We didn’t know what to expect for the 2017-2018 school year. After years of advocacy, state law finally changed, ending zero tolerance and requiring districts to at least consider alternatives to removal.

We got to work creating implementation tools (www.studentadvocacycenter.org/policy/rethink), updating training materials and prepping staff and volunteer advocates for this new approach. We were ready and cautiously hopeful.

And then we waited.

Our Helpline was hopping, because the Michigan Department of Education listed us as a resource in an online toolkit. But there weren’t many expulsion hearings that required our help initially. Were we still needed? Should we shift our focus?

Not so fast.

Before long, our advocates were back at hearings, working on creative solutions. We had a few early successes, including a student who received a 30-day suspension (instead of a 180-day expulsion) for fighting.

Some districts told us flat out they would not follow the law. Parents called us devastated and angry that their districts were still suspending without real consideration of alternatives. And then we saw a rise in quiet, informal removals, where students with significant needs were pushed into virtual settings.

So here we are. The needs remain. And thanks to the support from so many like you, we are prepared to respond to the calls from desperate families, who believe education is a right and their child needs it to claim a brighter future.

SAC hasn’t just changed because of the new laws. We have been adapting to become a stronger, more effective organization. When I look back at the last 5 years, I am so proud. Please check out the next page to see the impact of your faithful support.

We couldn’t have done this without you and we can’t continue without your support. Thank you.

Peri Stone-Palmquist
5-YEAR SNAPSHOT

In the past 5 years, we have grown from two offices to three, added a core of highly skilled volunteer advocates, created a sustainable helpline model and centralized intake system, increased staffing 79% and created a true continuum of services to assist students. We have doubled the number served and more than doubled our unrestricted revenue.

Impact

STUDENTS IMPROVE DISCIPLINE RECORDS

82% of advocacy cases improve discipline
7% maintain

STUDENTS ATTEND MORE SCHOOL

60% advocacy cases increase attendance
23% maintain

STUDENTS PASS CLASSES

80% advocacy cases pass classes
We first met Jeremy in January of his 9th grade year. He had been denied enrollment and unable to attend even one day of school. Jeremy had lived in the same district his whole life. He had been retained twice in elementary school and voluntarily attended a virtual school for parts of 7th and 8th grades. Jeremy knew he wanted more support for high school, so his father completed online enrollment for the local high school in August and called repeatedly about next steps.

The calls were not returned, and Jeremy’s dad, who has struggled with homelessness and health challenges, didn’t know what to do.

Finally, in November, the family had an appointment to provide proof of residency. A week later, they were told they would have to meet with the superintendent and Jeremy’s probation officer. This meeting was unexpectedly cancelled with no explanation. Jeremy’s dad kept trying to reschedule. Nothing.

In January, the family was told they needed a special meeting due to discipline issues, but Jeremy has never had school discipline issues. That’s when his dad called the Student Advocacy Center (SAC).

We finally had a meeting with the school in February, but the reasons Jeremy wasn’t allowed to attend kept changing. Now, he was too old. SAC persisted, pointing to laws that required the district to enroll him immediately.

Our persistence paid off. The following Monday, Jeremy was given a tour and schedule. He quickly settled into the rhythm of the school day. By early March, the reports from his teachers were glowing. SAC checked in weekly and brought him to our office for credit recovery, to earn the credits he missed while being denied enrollment.

Jeremy began to struggle with attendance as he juggled school and helping with his dad’s medical care. We agreed he needed more intensive support, and over the summer of 2016, he joined our Check and Connect mentoring program, an evidence-based dropout prevention program.

His mentor, Anell, recalls things being rocky for awhile. Jeremy first moved in with his mom, and then into his own apartment, supporting himself with a dish cleaning job. Jeremy would fall asleep in class and miss school.

Eventually, Jeremy moved back with his dad and his school attendance quickly improved.

Anell helped Jeremy feel more motivated in school, he says. He worked harder, completing extra classes. He had some amazing teachers as well. Ultimately, he was able to graduate a year early, astonishing us all with his work ethic and persistence.
Geographic Scope

Student Rights Helpline: Statewide
Education Advocacy: Staff in Wayne, Washtenaw & Jackson Volunteers in southeast Michigan
Check & Connect: Ypsilanti & Detroit
Youth Action Michigan: Detroit, Ypsilanti & Jackson

RED
Counties served during both the 2016-2017 & 2017-2018 School Years

ORANGE
Counties served during the 2017-2018 School Year Only

YELLOW
Counties served during the 2016-2017 School Year Only
THE TEAM

STAFF

Peri Stone-Palmquist, Executive Director
Danielle Flint, Assistant Director
Anell Eccleston, Programs Manager
Amy Wilhelm, Programs Manager

Dee Blair, Advocate
Jacorey Brown, Mentor*
Al Correa, Mentor*
Kristina Cosgrove, Mentor
Hakim Crampton, Adult Ally
Julia Gilbert, Accountant
Jordan Jones, Office Coordinator
Kathleen Kosobud, Advocate
Kat Layton, Mentor*
Ben Murphy-Smith, Advocate*
Jill Perticone, Family Advocate
Jenna Pickman, Advocate*
Shakel Raiford, Advocate
Tina Woods, Advocate

