SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN A MID-ATLANTIC INNER-RING SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY

by

Keyona L. Powell
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Dedication

First and foremost, this dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my daughter Emeriah. In the short time you were here you changed my life, thank you for giving me strength that I didn't know existed. I love you more than words can express. Until we meet again, rest in heaven my angel.

This dissertation is also dedicated to those who have provided me with unconditional support during this journey. To my parents, thank you all for instilling in me the importance of an education and the mindset that I can accomplish any goal I wish to achieve. To my mother, Celeste, thank you for enduring along with me and for being a consistent source of strength throughout this journey. No words can describe how grateful I am for the sacrifices you have made for me. Thank you for your unconditional love and support, including coming in town to help with laundry, cooking, and entertaining Willow so I could research and write. To my father, Kelvin, thank you for being a dad and friend. Thank you for motivating me and instilling in me a firm work ethic and unwavering self-confidence. To my Mama Jill, thank you for being a consistent source of strength throughout this journey. Thank you for your steadfast love, prayers, and assurance that my sacrifices will be worthwhile. To my Pappa Robert, thank you for your love, positivity, and your confidence in my ability to succeed in all things. To my PaPa Daddy, thank you for your love, wisdom, support, and encouragement in all I do. To my brothers, Kelvin, Kyland, and Robert, thank you for loving and supporting me. To my cousin (and best friend) Sandte, thank you for always being available and present for me no matter how busy we were or far we were apart. To my grandma, Earlene, I wish you were here to celebrate this milestone, but I know you are watching me and smiling down from heaven. For my friends Qiana, Kate, Candace, Pam, and Che', thank you for always encouraging me when times were stressful and overwhelming. I have encountered some trials on this journey and though it all you were there cheering me on.

Last, for my nieces, nephews, and children to come, it is my desire that this work serves as an example that if you work hard… you can accomplish anything. The sky is the limit!

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

Alternative Transformation……………………………………………………	AT
American Civil Liberties Union……………………….……………………	ACLU
American Psychological Association …………………………..…………..	APA
American School Counselor Association…………………………………	ASCA
Behavior Intervention Plan……………………………………………..	BIP
Civil Rights Data Collection………………………………………………	CRDC
Computer Assisted Qualitative Analysis Software……………………….	CAQDAS
Digital Learning Campus…………………………………………………	DLC
Fast Response Survey System……………………………………………	FRSS
Federal Office of Civil Rights…………………………………………...	OCR
Function Behavioral Assessment………………………………………..	FBA
Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990…………………………………..	GFSZA
Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994………………………………………….	GDSA
Individual Education Plan………………………………………………	IEP
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act……………………………….	IDEA
In-School Suspension……………………………………………………	ISS
Jefferson County Public School District………………………………….	JCPS
Multi-Tired Systems and Supports……………………………………..	MTSS
National Center for Education Statistics…………………………………	NCES
National Coalition to Abolish Corporal Punishment in Schools……………	NCACPS
Office Discipline Referral……………………………………………..	ODR
Office of Civil Rights ………………………………………………....	OCR
Out of School Suspension ………………………………………………	OSS
Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports……………………………	PBIS
Response to Intervention………………………………………………	RTI
Restorative Practices……………………………………………………	RP
School-Based Juvenile Court Referral……………………………………	SBJCR
School-Wide Positive Behavior Support…………………………………	SWPBS
Teaching Empowerment Leading & Learning……………………………	TELL
National Center for Education Statistics………………………………..	NCES
University of California Los Angeles…………………………………..	UCLA
U.S. Department of Education …………………………………………	USDOE

Abstract

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN A MID-ATLANTIC INNER-RING SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY

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George Mason University, 2017

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School disciplinary policies and practices are essential to public school systems throughout the United States. However, approximately 40 years of research has consistently demonstrated that school discipline policies and practices are often punitive, racially disproportionate, and have led to a host of negative outcomes for students, especially students of color. As a result, educators are focusing on employing interventions that may be used to reduce punitive discipline practices and improve student behaviors in school. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was a) to explore the lived experiences of educational leaders who serve as high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators as they relate to school discipline, b) to gain a detailed understanding of the discipline policies and practices processes at a high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district, and c) to interrogate the disparate impact of disciplinary policies and practices,

particularly on Black males. To describe, analyze, and provide an interpretation of the current school discipline policies and practices at one high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district the following research questions were investigated: 1) What is happening at a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban high school related to school discipline? 2) How do high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators describe school discipline policies and practices at Woodland High School? 3) In what ways do the school leadership, school discipline policies and procedures, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions provide insight into school discipline at Woodland High? Data was collected from documents and semi-structured interviews with sixteen participants who were a combination of counselors and administrators. Wolcott's (1994) process for analysis of qualitative research was applied through description, analysis and interpretation of the data. Framed by racial and justice literatures and lenses, the findings revealed: a) implementation of restorative practices, b) need for classroom management and cultural competency training for teachers, c) minimal teaching of behavioral expectations, and d) racially disproportionate discipline. Hence, this study recommends emphasis dedicated to: 1) teaching expectations; 2) providing classroom management and cultural competency training for teachers; 3) revamping data collection and reporting; and 4) fostering social justice leadership.

Chapter One: Introduction

Administrators and educators are commonly responsible for "creating an environment within the school where students experience a sense of belonging, including feeling safe and accepted" (Daly, Buchanan, Dasch, Eichen, & Lenhart, 2010, p. 18). Therefore, examining obstacles encountered as it relates to school safety is a major responsibility for school stakeholders. Hence, to assist stakeholders with the responsibility of keeping schools safe and managing student behaviors, school discipline policies and practices have become essential to the functionality of schools in the United States. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that school discipline policies and practices are not solely a product of the education system; they are also a product of the legislative and policy history of the country.

It is a fact that students may participate in unsafe and disruptive behaviors, which is a critical issue in schools (Bullock, Rielly, & Donahue, 1983; Dodge, 2011; Evans & Evans, 1985; Hranitz & Eddowes, 1990). Some of the most extreme examples are included in the nation's long history of school shootings (see Table 1). Specifically, from 1760 until 2010, there were more than 310 documented shootings on school property (Duplechain & Morris, 2014). Specific examples such as the tragedies at Sandy Hook

Elementary School[1], Columbine High School[2] and Virginia Tech[3] are instances of the

disturbing outcomes school violence has on schools and their communities.

Table 1

Reported School Shootings in the United States

Period of Time	Total Number of School Shootings
1760 - 1900 (140 year period)	25
1900 - 1930 (30 year period)	39
1930 - 1960 (30 year period)	45
1960 - 1990 (30 year period)	53
1990 — 2014 (24 year period)**	190

Note. These data were collected from various newspaper reports.
** Last count was October 24, 2014.
SOURCE: Duplechain, R., & Morris, R. (2014). School violence: Reported school shootings and making schools safer. *Education*, *135*(2), 145-150.

As a result, in acknowledgment of the gun violence impacting our nation's

schools, the federal government took steps to make our nation's schools safer from gun

violence by adopting: 1) The Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990 (GFSZA)[4]; and 2) The

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[1] On December 14, 2012, a lone gunman killed 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut before committing suicide.

[2] On April 20, 1999, two student gunmen killed 12 students and a teacher at a high school near Denver, Colorado before committing suicide.

[3] On April 16, 2007, a lone student gunman killed 32 people, mostly students, at Virginia Tech before committing suicide.

[4] The 1990 act, part of Title XVII of the Crime Control Act of 1990, made it illegal to possess a firearm in a place that one knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, is a school zone. The GFSZA defines "school

Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (GFSA). In 1990, congress enacted the GFSZA in response to the growing epidemic of weapons at or near schools. In 1994, the federal government mandated zero tolerance policies nationally when President Bill Clinton signed the Gun-Free Schools Act into law, requiring a one-year calendar expulsion for possession of firearms on any school campus and automatic referral to the criminal justice system and consideration that state law must allow for administrators and local school districts to modify expulsions on a case-by-case basis (Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994; Skiba, 2000; Skiba, & Losen, 2016). GFSZA applies to any person possessing a firearm in school zones; however, the GFSA places a specific focus on student behavior and penalizes students in an attempt to discourage them from bringing firearms or possessing them at school. Accordingly, these zero tolerance policies are practiced in schools throughout the United States as a strategy calling "for the application of predetermined consequences, most often severe and punitive in nature, regardless of the seriousness of behavior, extenuating circumstances, or situational context" (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008, p. 852). Yet, although the federal demand for mandatory expulsion was limited to specific firearms, and allowed for some discretion in application of the policy, zero tolerance policies are presently being enforced beyond its intended purpose in school systems across the United States (Civil Rights Project, 2000).

This chapter describes the background of the problem as it relates to school discipline policies and practices, provides a statement of the problem, and outlines the

zone" as: 1) in, or on the grounds of, a public, parochial or private school; or 2) within a distance of 1,000 feet from the grounds of a public, parochial or private school.

study's purpose, research questions, significance, and theoretical perspective guiding the study. As well, the research site is described, and a summary of methods are presented followed by the research limitations and delimitations. The researcher role and positionality is explained, and the chapter concludes with a dissertation overview and the definitions of key terms are provided.

Background of the Problem

School officials' overuse of punitive disciplinary policies and practices has been disproportionally affecting students, especially Black males across the United States consistently for decades (Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Civil Rights Discipline Collection, 2012; Skiba et al., 2011). In addition, these disciplinary policies and practices have created a link between students who misbehave in school and the criminal justice system since the Gun-Free Schools Act mandated zero tolerance policies nationally in 1994 (Krezmien, Leone, & Wilson, 2014; Losen & Martinez, 2013). Zero tolerance policies, defined by the U. S. Department of Education (2011) as policies that mandate predetermined consequences or punishments for specific offenses, were originally developed as a tool for drug and gun enforcement. Yet, despite the legislative intent to create safer schools, the federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 instead became a facilitator for an era of severe punishment for minor offenses.

According to The Civil Rights Project Report[5] (2000), following the federal mandate for zero tolerance in schools, many states later extended these policies to include

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[5] *Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline*, is the culmination of the shared efforts of The Civil Rights Project (CRP) at Harvard University and the Advancement Project (AP). This is the first comprehensive national report to scrutinize the impact that the Zero Tolerance approach to discipline, currently being used in public schools, is having on American

other weapons and possession or use of drugs or alcohol. However, as research on zero tolerance continued, school disciplinary data at both the district (Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997; Skiba, 2000) and national (Heaviside et al., 1998; Skiba, 2000) levels revealed that the serious infractions that are the primary target of zero tolerance (e.g., drugs, weapons, gangs) occur relatively infrequently; and, the most frequent disciplinary infractions schools struggle with are minor disruptive behaviors such as tardiness, class absence, disrespect, and noncompliance (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Civil Rights Project Report, 2000; Skiba, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

School discipline is a central element in creating safe learning environments. But, the variation of school board policies and federal and state regulations have increased the risk of students being suspended, expelled and even arrested at school (Nocella, Parmar, & Stovall, 2014). As it relates to zero tolerance policies, school districts may or may not acknowledge utilizing zero tolerance, but the over-utilization of exclusion through suspension and expulsion has been and still is exceedingly problematic in schools throughout the nation (The Civil Rights Project, 2000). When students are removed from the learning environment for any reason, they are not receiving instruction or opportunity for education, which jeopardizes long-term success rates among students (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). What's more, in some cases, exclusionary school discipline is utilized regardless of the severity of the infraction. Also troubling is the growing amount of research showing that America's students of color, especially Black

children. The report illustrates that Zero Tolerance is unfair, is contrary to the developmental needs of children, denies children educational opportunities, and often results in the criminalization of children.

males, are being excluded from educational settings at a much higher rate than their peers (e.g., Children's Defense Fund. 1975; Eitle & Eitle, 2004; Fenning & Rose, 2007; Raffaele Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002).

Educational research recurrently illustrates that Black students as compared to their White peers receive harsher consequences for similar degrees of misbehavior (Skiba et al., 2013); are more likely to be punished for first-time infractions (Rural Policy Matters, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2014); and, are more likely to be punished harshly for non-observable or subjective infractions like disrespect, noise, and disturbing the schools environment (Marchbanks et al., 2013; Skiba et al., 2013; Schollenberger, 2013). However, pivotal research from the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at UCLA's Civil Rights Project (2013) and the Equity Project at Indiana University researchers Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, and Pollock (2014), among others, found that there are no racially significant differences in behavior among students. For example, one study that controlled for teacher ratings of behavior and self- reports from a large sample of high school students validated that Black students were suspended more harshly than others (Finn & Servoss, 2015). This finding is similar to other studies further illustrated in Chapter Two which also convey that racial disparities are most pronounced for students of color.

Frankly, school discipline policies and practices have created multiple problems in schools across the nation. Specifically, school discipline policies and practices are being punitively and subjectively implemented. School discipline policies and practices are increasing the risk of students being suspended, expelled, and arrested at school. As

well, students of color, mainly Black students, are being disciplined at disproportionate rates as compared to their peers. Disciplinary consequences have created a link between students and the juvenile justice system. And, the distinctive disproportionate representation of Black students in the juvenile system is contributing to the mass incarceration of Black people (Bishop, 2005; Engen, Steen, & Bridges, 2002; Lauritsen, 2005). Additionally, as it relates to the juvenile justice system, though the education system alone cannot be identified as the sole cause for the overrepresentation of Black males in the criminal justice system, the outcomes associated with school systems' punitive discipline responses and failure to equitably serve particular student populations raises questions of bias and contributes heavily to the phenomenon referred to as the "school to prison pipeline". Hence, there is an urgent need for educators and researchers to understand how school disciplinary practices and policies are being implemented, how they impact the students and the stakeholders when addressing student behavior, and how to resolve the problems related to school discipline.

Purpose of the Study

Research on school discipline explicitly reports the negative outcomes associated with utilizing exclusionary school discipline practices, yet school administrators continue to suspend students at appalling rates (USDOE, 2012). And, although school discipline policies and practices are instrumental in creating safe school environments, there is concern regarding how school leaders address student behavior and the problems using these policies and practices. In light of the many and varied concerns that stem from school discipline, the purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was a) to explore

the lived experiences of educational leaders who serve as high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators as they relate to school discipline, b) to gain a detailed understanding of the discipline policies and practices processes at a high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district, and c) to interrogate the disparate impact of disciplinary policies and practices, particularly on Black males. The narratives of the identified school leaders, and the analysis of public documents related to discipline in the district, provide the wisdom and insight missing from the current discourse concerning the impacts of school discipline as it relates to discipline policies and practices.

Research Questions

To describe, analyze, and provide an interpretation of the current school discipline policies and practices at one high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district the following research questions were investigated:

Central Question:

What is happening at a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban high school related to school discipline?

Sub-questions:

1. How do high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators describe school discipline policies and practices at Woodland High School?

2. In what ways do the school leadership, school discipline policies and procedures, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions provide insight into school discipline at Woodland High?

Significance of the Study

Educators across the nation are acknowledging the problems associated with exclusionary discipline and making attempts to move away from the exclusionary discipline practices which result in suspension and expulsion. As well, given the unfavorable outcomes related to school discipline plaguing schools across the nation and the historical prevalence of this issue coupled with the magnitude of impact it has on the lives of Black students in the public schools, this study is of major significance and an examination of school discipline policies and practices is warranted. More specifically, it is important to understand how school district leaders describe their experiences and interpret school discipline policies and practices, new and old.

The mission of continuous improvement should be on the minds of all educational leaders since they are responsible for the growth of schools. Irby and Thomas (2013) recognize the increasing pressure school leaders are under to secure their school buildings and enact district level policies that involve security, school police, and local law enforcement. However, they also urge the field to reconsider the detrimental effects of an increased reliance on exclusionary discipline, law enforcement, and policing tactics – being that these practices strengthen the school-to prison pipeline and contribute to the criminalization of students, particularly children of color. Accordingly, it is important to

understand how the roles of school leaders impact outcomes for students as it relates to discipline.

Scholars have described a central role of the school leader as an advocate for marginalized students (Khalifa, 2013; Normore, Rodriguez, & Wynne, 2007; Siddle Walker, 2005; Theoharis, 2007). Hence, the roles school leaders, specifically the school counselors, building administrators, and central office administrators, play and the way in which they view their roles can influence and impact how they respond to matters related to school discipline. With heightened focus on ensuring equity for all students it is necessary for leaders to rethink their roles in schools (Dollarhide, Gibson, & Saginak, 2008). Accordingly, this study: a) contributes to the growing research related to school discipline; b) provides an understanding of the leadership roles of school counselors, building administrators, and central office administrators as it relates to school discipline policies and practices; c) explains how school leadership, school discipline policies and procedures, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions may impact schools; and d) provides recommendations to assists school leaders and leadership teams in implementing disciplinary reform and understanding how they can create a more consistent, equitable, and rewarding future for all students.

Theoretical Framework

Constructivist and interpretive approaches to research subscribe to the notion that all social reality is constructed, created, or modified by all the participants involved. In agreement with this ideology, I used a constructivist paradigm to examine school discipline policies and practices at one Mid-Atlantic inner ring suburban school district.

More specifically, the theoretical perspective for this study employs racial and justice literatures and lenses in order to understand racial disproportionalities that exist in school discipline. Accordingly, the leadership frameworks significant to this study are based on social justice leadership (Kemp-Graham, 2015; Marshall & Oliva, 2010; Rivera-McCutchen, 2014; Theoharis, 2007) and Cavanagh's (2009a) restorative practices models.

The concept of social justice school leadership has emerged within the last two decades (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009) in response to the shifting demographics of society, increased achievement gaps of underserved populations and accountability pressures, and high stakes testing. For instance, Theoharis (2007) defines social justice leadership to mean that the "principals make issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation and other historically and currently marginalizes conditions in the US central to their advocacy, leadership, practice, and vision" (p. 223). Furthermore, although researchers define social justice education leadership in various ways, they consistently agree that social justice leadership is demonstrated through ongoing actions, skills, habits of mind and competencies that are continually being created, questioned and refined and social justice school leaders embrace social justice leadership to ensure the academic success of school children, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual orientation, age, language, religion or socioeconomic status (Brown, 2004; Capper & Young, 2014; DeMatthews, & Mawhinney, 2014; Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Theoharis, 2007).

Social justice theorists have inferred that school leaders cannot be effective if they are not knowledgeable about their own biases of persons who look different from them as well are not knowledgeable about and understand the impact of oppression and marginalization of peoples in the United States (Kemp-Graham, 2015). Thus, given the expanding diverse school population and the homogeneity of school leaders charged with providing all students with equal access to a high quality education, social justice school leaders are needed to serve as activists in schools in order to create and sustain schools that will support equal access to a quality education free from lowered expectations and marginalization for all students (Kemp-Graham, 2015; Turhan, 2010). Similar to tenets of social justice leadership, Cavanagh's (2009a) theoretical framework of restorative justice also supports the development of school leaders to assist student needs.

Cavanagh (2009b) stressed that Western culture values fail to address the needs of people who feel powerless and marginalized. And, as a result, school systems for managing behavior are primarily based on adversarial processes, opposed to the development of healing relationships (Morgan, 2011). The concept of restorative justice now used as a school framework for addressing discipline, originated within the legal system, contrasting the retributive legal system with a restorative alternative (Zehr, 1995). Restorative justice involves probing beyond retribution to discover deeper solutions to heal damaged relationships. Healing the harm to relationships is critical to respond to any behavior that interferes with building or maintaining the dignity of individuals (Cavanagh, 2007b). It requires putting relationships at the core of the mission and vision of the school, rather than the curriculum. Cavanagh (2009a) applied the notion

of restorative justice in school settings, focusing on how schools can use restorative practices to respond to wrongdoing and conflict. Accordingly, by utilizing the aforementioned frameworks, an attempt can be made for educational leaders to better understand the role of race and racism in creating disparities among racial groups (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), discover ways to address the problem, and create activism and social change for all students.

Jefferson County Public School District

Jefferson County Public School District (JCPS), the school district selected for the study, is a public school district in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district that caters to the educational needs of more than 14,000 students with increasing enrollment each year. Demographically, the school district is populated with students from more than 80 different countries, who speak more than 60 languages, and represent a rainbow of ethnic and cultural groups from economically diverse backgrounds. While the Jefferson County Public School District prides itself in diversity, historical data related to the districts' discipline reports reveal disparities among students of color. Specifically, in 2014-15, district reported data indicated Black students in JCPS were suspended at rates nine times more than White students in the district (Advancement Project, 2016; Langberg & Ciolfi, 2016). The historical discipline problems in the district have been revealed in public reports, which highlight the districts' suspension rates and referrals to law enforcement, student reports, and via news outlets which are further explained in Chapter Four.

Summary of Methodology

13

Patton (1980) asserts that "qualitative methods permit the researcher to study selected issues in depth and detail; the fact that data collection is not constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth and detail of qualitative data" (p. 165). Merriam (1988) defines a descriptive case study in education as "one that presents a detailed account of the phenomenon" (p. 38). Yin (1994) states that, "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). This type of case study is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred (Yin, 2003). Under these definitions, a descriptive case study was most appropriate for this research.

Specifically, this qualitative descriptive case study describes the current discipline policies and practices at Woodland High School in Jefferson County Public School district. The participant sample for the research included a combination of sixteen high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators because they are identified leaders in the school. Guided by Creswell's (1998, p. 57) zigzag process of gathering information, the two methods of data collection were face-to-face semi-structured interviews (Merriam, 2009) and document review. Document analysis, also referred to as document review, was used in this qualitative descriptive case study to explain and validate participants' statements from interviews (Glaser, Strauss, & Strutzel, 1968) and to provide a thick description of the case (Esterberg, 2002; Merriam, 2002). Furthermore, Wolcott's (1994) approach to data analysis provided the description, analysis, and interpretation of research data needed to display the research findings and

answer the study's research questions across the four guiding principles: school leadership, school discipline policies and procedures, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions.

Limitations and Delimitations

Supplemental to document analysis, this study focused on the views and lived experiences of school counselors, school building administrators, and central office administrators related to school discipline policies and practices. I chose to delimit this study to this particular population because these are the perspectives of those considered leaders of the school district. Although other individuals identified as leaders at the school (i.e., school social workers, department chairs, instructional coaches, and lead teachers) may have and may continue to share experiences similar to those of the participating school leaders, those experiences will not be discussed in this study. Moreover, there is no assumption that the data collected in this study can be expected to reflect the experiences of all school counselors, school building administrators, and central office administrators. Rather, this descriptive case study was designed to serve as an opportunity to understand the school discipline policies and practices at a high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban high school.

Researcher Role and Positionality

The primary instrument for data collection and analysis in case study research is the researcher. Therefore, it is vital for researchers to consider their own biases, limitations, and views—throughout data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Merriam, 1988). Specifically, Altheide and Johnson (1994) explain that in order to evaluate the

validity of the research findings, researchers should neutralize their biases by stating them explicitly and to the full extent. In the interest of full disclosure and guarding against unethical or unintentional influences on my interpretation of school discipline policies and practices, I explain my personal and professional experiences relevant to this study.

As an Afro-Native American woman who will one day have Black children in school, my personal perspective of the impact of school discipline can be extremely different from what is experienced and understood by members of the White dominant culture (Collins, 1990; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Additionally, as an alternative school counselor, in a school with a long-standing history of predominately or all Black and Hispanic students, I am professionally able to understand the real-world outcomes of exclusionary discipline practices for students of color. For this reason, my personal and professional experiences influenced my desire and motivation to investigate school discipline and conduct this study. Overall, I aspire for this research to enhance scholars', educators', and citizens' understandings of this critical social issue and assist in facilitating dialogues that could lead to social change.

Dissertation Overview

This study describes the school discipline policies and practices in a high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district. Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of school discipline policies and practices, examines school leadership, presents the problem of racial disproportionality in exclusionary discipline, reports unfavorable outcomes associated with exclusionary discipline, and explains approaches many school

districts are adopting to reduce misbehavior and address student behavior. This chapter outlines the study's purpose, research questions, general data collection strategy, and significance. In addition, an explanation of the theoretical perspective and researcher perspective are presented, and the chapter concludes with an overview of the study and definitions of key terms. Chapter 2 provides a literature review related to school discipline, the disproportionalities that exist in discipline practices, the outcomes of disproportionate discipline practices, the roles of school leaders' role as it relates to discipline, and approaches for reducing misbehavior and addressing the racial disproportionalities in schools. An overview of the study's research design, theoretical framework, research site, participants, and methods of data collection and analysis are presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 describes, analyzes, and interprets the study's findings utilizing Wolcott's (1994) approach to data analysis. The study concludes with Chapter 5, which summarizes the findings and analysis, and discusses the implications of study findings and offers recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

Definition of Terms

The following provides a definition of key terms used throughout this study. These words were used to highlight, describe, or discuss some of the important ideas that were presented throughout the research. They were:

Alternative school placement: Removal from the regular school setting to an alternative school setting. Some expulsions are transfers to disciplinary alternative schools without students being put into an expulsion process. Districts can place students

in alternative schools without formally expelling them. Yet, some disciplinary transfers may meet the federal definition of expulsion (Dignity in Schools, 2009).

Building administrators: A building administrator is a full time staff member residing in that building that has the authority to make decisions and carry out duties which affect comfort, convenience, safety and energy conservation (Colvin & Sprick, 1999).

Central office administrators: Central office administrators are charged with the implementation of various education initiatives each year with the desired end result being an improvement in student performance (Muller, 2015).

Comprehensive school counseling program: An integral part of the total educational program that helps every student to acquire the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that promote academic achievement and meet developmental needs (American School Counselor Association (ASCA), 2005).

Counseling: The process of helping people by assisting them in making decisions and changing behaviors (Muller-Ackerman & Stillman, 2006).

Detention: A separate room in the school supervised by a school staff member. Students may be assigned to this room for a period or two. Instruction is provided to the student by way of teacher assignments for each individual student in attendance (Hanley-Noworyta, 2015).

Disability: A condition when a child is evaluated in accordance with Sec. Sec. 300.304 through 300.311 as having mental retardation (intellectual disability), a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual

impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as "emotional disturbance"), an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, any other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services (IDEA, 2004).

Discipline: The systems of rules that govern students' behavior and the consequences enacted when students violate those rules systems (Walton, & McKersie, 1965).

Disproportionality: The "overrepresentation" and "underrepresentation" of a particular demographic group (Dixon & Linz, 2000).

Expulsion: Banning a student from school for up to one calendar year at a time (USDOE OCR, 2014).

Expulsion with educational services: An action taken by the local educational agency removing a child from his/her regular school for disciplinary purposes, with the continuation of educational services, for the remainder of the school year or longer in accordance with local educational agency policy (i.e., transition to an alternative school placement). Expulsion with educational services also includes removals resulting from violations of the Gun-Free Schools Act that are modified to fewer than 365 days (USDOE OCR, 2014).

Expulsion without educational services: An action taken by the local educational agency removing a child from his/her regular school for disciplinary purposes, with the cessation of educational services, for the remainder of the school year or longer in accordance with local educational agency policy. Expulsion without

services also includes removals resulting from violations of the Gun-Free Schools Act that are modified to less than 365 days (USDOE OCR, 2014).

Exclusionary discipline: Exclusionary discipline describes any type of school disciplinary action that removes or excludes a student from his or her usual educational setting (Civil Rights Project, 2000).

Gender: The attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex. Sex refers to a person's biological status and is typically categorized as male, female, or intersex (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008).

In-school suspension: Instances in which a child is temporarily removed from his or her regular classroom(s) for at least half a day but remains under the direct supervision of school personnel. Direct supervision means school personnel are physically in the same location as students under their supervision (USDOE OCR, 2014).

Interventions: Actions taken by relevant stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, educational personnel, school districts) to improve a situation by changing how it is approached (Fullan, 2007).

Leadership: The process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation (Ellemers, De Gilder, & Haslam, 2004).

Long-Term Suspension: Banning a student from school for 11 school days to 364 calendar days (USDOE OCR, 2014).

Office Discipline Referral (ODR): The document completed by a staff member about a

student who did not follow school rules (Hanley-Noworyta, 2015).

Out-of-school suspension: For students with disabilities (IDEA): Out-of-school

suspension is an instance in which a child is temporarily removed from his/her

regular school for disciplinary purposes to another setting (e.g., home, behavior

center). This includes both removals in which no IEP services are provided

because the removal is 10 days or less, as well as removals in which the child

continues to receive services according to his/her IEP. For students without

disabilities, out-of-school suspension means excluding a student from school for

disciplinary reasons for one school day or longer (USDOE OCR, 2014).

Race: Race, or what sociologists refer to as social race, is a social construction. It is not

biologically or genetically determined, but rather "socially imposed and

hierarchical," resulting in "an inequality built into the system" (Conley, 2003;

Douglass Horsford, 2014).

Racial disparities: A significant difference between the percentage of a racial group

represented in the general population and the percentage of the same group

represented in the same general population (Burt et al., 1995).

Restorative Practices: Practice, which involves probing beyond retribution to discover

deeper solutions to heal damaged relationships. Healing the harm to relationships

is critical to the need to respond to any behavior that interferes with building or

maintaining the dignity of individuals (Cavanagh, 2007a).

Role: A set of expectations placed on an individual occupying a particular position in an organization, whereby, these expectations are defined and applied by the individual and by others (Culbreth, Scarborough, Banks-Johnson, & Solomon, 2005).

School-Based Juvenile Court Referral *(SBJCR):* A court referral that is sent to the court system by a public school official in response to inappropriate student behavior (Krezmien, Leone, Zablocki, Wells, 2010).

School Counselor Leadership: A critical requisite for the successful implementation of new or remodeled comprehensive school counseling programs (ASCA, 2005; Education Trust, 2009). National initiatives in professional school counseling make it clear that leadership is an essential skill for school counselors working in the21st century (ASCA, 2005; House & Hayes, 2002; House & Martin, 1998; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). Furthermore, because other essential skills such as advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change assume a certain degree of leadership, leadership may be considered the foundation of the other essential skills.

Short-Term Suspension: Banning a student from school for up to 10 school days (USDOE OCR, 2014).

Social justice leadership: A leadership style that promotes activism in a person's leadership practice to transform environments into spaces where all thrive (Theoharis, 2007).

Subjective suspensions: Suspensions where an adult used their judgment to determine if a student's behavior warranted a school suspension. These subjective behaviors require observing the student behavior and placing value judgment on that behavior to determine if the student behavior warranted a specific level of school discipline (Greflund, 2013).

Suspension: Removal from the educational setting for a specified amount of time as determined by a school administrator (USDOE OCR, 2014).

School counselor: School counselors are certified/licensed educators with a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling, making them uniquely qualified to address all students' academic, career and social/emotional development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success (ASCA, 2005).

School to prison pipeline: The set of school policies and practices that make the criminalization and incarceration of children and youth more likely and the attainment of a high quality education less likely (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005; Wald & Losen, 2003).

School Resource Officer (SRO): A career law enforcement officer, with sworn authority, deployed in community-oriented policing and assigned by the employing police department or agency to work in collaboration with schools and community-based organizations (Kim & Geronimo, 2009).

School security measures: School security measures are intentional physical alterations of the school environment potentially to increase school safety. These may

include some or all of the following: the presence of school security guards, metal

detectors, locked exterior doors, visitor sign-ins, visitor escorts, and teacher

supervision in the hallways, hall passes, and intercoms/telephones in classrooms

(Pepper, 2007).

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS): Refers to a multi-tiered systems

approach to establishing the social cultural and behavioral supports needed for all

children in a school to achieve both social and academic success (Simonsen,

Sugai, & Negron, 2008).

Special education: Specially designed instruction, support, and services provided to

students with an identified disability (Losen & Orfield, 2002).

Student misconduct: The violation of school rules, as defined by the student code of

conduct (Hanley-Noworyta, 2015).

Students of color: Students who share the common distinction of not being White

(Bernal, 2002).

The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs (ASCA,

2005) has integrated long-standing school counseling models and connected these

approaches to the National Standards for School Counseling and the

Transforming School Counseling Initiative (Dahir, 2007). Delineated in The

ASCA National Model are "the components of a 21st century comprehensive

school counseling program" (Dahir, p. 50).

Video surveillance: School video surveillance systems consist of cameras placed in areas

where action can be monitored (LaFee, 2005).

Zero-tolerance policies: A policy that mandates predetermined consequences or

    punishments for specific offenses (USDOE OCR, 2014). Originally used in

    schools to mandate expulsions for drugs, fighting and gang related activity, this

    concept has also been applied more broadly in schools and refers to major and

    minor school misbehavior and disruption (Skiba & Knesting, 2011).

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In light of the many and varied concerns that stem from school discipline, the purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was a) to explore the lived experiences of educational leaders who serve as high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators as they relate to school discipline, b) to gain a detailed understanding of the discipline policies and practices processes at a high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district, and c) to interrogate the disparate impact of disciplinary policies and practices, particularly on Black males. Accordingly, to describe, analyze, and provide an interpretation of the current school discipline policies and practices at one high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district the following research questions were investigated.

Central Question:

What is happening at a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban high school related to school discipline?

Sub-questions:

1. How do high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators describe school discipline policies and practices at Woodland High School?

2. In what ways do the school leadership, school discipline policies and procedures, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions provide insight into school discipline at Woodland High?

The narratives of the identified school leaders, and the analysis of public documents related to discipline in the district, provide the wisdom and insight missing from the current discourse concerning the impacts of school discipline as it relates to discipline policies and practices. However, to generate inferences from the literature to this study, the chapter examines the extent of the problems related to school discipline and its underlying causes and consequences. Specifically, the literature review of school discipline encompasses topics such as the disproportionalities that exist in discipline, outcomes of exclusionary discipline policies and practices, the roles of school leader's in addressing disproportionalities in discipline, and researched-based approaches implemented to reduce disproportionate discipline in schools throughout the United States. Such topics are significant since these factors can directly influence students' life trajectories.

Conducting the Literature Review

To conduct the literature review, I started by reviewing the George Mason Universities online resources provided by the university library. A comprehensive literature search of the following databases: ERIC, Education Research Complete, Social Sciences Citation Index (Web of Science), Psych Info, and JSTOR were utilized to produce this essay. Within each database I searched the following keywords: civil rights, school discipline, school to prison pipeline, alternative schools, United States, Education,

zero-tolerance, history, discipline policies, public education, expulsion, restorative justice, and suspension. These key words were used in the database searches due to their connection with the educational crisis students of color are facing as it relates to school discipline. Additionally, I used the reference lists cited in the journal articles to assist in the review of literature.

More specifically, the literature review for school discipline consequences was based primarily on the Children's Defense Fund (1975) report and Skiba, Michael, Nardo, and Peterson's (2002) claim that there are ethnic and gender disproportionalities in school discipline consequences. Accordingly, I began my search with school discipline consequences and racial and gender disproportionalities in school discipline. As the examination developed, I considered different combinations for the research variables. For example, school discipline consequences became in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, zero-tolerance and exclusionary discipline consequences. The term disproportionalities became inequities and disparities. Additionally, race/ethnicity and gender became more specific, as I researched African American males, Black males, and school discipline. I was able to find articles related to ethnic and gender inequities and school discipline consequences and ethnicity. From these searches I was able to further dive into topics surrounding discipline such as security measures, leadership, and interventions.

Theoretical Framework

This study is designed using a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm approach to research on school discipline. Constructivist researchers focus on understanding and

28

reconstructing the meanings that individuals hold about the phenomenon being studied (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997; Jones, 2002) by examining in-depth their *lived experiences* (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006) through use of open-ended questions (Crotty, 1998). For that reason, it was appropriate to conduct interviews with school leaders, review relevant district documents, and continually analyzed these data in an attempt to: construct meaning, describe school discipline policies and practices, and explain the ways in which school leaders administer and execute discipline. More specifically, Creswell's (1998, p. 57) zigzag process of gathering information, and Wolcott's (1994) strategies of the data analysis was employed to highlight findings, display findings, identify patterns, and evaluate the findings.

Utilizing racial and justice literatures and lenses to understand the racial disproportionalities that exist in school discipline, the leadership frameworks significant to this study are based on social justice leadership (Kemp-Graham, 2015; Marshall & Oliva, 2010; Rivera-McCutchen, 2014; Theoharis, 2007) and Cavanagh's restorative justice models. Many researchers attempted to define social justice (Blackmore, 2002; Bogotch, 2002; Furman & Gruenewald, 2004; Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002; Larson & Murtadha, 2002; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Shields, 2004). However, there is no general consensus at present about what the term "social justice" means (Shoho, Merchant, & Lugg, 2005). For example, Marshall and Oliva (2010) defined social justice leadership as leadership that emphasizes "equity, ethical values, justice, care and respect in educating of all students regardless of race and class, with a high quality education; and therefore closing the achievement gap between White, middle class students and minority

students." Whereas, Rivera-McCutchen (2014) defines social justice leadership as "a mindset that requires action to right what is wrong; social justice leaders actively work to improve teaching and learning so that all students have equitable opportunities to learn and excel" (p. 749).

Broadly defined, social justice is a value-based attitude or a belief people hold about the unequal life opportunities of some social groups compared with others in a given society, and how these opportunities are negatively affected by existing social conditions (Rasinski, 1987). In their case study, Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002) conclude that those who ascribe importance to social justice wish to promote what they view as the inherent human rights of equity, equality, and fairness in multiple social arenas. Thus, social justice efforts are aimed at eliminating cultural and social inequities such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, poverty, and disability (Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, 2005; Rucinski &Bauch, 2006).

Similar to tenets of social justice leadership, Cavanagh's (2009a) theoretical framework of restorative justice also warrants the development of school leaders to assist student needs. Cavanagh (2009a) applied the notion of restorative justice in school settings, focusing on how schools can use restorative practices to respond to wrongdoing and conflict. The restorative practices framework utilizes a philosophy and practices that strengthen relationships and foster a healthy school community. In addition the restorative practices framework is a rigorous practice framework that involves teachers, students and parents, engaging them in a collaborative approach that is firm, respectful, and incorporates fair process. Accordingly, by utilizing the aforementioned frameworks,

educational leaders will be able to better understand the role of race and racism in creating disparities among racial groups (Ladson-Billings, & Tate, 1995), discover ways to address the problem, and create activism and social change for all students.

School Discipline in the United States

School disciplinary policies and practices are essential to public school systems throughout the United States. According to the National School Safety Center (1992), school discipline is an essential component for learning and is something that must be intentionally and vigorously followed. It is the means by which students are nurtured to learn, develop responsibility, and ultimately, control their own actions. More specifically, school discipline is linked to the larger behavior management system of a school (Magableh & Hawamdeh, 2007; McKevitt, Dempsey, Ternus, & Shriver, 2012). According to Bear (2008), school discipline has four main purposes: First, to create a safe and orderly environment for all students; Second, to teach students how to develop self – discipline; Third, to facilitate a model of acceptable behaviors for students; Last, to deter students from demonstrating inappropriate behavior (Bear, 2008). Although a goal of school discipline is to create a safe learning environment so that all students can learn to their fullest potential, current disciplinary practices suggest that many schools across the U.S. may not be achieving this goal.

School Leadership

A longstanding consensus in leadership theory holds that leaders in all walks of life and all kinds of organizations, public and private, need to depend on others to accomplish the group's purpose and need to encourage the development of leadership

across the organization. Schools are no different. Today's school administrators are not only expected to be instructional leaders; they also have the additional responsibility of creating an educational environment with as few disruptions to the educational process as possible. Accordingly, when the educational process is interrupted by inappropriate student behavior, school leaders often use discipline policies and practices as methods for regaining order.

School Building Administrators

A building administrator (often identified as a school principal or assistant principal) is a most often a full time staff member that has the authority to make decisions and perform duties which affect the individuals within that particular building (Copland, 2003). An effective building administrator is responsible for ensuring the school is viewed as an important element of the district's vision to serve all children, and more importantly, to secure the resources needed to fulfill the vision of his/her school (Scipio, 2013). Generally, building administrators, as the leaders in their buildings, are held accountable for outcomes reflecting performance levels of all students in the school, as well; they are expected to hold others accountable (Trevino, 1986). Explicitly, building administrators are charged with ensuring that their schools are safe and both adults and children put learning at the center of their daily activities.

School building administrators play a vital role in the management and implementation of student discipline in their schools (Copland, 2003). This includes educating students, staff, and often parents, on behavioral conduct codes and expectations. Too, they often have a fundamental role in developing a system of

consequences for misbehavior that is in line with school district policies. For example, often, if a student gets into trouble in a class he/she is sent to a building administrator to discuss their behavior, explain and assign any potential consequences, and contact parents in many circumstances. As such, it is also important for school administrators to make data-based decisions, both for individual students and for overall building-level behavioral programs, when they consider how to most effectively address unacceptable behavior in their schools (Trevino, 1986). Furthermore, it is important for strong leadership from school building administrators if the goal is to efficiently and effectively manage student behaviors (Colvin & Sprick, 1999).

School Counselors

Throughout school counseling literature, the role of the school counselor has traditionally been viewed as supplementary to daily functionality in school (Dollarhide, 2003; Scarborough & Luke, 2008). Bemak (2000) contended that for the past 30 years, school counselors, for the most part, may have failed to become actively involved in social and political change and to assume active leadership roles necessary for effecting change in public schools to better serve all students (Bemak, 2000). Traditionally, school counselors often relied on administrators to define their roles and responsibilities and may have been trained to consider their main function as helpers rather than leaders who collaborate with others in educational improvement efforts (Amatea & Clark, 2005). However, presently researchers have argued that school counselors are increasingly called upon to exert leadership (Courtland, 2005; Education Trust, 2009).

Leadership is a prevalent theme found throughout current school counseling literature, and recognition of the importance of counselor leadership on the part of school counselors, administrators, and counselor educators has become increasingly evident in the field (Curry & DeVoss, 2009; Dollarhide, 2003; Dollarhide, Gibson, & Saginak 2008). Yet, the traditional roles of leadership in schools may hinder school counselors' ability and nature to view themselves as leaders (Mason & McMahon, 2009). Therefore, attempts have been exerted by proponents of contemporary counseling models to clarify current expectations and performance standards for school counselors (DeVoss & Andrews, 2006). School counselors are essential members of the educational community being asked to rethink their roles to see themselves as leaders (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Dollarhide, Gibson, & Saginak; House, 2005). Hence, researchers have agreed that in order for school counselors to become successful leaders, they need to be educated in leadership skills and be given opportunities to discover their own leadership approaches (DeVoss & Andrews, 2006; Dollarhide, Gibson, & Saginak, 2008; McMahon, Mason, & Paisley, 2009; Stone & Clark, 2001).

