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Breaking the Cycle: Effects of Classroom-based Behavior Interventions on Disproportionate
School Discipline

By

Gregory L. Murphy, Jr.

Lynn University

A Dissertation Submitted to the Ross College of Education

of Lynn University, Boca Raton

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

in Educational Leadership

2022

LYNN UNIVERSITY

APPROVAL OF DISSERTATION IN PRACTICE

Breaking the Cycle: Effects of Classroom-based Behavior Interventions on Disproportionate
School Discipline

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ABSTRACT

GREGORY L. MURPHY, Jr.: Breaking the Cycle: Effects of Classroom-Based Behavior Interventions on Disproportionate School Discipline.

Disproportionality in school discipline has plagued our nation since the 1970s. Numerous studies have covered this from various viewpoints. However, the level of disproportionality has continued to grow throughout the years. This study looks deeper into the nationwide issue and examines the impact of classroom-based behavior interventions on school discipline after implementing a required intervention form. This study applied the mixed method approach for research and used archival data from the year before the implementation of the mandated intervention form and the third year after implementation, which is also pre-covid. Phase two included the data results from phase one to create open-ended questions for instructional and administrative staff from both elementary and secondary schools. The study revealed statistical and numerical differences supported the work of the mandated intervention form. Phase two results led to the four themes. While the results of this study conveyed a positive result, there is a level of disproportionality still present in the data, which notes that there is still more work to be done in the targeted area.

Order Number: _____

Breaking the Cycle: Effects of Classroom-based Behavior Interventions on Disproportionate
School Discipline

Gregory L. Murphy, Jr., Ed.D.

Lynn University

2022, by Gregory L. Murphy, Jr.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Educators today are experiencing extreme pressure to move students academically each year (Li et al., 2021). To assist, some states have enacted class size policies (Florida Early Learning-20 Education Code, 2021) that limit the number of students enrolled in particular courses. However, experience has revealed that even with class size restrictions, one misbehaving student can collapse a lesson or an entire period (Gopalan & Nelson, 2019). To mitigate student misbehavior, educators must bear the knowledge to apprehend what drives misconduct and appropriate strategies for intervention that can effectively redirect, reteach, or de-escalate student misbehavior before it becomes ingrained. When educators do not have the necessary knowledge to intercede with appropriate interventions to curve or redirect challenging behaviors, they revert to completing office discipline referrals ([ODR]; LeRoy, 2017).

According to the Office of Civil Rights, in the 2017/2018 school year, over 930,000 students in the United States received and served more than one day of out-of-school suspension, with Black students leading at 44.8 percent. Two million six hundred thirty-six thousand three hundred sixty-three students received and served more than one day of in-school suspension, with Black students leading at 31.4 percent. Moreover, 11,205,797 days were missed by students subject to exclusionary discipline, with Black students leading at 41.7 percent. It is important to note that Black students make up 15% of all k-12 school-age children (NCES, 2022). Therefore, the percentage of in-school and out-of-school discipline is disproportionate.

Background

Schools' differential use of exclusionary discipline by race has been an unremitting problem since the 1970s (Bottiani et al., 2018). In the nearly half-century since exclusionary discipline gaps were first documented on a national scale by the Children's Defense Fund's research, Black-White disparities in discipline across the United States have almost quadrupled (Bottiani et al., 2018). These findings spur the national discourse on racial differences, prompting school leaders to refocus their efforts on academic results and discipline outcomes (Bottiani et al., 2018).

To most, equity in school discipline data is a conversation to avoid because the evidence shows how schools apply consequences unequally to specified student subgroups (Young et al., 2018). Consequences: Students who miss instructional time decrease their chance to learn and engage in the classroom. Studies have linked exclusionary actions with reduced academic competence, a higher risk of grade retention, and an amplified dropout risk (Barbadoro, 2017). This long-standing challenge of reaching equity in school discipline increases with minimal gap reduction (McIntosh et al., 2018).

Significance of the Study

Presently, the argument is that fulfilling the purpose of the study is vital to the field of study, to some specialization within the field, to a community of persons interested in the problem, or to researchers interested in the program.

In 2011, the school district examined for this study entered into a negotiated settlement agreement (NAACP, 2009) after an investigation into complaints regarding its system of discipline that discriminated against students based on their national origin. As such, the district implemented several Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS)

evidence-based practices to mitigate discrimination and reduce office discipline referrals. Moreover, district leaders developed, implemented, and provided district-wide training on the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report Form (Florida School District Code of Conduct, 2011).

The school district in this study conceptualized that the basis of discipline in school focused on teachers and their classroom management. When students exhibit behaviors that interrupt learning, teachers respond by determining if the behavior is teacher or administrator-managed. If the behavior is teacher-managed, the teacher should apply any research-based intervention or a simple redirection. However, the teacher also determines if a behavior is an administration-managed behavior. In this case, the teacher completes an office discipline referral for the observed behavior, and the student is removed from class. The decisions are the basis where there is disproportionality. Implementing the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report Form was to decrease the number of office referrals written for behaviors that teachers can effectively manage within the classroom as opposed to administrators in the office (Florida School District Code of Conduct, 2011). The current study seeks to investigate this Corrective Behavior Intervention Report Form and its use to mitigate the disproportionality of discipline and the overuse of ODRs.

Rationale

Race has historically been and continues to be a significant issue in all aspects of American society. Racial inequality is prominent in education, especially related to access, opportunity, discipline, and outcomes (Price, 2020). The school district discipline examined in this study is no different. Prior to the district's discipline settlement agreement, the disparity in ODRs between Black and White students was exponential (United States

Department of Justice, 2013). The rationale for conducting this study is to examine the effectiveness of one of the PBIS initiatives, the Corrective Behavior Form, in mitigating the office discipline referral disparity between Black and White students. The researcher hopes this investigation will disrupt the oppressive discipline systems across school districts, namely disproportionate school discipline, a longstanding issue that dates to the 1970s nationally and in the school district examined in this study. Moreover, the study seeks to find pathways for educators to better support students through classroom-based interventions that are culturally responsive and diverse. Numerous studies have covered the issue, but the problem has seen little to no gap narrowing and bears witness by the Office for Civil Rights Data (2018), as mentioned earlier.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory (Delgado et al., 2017) is applied as the theoretical framework to answer the research question of how the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form affects the disproportionality of school discipline. The Critical Race Theory framework provides educational researchers with critical lenses to deconstruct oppressive policies and practices and build more emancipatory systems for racial equity and justice (Price, 2020). In education, Critical Race Theory is a helpful tool for analyzing policy issues such as school funding, segregation, language policies, discipline policies, and testing and accountability policies (Price, 2020). Moreover, In the field of education, Critical Race Theory is a helpful tool for analyzing policy issues such as school funding, segregation, language policies, discipline policies, and testing and accountability policies (Price, 2020) that can perpetuate systemic racism.

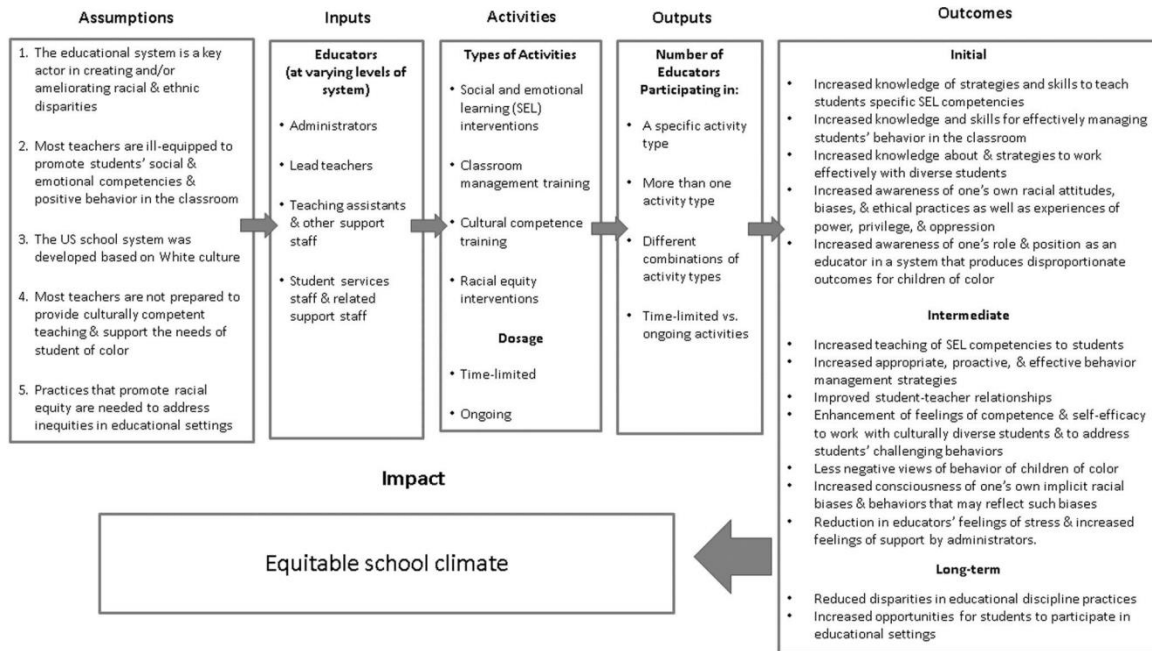
Critical Race Theory helps identify the root causes of castigating procedures in school

discipline. Studies have revealed that disproportionate discipline practices have steadily increased over the several decades for Black students. When examined by other studies, David Simson (2014) notes that the long history of racial prejudice in the United States is the basis for racial stigmatization, stereotyping, and implicit biases.

