

**Subject:** Volunteers @ work for Effective Student Discipline

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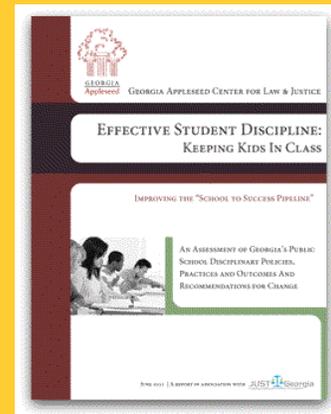
A News Update of the Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice,  
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## **VOLUNTEERS @ WORK for EFFECTIVE STUDENT DISCIPLINE that KEEPS KIDS IN CLASS**

Hundreds of law firm volunteers assisted in stakeholder interviews for the ***Effective Student Discipline: Keeping Kids in Class*** report issued by Georgia Appleseed in June. The first-hand input of those 'on the ground' rounded out the statistical data analysis of Georgia public school discipline policy and gave valuable perspective to how policy actually translated into practice. **Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP** took the volunteer lead, with Nelson Mullins Partner (and Georgia Appleseed Board Member) **Taylor Daly, Esq.** heading the firm's twenty-six member pro bono team responsible for coordinating, collecting and collating the interviews. Volunteers met with district superintendents, teachers, counselors, resource officers and many more.



In reflecting upon the experience, Taylor noted that a common thread among the Nelson Mullins volunteers was that they themselves are products of public schools and share a commitment to assist children, teachers and administrators achieve a quality experience in public school that will enable children to become contributing citizens. "We are all about

that", Taylor observed. She went on, "Irrespective of where a school system fell on the compendium of school discipline practice, across the board I was so impressed by educators' commitment and genuine concern to help students develop and be successful."



Taylor Daly, Esq.

**Kathy Solley, Esq.** is also a partner at Nelson Mullins and a long-time student leadership volunteer and advocate. She conducted interviews in Dawson County. Kathy noted, "I was very impressed with the approach in their alternative schools, where they were seeking to change student attitudes and behavior in order to accomplish school work. Their approach was to the whole child, and to my mind, the educators' dedication and excitement increased the chances for success." She further reflected, "There is a limit to how much rules alone can work; one needs good teachers and administrators to get rules to work. Effecting

change happens person by person. If we are able to help a few people, all will benefit; good apples have more influence than bad apples."

So how do Taylor and her colleagues' volunteer efforts help effect change? Taylor suggests, "One outcome is to start a dialogue that really looks at what the *Effective Student Discipline* report found and allows the school systems to step back, look closely at the findings and be more informed. For example, what are the real causes behind high out-of-school suspensions? What are the correlations to culture, learning, and family issues? We can bring resources to bear to improve the situation."

Kathy Solley, Esq.

She concluded, "We are a group of citizens interested in helping schools and being supportive of their goals to help each student be the best they can be. This is not criticism time. It is important for us to make a positive statement."

Haven't read the report yet? Click here to access [\*\*Effective Student Discipline: Keeping Kids in Class\*\*](#), including the *Executive Summary*.

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