In addition, the *American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model* has not only provided a framework for the school counseling profession, but also has encouraged counselors to take on a leadership role within their schools (American School Counselor Association, 2005; Dollarhide, 2003; Dollarhide, Gibson, & Saginak, 2008). Along with the traditional three c's of school counselor practices: (a) counseling, (b) consultation, and (c) coordination, the *Transforming School Counseling Initiative* (Dahir, 2007) has added leadership, advocacy, teaming and collaboration, data-driven results, and

34

use of technology, practices forming the new data driven and standards based model. For instance, in one study examining elementary school principals' perceptions (Zalaquett, 2005), leadership was not identified as a school counseling role. Yet a different study focusing on administrators' views on the role of school counselors (Amatea & Clark, 2005) revealed four significant roles of counselors: (a) school leader, (b) collaborative case consultant, (c) responsive direct service provider, and (d) administrative team player. As well, in a more recent qualitative study examining principals' perspectives on school counseling (Dollarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007), it was found that principals favored leadership, collaboration, advocacy, and systemic change, all themes espoused by The ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005).

Central Office Administrators

Continuous improvement of school districts is often the responsibility of central office administrators. Historically, the context in which central office administrators worked was built around the notion of authority and delegation (Muller, 2015). However, there has been a clear shift in the responsibilities of central office administrators. Like considering the principal more than a building manager, the level of accountability and responsibility has risen for central office leadership as well. Furthermore, Hillman and Kachur (2010) explain, "The ultimate goal of the central office transformation was to build the capacity of all faculty and staff through professional development to offer a quality education and accept responsibility to meet the needs of a diverse population" (p. 22). Accordingly, central office administrators are expected to support the schools, be a

resource, and delegate authority to the principals while following up with holding the

schools accountable for student growth (Mulford, 2003).

Maintaining Order and Safety in Schools

School leaders have the responsibility of maintaining order and safety in schools.

Noguera (1995) reported that since the 1990's, the solution to school violence has often

been to enact zero tolerance policies enforced by the installment of metal detectors,

security cameras, school police, the automatic removal of students who commit violent

acts, coupled with when appropriate, charging students with criminal offenses.

Accordingly, schools use a variety of practices and procedures to promote the safety of

students, faculty, and staff. Certain practices, such as locking or monitoring doors and

gates, are intended to limit or control access to school campuses, while others, such as the

use of metal detectors and security cameras, are intended to monitor or restrict students'

and visitors' behavior on campus.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2016) reported that in the

2013–14 school year, 93 percent of public schools reported that they controlled access to

school buildings by locking or monitoring doors during school hours. As well, other

safety and security measures reported by public schools included the use of video

surveillance to monitor the school (75 percent), a necessity that faculty and staff wear

badges or picture IDs (68 percent), and the enforcement of a firm dress code (58 percent).

In addition, 24 percent of public schools reported the practice of random dog sniffs to

check for drugs, 20 percent required that students dress in uniforms, 9 percent required

students to wear badges or picture IDs, and 4 percent used random metal detector checks (NCES, 2016).

The Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 has provided funds to many schools for the purchase of metal detectors and has paid the salary of school resource officers as protective strategies in response to heightened concerns about school violence (Schreck, Miller, & Gibson, 2003). Metal detectors and hired security officers have become common practice in schools (Welsh, 2000). Security guards in schools have been the most prominent solution to school-based shootings (Caulfield, 2000). The premise for many educators has been that by increasing the presence of criminal justice system symbols, such as uniformed officers, video surveillance, and metal detectors, perpetrators will be less likely to commit crimes and schools will be able to better maintain order and safety (Fuentes, 2003; Hirschfield, 2008; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Pepper, 2007; Schreck, Miller, & Gibson, 2003).

The use of a variety of safety and security procedures differed by school level during the 2013–14 school year (NCES, 2016) as depicted in Figure 1. For example, higher percentages of public elementary schools and public middle schools than of public high schools and combined elementary/secondary schools (referred to as high/combined schools) controlled access to school buildings and required faculty and staff to wear badges or picture IDs (NCES, 2016). Additionally, 23% of elementary schools required students to wear uniforms as compared to 15% of high/combined schools (NCES, 2016). Conversely, higher percentages of high/combined schools and middle schools than of elementary schools reported the enforcement of a strict dress code; a requirement that

students wear badges or picture IDs; and the use of random metal detector checks. A
higher percentage of high/combined schools reported the use of security cameras to
monitor the school (89 percent) than middle schools (84 percent), and both of these
percentages were higher than the percentage of elementary schools (67 percent) that
reported the use of security cameras (NCES, 2016). The same pattern was evident for the
use of random dog sniffs.
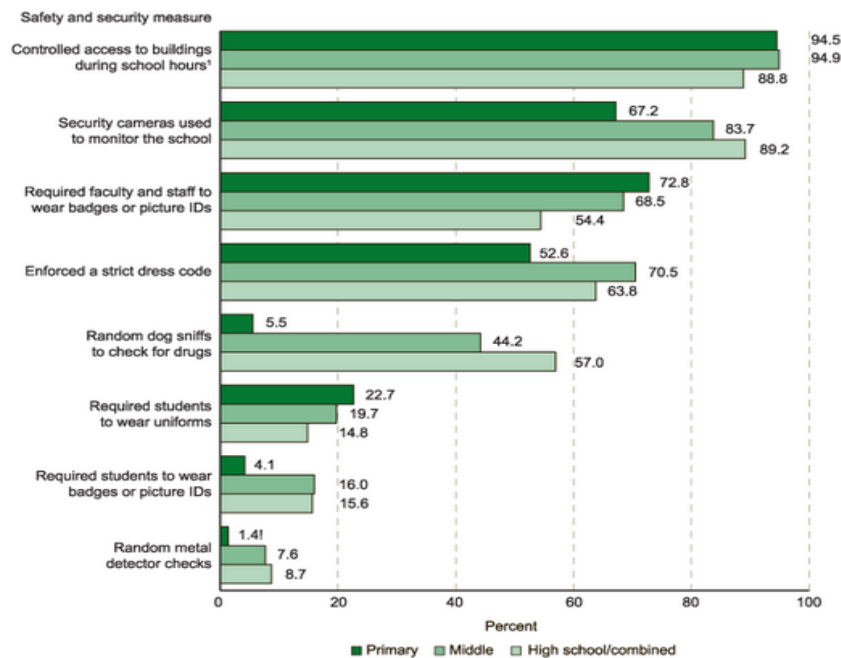
Figure 1. Selected safety and security measures utilized during the 2013-14 school year,
by percentage and school level
Note: Responses were provided by the principal or the person most knowledgeable about crime and safety
issues at the school. Primary schools are defined as schools in which the lowest grade is not higher than
grade 3 and the highest grade is not higher than grade 8. Middle schools are defined as schools in which the
lowest grade is not lower than grade 4 and the highest grade is not higher than grade 9. High schools are
defined as schools in which the lowest grade is not lower than grade 9 and the highest grade is not higher
than grade 12. Combined schools include all other combinations of grades, including K–12 schools.
Separate data on high schools and combined schools are not available.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *Indicators of
School Crime and Safety: 2015*, Indicator 20.

Individual security measures may not have a consistent impact on student behavior (Servoss & Finn, 2014). However, research has addressed the connection between individual security measures and various forms of indiscipline. May, Fessel, and Means (2004) found that school principals had positive impressions of school resource officers' effectiveness in reducing fights, drugs, and stealing at their schools. As well, McDevitt and Paniello (2005) found that students had favorable impressions of their school resource officers. Oppositely, Hankin, Hertz, and Simon's (2011) review of the existing research on the use of metal detectors to reduce school misbehavior presented limited effectiveness. From the seven studies they reviewed, one study reported a 6 percent decrease in the likelihood of students carrying a weapon while in school, yet there was no decrease in fighting. The other six studies they reviewed showed no effect of metal detectors on any measure of misbehavior.

Student Codes of Conduct

An approach to managing student discipline in many school districts is school codes of conduct, traditionally found in handbooks provided to students and parents (Browne, 2003; Di Lullo, 2004; Goldsmith, 1982; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Menacker, Hurwitz, & Weldon, 1988; Mukuria, 2002; Sang, 1990; Welsh, 2000). Though codes of conduct were often utilized to serve ''the administrator's purpose of being the authority to cite to support disciplinary action,'' they ''gave little if any guidance to students in defining what conduct was prohibited and punishable'' (p. 188). Presently, approaches to

school discipline—including conduct codes and security measures, often heavily rely on control and punishment to maintain order and safety in schools. The purpose of developing and implementing codes of conduct has been to focus schools' attention on discipline; to help schools clarify discipline policies and procedures; and to ensure equity throughout a district by creating uniform consequences for student misbehaviors.

School resource officers. A security measure utilized by schools throughout the United States is the use of school resource officers (Lambert & McGinty, 2002). School resource officers (SROs) are generally sworn law enforcement officials situated in community policing and assigned to work in partnership with schools and community-based organizations (Lambert & McGinty, 2002; Raymond, 2010). The SRO's role is often defined as that of a law enforcement officer, a counselor on law-related matters, and a classroom teacher of law-related education (Lambert & McGinty, 2002). According to Sneed (2015), school resource officers are theoretically put in place to foster positive relationships between citizens and law enforcement agencies.

Metal detectors. According to National School Safety and Security Services (2016), metal detectors may be an essential tool in school districts with a history of weapons issues and violence, such as shootings. To decrease the possibility of students, staff or other visitors entering the school building with a gun, knife, bomb or other weapon, metal detectors are often placed at the entrances of schools (Hankin, Hertz, & Simon, 2011). Metal detectors, as a security measure, are considered by many school administrators to be a viable solution for deterring weapons in schools and reducing the likelihood that weapons will be smuggled onto school campuses (Skiba, 2000).

Video surveillance. Schools across the nation are relying on technology for security and safety (Lafee, 2005). In secondary schools specifically, the installation of surveillance cameras has become a growing trend (Taylor, 2013). School video surveillance systems consist of cameras placed in areas where action can be monitored. A benefit of this type of technology is that a principal can attach a surveillance file to an e-mail and then send it to the police or the school superintendent for immediate review (Garza, 2002).

Outcomes Related to Conduct Codes and Security Measures

Due to a lack of clarity in the school codes, school districts have begun to play a leadership role in the development and implementation of codes of conduct for managing student behavior (Kerbow, 1996; Rumberger, 2003). A number of studies have documented a relationship between severe conduct codes and security measures and numerous negative student behaviors (Cantor & Wright, 2001; Colvin, Kameenui, & Sugai, 1993; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Noguera, 1995). Research has demonstrated that these policies and practices are often associated with and can contribute to increased disorder in schools and behavioral and academic problems among students. For example, as early as the 1970s, it was determined that schools with more formal punishment systems had higher rates of misbehavior than schools with less formal systems (Heal, 1978; National Institute of Education, 1978). Fenning, Wilczynski, and Parraga (2000) analyzed discipline codes of conduct and identified that the lack of proactive alternatives to discipline lead to the increase in suspension and expulsions. Strict school conduct codes have been found to be more predictive of suspension rates than student behaviors

and attitudes in urban high schools and strong predictors of suspension rates in suburban and rural high schools and junior high schools (Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982). More recently, Nance (2013) concluded that strict discipline and security measures are exacerbating the already problematic relationships between students and teachers by adding further adversity and mistrust.

In response to the heightened concern about school safety, many schools have utilized security guards and metal detectors. However, crimes can still occur in spite of the presence of these security measures on school campuses (Schreck, Miller, & Gibson, 2003). Resulting from the increase in security measures, some report that schools are looking, sounding, and functioning like criminal justice institutions due to addition of security personnel, metal detectors, and video surveillance (Caton, 2012; Skiba & Losen, 2016) especially in urban communities (Devine, 1996; Skiba & Losen, 2016). Schools have cited technological benefits from surveillance cameras on campuses such as reduced vandalism and bullying; however, there is no scientific research that surveillance cameras impact more serious crimes (Lafee, 2005). Mayer and Leone (1999) investigated the effect of using metal detectors, locked doors, and security guards on student conduct ($n =$ 7000) and found that the use of these practices was associated with more disorder, crime, and violence.

Hyman and colleagues (Hyman, 1990; Hyman & Weiler, 1994; Hyman & Perone, 1998) found that strip searches of students were associated with depression, anger, increased tardiness and truancy, decreased interest in academics, drop out, and fantasies of revenge among students subjected to these practices. Instead of utilizing reactionary

security measures on school campuses, Thompkins (2000) explains that proactive alternative opportunities should be made available to students to deter their attraction to misbehavior in the school. Sneed explains, "Thanks to inconsistent training models and a lack of clear standards, critics contend school officers are introducing children to the criminal justice system unnecessarily by doling out harsh punishments for classroom behavior" (p. 1). Sneed (2015) further explained that teachers now call for the school safety agents to come into the classroom and handle situations as opposed to deescalating disruptive student(s).

Managing Student Misconduct

This study defines student misconduct as the violation of school rules, as defined by the student code of conduct. To deal effectively and systematically with matters of misconduct, schools often use office discipline referrals as a part of the disciplinary process. Office discipline referrals (ODRs) are written for student misconduct and can indicate minor or major misbehavior in schools. Examples of minor misbehavior may include disrespect, disruptions in class, dress code violations, noncompliance, and inappropriate language. Examples of major misbehavior may include truancy, abusive language, fighting, theft, intimidation, harassment, threats, and electronics technology violations. ODR forms are standard throughout the school building and are submitted to school administrators when student misconduct was cited by a staff member (Hanley-Noworyta, 2015). Upon receiving ODRs, administrators confer with the student regarding their misbehavior and a disciplinary consequence is assigned. Then, the

information on the ODR referral form is reported in the school's data-based tracking system.

School disciplinary practices vary by school site and by district (Sugai & Horner, 2006). However, schools are required to generate reports about certain disciplinary data at the local, state, and federal level (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Schools generally collect data about student discipline issues as a standard procedure (Kern & Manz, 2004; Rusby, Taylor, & Foster, 2007). Schools often collect disciplinary code violation information in the form of ODRs which are gaining support through research because of their validity and usefulness in decision making at the student level and building level with regard to problematic student behavior (Irvin et al., 2006; Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004). As well, researchers reported that current ODRs have predictability with regard to future ODRs (McIntosh, Horner, Chard, Boland, & Good, 2006; Rusby et al., 2007; Schulenberg, O'Malley, Bachman, & Johnston, 2002).

Disciplinary Infractions

Most out-of-school suspensions across the country are for minor infractions of school rules rather than for dangerous or violent acts (Brooks, Schiraldi, & Ziedenberg, 1999; Skiba et al., 1997). For instance, Rosen's (1997) study of over 100 secondary administrators found that the most common reasons for out-of-school suspension were defiance of school authority, not reporting to after school detention or Saturday school, and class disruption. As well, the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) used the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) - 2008 to reveal that the most common reason for serious disciplinary actions during the

2007-2008 school year in U.S. schools was "insubordination" (43% of all actions). In another example, the NCES surveyed approximately 1,600 regular public schools in the 50 states and the District of Columbia to better understand safety and discipline at their schools.

A seminal 2014 study published in the *American Educational Research Journal*, "Parsing Disciplinary Disproportionality: Contributions of Infraction, Student and School Characteristics to Out-of-School Suspension and Expulsion," looks at how the type of infraction committed, demographic factors and principals' attitudes can predict rates of out-of-school suspension and expulsion. Russell J. Skiba, Choong-Geun Chung, Megan Trachok, Timberly L. Baker, Adam Sheya, and Robin L. Hughes (2014) analyzed data from 730 public and charter schools in an unnamed Midwestern U.S. state. The study included data from 43,320 students who were expelled, given out-of-school suspension or received both consequences (Skiba et al., 2014). The study's findings conveyed that after taking a student's infraction type, gender, socioeconomic status, and school demographics into consideration as well as the school principal's attitude towards discipline, a Black student still had 25% higher odds of being expelled than White students. However, Black students were no more likely to receive out-of-school suspension (Skiba et al., 2014).

Additionally, the findings described that despite the race of the student being punished, schools with a higher proportion of Black students were much more likely to give out-of-school suspensions compared to schools with fewer Black students (Skiba et al., 2014). Furthermore, as it related to students receiving free or reduced-price lunches,

students had an 18.9% higher chance of being given out-of-school suspension and a 17.5% higher chance for expulsion than those who didn't receive free or reduced-price lunches (Skiba et al., 2014). With regard to gender, male students had 17.2% higher chance of being suspended compared to female students, but there was no gender difference for the likelihood of being expelled (Skiba et al., 2014). In reference to leadership, the principal's attitude was an important predictor of expulsions because students at schools with a principal that favored exclusion had more than twice the odds of being expelled compared to students whose principal favored prevention strategies (i.e., using in-school suspension and peer mediation to prevent further infractions), yet the principal's attitude was not a significant factor in the rate of out-of-school suspensions. Of all the findings reported, the most important finding from this analysis suggests that school-level variables appear to contribute to disproportionality in out-of-school suspension far more than either type of infraction or individual demographics. Hence, if school leaders are using this study as a guide for change, it is important to understand that in order to have a positive effect on reducing or eliminating racial disparities, a focus in discipline interventions on school policies and practices will have greater impact than a focus on the characteristics of students or their behaviors.

Disciplinary Consequences

Discovering ways to discipline students is as old as education itself and has changed over time (see Table 2). Before the 1960s, schools used corporal punishment and public embarrassment to discipline students (Hanson, 2005). In the late 1970s and early

1980s, U.S. Supreme Court decisions[6] such as *Goss v. Lopez (*419 U.S. 565*)* caused school policies to shift in favor of in-school suspensions (Hanson, 2005). In the late 1980s to early 1990s, schools shifted toward a heavy reliance on out-of-school suspensions when they began to institute zero-tolerance policies as a response to fears of violence, drug-related problems, and gang activity (Skiba & Knesting, 2011). Then, in 1994, when President Bill Clinton signed the Gun-Free Schools Act into law, expulsion increased as a disciplinary consequence (Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994; Skiba & Losen, 2016), and the 2000s marked the increase of students sent to alternative schools as a form of expulsion (Atkins & Bartuska, 2010).

Table 2

Predominant Disciplinary Practices in Time

Time Period	Disciplinary Practices
1960s	Corporal punishment
1970s to early 1980s	In-school suspensions
1980s to early 1990s	Out-of-school suspensions
Mid-1990s	Expulsions
2000s	Suspension and expulsion

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[6] These decisions instituted due process protections for students, which substantially restricted school administrators' discretion in implementing exclusionary discipline policies.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment, defined as "physical pain inflicted on the body of a child as a penalty for disapproved behavior" (National Coalition to Abolish Corporal Punishment in Schools (NCACPS), 2002) was intentional and included a variety of disciplinary methods, such as hitting, spanking, punching, shaking, paddling, shoving, and use of various objects, painful body postures, excessive exercise drills, and electric shock (Society for Adolescent Medicine, 2003; Dupper & Dingus, 2008). Although some research findings indicate that the use of corporal punishment in schools was associated with increased immediate compliance (Owen, 2005), there were no data demonstrating that the use of corporal punishment was associated with enhanced social skills or self-control skills over time (Society for Adolescent Medicine, 2003); this was evident due to the same students being hit and punished repeatedly (Dupper & Dingus, 2008; Teicher, 2005). In addition, corporal punishment in schools was shown to be associated with damaging physical and psychological outcomes that affected some children for the remainder of their lives (Arcus, 2002; Hyman, 1995).

The excessive use of corporal punishment was shown to be associated with conduct disorder in children and was said to cause post-traumatic stress (Hyman, 1995). More specifically, the humiliation of the experience of corporal punishment in schools began to reduce children's abilities to problem solve rationally (Dupper & Dingus, 2008).

Children were more aggressive, defiant, and oppositional (Hyman, 1995) and were left with feelings of inadequacy and resentment which for many lead to anger, hostility, violence, and aggression against school property, peers, and authorities (Hyman & Perone, 1998). In addition, states reporting the highest rates of corporal punishment in schools were also the states with the highest number of youths awaiting capital punishment in the state judicial system (Arcus, 2002). Negative motivational techniques, such as corporal punishment, often increase student alienation, misbehavior, and desire to seek revenge (Hyman & Perone, 1998). Administering corporal punishment legitimizes the practice of violence by using violent means to solve behavior problems (Owen, 2005). Consequently, as awareness of the effects increased, states began to legally ban corporal punishment as a form of discipline (The American Civil Liberties Union, 2008). For many years, corporal punishment was an acceptable practice to make children conform to the expected rules (Owen, 2005). However, in more recent times, traditional practices have been reactive with aversive and punitive consequences in place such as suspensions, expulsion, and alternative school placement (Sprague & Walker, 2000).

Exclusionary Discipline

The discipline response process (e.g. referral, discipline related outcome) is a system within itself and can include multiple variables. Many times when students engage in disruptive behavior at school, they are referred to an administrator to discuss their behavior and receive a consequence for the behavior. Exclusionary discipline describes any type of school disciplinary action (see Table 3) that removes or excludes a student from his or her usual educational setting (Civil Rights Project, 2000). Explicitly,

49

suspending and expelling students is in direct conflict with the Federal level commitment

to assuring access to equal educational opportunity for every child (USDOE, 2011). Yet,

each year, school disciplinary policies and practices are leading to the elimination of

many students from the school system in the U.S. (Wallace et al., 2008). In the 1990s,

schools shifted toward a heavy reliance on exclusionary discipline when school systems

began to institute zero tolerance policies as a response to fears of violence, drug-related

problems, and gang activity (Skiba & Knesting, 2011). However, researchers have noted

that student behavior concerns, ranging from those that are considered as mild to more

severe, have largely been addressed on a case-by-case basis through student office

referrals often resulting in exclusionary consequences (Flannery, Fenning, Kato, &

Bohanon, 2013; Skiba & Rausch, 2006).

Table 3

Types of Exclusionary Discipline

Types of Exclusionary Discipline	Definition
In-School Suspension	Instances in which a child is temporarily removed from his or her regular classroom(s) for at least half a day but remains under the direct supervision of school personnel. Direct supervision means school personnel are physically in the same location as students under their supervision (USDOE OCR, 2014).
Out-of-School Suspension	For students with disabilities (IDEA): Out-of-school suspension is an instance in which a child is temporarily removed from his/her regular school for disciplinary purposes to another setting (e.g., home, behavior center). This includes both removals in which no IEP services are provided because the removal is 10 days or less, as well as removals in which the child continues to receive services according to his/her IEP. For students without disabilities,

	out-of-school suspension means excluding a student from school for disciplinary reasons for one school day or longer (USDOE OCR, 2014).
Expulsion with educational services	An action taken by the local educational agency removing a child from his/her regular school for disciplinary purposes, with the continuation of educational services, for the remainder of the school year or longer in accordance with local educational agency policy (i.e., transition to an alternative school placement). Expulsion with educational services also includes removals resulting from violations of the Gun Free Schools Act that are modified to fewer than 365 days (USDOE OCR, 2014).
Expulsion without educational services	An action taken by the local educational agency removing a child from his/her regular school for disciplinary purposes, with the cessation of educational services, for the remainder of the school year or longer in accordance with local educational agency policy. Expulsion without services also includes removals resulting from violations of the Gun Free Schools Act that are modified to less than 365 days (USDOE OCR, 2014).
Alternative School Placement	Removal from the regular school setting to an alternative school setting. Some "expulsions" are transfers to disciplinary alternative schools without students being put into an expulsion process. Districts can place students in alternative schools without formally expelling them. Yet, some disciplinary transfers may meet the federal definition of expulsion (Dignity in Schools, 2009).

Note: Definitions of types of exclusionary may slightly vary depending on the source.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR). (2014). *School Discipline Report*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-School-Discipline-Snapshot.pdf; Dignity in Schools. (2009). Fact sheet: School discipline and the push out problem. Retrieved from http://www.dignityinschools.org/files/DSC_Pushout_Fact_Sheet.pdf

Suspension

Presently, suspension is recorded as the most commonly used exclusionary form

of school discipline in public school education (Losen & Skiba, 2010). It is often

perceived as the punishment and/or a consequence in response to an inappropriate act or

behavior (Brophy, 1988). Suspension may be warranted in response to a large range of

student infractions, including disrespect, defiance, non-compliance, class disruptions, verbal and physical aggression, drug use and selling, vandalism, and weapons possession (Schiraldi & Ziedenberg, 2001). But most often, suspensions are given for minor, nonviolent incidents such as insubordination, tardiness, truancy, and dress code violations (Brooks et al., 1999; Dupper, 1994; Skiba et al., 1997). Skiba and Peterson (2000) reported that fighting has been the most common reason for suspension. There are two forms of suspension used in schools, in-school suspension (ISS) and out-of-school suspension (OSS).

In-school suspension. Instances in which a child is temporarily removed from his or her regular classroom(s) for at least half a day but remains under the direct supervision of school personnel is considered as in-school suspension. Direct supervision means school personnel are physically in the same location as students under their supervision In-school suspension, also known as ISS, is designed to reduce the need for out-of-school suspensions (OSS) while offering a constructive and controlled learning environment for students at their schools. The use of in-school suspension was a school consequence that served as a compromise to the criticism of out-of-school suspension (Troyan, 2003). Four variations of in-school suspension have evolved over the years and include punitive, academic, therapeutic, and individual in-school-suspension programs (Morris & Howard, 2003). Key differences in the four programs are the amount of support staff and interaction time between the staff and the student during the student's placement in the in-school suspension program (Morris & Howard, 2003). However, the punitive model of school discipline that began in the late 1960s and early 1970s is the most often utilized

program in schools today (Amuso, 2007; Morris & Howard, 2003). In-school suspension programs might vary from campus to campus; however, these programs incorporate several common components (Short, 1988). These components include (a) the placement of the student upon arrival to school in a separate classroom away from their peers and regular educational environment, (b) a certified teacher, educational assistant, or both to oversee the student(s) in the in-school suspension classroom, and (c) lunch in isolation.

A major concern with in-school suspension is that students miss educational opportunities for learning because their environment is solitary and isolated. Often, during in-school suspension, students work independently on teacher-assigned work and are not allowed the opportunity to ask questions about content or receive remedial instruction when needing further assistance with school assignments (Short, 1988). The Commission for Positive Change in the Oakland Public Schools (1992) expressed further concern with in-school suspension programs when it concluded that in-school suspension negatively impacted student self-esteem and increased the likelihood of students choosing to drop out of school.

Out-of-school suspension. Out-of-school suspension is the removal of a student from the school environment, as a consequence for misbehavior, for a period of time determined by administration. Banning a student from school for up to 10 school days is considered a short - term suspension; whereas, banning a student from school for 11 school days to 364 calendar days is considered a long-term suspension. Out-of-school suspensions are among the most widely used disciplinary practices for regulating student behavior in American schools (Skiba & Knesting, 2011; USDOE OCR, 2014).

Accordingly, in 2011-12, The Civil Rights Office of the U.S. Department of Education (OCR) publication of 2011-2012 suspension data revealed that of a student population of 49 million, 3.3 million students were suspended and 130,000 were expelled (Losen & Martinez, 2013; USDOE OCR, 2014).

Out-of-school suspension was originally intended as a way to punish students and to alert parents of student misbehavior (Taras et al., 2003). In addition, by suspending the misbehaving student school personnel and other students were protected (Taras et al., 2003). OSS is occasionally seen as a very straightforward consequence because the student is simply required to be absent from school for a designated period of time (Amuso, 2007). However, a major concern with assigning students out-of-school suspension is that often students who are suspended from school are also low academic performers (Owen, Wettach, & Hoffman, 2015). Another concern is that, upon returning to school, suspended students may have missed so much work that they cannot catch up (Rahynes, 2015). Additionally, OSS could reinforce, opposed to reduce, misbehavior due to the suspension permitting the student to be out of school (Schreur, 2006).

Disciplinary hearings. Following determination of a long-term suspension, a disciplinary hearing is scheduled to discuss the student misbehavior. The disciplinary hearing is coordinated by the central office administrator in the district and letters are mailed to the parents and school informing them of the hearing date, time, location, and of the rights of the student for this process. Traditionally, a central office administrator conducts the meeting. Outcomes of the disciplinary hearing could include: immediate

return to school, placement in alternative education programs for any amount of time deemed adequate by the central office administrator, or expulsion.

For over 30 years, the Supreme Court decision *Goss v. Lopez* has provided guidance on due process procedures. The students in *Goss* challenged the state law and filed a lawsuit arguing that Ohio legislation violated the Fourteenth Amendment when it allowed public school administrators to deny students their right to an education without a hearing. The *Goss v. Lopez* case set the standard for minimal constitutional requirements when a student is suspended for 10 days or less (Skiba, Eckes, & Brown, 2009/10). Skiba et al. highlighted the following questions the courts consider when determining whether a student has received appropriate due process in an expulsion case: (a) was the student given notice of the charge?, (b) did the student have an impartial hearing?, (c) was the student's right to be represented granted?, (d) was the student's right to present witnesses granted?, and (e) was the right to cross examination granted? However, the due process protection allowed to students is minimal by states' interest in providing order and discipline in schools. Therefore, the courts have had to seek balance between students' rights and the needs and interests of schools.

Expulsion. The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014) defines expulsion as school removals resulting from violations of the Gun Free Schools Act that are modified to fewer than 365 days. Many schools use expulsion in response to zero-tolerance policies and to remove students in an effort to maintain a safe school environment (Amuso, 2007). Adapted from the war on drugs during the 1980s and 1990s, the philosophy of zero tolerance has been increasingly implemented in schools across the

United States for a broad range of behaviors (APA, 2008; Losen, 2011; Skiba, 2000; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Wallace et al., 2008). With a series of high profile school shootings during the 1990s, many schools turned to punitive approaches to prevent school violence (Skiba et al., 1997; Skiba, 2002; Verdugo, 2002). The fear of increased violence in schools led school districts throughout the country to promote zero-tolerance policies, calling for expulsion for guns and all weapons, drugs, and gang-related activity, and to mandate increased suspension and expulsion for less serious offenses such as school disruption, smoking, and dress code violations (Skiba & Knesting, 2011).

Alternative school placement. Alternative school placement has become a final option for many students who have experienced ongoing academic and/or behavioral difficulties (O'Brien & Curry, 2009). Historically, one of the central reasons for developing alternative schools was to offer an innovative and unique way to educate students who did not respond to traditional forms of education (Miller, 1995). Alternative schools began in the Civil Rights Era (late 1950s and early 1960s) during a time in which the public educational system was highly criticized for being racist and exclusively designed for the success of the privileged (Lange & Sletten, 2002; Raywid, 1994). Public schools were highly influenced by unjust educational policies and the inclusion of students of color (Scipio, 2013). The inequalities exhibited toward students of color in public education affected the entire public education system. The result was a push to create private alternative school options (Lange & Sletten, 2002; Scipio, 2013). Accordingly, with government support, various alternative school options were designed

to offer equal and meaningful education to disadvantaged students and students of color (Lange & Sletten, 2002).

For students, an alternative school could be a unique way of obtaining an education (Atkins & Bartuska, 2010). For school systems, alternative education programs could serve as a safety net to protect them from violence, assist in meeting state proficiency standards, and recover lost revenue due to early school leavers (Atkins & Bartuska, 2010). Alternative education programs are being used to serve a wide range of students in all areas of the country (Atkins & Bartuska, 2010). Alternative schools can include home schools, special programs for gifted students, charter schools, interim education programs, etc. (Scipio, 2013). Studies have concluded that low traditional school achievers perform better in alternative schools (Cofield, 2005), which suggests that strong and appropriate leadership must support these environments (Cofield, 2005). In 1994, Neumann stated that the intent of most alternative programs "is to foster a student culture built around the beliefs that one can learn, and that responsible and mature adult behaviors are indicators of success" (p. 547). Accordingly, educators and policymakers have continued to recognize a need to create alternative pathways for students who need nontraditional support (Lehr, C.A., Lanners, E.J., Lange, C.M., 2003; Scipio, 2013).

From 2000 to 2010, the number of alternative education programs significantly increased (Atkins & Bartuska, 2010). Alternative schools for students that exhibit at-risk behaviors have become highly important in the current educational environment because schools have seen an increase in violent behaviors among students (Scipio, 2013).

Additionally, the option of giving students an alternative other than expulsion has become a significant change in this current educational environment. School officials are no longer satisfied with expelling students (Scipio, 2013). One of the reasons extends back to the No Child Left behind Act of 2001, which emphasized having high graduation rates; thus, school officials were more apt to give a behaviorally challenging student a second chance via an alternative educational placement (NCLB, 2001; Scipio, 2013). Thus, the decision to place a student who is perceived as at-risk into a separate school program has continued to be an appealing option for school systems and students (Atkins & Bartuska, 2010).

   Types of alternative schools. Various forms of alternative schools have developed across the nation to address the growing problems that hinder the education of students (Raywid, 1999). The increase of alternative programs across the nation and the variations across programs make it difficult to establish a concrete description of what constitutes an alternative education program (Atkins & Bartuska, 2010; Lange & Sletten, 2002; Miller, 1995; Raywid, 1999). According to researchers (Ascher, 1982; Cofield, 2005; Lange & Sletten, 2002; Raywid, 1994), it is difficult to provide a comprehensive listing of the types of alternative schools due to the continuous development of alternative programs and rules that govern them individually. With estimates of over 20,000 alternatives currently operating within the public education system, it is difficult to provide a concise description that would apply across the country (Lange &Sletten, 2002, p.6). According to Neumann (1994), while there was not a typical model of an alternative school, there appeared to be common structures and processes. Raywid

(1983) was one of the first to attempt to develop a comprehensive typology by providing a detailed analysis of alternative education and alternative schools by describing three types of alternative programs: Type I, II, and III alternative schools (Raywid, 1990).

Type I alternative schools are schools students make the choice to attend; they typically are relaxed and emphasized fairness, and individual creativity (Raywid, 1990). Also, type one schools were "likely to reflect a mix of ability levels among students—the weaker and the able, the motivated and the unmotivated" (Raywid, 1990, p. 29). Type I schools offer full-time, multiyear, education options for students of all kinds, including students needing individualization, those seeking an innovative or challenging curriculum, or dropouts wishing to earn their diploma. The second type of alternative program described in Raywid's (1990) article provided students a last chance to continue their public education prior to expulsion. According to Raywid (1990), this type of school was designed for disruptive students who have been removed from regular school programs in order to reduce the amount of distractions they cause to other students. The third type of alternative program described in Raywid's (1990) article was remedial in terms of academic, social, and/or emotional skills. Raywid (1990) reported that these programs "are perhaps today's most rapidly increasing alternative schools, developed in the interest of dropout prevention and responding to the needs of students judged to be at-risk" (p. 27-28). In common with the second type of schools, they assumed that "the cause of the student's troubles lies somewhere within the student" (p. 27-28). According to Raywid (1990), type three alternative schools were created to help students eliminate their weaknesses "through intensive counseling, unusual support, or remediation" (p. 27-

28). Finally, Type III programs often offer short-term, yet therapeutic, settings for students with social and emotional difficulties that produce obstacles to learning (Aron, 2006).

In acceptance of Raywid's (1990) typology of alternative schools, the alternative schools relevant to this study are those that she classified as type two alternative schools. Type II schools focus on discipline and aim to separate, contain, and reform disruptive students (Raywid, 1990). Students do not typically choose to attend type two alternative schools, but are sent for specified periods of time or until behavior and academic requirements are met. More specifically, type two alternative education programs could serve as a safety net to protect school systems from violence, assist in meeting state proficiency standards, and decrease the rates for students dropping out of school (Atkins & Bartuska, 2010). An assignment to a school district's disciplinary alternative education program is considered a higher level of consequence than an assignment of in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension (Kralevich, 2007). School districts have utilized alternative schools to address misbehavior for many years. Regardless of the reason, disciplinary alternative education programs are still a common disciplinary practice used in schools (Christle, Nelson, & Jolivette, 2004; Texas Education Agency, 2009).

Currently, there is an increase of type two alternative school programs throughout the nation. The enrollment increases in alternative schools have been directly associated with the increase of school related offenses which require students to be removed from the traditional educational setting and placed in alternative settings (Lehr, Lanners, Lange, 2003; Scipio, 2013). Behavioral outbursts, criminal involvement, and fighting are

just a few of the many reasons that students are placed in type two alternative schools (O'Brien & Curry, 2009). As discipline is the main focus of type two alternative schools, children placed in this type of alternative education setting often come with a set of stigmas attached to them. In some instances, they are viewed by educators in traditional settings as the disruptive children; those who do not have any interest in school and just come because they are required. Van Acker (2007) expressed that the placement of students into alternative school settings occurs to protect the majority of the students from the dangerous behaviors of the disruptive. With stigmas as such, there is an increased demand for proper leadership in alternative schools; hence, the perfect leadership match for at-risk youth is crucial to their success (Cofield, 2005).

Effects of Exclusionary Discipline

The effects of exclusionary discipline, such as suspension, expulsion, and alternative school placement, are not new topics in the field of education. For several years, educators and mental health professionals have expressed concern over the potential disadvantages of suspension. Skiba, Eckes, and Brown (2009/10) believed that suspensions and expulsions have caused particular controversy at the school district level because many students have been suspended or expelled for seemingly minor infractions. While schools have a responsibility to create safe environments that are conducive to learning, research on the use of suspension has identified it as a predictor of further suspension (Atkins et al., 2002; Dupper, 1994; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Hybl, 1993; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Raffaele Mendez, 2003; Safer, 1986; Tobin, Sugai, & Colvin, 1996), which may in part be attributed to a paradoxical effect of suspension that rewards

students who do not enjoy school with a vacation when they are disruptive or violent (Atkins et al., 2002; Rutherford, 1978). Although a primary goal of suspension is to decrease or eliminate the likelihood that a student recommits an offense that requires another form of disciplinary action to occur. Unfortunately, given that many children are suspended multiple times during the year, it has been acknowledged that suspension can often be ineffective in its intentions (Hudley, 1994; Radin, 1988).

Arcia (2006) explained that schools rely too heavily on exclusion as a primary discipline strategy. Furthermore, despite its prevalent use, there is no support in the research for punitive and exclusionary approaches such as suspension and expulsion (Christie, Nelson, & Jolivette, 2004; Mayer, 1995; Osher, Bear, Sprague & Doyle, 2010; Skiba et al., 1997). Explicitly, suspension and expulsion is ineffective and often has little positive effect on student behaviors (Christie, Nelson, & Jolivette, 2004; Reynolds, Ortengren, Richards & de Wit, 2006). Exclusionary methods of isolation do not address positive behaviors, and thus do not change inappropriate behaviors. Consequently, the behaviors become repetitive and the same offenders often repeat such behavior, which often results in self-removal from the educational system (Skiba & Knesting, 2011; Wald & Losen, 2003).

The ultimate exclusionary school discipline consequence is isolation and segregation from educational and societal opportunities. For that reason, due to its disproportionately negative impact on students of color, exclusionary school discipline can be viewed as an oppressive educational practice (Fine, 1991; Kozol, 2005; Weis & Fine, 2005). Yet and still, schools are relying on exclusionary policies and practices to

regulate student behavior although these policies and practices are only providing a short-term solution for more chronic problems. Despite its frequent use, research on exclusionary discipline indicates that it is not effective in reducing the behavior problems intended to be addressed (Mayer, 1995; Skiba et al., 1997).

For illustration, in 2008, an American Psychological Association (APA) Zero Tolerance Task Force reviewed literature related to 20 years of implemented zero tolerance policies to determine whether there was evidence to support their use (APA Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). The task force concluded that rather than reduce the frequency of future misbehavior, school suspensions may actually increase the rate of misbehavior and future suspensions (APA Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). As well, research has linked exclusionary practices to increased antisocial behavior among students, an increase in vandalism, and a greater likelihood of students dropping out or failing (Raffaele-Mendez, 2003; Tobin, Sugai, & Colvin, 1996). And, students who have been suspended or expelled are more likely to attend disciplinary alternative schools, become academically disengaged, drop out, and/or become involved in the juvenile justice system (U.S. Department of Justice, 2012; Wald & Losen, 2003).

Researchers Nicholas-Crotty, Birchmeier, and Valentine (2009) asserted that the racially disproportionate use of exclusionary discipline by schools has created patterns of disproportionate referrals to juvenile courts. They examined school disciplinary data from 53 Missouri counties and found that schools disproportionately targeting Black students in exclusionary discipline also experienced higher rates of juvenile court referrals for Black youth. More specifically, African Americans comprised 15% of the juvenile

population, 26% of juvenile arrests, 44% of juvenile detentions, 46% of youth sent to adult court, and 58% of youth sent to state prisons (Nicholas-Crotty et al., 2009). Similarly, the NCES reported in 2010 that African Americans comprised 27% of all dropouts and 52% of African American male dropouts have been incarcerated by age 30 (NCES, 2016). In light of the negative consequences associated with exclusionary practices, racial disparities in discipline suggest students from some groups are at even greater risk for negative outcomes relative to students from other groups (Carter, Fine & Russell, 2014). Hence, exclusionary discipline has been linked to various undesirable outcomes, and what is seemingly a minor disciplinary consequence may actually endanger students' educational future and negatively impact their lives.