Furthermore, Simson's research argues that Restorative Justice-based disciplinary policies are consistent with core principles of Critical Race Theory and are more conducive to creating a nurturing, safe, and inclusive school environment that not only keeps children in school but also helps to undermine the sources of racial conflict and of racial inequality that has plagued this nation for too long. For the current study, Critical Race Theory (CRT) will be the framework and worldview lens through which the researcher will examine the effectiveness of the Corrective Behavior Intervention form in mitigating disproportionate school discipline. Below, Figure 1 explains the logic model for examining educator-level interventions targeting educational disparities in exclusionary discipline practices (LaForett & De Marco, 2020).

Figure 1

Critical Race Theory Logic Model



Adapted from United Way of America, 1996.

Purpose of the Study

Within the concept of disproportionate school discipline, one must also examine the starting point of discipline: classroom management. Why are so many office discipline referrals enacted in school centers? Keith Smolkowski (2016) discussed the intractable racial disparities in school discipline and how emerging theories of implicit bias show promise in identifying inventions to help mitigate disproportionality. He used a Vulnerable Decision Points (VDPs) model as a base for analysis in his research. The study examined how teachers' decisions to issue an office discipline referral (ODR) were subject to implicit bias. Such a bias is believed to increase the chances of subjective office discipline referrals compared to objective office discipline referrals.

According to data from the U. S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights, over three million students received at least one in-school suspension, and just over three million received at least one out-of-school suspension each year (Gage et al., 2018). The Pediatrics Council on School Health policy statement (2013) recommended three strategies to reduce school suspension. The first was early intervention followed by early identification, and the third was the implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports.

Classroom-based interventions are a critical component in reducing the number of office discipline referrals, which will, in turn, positively affect the percentage of disproportionality in school discipline.

Research Questions

The purpose of this sequential phase explanatory mixed methods study (Creswell, 2018) is to discover to what extent the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form mitigates the disproportionality in school discipline of urban schools in a large school district in the Southeastern United States. The following research questions and hypotheses guided this study:

RQ1: Does the number of office discipline referrals differ before and after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development?

Ho1: There is a significant decrease in office discipline referrals after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development.

RQ2: Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals of Black elementary students before and after the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development?

Ho2: There is a significant decrease in the number of office discipline referrals of Black elementary students after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development.

RQ3: Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals of Black secondary students before and after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development?

Ho3: There is a significant decrease in the number of office discipline referrals of Black secondary students after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development.

RQ4: What are the large urban school district staff perceptions of the phase 1 quantitative analysis?

At this stage in the research, the disproportionality of school discipline disproportionality represents one of the most significant difficulties in schooling (Gage et al., 2019). Qualitative question(s) will be formed based on the quantitative data analysis.

Assumptions

Considering our current practice of sheltering in place due to COVID-19, much of the data for the 2020 – 2021 school year will not be present. Additionally, school discipline numbers will be lower than expected if the school district continues to operate virtually.

Furthermore, some districts are looking at adding virtual learning as an action code for the discipline matrix. Should this come to fruition, it would reduce the number of OSS days because students can receive direct instruction, just virtually. However, would this still count as exclusionary discipline data? The scholar's hypothesis for this study is that when classroom-based interventions are implemented school-wide with fidelity, the number of

office discipline referrals decreases and, in turn, will decrease disproportionality in said school's discipline.

Definitions of Terms

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS): an evidence-based, three-tiered framework to improve and integrate all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes daily (Center on PBIS, 2021).

Office Discipline Referral (ODR): the document of an event in which a staff member observes a student violating a school rule; it is then submitted to the administrative leadership, who then delivers a consequence to the student (Pas et al., 2011)

Disproportionality: refers to a group's representation in a particular category that exceeds expectations for that group or differs substantially from the representation of others in that category (National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), n.d.).

Objective: expressing or dealing with facts or conditions as perceived without distortion by personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Subjective: influenced by or based on personal beliefs or feelings rather than based on facts (*Cambridge Dictionary / English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus*, n.d.)

Organization of the Dissertation and Summary

Nationwide, students in Black, Latino, and American Indian subgroups are to be suspended and expelled from school at double the rates of other students (Whitford, 2017). Consequences where students miss instructional time decrease their chance to learn and engage in the classroom. Investigations have connected exclusionary actions with reduced academic proficiency, a higher risk of grade retention, and an amplified dropout risk (Barbadoro, 2017). Critical Race Theory is applied as the theoretical framework to answer the research question

of to what extent the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form affects disproportionality in school discipline. The organization of this research is arranged into five chapters.

As the next steps in the research, the scholar presented a review of literature in chapter two that will consist of an extensive array of articles, books, and publications that will tell history, discuss equity, current trend studies, interventions and programs, and policy surrounding the focus of the study. Chapter three will include the methodology, including a detailed description of the research and purpose. Additionally, it will review the research design, data collection, procedures to analyze data, and study limitations. Chapter four will review the results or findings of the study, and Chapter five will discuss the results and provide recommendations for future research. This research aims to discover the impact of classroom-based interventions on disproportionate school discipline.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In order to deliver a comprehensive framework of the study, this literature review begins by discussing what is known about disproportionality in school discipline. The research is organized into four sections: (a) general equity studies, (b) trend studies, (c) interventions and programs, (d) policy, (e) interventions to mitigate disproportionate discipline, (f) current discipline data, and (g) critical race theory. The literature review outlines the problem and the history and progression that may influence disproportionality in school discipline data.

Background

Disproportionality in school discipline data across racial and ethnic subgroups has focused on education research for decades (Gregory et al., 2010). In the 1970s, the Children's Defense Fund uncovered the overrepresentation of various subgroups in school suspension data. Our national discourse on racial disparity tends to focus on academic outcomes. However, the discipline gap in school districts throughout the United States reveals that Black, Latino, and American Indian students are more likely to experience inequality and a disproportionate rate of school disciplinary consequences (Gregory et al., 2010).

Nationwide, students in Black, Latino, and Native American subgroups are suspended and expelled from school, double the rates of other students (Welsh & Little, 2018). To most educational stakeholders, exclusionary discipline data can be more manageable. It is difficult to manage due to the evidence showing how schools are applying consequences unequally to specified student subgroups (Gregory et al., 2017). Consequences where students miss instructional time decrease their chance to learn and engage in the classroom. Investigations

have connected exclusionary actions with reduced academic proficiency, a higher risk of grade retention, and an amplified dropout risk (Gagnon et al., 2017).

Today, disproportionality in school discipline represents one of the most significant difficulties in schooling (Gage et al., 2019). This long-standing challenge of reaching equity in school discipline gradually increases with minimal gap reduction (McIntosh et al., 2018).

General Equity Studies

Gastic (2016) completed a study that investigated the racial discipline gap among Black and Latino students, noting that they are more likely to be disciplined than their White peers. He sought to determine the degree to which Black and Latino students are more likely to be disproportionately cited for fighting than White students. Gastic proposed two research questions in this study: (a) To what extent are Black and Latino students disproportionately cited for fighting? (b) To what extent do differences in rates of self-reported behavior explain the disproportionality? With a limited scope in completing the study, using data specifically from the Massachusetts Department of Education and Secondary Education, the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Common Core Data of the National Center for Education Statistics. The population was a small subset of grades 9-12 students who had infractions for physical fighting. The aggregated data showed nearly 4,000 students with physical fighting infractions in 2007. Two thousand two hundred sixty-eight White, 833 Latino, and 687 Black students were the observed focus of the analysis. Black students also account for 96% of students who were disciplined for fighting at school. The study concluded that the risk to Latino and Black students is more than twice that for White students. More specifically, using the Relative Risk Ratio terms, Latino students were 2.14 times more probable than White students, and

Black students were 2.52 more probable than White students disciplined for fighting in the state of Massachusetts (Gastic, 2016).