Loki, Staff Dog & Resident Cuddler

* Joined our team after July 1, 2018

2017-2018 BOARD

Peri Stone-Palmquist, Executive Director
Faye Askew-King, Board Chair
Francisco Sánchez, Vice-Chair
Craig Hernandez, Treasurer
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Nakisha Chaney
Robyn Cook, Youth Member
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Amy Frontier
Joel Gechter
Karey Henderson
Katie Hoener
Jimmie Jones
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Cindy Maritato Shick
Branden Magee, Youth Member
Shanita Scott
Rossi Ray-Taylor
Dwight Wilson
Ruth Zweifler

Board Member Emeritus
James Hawkins and Calvin Williams

VOLUNTEER HOURS + VALUE

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<th>Intern</th>
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TONYA KNEFF-CHANG
PhD candidate in Educational Foundations and Policy, Executive Board Member and Volunteer Advocate for SAC’s Student Rights Project

“Disrupting, and eventually dismantling, the school-to-prison pipeline is crucial work and will take a collective effort. SAC is an organization that works with everyone - students, parents, principals, teachers - and takes a restorative justice approach to relationship building and policy making. We take on one case at a time, and for me, it is worth every letter, phone call, conversation, and amount of research to help a child be successful in school. Honestly, there are times when this work is frustrating, but I accept such challenges as part of the work of fighting injustice. Students deserve quality learning opportunities and I stand with SAC as we work with families, schools, districts, communities, and policy makers to defend the right to education.”

RICHARD KING
Retired, College of Business, EMU Volunteer, Kappa Alpha Psi Organized car wash fundraiser for SAC with Kappa

“The young men and adult advisors (at the Kappa Leadership Development League) felt strongly that the work SAC does to help keep kids in school (especially young black men) when they are often unfairly suspended or even expelled was a program that served a great purpose and one in which the young men readily identified with and could eagerly support.

Kappa League is a leadership training and mentorship program for primarily African-American High School age males. SAC presented to the young men, who decided to have a carwash to support our work ending the school to prison pipeline.”
As a legal aid lawyer, I see how whole families are disrupted by a conflict between a student and their school system, especially when that conflict involves a suspension or expulsion. I also see how often school discipline systems seem overwhelming to families - and how these systems can be stacked against students, especially low-income and minority students. I appreciate how connected the Student Advocacy Center is to low-income families; how it is seen as an advocate and support by families. I also appreciate the effectiveness of SAC's advocacy in suspension and expulsion cases. It is really important to me that our community reach out to children who are struggling in the school system. Our community is stronger in the long run if we engage with these students and understand and meet their needs - than it is if we stigmatize children and exclude them from accessing critical resources, like a public education.

I am a teacher and I have seen many cases where schools go for the 'easiest fix' and don't have student needs front and center where they need to be. The SAC keeps schools on the straight and narrow and is an all-important advocate and watchdog that keeps student needs front and center 24/7. This is the only organization that does this kind of advocacy work with the school systems and state agencies.

Teacher, SAC Supporter who first learned about SAC through a colleague and became more involved after attending "Telling Tales"
Funders 2017-2018

Annual Event Support
Salutatorian:
Joan Binkow, Michigan Medicine

Honor Roll Sponsors:

Rising Scholar:

Pep Squad Sponsors:

Monthly Givers
A special thank you to our monthly donors who have committed to regular and ongoing support: Jessica “Decky” Alexander and Bruce Kutinsky, Faye Askew-King & Richard King, Nakisha Chaney, Anonymous, Carrie and Greg Hammerman, Katie Hoener, Marjorie Kauth-Karjala, Jeralyn Lowe, Francisco Sanchez, Cynthia Maritato Shick, Peri and Matt Stone-Palmquist, Dwight Wilson, Gail Wolkoff, Ruth and Andy Zweifler
Supporters

Launch Giving Circle
Thank you to our young professionals and college students who are committed to fighting the school-to-prison pipeline and are “launching” our community’s students on a path to learning!
Jimmie Jones

Legacy Society
We are thankful for our Legacy Society who include SAC in their Will or Charitable Trust!
Peri and Matt Stone-Palmquist

Special thanks to these other supporters:
Patti Aaron, Cindy Strang, Esther Floyd, Daniel and Margaret Francis, Adrienne Kaplan, Olivia Maynard and Olaf Karlstrom, Mike Merrick and Catherine McClary, Dr. Richard Tolman and Naomi Woloshin, Mark Wallace, Ambassador Ronald and Ms. Eileen Weiser, and The Wellman Family

And many thanks to everyone who supports our work!

Financial Snapshot

Revenue

Grants $1,452,023
Contributions $75,112
Special Events $34,553
Fees for Advocacy $2,131
Total $1,563,819

Expenses

Programs $552,714
Management $56,827
Fundraising $25,849
Total $635,390

Note: The difference between revenue and expenses is due to the timing of grants.