When students are removed from the instructional environment, their opportunity to learn more appropriate behavior may be decreased (Olsen, 1982). Moreover, exclusion through suspension and expulsion is also associated with school disengagement and poorer academic outcomes (Gersch & Nolan, 1994; Masia-Warner et al., 2005; McIntosh, Flannery, Sugai, Braun, & Cochrane, 2008; Reschly & Christenson, 2006; Yelsma, Yelsma, & Hovestadt, 1991), dropping out (Christle et al., 2005; DeRidder, 1991; Lee & Burkam, 2003; Raffaele Mendez, 2003; Skiba, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Smith, 1991; Townsend, 2000; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986) and ultimately, involvement in the criminal justice system (Balfanz, Spridakis, Neild, & Legters, 2003; Christle et al., 2005; Fowler, 2011; Leone et al., 2003; Losen & Martinez, 2013; Lovey, Docking, & Evans, 1994; Monroe, 2005a; Noguera, 2003; Wald & Losen, 2003).

Poorer Academic Outcomes

Students who are already performing poorly in school are the most likely to be suspended, forcing them to miss out on instruction and causing them to fall further behind (Arcia, 2006; Brown, 2007; Cartledge & Kourea, 2008; Gordon, Della Piana, & Keleher, 2000; Losen & Skiba, 2010; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Townsend, 2000). The importance of engaged time in academic learning and student achievement has been examined (Greenwood, Horton, & Utley, 2002; Greenwood, Terry, Marquis, & Walker, 1994). Utilizing a structural equation model, Greenwood et al. (1994) tested three theoretical models related to time spent learning and student achievement. Results of their analysis suggested that the best fit model was one that included student engagement as a construct that mediated the effects of school instruction on academic achievement (Greenwood et al., 1994). Greenwood et al. (2002) further demonstrated a positive relationship between the amount and quality of time spent engaged in academic learning and student achievement.

Arcia (2006) found in a study of suspensions and achievement that, prior to suspension; students who had the highest number of days in suspensions had lower achievement than students who had fewer or no suspensions. More specifically, the positive relationships between the amount and quality of engaged time in academic learning and student achievement (Brophy, 1988; Greenwood et al., 2002) and conversely, between school alienation/school bonding and subsequent delinquency (Hawkins, Doueck, & Lishner, 1988), procedures like out-of-school suspension and expulsion that remove students from the opportunity to learn and potentially weaken the school bond are potentially risky interventions. For example, when a student's

disciplinary consequence is out-of-school suspension they are many times provided their school work to complete, but often do not have the assistance to complete the work that has caused some students to do poorly on assignments or fall behind academically. As well, Williams (1979) stated that students who are often delayed academically prior to suspension return to school even further behind their classmates and argued that suspension has a negative impact on self-respect, creates a stigma among peers, and increases the suspended student's contact with the delinquent subculture.

Impact on Dropout and Graduation

A student's decision to drop out of school is one that will affect the outcomes of the rest of their lives. Dropouts encounter problems such as a lack of employment, low-status jobs, less chance to advance and less pay, as well as being more likely to be dependent on public assistance as a result of their decisions made prior to graduation (Beck & Muia, 1980). Students who choose to exit the school environment have not made an impulsive decision based on a single event. Rather their decision is often based on their cumulative educational experiences, good and bad (Hardy-Fortin, 2012).

One researcher (Azzam, 2007) believes many dropouts view school as being boring and fall too far behind to catch up. Another (Coley, 1995) suggests an overall dislike of school, bad grades and not getting along with staff lead to drop out. Employing a multivariate analysis, Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock (1986) explored factors related to dropping out of school. Findings revealed that 32.7% of sophomores who had dropped out of school had also been suspended at least once, whereas 10.7% of the sophomores were dropouts that had never been suspended. Thus, students were three times more

66

likely to drop out if they had at least one suspension (Ekstrom et al., 1986). In a

multivariate analysis of the same database, Wehlage and Rutter (1986) reported that

school discipline emerged as one of the strongest factors predicting school dropout.

Similarly, in a logistic regression analysis of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth,

1997 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002), Suh, Suh, & Houston (2007) reported

suspension as a strong predictor of school dropout.

Involvement with the Legal System

Schools' exclusionary discipline practices appear to be introducing students to the

juvenile justice system at an early age. Students across the country have been referred to

the juvenile courts for minor offenses occurring in school. James (2011) argues that

schools feed prisons through four different avenues: high school dropouts, suspensions,

arrest and referrals, and lack of collegiate readiness. An example of such a link is best

illustrated when examining findings from the U.S. Department of Justice's (2004, 2007)

Bureau of Justice Statistics which reported 34% of federal and state inmates and 51% of

those on death row did not graduate from high school. Costenbader & Markson (1998)

employed a 15- item survey and Hightower's (1988) Student Rating Scale (SRS) to

examine factors associated with school suspension. The study revealed that students who

were suspended were more likely than those that weren't suspended to be involved with

the legal system. For the years 2008-2009, the state of North Carolina reported 16,499

school disciplinary complaints which ended up accounting for 43% of *all* delinquency

complaints filed in their juvenile justice system (Langberg & Brege, 2009).

Referrals to the juvenile courts have resulted from class disruption, low-value theft, and other acts that do not cause imminent threat to students' safety and do not involve weapons (Morgan et al., 2014). Students who are suspended or expelled from school often spend time unsupervised in the community where they encounter trouble (Fabelo et al., 2011). Consequently, many of these youth become involved in the juvenile justice system. Research has suggested that when youth make contact with the juvenile justice system at a young age, there is a greater likelihood that they will drop out of school. These youth also have recurring involvement with the juvenile and criminal court systems (Morgan et al., 2014). The process through which youth are excluded from school and eventually become involved in the juvenile justice system is commonly often referred to as the School to Prison Pipeline (ACLU, 2014; Christle et al., 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Lerner & Galambos, 1998; Sandler, Wong, Morales, & Patel, 2000; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba & Rausch, 2004; Wald & Losen, 2003).

School to Prison Pipeline

School systems have increasingly become a point of contact for students being arrested or referred to the juvenile justice system since the implementation of zero tolerance policies. Schools systems have also more heavily relied on the police and juvenile courts to address discipline problems. In result, the increased court involvement in school discipline has become a major concern for both the educational and juvenile justice communities. Moreover, the increasing suspension and expulsion of students from schools to juvenile justice facilities has been referred to as the "school to prison pipeline"

(SPP), whereby students are referred to the juvenile courts for school related behavior and subsequently become entangled in the juvenile justice system (ACLU, 2014).

Explicitly, the school to prison pipeline refers to the policies and practices that push children out of schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems (ACLU, 2014; Christle et al., 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Lerner & Galambos, 1998; Sandler et al., 2000; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba & Rausch, 2004; Wald & Losen, 2003; Wruble, 2016). The school to prison pipeline theory points to suspension, expulsion, and the disproportionate issuance of disciplinary consequences as the catalyst for driving students away from education and subsequently increasing the likelihood of incarceration (ACLU, 2014; Advancement Project, 2010; Cregor & Hewitt, 2011; Skiba et al., 2011; Wald & Losen, 2003, 2011). Furthermore, the policies and practices contributing to the school to prison pipelines make the criminalization and incarceration of children and youth more likely and the attainment of a high quality education less likely (ACLU, 2014; Krezmien et al., 2010; Pantoja, 2013).

Throughout the nation, school discipline policies are increasing the likelihood that students who misbehave will have contact with the juvenile and criminal justice systems (Gonzalez, 2012; Wruble, 2016). Specifically, the link between schools and prisons was established a century ago through the introduction of truant officers (Casella, 2003); presently, the implementation of zero-tolerance and exclusionary policies has strengthened that link. Zero tolerance policies and other punitive measures used in schools, such as exclusionary discipline, school-based court referrals, and arrests, have become essential factors influencing the school to prison pipeline (Fabelo et. al., 2011;

Morgan et al., 2014, Losen, 2011; Losen & Martinez, 2013; Wruble, 2016). Additionally,

according to CRDC (2014), Black students represent 16% of student enrollment, 27% of

students referred to law enforcement, and 31% of students subjected to a school-related

arrest. In comparison, White students represent 51% of students enrolled, 41% of

referrals to law enforcement, and 39% of students exposed to school-related arrests as

shown in Figure 2. In sum, school discipline data consistently demonstrate that

suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to law enforcement or school related arrest, are

disproportionally imposed upon students of color, particularly Black students.
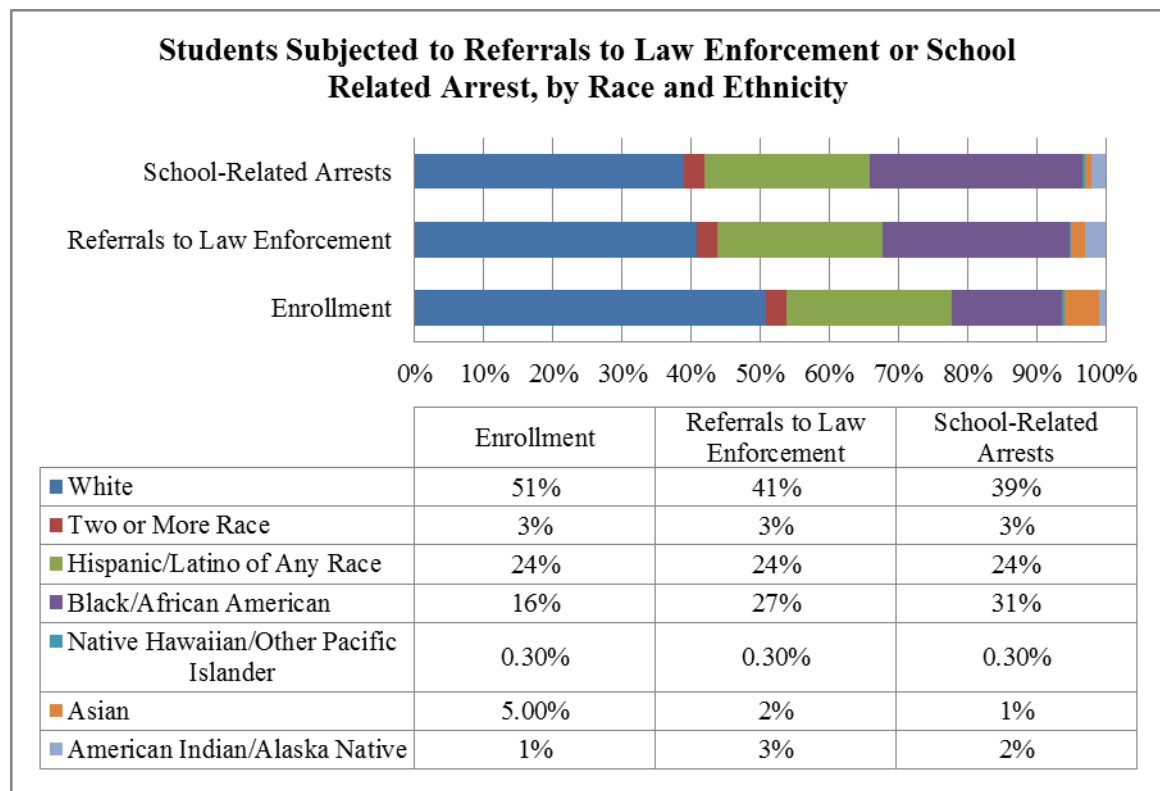
Students Subjected to Referrals to Law Enforcement or School Related Arrest, by Race and Ethnicity

	Enrollment	Referrals to Law Enforcement	School-Related Arrests
■ White	51%	41%	39%
■ Two or More Race	3%	3%	3%
■ Hispanic/Latino of Any Race	24%	24%	24%
■ Black/African American	16%	27%	31%
■ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.30%	0.30%	0.30%
■ Asian	5.00%	2%	1%
■ American Indian/Alaska Native	1%	3%	2%

Krezmien and colleagues (2010) examined the direct relationship between schools and the juvenile justice system. As a result, they found that approximately one in every ten youth involved in the juvenile justice system in the five states they studied was referred to the juvenile courts by schools. In addition, the study found that out of the nearly one million students in the cohort they studied, about 46% were repeatedly involved in the schools' disciplinary systems. Furthermore, 88% of those students subsequently became involved in the juvenile justice system (Fabelo et al., 2011).

Pantoja (2013) uses the "pipeline" as a metaphor and designates schools as Point A or the starting point of criminalizing youth behavior, and Point B as prison or end of the pipeline. Similarly, Krezmien, Leone & Wilson (2014) identified two different pathways to the school to prison pipeline. Figure 3 illustrates both paths. Path 1 occurs when schools uses exclusionary discipline and excludes students from school resulting from disciplinary or academic issues (Krezmien et al., 2014). Hence, Path 1 can indirectly introduce students to the juvenile justice system by taking them from school and removing a supervised and structured environment.

Path 2, identified by Krezmien and his colleagues (2014), occurs when students are referred directly from school to the juvenile courts. A School-based Juvenile Court

Referral (SBJCR) is a referral sent to the court system by a school official in response to inappropriate student behavior that is thought to be criminal activity (Krezmien et al., 2014). The student is then directly introduced to law enforcement, the courts, and the juvenile justice system. After a youth receives a SBJCR there are many different outcomes that could arise ranging from dismissal of the SBJCR to placement in a juvenile correctional facility. The Breaking Schools' Rules study found that 23% of students who were disciplined in school were also involved with the juvenile justice system (Fabelo et al., 2011).
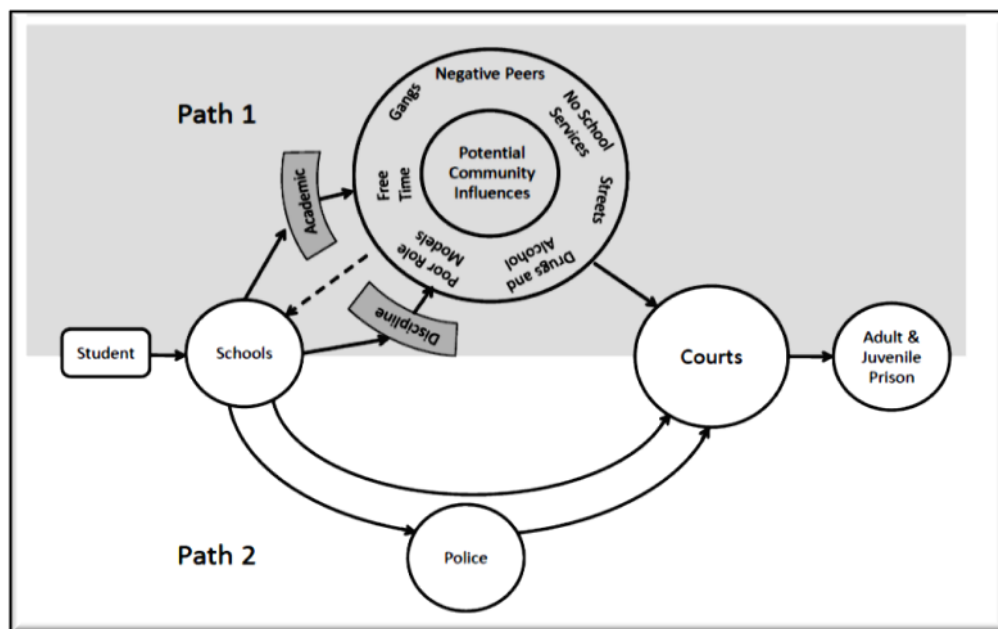
Figure 3. School to Prison Pathways
Note: School to Prison Pathways. Adapted from Krezmien, M.P., Leone, P.E. and Wilson, M.G. (2014). Chapter 12: Marginalized students, school exclusions and the school to prison pipeline.
SOURCE: Church II, W., Springer, D.W., & Roberts, A. R. (Eds.c), *Juvenile Justice Sourcebook*, 2nd ed., pp. 267-287. New York: Oxford University Press.

Researchers Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier, and Valentine (2009) stated that the overrepresentation of exclusionary discipline among students of color in school is related to the over representation of minorities in the juvenile justice system. Krezmien et al., (2010) attempted to understand this phenomenon by studying the extent to which schools refer students to the juvenile courts. The researchers sought to explain the relationship between the educational and legal systems. In addition, they suggested that specific student characteristics be examined in order to illustrate why certain subgroups, specifically Black students and students with disabilities, are overrepresented in the school to prison pipeline (Krezmien et al., 2010).

Disproportionate Discipline by Race, Gender, and Disability Status

Education research has consistently documented the disproportionate use of discipline in schools by race, gender, and disability status (Children's Defense Fund, 1975; CRDC, 2012; Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006; Losen, 2011; Losen & Skiba, 2010; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010; Raffaele Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Skiba et al., 2011; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1997; Wallace et al., 2008; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982). More specifically, the issue of disproportionality in school data, a phenomenon in which students relative to their proportion in the population experience overrepresentation or underrepresentation along a particular data point, plagues schools nationally. With regard to exclusionary discipline, disproportionate discipline has been found to be much greater when reviewing suspension data and weaker when reviewing expulsion data. One conclusion for the more noticeable effect of suspension disproportionality is that suspensions are more subjective than expulsions.

Subjective suspensions are defined as those suspensions where adults used their judgment to determine if a student's behavior warranted a school suspension. These subjective decisions require observing the student behavior and placing value judgment on that behavior to determine if the student behavior warranted a specific level of school discipline (Balderas, 2014; Greflund, 2013). Conversely, objective suspensions such as for possessing a firearm, selling a controlled substance; committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault and possession of an explosive have shown few racial differences (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Objective suspensions are documented and processed by district and federal mandates (i.e. zero tolerance). As well, expulsions involve more collaborative decision making at the administrative level than suspensions, which are often unilaterally imposed at the school site level (Noltemeyer & Mcloughin, 2010).

Race and Discipline

Despite the findings related to the ineffectiveness of suspension and expulsion (Hudley, 1994; Radin, 1988), the use of exclusionary discipline in schools continues to rise. National data trends have shown disproportionate increases in exclusion rates for students of all races (see Table 4). However, the public K-12 student suspension rates have steadily increased over the last 40 years for students of color, or non-white students (Losen, 2011). Skiba and associates (2002) illustrated that observed racial disparity was more pronounced with exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions. To date, much of the research on disproportionate use of school punishment by race has concentrated on differences between Blacks and Whites. Documentation also exists for

disproportionate use of discipline for Hispanic/Latino, and Native American students, but the evidence is less consistent.

Table 4

Percentage of Suspensions within Each Racial/Ethnic Category, By Year in the United States

	1972-73	1988-89	2006-07
White	3%	4%	5%
Hispanic	3%	5%	7%
Black	6%	10%	15%
American Indian	3%	5%	8%
Asian Pacific Islander	1%	3%	3%
Total	16%	27%	38%

Note: This table was adapted from Losen and Skiba (2010).
SOURCE: Losen, D., & Skiba, R. J. (2010).

Past and present, the overrepresentation of Black students in school suspensions and expulsions has been a continuous issue confronting school systems. Losen (2010) of the Civil Rights Project at UCLA, highlighted in a report entitled *Discipline Policies, Successful Schools, and Racial Justice* that school suspensions for Black students in kindergarten through 12th grade increased by more than 100 percent since 1970. Since the 1970s, suspension rates for students of color, especially those who were Black, began

to rise, which prompted concerns from civil rights groups (Skiba & Losen, 2016).

Distinctively, one of the earliest studies to depict racial disproportionality in school

discipline was conducted by the Children's Defense Fund in 1975. Utilizing data from the

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, suspension rates from 2,862

school districts were examined. The findings explained that the suspension rates of Black

students were two to three times higher than the rates for White students at the

elementary, middle and high school levels. Apparent by the year of the study, the

problem of racial disproportionality in school discipline is not a new problem in

education.

Since the Children's Defense Fund report (1975) studies have continued to

document disproportional representation of Black students in exclusionary school

discipline practices. As illustrated in Skiba, Michael, and Nardo's (2002) policy research

report, "The Color of Discipline: Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in

School Punishment", Table 5 is a summary of the findings of seminal studies

investigating minority overrepresentation in school suspension and expulsion since the

Children's Defense Fund (1975) report.

Table 5

Investigations of Minority Disproportionality in Office Referral, Suspension, and

Expulsion

   A. Data Indicating Disproportionality in Suspension or Other Disciplinary Action

Study	Location & Data Source	Sample	Percentage of Enrollment	Percentage Receiving Disciplinary Actions
Costenbader & Markson (1998)	One urban and one rural school district; school district records	620 middle and high school students	White 50% African American 23% Hispanic 8%	Suspension: White 12% African American 45% Hispanic 18%
Gordon, Della Piana, & Keleher (2000)	Twelve major urban school districts; suspension and expulsion data	All students who were suspended or expelled	Percentages varied across the 12 cities. Examples are: Boston White 13% African American 55% Hispanic 23% Los Angeles White 11% African American 14% Hispanic 69%	Suspensions and Expulsion Data for selected cities: Boston White 9% African American 70% Hispanic 19% Los Angeles White 8% African American 30% Hispanic 85% (Note: In the 12 cities studied, the proportion of African American students suspended or expelled exceeded their representation in the population by between 14% and 296 %.)
Massachusetts Advocacy Center (1986)	Boston; central administration records from 1985	All suspension data from seven middle schools over three schools years	African American 49.8%	Suspension: African American 63.8%

Study	Location & Data Source	Sample		
McFadden, Marsh, Price, & Hwang (1992)	South Florida; discipline files from the 1987-88 school year	4,391 disciplined students in grades K through 12	White 58% African American 22% Hispanic 18% Other 2%	Suspension: White 35% African American 44% Hispanic 20.6% Other .5% Corporal Punishment: White 33.1% African American 54.1% Hispanic 11.8% Other 1%
Taylor & Foster (1986)	Southeastern United States; suspension records of a medium sized school district for 1983-84 school year	All suspension records	Elementary: African American 44% Secondary: African American 45%	Elementary Suspensions: African American 67.4% Secondary Suspensions: African American 59%
Thornton & Trent (1988)	East Baton Rouge Parish, LA secondary school records 1981-82 school year	32,210 school suspension records	White 58.7% African American 42%	Suspensions: White 33% African American 66%

B. Percent of Group Suspended

Study	Location & Data Source	Sample	Percentage of Group Suspended
Kaeser (1979)	United States and Ohio's seven largest city school districts; 1975 Office of Civil Rights school survey	All students in the nation; all students in the Ohio districts	Nationwide: African American 6% White 3.1% Ohio's 7 largest city school districts: White 5.6%-16.7% African American

			13.3%-24.7%
Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles (1982)	Self-administered questionnaires of principals, teachers, and students as part of the Safe School Study (National Institute of Education, 1978)	Principals, teachers (23, 895), and students (31,103) from 641 public secondary schools (7th -12th grade) in the U.S.	White 5%-11% African American 15%-23% Hispanic 8%-17% Asian American and Pacific Islanders 6%-11% Native Americans 5%-23% Other Minorities 7%-14%

Note: The tables are summaries of the findings of seminal studies investigating minority overrepresentation in school suspension and expulsion since the Children's Defense Fund (1975) report.
SOURCE: These tables were illustrated in Skiba, Michael, and Nardo's (2000) policy research report, "The Color of Discipline: Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment."

Research from the 2012 Civil Rights Data Collection report, using 2009-2010 school year data from over 7,000 school districts with over 72,000 schools, documented that Black students were 3.5 times as likely to be suspended or expelled as their White peers. As well, Sneed's (2015) study examined how security measures in school impact suspension rates. He found that schools with high security measures in place displayed higher suspension rates for Black students when compared to their White counterparts. Similarly, Hinojosa (2008) found that Black students were over two times as likely as Whites to be given an in school suspension. However, this effect was greater when examining out of school suspensions, where Black students were nearly three and a half times more likely than Whites to be given an out of school suspension.

Similar to the past studies that reported an overrepresentation of students of color, Skiba et al. (2002) reviewed racial and gender disparities in school discipline in an urban

79

setting and found that White students were referred to the office significantly more frequently for offenses that are relatively easy to document objectively (e.g., smoking, vandalism, leaving without permission, and using obscene language). Black students, however, were referred more often for behaviors requiring more subjective judgment on the part of the person making the referral (e.g., disrespect, excessive noise, threatening behavior, and loitering) (Skiba et.al., 2002; Losen, 2011).

Consistent with research on racially disproportionate discipline, in 2007, 49% of Black males compared to and 21% of White males were suspended in grades 6-12 (Planty et al., 2009). In contrast, White students comprised 56% of the population that same year, yet only 21% of White males in grades six through twelve reported being suspended.

Research on school discipline in schools has consistently illustrated that students of color have routinely been punished at greater rates than their representation in schools (Eitle & Eitle, 2004; Elliott & Ageton, 1980; Fenning & Rose, 2007; Hinojosa, 2008; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; McFadden & Marsh, 1992; Nichols, Ludwin, & Iadicola, 1999; Skiba et al., 2002). More recent, in 2014, the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights presented a data snapshot of school discipline in the United States. The data snapshot presented statistics from the CRDC (2014) report which revealed that in the 2011-12 school year, Black students represented 16% of the student population, but 32-42% of students suspended or expelled across the United States (see Figure 4). In comparison, White students also represent a similar range of between 31-40% of students suspended or expelled, but they were 51% of the student population

(CRDC, 2014). However, Black students are not the only students of color affected by racially disproportionate discipline.

Students Recieving Suspensions and Explusions, By Race and Ethnicity

	Enrollment	In-School Suspension	Out-of-School Suspension (Single)	Out-of-School Suspension (Multiple)	Expulsions
White	51%	40%	36%	31%	36%
Two or More Races	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Hispanic/Latino of Any Race	24%	22%	23%	21%	22%
Black/African American	16%	32%	33%	42%	34%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.50%	0.20%	0.40%	0.30%	0.30%
Asian	5%	1%	2%	1%	1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.50%	0.20%	2%	2%	3%

Figure 4. Students Receiving Suspensions and Expulsions, by Race and Ethnicity
Note: Detail may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Totals: Enrollment is 49 million students, in-school suspension is 3.5 million students, single out-of-school suspension is 1.9 million students, multiple out-of-school suspension is 1.55 million students, and expulsion is 130,000 students. Data reported in this figure represents 99% of responding schools.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-12 (CRDC, 2014).

Browne (2003) conducted a study called "Derailed: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track" for the Advancement Project and examined data from across the United States. The data confirmed that the schoolhouse to jailhouse track is crowded with a disproportionate number of children of color, suggesting that schools have become a

harmful environment for these young people. Rabrenovic and Levin (2003) using 2000-2001 data from the state of Massachusetts found that Hispanic and Black students combined made up only 19.4% of the student population, yet they accounted for 56.7% of school suspensions. While it is clear that students of color are more harshly impacted by school discipline, when examining trends in disproportionality most of the research base focuses on Black disproportionality. The reason for such focus tends to stem from the fact that most findings illustrate more consistent patterns of overrepresentation in the suspension of Black students as compared to the overrepresentation of Hispanic/Latino students (Skiba & Rausch, 2006).

In terms of Latino disproportionality, the research base is comparably much smaller. Though the research base on Latino disproportionality in school discipline is scarce, there are some studies that have reported instances of such disproportionality (Bireda, 2007; Civil Rights Project, 2000; Gordon et al., 2000; Rausch & Skiba, 2004; Skiba et al., 2008). One such study reporting significant Latino overrepresentation, illustrated that Latino students had twice the odds of being suspended when compared to White students (Skiba et al., 2011). Similarly, in an analysis of 2002-2003 school discipline data for the state of Indiana, Rausch and Skiba (2004) reported that the Latino student population was two times more likely to be suspended when compared to their White counterparts. Other studies pertaining to disproportionality in school discipline for students of color have found little to no patterns of Latino overrepresentation in school suspensions. One particular study highlighting the inconsistency of findings in Latino overrepresentation was conducted by Gordon et al. (2000). In this analysis of school

82

discipline data from 12 U.S. cities, the author discovered patterns for Latino student overrepresentation in only 1 of the 12 cities. Taken as a whole, the studies examining Latino disproportionality in school discipline demonstrate inconsistent findings in terms of overrepresentation in school suspensions.

The gap between Black and White student suspension rates has more than tripled and Latino suspension rates have increased over time as well (Losen, 2011; Losen & Skiba, 2010). Similar results were found when considering expulsion rates. In a study by Noltemeyer and Mcloughlin (2010), findings revealed that Black students had an expulsion incident rate that made them 2.5 times more likely to receive an expulsion than White students, with Latinos at a 1.67 higher rate of expulsion than White students. Too, although there were more data from the Noltemeyer and Mcloughlin (2010) study regarding Latino students, the data focused mostly on Black students since they were the racial group most impacted.

Gender and Discipline

Research suggests that gender can impact the rate of disciplinary actions. Specifically, males have consistently been overrepresented as recipients of disciplinary actions (Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Skiba et al., 1997). Researchers, Imich (1994) and Skiba (2002), reported that the rate of disciplinary actions for male students is up to four times higher than it is for female students. Mendez & Knoff (2003) report more conservative estimates, with White males being more than twice as likely as White females to be suspended, and Black males being nearly twice as likely as Black females to be suspended. In 2014, the US Department of Education Office

of Civil Rights reported that Black students are suspended from school at a rate three times that of white students; and black females are suspended six times the rate of white females.

McFadden and Marsh (1992) found that males represented three quarters of all discipline referrals in a study of nine schools in south Florida. They (McFadden & Marsh, 1992) also found that males represented 78 percent of defiance cases, 70 percent of truancies, 87 percent of bothering others, and two-thirds of fighting cases. Relying on data from a large Midwestern school district, Skiba and colleagues (2002) found that males were overrepresented across all types of punishment explored. Males comprised nearly 52 percent of Skiba and colleagues' (2002) sample, but comprised 63 percent of discipline referrals, 67 percent of suspensions, and 84 percent of expulsions. Moreover the ratio of male to female punishment was greater in the more severe types of punishment, as the males were represented 1.7 times greater than females in referrals, twice as great in suspensions, and five times greater in expulsions (Skiba et al., 2002). This pattern has also been found to be robust across racial and ethnic categories as well as school types (Mendez & Knoff, 2003).

In another example, the CRDC 2011-12 data revealed that Black males and females have higher suspension rates than any of their peer groups as illustrated in Figure 5, and while males and females each represent about half of the student population, males represent nearly three out of four of those suspended multiple times out of school and expelled (see Figure 6) (CRDC, 2014). Also of importance, research on disproportionate representation of students of diverse ethnicities played a critical role in students being

placed in restrictive environments that lead to placement in special education (Morrier,

Hess, & Heflin, 2008).

Students Receiving Out-of-School Suspensions by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Black/African American
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino of Any Race
- Two or More Races
- White

Boys: 7%, 20%, 13%, 3%, 9%, 11%, 6%

Girls: 3%, 12%, 7%, 1%, 4%, 5%, 2%
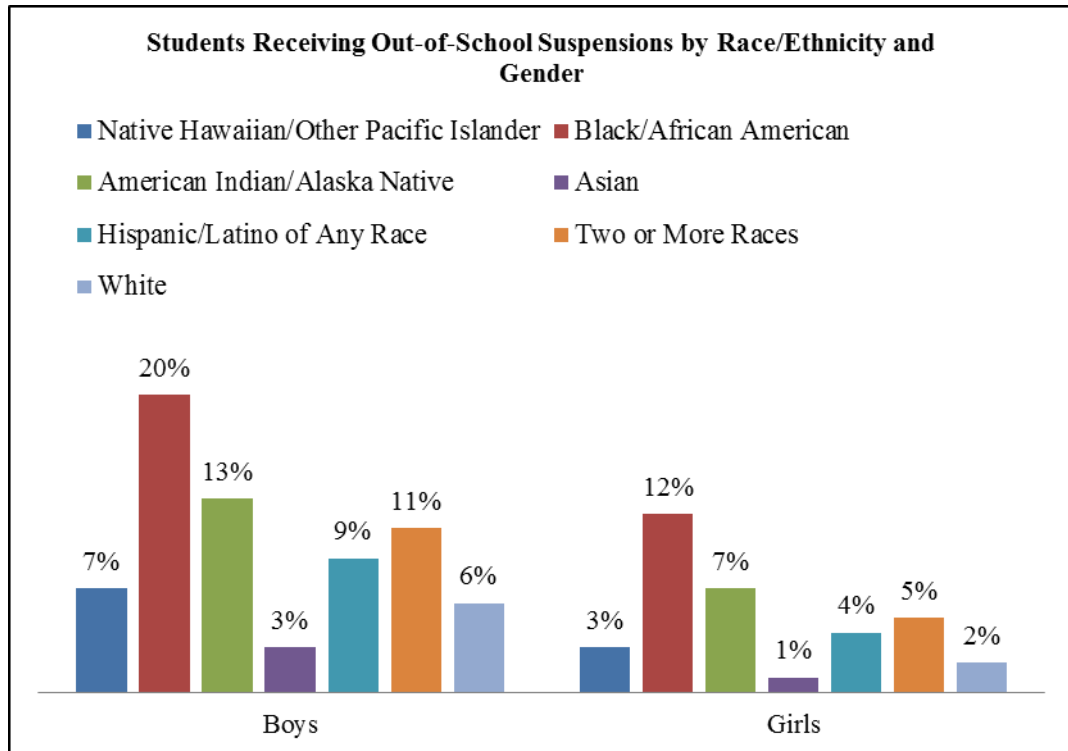
Figure 5. Students receiving out of school suspensions, by race/ethnicity and gender
Note: Data reflects 99% of CRDC schools and a total of 290,000 American Indian/Alaska Native females, 300,000 American Indian/Alaska Native males, 1.1 million Asian males, 1.2 million Asian females, 120,000 Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander males and females, 3.7 million black females, 3.8 million black males, 5.6 million Hispanic females, 5.9 million Hispanic males, 630,000 males of two or more races, 640,000 females of two or more races, 12 million white males, and 12 million white females.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-12 (CRDC, 2014).
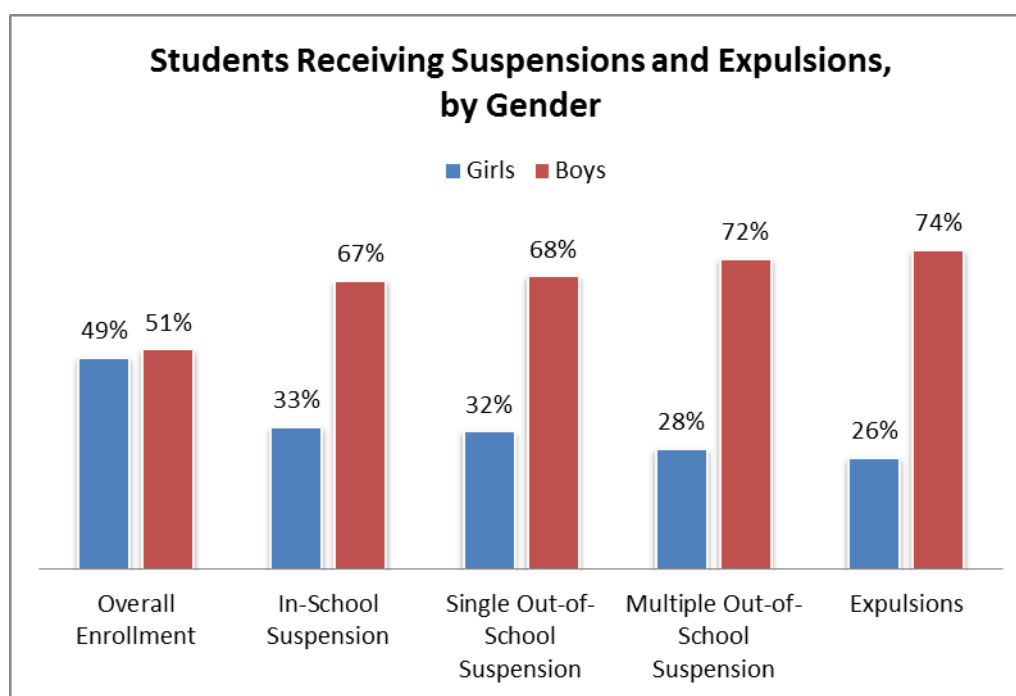
Figure 6. Students receiving suspensions and expulsions, by gender

Note: Detail may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Totals: Enrollment is 49 million students, in-school suspensions 3.5 million students, single out-of-school suspension is 1.9 million students, multiple out-of-school suspension is 1.55 million students, and expulsions are130,000 students. Data reported in this figure represents 99% of responding schools.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-12 (CRDC, 2014).

Disability Status and School Discipline

Exclusionary discipline has a negative impact for students with and without a disability. Yet, like gender-by-race interactions, disability status has been identified as a predictor of disproportionate discipline. Kunjufu (2005) stated that once individuals in society can admit to the existence of racism and discrimination for students with disabilities, individuals can understand perceptions of racism in the public education industry. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reauthorized in 2004, placed extensive requirements on states to annually report on the frequency, type of

86

infraction, and discipline consequence disaggregated by race, ethnicity and disability status in an effort to shed light on the disproportionate use of discipline for students with disabilities. In spite of this, there is consistent evidence of higher rates of suspension for students with disabilities than their peers without disabilities (Achilles, McLaughlin, & Croninger, 2007; Bowman-Perrott et al., 2011; CRDC, 2012; Krezmien et al., 2006; Losen, 2011; Rausch & Skiba, 2006; Rocque, 2010; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Wagner, Newman, & Cameto, 2004; Zhang, Katsiyannis, & Herbst, 2004).

In a national sample, Zhang et al. (2004) documented over representation with suspension for Native American and Black students with disabilities compared to their White peers with disabilities. Losen (2011) reported that in 2008, at least 10 states suspended over 20% of their Black students with disabilities. These same states reported suspension rates between 10% and 39% for Native American students with disabilities. Likewise, Chinn and Hughes (1987) stated disproportionate representation exists when individuals from specific ethnics groups within disability categories are identified at a rate of approximately 10% greater than that of the general population. More specifically, researchers have identified that Black males have a higher likelihood for suspension and expulsion among the students with disabilities (Achilles et al., 2007; Bowman-Perrott et al., 2011; Losen, 2011; Losen & Skiba, 2010).

School Discipline and its Impact on Black Males

Research has suggested disproportionality is primarily a function of adult perception of subjective behaviors (Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2011). Subjective behaviors are often identified as inappropriate when the student does not intend to be so.

Students talking when the teacher is talking, play fighting, and expressing humor have also been interpreted as disrespect, aggression, and insults (Hanna, 1988; Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004). Moreover, researchers Bennett and Harris (1982) claimed that one of the fundamental variables in influencing decisions regarding discipline was the adult's expectation of students. For example, Grant (1988) identified adult perceptions of Black male students and found that teachers primarily focus on controlling student behaviors when there is a predominant representation of Black males in the class.

Research has also confirmed that Blacks males are consistently punished at levels that are disproportionate to their representation in schools which impacts the likelihood of involvement in the criminal justice system (Civil Rights Project, 2000). For illustration, Sealey-Ruiz (2011) discusses that the United States has the highest rate of incarceration when compared to other countries in that one in every 100 Americans is incarcerated and even worse, the high school graduation rate for Black males in prison is only 47%. These two factors are directly related in that when students are suspended or pushed out of school for misbehavior, the student continues to act out in settings outside of schools, which may lead to laws being broken. So it can be assumed that since Black males are most frequently punished by exclusionary discipline, they are also more likely to commit a crime and become incarcerated as an adult (Sealey-Ruiz, 2011). According to Ferguson (2000), being Black and male in public schools increased the risk for various harmful consequences, including academic failure, inclusion in special education, and exposure to exclusionary discipline practices, incarceration, and violence.

In the United States there are more than two million children with at least one incarcerated parent, and these youth are five times more likely to end up in prison themselves (Murray & Farrington, 2005). Large urban school districts are often at the forefront of criminalization tactics and most urban areas have specific police units dedicated to patrolling schools (Devine, 1996). In these types of schools, acts that were historically dealt with internally now result in arrests of the offending students (Fuentes, 2003). As a result, an increasing number of school referrals are being sent to juvenile courts for adjudication, many of which are for minor misconduct (Hirschfield, 2008). This has led to a blurring of the lines between schools and the juvenile justice system as to where the responsibility for social control on school grounds lies.

Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, and Palma (2009) presented data that examines the incarceration rates for high school dropouts, both male and female, ranging in age from 16-24 years. When race and ethnic groups were examined, it was discovered that incarceration rates were considerably higher among Black males than any other ethnic group. Sum et al. (2009) state, "Approximately 23 of every 100 young Black male adults was institutionalized versus only six to seven of every 100 Asians, Hispanics, and Whites" (p. 10). Across gender and race, Costenbader & Markson (1998) also found that Black males were overrepresented in the suspended subsamples and were more likely to be involved with the legal system. Caton conducted research on the overrepresentation of Black males in the population of students who are suspended and expelled from school because of existing zero-tolerance policies (Caton, 2012; Fenning & Rose, 2007; Ferguson, 2000; Henfield, Owens, & Moore, 2008; Monroe, 2005b; Noguera, 2003,

89

2008; Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2008, 2010). Caton's study reported that Black males are four times more likely than their peers to be suspended and/or expelled from school (Caton, 2012).

The literature reviewed related to Black males and school discipline consequences did suggest further studies to address the gaps in the current literature. For instance, Davis (2003) also made contributions to literature on Black males in public schools. The study was conducted to provide an understanding and rationales for underachievement and school engagement. In researching the early schooling of Black males, the author maintained a stance that Black males present cultural and gender challenges for schools. Further, he asserted that schools are insufficiently addressing the social and developmental needs of Black males (Brown & Davis, 2000). With the effects of exclusionary discipline clearly targeting and funneling Black males into the school to prison pipeline, schools must opt to address discipline in alternative ways, if they believe in equitable practices for all students.

Incorporating School-Based Interventions

Racial discrimination and inequitable school discipline practices are two foundational aspects of the issue concerning the disparities in school discipline. Hence, given that the discipline rates among students of color have remained consistently high (Skiba et al., 2011), it is suggested that alternatives to traditional disciplinary practices be explored. Fenning and Rose (2007) discussed the pressing social justice issue of exclusionary discipline practices on students of color and suggest that the focus shift to use the data to create proactive school discipline policies that will benefit all.