Gregory et al. (2010) facilitated a study that synthesized research on racial and ethnic sequences in school sanctions and considered how disproportionate discipline might contribute to student achievement among students of color. Within the synthesizes, the carefully examined indicators for the student, school, and community contributors to the racial and ethnic patterns in school sanctions and reviews tips for gap-reducing discipline policies and practices. The study revealed that identical studies surrounding the achievement gap overlooked the disproportionality in suspensions and expulsions. The researchers conclude that such student traits are inadequate to describe the vast inequalities in achievement. Additionally, it specifies that schools and teachers need to explore in future research. Lastly, the research identifies procedural adversities to the study of disproportionality and offers hopeful approaches for gap-reducing interventions (Gregory et al., 2010).

Whitford (2017) examined office discipline referrals and administrative outcomes of special education students, with an emphasis on American Indian students. The American Indian population represents about 1.7% of the United States, with the majority living in clusters west of the Mississippi. This made the research challenging to complete and conclude an accurate analysis. Educational professionals would deem said studies as statistically insignificant for research. Despite difficulties, numerous scholars have found that American Indian students are nearly three times more likely to receive a referral than White students and more than twice as likely to receive a referral compared to Latino students. the Arizona Safety Accountability for Education Project obtained the data for the study. Two

school districts with a higher-than-average American Indian population were purposefully selected to increase the probability of finding statistically significant results. Indian reservation schools were intentionally excluded from this study to reduce over or underestimation or representation in the referral and administrative outcome data. The survey results revealed that American Indian students in special education were proportionately represented in the discipline data. There was some inconsistency in the administrative action taken on the referrals. American Indian students in special education were more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension or recommended for expulsion as compared to White and Latino students for identical behaviors. Understanding that the White students were larger in population, they were one and half times more likely to receive an in-school suspension for identical behaviors exhibited by American Indians (Whitford, 2017).

Gage et al. (2021) explored school discipline disproportionality of the Latinx population and noted that this population had become the largest racially and ethnically diverse group in America. Those previous studies have returned inconsistent to school discipline disparities; the researcher opted to study discipline practices of Latinx students with and without disabilities within America. The researcher uses risk ratios and weighted mixed-effects models within this study against national data from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. The acquired data set included 94,000 schools from the 2015/2016 fiscal year. Their study asked two research questions. First, at what rates have Latinx students with and without disabilities received disciplinary exclusion? Second, do Latinx students with and without disabilities receive disproportionate disciplinary exclusion compared with White and Black students? Utilizing the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights Data Collection survey, the researcher determined the number of

Latinx students with and without disabilities who received in-school suspension (ISS) and out-of-school suspensions (OSS) within the 2015/2016 school year. The results revealed that 6.8% of Latinx students received either an in-school or out-of-school suspension compared to 6.2 of White peers and 12.4% of Black peers. 14.8% of Latinx students with disabilities received either an in-school or out-of-school suspension compared to the 13.4% of White peers with disabilities and 34.7% of Black peers with disabilities. Finally, expulsion was a rare occurrence, revealing less than 1% across all subgroups except Black students with disabilities, which showed 1% expelled. Thus, the research notes that students of color are more subject to exclusionary school discipline than their White peers for like violations (Gage et al., 2021).

Camacho and Krezmien (2020) analyzed discipline policies and suspension practices statewide. This article reviews federal, state, district, and school policies that have played considerable roles in how states, districts, and schools respond to student behavior. The researcher analyzed the effects of the 1994 mandates from the federal Gun-Free Schools Act that required schools to expel students for no less than one year for possession of weapons on school grounds. The researcher equates this federal mandate as the foundation for the abundant state-implemented “zero tolerance” policies. Additionally, consequences must be applied universally to all students regardless of circumstance. In 2014, the U.S. Department of Education enacted the Supportive School Discipline Initiative to release recommended protocols to address the national soaring exclusionary discipline rates. Included in these recommendations were school climate and discipline resources that emphasized the urgent need to create safe, non-discriminatory, and positive school climates that address student behavior effectively and equitably. As a result of this effort, approximately twenty states

passed legislative reform targeting school discipline. These reforms have rendered positive benefits that dramatically reduce suspensions and dropout rates. Additionally, these reform policies adopted prevention strategies such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and Restorative Justice Practices. This study applies three research questions: (a) What are the current suspension practices in one state? (b) What types of disciplinary policies do the school districts utilize? (c) Is there an association between school districts' disciplinary policies and disciplinary outcomes? The study was conducted in Maryland, where there are approximately 830,000 public school students in grades K-12. Needed data was obtained from the publicly filed School Suspensions, Expulsions, and State Enrollment reports stored on Maryland's Department of Education website. The results concluded that 5.1% of Maryland's K-12 student population, with Somerset County School District leading the state at 11.9%. The data also revealed that repeat offenses and administrator discretion varied in procedures. Some districts maintain clear protocols for progressive discipline with a level for each occurrence, while others show no difference in approach to repetitive discipline. Finally, the data indicated that districts with handbooks with more positive consequences for misbehavior reduced their suspension rates over ten years and stayed below the 1.9 percentile of the state suspension rate (Camacho & Krezmien, 2020).

Skiba et al. (2002) examined the sources of racial and gender disproportionality in school punishment. The scholars mentioned that the topic is well documented, but the reasoning for such disparities is not entirely understood. The researchers selected to use middle school discipline from an urban school district in Illinois. Using the acquired data, they applied three different lenses to the data: gender, race, and socioeconomic status as reasons for disparities. The large urban school district used in the study was located in

Illinois, one of the largest fifteen cities in America, serving more than fifty thousand students. Data showed an even distribution between grade levels for the nineteen middle schools. Student demographics consisted of 56% who identified as Black, 42% as White, 1.2% as Latino, and 0.7% as Asian-American. General Education students were 83.2 %, and special education students were 16.8%. The result discovered that male and black students were overrepresented in all exclusionary discipline measures. Females and White students were underrepresented in all exclusionary discipline measures. Only expulsions showed statically significant for two of the three subgroups when examined by socioeconomic status. Finally, a differential treatment pattern surfaced from the examination at the classroom level. This pattern indicated that Black students received office discipline referrals that were more subjective in interpretation. The study further concluded that teacher reform was needed in implicit bias and behavior management (Skiba et al., 2002).

Trend Studies

Nguyen et al. (2019) address the question of patterns of variance among Asian American and Pacific Islanders within the racial discipline gap that can establish the presence of an ethnic discipline gap. To answer the question, the researchers use risk ratios to conclusively depict if ethnic disproportionality exists in school discipline among the identified subgroup. The racial formation theory developed by Omi and Winant (2015) was used to guide the investigation of ethnic differences in school discipline. The participants of the study were based in Washington State. Data was provided by the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and drawn from all K-12 public schools. The investigation revealed discipline patterns for Washington state and was not specific to districts, schools, or grade levels. Once gathered into the nine groupings and disaggregated

by race and ethnic group, it did not contain other demographic factors. The findings conclude that Black students are 3.35 times more likely to experience school discipline than White students when measuring risk ratios. Latino and Native American students were 1.50 and 2.24 more possible (Nguyen et al., 2019).

Smolkowski et al. (2016) discusses the intractable racial disparities in school discipline and how emerging theories of implicit bias show promise in identifying interventions to help mitigate disproportionality. The Vulnerable Decision Points (VDPs) model was used as a base for research. The study examined how teachers' decisions to issue an office discipline referral (ODR) were subject to implicit bias. Such bias is believed to increase the odds of subjective office discipline referrals compared to objective office discipline referrals for Black students. The population used in the study was that of a national database. It included 483,686 office discipline referrals issued to 235,542 students by 53,030 educators. These variables were extracted from 1,666 schools across 45 states in the United States. When disaggregating the data, an expert panel considered each behavior type objective or subjective. Anything not classified as subjective or objective was removed from the analysis. The results of the study were positive in that overall, African-American students were more prone to receiving referrals that were subjective as compared to their white peers. The recommendation was that the study be repeated with middle and high school samples to evaluate the reliability of the vulnerable decision Points across settings (Smolkowski et al., 2016).

Girvan et al. (2016) explored how to improve our understanding of where to target interventions to mitigate disproportionality in discipline data. The study examined the degree to which school discipline is disproportionately amongst Black and White students,

attributable to racial disparities in teachers' discretionary and nondiscretionary decisions. Data used in the study was derived from discipline referrals for 1,154,686 students from 1,824 schools nationwide. The investigation compared the relative contributions of disproportionality in discipline referrals for subjectively and objectively defined behaviors to overall disproportionality governing applicable school characteristics. The concluding analysis was vastly consistent with the forecast the Vulnerable Decision Points model provided. Considerably, more of the variance in the student-level disproportionality is attributable to racial disparities in subjective discipline referrals than compared to racial inequality in objective discipline referrals (Girvan et al., 2016).

