

# Appleseed This Week

## Louisiana Appleseed Joins Coalition to Eradicate the School-to-Prison Pipeline

**June 12, 2008** - Last week **Louisiana Appleseed** joined the **Louisiana School to Prison Reform Coalition**, a group committed to pursuing systemic legislative and policy changes to curtail the thousands of Louisiana youth who end up in the "school-to-prison pipeline," which is described as various disciplinary policies that push children out of school and hasten their entry into the juvenile, and eventually the criminal, justice system, where prison is the end of the road.

The coalition, comprised of Louisiana Appleseed, the **Southern Poverty Law Center**, the **Southern Disability Law Center** and the **Advocacy Center**, among others, is focusing on the implementation of Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) and school disciplinary proceedings. PBIS is a systems approach to preventing and responding to school and classroom discipline problems, promoting positive behaviors in students. All students in a school are accountable with support to behave in ways that positively affect them personally, academically, socially and from a health perspective.

The Louisiana legislature has officially recognized the benefits of having a disciplinary code that encourages positive behavior, and brings students, teachers and parents into the process of encouraging such behavior. The legislature requires that each school district approve a PBIS plan. A typical PBIS states the behaviors the district wants to encourage, such as treating others with respect and solving conflicts in a constructive manner, as well as outlines the corresponding methods that teachers, administrators, students and parents use to that end. However, although legislation stipulates that schools must approve a plan, it does not require the schools to implement the plan.

"Building on Appleseed's expertise in education and the school-to-prison reform movement, Louisiana Appleseed looks forward to working with our collaborative partners and other stakeholders to ensure Louisiana schools implement positive behavioral intervention, and support plans to replace the some of the ineffective and punitive zero tolerance policies in place today," said **Allison Berger Tiller**, Appleseed's Gulf Coast Recovery Project Director.

Other Appleseed Centers have examined the school- to-prison pipeline, including **Texas Appleseed**, which began to tackle it last year. Their report found that a Texas law aimed at cracking down on serious discipline problems was possibly fueling the school- to-prison pipeline, in which thousands of children were sent to alternative disciplinary programs, often for minor infractions. Many schools have adopted a zero-tolerance approach to even the smallest violations. In Louisiana, this policy is outlined in Section 416, which the Louisiana School to Prison Reform Coalition will examine in the upcoming months.

**For more information on Appleseed, visit [www.appleseednetwork.org](http://www.appleseednetwork.org). To support the work of Appleseed, donate [here](#).**

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