Interventions, school-wide and individual, that use proactive, preventative approaches, address the underlying cause or purpose of the behavior, and reinforce positive behaviors, have been associated with increases in academic engagement, academic achievement, and reductions in suspensions and school dropouts (American Psychological Association, 2008; Christle et al., 2005; Crone, Horner, & Hawken, 2010; Liaupsin, Umbreit, Ferro, Urso, & Upreti, 2006; Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005; Putnam, Horner, & Algozzine, 2006; Skiba & Sprague, 2008; Theriot, Craun, & Dupper, 2010). Therefore, schools must use less punitive methods to discipline in order to reduce misconduct and to ensure a school environment that is safe and conducive to learning (Bear & Minke, 2006).

Skiba and Sprague (2008) argued that many school administrators use exclusionary and disciplinary measures not because they wish to remove students from educational opportunities, but because they need to do something and they do not know what else to do. Therefore, there is a need for schools to implement alternatives to exclusionary consequences in order to eliminate the disproportionate number of students being suspended or expelled. Improving school discipline policies and practices and addressing exiting disproportionalities are critical steps to supporting all students and dismantling the school to prison pipeline (Furlong & Morrison, 2000). Traditional behavior interventions attempt to deter undesired behaviors by a system of progressive disciplinary action whereby discipline is relative to behavior identified (Reynolds et al., 2006). Reynolds et al. (2006) confirms that these methods of discipline are often ineffective. Reynolds et al. (2006) also identified that methods of isolation do not address

91

positive behaviors and consequentially do not have lasting effects on behavioral change. Accordingly, schools have begun to use various interventions to better address student behavior and attempt to eliminate the racial disproportionalities in school discipline.

The extensive body of research documenting the current problem of disproportionate discipline and the negative outcomes for students point to practices that may help eliminate its existence (Cartledge & Kourea, 2008; Guardino, 2013; Lewis, Butler, Bonner, & Joubert, 2010; Losen & Skiba, 2010; Monroe, 2005b; Skiba et al., 2011; Theriot et al., 2010; Tobin & Vincent, 2011; Vincent & Tobin, 2011; Vincent, Swain-Brady, Tobin, & May, 2011). Accordingly, schools are now attempting to utilize less punitive approaches to discipline in order to stop the funneling of students into the school to prison pipeline. These practices include: shifting from reactive and punitive policies and practices to prevention focused culturally responsive frameworks, developing consistency for how behavior is defined and consequences delivered by building administrators, the ongoing collection and review of disaggregated behavioral data by race/ethnicity and disability status, and the use of multi-tiered systems of support (Guardino, 2013).

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

School systems often give much attention to negative student behaviors, however it is also important to systemically support student behaviors that are positive (Curtis, Van Horne, Robertson, & Karvonen, 2010). Opposed to using punishment to address misbehavior, schools need to focus on a prevention approach that promotes desired behaviors (Flannery, Guest, & Horner, 2010). One systematic method of reinforcing

positive behaviors is Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS). PBIS is a multi-tiered approach to creating a positive school environment that facilitates effective instruction and learning (Sugai & Horner, 2009; Sugai, Horner, & Lewis, 2009). The essential components of PBIS include: efforts of prevention by the faculty and administration, actions of the faculty to define and teach positive social expectations, acknowledgement of positive social behaviors by the faculty, development of consistent consequences for problem behavior that are followed by all faculty, continual efforts by faculty to collect discipline data that will be used to drive discipline decisions, intensive individualized interventions for repetitive behaviors, and an administration that actively leads the school-wide implementation (Sugai & Horner, 2009).

PBIS provides a comprehensive framework that can be used by any school to design its own system of behavioral supports for all students. Practices within PBIS are organized into a three-tiered framework (as illustrated in Figure 7 and Table 6), based on decades of prevention theory and science (e.g., Caplan, 1964; Horner & Sugai, 2000; Walker et al., 1996), including universal (tier 1), targeted-group (tier 2), and intensive individualized (tier 3) support. Each of the three tiers in the prevention model contains primary, secondary, and tertiary core elements. Tier I consists of schoolwide policies that promote and reward positive behaviors for the general student body (Sugai et al., 2009). Tier II constructs are in place to reinforce behaviors that are not modified by Tier I interventions. Tier III interventions are student specific and result only after Tiers I and II have failed to produce desired outcomes. Research reports that tertiary intervention has a

greater level of effectiveness because it is intense and specialized to the needs of specific

individuals (Swain-Bradway, 2009; Swain-Bradway & Malloy, 2009).
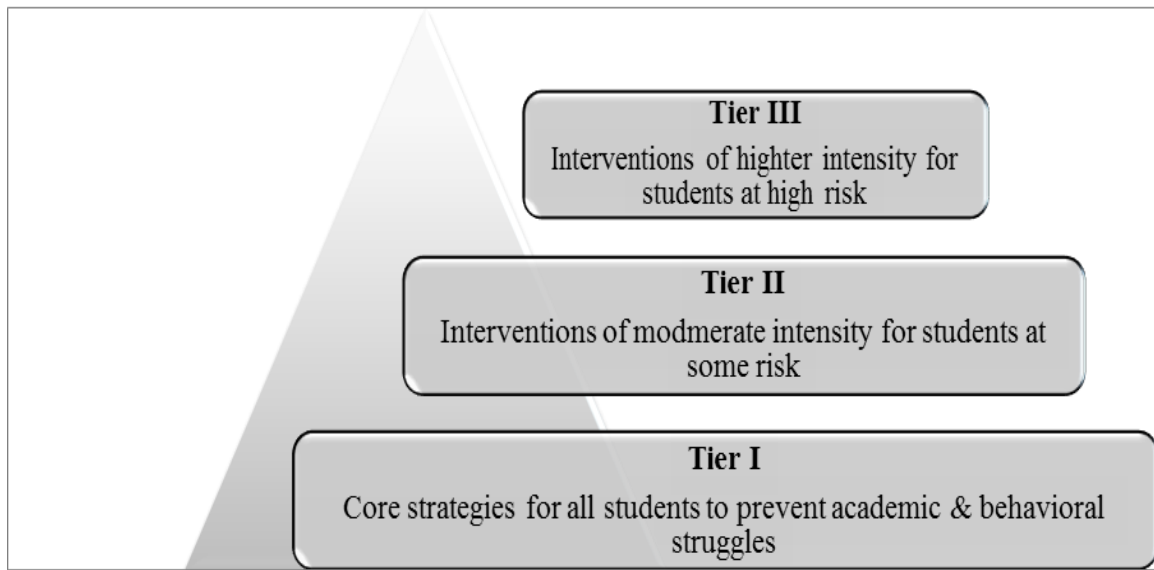
Figure 7. MTSS Tiers
Note: Figure explains interventions occurring at each tier.
SOURCE: Langberg, J. & Ciolfi, A. (2016). *Suspended progress.* Just Children Program: Legal Aid
Justice Center Report. Retrieved from https://www.justice4all.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Suspended-
Progress-Report.pdf

Table 6

Examples PBIS Strategies

Tier	PBIS Strategies
Tier 1	Defining core behavioral expectations
	Communicating and teaching what expected behaviors look like in various school settings
	Effectively designing the physical environment of the classroom
	Acknowledging and rewarding appropriate behavior

Tier 2	Increased adult supervision
	Increased instruction and practice with self-regulation and social skills
	Increased antecedent manipulations (*i.e.*, changing the events, actions, or circumstances that occur immediately before a behavior)
Tier 3	Functional behavioral assessments (*i.e.*, a process used to determine why a student
	exhibits specific behaviors and how the environment influences those behaviors)
	Individualized behavioral intervention plans
	Wraparound supports that actively involve family and community supports

Note: Table explains the strategies used at each tier when incorporating a PBIS framework, Adapted from "*Suspended progress*" by Langberg, J. & Ciolfi, A. (2016). Just Children Program: Legal Aid Justice Center Report. Retrieved from https://www.justice4all.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Suspended-Progress-Report.pdf

The 3-tiered model includes active, early, and consistent teaching and acknowledgement of appropriate behavior in schools (Tidwell, Flannery, & Lewis-Palmer, 2003). PBIS models have shown success in schools throughout the nation; and, it has been considered one of the most promising ways to reduce low-level violent and disruptive behaviors and possibly reduce their escalation to high level disruptive behaviors (Osher et al., 2010; Sugai & Horner, 2009; Sugai, Horner, & Lewis, 2009). Additionally, research has shown that PBIS is effective in reducing the need for disciplinary action, improving school climate, and improving students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral health outcomes (Morgan, Salomon, Plotkin, & Cohen, 2014).

The majority of research studying the effectiveness of PBIS has been in elementary school settings, with less research targeted at the high school. Nevertheless, in one application of this approach, Morrissey, Bohanon, and Fenning (2010) found that tier I interventions alone reduced the percentage of students with two to five office discipline

referrals (ODRs) from 33% to 23% in a Chicago high school over the 2003-2005 school years. Conversely, Fenning et al. (2013) reported that in their study, high schools with harsh punitive codes of conduct did not reap the benefits typically associated with properly implemented Schoolwide Positive Behavior Supports (SPBS or PBIS). Yet and still, Vincent and Tobin (2011) studied districts where PBIS was not very effective and suggested that it might have worked better if coupled with training on multicultural competence and aligned to the schools' code of conduct.

School-wide behavior supports have benefited schools precisely because they are proactive. However, to be proactive, schools must first evaluate and understand their own school data profiles. Using school-wide data sets already in use within school systems is a key factor in building and improving upon overall school-wide systems level supports. Such data sets allow school-based teams to collect, review, and analyze data from their own schools to apply that data specifically and appropriately to their own schools. When schools manage student behavior by first reviewing the types of behaviors that take students away from classrooms, they create a springboard in their quest to understand building-level profiles. In addition to providing timely information regarding location, time, type of problem behavior, and individual students involved, PBIS allows school-based teams to review ethnicity reports that compare the rates of office discipline referrals by ethnic group with the proportion of students from each ethnic group (Todd, Horner, Sampson, & Amedo, 2008). PBIS teams are taught to analyze ethnicity data on a bi-weekly or monthly basis to compare the proportion of office discipline referrals with the enrollment by ethnic group. The teams use this information for active problem

solving, and on-going evaluation of the impact of problem solving strategies (Sugai et al., 2010).

Restorative Practices (RP)

Restorative Practices is a framework which focuses on non-punitive responses to misbehavior with goals to improve relationships, develop personal responsibility, and increase problem-solving, all while building community (Cavanagh, 2007a; Zehr, 1995). Restorative Practices (RP) are being used in school systems as a response to a growing dissatisfaction with traditional approaches to school-based discipline. Specifically, the pressure for schools to decrease rates of suspension and expulsion, incidents of discipline, and referrals to the police has warranted the use of restorative methods (Chmelynski, 2005; Claassen-Wilson, 2000, & Riestenberg, 2003, p.7).

Traditionally, discipline has been handled by school leaders based on a system of rewards and punishments for behaviors deemed appropriate or inappropriate. Restorative Practices, on the other hand, actively involves the victim of the infraction in addressing the offenders directly to hold them accountable and give them a chance to explain their actions as shown in Table 7. In this meeting, the victim and the offender are invited to decide how the offender can make amends for their misdeed. In this way, the victim can experience empowerment from being actively involved in the justice process and the offender can experience responsibility, in attempting to make sense of the breach of the school rules or normative expectations. In this process, the community of family, friends, social workers, police officers, or other interested parties is often invited to support both the victim and offender on their path towards healing.

Table 7

Traditional Discipline Practices Compared to Restorative Practices

	Traditional Discipline	Restorative Practices
Focuses & Goals	☐ Retribution and punishment for the offender ☐ Enforce rules ☐ Address offender ☐ React swiftly	☐ Address harms ☐ Healing, learning, and growth for all involved ☐ Build relationships and community ☐ Prevention and meaningful process
Questions	☐ What rule was broken? ☐ Who broke the rule? ☐ What punishment is warranted?	☐ Who was harmed and what harm were done? ☐ What are the needs and responsibilities of all affected? ☐ How do all affected parties address needs and repair harms?
Results	☐ Exclusion and isolation ☐ Stigmatization and alienation ☐ Offender accepts punishment ☐ Mental health problems for offender ☐ Victim not heard/has less satisfaction ☐ High recidivism ☐ Lower attendance and graduation rates ☐ Larger disparities ☐ Damage to school climate	☐ Inclusion and connectedness ☐ Repaired, restored, and strengthened relationships ☐ Offender takes responsibility ☐ Social and emotional learning for all involved ☐ Victim heard/has more satisfaction ☐ Lower recidivism, suspensions, and court referrals ☐ Higher attendance and graduation rates ☐ Reduced disparities ☐ Improved school climate

SOURCE: Langberg, J. & Ciolfi, A. (2016). *Suspended progress.* Just Children Program: Legal Aid Justice Center Report. Retrieved from https://www.justice4all.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Suspended-Progress-Report.pdf

Two specific approaches associated with RP are classroom/community circles and restorative/responsive circles. The circle spaces in both contexts are about accountability to one's self and community. Classroom/Community circles are often used to help build trust, positivity, and a sense of belonging within the classroom and school community. As well, they are about giving students opportunity to get to know each other and establish positive connections, including agreements about how they ought to treat each other. Restorative/Responsive circles are often used as an alternative to traditional suspensions and expulsions; and, they emphasize healing and learning through a collective group process, aiming to repair harm done and assign responsibility by talking through the problem (Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2003).

Restorative Practices allow the person who causes harm to make amends while the root causes of the misbehavior are addressed to prevent reoccurrence (Cavanagh, 2007a; Zehr, 1995). The RP process generally involves the offender, victim, community (e.g., staff, family, and other students), and a facilitator, all of whom are sitting in a circle as shown in Figure 8. The process evolves in two steps: (1) a facilitated dialogue about the harms and needs of participants; and (2) the development of a plan for how everyone involved will contribute to repairing the harm done, preventing future harm, and restoring relationships (Langberg & Ciolfi, 2016).
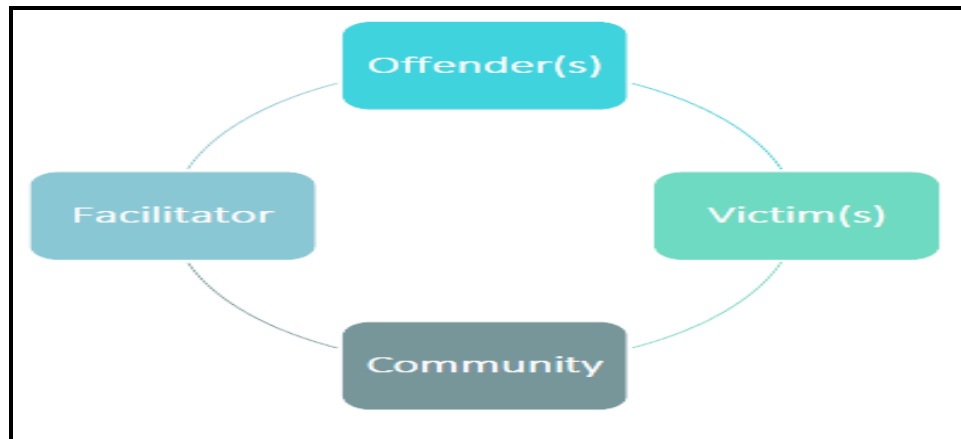
Figure 8. Restorative circle participant process
Note: The figure represents the participants who are involved in the restorative circle process.
SOURCE: Adapted from *"Suspended progress" by* Langberg, J. & Ciolfi, A. (2016). Just Children
Program: Legal Aid Justice Center Report. Retrieved from https://www.justice4all.org/wp-
content/uploads/2016/05/Suspended-Progress-Report.pdf

Where there are data on the efficacy of RP programs they appear very promising,

though very preliminary. The Minnesota Department of Education commissioned a study

on 5 pilot RP sites to assess the effectiveness of the programs. In one school when

comparing the 2001-2002 school year with the 2002-2003 school year (the intervention

year), discipline referral dropped by 57%, in-school suspensions dropped by 35%, out of

school suspensions dropped by 77%, and expulsions dropped from 7 to 1 (Riestenberg,

2003). As well, 69% of students reported that they were better able to resolve conflicts

since the program's implementation. In 2 other schools, there were reductions in

suspensions of 63% and 45%. In another Minnesota school, 35% of teachers felt that

bullying and teasing were lessened and 40% indicated that there was less student conflict

and more student problem-solving since the RP program came to their school. Over 50%

of elementary students in another school indicated that they were better able to get along

with their classmates, they felt better about themselves, and that they could solve more of their own problems after the RP program was implemented. In yet another school, daily referrals for violent offences dropped from 7 per day to fewer than 2 (Riestenberg, 2003).

Commonly, students in schools with RP programs have shown decreased rates of suspension, expulsion, and referrals to the police (Claassen-Wilsen, 2000, p.2). However, RP programs in schools which focus only on RP practices and take a more reactive stance to student norm breaches have had a more limited impact than in schools that have adopted a more holistic, proactive approach and adhere more completely to the values of RP throughout the entire school (Blood & Thorsborne, 2005, p.2). For example, Buxmont Academy, alternative programs for delinquent youth in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, using RP practices, evaluated the impact RP had in their school by comparing themselves to public schools in the area. Among Buxmont students, 16% reported getting picked on compared to 49% of the public school students, 24% of Buxmont students said that students have stolen from each other 4 or more times in the last month compared to 47% of the public school students, and 8% of the Buxmont students said that students have wrecked each other's property 4 or more times in the last month compared to 31% of the public school students. Generally, the student body felt safer than before they had an RP program. However, it is important to note that there are some difficulties with validity because the two student populations are distinctly different.

Though success exists, there are still outstanding issues that are ongoing challenges for those wanting to implement a Restorative Practices program in a school. Specifically, funding, administrative and community buy-in, challenges with flexible

implementation, lack of standardization in application and evaluation, time constraints, monitoring of data, and changing the school culture to conform with RP principles can be difficult despite the long-term benefits (Hanson, 2005). There are still some unresolved issues that are ongoing challenges for those wanting to implement a Restorative Practices program in a school. Changing the school culture to conform with RP principles can also be difficult and setting up an RP program has been found to be very time consuming (long-term it is thought to save time in dealing with fewer disciplinary issues, however) (Hopkins, 2003, p.5).

Innovative Alternatives

Separate from designed interventions such as PBIS and RP, many school districts have been innovative with alternatives to out-of-school suspension and expulsion by utilizing less punitive approaches to discipline and adopting various models to support student behavior. Table 8 provides examples of the strategic and intentional changes leaders in ten US school districts made to their suspension policies in an attempt to change the approaches to discipline which mimic zero tolerance policies. For instance, a study of a secondary school in Texas found 97% of suspensions issued at the discretion of administrators were for nonviolent minor disruptions such as tardiness or disrespect (Boccanfuso & Kuhfeld, 2011). To combat local overuse of suspension and expulsion, Texas' State Education Board enacted legislation to prevent students from school suspension for more than 3 consecutive days; however, the number of times a student could receive a 3-day suspension is discretionary and unlimited. Although a promising start, this legislation does not prevent the overuse of exclusionary disciplinary practices,

which pushes students towards the juvenile justice system (Fabelo et al., 2011), and

contributes to the SPP.

Table 8

10 School Districts' Strategies for Reducing Exclusionary Discipline

School District	District Strategies to Reduce Exclusionary Discipline and Incorporating Alternatives
Los Angeles Unified School District, California	The district has standardized its discipline policy by introducing alternatives to expulsion and suspension. The alternative discipline policy requires tiered intervention focused on implementing positive behavior support and providing more counseling for students who violate the student code of conduct.
Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnesota	The district has created a policy that focuses on the relationship between academic success and school discipline. The policy states that interventions and consequences due to misbehavior should minimize the interruption of a student's educational program. The policy also emphasizes the importance of quality instruction as the foundation of effective discipline.
Denver Public Schools, Colorado	The district's discipline policy states that students can only be expelled for the most serious offenses and out-of-school suspension can only be used for serious misconduct or when misbehavior is repeated. The policy also limits the amount of time students can be suspended out of school. The maximum out of school suspension period is three days. In addition to the policy, the district has created a laddered strategy toward intervention.
Baltimore City Public Schools, Maryland	The district's code of conduct has divided student misconduct into four levels, ranging from minor to serious offenses. Out-of-school suspensions are not an option for the first two levels, and expulsion is only an option for level four offenses.
Charleston County Public Schools, South Carolina	The board discipline policy created a ladder of intervention based on misconduct. Students' misbehaviors have been divided into three levels, ranging from minor offenses to more serious ones. Out-of-school suspension is an option for level two offenses, and

	expulsion is limited to level three offenses.
Austin Independent School District, Texas	The school board created a policy that requires each school site to develop a three-tiered discipline model program endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education. Each school campus is required to select a school-wide system or strategy and then decide whether to implement the strategy with all students, a targeted group of students, or in a one-on-one scenario.
Milwaukee Public Schools, Wisconsin	The school board has created policies for reducing out-of-school suspension that limit suspension in elementary school to serious breaches of discipline. The policies also require all schools to develop creative alternatives to suspensions, as well as authorize principals to develop plans for suspension reduction.
Palm Beach County School District, Florida	The district requires that each school utilize a wide variety of corrective strategies. In addition, prior to a student receiving a suspension, two forms of interventions that address the student misbehavior must occur. These interventions must be documented. Exceptions to this are offenses that are most serious in nature.
Wake County Public School System, North Carolina	The district requires that long-term, out-of-school suspensions be used only for serious misconduct, such as behavior that threatens the safety of students, staff or visitors or threatens to substantially disrupt the educational environment.
Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Maryland	The district's discipline policy encourages the use of reasonable intervention strategies before out-of-school suspension is utilized. The intervention strategies are based on Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) that include six levels. Out-of-school suspension is not an option for the first two levels.

SOURCE: National School Board Association (2013). *Addressing the out-of-school suspension crisis: A policy guide for school board members.* Retrieved from https://www.nsba.org/sites/default/files/0413NSBA-Out-Of-School-Suspension-School-Board-Policy-Guide.pdf

Chapter Summary

This literature revealed that school discipline practices and policies are often the

center of a great deal of conflict for educators. Whereas some schools continue to resort

to exclusionary discipline, even for minor misbehaviors, other schools are employing new approaches to discipline and various school-based interventions to reduce exclusionary discipline practices. However, with approaches to discipline old and new, there continues to be a disproportionate representation of Black males being disciplined. As a result, there remains an overrepresentation of Black males in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Hence, it is critical for schools to collect and analyze school discipline data; and, it is imperative that school leaders understand when, how and why exclusionary discipline practices are being utilized so they can determine how to most effectively address student behavior.

Chapter Three: Methods

School discipline policies and practices are utilized in schools to keep students safe. However, the implementation of these, often exclusionary, policies and practices have resulted in a disproportionate effect on students of color, particularly Black males. As well, school officials' overuse of exclusionary discipline consequences has created an unintended link between students who misbehave in school and the criminal justice system. Hence, schools are now attempting to utilize less punitive approaches to discipline in order to stop the funneling of students into the school to prison pipeline. For this study, a descriptive case study design was used in order to investigate the school discipline policies and practices within the real-life context of one Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district. This chapter defines the purpose of this study, the research questions investigated, and the methods employed to conduct the research. More specifically, this chapter discusses the research methods and design; data collection and analysis methods; research site and participants; ethical considerations; and, the researcher role and positionality utilized in this descriptive case study.

Purpose of the Study

In light of the many and varied concerns that stem from school discipline, the purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was a) to explore the lived experiences of educational leaders who serve as high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators as they relate to school discipline, b) to

gain a detailed understanding of the discipline policies and practices processes at a high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district, and c) to interrogate the disparate impact of disciplinary policies and practices, particularly on Black males. The narratives of the identified school leaders, and the analysis of public documents related to discipline in the district, provide the wisdom and insight missing from the current discourse concerning the impacts of school discipline as it relates to discipline policies and practices.

Research Questions

To describe, analyze, and provide an interpretation of the current school discipline policies and practices at one high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district the following research questions were investigated.

Central Question:

What is happening at a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban high school related to school discipline?

Sub-questions:

1. How do high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators describe school discipline policies and practices at Woodland High School?

2. In what ways do the school leadership, school discipline policies and procedures, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions provide insight into school discipline at Woodland High?

Theoretical Framework

Miles and Hueberman (1994) explain that researchers following the interpretive perspective "have their own understandings, their own convictions, their own conceptual orientations; they, too, are members of a particular culture specific historical moment" (p. 7). Therefore, by using the interpretive theoretical perspective, which guided the data collection and analysis, this research utilized racial and justice literatures and lenses in order to understand the school discipline policies and practices at the Mid-Atlantic inner ring suburban district being researched.

Qualitative Descriptive Case Study Design

This study is a qualitative descriptive case study that according to Merriam (1988) is one that "presents a detailed account of the phenomenon under study... with the intent of interpreting or theorizing about the phenomenon" (p. 28). The qualitative descriptive case study design was chosen because it adds strength to what is already known about school discipline and also helps explain complex issues within the case setting. To answer the above stated research questions and gain knowledge concerning the complexities associated with school discipline policies and practices, I employed a qualitative case study research design framed using a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm.

The constructivist-interpretivist- paradigm associated with this qualitative case study research was used to obtain an understanding of the world from the participant's perspective resulting from their lived experiences (Gray, 2013). Specifically, the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm generally operates using predominantly qualitative

methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Burns, 1997; Cohen & Manion, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Mertens, 2005; Silverman, 2000; Wiersma, 2000). As such, although the research heavily relied on qualitative data collection methods and analysis, quantitative data presented from the document analysis supported qualitative data and effectively deepened the descriptions resulting from the research (Matua & Vanderwal, 2015).

Specifically, the phenomenon under investigation was school discipline policies and practices and their disproportionate impact on students of color. The *case* for the current study was high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators in a Mid-Atlantic inner ring suburban school district. The unit of analysis, defined as the area of focus of the study (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2009), was the high school research site for the study. Data was collected through in-depth interviews and a review of public documents related to discipline in the school district where the study was conducted. Specifically, interviews were conducted and audio-taped, tapes were transcribed into word documents, district documents were reviewed, and data were coded for emergent themes.

Research Procedures

After successfully defending the dissertation proposal, permissions were sought from the school district where research was conducted as well as the Institutional Review Board of George Mason University. To gain research approval from the school district, a research application, which included a summary of the research purpose, significance, and methodologies for conducting research, was submitted to the school district's

Department of Accountability. After research approval was granted from the Department of Accountability, the research application then was provided to the principal at the research site to determine if permission to conduct research would be obtained. After research permissions were obtained in writing from the research site's district representative and the site principal, permissions from the IRB were pursued and also obtained (see Appendix A). After obtaining permissions, the potential participants were emailed an invitation to participate (see Appendix B) which summarized the research purpose and procedures. Potential participants were also informed that they could contact the researcher by cellular phone or email at any time if they need additional information about the study before making a decision regarding participation. For those that expressed an interest in participation, an appointment to be interviewed was scheduled at the convenience of each participant.

Semi-structured interviews were held at a location of the participant's selection. However, I made certain the location and space was an adequate environment conducive for interviewing. Additionally, I ensured that materials (i.e., copies of interview questions and consent forms) were readily available and the atmosphere that was comfortable and personable during the interview. Prior to each interview beginning, I provided some background information about myself and to establish rapport, create a positive space, and gain the participants' trust (Patton, 1980). Then, we discussed the study and I addressed any questions and/or concerns as the participant reviewed and signed the informed consent (see Appendix C).

Throughout the study, ethics were of extreme importance since it is the researchers' responsibility to protect the privacy of the participants and also to protect all of the participants from harm or repercussions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2007). Accordingly, for the sake of confidentiality, participants were able to choose their own pseudonyms to safeguard and protect their identities. I used the semi-structured interview approach (Merriam, 2002) and a uniform set of open-ended questions to obtain: (a) demographic information on the participants, and (b) participants' perceptions and experiences with collecting, analyzing, and using data for the purpose of describing what is happening at a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban high school related to school discipline. The interview protocol utilized in this study can be found in Appendix D.

In total, sixteen participants were interviewed for this research conducted between November 26, 2016 and January 8, 2017. Interviews ranged from approximately 30-90 minutes and were conducted before or after school hours. I also took handwritten notes during each interview, which enabled me to track key points to return to later in the interview or to highlight ideas of particular interest or importance. Interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants and transcribed within two weeks of the interviews. After the interviews were transcribed, I followed up with each participant to provide their respective transcript for member-checking and to verify transcript content.

Throughout the interview process, public data and documents related to school discipline in the district were retrieved and reviewed. The public documents collected included newspapers, press releases, reports, surveys, social media posts, and policy manuals. Each document retrieved was analyzed using the document analysis form (see

Appendix E) created for this study. After collecting interviews and documents data, I employed descriptive coding verified by NVivo and utilized Wolcott's (1994) strategies of the analysis stage to highlight findings, display findings, identify patterns, evaluate the findings and generate themes to answer the study's research questions. The findings of the study are presented in Chapter Four.

Research Site

Woodland High School is a well-respected, comprehensive high school located in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district with a current enrollment of approximately 3,600 students in grades 9–12. Woodland High School would be considered a majority-minority high school, meaning a significant number of its population would be classified as non-white or of color, drawing from a population that is economically, racially, and ethnically diverse. The high school student body was reported as 37.7% Hispanic/Latinx[7], 33.8% Black/African American, 20.9% White, 5.3% Asian, 1.7% Multi-racial, 0.4% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 0.2% Native American, as of September 2015. Woodland High School ninth grade students attend classes at a separate campus from the students in grades 10-12. There were 975 ninth grade students enrolled at the Woodland High School - Roswell Campus[8], as of September 2015. There were 2,619 students in grades 10-12 at the Woodland High School - Eastern Street Campus[9], as

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[7] Use of the term Latinx is intentional. Latinx is a gender-inclusive reference to people of Latin American descent.

[8] The Woodland High School campus that serves ninth grade students is often referred to as the "Roswell Campus" due to its location on Roswell Road.

[9] The Woodland High School campus that serves students grades 10-12 is often referred to as the "Main Campus" because it serves the larger student body and host the majority of clubs, sporting events, and extracurricular activities. The Main Campus is also known as the "Eastern Street Campus" due to its location on Eastern Street.

of September 2015. While Woodland High ninth grade students attend classes at the nearby Roswell Campus, students participate in specialized classes (i.e., JROTC, Cosmetology, and Automotive Technology), sports, and extracurricular activities at the Woodland High School- Eastern Street Campus.

To support diverse student academic and curricular progressions at the high school level, Woodland High School offers a variety of programs and opportunities. Woodland High athletics is growing each year in addition to the approximately 100 faculty-sponsored student clubs including ethnic and interest clubs, as well as various honor societies and service-related clubs. Academically, Woodland High offers Advanced Placement, Dual Enrollment (College Credit Courses), Honors, and career and technical education courses. Additionally, Woodland High offers a STEM program to provide a collaborative atmosphere in which all participants use problem-solving and inquiry in a project-based environment. To make it easier for students coming from other countries to settle in and be successful in their schoolwork, Woodland High School offers a school-within-a-school model of services. The school-within-a-school, referred to as the Global Center, was created to assist and empower approximately 600 English Language Learners with content mastery and language proficiency through curricula for college and workforce readiness and to prepare them to become contributing members of the community and global society in the future.

With the continued attempts to meet student needs, Woodland High School provides students with the opportunity to apply for admission at one of the districts alternative school programs, the Digital Learning Campus (DLC). The DLC is a

comprehensive, nontraditional, digital high school campus that delivers a 21st-Century curriculum through a hybrid online/onsite model offering flexible scheduling, internship opportunities, one-on-one student-centered support, and a new pathway to graduation to meet the varied needs of Woodland High School students. Another alternative program in JCPS that serves Woodland High School students is Alternative Transformations (AT). AT is an alternative school program which provides an alternative learning environment predominantly for students who exhibit continuous behavioral challenges or behaviors which could typically result in expulsion.

Participants

The sixteen participants for the study were a combination of high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office district administrators. Specifically, there were 6 high school counselors, 4 high school building administrators, and 6 central office administrators. Used interchangeably with "purposeful selection" which Maxwell (2005) explains to be "a selection strategy in which particular settings, persons or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can't be gotten as well from other choices" (p. 88), "purposeful sampling" (Patton, 2002) was used to select the counselors and administrators for interviews. More specifically, stakeholder sampling, a type of sampling to which the researcher depends on his/her understanding of who the most significant stakeholders are and makes the selection of participants based on this information (Given, 2008), was used for selecting participants.

Explicitly, the participants in this study are key informants. Key informants are people who are particularly knowledgeable about a particular setting and whose insights

114

can be helpful in understanding events that have happened and reasons why those events

happened (Patton, 2002). On average, counselor participants had fourteen years of

experience at WHS, high school building administrators had six years of experience at

WHS, and central office administrators had three years of experience at the district level

in JCPS. Appendix F presents participant demographics related to their role, duties, and

time in position. Given that they are vital leaders responsible for supervising student

behaviors, selecting high school counselors, high school building administrators, and

central office district administrators for this study was appropriate. Thus, their experience

can provide a description of the disciplinary policies and practices employed at the high

school level.

School counselors

School counselors are certified/licensed educators with a minimum of a master's

degree in school counseling, making them uniquely qualified to address all students'

academic, career and social/emotional development needs by designing, implementing,

evaluating and enhancing a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and

enhances student success (American School Counselor Association, 2005). Woodland

High School has among the lowest counselor-to-student ratios nationally (which is

approximately 1:200), ASCA recommends (1: 250) for the purpose of effectively guiding

students in the development of their individualized career and academic plans while also

providing social-emotional support as needed.

The counselors transition with their students from grades 9-12 in order to provide

consistency in support for students and families. Resulting from transitioning from grade

to grade, counselors are skilled in providing the specific supports needed at the various stages in high school. Specifically, counselors are able to support their caseloads of students from transitioning into high school from middle school to high school graduation. From the pool of high school counselors in JCPS, those invited to participate in the study (a) were experienced, (b) viewed themselves as leaders in the high school, and (c) were willing to communicate their experiences as it relates to discipline. For the purpose of this research, the criteria which determined experience was: (a) a minimum of three years' experience as a school counselor (b) the possession of a Master's Degree or higher in School Counseling, and (c) non–probationary employment status within the school district. The minimum of three years' experience was one of the criteria for participation because the JCPS counselors are on probationary employment status until they successfully (per their yearly evaluations) complete three years in their role. This change from probationary to continuing contract signifies that the district recognized the participant as re-hirable as a counselor.

As depicted in Figure 9, the *High School Counselor Participant Flow Chart*, from the 20 school counselors at Woodland High, 12 were eligible and therefore invited to participate based on the criteria stated above. The 12 eligible participants were recruited to participate three times via email over a 3 month period. After three months of recruiting the 12 eligible participants, there were a total of 6 counselors who participated in the study.

Woodland High School Counselors

Those invited to participate in the study (a) were experienced, (b) viewed themselves as leaders in the high school, and (c) were willing to communicate their experiences as it relates to discipline. Criteria which determined experience was: (a) a minimum of three years' experience as a school counselor (b) the possession of a Master's Degree or higher in School Counseling, and (c) non–probationary employment status within the school district.

12 counselors were eligible and therefore invited to participate based on the criteria.

Step 1: Send invitation to participate to eligible participants work email addresses.

Step 2: Interview participants who expressed interest.

Step 3: After 30 days, send a follow up email to participants who 1) were not interviewed, 2) have not declined participation, and 3) have not responded to initial email invitation to participate.

Step 4: Repeat Steps 2-3 two times. Participants were recruited over 90 days.

There were a total of 6 high school counselor participants.

Figure 9. High school counselor participant flow chart

Building administrators

In most schools, the building administrators are principals. However, at the high school level in JCPS, building administrators include principals and deans. The role of the Academic Principal/Assistant Principal at Woodland High School is directly related to supporting teachers. Specifically, the primary role for the Academic Principal/Assistant Principal is determining how teachers can most effectively meet the needs of their students as it relates to curriculum and instruction. The role of the Dean of Students at Woodland High School is directly related to supporting students. Specifically, discipline is a daily agenda item for the Dean of Students. As it relates to school

117

discipline at Woodland High, classroom teachers are often the first responders to student behavior, and the dean decides the consequence based upon the student code of conduct and related disciplinary policies.

From the pool of current high school building administrators, those invited to participate in the study were those who (a) were employed as a Dean of Students or the School Principal, and (b) were willing to communicate their experiences as it relates to discipline. As illustrated in Figure 10, the *High School Building Administrator Participant Flow Chart*, from the 17 school high school building administrators at Woodland High, 8 were eligible and therefore invited to participate based on the criteria stated above. The 8 eligible participants were recruited to participate three times via email over a 3 month period. After three months of recruiting the 8 eligible participants, there were a total of 4 high school building administrators who participated in the study.

High School Building Administrators

From the pool of current high school building administrators, those invited to participate in the study were those who (a) were employed as a Dean of Students or the School Principal, and (b) were willing to communicate their experiences as it relates to discipline.

8 high school building administratorscounselors were eligible and therfore and invited to participate based on the criteria.

Step 1: Send invitation to participate to eligible participants work email addresses.

Step 2: Interview participants who expressed interest.

Step 3: After 30 days, send a follow up email to participants who 1) were not interviewed, 2) have not declined participation, and 3) have not responded to initial email invitation to participate.

Step 4: Repeat Steps 2-3 two times. Participants were recruited over 90 days.

There were a total of 4 high school high school building administrator participants.

Figure 10. High school building administrator participant flow chart

Central office administrators

Central office administrators carry out various roles when it comes to the operation of a school district. Dickson Corbett and Wilson (1992) stated the overarching role for central office administrators is to achieve equitable and consistent improvement across the district. Hillman and Kachur (2010) explain, "The ultimate goal of the central office administrators is to build the capacity of all faculty and staff through professional development to offer a quality education and accept responsibility to meet the needs of a

119

diverse population" (p. 22). Equity and improvement can be accomplished with the combination of these roles being played by central office administrators (Muller, 2015).