Whitford (2016) studied school populations affected by discriminatory discipline and how indicators surrounding prevention and intervention efforts decrease the disproportionality. Moreover, the rise of zero-tolerance policies has negatively impacted the rates of disproportionality by increasing the gap between various student groups. The study performed a thematic analysis of national discriminatory data of gender, race/ethnicity, social-economic status, and special education status. Emerging fields in the study were lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, American Indian students, and Latino students. The study concluded that to genuinely narrow the gap in disproportionate discipline for males, LGBTQ students, and students of color. Economically disadvantaged and special education students must see increased prevention and intervention efforts at the administrative level. These efforts must address personal bias in personnel, recruitment of teachers, early childhood behaviors, academic preparation for school, policy, and administrative practices. Finally, the study notes adherence to federal guidance and policy implementation of a multi-tiered system of support. Lastly, culturally relevant and

empathetic will stimulate professional development (Whitford et al., 2016).

Interventions and Programs

McIntosh (2018) explored the protocol for schools to investigate the effect of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) implementation on disciplinary equity in an urban K-8 school in the northwest. This research investigation included 475 students, 55% White, 20% African American, and 12% Latino. The results indicated disciplinary inequity within the school. Furthermore, physical aggression on the playground was most closely associated with the number of Vulnerable Decision Points (VDP). African American students had a ratio risk of 4.5 for office discipline referrals (ODR), whereas other students had an ODR ratio risk of 2.67. Upon further examination, the study determined that most VDPs occurred during recess basketball games where African American students played a more physical “streetball” game. White students played basketball with less physical contact, like the rules of the NBA. The research team concluded that physical basketball games among students made it difficult to curb physical aggression, and implemented National Basketball Association (NBA) rules for students on the basketball court. When evaluating this implementation, the overall risk for African-American students dropped from 2.67 to 2.0 and .2 over three years (McIntosh et al., 2018).

Stalker’s (2017) study focused on reducing school discipline disproportionality and challenges faced by school social workers. While a complex issue, Stalker explores offering an alternative to standard discipline measures as a Teen Court to the traditional discipline model. In its traditional form, the Teen Court platform represents a juvenile justice diversion program focused on nonchronic juvenile offenders. The interworking of each model varies based on the geographical location and state and local laws on minor offenses. However,

rather than being processed by way of the traditional juvenile justice system, the teen court allows students to be judged by a jury of their peers. The study concludes by revealing a reduction in disproportionality in discipline sanctions. Restorative Justice is used in Teen Court and is considered a proven alternative to suspensions and expulsions (Stalker, 2017).

Gregory (2016) explored the concept of restorative justice as a method to reform the student-teacher relationship and to achieve equity in school discipline. The study surveys students in two high schools on the East Coast during their first year of implementing restorative practices. The theory surrounding restorative practices reveals that teachers who implement Restorative Practices have more positive relationships with their students. Teacher perception of restorative practices is much higher, and as a result, there are fewer exclusionary discipline referrals issued. The results of this study found that higher-implementing teachers issued fewer referrals to high-indicating subgroups as compared to low-implementing teachers. Finally, the findings within the study also have shown links to equity-focused conferencing in school concerning disciplinary actions (Gregory et al., 2016).

Policy

Curran (2019) compares specific zero-tolerance policies and mandatory expulsion policies across federal and state law and district policies. The study examines four research questions: (a) How do federal laws, state laws, and school district policy documents codify zero-tolerance school discipline? (b) How does the popular media portray school zero-tolerance discipline? (c) To what extent do the legal and school district codifications of zero tolerance discipline align with each other and with popular media conceptions of zero tolerance discipline? (d) Do school district zero-tolerance policies vary by district characteristics such as racial composition, socioeconomic composition, charter status, and

urbanicity? This study uses a traditional view that blends the top-down and bottom-up perspectives while highlighting the complex nature of policy application. The results reveal several findings: (a) There are far fewer federal policies than state policies at the state and district levels. (b) lower levels of governance tend to apply federal and state policies to a broader range of offenses than higher levels of governance. (c) The use of state policies varies systematically across certain district's characteristics. Districts serving high minority populations tend to utilize state policies for various offenses. (d) The data indicates that state and federal policies, to a lesser extent, tend to rarely apply to minor offenses despite being commonly framed as in the media. Furthermore, the study validates the significant differences in the commonness of federal and state policies across levels of governance, school characteristics, and media portrayals (Curran, 2019).

Interventions to Mitigate Disproportionate Discipline

Knoster and Drogan (2016) authored a text to serve as a resource for implementing Positive Behavior Support for classroom educators. It focuses on assisting school centers with implementing Tier 2 Positive Behavior Support. The strategies support school centers with or without an existing PBIS system. The authors open with a discussion with readers by asking what teachers should do when universal Tier 1 behavior supports don't sufficiently meet the needs of all children (Knoster & Drogan, 2016). Selecting a targeted intervention might appear difficult when one has not acquired the antecedent of the behavior. However, a safe, positive learning environment is needed to foster learning for all students in a classroom. The authors walk educators through the concepts of targeted intervention and support and detail their advantages to unique groups of students who struggle with behavior through scenario-based case studies. Should the school center not have an incorporated PBIS

system, the authors provide tools and methods to infuse PBIS at the classroom and school center level. They walk educators through organizing, collecting, and analyzing behavior for progress monitoring and needing more intensive support. They detail the importance of action planning and how to adjust targeted supports. Lastly, the book provides an overview of the relationship and difference between Tier 2 and Tier 3 targeted supports and how they are interconnected to the support plan and functional behavioral assessment results (Knoster & Drogan, 2016).

Sprick and Knight (2018) published an article that reviews classroom educators' role in the schoolwide behavior management system and strategy. They discuss shared decision-making and how it is normal for classroom educators to have this opportunity regarding curriculum and instruction. However, it is less common when it comes to behavior and discipline policies. Roughly 35% percent of teachers in either high or low-poverty schools have had the opportunity to have shared decision-making in discipline procedures (Ingersoll et al., 2017). Research has revealed that schools with shared decision-making regarding behavior issues have a higher retention rate (Riggs, 2013). Educators at these centers feel like their opinions matter when administrators determine an appropriate response to discipline infractions. While the shared decision process is known to most administrators, the issue considered is that the process can be very time-consuming. At the same time, practices that impact the entire school should be vetted and approved by all for schoolwide consistently. In contrast, researchers have found that most administrators unilaterally define, vet, and implement developed plans for school staff, resulting in inconsistent implementation. This approach may often lead to administrators pressuring educators and, in turn, creating a more resistant and destructive cycle (Sprick & Knight, 2018).

Meidl and Vanorsdale (2018) conducted a case study utilizing a sample of twenty-five educators who implemented CHAMPS in their classrooms. CHAMPS is a system of behavior expectations applied to all classroom and schoolwide token economies. CHAMPS is a research-based system developed by Randy Sprick using more than thirty years of behavior research. CHAMPS stands for: Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, Participation, and Success. Research has revealed that implementing CHAMPS reduces classroom misbehavior and office discipline referrals, enhances school climate, heightens on-task student behavior, and produces civil and Courteous relationships. The participants were twenty-five from K-8 classrooms who utilized the CHAMPS framework in their classroom. The selected educators ranged from two to thirty-five years of experience in education. There were six male and nineteen female educators, of which the majority were considered White middle-class, with all content areas represented. Collected data consisted of peer and administrator observations and self-reflection rating forms. The qualitative study produced three themes: (a) types of targeted behavior, (b) teaching and learning design impact, (c) Language of behavior, (d) impact of time, and (e) perceptions of improvement. These themes proposed that though the CHAMPS implementation was successfully, additional teacher training was required to ensure the efficacy of implementation (Meidl & Vanorsdale 2018).

Gonzalez et al. (2019) led a case study that examined school-based Restorative Justice practices. Most studies tend to explore the initial phase of Restorative Justice implementation; this study sought to fill the gap with a multi-year case study covering the complete implementation of Restorative Justice. Research has shown that schoolwide implementation of Restorative Justice has proven most effective for increasing student outcomes. The schoolwide framework delves into new aims that set practice and theory into

the academic curriculum. The study takes place in a small urban school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The school currently has two hundred enrolled students, of which 54% are Black, 19% White, 17% Latino, 4% Asian, 3% Native-American, .5% Pacific Islanders, and 2.5% multi-racial. 40% are Male, and 60% are female students. The study used implementation data from 2011 through 2018. The study results prove to be effective in the alignment of curriculum, pedagogical practices, and restorative approaches. The results further concluded that the three facets are not mutually exclusive. Still, they have significant outcomes throughout the school campus: enhanced relationships, social and emotional learning, professional development, and leadership (Gonzalez et al.).

Current Discipline Data by Race

National Data. In 2019, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) published The Indicator 15. This report examines racial/ethnic differences in the percentages of students retained in a grade, received one or more out-of-school suspensions, and were expelled by race and ethnicity (NCES, 2019). Such exclusionary data is closely tied to the damaging outcomes of retention, school drop, and the school-to-prison pipeline. While retention cause can be a determinant of both academic and behavior, when considered for behavior, students have missed a significant amount of instructional time, which has the student academically insufficient to meet grade-level standards. Between 2000 and 2016, the retention percentage decreased by 1.6 percent across K-12 White, Black, and Hispanic students. However, Black and Hispanic students maintained a higher retention rate than White students (NCES, 2019).

