needs of the communities we serve. This includes, but is not limited to:

- College scholarships for young women totaling \$650,000
- Mentoring programs for girls ages 9-18
- A bi-annual debutante cotillion for rising juniors and seniors
- An annual economic empowerment summit
- A health fair
- Advocating for change in our society through social action initiatives

With a growing membership that exceeds 700 college-educated women, we strive to embody the core principles of Sisterhood, Scholarship, and Service. By planning and executing programs and events under the sorority's Five-Point Programmatic Thrust, MRAC makes an impact in Cobb, North Fulton and Cherokee counties.