From the pool of school central office administrators, those invited to participate in the study were (a) directly responsible for the development of school discipline procedures (i.e., student code of conduct) and behavior interventions (i.e., Multi-Tiered Systems of Support), (b) responsible for managing and interpreting school discipline data for the district, and/or (c) trained to provide professional development to discipline policies and practices. As shown in Figure 11, the *Central Office Administrator Participant Flow Chart*, 9 central office administrators from JCPS were eligible and therefore invited to participate based on the criteria stated above. The 9 eligible participants were recruited to participate three times via email over a 3 month period. After three months of recruiting the 9 eligible participants, there were a total of 6 central office administrators who participated in the study.
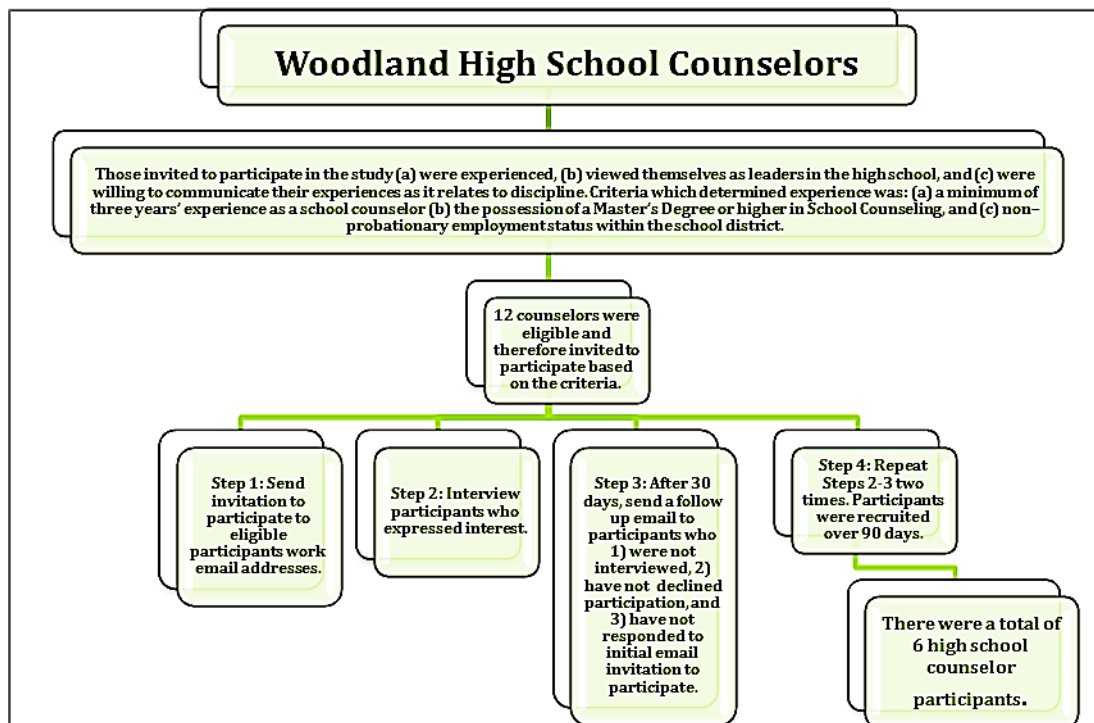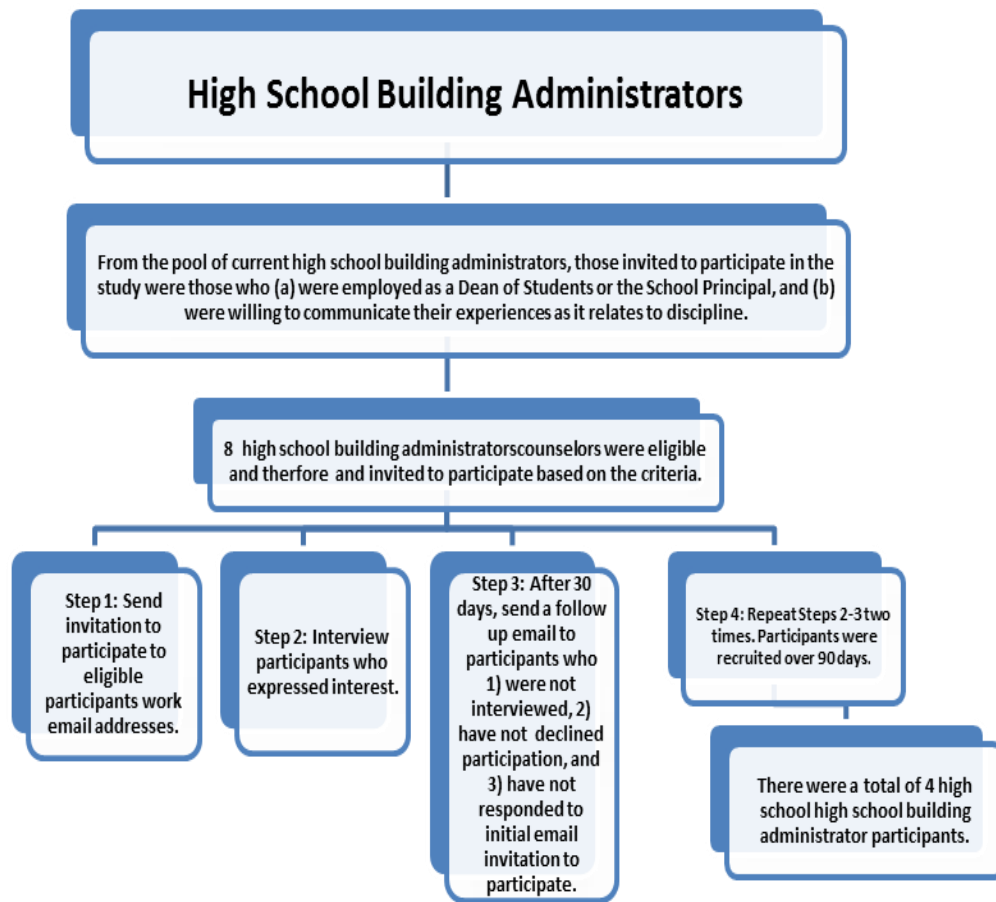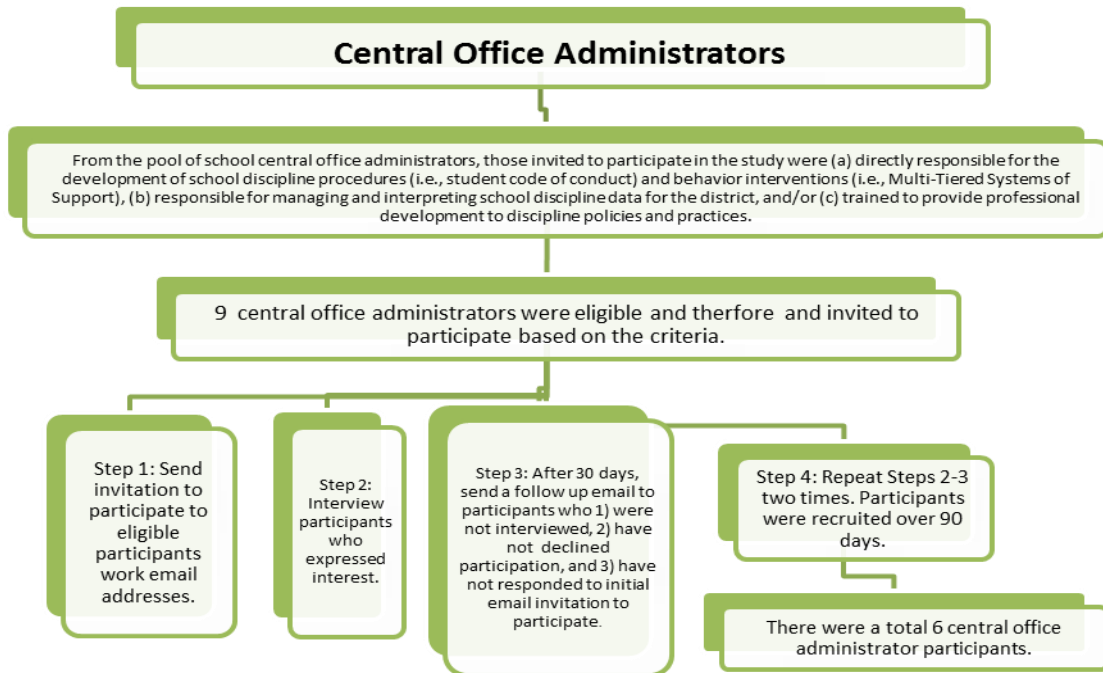
Central Office Administrators

From the pool of school central office administrators, those invited to participate in the study were (a) directly responsible for the development of school discipline procedures (i.e., student code of conduct) and behavior interventions (i.e., Multi-Tiered Systems of Support), (b) responsible for managing and interpreting school discipline data for the district, and/or (c) trained to provide professional development to discipline policies and practices.

9 central office administrators were eligible and therfore and invited to participate based on the criteria.

Step 1: Send invitation to participate to eligible participants work email addresses.

Step 2: Interview participants who expressed interest.

Step 3: After 30 days, send a follow up email to participants who 1) were not interviewed, 2) have not declined participation, and 3) have not responded to initial email invitation to participate.

Step 4: Repeat Steps 2-3 two times. Participants were recruited over 90 days.

There were a total 6 central office administrator participants.

Figure 11. Central office administrator participant flow chart

Data Collection

Yin (2003) and Creswell (2007, p. 73) affirm that case study inquiry is only successful when built on the collection and analysis of data from multiple sources. More explicitly, it is important to use multiple sources of data, also known as triangulation, as a means to ensure data is understood as accurately as possible. Yin (2009) and Stake (1995) agree that triangulation is crucial to performing a case study reliably. For that reason, sources of information for this qualitative descriptive case study design were collected by means of semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

Data was collected during the first semester of the 2016-17 school year. The semi- structured interviews with administrators and counselors, in addition to documentary data, were used to collect data on school discipline policies and practices at Woodland High School. Semi-structured interviews were the primary method of data collection because the questions allow participants the opportunity to openly answer the questions asked without boundaries and it allows the researcher the opportunity to explore particular themes or responses further (Merriam, 2009). However, although interviews were the primary method of data collection, the documents provided essential supplementary information that the interviews alone could not convey.

Document Analysis

The use of documentation is vital to case studies and should be used to support and/or enhance data from other sources (Kohlbacher, 2005; Yin, 2003). The specific purpose for generating documents for review and analysis is to learn more about the situation, person, or event being investigated. Some documents may contain spontaneous data, such as feelings, and refer to actions that are recorded in a specific context. Other documents may provide insight into how people see things or how they want to appear. Either way, they provide a very specific account of reality. Hatch (2002) emphasizes that documents "are objects that participants use in everyday activity of the context under examination" (p. 117). He also stresses that they can be "powerful indicators of the value systems operating within institutions (p. 117). Likewise, according to Merriam (2009), a document analysis "can contain clues, even startling insights, into the phenomenon under study.

Further, in research individuals will also be influenced by your demeanor and their perception of you. Likewise, matters of sex, age, race and other attributes are likely to have an impression on what others say or do in the midst of being interviewed. Hence, by using documents you eliminate the influence that you, as a researcher, have on a person or situation. Accordingly, for this qualitative descriptive case study, documents related to discipline were collected and then analyzed to find its audience, purpose, a summary, and the major findings. After data analysis, I organized and coded the document data as it related to the four guiding principles: school leadership, school discipline policies and procedures, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions.

In this case study the following types of documents were analyzed to further understand school discipline policies and practices at a high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban high school: (a) public school records (i.e., mission statements, annual reports, policy manuals, and student handbooks), (b) media reports regarding the school district (i.e., social media posts, blogs, and newspapers/press releases), (c) discipline data, (d) training materials related to behavior management and/or school discipline, and (e) district survey data. The school district was adamant that all measures should be taken to ensure confidentiality as a component of approval being granted to conduct research in the district. If cited, the particular documents that were reviewed would undeniably reveal the research site. Therefore, citations that would reveal the district were not included.

Interviews

Interviewing was the primary data source for this study for the following reasons: (a) "The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind. We interview people to find out from them those things we can't observe" (Patton, 1980, p. 196; Patton, 2002), (b) qualitative interviewing is appropriate to use when "studying people's understanding of the meaning in their *lived world*" (Kvale, 1996, p. 105), (c) qualitative interviews result in thick descriptions of the subject being studied which enables readers to make decisions about transferability of study results (Merriam, 2002), and (d) interviews allow for triangulation of information obtained from other sources and, thus, increase the credibility of study findings (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Merriam, 2002; Stake, 1995). More specifically, I utilized the semi-structured interview approach (Merriam, 2002). The semi-structured interviews were the primary method of data collection because the questions allowed participants the opportunity to openly answer the questions asked without boundaries; and, it allowed the opportunity to further explore particular responses and ask questions during the interview.

When compared to data collection methods such as surveys, a semi- structured interview produces more detailed information about the participant's perspective on a program, idea, or situation (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Charmaz (2012) points out that the number of interviews required will be impacted by any previous or planned research. For example, a smaller sample size would be appropriate if results are strengthened by other qualitative methodology such as focus groups or other quantitative methodology. Generally, projects with a broad scope require more qualitative interviews than projects with a narrow scope in order to fully understand the phenomena under investigation.

Open-ended questions were asked throughout the interviews to encourage

participants to respond freely and openly to queries (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Esterberg,

2002; Kvale, 1996). Probing and/or follow-up questions were asked, when necessary, in

order to encourage participants to elaborate on or clarify a response (Denzin & Lincoln,

2000). Each interview was transcribed following the interview. The transcribed

interviews exist individually on separate Microsoft documents. Contents of the interview

were transcribed verbatim, with the following exceptions: (a) omission of minor

utterances such as "Uh;" (b) obstruction of any identifiable or potentially identifiable

information, such as names of individuals, programs, schools, or districts; and (c)

omission of the scenarios presented, which were read to the participant in order to gain

insight on the ways in which they responded to the matter presented (Suero-Duran,

2010). Transcribed interviews were read multiple times in order to identify any questions

or responses needing clarity. Specifically, I transcribed the interviews using the following

process: 1) Record the interview with a recording device; 2) Upload the audio to

computer, and 3) Listen to and type the researcher and participant responses heard in the

interviews into Microsoft Word.

In qualitative research, there is no neat measure of significance, so getting an

adequate sample size can be more difficult. The literature often talks about reaching

'saturation point' - a term taken from physical science to represent a moment during the

analysis of the data where the same themes are recurring, and no new insights are given

by additional sources of data (Mason, 2010). Saturation in qualitative research is a

difficult concept to define, but overall saturation can be described as the point in a

qualitative research project when there is enough data to ensure the research questions can be answered. Accordingly, saturation involves eliciting all forms of types of occurrences, valuing variation over quantity" (Morse, 1995).

Contemporary academic research experts providing numerical guidance on the necessary qualitative sample size to reach data saturation have wavering ideas. For instance, Brannen (2012) explains that anywhere from 1 to 260 cases would be appropriate depending upon the target audience, the scope of the project and the level of expertise held by each participant. In contrast, other experts encourage a narrow range of cases, like Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) who believe data saturation typically occurs by the twelfth interview, with meta-themes becoming identifiable after the sixth interview provided the research scope is narrow and the target audience is relatively homogenous. Brod, Tesler, and Christiansen (2009) recommend constructing a 'saturation grid' listing the major topics or research questions against interviews or other sources, and ensuring all bases have been covered. In acceptance of Brod et al.'s (2009) suggestion, I knew that the research reached saturation when the amount of variation in the data began to level off, and new perspectives and explanations were no longer coming from the data. As well, I knew saturation was achieved when both the interviews and documents reviewed provided no new perspectives on the research questions.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research involves a continuous interaction between data collection and data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Overall, the analysis of qualitative data is an ongoing process (Stake, 1995; Patton, 2002) seen as a systematic search for meaning

(Hatch, 2002). Although there is no single way to analyze qualitative data (Coffee & Atkinson, 1996), the data analysis process usually results in patterns that create categories, factors, variables, or themes (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2001). Specifically, I referred to Wolcott's (1994) framework for focus and guidance throughout the analysis of research data. Wolcott (1994) suggests that qualitative research analysis consists of three interrelated categories: description, analysis and interpretation. Description addresses the question, "What is going on here?" Analysis addresses the identification of essential features and interrelationships and asks the question, "How do things work?" And, interpretation addresses process questions of meanings and contexts; "What does it all mean? What is to be made of it all?" (Wolcott, 1994, p. 12). Utilizing Wolcott's (1994) approach to data analysis, this section outlines the data analysis measures used in developing credible and trustworthy findings.

Johnny Saldaña (2009) defines a code in qualitative inquiry as "most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data." He also explains that it is important to understand that coding is "not a precise science," rather it is "primarily an interpretive act" meant to be "the transitional process between data collection and more extensive data analysis" (pp. 3-4). Aligned with Wolcott's (1994) terminology, descriptive coding as a data analysis tool was a viable approach in addressing the research question. Simply, descriptive coding summarizes, in a word or short phrase, the focus of a section of data (Saldaña, 2009).

Following the recommendations of qualitative researchers, NVivo, a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software[10], was selected for coding the transcribed interviews (Bazeley, 2007). Numerous qualitative researchers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Fielding, 1994; Lee & Fielding, 1991; Merriam, 2001; Miles & Hueberman, 1994; Patton, 2002; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984) encourage the use of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) to manage data more efficiently throughout the course of a research project. Likewise, Patton (2002) affirms that computers and software can ease the process of "locating coded themes, grouping data together in categories, and comparing passages in transcripts or incidents from field notes" (p. 442). In addition, a unique aspect of using CAQDAS for coding opposed to hand-coding is the ability of the program to create visual representations of data (i.e., charts and graphs) to help readers more deeply understand interpretations of data (Rademaker, Grace, & Curda, 2012).

After interviews were transcribed and member checked, transcriptions for each of the participants were uploaded into NVivo, with the expectation of reaping the many benefits researchers have identified related to utilizing computer software for data analysis. However, during the initial analysis, it was difficult for me to identify significant themes or meaning in the codes, as I would have liked. So, opposed to uploading the interviews into NVivo by individual transcriptions, I decided to create new individual Microsoft Word documents that detail: a) the question asked during the interview, and b) the sixteen participant's response to each of the individual questions.

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[10] Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) is a term, introduced by Lee and Fielding in 1991, that refers to the wide range of computer software that supports a variety of analytic styles in qualitative work.

Then, for any questions that were asked, separate from the interview protocol, the responses were added the document, which lists the responses to the final interview question, "Do you have anything you would like to add pertaining to discipline at the high school level within your school district?"

My intention after creating the individual Microsoft Word documents, by question, was to then upload them into NVivo to re-code the data now that it was separated. However, after manually separating the data myself I become very close to my data and doubted NVivo would be able to generalize meaning from the interviews and documents in the way that I could as a research instrument. Methodologically, Esterberg (2002) recommends, "getting intimate with data" (p. 157), and suggests that the key objective of immersing oneself in interview transcripts is to "load up your memory" with the collected data. Thus, despite the challenges of managing the large amounts of data collected via sixteen semi-structured interviews, coding the data by hand was the only way I felt I could make meaning of what is happening at the research site related to school discipline. And, although my manual descriptive coding produced clear and explicit codes and themes that can be used for presenting the research findings, I felt the need confirm accuracy in my coding methods. So, I randomly selected ten Word documents, listing the participant responses by question, and uploaded them into NVivo to cross-reference the results of my coding. Accurately, the computer assisted coding and my manual coding yielded consistent descriptive data from interviews.

From the documents collected, each was initially examined to find its audience, purpose, and major findings using a document analysis form I created as an

organizational tool (Appendix E). Next, I sorted the documents according to its

relationship to the four guiding principles: school leadership, school discipline policies

and procedures, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions. Guided by

Wolcott (1994), every detail was subjected to critical judgment in answer to the

significant question: is this relevant to the account? In view of that, though all documents

collected were associated with school discipline, some documents were eliminated if they

were not significant to the understanding school discipline at Woodland High School. A

final list of the documents analyzed is presented in Appendix G. The remaining

documents were coded and provided specific information that contributes to the

understanding of school discipline at Woodland High School. Chapter Five presents the

findings of the study using Wolcott's (1994) approach to analysis across three interrelated

categories: description, analysis and interpretation.

Ethical Assurances

Leaders throughout the school district communicated their personal insights for

the benefit of the dissertation. Accordingly, names of participants were concealed with

pseudonyms on the interview forms, transcripts, and any reports related to the study.

Names of the school sites and participants are known only to the researcher and personnel

of the Institutional Review Board of George Mason University. In addition, given that the

participants are employees of the same school system, I ensured that participants were

informed of the confidential and volunteer nature of the study, the relevant details of the

study approval process and reporting of data, and the intention of the study a) to explore

the lived experiences of educational leaders who serve as high school counselors, high

school building administrators, and central office administrators as they relate to school discipline, b) to gain a detailed understanding of the discipline policies and practices processes at a high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district, and c) to interrogate the disparate impact of disciplinary policies and practices, particularly on Black males. More specifically, the documents analyzed were not cited in the dissertation as a method for further protecting the district. The school district was adamant that all measures should be taken to ensure confidentiality as a component of approval being granted to conduct research in the district. If cited, the particular documents that were reviewed would undeniably reveal the research site. Thus, citations that would reveal the district were not included. Upon final completion of the study, all research data were stored in a locked file within the principal investigators office in the Education Leadership office at George Mason University to protect the research data.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

When collecting and analyzing case study research data, it is essential that procedures are followed so meticulously that even the most skilled researcher has difficulty discovering errors with the findings. Bernard (1997) stated that "nothing in research is more important than validity" (p. 38) because validity is essential to all variations of research. Explicitly, validity indicates accuracy and trustworthiness of instruments, data, and findings. Lapan (2004) explained that "testing the instrument in the field is essential to their readiness for use" (p. 241). He further explains testing the instrument allows the researcher the opportunity to practice conducting interviews. Accordingly, to ensure that the interview protocols were ready for use, several questions

131

were first pilot tested on alternative school teachers in May 2015. In addition, at the conclusion of the first six interviews for this study, I solicited feedback related to the clarity of the questions asked. From the feedback solicited from participants, the questions reported to be clear and specific with no changes suggested.

According to Morrow and Smith (2000), in qualitative research the criteria for trustworthiness should be assessed based on the paradigmatic foundation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Correspondingly, in the interpretivist paradigm, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest criteria to generate trustworthiness and promote validity in data collection. Essentially, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest that researchers establish credibility. Hence, to establish credibility and trustworthiness of the study's findings, I utilized various strategies recommended for signifying credibility.

Credibility can be exposed in interpretivist research through multiple methods and sources for gathering the data (Merriam, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Thus, to decrease threats to credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I used public documents related to discipline in the district (i.e., include news articles, surveys, and district policy manuals), interview transcripts and audio recordings, and personal research notes composed during interviews and personal reflection. Another strategy to establish credibility, which Merriam (2002) and Creswell (2007) recommend is the practice of member checks.

Member checks occurred by contacting participants and arranging to send the interview transcription for review of content and intent (Creswell, 2007). Participants were asked to respond within one week after receiving the transcription. A follow-up phone interview or in-person interview took place in order for each participant to confirm

accuracy of the transcription and clarify any questions related to the interviews when needed. No revisions were necessary; however, there were two participants who appeared uneasy after freely sharing during the interview. The apprehensions of the two participants were eased after ensuring their confidentiality (as explained in the informed consent), and by providing an explanation of my ethical obligation to protect the participant and research site. This follow-up process helped to further establish the credibility of the study by ensuring the data collected reflected the meaning intended by the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Stake (1995) cautioned qualitative researchers against narrow thinking, and instead suggested that researchers learn to understand their research as their participants do, rather than impose their own assumptions. Assumptions in the research are the elements that were taken for granted without valid proof for the purpose of the study (Wallach, 2016). The research method for this study follows a qualitative approach in order to explore the research questions. Consequently, an assumption is that information attained from the participants is considered to be reliable and true. The validity of the answers of the subjects is an uncontrollable factor in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, answers of the subjects based on their personal experiences were difficult to verify and could potentially compromise the integrity of the data used as the basis of the research.

With regard to limitations, the research for the study is limited because of its focus on a single case within a small population. It is limited to the evaluation of one

school district in a single geographic location. It is limited due to its absence of students, parents, and teachers, which could create a more complete story. And, it could be considered as limited due to the number of individuals who were willing to participate. Although, I had a list of participants that I wanted to participate, they did not all participate.   This study also presents delimitations—that is, how the study was narrowed in scope (Creswell, 2003).

Conducting a case study in only one school district could be viewed as delimitation. Although a complete district perspective could be gained from the interview and document data presented, it is important to remember that one Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district may vary greatly from another Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district, even if it is the same size, larger, or smaller. Furthermore, there is no assumption that the data collected in this study can be expected to reflect the experiences of all high school counselors, high school building administrators, or central office administrators. Nevertheless, this study can be used to lay the groundwork for future research.

<div align="center">**Researcher Role and Positionality**</div>

Dwyer and Buckle (2009) explained that whether the researcher is an insider or an outsider, the researcher is an essential and important aspect of the study. In addition, Hueberman and Miles (1998) suggest that it is advisable for the researcher to explain how s/he views the social world and how a credible study will be presented to assist the reader in critically judging the research. For this study, in the interest of full disclosure and of guarding against unethical or unintentional influences on my interpretation of school

discipline policies and practices, the following discussion outlines my personal experiences relevant to this study.

In my work, I witness both the personal struggles of young people and the systemic injustices perpetrated on America's "least favorite youth" (Rust, 1999, p. 3). Accordingly, my professional career as an alternative school counselor has influenced my engagement in this particular area of research. As a school leader charged with supporting student's social emotional growth, it is important to ensure that all children are perceived only as children, not as criminals; and that they are allowed the equitable access to privileges of their education, regardless of their race, social class, or any other thing that may be used against them.

As a Black woman, my personal and professional experiences played a large role in my desire to investigate this area of study. I expect my identity to also had implications for the manner in which participants shared and communicated with me. Overall, this study resulted in double the amount of benefits for me: as the researcher of the study, I was interested in the overall findings of the study; as an educator, it was exciting when school leaders who were interviewed revealed that this would be an additional piece of school data that they could consider in their quest toward improving school initiatives and reaching district goals.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 provides the rationale for approaching this research as a descriptive case study. As well, the research methods for data collection and data analysis were described. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study, and Chapter 5 discusses the

findings, draws conclusions based on examination of study results and review of the

literature in the field, discusses the implications of the study for practice, and makes

recommendations for further research.

Chapter Four: Findings

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was a) to explore the lived experiences of educational leaders who serve as high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators as they relate to school discipline, b) to gain a detailed understanding of the discipline policies and practices processes at a high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district, and c) to interrogate the disparate impact of disciplinary policies and practices, particularly on Black males. The narratives of the identified school leaders, and the analysis of public documents related to discipline in the district, provide the wisdom and insight missing from the current discourse concerning the impacts of school discipline as it relates to discipline policies and practices. The findings of this qualitative descriptive case study provide sufficient evidence to answer the research questions and they allow the researcher and the reader to become intimately aware of the inner workings of the particular case (Stake, 1995). This chapter describes, analyzes and provides an interpretation of school discipline policies and practices at a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban high school.

Research Questions

To describe, analyze, and provide an interpretation of the current school discipline policies and practices at one high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district the following research questions were investigated:

Central Question:

What is happening at a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban high school related to school discipline?

Sub-questions:

1. How do high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators describe school discipline policies and practices at Woodland High School?

2. In what ways do the school leadership, school discipline policies and procedures, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions provide insight into school discipline at Woodland High?

Presentation of Findings

Findings for this study are presented following Wolcott's (1994) Description-Analysis- Interpretation (DAI) Model. Wolcott (1994) explains that description consists of the actual data collected by the researcher and is "at the heart of qualitative inquiry" (p.55). Wolcott also emphasizes that description requires the researcher to select data to be included in the research and regulate the amount of detail to be applied to the data chosen. Specifically, the data selected and the amount of detail applied was guided by the purpose of the study and the relevance of the data to the study. Every aspect of the description stage required critical judgment and answering the question: is this relevant to the research? Furthermore, the description stage addresses the question, "What is going on here?" and provides the foundation for the analysis and interpretation stages in Wolcott's approach (Wolcott, 1994).

In some instances, analysis and interpretation have often been used synonymously in research; Wolcott, however, separates these two processes. Wolcott's (1994) analysis stage involves breaking the data down into themes, whereas the interpretation stage involves finding the meaning of these emergent themes by pulling the data back together. In addition, the analysis stage of the DAI Model focuses on bring meaning, structure, and order to data as well as identifying specific characteristics and interrelationships while questioning, "How do things work?" (Wolcott, 1994, p.12). Document data and interview transcripts produced in the description stage of analysis were thoroughly examined in the analysis stage to develop a clear understanding of the data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Patton, 2002), and then were content analyzed (Patton, 2002).

The data collected through document review were extensively explored for patterns and were organized according to the four guiding principles: school leadership, school discipline policies and procedures, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions. These four guiding principles, related to school discipline had the purpose of offering a function of categories and a framework for the classification of data by grouping and defining data according to common or shared characteristics. Concurrently, content analysis of interview transcripts consisted of a line-by-line examination of the sixteen interview transcriptions for consistencies and patterns to facilitate the creation of themes (Patton, 2002; Wolcott, 1994). As well, the utilization of quotes from transcriptions allows the opportunity for readers to experience the individual participants' points of view (Sparkes, 2002). Moreover, to confirm the content of the inductive

analysis and examine the data with regards to social justice leadership theory, a deductive

analysis of the themes from document and interview data followed.

Based on the findings from the analysis stage, the interpretation of data

encompassed the generation of meanings for the themes identified in the analysis stage.

Specifically, the interpretation stage addresses the questions of meanings and contexts:

"What does it all mean? What is to be made of it all?" (Wolcott, 1994, p.12).

Interpretations of the data were described from the lens of my understanding of the

participants and research environment as it relates to the study's purpose and social

justice leadership theory (Theoharis, 2007). Explicitly, the interpretation stage required

going beyond factual data to search into what can be made from these data. In sum, the

application of Wolcott's (2004) strategies for analysis allowed me to highlight, identify,

and evaluate the findings gleaned from semi-structured interviews and document review.

Description

Leadership has been defined in many connotations such as: a process whereby an

individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse,

2004); the influencing process of leaders and followers to achieve organizational

objectives through changes (Lussier & Achua, 2004); a relationship between those who

aspire to lead and those who choose to follow (Kouzes & Posner, 2002); the ability of an

individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness

and success of the organization (House et al., 1999). To understand what is happening in

terms of school discipline at a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban high school a description

of interview and document data related to school leadership, school discipline policies and procedures, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions is presented.

School Leadership

Interviews and documents were analyzed to describe school leadership in Jefferson County Public School District. Defined by participants and district documents, the hierarchy of leadership in JCPS begins with the superintendent followed by central office administrators. And, as illustrated in Figure 12, the hierarchy of leadership at Woodland High School begins with the building principal, followed by the assistant principals and deans of students, and then the student support staff (school nurse school social worker, school psychologist, and school counselors). Particularly, at Woodland High School the primary role of the assistant principals is curriculum and teaching, whereas the primary role of the deans of students is managing student behavior.
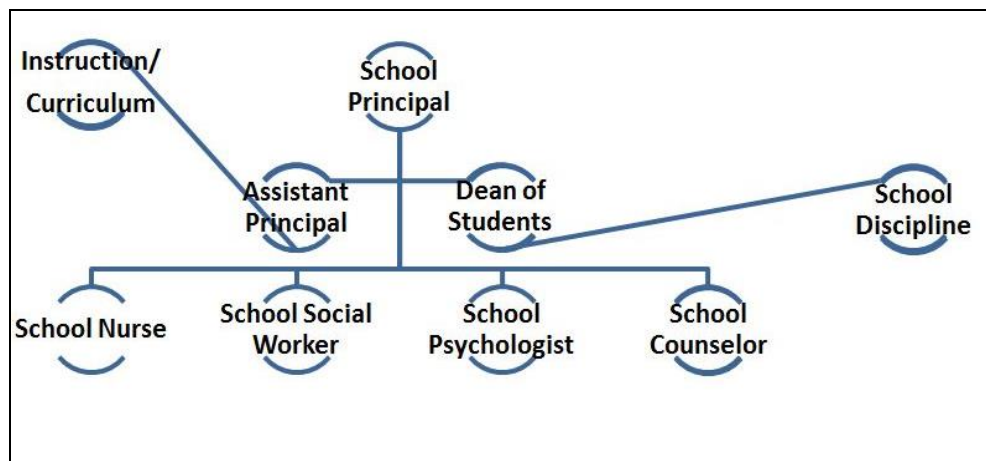
Figure 12. Hierarchy of School Leadership at Woodland High School

News articles revealed that at Woodland High School, the building principal identified in a published news article stated that students of color felt they were being specifically targeted with disciplinary action. In support of the students, the Woodland High's principal expressed that the students advocating for reform to the school's disciplinary programs have "found an ally in him". Accordingly, now in his second year at Woodland High School, the principal's physical support is approaching expiration considering his resignation announcement as of Fall 2016. Though discussions of the principal's resignation did not surface in interviews, an official resignation announcement two months into the start of the school year of a school leader may affect the school community.

To further illuminate leadership in JCPS, participants were asked to discuss their leadership styles. Several styles emerged to comprise an intentional focus on being: relational, transformational, collaborative, helpful, and supportive leaders. Also, others simply described that they "try to lead by example" and "lead by doing". After reporting how they self-identify as leaders, participants were asked to explain the leadership qualities they deemed effective school leaders need to encompass at WHS. Responses included the need for leaders to be fair, relatable, firm, positive, caring, strong, present, and knowledgeable. Interestingly, there was minimal overlap between how participants viewed themselves as leaders and the leadership qualities they felt effective school leaders should embrace. Nonetheless, 44% of participants specifically identified the need for collaborative leadership throughout JCPS.

In the investigation of school leadership, participants were asked to describe how high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators collaborate on matters related to school discipline. Though responses generally varied it was consistently stated that counselors and deans work very closely together to address discipline. Yet, unanimously school-building administrators explained that the Deans of Students frequently collaborate with each other since a primary role is to address discipline. For example, Monica who was previously a dean and is now an assistant principal indicated that when she was a dean, "We [the deans] definitely met weekly to make sure that we were aligned… there's constant communication among the deans about appropriate consequences." However, another school building administrator, Shamari explicitly stated:

> The only way that we [counselors, building administrators, and central office administrators] work together is when we are all tasked with similar objectives...Counselors do work with deans in order to address specific student needs and play a role in the implementation of interventions and the creation or the development of interventions to deal with certain behaviors. Central office just tells us what we can and cannot do. I'm not sure how much help that is.

Oppositely, David, a school building administrator, conveyed that "central office staff lends us [deans] the support that we need to be successful" and described when a central office colleague shadowed him in order to gain an understanding of the role of Dean of Students at WHS. Overall, interviews mentioned that collaboration consistently exists between school counselors and the deans. And, frequent collaboration occurs amongst

143

central office administrators. However, 75% of the participants reported a deficit in the collaboration between WHS leadership (to include school counselors and school building administrators) and central office leadership. Jerome, a central office administrator also serving the role as an alternative school principal, indicated, "I am amazed that when we have conversations about discipline, not who's there, but who's not there. And oftentimes you don't see counselors, social workers, or any of those folks there".

As participant's discussed the need for leadership collaboration, a discussion of other leadership challenges related to discipline progressed. The most common leadership challenges experienced by WHS counselors involved assuming the role of a disciplinarian. For example, Amy explained:

> As a counselor you don't want to be the disciplinarian…. I don't like to call out students in the hallway if they're doing something. And I know I'm really bad about it, but I don't like to because I feel like everybody else is calling them out, so I don't usually. I mean, if it's really bad or if I know the kid, I think I will say something. If I don't know them, I'm going to be more-- I'm going to not be as likely to say something. … As a counselor, I don't really think it's our role to be that [a disciplinarian].

Keisha and Neicy, two high school counselor participants shared the viewpoint that the role of disciplinarian was not the responsibility of the counselor. Specifically, Keisha stated, "we [as counselors] are asked to do disciplinary things that are not in our realm of work, and it's sort of put us in an awkward position working with students as a counselor." Similarly, Neicy stated, "Teachers and other staff may be confusing what we

do as a counselor versus what's a real counseling need and what's a disciplinary need… if its 'straight' discipline [discipline requiring that a consequence is assigned], it shouldn't start with me."

On the other hand, another high school counselor, Julia, explained a challenge as:

> The blatant disrespect with kids...they will curse in front of you. They will curse when you have parents with you. They will just use inappropriate language as if you're not even there. When you try to correct them then they get more aggressive.

> From the perspective of an administrator, Jerome stated that a challenge for him is "the daily struggle between law and order." Whereas, Monica, also a high school building administrator, articulated a challenge was, "the sheer number of students that we're dealing with…Right now, we're over capacity and we're dealing with bigger level infractions." Alternatively, David, a building administrator, revealed a more personal challenge as it relates to discipline. David shared:

> The biggest challenge I face as it relates to school discipline is trying to make sure that I am consistent, yet compassionate, when it comes to dealing with issues. Students are different. The rules are the same, but students are different. And because of my relationship with these scholars, I know more about them than most know. I know what their home life looks like. I know what the struggles are they're dealing with but, at the same time, I have to make sure that they understand that you can't use that as an excuse.

Similar to David, Denise, a central office administrator voices:

I know this is not a clinic. We have to educate, but I still feel like in many ways

we're graduating kids that have not fully processed past trauma, past hurt. And all

of that is part of adolescent development. And all of that plays out in the school

system, so I wish that we had a little bit more room to do more therapeutic work

in the schools.

In addition to the participant responses mentioned, the school leaders also

described challenges related to student attendance, lack of support, and as Tricee

explained, "Getting staff, including administrators, to see alternative ways of dealing with

students." As it relates to alternative ways to interact with students, each participant

mentioned undergoing training in Restorative Practices. In addition, the majority of

central office administrators explained that they were also trained to be Restorative

Practices trainers. Specifically, the semi-structured discussions of leadership trainings

were primarily inclusive of Restorative Practices; however, participants also mentioned

training in the use of Multi-Tiered Systems and Supports (MTSS)[11]; mainly to include

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports[12] (PBIS). This suggests that training and

professional development is occurring for school leaders in JCPS. It is unknown,

however, if training is widespread across the school district for all stakeholders who serve

students, especially as it relates to teachers who are often the first to respond to matters of

discipline.

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[11] MTSS is a systemic, continuous- improvement framework in which data-based problem-solving and decision making is practiced across all levels of the educational system for supporting students. MTSS combines two frameworks: Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). RTI involves academic interventions, whereas PBIS involves behavioral interventions.
[12] PBIS refers to a multi-tiered systems approach to establishing the social cultural and behavioral supports needed for all children in a school to achieve both social and academic success (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008).

Jerome, a central office administrator, identified the need for those who interact with students and respond to student behavior to be "culturally competent"; if not innately, through training. Just as the participants are identified as leaders, the teachers are leaders as well. Accordingly, as one school counselor, Keisha, described, "adequate training" is a necessity for all who lead students. This need for teacher training is warranted not only by interview participants, but also by those 62% of educators at WHS who responded to the 2016 district survey. Expressed in Table 9, WHS stakeholders reported their belief that only 20% students follow rules of conduct.

Table 9

2016 JCPS District Survey Results, Managing Student Conduct

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about managing student conduct in your school.	2016 Jefferson County Public School District (73.67% responded)	2016 JCPS High Schools (61.82% responded)	2016 Woodland High School-Main Campus (61.75% responded)
a. Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.	76.3%	50.5%	48.1%
b. Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	60.1%	24.8%	19.5%
c. Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.	70.5%	54.5%	54.5%
d. School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	58.7%	33.3%	23.6%
e. School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.	72.7%	51.0%	43.5%

f. Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	74.8%	58.9%	53.1%
g. The faculty works in a school environment that is safe.	84.1%	70.4%	64.7%

In sum, the description of school leadership contributes to the understanding the research question, what is happening at a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban high school as it relates to school discipline? This exploration will continue in the next section as the description shifts from matters related to school leadership to matters related to school discipline policies and procedures.

School Discipline Policies and Procedures

When the educational process is interrupted, educators often use discipline to regain order. Accordingly, to better understand school discipline policies and practices, semi structured interviews in addition to various documents related to school discipline policies and procedures, were collected, reviewed, and analyzed to create a description of school discipline at Woodland High.

The code of conduct was referenced several times during interviews when participants were asked to explain the policies that guide their decision- making in relation to discipline. Designed by the Office of Student Services and approved by the JCPS School Board, The Student Code of Conduct provides parents, teachers, students, and administrators with the district's expectations, guidelines, and procedures related to student conduct. Specifically, the Student Code of Conduct is a handbook, which provides an overview of specific ways to respond to student conduct. Included in the

handbook are: goals of the district; student/teacher/parent/administrative expectations; interventions & disciplinary procedures; MTSS guidelines (PBIS and Restorative Practices); behavioral tiers of support; interventions and consequence levels; infractions and disciplinary consequences; alternative education programs, suspension classifications; and, definitions of disciplinary terms used in JCPS.

Administrators' participating in this study swore by the code of conduct; and, their descriptions of its usefulness closely echoed a statement by an assistant principal and former dean, Monica, as she explained that "Anytime I had a student in front of me, we would pull out the Code of Conduct and look at their infraction, and see what's the consequence. It's very straight up, and it's no hidden messages." High school counselors, however, were aware of the code of conduct and its purposes; yet, because they don't assign disciplinary consequences, they don't often utilize the handbook. Including, but not solely encompassing polices related to school discipline is the School Board Policy Manual. This is a manual organized according to the classification system developed by the Educational Policies Services of the National School Boards Association. More specifically, the policies adopted by the School Board explain what is to be done and may also include why and how much should be done in various situations.

There are (12) major classifications, each bearing an alphabetical code in the policy manual. Yet, the classification describing students is the only classification which directly influences this study. Some of the specific standards of the Student polices related to this research describe the appropriate responses and consequences for: a) suspension/expulsion, b) disruptive conduct, c) profane, obscene, or abusive language, d)

149

use and/or possession of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, e) defiance of the authority of school personnel, f) possession or use of weapons or other dangerous articles, g) teacher removal of a student from class, and h) possession of cellular telephones, other electronic devices. Overall, the Student Policies in JCPS provided the supplemental knowledge that would be nearly impossible to gain by means of semi-structured interviews solely. Additionally, the School Board Policy Manual provides corrective actions for school administration, which should be considered fully in determining reasonably corrective actions in all situations.

High school building administrators and central office administrators stated they often refer to the Code of Conduct and School Board Policy Manual to guide the assigning of consequences for various problem behaviors. More specially, at Woodland High, the "Deans [of Students]" were unanimously identified as the leaders responsible for assigning consequences. Simply, a school counselor described the process for assigning disciplinary consequences and indicated that, "The teacher submits a referral and it goes to the dean. And then, the dean assigns a consequence". A former Dean, and current Assistant Principal, further explained the procedure for assigning consequences and discussed the use of "a gradual discipline ladder". Figure 13 illustrates the disciplinary process utilized in JCPS to respond to problematic student behaviors as outlined in the district code of conduct.
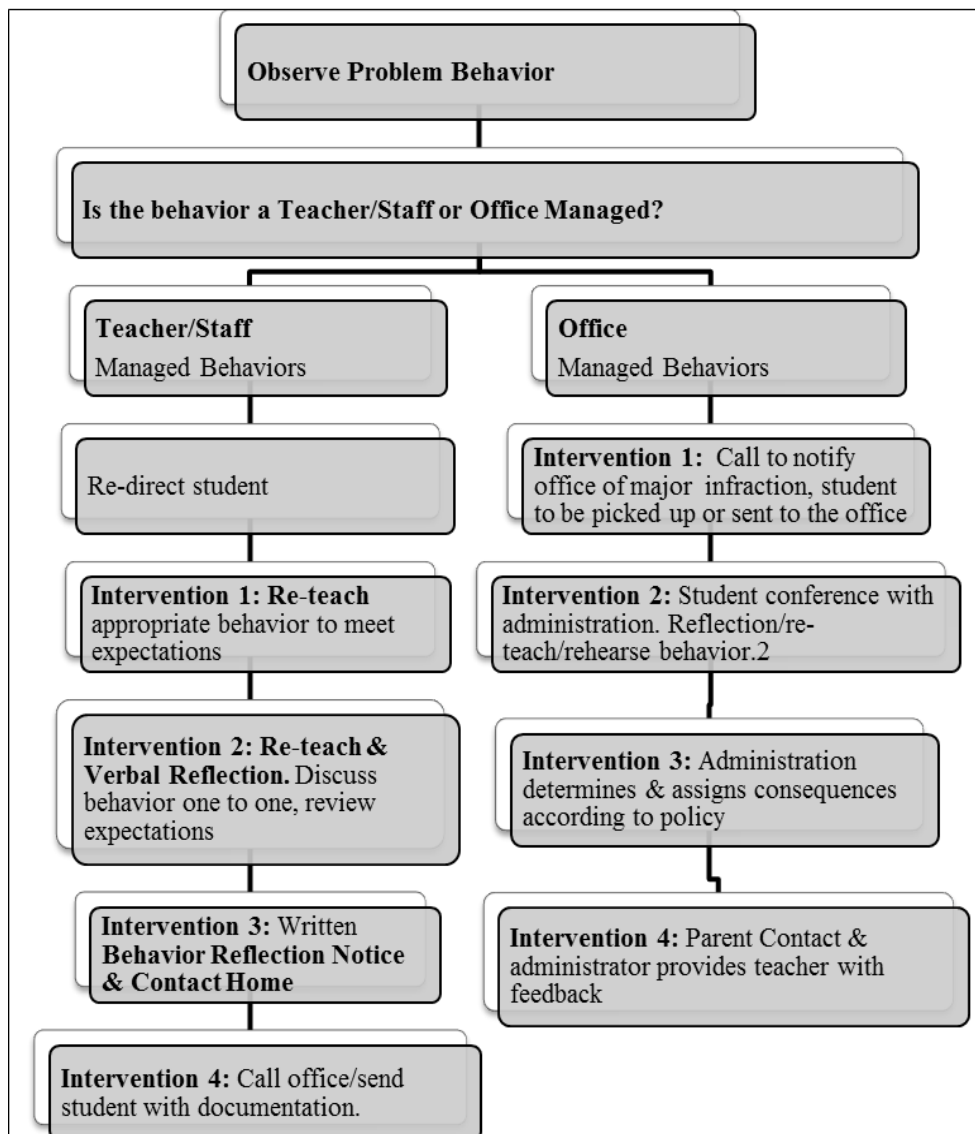
Figure 13. Disciplinary Process for Responding to Problematic Behaviors

Overall, participant interviews inferred that administrators in central office and at WHS collect data on a variety of incidents, infractions, and consequences, which stemmed from disciplinary referrals. Julia, a school counselor, reported that "As far as what we're doing right now, it seems like restorative circles and community circles are

the current practices. In the past, I think we've utilized more in-school suspension, out of school suspension, and home pending parent conferences." Clarity was sought regarding home pending parent conferences since it was not a traditional approach to discipline. The counselor explained that at WHS suspension and home pending parent conferences have been frequently used as consequences for student misbehavior. More specifically, she explained:

> It's an alternative to an out of school suspension. So you use home pending parent conference because it's not counted against the school's disciplinary record when it comes to out of school suspension. So you basically send the kid home until their parent can come in and meet with an administrator. And then you have a meeting and you discuss the behavior. And you put strategies in place to help them improve with that behavior, and they're able to come back to school.