U.S. News (2019) investigated the Trump administration's attempts to dismantle regulations that protect students of color from discrimination. Data from the U.S. Department

of Education's Office of Civil Rights reveals that Black students with a disability are more often disciplined, propelling them into the school-to-prison pipeline. The report further details that students of color do not acquire more infractions than white students.

Nevertheless, they are disciplined at a significantly higher rate than their white peers, and Black students with disabilities are double the for receiving exclusionary discipline. In the 2015/2016 school year, more than 2.7 million students received at least one out-of-school suspension in the United States. Of the 2.7 million, Black students with disabilities represented 32%. Additionally, 40% of the 2.7 million Black students with disabilities were suspended repetitively. These statistics further emphasize that students of color experience exclusionary discipline at a considerably higher rate than their White peers (Camera, 2019).

U.S. News (2020) produced a report on the new findings from the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the University of California, Los Angeles, that unveiled critical disparities of Black and Hispanic students who have lost instructional time due to out-of-school suspensions. Within the 2015/2016 school year, students missed approximately eleven million school days due to out-of-school suspensions. When examined by subgroups, Black and Hispanic students led the number of missed days. Thus, data noted an alarming systemic issue with school discipline in America. The secondary student population appeared to be five times higher than elementary students. When calculated per 100 students, secondary students averaged 37 days lost compared to elementary students, who had seven days per 100. By subgroups, Black students missed 103 days per 100, while White students missed 21 days per 100. When examining learning loss, Black males averaged 132 days per 100, while Black females averaged 77 days per 100. This report is the first to provide data on the full effect of lost instructional time due to out-of-school suspensions. At a time when COVID-19

has hindered a substantial number of students from attending, the need for reform is critical. However, Secretary Betsy DeVos rescinded several policies enacted by the Obama administration to inhibit disproportionate discipline of Black and Hispanic students and students with disabilities. This action further aids in widening the discipline gap for students with disabilities and Hispanic and Black students (Camera, 2020).

In June 2021, the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights published a report of the 2017-18 pre-k through 12th grade exclusionary school data and conducted a comparison of the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 school years. Data includes all 50 states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, public schools, charter schools, alternative education settings, special education centers, and juvenile justice schools. The report serves the purpose of monitoring progress in schools meeting the requirement of providing equal educational opportunities to all students. The comparison revealed a two percent decrease in exclusionary discipline practices in U.S. public schools. Still, there was a 5% increase in school-related arrests, a 7% increase in expulsion with services, and a 12% increase in referrals to Law Enforcement. The report further explained that, when comparing expulsions by sex and race, male students represented 72.5 of all expulsions%. Additionally, Black students, who equaled 15.1% of the enrolled population, represented 38.8% of expulsions with services and 33.3% without services.

Figure 2

Suspension Percentages of Males and Females by Racial Subgroups (2017-2018)

Race/Ethnicity	Boys			Girls		
	Enrollment	One or More Out-of-School Suspensions	Expulsions	Enrollment	One or More Out-of-School Suspensions	Expulsions
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.6%	1.6%	0.3%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%
Asian	2.3%	0.4%	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino	15.5%	9.5%	16.3%	13.8%	1.5%	1.3%
Black	9.6%	34.2%	30.4%	8.6%	9.1%	7.8%
White	23.8%	32.1%	33.0%	19.2%	4.9%	4.6%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Two or More Races	2.2%	5.2%	4.6%	1.9%	1.3%	1.3%
TOTAL	54.1%	83.0%	85.0%	45.9%	17.0%	15.0%

Source: U.S. Education Department, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2017-18 State and National Estimations, released June 2021, available at <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/estimations/2017-2018>

For the 2017-18 school, there were a total of 11,205,797 days of missed instruction due to out-of-school suspension (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2021).

State Data. In October 2018, ProPublica published statewide data that revealed disparity data that was 2.5 percent or higher. The publication noted that Black and Hispanic students were less likely to be placed into Advanced Placement (AP) courses than their White peers. Black and Hispanic students, on average, are suspended and expelled more than their White peers. The composition of AP courses in 2018 was 13% Black, 30% Hispanic, 48% White, 6% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 3% Multiracial. The gifted and accelerated course composition reflected 10% Black, 28% Hispanic, 51% White, 7% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 4% Multiracial. Out-of-school suspension data reflected 42% Black, 22% Hispanic, 30% White, 1% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 5% Multiracial. Expulsion data reflected 39% Black, 16% Hispanic, 40% White, 1% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1% Native American, 4% Multiracial. Within the state, in 2018, one hundred and sixty thousand students were

suspended. This represented 6% of all students in the state. One hundred and ninety-five students served days in in-school suspension. This total ranked in the highest 10% in the country. Expulsion totals represented 1% percent of all students in the state. This total was in the lowest 10% in the country. Lastly, one thousand seven hundred and eight students received corporal punishment. This represented 1% of the total student population (Groeger et al., 2018).

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (n.d.) database reported that the state had 95,066 students, with and without disabilities, who received one day of out-of-school suspension. Of those 95,066 students, 0.3% were American Indian, 0.7% Asian, 23.5% Hispanic, 39.3% Black, 32.0% White, and 0.1% Pacific Islander. Additionally, 149,407 students with and without disabilities received more than one day of out-of-school suspension. Of those 149,407 students, 0.0% were American Indian, 0.6% Asian, 22.1% Hispanic, 41.9% Black, 30.8% White, and 0.1% Pacific Islander. Lastly, the report detailed that 5,916 students, with and without disabilities, received an expulsion without educational services. Of those 5,916 students, 0.2 were American Indian, 0.6 Asian, 22.8% Hispanic, 40.8% Black, 31.1% White, and 0.2% Pacific Islander (Office of Civil Rights, n.d.).

Local Data. In 2018, ProPublica reported that Black students are 4.2 times more likely and Hispanics are 1.4 times more likely to be suspended as opposed to their White peers. Also, Black students represent 56% of all students, Hispanic students represent 22%, and White students represent 16% of suspensions in the local district. When examining expulsions, Black students totaled 52%, Hispanic students totaled 38%, and White students totaled 10%. Lastly, the report noted that 6% of the total student population received at least one out-of-school suspension. Four percent of the student population served at least one day of in-school

suspension, and 1% of the total student body was expelled with or without educational services. One hundred and sixty-six days were missed to out-of-school suspension per school (Groeger et al., 2018).

As reported by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (n.d.) data collection, the local district for the 2017-18 school year, the demographic breakdown for students receiving in-school suspension was 0.6% Native American, 1.0% Asian, 48.6% Black, 27.1% Hispanic, 0.1% Pacific Islander, and 20.4% White. Student students who received out-of-school suspension were 0.7% American Indian, 0.8% Asian, 53.6% Black, 24.0% Hispanic, 0.1% Pacific Islander, and 18.4% White. Lastly, students who received expulsions represented 77.8% Black, 11.1% Hispanic, and 11% Multiracial (Office of Civil Rights, n.d.).

Critical Race Theory

Delgado et al. (2017) published the third edition text that captured the two economic recessions, the eruption of terrorism, and the uptick of hate crimes towards Middle Easterners, Hispanics, and newcomers since the first edition was published in 2001. Additionally, it captured the promising events that transpired, such as the two-term election of America's first Black president, comprehensive healthcare reform, and the advancement of LGBT rights. Delgado et al. define the Critical Race Theory (CRT) movement as the compilation of advocates and intellectuals researching and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power (Delgado et al., 2017). While the movement highlights similar issues, it also connects them to more significant problems such as settings, history, economics, emotions, group and self-interest, and the unconscious. CRT focuses on understanding the foundational concerns with the liberal order, including legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, equality theory, and neutral principles of constitutional law.

Delgado et al. break CRT into several tenets. The first tenet details that racism is ordinary, not aberrational, but a consistent daily experience for people of color in America.

Additionally, related to psychic and material dominant groups in America, the majority would affirm the existence of a white-over-color superiority. The second tenet, called interest convergence, deals with white interest's psychic and material advances. The third tenet discusses how race is a manufactured social construct designed for partial benefit and can be retired when convenient for the benefiting race. The final tenet talks about how the voice of color holds significant precedence due to the distinction between legacies and encounters with oppression. Intellectuals of the affected community can communicate with the White population in ways that they are unlikely to know - a presumed competence to discuss racism and race (Delgado et al., 2017).