She further revealed:

> It doesn't go in as a-- because it's not technically a suspension. It is a, you're out of school, but you're not suspended. You're out of school until your parent can come in and meet. So if you're parent can come in the same day, you never get sent home. If your parent can't come in, and they're able to do it sometimes over the phone, then you're not sent home. It just depends on how severe the infraction is.

> Nonetheless, while state laws and regulations require that administrators keep records on suspensions and expulsions, in addition to submitting annual reports to the Department of Education in their state; building administrators and leadership teams have some discretion in terms of other behavior data they collect.

School Disciplinary Data

In schools, systematic collection of data allows educators and stakeholders to see patterns that may not be understood through individual personal statements. In addition, the community at large needs to know how discipline is being handled in the school building to ensure that disciplinary incidents are addressed appropriately and students are treated fairly. Without data, it is difficult to know if individual experiences are exceptions or part of a pattern. Accordingly, the documents reviewed and analyzed added to the research what participant interviews could not, statistical data. And, the interviews provided an explanation of the data collected and analyzed from the perspective of school leaders. The description of school disciplinary data will contribute to the understanding of school discipline at Woodland High.

Data collection. It is required by the Federal Office of Civil Rights (OCR) that schools and school districts collect, review, and evaluates disparities in disciplinary actions taken between student populations. With this new focus on the use of discipline data to better understand disparities it is important to consider the quality of discipline data being evaluated. As it relates to data collection at Woodland High School, participants described: a) people or positions responsible for collecting the data, b) the types of data collected, c) the frequency of data collection, and d) personal opinions as it relates to their perceived "appropriateness" of the disciplinary referrals collected.

Specifically, as it relates to people or positions responsible for collecting the data; participants stated that ten of them personally collect data related to discipline, and six do not. Unanimously, all high school building administrator participants, reported that they

collect disciplinary data. However; there were varied responses across the other

participant groups in reference to data collected by that individual. Undisputed across all

interviews was the recognition that deans and administrators collect behavior and

incident data. Yet, the primary responsibility rests on the Dean of Students; the deans and

administrators participating in the study all confirmed this to be true.

Listed in no particular order, participants reported that they regularly collect data

in three areas: 1) attendance/ truancy data, 2) office referrals/ disciplinary infractions, and

3) suspension and expulsion data. Additionally, demographics of students are collected

across all three areas. Bilal, a central office administrator, explained that, "we [central

office] collect the data that is related to what we have to submit to the state." As

discussions of discipline occurred, each interview confirmed that some students

repeatedly violate the school's code of conduct. As such, participants were asked about

data collected and reviewed regarding student behavior goals. Over half of the

participants responded with "not that I am aware of", "no", or "I don't know". On the

other hand, seven participants made mention of data collected on behavior goals

presented in students' IEPs (Individualized Education Plan), FBA's, Behavior Contract

Goals, and/or BIPs. David, a WHS administrator, explained:

> If you were a student with a disability, you have an IEP then we have what are
>
> called behavior intervention plans, a BIP. But what some folks don't understand is
>
> that we also have behavior intervention plans for general ED [education] students
>
> as well. BIPs do allow us to monitor how students are reaching their behavior
>
> goals. Another thing that we do is a lot of behavior contracts where we actually

contract with the student and the parent, and we set that behavior goal. We set a specific goal, time, and then we meet to address it. And if that goal has not been met, then we look at sometimes restructuring the goal or I'll look at what our next steps are going to be.

Likewise, participants were asked to describe any data collected about the teaching of behavioral expectations. Accordingly, the majority of participants explained, either they "are not aware of data collected" or were certain that data are not collected about the teaching of behavioral expectations. Reported by each counselor, aside from a contract signed in the beginning of year following an assembly about school behavior expectations, no data are collected.

To further understand school discipline policies and practices, participants were also asked to identify how often they collect data. Responses regarding frequency of data collection ranged from uncertainty to daily. Amy, a school counselor's response was, "I don't really know that. They do this thing at central office every-- I don't even know how often." Bilal, a central office administrator responded that he has "a personal goal of quarterly to check the district-wide data." Julia, a counselor, explained, "I think it's collected daily when our administrative assistant is there." Like Julia, Tricee, a central office administrator, pointed out, "The data collection is ongoing. The referral forms come in daily. As far as how often they put it into the system, I'm not sure. I know they have been asked to put it in at least weekly." Yet, Riley, a central office administrator said, "That [data collection] happens once a month or so."

Referrals and infractions. Explicitly, much of the discourse surrounding school

discipline data collection at Woodland High School refers back to disciplinary referrals.

Accordingly, participants described what they would consider an appropriate referral

compared to an inappropriate referral; then, provide their standpoint on the percentage of

appropriate referrals at the high school. All participants agreed that any behavior that

jeopardizes the safety of others would warrant a referral, which would be appropriate.

Specially, as reported by participants, this includes: weapon possession, bullying, and

fighting. Other appropriate referrals mentioned included: plagiarism/cheating (a violation

of the school honor code), classroom disturbances/disruptions, disrespect (to include

profanity toward a staff member), selling/possessing drugs, racial slurs, and

insubordination.

As inappropriate referrals were described by participants, Samantha, a school

counselor explained:

> Some of the referrals are actually quite silly: Chewing gum, not having utensils -
>
> pens, paper for class - not having a book. And those referrals, they have to be read
>
> through just like the more serious referrals, and it tends to bog down the system
>
> and things don't get done.

Several other participants mentioned referrals related to a lack of classroom materials,

gum, food or drinks. Specifically, Monica, a building administrator, revealed:

> Sometimes, I've seen referrals that teachers ask students to leave because they
>
> don't have their materials…A student not having their materials, that's a frivolous
>
> referral; If, a student is using that as an excuse not to do the work, I think the

teachers can provide that pencil or the student can ask a neighbor or a classmate

for a writing utensil.

Also in agreement with the other participants, David, a building administrator, presented

the example, "Johnny [hypothetical student] didn't have his pencil, or Johnny took his

phone out…is easily resolved within the classroom. It doesn't require a discipline

referral."

After discussions with participants regarding their perceptions of appropriate and

inappropriate disciplinary referrals, they were then asked to communicate the percentage

of disciplinary referrals that they felt, on average, were appropriate. Some central office

administrators responded that a building administrator could better respond. Accordingly,

for participants who work at Woodland High School, the most frequent response was

50%. Yet, Riley, a central office administrator submitted:

I have seen enough in the high school to know that people don't just write

discipline referrals for no reason. I do believe that we have kids who have

challenging behaviors. We have adults who could potentially learn how to deal

with those challenging behaviors. I'd say 50/50. It could be 50% that the kid is

really acting out, or 50% that the staff member may need some additional support.

Similarly, Samantha, a high school counselor, asserted:

The data we receive, most of our referrals come from five teachers, and I'm

guessing there could be four, could be six, but most of our referrals come from the

same teachers…I've been at the school a long time. A lot of the teachers have

been at the school a long time. I know them. I know they're not going to change.

So when I have kids who are in a specific teacher's class who I know gives a lot

of referrals, I bring the kids in when I see them. I say, "Listen. This is how it is.

You have teacher X. Teacher X has been this way for 25 years. They are not

going to change. You have to do A, B, and C. Do these things, don't do X, Y, and

Z because you will be sent out. I'm telling you ahead of time. This is how it is."

Sometimes they listen. Sometimes they don't; and, the teacher never waivers.

A local metropolitan news article, published within the last year, which presents

the results of a local investigation of school weapons uncovered an alarming increase in

the number of local students taking weapons to school. Specifically, in JCPS, the number

doubled from 14 weapon incidents to 28 over the course of a year. School representation

provided a statement to the news, which conveyed that the increased reportage of

weapons should be associated with JCPS's diligence in providing more accurate

documentation.

In further exploration, participants were asked to describe the most frequent

disciplinary infractions at Woodland High School. The three infractions mentioned most

often, in order of frequency referenced starting with the most, were: disrespect and

fighting (equally), insubordination/disobedience; and skipping class. Figure 14 displays

the disciplinary infractions participants described as most frequent. Some participants

made mention of one infraction and others listed multiple; yet and still, all infractions

referenced are listed.

Woodland High School, Most Frequent Disciplinary Infractions reported by Participants
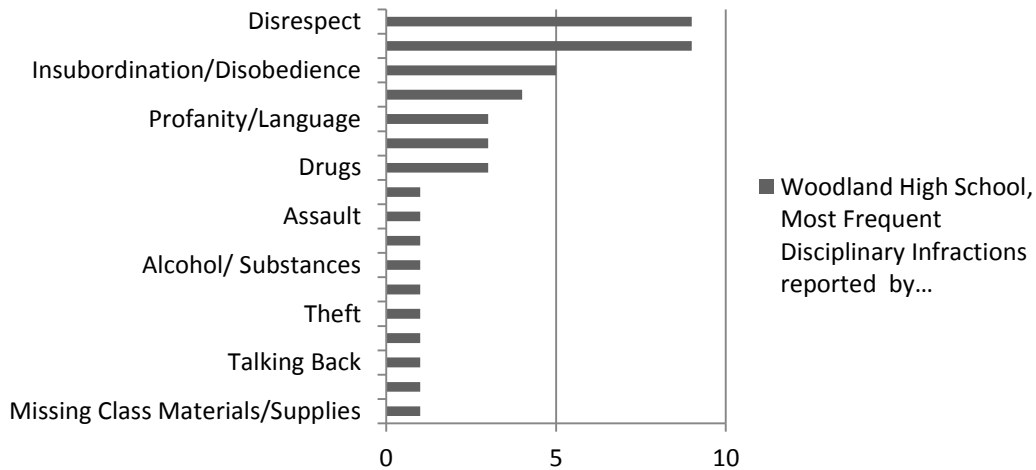
Figure 14. Disciplinary Infractions Reported by Participants

In addition to being asked to describe the most frequent disciplinary infractions, participants were too asked to explain the consequences for the disciplinary infractions they regarded as most frequent. For example, Shamari states that, "the most frequent classroom behavioral concern is insubordination." He then explains that, "In most cases, those are dealt with verbal reprimands and conversations and in some cases, detentions [to include lunch detention and after school detention]. In the most severe cases, they're dealt with Saturday school and in-school suspension and even parent conferences." As a consequence for disrespect and fighting, Monica expressed:

I would think that would depend on how many times it's happened. If it's an all-out brawl, the students are asked to leave the building as soon as possible. Then,

159

they have to return with a parent. If a repeated offense, they're probably

suspended [out of school]. With the disrespect, it's kind of - what do I want to say

- it's in the eye of the beholder. So, what one person might perceive as disrespect,

another person might not see as disrespectful…We just want students to

understand and own their behavior, and then work to make sure it doesn't happen

again.

Participants also made mention of restorative circles and repair circles; specifically,

David, explained:

With insubordination, and disrespect, and skipping class, most of these we resolve

using Restorative Practices…out of school suspension is a last resort and we

really don't use that now unless there's some major code of conduct violation

which we've tried other interventions and unfortunately nothing has at that point

seemed to have worked.

For further understanding, participants were asked to specify some of the

particular infractions they observed which constituted suspension, expulsion, and

alternative school placement. Students' behaviors which constitute suspension and

alternative school placement, as reported by participants, include: possession or use of

drugs, alcohol, or weapons in school; disrespect and profanity; defiance and

insubordination; skipping class and truancy; and physical altercations. Though there

presents an overlap in behaviors, which constitute suspensions and alternative placement

alike, one distinct difference presented by Shamari, and echoed by most participants, was,

"alternative school placement is usually the result of persistently troublesome behavior. Whether it is insubordination or fighting, it usually has to be persistent and ongoing." Additionally, all 16 participants unanimously stated that in their time in JCPS, no student has ever been expelled.

The research over the past 30 years indicates that classroom management is one of the critical ingredients of effective teaching (Brophy, 1996; Doyle, 1986, 1990; Emmer, 1984). Accordingly, it was necessary to better understand how participants reported their perceptions regarding the time for teaching that is hindered due to disciplinary concerns at Woodland High School. Ten of the sixteen participants quantitatively reported their perceptions regarding the time for teaching that is hindered due to disciplinary concerns. From those ten, the participants' responses ranged from 0% to 80% with an average report of 36% of time for teaching that is hindered due to disciplinary concerns. On the low end, Paige explained that, "in the honors and AP class it would be 0%, or maybe 1%." Then, she continued to explain that, "some of the regular ones [non honors or AP classes]… maybe like 20%." As well, Monica communicated:

> I think it depends on the teacher… And I think as long as teachers are consistent
> and fair and create that welcoming community in their classroom, there's less
> disruption. So I think it just varies classroom to classroom. And so I would just
> say as a veteran teacher it should only probably impact 10% less of the time.

On the high end, as it relates to teaching time hindered due to disciplinary concerns, Jerome stated:

> I've heard upwards of 70% of the time … I argue that if you're spending 70% of

161

the time dealing with discipline, then you don't know how to manage your class.

From the six who did not quantitatively report their perceptions regarding the time for teaching that is hindered due to disciplinary concerns, there were illustrative narratives presented. For example, David replied:

I think it really does depend upon the teacher, from the referrals that I receive. Usually, on average, for instance, we receive about; I would say each learning community, somewhere between 900, around 800 discipline referrals a year. But unfortunately, when you desegregate the data, some of the referrals that are submitted really do not meet the criteria of a major code of conduct violation. That's where I think - and I don't want to get on my soapbox - but I think that's where cultural competency training comes in also. Students learn differently.

Too, Bilal made the statement that, "it's hard to say because it really depends on the class and/or the teacher". However, Samantha's response suggested that grade level plays a factor as she indicated:

With the younger grades, so much of the teaching time is put to redirection - trying to get kids to settle down, listen. Every one of our kids - given a laptop, and so much of the time may be spent at getting the kids redirected into appropriate places on the laptop or shutting them down altogether. Just following basic rules in the younger grades, I think it takes up quite a bit of time. As soon as they get older, the kids tend to follow the rules more readily. One redirect is often enough and not three or four.

Another perspective, presented by Shamari exposed:

There are some teachers whose curriculum is not impacted by discipline at all

because they manage their classrooms, whereas the same students are disrupting

the curriculum in other teachers' classrooms, so it would vary from teacher to

teacher. I know some teachers who are barely able to teach because they can't

manage kids.

Though some participants made mention of their stances as related to Woodland

High Schools teachers' ability to manage their classrooms, to further explicate the

leadership perspectives, participants were explicitly asked if they perceived that teachers

were equipped to manage student behaviors. Similar responses were relayed across

participants. Amy stated that "On average, some are better than others. Some, I think, are

not equipped." In agreement with Amy, David stated, "I think that most classroom

teachers are equipped to manage student behaviors, but unfortunately not all. So, the

support that we offer [teachers] ...is professional development." This perspective was

conveyed in other interviews as well. Yet, In contrast, Julia mentions, "No, because

teachers send students out sometimes for the things that actually should be handled in the

classroom. They just send them out." And, Monica insists, "Yes. If you're a teacher that

is compassionate about students, and you have your pulse on your classroom, and you're

trying to provide equity for all students, I think that you won't have a problem teaching."

Nonetheless, Samantha attested:

Some [teachers] do a great job. And the ones that I can tell do the best job are

the ones that are serious but they're not real hard asses…They don't have to be the

king or queen. They're in charge, they know they're in charge; but, they don't have

to prove they're in charge to anybody. They tend to have the better relationships with the kids too. Not everyone can teach and not everyone can teach this grade level or this group of kids. There may be a teacher who is excellent with his or her knowledge base and they're fabulous at getting it out there, but this isn't the group for them… We may have some teachers who aren't tops in their field in a subject matter but are great with kids, so they end up being our better teachers ...You either have a feel for kids or you don't, and I really don't think you can teach that.

Studies on suspensions reveal that, because of the subjective nature of many suspensions, bias is often a factor in determining whether to suspend a student (Carter et al., 2014). The results in racial disproportionalities for subjective offenses in JCPS were displayed in Figure 15. Figure 15 reveals that at least 93% of Black and Latinx students, compared to their 65.8% representation in the district's enrollment, were suspended for incidents "related to behavior," which were subjectively determined. Explicitly, the majority of the suspensions reported for Black and Latinx students were for subjective offenses such as disrespect, defiance/insubordination, and disruption.
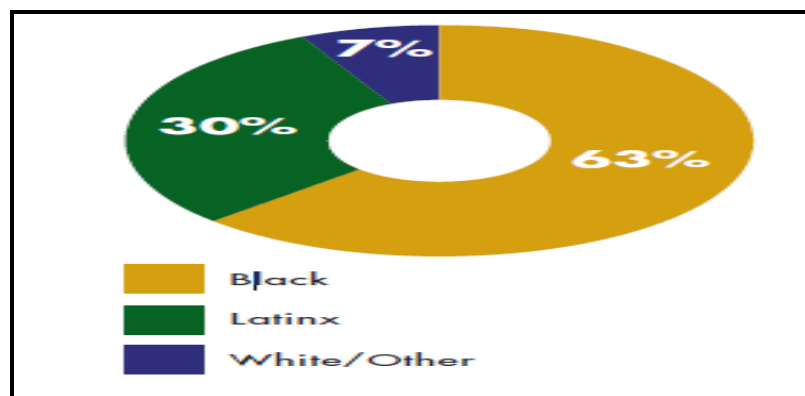
Figure 15. JCPS Subjective offense suspensions
Note: For the 2014-15 school year, the Department of Education [in the state being researched] did not report any the districts suspensions "related to weapons" because there were so few such suspensions. The figure is not representative of suspensions related to weapons. Use of the term Latinx is intentional. Latinx is a gender-inclusive reference to people of Latin American descent.
SOURCE: Based on data submitted to the (Protected State) Department of Education

Racial disproportionality also exists in JCPS as it relates to law enforcement data. All of the students referred to law enforcement for "Disorderly Conduct" in 2014-15 were reportedly either Black or Latinx. In other words, not only were Black and Latinx students losing learning time for "subjective" offenses, but they were also being criminalized for such behavior, which could potentially result in a school to prison pipeline. As well, the data reported confirmed that at least 78 of the 219 students referred to law enforcement were referred for fights with no injury or minor injury. Hence, addressing those incidents using Restorative Practices would have been ideal as opposed to the creation of an opportunity for students to be (re)introduced to the juvenile justice system. Also, of the 219 referrals to law enforcement, 60% were not required by state law, which meant that JCPS staff directly initiated a school to prison pipeline.

As illustrated in Figure 16A, Black students were identified as 38% of state required referrals to law enforcement, which was fairly close to their student enrollment percentage (31%). These offenses were more objective in nature, such as "alcohol possession" or "possession of a BB Gun." However, for discretionary referrals to law enforcement illustrated in Figure 16B, which include subjective offenses like "defiance" and "disruptive demonstrations," Black students were 61% of such referrals. This could be an indication that racial discrimination may have played a role in the way students

were being criminalized. Additionally, as displayed in Figure 17, during the 2014-15

school year, at the high school level, Black students were almost 5 times as likely (and

Latinx students were 2 times as likely) to be suspended as compared to White students;

And, as illustrated in Figure 18, from 2010-15, students of color made up almost all of

the subjective offense suspensions (94%).
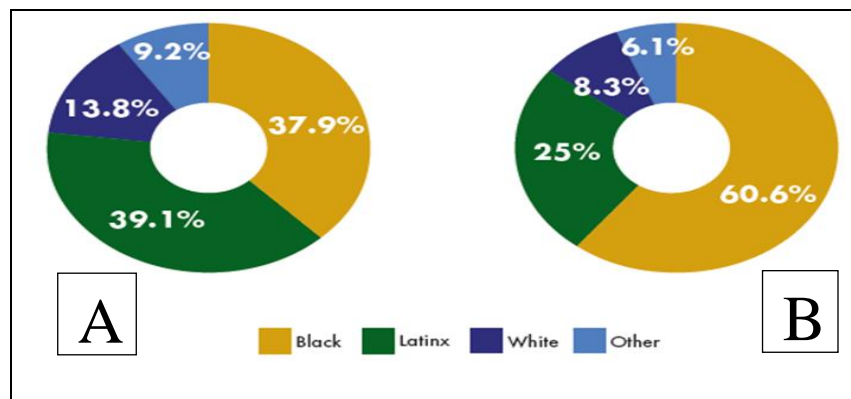
Figure 16. A) 2014-15 JCPS State Required Referrals to Law Enforcement
                B) 2014-15 JCPS Discretionary Referrals to Law Enforcement
Note: Use of the term Latinx is intentional. Latinx is a gender-inclusive reference to people of Latin American descent.
SOURCE: Based on data submitted to the (Protected State) Department of Education
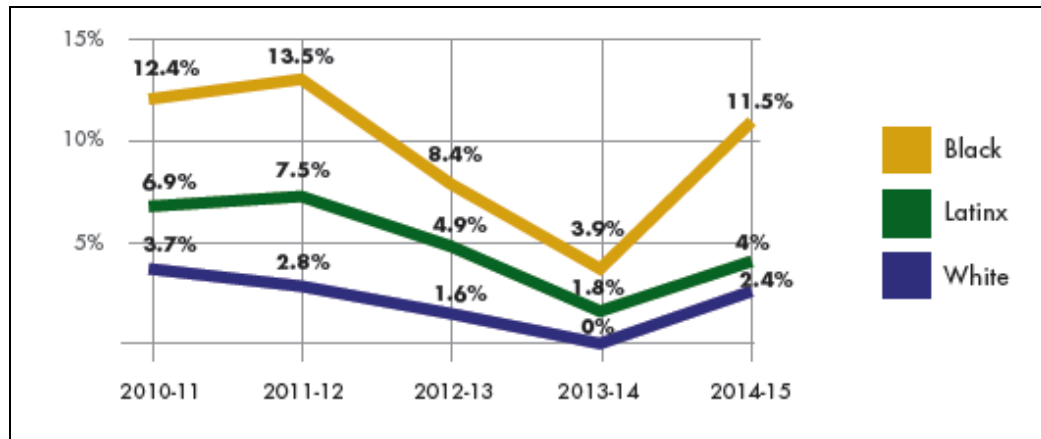
Figure 17. 2010-2015 WHS suspension rates, by race

Note: Use of the term Latinx is intentional. Latinx is a gender-inclusive reference to people of Latin American descent. The percentages represent the proportion of each group that was suspended one or more times.
SOURCE: Based on data submitted to the (Protected State) Department of Education Based.
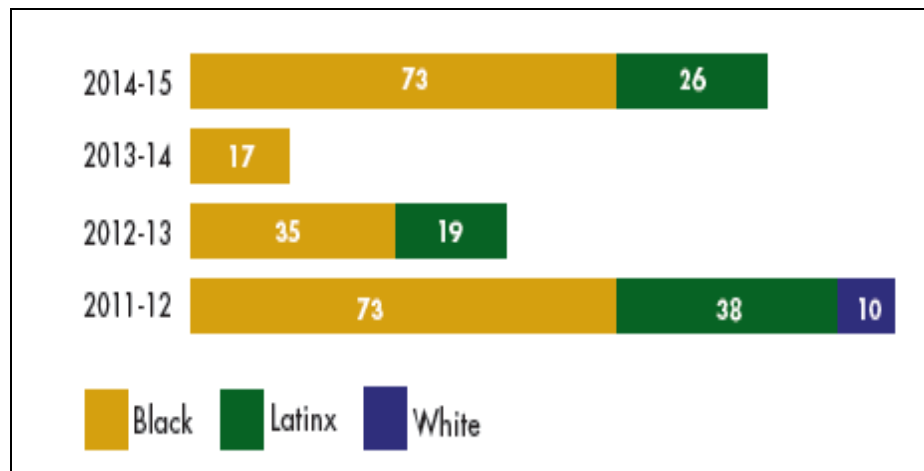
Figure 18. 2010-2015 JCPS High School subjective suspension rates, by race
Note: From 2012- 2015, the protected states Department of Education did not provide data on subjective offense suspensions for White students at the research site because there were fewer than 10 such suspensions. Use of the term Latinx is intentional. Latinx is a gender-inclusive reference to people of Latin American descent.
SOURCE: Based on data submitted to the (Protected State) Department of Education

Data analysis. As it involves the analysis of school data, participants'

understanding of how data are analyzed was unclear for most participants. However,

Jerome, a central office administrator, reported confidently that, "it [data analysis] comes

from [a student information database]." Also, he explained that, "the designated person at

the school who's responsible for inputting [discipline referral information] enters [referral

information] into the system…then it goes to the Office of Technology, and it's presented

by Accountability." Overall, administrators reported having an understanding of systems

in place, often informal, that enable them to track student behavior. However, the

counselors were not as familiar with the process.

In addition to discussions of the current data collected and analyzed, participants

were also asked what they still need to know about data. A building administrator, David

expressed needing to know:

> What you [teachers] are doing in the classroom to teach what appropriate
>
> behavior looks like… I want to know before you refer this student… what are
>
> some of the interventions that you've put into place to change the behavior before
>
> you're saying now, 'I need this child out of the classroom. I've just had enough'.

A counselor and building administrator, Keisha and Monica, both make mention of the

mental health needs of students. Further, Keisha specified, "I think it will be nice to know

how many students are suspended or receive referrals, and for what so that we can

address their needs because a lot of the times, the needs are underlying for the referrals."

Tricee, a central office administrator, described needing to know, "the teachers role in the

discipline data." Also related to student behavior data, school counselor, Julia stated:

Teachers need to be made aware of the data because I think if they are able to see that you sent 20 students out of your class in a week because they didn't have a pencil, because they put their head down, because they put their earphones in their ear, and they're all this [Black] demographic, versus your White students who do the same thing and you give them a pencil.

As data collection and data analysis continued to be discussed with participants, it was mentioned that demographic statistics are reported in discipline data. Accordingly, participants were asked what demographic group is disciplined most often. More explicitly, participants were asked to identify the gender group and racial group that are disciplined most often. Participants, in entirety, stated that males are being suspended most often; although, there is an increase in discipline amongst females at Woodland High. In reference to demographic data on the racial group most often disciplined, Black students were the primary group and Latino students followed behind closely. The participant's identification of Black males, as the demographic group most often disciplined, was consistent across all interviews.

Racially Disproportionate Data

In 2006, students from Jefferson County Public School District (JCPS)[13] began identifying the school to prison pipeline as a serious concern in their school district. Accordingly, they began to survey their fellow students with hopes to identify obstacles to their success. One of the most common obstacles, reported by secondary students in

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[13] Jefferson County Public School District is a pseudonym used to protect the actual school district. However, details presented regarding the Mid-Atlantic suburban inner-ring district are considered to be true and factual based on public reports retrieved in data collection.

the district, was the overuse of harsh school discipline practices. Furthermore, students

reported that they felt students of color were being "targeted" with regards to school

discipline. Now, a decade later, students reportedly were still experiencing harsh and

racially disproportionate discipline.

Table 10 reports the total suspension and referral to law enforcement data for

discipline within the district during the 2014-15 school year. Additionally, Figure 19

illustrates the racial disproportionalities in discipline within the school district. Black

students make up 31% of student enrollment in JCPS, but were 55% of suspended

students and 52% of students referred to law enforcement. In comparison, White students

were 27% of student enrollment, but only 5% of suspended students and 11% of students

referred to law enforcement. In other words, Black students were reportedly 9 times more

likely to receive a short-term out-of-school suspension than White students. Meanwhile,

Latinx[14] students were reportedly 4 times as likely to receive a short-term out-of-school

suspension as White students. These racial disparities have been a consistent trend for at

least the past five school years, as illustrated by Figure 20.

Table 10

2014-15 Jefferson County Public School District Total Number of Students Suspended

and Total Number of Students Referred to Law Enforcement

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[14] Use of the term Latinx is intentional. Latinx is a gender-inclusive reference to people of Latin American descent.

	Student Enrollment	Total Number of Students Suspended	Total Number of Referrals to Law Enforcement
Elementary	8037	67	5
Middle	2676	290	168
High	3503	216	46
Totals	14216	573	219

Note: These data show the number of students who received a short-term out-of-school suspension (less than 10 days). Data for regional centers was not publicly available.
SOURCE: Safe Schools Information Resources & Record Requests

Figure 19. 2014-15 JCPS Racial disproportionalities in students suspended and students referred to law enforcement
Note: Use of the term Latinx is intentional. Latinx is a gender-inclusive reference to people of Latin American descent.
SOURCE: Based on data submitted to the (Protected State) Department of Education
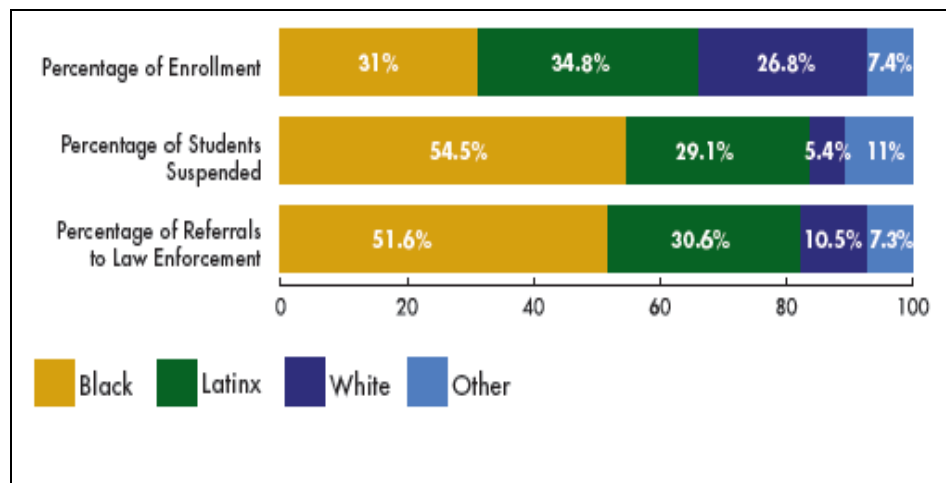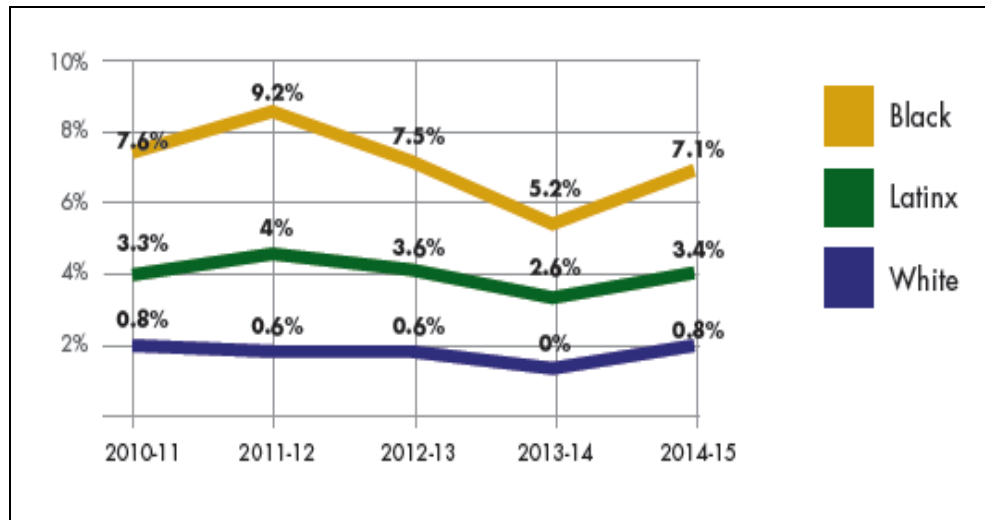
Figure 20. 2010-2015 JCPS Suspension rates, by race
Note: Use of the term Latinx is intentional. Latinx is a gender-inclusive reference to people of Latin American descent. The percentages represent the proportion of each group that was suspended one or more times.
SOURCE: Based on data submitted to the (Protected State) Department of Education

A news article from April 2016 which discusses the relationship between suspensions of Black students and racism, revealed that Black students are more than 3 time more likely than white students to be suspended or expelled from school, according to an analysis of data compiled by the US Department of Education. More specifically, this article is significant being that in the state of the research, 14% of black students received suspensions as compared to 5% of white students in the state. Furthermore, in another report, which compares suspension and expulsion rates of school districts across the state where the research site is located, presented data from JCPS during the 2013-14 school year. Specifically, data focused on suspension and expulsions with regards to demographic classification, frequency of suspensions, number of days suspended, and

expulsions. Included in the data reported, were a disproportionate suspension of Black students. Specifically, a 4.56% risk difference existed between Black and White students in JCPS.

Though there is no exact reason as to why Black males are the prominent demographic group represented in school discipline data, when participants were asked why they perceived that Black males were most often disciplined, a variation of responses was presented. In one example, Jerome, a central office administrator, explained that Black males are disciplined more than other students was "Because they scare people." Furthermore, Julia, a school counselor, explained her perception of why Black males were most often disciplined. She divulged:

> I think we have a lot of White teachers who view our students' behavior as more aggressive. A white student can be just as disrespectful to a teacher, and they will brush it off and say that the child is having a bad day, even though the child can curse at them, the child can buck at them, the child can get up and storm out, and all of that, but they will excuse their behavior. Whereas, if our [Black] kids respond in a tone that they feel is hostile, they don't feel safe, they want the child out; they're not willing to let them come back until a parent can come in.

Another central office administrator, Bilal, described:

> Some of it is the work that we're trying to do through cultural competency…either conscious or unconscious bias that some of our staff have as it relates to students of color…If the White kid is tapping his pencil on the desk, are you as agitated as when the Black kid is tapping his pencil on the desk, and what's your response? I

173

would argue that for the African American kid, depending on who it is, it's probably a totally different response…I would say a lot of it just relates to internal biases that people have, and so we're trying to grow people's cultural competency, cultural awareness, but we're starting with the school board and with administrators.

Like Bilal, David, a building administrator references cultural competence. He disclosed:

I think that some of it has to do with the way students perceive themselves, as well as educators. We talk about code switching, and I show my students; you can use slang out in the community with your friends, you can write incomplete sentences when you're on Twitter and you're texting, but you have to know how to switch when you get in the school house.

Denise, another central office administrator, suggested:

I feel as if that population of students [Black males] is often misunderstood. They're hurting, without a safe place to vent or share. And, I think that a large piece of what we deal with in the schools that is challenging is they're coming from communities that have multiple stressors; and, I think that's brought to school. And so, I think that not having a place to deal with that…I think when you have all those issues that are compounding the experiences of African American male students-- I was going to say African American students, period, but African American males, I think that that is a recipe for disaster if it's left unaddressed.

Similar to Denise, Keisha's perception as a school counselor was, "we [educators] do not know how to deal with them [Black males] as a school system. So they're labeled,

and no one address their true needs, the underlying issues, or the cause of behavior."
Paige, another school counselor, communicated that she considered the disproportionality
to be "a whole systemic issue." In addition, Riley and Tricee who are both central office
administrators conveyed that, "they [Black males] are a group that is misunderstood."
Riley further clarified:

> It's just the cultural misunderstanding with that particular group of students. And
> so, I think it leads to the easiest thing is to get rid of them as opposed to trying to
> understand and trying to give them an opportunity to express themselves or be a
> part of the school community.

Different from all others, Monica's administrative perception of why there is an over-
representation of Black males in discipline stemmed from the deficiency in reading skills.
Following the assertion, Samantha expressed her counseling perception of why
disproportionate discipline is prevalent amongst Black males. She disclosed:

> Our White kids do stuff, but they do so on the sly so that it's hard to catch them.
> They're just more sophisticated with the crap that they do. They will put stuff on
> Twitter and on Facebook and social media that we have to track down and bring
> them in on. Or they're the kids that get drunk at homecoming or at a football game
> that sometimes we catch and sometimes we don't. They're not the kids that blow
> up in class. So in a lot of ways, what they're doing is a lot more serious, but they
> do it under cover. I don't want to say they're smarter about it because that
> demeans our African-American boys, but they [white students] do stuff so it's
> harder to get caught; whereas, our African-American boys will just go off in class.

She continued:

> This year, in our grade level, nobody is getting suspended. Even though we had
> an incidence this year of a kid being drunk at Homecoming; White boy, drunk at
> Homecoming, - no questions. Nobody is denying that he was drunk. He's not
> denying it. His parents aren't denying it. The school's not denying it. Not
> suspended.

In reference to the Homecoming example, Samantha was asked, if the same scenario involved an African American male how she believed it would be handled. Her response was, "in my experience, all hell would-- The shit would hit the fan." Samantha discussed another situation, which occurred at Woodland High, she described, "we had an incidence last year where there was a party bus that came to prom. And, of the seniors-- these were well-to-do White kids on a party bus where there was drinking. Nobody was suspended". Further, she relayed, "One of the things we run into, and I run into, is who speaks for the voiceless?" Contradictory, to the other participant responses, one administrator articulated, "they're most often disciplined because they trifling as hell. Their behaviors are trifling. I mean, it's not the school; it's the behavior that the students bring with them to the school building.

Data-Driven Decision Making

During their interviews, study participants talked about using data to improve students' success in school; namely, to develop appropriate interventions and to create new initiatives designed to reduce barriers to learning. For that reason, participants were asked how the school discipline data influences the district's disciplinary practices. David

176

described the division as "data driven," and discussed, like the majority of participants, the switch to Restorative Practices Furthermore, David explained:

> The district was called to task by [2 organizations] that represents the interests of African American and Latino students… They were very concerned about the high number of suspensions, specifically as it concern black and brown children. So we [administrators] met with them, and one of the things they wanted us to do was to consider Restorative Practices. Out of that meeting, now the majority of our leadership team as well as some teachers have been trained in Restorative Practices.

One report, from the organizations which David explained called the district to task, which describes challenges students faced in JCPS in October 2007, nearly ten years ago. Historically, students reported that they experienced limited preparation for college; academic tracking of students of color into low-level courses; low expectations of students by school staff that resulted in students feeling discouraged, unmotivated, and unprepared for college; lack of support for struggling students, and even encouraging some to drop out; ESL classes that do not adequately prepare students to graduate high school and attend college; limited access to AP and Honors classes; and unjust discipline policies that push students out of school. Further, a survey was developed to measure student views about school climate, academic achievement, and college preparation at Woodland High.

The results of this research led the public to a disturbing conclusion. This document exposed that Jefferson County Public Schools reportedly created two racially

identifiable education tracks which were described as: an exclusive, privileged track, in which a small number of students are actively prepared for academic success; and a mainstream, unprivileged track, in which the majority of students are not expected to excel and receive little support or opportunity to pursue their academic goals. Amongst several other statistics reported, the document specified that JCPS graduated its White students with college preparatory diplomas six times more than Black students and over four times higher than the rate for Latino students. The data indicate that there are institutional barriers within the district that are preventing Black and Latino students from achieving academic success. And, a substantial number of students reported feeling unsupported by the staff of Woodland High. Related to the research regarding school policies and practices at JCPS, the survey results also indicated that harsh school discipline practices are a primary factor in creating an unsupportive school environment that leads to students dropping out or being pushed out.

A June 2016 article, which appeared in a prominent national newspaper, regarding students of Woodland High School's pursuit for "justice" in their school was created after students voiced the problems with disproportionalities in discipline at Woodland High School to the local news by writing a local opinions essay. The article quotes students' requests for change, specifically, the students revealed that it there is a problem with disproportionality for students of color at Woodland High; and, students of color are targeted and disciplined with harsh, punitive measures. The article also explained that students made a push with community organizations to bring Restorative Practices to Woodland High School for the purpose of creating a safe and respectful

178

learning environment. This report created quite the disturbance in the community. As a result, a lot of attention was placed on Jefferson County Public Schools and reports and research on district discipline data were exposed.

Stemming from the outcry from students, other news reports and articles emerged in local and national news outlets. Historical statistics were reported to show that the presence of racially disproportionate discipline in the district has been a concern left unmanaged over almost a decade. To further clarify the historical struggle for change, the report displayed a timeline spanning over almost ten years with request from two local organizations asking JCPS to reevaluate their responses to discipline for students of color. This report highlights the initiative of students at Woodland High searching for assistance from the community and asking for patronage in implementing Restorative Practices. Specific statistics, which exposed the frequency of law enforcement intervention in JCPS schools, as well as the undeniable racial disproportionalities in suspensions across Jefferson County Public Schools, were provided. Findings revealed that Black students were nine times as likely as their white classmates to receive short-term suspensions. And, Latinx students received short-term suspensions at four times the rate of white students. The voices of the students in JCPS were explicit as they conveyed the message that the past and present disproportionalities in discipline are not acceptable at Woodland High.