Dutil (2020) notes that many states and districts implement trauma-informed practices (TIPS). Research shows that Hispanic Black and Hispanic youths are more likely to experience trauma than non-Hispanic White youths. The *School-to-Prison Pipeline* is a system used to define pathways for some youth (Dutil, 2020). This system causes more harm than good and to dismantle the pipeline, there needs to be an awareness of disparities. Researchers have found that discipline was a primary indicator of academic problems for Black students. The United States' high incarceration rate is not due to violent crime! Systematic racism is the driving force for people of color. Due to its zero-tolerance policies, the school system is a part of the issue due to its zero-tolerance policies. Blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities are suspended significantly higher than White students. The School-to-Prison Pipeline is a tool of White supremacy (Dutil, 2020). The function of the pipeline hurts underserved students tremendously, primarily by rendering experiences higher rates of

trauma. Critical Race Theory (CRT) demands there be a change, and that change begins with dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline and trying to understand the trauma of non-White students (Dutil, 2020).

This article from the UCLA Law Review, authored by David Simson (2014), discusses punitive and detrimental school discipline procedures for minority students. Simon notes that these procedures are interconnected to broader social issues: the school-to-prison pipeline, school dropout rates, criminalization of schools, and the push-out trend. Furthermore, Simson argues that the foundation of these practices is derived from a deep-rooted racial prejudice history in America. While in research for the change agent to alter such pervasive racial inequality, it must be noted that change should not be expected from the efforts of our judicial system. Instead, the change must be constructed through alternative means and tactics to diminish and inverse the impact of said discipline practices and the impositions they place on minority students. Restorative Justice practices that incorporate school discipline are a promising way to curve the noted injustices in school discipline data. The principles embedded within Restorative Justice are in alignment with Critical Race Theory. They deem it more favorable to develop a more nurturing, safe, and inclusive school climate that retains students in school and disrupts the oppressive systems of racial conflict and inequality plaguing our society and education systems. Discipline decision-making in elementary and secondary schools has and continues to have adverse and disproportionate outcomes for minority students. This leads to an increased school-to-prison, school dropout, and push-out rates. Restorative Justice deserves a fighting chance to counteract the punitive policies (UCLA Law Review, 2014).

Subini Annamma et al. (2019) conducted a mixed-methods empirical study to

examine Black girls' exclusionary discipline results. The conceptual framework applied was Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Feminism. The initial part of the study reviewed discipline data from large urban school districts to indicate the ratio of differences in racial groups related to office discipline referrals. More concisely, they look to identify incident codes (reasons) and disparities in out-of-school suspensions, law enforcement referrals, and expulsions. The analysis of the acquired multivariate data revealed that 52% of all Black students referred to the office were suspended from school. 42% of Latinas sent to the office were given an out-of-school suspension. Additionally, Black girls had a .9% higher likelihood of being expelled. This article seeks to bring justice to Black girls overrepresented in school discipline data by spotlighting them, deemed a marginalized population, often overlooked and left out of conversations of inequities in school discipline and urban education (Annamma et al., 2019).

James (2019) looks into middle school male students residing in the suburbs of Toronto, Canada. In this study, James applies Critical Race Theory and Positioning Theory to understand the educational experiences of his control group of middle school male students. Most studies focus on the experiences of high school males, how they are overrepresented in exclusionary data and athletics, and the lack of representation in advanced level courses. James sought to understand this complexity from the middle school level to identify any blockades in Canadian society. This study revealed that nine students and teachers positioned students to be academically successful. Some students noted that they felt as if their teachers had constructs of them being underperformers, athletes, and troublemakers. The others believed their teachers viewed them as “regular students” and supported their extracurricular activities. The interesting part of the study was how it described how these students read their

teacher's perception of them and how said perceptions informed their positioning response. Lastly, James noted that the study also revealed the importance of supporting Black students in culturally relevant ways as they transition from middle to high school. This support will aid them in being more successful in meeting the challenges of academic, social, and pedagogical constructs (James, 2019).

Johnson-Ahorlu (2017) published an article discussing the use of social justice lenses or social science research to dismantle racism in education. The use of critical race theory brings about an awareness of many functions of racism. In this article, Johnson-Ahorlu explores the combined efforts of activists and critical race theory and its potency to identify social injustice. The publication outlines the tenets of critical race theory in education and its placement as the foundation in displaying how each tent shapes research design and informs decisions in social movement strategy. Personal experiences inspired this approach, and scholars desire it to serve as a stimulus for advanced discourse surrounding critical race theory and social science research in education (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2017).

Wigginton and Middleton (2019) published this book that examined how curriculum representations of Dominican identity navigate black identity and its correlation to Haiti and the culturally entrenched judgmental image of Haitians in Dominican society. These two authors claim that aside from several attempts at the inclusion of skin color, the lessening of "black denial" is very narrow. Notably, the means of how blackness continues to be meaningfully related to the otherness of Haitian racial identity. The overarching theme of the text is focused on reconstructing and unburying African history, in addition to using Critical Race Theory as the conceptual framework. The authors also apply anthropology, education, and history. The book unveils Dominican elites' historical judicial and political ploys

through these frameworks. Additionally, they present the progression of black-inclusive Dominican identity (Wigginton & Middleton, 2019).

Shameka and Bahiyyah (2018) discuss children's mental state exposed to juvenile justice and law enforcement. The study notes that in the 2011/ 2012 school year, close to two hundred and sixty thousand students were introduced. Law enforcement apprehended roughly about ninety-two thousand on a school campus out of the same number. As such, research has revealed that students between the ages of fifteen and twenty who were previously apprehended and retained for some time have a significantly higher recidivism rate than students who did not get arrested. Statistics have revealed that 76% of youth under twenty-five, previously apprehended, were rearrested within three years.

Moreover, 80% of Black students were rearrested within five years. Such percentages of recidivating Black students indicate an extreme inequality surrounding youth incarceration based on racial groups. Today, Black citizens make up 13% of the American population. However, they make up 40% of the young adult inmate population. Such experiences are considered Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE). Furthermore, the disproportionate currency was shown to be more constant with the addition of school resource officers.

Joseph et al. (2020) propose that discipline of interventions would be more effective if they were trauma-informed and race-centered. The Researchers note that Black and Brown students are exposed to inequitable discipline practices due to the forms of trauma experienced. When school centers implement racial equity into the student code of conduct and mental health practices, disproportionality is reduced significantly. When administrators, school psychologists, and school counselors work cohesively using culturally responsive and trauma-informed techniques, the disproportion rate in discipline outcomes decreases

substantially.

Shockley and Lomotey (2020) reimagine education and society on the African continent before the incarcerated and transported of Africans to colonies. Before the period of slavery, there were well-established formal and informal instructions throughout the continent. Fast-forwarding to when it was permissible to educate blacks in America, the system's failure has become obstinate, pervasive, and disproportionate. Educational enterprise in America has experienced significant minimal change in meeting the cultural, academic, and social needs of Black children. The compilation of chapters in this text seeks to provide researchers with information and skills surrounding the means of African-centered educationists, known for successful efforts with Black students. Clarifying achievement and academic success is a cultural concept because Black students' achievement can not be singled out or measured by standardized tests. As such, the book details diverse methods for practitioners in education.

Summary

Today much is known about disproportionality in school discipline. Research dating back to the 1970s has provided tremendous evidence and connections to describe and validate the negative impact of disproportionality on students. However, fifty years later, the gap is steadily increasing, with little to no gap reduction and leaving most students with severe effects such as reduced academic proficiency, a higher risk of grade retention, and an amplified risk of dropping out.

This study sought to examine this issue from a macro viewpoint as opposed to the traditional micro viewpoint to identify solutions to mitigate the systemic problem from a federal and state level, ultimately filtering down the local district level and school centers.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Purpose

In the 1970s, the Children's Defense Fund uncovered the overrepresentation of various subgroups in school suspension data (Gregory et al., 2010). The national discourse on racial disparity tends to focus on academic outcomes. However, the discipline gap in school districts throughout the United States still reveals that Black, Latino, and American Indian students are more likely to experience inequality and a disproportionate rate of school disciplinary consequences (Nguyen et al., 2019).

Nationwide, students in Black, Latino, and American Indian subgroups were suspended and expelled from school at double the rates of other students (Whitford, 2017). To most, equity in school discipline data is a conversation to avoid because the evidence shows how schools apply consequences unequally to specified student subgroups. Consequences where students miss instructional time decrease their chance to learn and engage in the classroom. Investigations have connected exclusionary actions with reduced academic proficiency, a higher risk of grade retention, and an amplified dropout risk (Barbadoro, 2017).

This long-standing challenge of achieving equity in school discipline gradually increases with minimal gap reduction (McIntosh et al., 2018). The purpose of this sequential phase explanatory mixed methods study (Creswell, 2018) was to explain to what extent the Corrective Behavior Intervention form affects disproportionality in school discipline of urban schools in a large urban school district in the Southeastern United States that has been identified by NAACP, Southern Poverty Law, and Legal Aid Society as in need of proportionate discipline improvement. The Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form was implemented district-wide in this large urban school district in 2015 and is currently supposed to be used by all schools in the district, kindergarten through 12th grade. This Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form was implemented to mitigate the disproportionate office discipline referrals, in-school suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions in the large urban school district. The researcher seeks to determine the effectiveness of the Corrective Behavior Intervention form. Currently, disproportionality in school discipline nationwide represents inequitable schooling as one of the most significant difficulties (NCES, 2019).

Philosophical perspectives.

The researcher incorporates the transformative worldview into this research (Creswell, 2018). The use of the transformative worldview lens was incorporated because of the longstanding history of disproportionality that dates back to the 1970s Child's Defense Fund research (Bottiani et al., 2018). For decades, the Black and Hispanic populations have, for decades, been disciplined more significantly than their White peers.

The researcher has an extensive background in implementing and supporting schools in terms of school climate. The researcher has served as a PBIS internal coach, external

coach, and district coordinator for Positive Behavior Support and Social Emotional Learning. As such, the researcher will examine this problem of practice from a transformative (Creswell, 2007) worldview lens operating from a Critical Race Theory interpretive community (Creswell, 2007) to allow the data and responses of participants to guide his research.

Research Question:

RQ1: Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals before and after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development?

Ho1: There is a significant decrease in the number of office discipline referrals after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development.

RQ2: Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals of Black elementary students before and after the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development?

Ho2: There is a significant decrease in the number of office discipline referrals of Black elementary students after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development.

RQ3: Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals of Black secondary students before and after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development?

Ho3: There is a significant decrease in the number of office discipline referrals of Black secondary students after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development.

RQ4: What are the perceptions of the large urban school district staff of phase 1

quantitative analysis?

Description of Population and/or Sample

The identified population is that of a large urban school district in the Southeast United States, with a total population of 169,250 students who attend one of the 179 district-operated schools. Over fifty percent of schools have an ‘A’ or ‘B’ rating. Table 1 displays the most current demographics for the school district. However, the data in Table 1 indicates all public district-operated and supported charter schools.

Table 1

2020-2021 Student Demographics

Student Demographics	Percentage
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.7%
Asian	3.1%
Black/African American	27.9%
Hispanic	36.4%
Multiracial	2.8%
<hr/>	
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.1%
White	28.9%
Economically Disadvantaged	64.7%
English Language Learners	14.3%
Students with Disabilities	15.9%
Male	51.2%
Female	48.8%
Total Enrollment	188,832

Adapted from Florida Department of Education, *District Report Card, 2019-2020*.

Each district reports its instructional staff demographics each year, which include supported charter schools. Currently, the selected school district has 12,617 classroom teachers. Table 2 displays the current faculty demographics for the district schools.

Table 2

2020-2021 Instructional Staff Demographics for the District

Instructional Staff Demographics	Total	Percentage
American Indian/Alaskan Native	17	0.13%
Asian	206	1.63%
Black/African American	2,373	18.81%
Hispanic	1,974	15.65%
Multiracial	160	1.27%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	5	0.04%
White	7,882	62.47%
Male	2,659	21.07%
Female	9,958	78.93%
Total	12,617	100%

Adopted from Florida Department of Education, *Staff in Florida's Public Schools District Reports 2020-2021*.

The sample will consist of two archival discipline data sets: elementary and secondary. The data sets will only consist of pre- (years 2013-2014) and post- (years 2018-2019) implementation data from district-operated schools. Intended focus groups will include teachers and administrators from the selected school district. Participants will be grouped by

position and level, elementary or secondary.

Research Design - Rationale for Design.

The researcher sought to determine how the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form affected disproportionality in school discipline. The researcher's design was a mixed-method explanatory, two-phase sequential action research study involving collecting and leading with quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that require theoretical frameworks (Creswell, 2018). The rationale for choosing the mixed-method explanatory design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) is to thoroughly answer the overarching research questions that seek to explain if the corrective Behavior Intervention Form meets its intended outcomes and then ask the professionals who use it why outcomes are so. This design is uniquely suited to answer these questions.

The initial phase of the investigation consisted of the quantitative statistical analysis of pre- and post-Corrective Behavior Intervention Report Form archival data to identify any differences between the pre-implementation and post-implementation of the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report Form. These data were paired through a sample t-test. Phase two consisted of the qualitative part of the study. Based on the paired sample T-test results, four focus groups, elementary and secondary, teacher and administrators, were asked semi-structured, open-ended questions. Responses were transcribed and analyzed using the SPSS statistical software program.

The population consisted of participants from a large urban school district in the southeast United States with PBIS programs in place throughout the district. Additionally, the sample included teachers and administrators in this urban public school district.

Data Collection

The initial step of this process was to compare and analyze archival discipline data before and after the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form was instituted in 2015. Based on interpreted data, semi-structured interview questions were developed and asked of participants of the four focus groups: elementary and secondary teachers and elementary and secondary administrators. The final phase analyzed focus group responses, identifies themes, and triangulates results.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Phase 1

After the requested (Appendix A) data set was acquired from the school district, the quantitative data analysis began on the archival data set. As described in the above section, the scholar took pre-PBIS implementation and post-PBIS implementation archival PBIS Corrective Behavior Intervention form data sets and combine them to create one dataset using SPSS to generate aggregated reports. The pre and post PBIS corrective Behavior Intervention discipline will be analyzed for statistical significance differences at the $p < .05$ level. SPSS 28.0 were used to examine differences. First, the sample set were analyzed to determine if there was an even distribution. If it is determined that each set (pre and post PD / intervention training) is not evenly distributed, then a random selection process will be implemented. Then, a paired-sample *t-Test* was run. Specific pre/post variable points included:

- Overall discipline infractions or coding of the incident by code, level, race, by SWD, by FRL, By elementary and secondary level.
- Overall detentions by race, by SWD, by FRL, By elementary and secondary level.

- Overall, first in-school suspensions by race, by SWD, by FRL, By elementary and secondary level
- Overall first out-of-school suspensions by race, by SWD, by FRL, By elementary and secondary level
- Overall expulsions by race, by SWD, by FRL, By elementary and secondary level.

Qualitative Phase 2

Open-ended questions were derived from the phase 1 quantitative results. Four homogenous taped remote focus groups of elementary teachers, elementary administrators, secondary teachers, and secondary administrators were solicited through flyers and email requests (Appendix B). Two recording devices were used once a focus group meeting was arranged. Recordings were downloaded into NVivo and were used to convert open-ended questions into transcriptions. Then the researcher organized them into codes to generate three to five themes. Both the archival quantitative data results and the qualitative themes were triangulated to make meaning of the entire data collection to inform future practice.

Procedures

Table 3

Data Collection and Analysis Timeline

<i>Phase/Schedule</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Product</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Quantitative Data Collection</i>	<i>Elementary and Secondary district-wide data sets</i>	<i>Archival Data</i>	<i>6/2022</i>
<i>Quantitative Data Analysis</i>	<i>Pre and Post intervention data sets Sample t-Test</i>	<i>SPSS analysis output</i>	<i>7/2022</i>
<i>Formulate Qualitative Questions</i>	<i>Focus group protocols and interview questions</i>	<i>Protocol and confirmed number of participants</i>	<i>7/2022</i>

<i>Phase/Schedule</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Product</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Focus Groups (4)</i>	<i>Solicitation and informed consent</i>	<i>Informed Consent, transcriptions</i>	<i>8/2022</i>
<i>Qualitative Data Analysis</i>	<i>Transcribe, proof, and Data Collection</i>	<i>themes</i>	<i>9/2022</i>
<i>Data Results</i>	<i>Quantitative and qualitative data integration</i>	<i>Triangulated Results, Discussion, conclusion, and recommendations</i>	<i>9/2022</i>

Limitations and Delimitations

A potential limitation of this study was the truthfulness of focus group answers. Equity or disproportionality is a complicated conversation with individuals, especially people of authority. However, our current societal climate has a great push for equity for disadvantaged populations. While some individuals are open to examination and self-reflection, many are clueless and do not utterly understand the pressing issue due to inexperience. Another identified limitation was concerning archival data. If the classroom interventions were not a priority for the individual school and were not enforced, the presented data would be distorted for that school center. Lastly, the researcher currently works in the proposed research area. As such, participants may have chosen to answer questions how they believed the researcher wanted to hear.

This study did not examine school discipline data for charter schools or nonurban school districts. The researcher does have an extensive background in school climate and behavior interventions. More specifically, his background includes support for school district-wide with Positive Behavior Support, Social and Emotional Learning, and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) behavior management and interventions.

Ethical Considerations - Risks & Benefits - How Data will be Secured

Participants faced minimal risk as a result of their participation in the study. However, if participants felt stressed or uncomfortable during any part of the study, they could withdraw without consequence or ramifications to their employment. There were no benefits to participating in the study. However, participants enjoyed knowing they are assisting in the continual improvement process of the district's PBIS and disciplinary practices. A benefit was that the school district, administrators, and teachers may now be able to understand the impact of the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form within its district-operated schools.