Furthermore, public documents continued to emerge and highlight the exchanges from community organizations to JCPS officials requesting to implement a Restorative Practices program, one that focuses less on punishment and more on repairing the harm

179

that bad behavior causes. This was mentioned in several of the interviews when asked how disciplinary data influences school-based interventions. Conversely, in the report city school officials rebutted the report's finding and attempted to highlight the work they have done to train teachers and staff members in what they termed 'Restorative Practices'. Additionally, a school system spokeswoman conveyed that JCPS has used Restorative Practices and paired them with shorter suspensions, so the impact of the program is not necessarily reflected in school suspension data. Appearing in the same prominent national newspaper that published the students outcry for support, civil rights advocates were beyond displeased to publicly learn that the continued issues involving racial disproportionate discipline were so extreme that it became necessary for students of Woodland High School to contact news outlets to assist them in their pursuit for "justice". The civil rights advocacy group argued that the Jefferson County public school system has failed to fully implement reforms that could help cut suspensions and law enforcement referrals among black and Hispanic students.

School-Based Interventions

This section illuminates and provides a description of the school-based interventions and supports utilized at Woodland High. In particular, the participants consistently mentioned the use of three guiding systems: Multi-Tired Systems and Supports (MTSS), Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and Restorative Practices (RP). The identification of the aforementioned three guiding systems resulted from participants' explanations of supports offered for students facing challenges at the high school level. A May 2016 report detailing suspension and expulsion data in the state

180

where research conducted conveyed public schools (including JCPS) issued over 126,000 out of school suspension to approximately 70,000 individual students. Following the presentation of statistics related to the state where the research was conducted, the report described proven interventions and alternatives to suspension. The report provided recommendations for lawmakers and detailed information regarding MTSS, RTI, PBIS, and Restorative Practices.

Restorative Practices (RP)

A news article published in July 2016 that, in its headline, boldly identified that Black students are punished more often than whites in JCPS referenced statistics presented discipline data reports and added that the 'school-to-prison pipeline' where punitive discipline policies link students to law enforcement for punishment was the culture of the district. The article stated that the current superintendent is committed to the full implementation of Restorative Practices in the Jefferson County Public School system.

The key points outlined in this section recount how Restorative Practices are employed at Woodland High School. In their responses to interview questions, participants identified a) how Restorative Practices are used and integrated into the school's disciplinary procedures, b) the impact Restorative Practices has on student behaviors, and c) the benefits and obstacles associated with implementing Restorative Practices. At the high school level, Restorative Practices are still fairly new. Nevertheless, participants are aware of the potential benefits that integrating RP can create. When participants explained the current discipline practices at Woodland High,

181

the recent integration of Restorative Practices was described during each interview. As one building administrator, David, candidly mentioned:

> We've made a major shift. Traditionally, we have used out of school suspension and a recommendation for expulsion…I been responsible for helping initiate a paradigm shift. Our suspensions are down and we now use suspensions as a last resort, instead of a first response to issues and concerns.

Keisha further explains, "We do community circles within the classroom and then restorative circles for students when they have a fight or an altercation or an argument to try and bring understanding to the issue". Shamari indicated that, "We [Woodland High] use the Restorative Practices in lieu of out of school suspension. They're also used as community building circles-- community circles to help develop relationships among students and staff."

A news article that speaks on district's use of Restorative Practices as a solution, from the superintendent of JCPS, expresses that safety is a primary concern. As well he explains that Restorative Practices are an important part of creating a system of positive behaviors in the district. He conveyed that the problems that affect school climate and suspension rates are being addressed in a thoughtful five-year plan. Then, he adds that Restorative Practices are now incorporated into the code of conduct, which was provided to all families. He continues by discussing that a cultural competency initiative has been launched. He ends by expressing that Restorative Practices is not the only solution, rather part of the solution; thus, reducing rates of suspension requires multiple strategies and the collaboration of schools, community organizations, parents and students together.

Though still rather new, participants were asked to relay how they perceived student behavior has been impacted by Restorative Practices. This question presented varying responses. For example, Keisha affirmed, "I think it's been positive the couple times I've been involved, but again, it's not always done appropriately, so I think more training is needed to make sure it's appropriately used". Whereas, Paige declared, "Well I don't think it's been revolutionary as a result of everyone is perfect, but I do think that it kind of helps them make positive decisions for themselves." Similar to Paige, Tricee stated that in a meeting where RP was discussed "they had seen less recidivism. So less return hangers for the same thing. Students are requesting to talk things out more than they did in the past, and I believe their out-of-school suspension numbers have dropped." Yet, the opposite was reported by Jerome as he conveyed:

> To hear it from some folks, they say it got worse. We still live in a - whether people want to believe it or not - we want our behavior to be excused but we want the person that harmed us to be killed… And so, you've really got to change that mindset, not just in kids but in their parents. It's just how it is. So I would say it's kind of mixed at best.

Though there was not agreement as it related to student behaviors, participants shared parallel views when asked to identify the benefits and obstacles associated with implementing Restorative Practices. Amelia, for instance, acknowledged:

> The benefits are that there's the potential for students to resolve their problems in the school environment, and also to grow from those experiences. So, there are benefits in terms of student connectedness to the school, student performance,

student buy-in to their learning, student attendance improvement, and a reduction in behavior issues.

David expressed that, "the benefit is that it teaches students to be able to sit down, and be reflective, and to talk things out." This stance was shared as Denise asserted:

Benefits are building community, building capacity in community. Benefits are strengthening relationships in schools; student to student and student to staff. Benefits are therapeutic releases, for sure. Benefits are having a voice in what happens in your school. Benefits are restored relationships… And benefits are the potential to reduce out-of-school placements.

The benefits presented by Denise, David, and Amelia resonated throughout the interviews. Yet and still, with all new things there are obstacles that may exist. Time and staff buy-in were reported as obstacles of RP that were discussed with participants. With regards to obstacles, Bilal expressed that, "the only obstacle would just be making sure that folks are trained, that folks are implementing with fidelity which we are establishing practices for that." Julia presented another obstacle as she specified:

I don't think we are implementing them correctly. I think we're using them for things that doesn't-- I think we're using them too soon. I think there has to be a discipline given for the infraction, and then when they come back from the consequence of their discipline or from the infraction, then you use a restorative circle. But, there's no consequence. There's just an infraction and then a restorative circle. So, to them, it's like, 'Oh, I can curse you out and cause all kinds of harm, and we're going to sit in the circle.'

In agreement with Julia, Shamari recognized:

> The obstacle to me is it does not give a real consequence for behavior. And
> students who are not interested in your feelings will continue to be recidivist as
> far as behavior issues are concerned, because they're not conditioned to a see
> Restorative Practices as a consequence

Data from all participants indicate that they share a common understanding of Restorative Practices and how it impacts students and the staff who lead the implementation efforts. In addition to Restorative Practices, participants commonly mentioned MTSS and PBIS.

Multi-Tiered Systems and Supports (MTSS)

A school-based intervention system used in JCPS, as mentioned by participants and in document review, is the Multi-Tier Support system. In October 2016, the Jefferson County School District newsletter explained that JCPS "is committed to ensuring that there are many ways to help children learn and that those who need additional supports are successful." Accordingly, the article explains that one way the district provides support is through the use of MTSS. The article also mentions (as depicted in Figure 21) that MTSS is commonly used in addressing reading, math and behavior; and, the MTSS process is flexible and designed to meet the needs of students. Further, the article provided the following image for the community to understand the key components of MTSS; and processes for parents to seek additional support if they believe that their child may need additional support in the realm of special education.
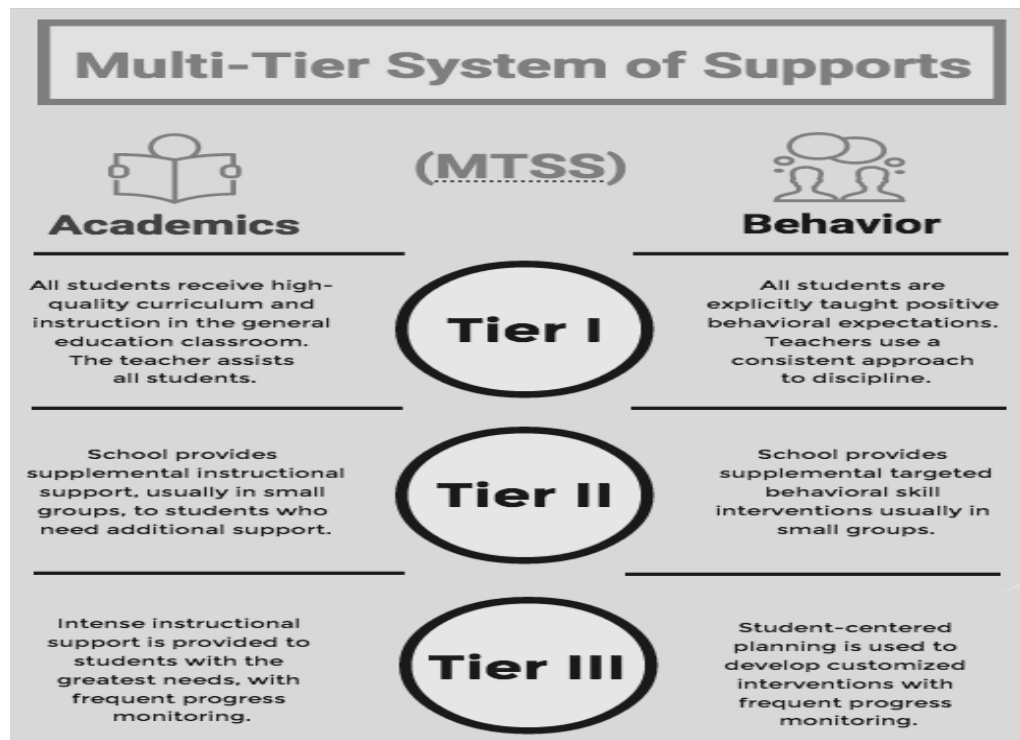
Figure 21. Multi-Tier Systems of Support

Samantha, one high school counselor, reported that counselors and other support staff (nurses, social workers, and psychologist) are expected to use "MTSS" as a guide for addressing student behaviors. Consistently, this was corroborated by several of the participants during interviews. Yet in still, although she acknowledged the expectation to use MTSS as a guide, Samantha expressed that her familiarity with MTSS is minimal. Further she communicated that when she reflects on MTSS, "it seems to be a big binder with a lot of things to read and to learn, and I know they've said they made it much smaller and much easier, but still, there's no time in the day to actually learn it, to digest it, let alone use it. So, we've had a couple in-school trainings for it, but if we're expected to use it, it's not nearly enough than what we need." On the other hand, the responses of

the other five counselor participants mimicked Keisha's response, "I just try to be fair and consistent with the students. Regardless of who you are or what color you are, if you do something that's inappropriate, I address the student the same way."

In sum, as it relates to disciplinary procedures, while certain participants identified MTSS as a guide for student behaviors, others reported a dependence on the student code of conduct or even the specific school board policies for specific guidance. Yet in still, while manuals are developed in order to provide specific guidance, some participants disclosed that they rely more on their moral values and personal feelings to guide them when addressing student behaviors than a simple handbook.

Participants were asked to explain how the school provides supports for students. Eleven participant's responses were identical as they mentioned the utilization of school support professionals in the building, like Samantha, a school counselor disclosed:

> The supports we have are the guidance counselors; we have social workers and we have school psychologists that are available to us. If it's a substance abuse issue, we have counselors who their main job is to work with kids with substance abuse issues.

However, other participants divulged a reliance on behavior models. For instance, central office administrators all described the MTSS process. Specifically, Bilal clarified:

> I expect for them [students in need of support] to go through the MTSS process… identifying what the problem is and then working within school groups or school teams to figure out what is the data telling us and what does it suggest that we do… We just ask that you do something and just not sit on your hands.

Denise presented another viewpoint after she was asked to explain how the school provides supports for students, she conveyed, " I think when you have a safe place like a support group, it allows kids a venue to just simply express themselves, but also allows a venue for a support team member to then lay out expectations."

Keisha and Monica shared similar ideas in relation to how the school provides supports for students. Both participants initially referred to the Dean of Students when asked about school supports. To quote, Keisha, a school counselor stated, "I normally refer to the dean. Sometime we work with the social worker to get involved. A lot of times I counsel with the student and talk to them about that behavior. Likewise, Monica, a school principal shared that, "if a problem arises, the first point of contact would be the dean of students. The dean of students would then rely on a counselor and or a social worker - depending on the infraction."

Another point of view was conveyed by Neicy, a school counselor, when asked to explain the supports offered for students at Woodland High. She expressed:

> I do try to meet regularly. Check in on the kid. Add academic support because usually that goes hand in hand. Then, I try to find some alternatives. Hook them up with a tutor. Do some different things. I have some hard-core conversations with some kids, especially if they're boys of color because I always tell them, 'I have Black boys at home, and so let me just tell you what the real is. You need to stop all the foolery because it's getting you nowhere.' And I'll tell them, 'I'm not of the mind that every teacher in this building has high expectations for you, so you need to rise up and have them for yourself.'

Although responses varied by how the information was presented, all participant statements are pertinent to the use of MTSS. This connection was strengthened as participants were asked to describe the supports in place for students who are repeatedly in violation of the code of conduct. More specifically, participants were asked to explain the supports available for Black males since they were identified as a specific group of students that were frequently disciplined. Some participants simply stated that there are no focused supports for Black males; yet, over half of the participants made a reference to mentoring programs. However, like several of the other participants, made a reference to mentoring as a support, a central office administrator stated a valid point that could not be ignored. She voiced:

> It was a group for African American males. However, the African American males that participated were not necessarily the ones that needed to receive the support. They're [Black males who need support] the students that often get labeled the 'bad kids' that make bad decisions, and they're not necessarily sought out to be pulled into those support-type groups that may end up having a positive impact on them.

Accordingly, from Tricee's response, it could be assumed that the Black males who need the support of mentoring programs are not being serviced. Hence, this assumption corresponds with Shamari's statement that, "there's nothing in place to manage those behaviors and/or provide them [Black students or students who are frequently violating the code of conduct] with an environment that is suited or equipped for their behaviors".

189

Although Black males are repetitively identified as the demographic group most often disciplined, participants did not disclose specific supports offered for the target population. Nevertheless, although there are not targeted interventions for Black males, there are interventions used to manage behavior at Woodland High. Explicitly, when asked to describe the school-based interventions utilized at the high school, one intervention was mentioned by all sixteen participants, Restorative Practices; Additionally, PBIS and MTSS were interventions highlighted during interviews.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

To assemble a more complete picture of how positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) are used at Woodland High, participants were asked to describe a) how PBIS is used and integrated into the school's disciplinary procedures, b) the impact PBIS has on student behaviors, and c) the benefits and obstacles associated with implementing PBIS. All 16 participants made mention of PBIS during their interviews. However, when asked specifics regarding its implementation at Woodland High, there was not transparency in participant's statements. Some participants recalled that there existed a PBIS Matrix that offers rewards while others recalled that it exists more in middle and elementary school. Riley, for instance, stated:

>PBIS is more a framework, whereas Restorative Practices kind of 'is' the work. So I think the framework of PBIS has lent itself to Restorative Practices being implemented. So, I see PBIS as the larger umbrella and under that is Restorative Practices that is as a tool to help build a sense of community and also offer

students who have committed infractions an opportunity to restore themselves to their school community.

Additionally, Tricee, who is the PBIS specialist for the district, reported:

Currently, there isn't really a baseline for behavior, so their [Woodland High School's] PBIS system is not in place. But, they use Restorative Practices in the form of community circles, in classrooms... I'm really not aware of the work that they're doing around behavioral planning as far as intervention planning for students they're not really doing PBIS.

In sum, though participants could recall the push in the past for PBIS at Woodland High, as confirmed by the districts PBIS coordinator. PBIS is not operating in the high school, but instead they are using Restorative Practices.

Effectiveness of Interventions

In conjunction with the depiction of school discipline practices, it was important to gain an understanding of how leadership viewed the current discipline practices by describing their viewpoint as it related to what they considered the most/least effective discipline practices utilized at Woodland High. Recurrently, the introduction of Restorative Practices was reported as the most effective practices by participants. David, a building administrator, proclaimed:

The most effective discipline practices, is when the consequence that's given teaches the student what appropriate behavior looks like. Anything short of that is nothing more than punishment, because the overall goal is to change the behavior from being inappropriate to appropriate.

Accordingly, RP is utilized as a practice for reducing suspensions and for teaching expectations.

Choices are often based on a prediction by the person of how courses of action are likely to play out through interaction to either meet, or fail to meet, their own or others' expectations. During interviews, participants were asked to disclose their perspective as it relates to a) who is responsible for teaching and monitoring behaviors at Woodland High, b) how are behavioral expectations a taught and monitored at Woodland High, and c) how are inappropriate and appropriate behavior identified at Woodland High. Responses revealed that some participants believe that the school counselors are primarily responsible for teaching and monitoring behavior, while other participants believe that the teachers or deans have the responsibility for teaching and monitoring behaviors. As conveyed by Denise, the prominent response from more than half of the participants embraces the idea that the responsibility of teaching and monitoring behaviors rests on "the whole school". Distinctively, Denise reported that, "Deans and administrators must take the lead because of the nature of their role. But just like a family, expectations are-- they're constantly being reinforced to every member. So everyone has to be on board, and that means everyone has to also understand them." She continued:

> If one person is doing one thing and you're doing another, it is a wrap. We have to
> be on the same page. As well as outside, like central office staff, I think that's
> almost part of the process that you have to have oversight internally but also

oversight that comes from central office to make sure that practices are done with

integrity and consistency.

The ideas presented by Denise were upheld across other interviews. In the same way,

Riley identified the importance of modeling. She affirmed:

It's important to model. If colleagues don't walk down the hall and don't speak to

each other or they're mean or say hurtful things or hateful things or don't

collaborate, don't work together, then we can't expect that from the student.

In addition, a central office administrator, Denise, who previously served in the

role of a social worker, specified that from her perspective, the most effective discipline

intervention or practice is "structure". She further explains:

Clearly defined structure that is coupled with relationships and love…is an

awesome recipe because it targets their [students] emotions and their

development. But, also you're making sure that they have knowledge of

expectations. And that alone is emotionally beneficial. When someone knows

what expectations are, that's liberating.

Opposite the most effective practices, participants were also asked to describe what they

would consider as the least effective practices utilized at Woodland High School.

In their responses to interview questions, participants identified a number of

practices that they do not consider to be effective as it relates to school discipline. Amelia

mentioned that, "attendance referrals are not really working because the students know

that there's very little that we can do". Moreover, Bilal mentioned that a "wholly punitive

approach… like zero tolerance" is ineffective. On the contrary, Jerome reported:

The number one least effective discipline practice - because there is zero, zilch,

and no data on the damn thing - is home pending parent conference.

However, Amy, a school counselor explained, "In-school is not, and I don't think out-of-school is very good because when you're out of school, you're definitely missing instruction, and I don't think that's good either." In agreement with Amy, suspension in and out-of-school was regarded as the least effective practice by the majority of participants. Precisely, as stated by Paige, "constantly suspending…that doesn't really help because they probably want to be home anyway."

Other effective strategies mentioned by participants included parental involvement, being physically present, and defining expectations for students. The effectiveness of disciplinary practices, in association with expectations, was mentioned by Riley, Director of Counseling for the school district. In addition to identifying Restorative Practices as an effective practice, she also stated, "I think definitely building a sense of community and being explicit about the expectations, teaching the expectations. Not assuming that every kid knows. I think that's effective."

Further, though a majority of participants reported that it was the responsibility of all educators to teach and monitor behaviors, when asked specifically "how" appropriate behaviors and expectations are taught and monitored, there were two prevalent subthemes. One prevalent subtheme was that "they are not." Plainly, Shamari responded that "the assumption is they [students] already know those things [appropriate behavior and expectations] when they come to high school." In agreement with Shamari, Julia stated that "it dwindles down in middle school and is non-existent in high school because

194

I think people assume that kids at that age [high school age] know how to act." In accord with Julia and Shamari, Monica expressed, "I think that begins by elementary. And we just enforce it; continually reinforce it by giving examples." As Monica continued to speak, she pointed out the second prevalent subtheme, which involved school assemblies. Monica shared:

…at the very beginning of the school year we ask that teachers go over the code of conduct and make sure that students are aware of the consequences and what happens [resulting from a code of conduct violation]. Also, we do an assembly at the beginning of the school year, and at the beginning of the second semester to reinforce those consequences and the expectations we have of all our students.

Other participants made mention that the assembly at the beginning of the year was the primary time to speak about behavioral expectations, in agreement with Monica.

Still coupled with the behavioral expectation theme, participants were asked to describe how appropriate and inappropriate behavior is identified at Woodland High. Associated with appropriate behavior, Amy revealed that, "we [staff at Woodland High] don't do enough of that." Similarly, Shamari explained:

I'm not sure we do a good job of identifying appropriate behavior. Inappropriate behavior is identified by teacher referrals and teacher and/or administration. There is some feedback - verbal feedback - but nothing formal as it concerns positive behavior with the exception of academic success, like the honor roll or something like that.

Additionally, eight participants mentioned the use of PBIS to identify appropriate behaviors, and the code of conduct to identify inappropriate behaviors.

Distinctly, Samantha presented a different perspective when asked how appropriate and inappropriate behaviors are identified. She stated:

> Purely subjectively. It's up to the individual adult in the building to find what is appropriate and what's not. And since it's subjective, a lot of times it goes by emotion. If somebody's having a bad day, somebody might get in trouble today that didn't get in trouble yesterday…So it's different depending on the person and it's hard for the kids to follow. It's frankly unfair.

Though there are similarities reported by participants, such as the idea that it is the responsibility of the school community at large to teach and monitor behaviors, there is evidence that amongst school leaders there is inconsistency as it concerns the ways in which behavioral expectations are taught and monitored; and, how inappropriate and appropriate behavior is identified at Woodland High. Thus, teachers, school staff and administrators need to know the circumstances and patterns of disciplinary incidents in their schools, including how incidents are being addressed, in order to prevent student misbehavior and better respond to it, promote positive school climates and ensure adults are treating students fairly.

Personal Reflections Related to School Discipline

At the conclusion of each interview, participants were asked if there was anything they wanted to add pertaining to discipline at the high school level. 14 of the 16 participants made additional contributions to the discussion of school discipline in

Jefferson County Public School District. Some participants shared their concerns. For example, Shamari conveyed:

> I believe that we're absolutely going in the wrong direction as it concerns discipline and behavior and that students are coming to school more and more volatile and mentally unstable. And we are spending way too much time trying to fix them as opposed to just addressing their behaviors, and I believe those things should be separate. I believe that students who need help should get that help, but that shouldn't negate consequences for behavior, that they should be two separate things. And I think we're spending way too much time trying to-- using tactics and strategies that don't really address the individuals.

Also in concern, Neicy explained:

> The powers that be need to really sit down and look at how discipline should be enacted for different types of infractions. There needs to be consistency amongst all the learning communities with the deans with everyone. There needs to be consistency among the racial and ethnic breakdown among all the students.

Other participants describe changes that could be made. For instance, Amy disclosed:

> I think that there's so much more that we could be doing, and we don't often look at it [discipline] from the proactive perspective. We really don't. We just wait. We are so reactive. We're so reactive in the school. That's what we do. We wait until something happens, and then we react to it. But we're not as proactive as we could be or should be.

Participants also describe what they look forward to as it relates to discipline. Riley pointed out that she, "really looks forward to continued growth in this particular area [school discipline]. I look forward to us working to better meet the needs of all of our students.' Keisha and Samantha both specified she would "like to see more alternatives for students." Specifically, Keisha explained a want for "an alternative program, more consistency with discipline, more fine cut and dry policy like other school systems have so students know if they are involved in any infraction, what that consequence would be." Monica added that, "we can't sugar coat if a student breaks a serious law that there will be no consequence, so it has to be a fine line between just arbitrary consequences to being as consistent as possible."

Although some participants have expressed their concerns related to discipline, David, stated the "Restorative Practices framework that we're using is going to yield great dividends." Furthermore, he expressed:

> I'm also excited about our implementation of districtwide, not just schoolwide, but districtwide, cultural competency training... I think the Restorative Practices and the cultural competency will put us in a position where we will see there is going to be a decrease in discipline and an increase in student achievement.

Conversely, Julia conveyed that "out of school suspension should not be eliminated". She acknowledged:

> There are infractions that require out of school suspensions, and I think the reality that our [Black] kids are being suspended comes from the fact that the discipline

data is not being shared with teachers. So, they are not even aware of their biases

when it comes to Black and Brown children versus their White counterparts".

She further expressed feelings of unfairness as she stated:

I have seen and heard of White children cursing out teachers, and they've never

been sent to my office. They've never been kicked out of class. They have never

been disciplined the same way that our Black and Brown children are. So, they

need to-- it needs to be fair across the board. And I know nothing is ever equal,

but it needs to be fair, and it's not fair when it comes to discipline in our school.

Lastly, from the position of optimism, Tricee explained:

Although we have experienced a little bit of improvement, I just think we have a

long way to go, because our practices are not consistent, and that makes an

inconsistent environment that then builds an inconsistent environment for our

students. And students can't be successful in an inconsistent environment.

Following Wolcott's (1994) approach, the data analysis occurred after the description of

data.

Analysis

Wolcott's (1994) analysis stage involves breaking the data down into themes.

Accordingly, the descriptions presented across the four guiding principles (school

leadership, school discipline policies and procedures, school disciplinary data, and

school-based interventions) were analyzed to identify the essential features and

interrelationships of school discipline at Woodland High School, as illustrated in Figure

22. Framed by racial and justice literatures and lenses, to understand how things work as

it relates to school discipline policies and practices at Woodland High School, data

analysis discovered the following themes: a) implementation of Restorative Practices, b)

need for classroom management and cultural competency training for teachers, c)

minimal teaching of behavioral expectations, and d) racially disproportionate discipline.
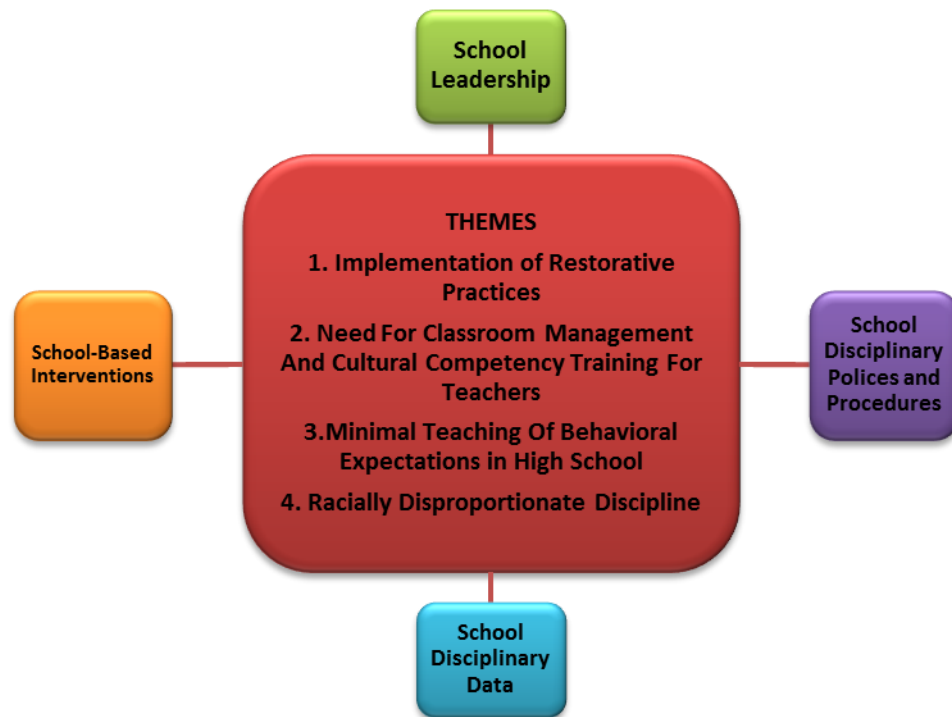
Figure 22. Themes Derived from Data Analysis of Guiding Principles

Theme 1: Implementation of Restorative Practices

The implementation of Restorative Practices emerged in document review and

interviews across each of the guiding principles. As it related to school leaders there was

a shared acknowledgement that the implementation of Restorative Practices is a priority.

Participants mentioned Restorative Practices in discussions surrounding school based

interventions currently implemented. While some were more familiar with the RP

components and its implementation than others, it was clear that RP was the "new" answer for difficulties with student behavior in Woodland High School.

The use of Restorative Practices in JCPS is vividly echoed in documents and interviews alike. Additionally, participants have mentioned that Restorative Practices has begun to offer a better way to address wrongdoing where zero tolerance policy is replaced with a discipline procedure that is constructive, ethical, and fair for all members of the community. The lowered suspension rates as a result of Restorative Practices were mentioned in almost every interview. And, the perception that suspensions were viewed as ineffective as a form of discipline proved evident based on the responses of participants. Explicitly, the leaders expressed a clear belief that Restorative Practices worked and are working to deliver that message to the rest of the school community. Though documents revealed the students' support of Restorative Practices, ideally, JCPS has the expectation that all staff and students needed to share that same sense of belief and ownership of the RP philosophy.

Theme 2: Need for Classroom Management and Cultural Competency Training for Teachers

While it is necessary to have a safe, orderly place to learn, many incidents that were reported as discipline referrals at Woodland High were subjective and often involved students of color. Specifically, discipline referrals submitted by teachers at Woodland High School were for three primary reasons: defiance, disrespect, and disruption. These referrals are described as subjective because it entails observing the student behavior and placing value judgment on that behavior to determine if the student

behavior warranted a specific level of school discipline (Greflund, 2013). More specifically, more than half of the participants accredited the existing disproportionalities and subjective referrals to a lack of classroom management and cultural understanding.

Though the majority of the participants expressed they each possessed a higher cultural awareness, they specifically revealed the representation of high referring teachers and their need for cultural competency and classroom management. This need for teachers to fairly and equitably create and sustain appropriate behavior of students in classroom settings is a necessity. Accordingly, it is important to note that the teachers discussed and described as low referring teachers in interviews, maintained high expectations of their students both in terms of behavior and academic performance. These expectations were very specific to individual classrooms and the relationships that low referring teachers had established with their students. As it relates, all sixteen participants explained that classroom management is an area in which teachers need additional support at Woodland High. In addition to further training in classroom management, interviews revealed that training to develop cultural competency would be beneficial as well; this finding emerged when participants were each asked about the role that race plays in school discipline policies and practices at Woodland High.

Moreover, the JCPS School board policy explains that no student, on the basis of race, national origin, disability, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or martial or parental status, shall be denied equal access to programs, activities, services, or benefits or be limited in the exercise of any right, privilege, advantage, or denied equal access to educational and extracurricular programs and

202

activities. As well, the manual adds that training to prevent discrimination should be included in employee and student orientations as well as employee in service training. Thus, by developing cultural competency amongst teachers, the participants believe will put those at WHS in a position where they will see a decrease racially disproportionate discipline and increase equality in treatment for all.

Theme 3: Minimal Teaching of Behavioral Expectations

Horner et al. (2004) recognized that when investing into school-wide behavior supports, promoting appropriate school-wide behavior could only be accomplished through teaching clearly defined expectations. Supporting this belief, participants acknowledged that the formation of a positive student culture involved providing students with a standardized set of expectations and a common language regarding expectations throughout the school. Furthermore, explained in PBIS literature, would be to ensure the expectations being taught are expressed positively for all students throughout the school (Bohanon et al., 2012).

Participants were adamant as they described the lack of expectations being taught. Specifically, participants described an assumption that high school students know what is expected of them without specifically teaching them. Several participants expressed the need for the teaching of expectations, identified that all in the school were responsible for teaching and modeling appropriate behaviors, and participants constantly mentioned the start of the year assembly which informs students of the expectations for their behavior; Yet, even though each participant discussed the need for teaching behavior expectations, there is no direction work to do so that was mentioned. However, by consistently utilizing

203

the community circle practice within RP, the recommended practice of explicitly teaching

and modeling the behaviors expected could potentially improve the Woodland High

School student behavior.

Theme 4: Racially Disproportionate Discipline

One major problem that exists in JCPS as it relates to discipline is the decade of

documented racially disproportionate discipline at Woodland High. Accordingly, a strong

recommendation from participants has been to place a focus on understanding the

experiences and perceptions of the Black male student population, as well as identifying

social emotional supports at school and in the community to provide wraparound services

to meet the student's needs. Feagin (2013) claims that in order for systemic racism to

persist, it requires reproducing of organizational structures and ideological processes that

perpetuate social reproductions. Many of the interview participants mentioned race even

when the interview question did not directly address race. Additionally, the participants

expressed concern with the treatment that is given to Black students versus their White

peers at WHS.

The endless, present and historical, data overlapping in the four guiding principles

suggests that participants and district stakeholders are normalizing racism through

racialized practices of racially deficit thinking towards Black students. As for the

discrimination that is associated with school disciplinary practices, there was no denial or

unawareness of its presence in document data or interviews. Specifically, each participant

explained the existence of Black male overrepresentation in discipline data and explained

their beliefs of why Black males are overrepresented. Following discussions surrounding

the misunderstanding of the Black males, supports for this population were scarce. The majority of the school leaders interviewed expressed the absence of supports specifically for Black males. However others made mention of a mentoring program for Black males, and countered its effectiveness by conveying that it's not the Black males being disciplined participating in mentoring; it's the Black males that are achieving and causing no problems.

Interpretation

Jefferson County Public School District is a diverse school district that does not utilize zero tolerance practices. Specifically, interviews unanimously confirmed that "students aren't expelled" in the district. Though the school board policy related to expulsion allows for expulsion as a consequence, suspension is the consequence that has historically been employed most often for the array of student behaviors, which violate the district code of conduct. Framed by racial and justice literatures and lenses, to understand how things work as it relates to school discipline policies and practices at Woodland High School, data analysis discovered the following themes: a) implementation of Restorative Practices, b) need for classroom management and cultural competency training for teachers, c) minimal teaching of behavioral expectations, and d) racially disproportionate discipline.

The primary goal of this section is to provide an interpretation of the findings gleaned from semi- structured interviews and documents and make logical assumptions based on them that give possible answers to each research question. The extensive narratives provided insight into the policies and practices at one Mid-Atlantic inner ring

suburban high school from the perspective of school leaders. Specifically, the perspectives were presented from high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators. The interviews and documents allowed me to provide a thorough interpretation of school discipline policies and practices at Woodland High School.

The school district is in its second year of Restorative Practices (RP) implementation. More specifically, 2015-16 was described as the school year for training in RP, and 2016-17 has been described as the school year for application of RP. During the interviews, participants described their involvement with RP. All participants were familiar with Restorative Practices and explained that they received RP training. More specifically, the central office administrators as well as 2 of the Deans of Students also made mention of being certified RP trainers. The school counselors reportedly weren't as involved with RP procedures as administrators; however, they were aware that RP were being utilized. As it relates to the current benefits and obstacles associated with RP, the three prominent obstacles were time constraints, staff buy-in, and lack of data. Positively, participants mentioned the decline in suspension rates, which they attributed to the use of RP, as the greatest benefit. Yet, the size of the decline in suspension rates, and the use of HPC procedures, as opposed to RJ, associated with the decline are unknown.

Importantly, when children don't know how to read and write educators are expected to teach them. In the same way, when students don't know how to behave in socially acceptable ways, educators are expected to teach them. All sixteen participants in

the study discussed in their interviews the importance of consistent and intentional teaching of the expectations for student behaviors. More specifically, participants in this study reported a significant deficiency in teaching and modeling behavioral expectations. For example, Neicy, Keisha, Samantha, and Monica described the teaching of expectations as a practice at the start of the school year where expectations are taught in grade level assemblies.

As it was described in the interviews, Woodland High School begins each year by holding assemblies by grade levels to discuss behavioral expectations. More specifically, in the assemblies the code of conduct is reviewed. The staff discusses with the students the consequences for inappropriate behaviors and the students each receive a copy of the code of conduct. Then, a form is distributed and they are asked to sign and return it documenting that they received the code of conduct. However, for students who begin school after the assembly is held, or may have been absent the day of the assembly, there is currently no re-teaching to the masses; and, expectations are taught in variations in student classrooms.

Very little additional time is set aside throughout the school year to examine appropriate student conduct. Furthermore, Julia and Shamari made mention of expectations being taught in middle school. Blatantly, Shamari specified that "the assumption is they [students] already know those things [appropriate behavior and expectations] when they come to high school." And, Julia acknowledged that the teaching of behavioral expectations "dwindles down in middle school and is non-existent in high school because people assume that kids at that age [high school age] know how to act."

For that reason, participants agreed that the continual teaching of expectations is an essential function that is missing in the daily operations at Woodland High School.

African American males are overrepresented in disciplinary data at WHS; hence, by implementing facets of cultural competency and classroom management training may aid in reducing disproportionate discipline practices. Another way for school leaders to reduce the disproportionate discipline practices within a WHS is to provide teachers with classroom management strategies. Researchers explain that teacher referral biases actually contribute to disproportionate discipline referrals as opposed to students" actual behavior (Skiba et al., 1997; Skiba et al., 2002). Although participants made mention of the need for cultural competency training, the district is currently utilizing Restorative Practices as a central strategy to combat and reduce suspensions and close the discipline gap across the district, especially for students of color.

Albeit it from the push from the civil rights advocacy groups that stressed the need for JCPS to implement Restorative Practices, or simply the need to try something new to address student behavior; Restorative Practices provide an attempt to lessen the likelihood for racial disproportionality. However, a school-based intervention alone will not change the historical presence of what some may describe as racism in the district. Therefore, stakeholders in JCPS are at the point of needing to create a culture encompassing a mid-shift towards social justice leadership.

Chapter Summary

Chapter four presented the findings of the study. These findings are based on analysis of interview transcripts and are supported by reviewed documents related to

school discipline in one Mid-Atlantic inner ring suburban high school. Guided by Wolcott's (1994) D-A-I Model, findings were discussed in three parts: description, analysis, and interpretation. Additionally, the description is structured by the guiding principles for this research: school leadership, school discipline, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions. Framed by racial and justice literatures and lenses, the findings revealed: a) implementation of Restorative Practices, b) need for classroom management and cultural competency training for teachers, c) minimal teaching of behavioral expectations, and d) racially disproportionate discipline. Chapter 5 discusses the themes that emerged from this study, describes implications, and makes recommendations for future research.

Chapter Five: Discussion

School discipline policies and practices are often employed with the intent to provide order and safety in schools; however, schools often rely on exclusionary discipline as a primary consequence for behaviors deemed inappropriate (Arcia, 2006). In light of the many and varied concerns that stem from school discipline, the purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was a) to explore the lived experiences of educational leaders who serve as high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators as they relate to school discipline, b) to gain a detailed understanding of the discipline policies and practices processes at a high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district, and c) to interrogate the disparate impact of disciplinary policies and practices, particularly on Black males. The narratives of the identified school leaders, and the analysis of public documents related to discipline in the district, provide the wisdom and insight missing from the current discourse concerning the impacts of school discipline as it relates to discipline policies and practices. Research was conducted through semi-structured face-to face interviews with sixteen school leaders, and through the review of public documents associated with the school district being studied.

This chapter discusses a summary of the findings and provides recommendations for improving school discipline policies and practices at Woodland High School. As well,

the chapter explains implications, describes the limitations of the study, and concludes with suggestions for further research on school discipline.

Research Questions

To describe, analyze, and provide an interpretation of the current school discipline policies and practices at one high school in a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district the following research questions were investigated:

Central Question:

What is happening at a Mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban high school related to school discipline?

Sub-questions:

1. How do high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators describe school discipline policies and practices at Woodland High School?

2. In what ways do the school leadership, school discipline policies and procedures, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions provide insight into school discipline at Woodland High?

Assumptions and New Understandings

Upon the conclusion of data analysis, I was both affirmed and appalled by the findings. By exploring the lived experiences of the participants it was revealed that, similar to the society at large, Black males at WHS are consistently more harshly punished and disciplined. More specifically, Black males have historically been more disproportionately punished; and, although the participant's experiences consistently

echoed school leaderships talk of change, it lacked efficient follow through and buy-in from stakeholders to address the discipline gap. Data analysis reiterated previous literature related to school discipline as discussed throughout this dissertation. Entering into this research, I assumed that there would be more strategic supports for Black students given the media attention related to racial disproportionalities. Likewise, I assumed the school would elicit the prompt delivery of cultural competency since community advocacy groups exposed, via public news outlets, the systemic inequalities for students of color at WHS. Explicitly, after conducting this study, I learned that leaders are: 1) aware that changes need to occur to address racial disproportionate discipline, 2) strategically using Restorative Practices as an intervention for addressing inequities, 3) trained to implement Restorative Practices, and are trained to be trainers, and 4) making intentional attempts not to suspend. Yet, in stating their acknowledgment of the problem, participants often expressed the disproportionalities were district norms and "just how it is" in JCPS.

Consistent with previous research, the definition of social justice cannot be separated from the practices of educational leadership (Bogotch, 2002; Theoharis, 2007). Hence, although leadership efforts to shift discipline practices are occurring; I ponder if there will be strategic efforts to create a culture shift for addressing students of color as well. The findings from this study have implications for the social justice leadership framework. More specifically, the findings of this study encouraged me to think more about how advocacy in leadership must happen, in conjunction with interventions like RP. As well, social justice leadership Theory in this study encompasses the idea that

educators and community members at large can work together to make a stand against the harsh treatment of marginalized populations. Therefore, by incorporating social justice leadership tenets, equality and integrity can saturate the culture of Woodland High School; and, Jefferson County Public Schools in its entirety.

Summary of the Findings

Findings for this study are presented following Wolcott's (1994) Description-Analysis- Interpretation (DAI) Model. Specifically, the data selected and the amount of detail applied was guided by the purpose of the study and the relevance of the data to the study. The data collected through document review were extensively explored for patterns and were organized according to the four guiding principles: school leadership, school discipline policies and procedures, school disciplinary data, and school-based interventions. These four principles had the purpose of offering a framework for the classification of data by grouping and defining data according to common or shared characteristics.

Framed by racial and justice literatures and lenses, data analysis revealed: a) implementation of Restorative Practices, b) need for classroom management and cultural competency training for teachers, c) minimal teaching of behavioral expectations, and d) racially disproportionate discipline. Hence, this study recommends emphasis dedicated to: 1) teaching expectations; 2) providing classroom management and cultural competency training for teachers; 3) revamping data collection and reporting; and 4) fostering social justice leadership. To sum, the application of Wolcott's (2004) strategies for analysis (description/analysis/ interpretation) allowed me to highlight, identify, and

213

evaluate the findings gleaned from semi-structured interviews and document review and answer the research questions.

Recommendations

School leaders can potentially encounter a range of concerns related to school discipline. As a result, leaders may additionally face the challenge of implementing school- based interventions that address the various concerns. Inconsistencies among staff members' knowledge and ability to deal with behavior challenges, in addition to the variety of student needs in the area of social, emotional, and behavioral learning, renders school leaders ill-equipped to meet the increasing challenges facing students and schools. Accordingly, the findings of this study suggest four recommendations for addressing and improving school discipline in order to improve behavioral outcomes for students at the high school being studied. From Wolcott's (1994) description, analysis and interpretation process emerged four recommendations. The research recommends more emphasis devoted to: 1) teaching expectations; 2) providing ongoing professional development in classroom management and cultural competency for teachers; 3) collecting and analyzing data systemically in order to strengthen the effectiveness of school based interventions; and 4) fostering social justice leadership.

Recommendation 1: Teach Expectations

The idea of clearly defined expectations relates to the findings outlined in chapter four. The recommendation to teach expectations emphasizes moving beyond solely having school expectations for student behavior posted around the school or discussions about what is deemed as appropriate behavior at the start of the school year. This

recommendation promotes the need for explicitly, intentionally, and purposefully teaching expectations to all students at all times through discussions, modeling, or redirection. In general, students must understand what they are expected to do and how to act before they can assume responsibility for their behaviors.

The findings of this study echo the literature in recommending that behavioral expectations should be taught to all students. Specifically, researchers have identified that the explicit and intentional teaching of desired behavior outcomes can reach 80–85 percent of students (Brophy, 2006; Emmer & Sabornie, 2015; Everston & Weinstein, 2006; Lewis & Sugai, 1999), hence freeing up resources to focus on the most significant and challenging behaviors. Neither administrators nor teachers can assume that students know what is expected and what is appropriate for the school setting (Dodge, 2011). Accordingly, school leaders should explore strategies to transform broad school expectations into specific and observable behavioral expectations for all. Purposefully creating specific language, as it relates to behavioral expectations, combats the chances of confusing or unclear behavior expectations. Specific language would also reduce the scenarios where students become confused when rules are different from teacher to teacher, or even different from administrator to teacher.

The need for increased teaching of behavioral expectations and more effective implementation of Restorative Practices were key findings of this study. All sixteen participants discussed the importance of consistent and intentional teaching of the expectations for student behaviors and all were familiar with Restorative Practices. While at the same time, they all reported a significant deficiency in teaching and modeling

behavioral expectations coupled with a lack of implementation of Restorative Practices. Both have contributed to discrepancies in disciplinary practices at JCPS.

Explicitly, expectations should state what students should do, opposed to what they should not do. Furthermore, to ensure that students learn the skills necessary to navigate the WHS setting, clearly stated school-wide expectations should be taught and modeled, allowing time for students to practice and build confidence in the social, emotional, and behavioral realms (Dodge, 2011). As such, implementing the recommended practice of explicitly teaching and modeling the behaviors expected would improve the Woodland High Schools school discipline practices.

Recommendation 2: Provide Ongoing Professional Development in Classroom Management and Cultural Competency for Teachers

Social justice leadership can provide a framework for discussing behavioral expectations. Rooted in the literature on culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), research has acknowledged that effective classroom teachers, particularly of students from ethnic/racial minority backgrounds, build strong relationships with students, create caring environments that focus on learning, encourage socialization and discussion, and teach with assertiveness, and clearly state expectations (Brown, 2004; Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2007). Furthermore, research conveys an association between culturally responsive strategies and teachers' ability to manage behavior (Ahram, Fergus, & Noguera, 2011; Moore & Ratchford, 2007; Reglin, Akpo-Sanni, & Losike-Sedimo,

2009). Thus, increasing training to further develop teachers' cultural competency will assist in classroom management, therefore appropriating this recommendation.

As it relates to classroom management and cultural competence, participants unanimously explained that classroom management and cultural competency were areas in which teachers needed additional support and training. Additionally, research suggests that the overrepresentation of students of color receiving exclusionary consequence may be partially due to implicit biases. Meaning, teachers often may anticipate worse behavior from students of color, and therefore report more frequent occurrences. Specifically, since many disciplinary actions taken are subjective, consequences assigned to students of color referred for defiance or insubordination in particular, may be harsher. This influx of disciplinary referrals from teachers has led to the racially disproportionate disciplinary consequences and subsequent data. Therefore, training teachers in social justice leadership will increase awareness of cultural influences in their school settings as well as how their own biases may influence their views of disciplinary infractions.

The contrasting backgrounds of teacher and student, whether the differences are racial, socio-economic, or both, can cause misunderstandings that lead to disproportionate discipline (Townsend, 2000). However, some traditional classroom management approaches fail to take into account the role of culture in classroom behavior and may be ineffective for students from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds (Siwatu & Starker, 2010). Regrettably, the reluctance to "deal" with students of color may be the root cause of the disproportionate patterns of exclusionary discipline experienced by students at WHS. And, the cultural differences may have led Black

students to be viewed as displaying nonconforming behaviors at school (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010). Thus, by utilizing evidence-based classroom management strategies in conjunction with culturally responsive practices, WHS staff can begin form better relationships with students and create a more positive school culture for all regardless of their race.

Recommendation 3: Collect and Analyze Data Systemically in Order to Strengthen the Effectiveness of School Based Interventions

A key element in educational reform is to implement changes in traditional practices in order to provide better services to all students (Graden, Zins, & Curtis, 1988; Reschly, 1988; Reschly & Ysseldyke, 1995). In view of that, Woodland High is currently in its second year of integrating Restorative Practices into the school's disciplinary practices. Participants explained that the introduction of Restorative Practices stemmed from the community advocating that the district use Restorative Practices to combat the racially disproportionate responses to discipline. Therefore, collecting and analyzing data systemically in order to strengthen the effectiveness of school-based interventions was recommended.

As well, although all of the administrators reported that they utilize an electronic district-level database to record the disciplinary referrals received, clarity was lacking in the participants' responses related to how Restorative Practices data would be collected and analyzed. Accordingly, training may be needed to ensure building-level administrators have the necessary tools to improve practices in the arena of collecting and analyzing data related to the implementation and use of Restorative Practices. As schools

218

adopt Restorative Practices as a means of improving discipline, school leaders will need to continuously analyze the impact of restorative methods. Specifically, to ensure school leaders are making positive progress, they should identify specific times to review and analyze data and compare past and present data related to school discipline. It would also be beneficial to survey teachers, students, and administrators regarding their experiences, the challenges, and the benefits of the implementation of Restorative Practices. Furthermore, in addition to Restorative Practices, it is recommended that the systematic data collection and analysis is extended across all school based interventions.

Recommendation 4: Foster Social Justice Leadership

Social justice can be broadly defined as, "a value-based attitude or a belief people hold about the unequal life opportunities of some social groups compared with others in a given society, and how these opportunities are negatively affected by existing social conditions (Rasinski, 1987). Additionally, social justice leadership is demonstrated through ongoing actions, skills, habits of mind and competencies that are continuously evolving to benefit all school children (Brown, 2004; Capper & Young, 2014; DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Theoharis, 2007). Therefore, it is imperative that all stakeholders possess an understanding of cultural norms and sociocultural issues. Thus, by fostering an environment based on a social justice leadership perspective, leaders ensure that all students are provided with equal access to education. Furthermore, by incorporating social justice leadership practices and policies into the school culture, several of the research findings could be addressed explicitly.

<div align="center">

Implications for Practice

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One of the roles of leaders who adapt the social justice theory is the creation of an atmosphere that empowers equality, fairness, and advocacy for marginalized populations. From the document and interview data, the findings revealed the need for trainings that help school stakeholders resist unjust practices. Unfortunately, there are educators that may not possess the knowledge, experiences, strategies, or skills to comprehend issues related to poverty, language differences, special needs, gender, race, and sexuality. Hence, as a result of their deficiency, stakeholders may allocate unfair consequences and subjective disciplinary referrals to students of color. The use of culturally competent workshops, group sessions, trainings, and peer mediations can strengthen the tools to manage classrooms and decrease the number of referrals which lead to more disciplinary consequences.

Implications for Policy

This research also reveals that although discipline policies and procedures at this school were outlined in the code of conduct, the disciplinary process is still subjective, inconsistent and racially disproportionate. Therefore, it is the job of policymakers to fairly enforce the utilization of polices. In result, JCPS stakeholders would be held to a standard of accountability. Additionally, just as Restorative Practices and cultural competence is highlighted throughout district policies and standards, training in social justice for staff throughout the district should also be a priority. Too, research also reveals that suspension and expulsion create a host of negative outcomes for youth. Thus, alternative strategies and policies should continue to require and encourage the use of evidence-based practices that can be implemented in school settings as an alternative to

exclusionary discipline. Lastly, policy makers represent the interest of all in the school community regardless of demographic identification. Accordingly, increased efforts to develop solutions to address the problems affecting the JCPS community should be initiated to include representatives of those in the communities harshly affected by polices.

Implications for Future Research

The majority of the participants identified teachers as the first responders in the hierarchy of discipline. Specifically, there is some concern regarding the behavior referrals presented by WHS teachers; Participants expressed that select referrals may not have been required if teachers were culturally competent and able to implement the necessary classroom management techniques. Future research is needed to discuss the possible underlying reasons why teachers believe some offensives are worthy of further disciplinary consequences and others are dismissed or defused through various classroom management techniques. In addition, the results from this study revealed the need for reliable data collection related to suspension for Black males since the implementation of Restorative Practices.

Limitations

This study describes the views and experiences of high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office administrators as it relates to school discipline policies and practices in the district being researched. I chose to delimit this study to this particular participant group because they are all considered leaders in the school district. A potential limitation surrounds participant's reports of school discipline

policies and practices. Responses may have been censored and the truth may have been suppressed to ensure responses were socially acceptable for the district, due to the recent exposure in the news related to racial disproportionalities. Flawed data collection may be a limitation that threatens the validity of my conclusions. Specifically, during interviews it was mentioned on four occasions that administrators were implementing home pending parent conferences (HPCs), which were suspension-like methods, but not documented as such. This utilization of HPCs is not documented in suspension data therefore; statistics related to exclusionary discipline may be more disparate than reported.

Recommendations for Practitioners

Conducting this study further reveals the need for increased examination of school discipline policies and practices. Specifically, by researching the implementation of school based interventions, employed as a strategy for decreasing punitive and racially disproportionate discipline, educators throughout the United States could play a fundamental role in dismantling the school to prison pipeline. As well, this study recommends that practitioner's explicitly teach appropriate behaviors. Specifically, the reduction in discipline referrals, suspensions, racially disproportionate discipline, will require training and support to teach classroom management and cultural competency for stakeholders. Too, by expanding cultural competency and fostering social justice leadership in schools for all who interact with students, educators will be able to focus on teaching the youth opposed to disciplining them.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research describes and provides a detailed understanding of the discipline policies and practices processes utilized at a high school in a mid-Atlantic inner-ring suburban school district. In the future, there are three prominent areas that research should explore. First, it would be beneficial to identify the teachers who write the most referrals; then, explore their feelings of preparedness to manage classroom behaviors. By exploring the teachers' preparedness to manage the classroom and observing their classroom management style, training can be provided as needed to best support those teachers. As well, for the teachers who write no referrals, it would be beneficial to explore: how they manage their classes; their personal perspectives on what constitutes a referral; and, the trainings they received related to classroom management, behavior, and learning. Second, research should further explore the benefits and difficulties of Restorative Practices from the perspective of teachers and students. Additionally, future research should include a comprehensive examination of the effects of Restorative Practices on diverse student populations. Last, it would be ideal to further examine the Black males disciplined most frequently to learn the age at which these individuals began receiving disciplinary action; a review of the participants' cumulative disciplinary data from elementary school and beyond would assist in the solidification of the research findings.

Conclusion

Of the expected 50 million K-12 students in public schools in the United States in 2014 (NCES, 2016), 7% of them will be excluded from their school yearly (Losen & Gillespie, 2012). More specifically, in acknowledging the racial disproportionalities that

223

exist in the school discipline data, reducing the disciplinary gap between Black and White students may require systemic reform (Skiba et al., 2002). To begin the systemic reform, school leaders should include positive approaches to discipline, training for teachers' classroom management techniques, and consistent and clear discipline policies and practices. Nonetheless, the effort involved in effectively transforming a school is a task that entails an unwavering commitment from all district stakeholders. However, to achieve this transformation, adults must analyze their own behaviors as well as the behaviors of their students, and be open to changing practices for the betterment of the school, community, state, and our nation.

Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

Research Hall, 4400 University Drive, MS 6D5, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-5445; Fax: 703-993-9590

DATE: November 8, 2016

TO: Rodney Hopson, PhD
FROM: George Mason University IRB

Project Title: [954599-1] SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN A MID-
                         ATLANTIC INNER-RING SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A DESCRIPTIVE
                         CASE STUDY

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: November 8, 2016

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category #2 & 4

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Office of Research Integrity
& Assurance (ORIA) has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal
regulations.

Please remember that all research must be conducted as described in the submitted materials.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be submitted to the ORIA prior to
initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Motsinger at 703-993-4208 or kmotsing@gmu.edu.
Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within George Mason
University IRB's records.

Appendix B

Invitation to Participate

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN A MID-ATLANTIC

INNER-RING SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE

STUDY

**TITLE OF STUDY: School Discipline Policies and Practices in a Mid-Atlantic
Inner-Ring Suburban School District: A Descriptive Case Study
INVESTIGATOR/S: Keyona L. Powell, Student Researcher; Dr. Rodney Hopson,
Faculty Advisor
CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: (816) 686-2903**

Dear [Perspective Research Participant],

I am conducting a dissertation study currently entitled *School Discipline Policies and
Practices in a Mid-Atlantic Inner-Ring Suburban School District: A Descriptive Case
Study* in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education Leadership
degree at George Mason University, Virginia. I invite you to participate in this study and
would greatly appreciate your contribution to this very important research project.

The purpose of my study is to explore the lived experiences of educational leaders who
serve as high school counselors, high school building administrators, and central office
administrators as it relates to school discipline. I believe the narratives, oral histories, and
experiential knowledge of these identified school leaders will provide the wisdom and
insight missing from the current discourse concerning the impacts of school discipline as
it relates to discipline policies and practices.

Your participation will include an in person interview for approximately 45-90 minutes. A 5 to 15 minute follow-up phone conversation may be added if deemed necessary after the interview. I will protect you from the possibility of identification by using a pseudonym for your name and of the district for which you work. The district will not be named directly or identified by state. I will also give you a hard copy of the transcript of your interview so you can make any necessary changes.

I greatly appreciate your giving time to this study, which will help inform the next generation of leaders and scholars, such as myself, on the implications of these very important issues.
If you have questions in the meantime, please feel free to call me at 816-686-2903 or e-mail me at kpowel14@gmu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Keyona L. Powell
Doctoral Candidate
College of Education and Human Development
George Mason University, Virginia
IRBNet Number:

Informed Consent

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLCIES AND PRACTICES IN A MID-ATLANTIC

INNER-RING SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE

STUDY

Informed Consent

TITLE OF STUDY: School Discipline Policies and Practices in a Mid-Atlantic Inner-Ring Suburban School District: A Descriptive Case Study
INVESTIGATOR/S: Keyona L. Powell, Student Researcher; Dr. Rodney Hopson, Faculty Advisor
CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: (816) 686-2903

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact me, Keyona L. Powell, at (816) 686-2903. You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Integrity & Assurance at 703-993-4121, if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with the university. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Confidentiality

The data in this study will be confidential. Participants' name, place of employment, and specific identifying information will be kept confidential. The researcher will use

pseudonyms for the participants and the school site to protect the privacy of the participants and district. Dr. Hopson (faculty advisor) and Keyona Powell (doctoral student researcher) will be the only individuals who have access to the identification key that links the pseudonyms to the real names as well as study data. Interviews will be conducted by the doctoral student researcher. All records, including digital audio recordings, transcripts, and field notes, will remain in the researcher's possession while being transported home and then placed in a locked file cabinet. The audio will be stored on a recording device in the posession of the researcher. When not in use the recording device will be stored away in a locked drawer. The recordings will remain on the recorder if downloading is not deemed necessary. If it is necessary for the recording to be downloaded onto a flash drive, only Dr. Hopson and Keyona Powell will have access to downloaded file. The audio taped material will be kept with the transcribed documents in a locked drawer when not in use. Completed consent forms will be retained for a minimum period of five years from the date at which the project is completed. After five years, all data will be disposed of by shredding unwanted documents and permanently deleting all computer files from all systems.

Research Procedures

Your participation will include an in person interview for approximately 45-90 minutes. A 5 to 15 minute follow-up phone conversation may be added if deemed necessary after the interview.

Risks

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research. This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

Benefits

There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in education related to school discipline. The narratives, oral histories, and experiential knowledge of identified school leaders will provide the wisdom and insight missing from the current discourse concerning the impacts of school discipline as it relates to discipline policies and practices.

Consent

I have read this form, all of my questions have been answered by the researcher, and I agree to participate in this study.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Interview Protocol

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN A MID-ATLANTIC

INNER-RING SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE

STUDY

Interview Questions

Participants: High School Counselors

TITLE OF STUDY: School Discipline Policies and Practices in a Mid-Atlantic Inner-Ring Suburban School District: A Descriptive Case Study
INVESTIGATOR/S: Keyona L. Powell, Student Researcher; Dr. Rodney Hopson, Faculty Advisor
CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: (816) 686-2903

Interview Guidelines: Open-ended questions will be asked throughout the interviews to encourage participants to respond freely and openly. Probing and/or follow-up questions will be asked, when necessary, in order to encourage participants to elaborate on or clarify a response. Each interview will be transcribed following the interview.

Background Information:

1. Describe your role and duties.
2. How long have you worked as a high school counselor at your school?
3. How would you describe yourself as a leader?
4. How is your leadership utilized as it relates to discipline?
5. What trainings have you received as it relates to discipline?

School Discipline Policies and Procedures:

1. Describe the current discipline practices used within the school?
2. How is appropriate behavior identified in your school?
3. How is inappropriate behavior identified in your school?
4. What are the most frequent disciplinary infractions you observe? What are the consequences for those infractions?
5. What behaviors constitute a suspension? Expulsion? Alternative school placement?
6. If problems arise with a student, what supports does the school provide? What do you do?
7. To what extent, if any, do you think that time for teaching curriculum is hindered because of discipline problems? Do you feel teachers are equipped to manage student behaviors?
8. Who is being disciplined most often? Racial group? Gender group? Why do you feel they are most often disciplined? What actions are in place to support these students?
9. What are the most effective discipline practices utilized in your school, in your opinion?
10. What are the least effective discipline practices utilized in your school, in your opinion?
11. What challenges do you face in your work setting as it relates to school discipline?

School Disciplinary Data:

1. Do you collect any data related to school discipline? If so, what types of data?
2. What data are collected about the teaching of behavioral expectations?
3. Who collects your building's behavior and incident data? How often is the data collected? How is the data analyzed?
4. Of the ODRs received, what percentage do you feel were appropriate?
5. From your experiences, can you describe an ODR that you feel is appropriate and an ODR that you feel is inappropriate?
6. What data do you collect and review regarding student behavior goals?
7. How does the school discipline data influence the districts disciplinary practices?
8. What does the current disciplinary data report? What do you still need to know?

School Leadership:

1. What type of leadership needs to be present for school discipline practices to be effective?
2. How are appropriate behaviors and expectations taught and monitored in school?
3. Who is responsible for teaching and monitoring behaviors in school?
4. What is the process for assigning consequences for disciplinary infractions?
5. Who assigns disciplinary consequences?

6. How are decisions made consistently regarding student discipline when there are multiple administrators in a building handling similar behavior situations with multiple staff members?
7. How do school counselors, building administrators, and central office administration work together to address school discipline?
8. What policies guide you when addressing student behaviors?

School Based- Interventions:

1. What are the initiatives in your building related to student behavior and what is your involvement with those initiatives?
2. How are appropriate school behaviors rewarded and what data are they based upon?
3. What behavior systems or programs are in place that support appropriate and desired student behaviors?
4. How are restorative practices used at your school?
5. In what ways are restorative practices integrated into the school's disciplinary procedures?
6. What impact has restorative practices had on student behavior?
7. From your perspective, what are the benefits and/or obstacles associated with implementing restorative practices at your school?
8. How are positive behavior interventions and supports used at your school?
9. In what ways are positive behavior interventions and supports integrated into the school's disciplinary procedures?
10. What impact has positive behavior interventions and supports had on student behavior?
11. From your perspective, what are the benefits and/or obstacles associated with implementing positive behavior interventions and supports at your school?

Closing Question:

1. Do you have anything you would like to add pertaining to discipline at the high school level within your school district?

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLCIES AND PRACTICES IN A MID-ATLANTIC

INNER-RING SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE

STUDY

Interview Questions

Participants: High School Building Administrators

TITLE OF STUDY: School Discipline Policies and Practices in a Mid-Atlantic Inner-Ring Suburban School District: A Descriptive Case Study
INVESTIGATOR/S: Keyona L. Powell, Student Researcher; Dr. Rodney Hopson, Faculty Advisor
CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: (816) 686-2903

Interview Guidelines: Open-ended questions will be asked throughout the interviews to encourage participants to respond freely and openly. Probing and/or follow-up questions will be asked, when necessary, in order to encourage participants to elaborate on or clarify a response. Each interview will be transcribed following the interview.

Background Information:

1. Describe your role and duties?
2. How long have you worked as an administrator at your school?
3. How would you describe yourself as a leader?
4. How is your leadership utilized as it relates discipline?
5. What trainings have you received as it relates to discipline?

School Discipline Policies and Procedures:

1. Describe the current discipline practices used within the school?
2. How is appropriate behavior identified in your school?
3. How is inappropriate behavior identified in your school?
4. What are the most frequent disciplinary infractions you observe? What are the consequences for those infractions?
5. What behaviors constitute a suspension? Expulsion? Alternative school placement?
6. If problems arise with a student, what supports does the school provide? What do you do?
7. To what extent, if any, do you think that time for teaching curriculum is hindered because of discipline problems? Do you feel teachers are equipped to manage student behaviors?

8. Who is being disciplined most often? Racial group? Gender group? Why do you feel they are most often disciplined? What actions are in place to support these students?
9. What are the most effective discipline practices utilized in your school, in your opinion?
10. What are the least effective discipline practices utilized in your school, in your opinion?
11. What challenges do you face in your work setting as it relates to school discipline?

School Disciplinary Data:

1. Do you collect any data related to school discipline? If so, what types of data?
2. What data is collected about the teaching of behavioral expectations?
3. Who collects your building's behavior and incident data? How often is the data collected? How is the data analyzed?
4. Of the ODRs received, what percentage do you feel were appropriate?
5. From your experiences, can you describe an ODR that you feel is appropriate and an ODR that you feel is inappropriate?
6. What data do you collect and review regarding student behavior goals?
7. How does the school discipline data influence the districts disciplinary practices?
8. What does the current disciplinary data report? What do you still need to know?

School Leadership:

1. What type of leadership needs to be present for school discipline practices to be effective?
2. How are appropriate behaviors and expectations taught and monitored in school?
3. Who is responsible for teaching and monitoring behaviors in school?
4. What is the process for assigning consequences for disciplinary infractions?
5. Who assigns disciplinary consequences?
6. How are decisions made consistently regarding student discipline when there are multiple administrators in a building handling similar behavior situations with multiple staff members?
7. How do school counselors, building administrators, and central office administration work together to address school discipline?
8. What policies guide you when addressing student behaviors?

School Based-Interventions:

1. What are the initiatives in your building related to student behavior and what is your involvement with those initiatives?
2. How are appropriate school behaviors rewarded and what data are they based upon?

3. What behavior systems or programs are in place that support appropriate and desired student behaviors?
4. How are restorative practices used at your school?
5. In what ways are restorative practices integrated into the school's disciplinary procedures?
6. What impact has restorative practices had on student behavior?
7. From your perspective, what are the benefits and/or obstacles associated with implementing restorative practices at your school?
8. How are positive behavior interventions and supports used at your school?
9. In what ways are positive behavior interventions and supports integrated into the school's disciplinary procedures?
10. What impact has positive behavior interventions and supports had on student behavior?
11. From your perspective, what are the benefits and/or obstacles associated with implementing positive behavior interventions and supports at your school?

Closing Question:

1. Do you have anything you would like to add pertaining to discipline at the high school level within your school district?

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN A MID-ATLANTIC

INNER-RING SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE

STUDY

Interview Questions

Participants: Central Office District Administrators

TITLE OF STUDY: School Discipline Policies and Practices in a Mid-Atlantic Inner-Ring Suburban School District: A Descriptive Case Study
INVESTIGATOR/S: Keyona L. Powell, Student Researcher; Dr. Rodney Hopson, Faculty Advisor
CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: (816) 686-2903

Interview Guidelines: Open-ended questions will be asked throughout the interviews to encourage participants to respond freely and openly. Probing and/or follow-up questions will be asked, when necessary, in order to encourage participants to elaborate on or clarify a response. Each interview will be transcribed following the interview.

Background Information:

1. Describe your role and duties?
2. How long have you worked as a district administrator?
3. How would you describe yourself as a leader?
4. How is your leadership utilized as it relates discipline?
5. What trainings have you received as it relates to discipline?

School Discipline Policies and Procedures:

1. Describe the current discipline practices used at the high school level?
2. How is appropriate behavior identified at the high school level?
3. How is inappropriate behavior identified at the high school level?
4. What are the most frequent disciplinary infractions reported? What are the consequences for those infractions?
5. What behaviors constitute a suspension? Expulsion? Alternative school placement?
6. If problems arise with a student at the high school, what supports do you expect should be provided?
7. To what extent, if any, do you think that time for teaching curriculum is hindered because of discipline problems at the high school level? Do you feel teachers are equipped to manage student behaviors?

8. Who is being disciplined most often? Racial group? Gender group? Why do you feel they are most often disciplined? What actions are in place to support these students?
9. What are the most effective discipline practices utilized at the high school level, in your opinion?
10. What are the least effective discipline practices utilized at the high school level, in your opinion?
11. What challenges do you face in your work setting as it relates to school discipline?

School Disciplinary Data:

1. Do you collect any data related to school discipline at the high school level? If so, what types of data?
2. What data is collected about the teaching of behavioral expectations at the high school level?
3. Who collects your behavior and incident data at the high school level? How often is the data collected? How is the data analyzed?
4. Of the ODRs received, what percentage do you feel were appropriate?
5. From your experiences, can you describe an ODR that you feel is appropriate and an ODR that you feel is inappropriate?
6. What data is expected to be collected and reviewed regarding student behavior goals?
7. How does the school discipline data influence the districts disciplinary practices?
8. What does the current disciplinary data report? What do you still need to know?

School Leadership:

1. What type of leadership needs to be present for school discipline practices to be effective?
2. How are appropriate behaviors and expectations taught and monitored at the high school level?
3. Who is responsible for teaching and monitoring behaviors at the high school level?
4. What is the process for assigning consequences for disciplinary infractions at the high school level?
5. Who assigns disciplinary consequences at the high school level?
6. How are decisions made consistently regarding student discipline when there are multiple administrators in a building handling similar behavior situations with multiple staff members at the high school level?
7. How do school counselors, building administrators, and central office administration work together to address school discipline?
8. What policies are used to address student behaviors?

School Based- Interventions:

1. What are the initiatives at the high school level related to student behavior and what is your involvement with those initiatives?
2. How are appropriate school behaviors rewarded and what data are they based upon at the high school level?
3. What behavior systems or programs are in place that support appropriate and desired student behaviors at the high school level?
4. How are restorative practices used at the high school level?
5. In what ways are restorative practices integrated into the high school's disciplinary procedures?
6. What impact has restorative practices had on student behavior at the high school level?
7. From your perspective, what are the benefits and/or obstacles associated with implementing restorative practices at the high school level?
8. How are positive behavior interventions and supports used at the high school level?
9. In what ways are positive behavior interventions and supports integrated into the high school's disciplinary procedures?
10. What impact has positive behavior interventions and supports had on student behavior at the high school level?
11. From your perspective, what are the benefits and/or obstacles associated with implementing positive behavior interventions and supports at the high school level?

Closing Question:

1. Do you have anything you would like to add pertaining to discipline at the high school level within your school district?

Appendix E

Document Analysis Form

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN A MID-ATLANTIC INNER-RING SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY			
Document Analysis Form			
Document Title:			
Author/Organization:		**Document Date:**	
Location/Source:			
Section	**Item**		**Comment**
TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one):	Newspaper/ Press Release	☐	
	Report/Survey	☐	
	Flyer/Poster	☐	
	Handbook	☐	
	Training materials	☐	
	Policy Manual	☐	
	Social Media Post	☐	
	Memorandum/Meeting Notes	☐	
	Other	☐	
DOCUMENT SPECIFICS:	AUDIENCE		
	PURPOSE		
	SUMMARY		
	FINDINGS		
	NOTES		

Participant Demographics

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN A MID-ATLANTIC INNER-RING SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY		
Participant Name*/Leadership Role	Duties	Time in Position
Amelia / High School Building Administrator	Manage the school, to include everything related to students and teachers.	3 years
Amy/ High School Counselor	Provide counseling support services for all students on caseload in the areas of academic, career, personal, and social development.	17 years
Bilal/ Central Office Administrator	Discipline Hearings Officer; Designee for the Superintendent; Supervisor of several staff members to include the districts' directors of student supports. Restorative Practices Trainer.	2 years
David/ High School Building Administrator	Lead administrator for grade level assigned. Responsible for students, 4 counselors, an administrative assistant, and a social worker.	7 years
Denise/ Central Office Administrator	Monitor attendance and truancy amongst all students in district.	2 years
Jerome/ Central Office Administrator	Director of alternative programs; Alternative school principal. Charged with responding to issues related to equity in the school system.	4 years
Julia/ High School Counselor	Responsible for ensuring that students are placed correctly in the right class so that they can matriculate through school and graduate on time;	17 years

	Responsible for making sure that their transcripts are correct; Responsible for assisting students with their needs; Ensuring students social and emotional needs are met.	
Keisha/ High School Counselor	Assist students with social, emotional, and academic plans.	17 years
Monica/ High School Building Administrator	Work closely with the teachers; Perform observations and formal evaluations; Discuss data.	7 years
Neicy/ High School Counselor	Provide counseling support for students. Help to prepare students for life after high school.	13 years
Paige/ High School Counselor	College advising, academic, and social counseling.	14 years
Riley/ Central Office Administrator	Work with all the school counselors across the school division; Support the school counseling programs by supporting the school counselors primarily with aligning with the American School Counselor National Association model.	2 years
Samantha/ High School Counselor	Career exploration, college applications, acceptances, counseling on a level that is commensurate with my abilities; Work with teachers and students as a liaison to solve problems; Work with parents to help their kids. Lunch duty on occasion and being there for the kids from 8:00am until 4:00pm.	7 years
Shamari/ High School Building Administrator	Monitor and manage: student life; building safety; building operation; student academic progress; student behavioral concerns and progress; student emotional and social needs.	6 years
Sisyphus/ Central Office Administrator	Coordinate emergency management and security services. Supervise security staff at the high school campuses, middle schools, and other facilities. Oversee emergency management such as performing drills, putting drill and emergency procedures in place. Day-to-day security of the schools and the facilities.	1 year

| Tricee/ Central Office Administrator | Coordinate all of the behavior-based programs in the school system. Support the implementation of positive behavior interventions and supports, restorative practices, and multi-tier system of support for behavior. Train the building coaches and contacts, as well as staff and administrators on behavior support for students. | 9 years |

Appendix G

Document Analysis Table

			School Leadership Documents	
Doc #	Doc Type	Date	Purpose	Summary
SL1	NW; O	8/15/14	Article features new superintendent of the district being researched.	Highlights career and plans of superintendent of the district being researched.
SL2	PR	8/2/16	Welcome to the new school year from district superintendent	At the district being researched the superintendent pens a letter to district stakeholders about goals and expectations for upcoming school year.
SL3	NW; O	6/23/16	Article features graduation during 50th anniversary of school and the end of the 1st year for new principal at Woodland HS.	Reflects thoughts of principal at WHS (highlighting his first year as leader). Celebrates student graduating during 50th anniversary of school.
SL4	NW	11/7/16	School newspaper features article on principal's abrupt resignation.	Head Principal at the high school of research announces resignation.
SD1	O; HB	2016-17	Overview of Discipline	Webpage from district being researched provides an overview of discipline. Also include are: appeal procedures for short-term suspensions, appeal procedures for long-term suspensions, definitions related to school discipline, expulsion, alternative placement options, homebound instruction, and restorative practices.

SD2	PM	2016-17	Student code of conduct: Grades K-12	The Code of Conduct handbook describes systems of support to assist students exhibiting behavioral challenges, procedures for reporting bullying, and conduct that could result in specific disciplinary actions. It is a guide for students, families, and staff.
SD3	PM	2016-17	The manual is organized according to the classification system developed by the Educational Policies Services of the National School Boards Association. The manual provides an efficient means of coding, filing, and finding policies regulations, & other documents	The School Board Policy Manual at the district being researched provides (12) major classifications, each bearing an alphabetical code related specific components (i.e, Fiscal Management, Support Services, and Students).
SD4	PM	2016-17	In the School Board Policy manual, the Policies related to student's are of important to the research. More specific are individual polices listed in under the Student classification. Located within the Student classification and directly related to the research is the policy regarding Equal Educational Opportunities/Non-Discrimination.	Specifics related to the Equal Educational Opportunities/Non-Discrimination policy are described in the manual.

SD5	PM	2016-17	In the School Board Policy manual, the Policies related to student's are of important to the research. More specific are individual polices listed in under the Student classification. Located within the Student classification and directly related to the research is the School Counseling Program policy.	The School Counseling Program Discusses mission and vision of counseling department within the district being researched. It also describes service provided to all students at each school.
SD6	PM	2016-17	In the School Board Policy manual, the Policies related to student's are of important to the research. More specific are individual polices listed in under the Student classification. Located within the Student classification and directly related to the research is the Management of Student Behaviors in Emergency Situations policy.	The Management of Student Behaviors in Emergency Situations policy defines: physical restraint, mechanical restraint, and seclusion and when each behavior can be used as a response. And it reflects on district's stance on Corporal punishment. As well, it defines when parents should be notified. Too, it identifies when trainings will be provided by the district.
SD7	PM	2016-17	In the School Board Policy manual, the Policies related to student's are of important to the research. More specific are individual polices listed in under the Student classification. Located within the Student classification and directly related to the research is the Student Suspension/Expulsion	The Student Suspension/Expulsion (Regulations) policy explains: I. Grounds of Suspension & Expulsion II. Appeal of Suspension & Expulsions III. Readmission of Expelled Students

policy.

SD8	PM	2016-17	Located within the Student classification and directly related to the research is the Student Suspension/Expulsion policy. Specifically this section in the policy manual provides definitions related to the aforementioned policy.	As it relates to Student Suspension/ Expulsion this policy document provides definitions and specifics related to Suspensions & Expulsions of Students Generally, Alternative Education Program, Reporting, Re-Admission of Suspended and/or Expelled Students, and Disciplining Students with Disabilities
SD9	PM	2016-17	In the School Board Policy manual, the Policies related to student's are important to the research. More specific are individual polices listed in under the Student classification. Located within the Student classification and directly related to the research is the Corporal Punishment policy.	The Corporal Punishment policy document states the regulations on corporal punishment at the district being researched.
SD10	PM	2016-17	In the School Board Policy manual, the Policies related to student's are important to the research. More specific are individual polices listed in under the Student classification. Located within the Student classification and directly related to the research is the Drugs in School policy.	Specifics related to The Drugs in School policy are listed in the manual and include definitions of illegal drugs & controlled substances are and the consequences for them on school grounds.

SD11	PM	2016-17	In the School Board Policy manual, the Policies related to student's are important to the research. More specific are individual polices listed in under the Student classification. Located within the Student classification and directly related to the research is the Weapons in Schools policy.	Specifics related to weapons in school are presented generally (definition) and as it relates to students with disabilities.
SD12	PM	2016-17	In the School Board Policy manual, the Policies related to student's are important to the research. More specific are individual polices listed in under the Student classification. Located within the Student classification and directly related to the research is the Standards of Student Conduct policy.	The Standards of Student Conduct explains how to respond to various student behaviors (i.e., theft, gang activity, vandalism, bullying, and harassment).
SD13	PM	2016-17	In the School Board Policy manual, the Policies related to student's are important to the research. More specific are individual polices listed in under the Student classification. Located within the Student classification and directly related to the research is the Student Absences/ Excuses/ Dismissals policy.	The Student Absences/ Excuses/ Dismissals policies, parental obligations related to attendance, and dismissal precautions are explained.

SD14	PM	2016-17	In the School Board Policy manual, the Policies related to students are important to the research. More specific are individual polices listed in under the Student classification. Located within the Student classification and directly related to the research is the Compulsory Attendance policy.	The Compulsory Attendance policy explains: I. The requirements of this policy apply to: II. The requirements of this policy do not apply to: III. Individual Student Alternative Education Plan IV. Alternative Education Program
SD15	NW	2/5/13	Article on 10-year-old student charged with brandishing a weapon after police officers found a toy gun in his backpack	At the district being researched a school official alerted authorities after 5th grade child had shown a weapon to classmate on the bus ride home. Officers retrieved the gun from child's bag the next morning, to learn it was fake. The child was taken into police custody on the misdemeanor charge & suspended. Superintendent did not rule out the possibility of expulsion.
DD1	R; S	11/2007	Presents results of survey given to students in the district being researched about the dispersion of resources in an effort to gain better understanding of causes for low graduation rates.	Results found that the district being researched operates a '2-track' school system – (1) a college preparatory track that is available to mostly middle-class white students (2) low-level track reserved for mostly poor students of color
DD2	R	09/04/15	A legal organization focusing on children in schools collected data about suspension & expulsion in state of district being researched.	Suspension & expulsion in state of district being researched during the 2013-2014 school year

DD3	NW; R	04/09/16	Discusses relationship between suspensions of Black students and racism	Article reveals results of disparities within suspension data in the US and the state of the school district being researched.
DD4	R	05/2016	A legal organization focusing on children in schools collected data about suspension & expulsion in the district being researched.	Report contains information about suspension & expulsion in district being researched during 2014-15. Proven interventions & alternatives, and recommendations for lawmakers & policymakers are included.
DD5	NW	6/3/16	Reflects on the racial disproportionately in discipline at the district of research.	Article reflects on student's reports of racial injustice in their schools as it relates to school discipline in the district being researched.
DD6	R	06/2016	A community review of the need for implementation of restorative justice in the district being researched Report created by local organizations and local chapters of national organization who fight for equality and justice for individuals of color.	Report contains a timeline of restorative practice campaigns at the district being researched. Discipline data reported includes: suspension data, referral to law enforcement data, Subjective Offenses, and other pertinent data to explain the racial dispirited. Solutions to implement restorative justice and other recommendations were offered to the district.
DD7	NW	6/13/16	Reflects on civil rights group responses surrounding student's reports of racially disproportionate responses to discipline in the district being researched	The report examined discipline data from 2014-15 school year, leading the advocacy group to speak out and condemn the district for their responses to discipline, especially for students of color.
DD8	NW	07/13/16	Discusses results of study on disciplinary consequences in the	Article reflects the results of a study that revealed black students are punished more often than

			district being researched.	white in the district being researched.
DD9	NW	11/1/16	The purpose of the article is to report an alarming spike in weapons offenses in 7 local school districts, including the district being researched.	Article presents statistics on the increase of weapons offenses in the district of research. A reply from school officials explains the increase may be a result of improved data reporting procedures.
DD10	R; S	2016	This document provides the preliminary results of the 2016 Teaching, Empowering, Leading, & Learning (TELL) survey which was administered at the district being researched.	TELL Survey is a statistically valid and reliable instrument to assess whether educators have working conditions in their school that support effective teaching. (8) constructs measured: Community Support & Involvement, Use of Time, Facilities & Resources, Professional Development, Managing Student Conduct, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, & Instructional Practices & Support
SI1	NW	6/10/16	Reflects on the use of restorative practices at the district being researched.	The district being researched is using restorative practices as a solution to the findings of disproportionality in disciplinary responses. The article speaks on district's use of restorative practices as a solution.
SI2	PR	6/10/16	Restorative practices is one strategy used to repair the harm caused by negative behaviors in the district being researched	The district being researched began implementing restorative practices in 2013 with anticipation that it will lower suspension rates. This article states that the district has provided extensive training in restorative practices.
SI3	R; O	10/7/16	Report on The Multi-Tier	MTSS is a multi-step process of

			System of Supports (MTSS) is one way the district being researched provides supports which is outlined in the district's strategic plan	providing instruction and support to promote the academic and behavioral success of all.
SI4	R; HB	2016	The booklet outlines Multi-tier system of supports (MTSS).	MTSS is a multi-step process of providing instruction and support to promote the academic and behavioral success of all children. It also provides a roadmap for seeking help from the school as needed.

Key:
Flyer- F
Handbook –HB
Memorandum/Meeting Notes – M
Newspaper – NW
Other – O
Policy Manual – PM
Poster –P
Press Release – PR
Report – R
Social Media Post – SM
Survey – S
Training Materials - TM

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273

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Biography

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