Anonymity & Confidentiality

The goal was to have complete anonymity and confidentiality during all aspects of research and thereafter. The discipline and Corrective Behavior Intervention form data received from the school district being studied did not contain any identifiable student, faculty, staff, or school names; it was strictly anonymous. Participation in focus groups is strictly confidential, and there were no identifying information kept or known to the researchers. All obtained responses to questions were de-identified, and pseudonyms were assigned to all participants and schools. Interviews were kept confidential and de-identified after being analyzed. Data and information were stored in a locked cabinet or a computer with password protection for up to two years and will be adequately discarded two years after the study has been completed. Lastly, research records may be reviewed by the departments at Lynn University that were responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

Summary

This chapter depicts the research method, design, and essentials. This two-phase

sequential mixed-method study examined archival data sets of pre and post-implementation data of the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report Form. Based on the data analysis, the trends identified were used to complete the qualitative portion.

The qualitative portion of the study consisted of four focus groups. Two elementary groups, one of the teachers and one of the administrators. The other two were a secondary group, one of the teachers and another of administrators. The participant responses were transcribed and analyzed using the SPSS statistical software program.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Introduction

The researcher intended to investigate if there were differences in office discipline referrals based on pre-2015 and post-2015 archival data sets of implementing of the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form (CBIR). Then, using focus groups, determine the reasons for the pre/post archival data results. The purpose of this sequential phase explanatory mixed methods study was to discover to what extent the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form mitigates the disproportionality in school discipline of urban schools in a large school district in the Southeastern United States and the reasons for those findings. As such, the findings provided in this chapter are responsive to the study's research questions:

- RQ1: Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals before and after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development?
 - Ho1: There is a significant decrease in the number of office discipline referrals after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development.
- RQ2: Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals of Black elementary students before and after the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development?
 - Ho2: There is a significant decrease in the number of office discipline referrals of Black elementary students after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development.
- RQ3: Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals of Black

secondary students before and after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development?

- Ho3: There is a significant decrease in the number of office discipline referrals of Black secondary students after Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development.
- RQ4: What are the perceptions of the large urban school district staff of phase 1 quantitative analysis?

Phase One Results

Phase one allowed the researcher to analyze data sets using statistical analytic software. The archival pre- and post-data were analyzed for statistical significance differences at the $p < .05$ level. SPSS was used to examine differences. First, the sample sets were analyzed to determine if there was an even distribution. It was determined that each set (pre- and post) is not evenly distributed, so a random selection process will be implemented. Then, an independent sample t-test was run. It should be noted that the t-test compares values against means. Comparably, raw data from each set was compared against each other to determine percentage increases and decreases.

Distribution of Data

The school year 2013-14 and 2018-19 discipline data yielded an uneven distribution sample. The school year 2013-14 reported 64,348 incidents, while the school year 2018-19 reported 46,096 incidents. This was a difference of 18,252 incidents or a 33% percent reduction of reported incidents. To create an even distribution, the researcher used a randomly generated formula through Microsoft Excel that reduced the data set by 18,252, which created a normal distribution of pre- and post-archival data.

Results for Research Question 1

RQ 1: Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals before and after the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development?

H₀₁: There is not a statistically significant difference in the number of office discipline referrals before and after the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development.

The researcher performed the independent sample T-test. The dependent variable is Incident Level. The independent variable is the Year, with the groupings being 2014 and 2019. The statistical significance was measured at $p < .05$. The researcher also performed a Cohen's d to determine the size of the effect.

The 64,312 ($M = 1.63$, $SD = .646$) students from before the implementation of the Corrective Behavior Intervention professional development had a significantly different number of office discipline referrals than the 46,080 ($M = 1.76$, $SD = .637$) students after the implementation, $t(110,391) = 33.122$, $p < 0.001$. We reject the null hypothesis. The size of the effect is $d = .202$, signifying a small effect.

Table 4

Crosstabulation of Total Office Discipline Referrals SY14 and SY19

Count		Incident Level				Total
		1	2	3	4	
Year	2014	29275	30020	4572	445	64312
	2019	16129	25003	4847	101	46080
Total		45404	55023	9419	546	110392

Subsequent research interests led the researcher to investigate the impact of School Level, Race, Disability, Gender, and Free and Reduced Lunch on Office discipline

referrals.

School Level

Elementary students ($n = 22,218$, $M = 1.85$, $SD = .635$) had a significantly different number of office discipline referrals than Secondary students ($n = 88,175$, $M = 1.64$, $SD = .642$), $t(110,391) = 42.159$, $p = 0.00$. The size of the effect is $d = .316$, signifying a small effect.

Race

Black students ($n = 59,058$, $M = 1.71$, $SD = .661$) had a significantly different number of office discipline referrals than White students ($n = 38,497$, $M = 1.64$, $SD = .620$), $t(97,542) = 16.636$, $p < .001$. The size of the effect is $d = .109$, signifying a trivial effect.

Black students ($n = 59,058$, $M = 1.71$, $SD = .661$) had a significantly different number of office discipline referrals than Multiracial students ($n = 4,132$, $M = 1.68$, $SD = .630$), $t(63,188) = 3.257$, $p < .001$. The size of the effect is $d = .052$, signifying a trivial effect.

Table 5

Crosstabulation of Office Discipline Referrals by Race

<i>Race</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Asian	891	.8	.8	.8
	Black	59058	53.5	53.5	54.3
	Multiracial	4132	3.7	3.7	58.0
	Native American	7621	6.9	6.9	65.0
	Pacific Islander	193	.2	.2	65.1
	White	38497	34.9	34.9	100.0
	Total	110392	100.0	100.0	

Disability

Students with Disabilities ($n = 29,050$, $M = 1.73$, $SD = .647$) had a significantly

different number of office discipline referrals than Students without Disabilities ($n = 81,342$, $M = 1.67$, $SD = .644$), $t(110,390) = 15.662$, $p < .001$. The size of the effect is $d = .107$, signifying a trivial effect.

Table 6

Crosstabulation of Office Discipline Referrals by Disability

<i>Disability</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	81342	73.7	73.7	73.7
	Yes	29050	26.3	26.3	100.0
	Total	110392	100.0	100.0	

Gender

Male students ($n = 78,580$, $M = 1.70$, $SD = .639$) had a significantly different number of office discipline referrals than Female students ($n = 31,812$, $M = 1.65$, $SD = .659$), $t(110,930) = 12.610$, $p < .001$. The size of the effect is $d = .084$, signifying a trivial effect.

Table 7

Crosstabulation of Office Discipline Referrals by Gender

<i>Gender</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	78580	71.2	71.2	71.2
	Female	31812	28.8	28.8	100.0
	Total	110392	100.0	100.0	

Free or Reduced Lunch

Students who received free or reduced lunch ($n = 79,993$, $M = 1.72$, $SD = .654$) had a significantly different number of office discipline referrals than students who did not receive

free or reduced lunch ($n = 30,399$, $M = 1.60$, $SD = .615$), $t(110,390) = 27.408$, $p < .001$. The size of the effect is $d = .185$, signifying a trivial effect.

Table 8

Crosstabulation of Office Discipline Referrals by Free and Reduce Lunch

		<i>Free or Reduced Lunch</i>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	30399	27.5	27.5	27.5
	Yes	79993	72.5	72.5	100.0
	Total	110392	100.0	100.0	

Results for Research Question 2

RQ2: Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals of Black Elementary students before and after the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development?

H₀₂: There is not a statistically significant difference in the number of office discipline referrals of Black Elementary students before and after the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development.

The researcher segmented the dataset, using only students who were classified as Black and in Elementary school. They performed the Independent Sample T-test. The dependent variable is Incident Level. The Independent Variable is the Year, with the groupings being 2014 and 2019. The researcher also performed a Cohen’s d to determine the effect size.

The 8,610 ($M = 1.89$, $SD = .657$) Black Elementary students from before the implementation of the Corrective Behavior Intervention professional development had a

significantly different number of office discipline referrals than the 6,091 ($M = 1.84$, $SD = .617$) Black Elementary students after the implementation, $t(14,699) = 4.47$, $p < 0.001$. We reject the null hypothesis. The size of the effect is $d = .074$, signifying a trivial effect.

Table 9

Crosstabulation of Office Discipline Referrals by Elementary Incident Level

<i>Incident Level</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3910	26.6	26.6	26.6
	2	8970	61.0	61.0	87.6
	3	1636	11.1	11.1	98.7
	4	185	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	14701	100.0	100.0	

Subsequent research interests led the researcher to investigate the impact of Disability, Gender, and Free and Reduced Lunch on Office discipline referrals of Black Elementary students.

Disability

Students with Disabilities ($n = 4,288$, $M = 1.90$, $SD = .645$) had a significantly different number of office discipline referrals than Students without disabilities ($n = 10,413$, $M = 1.86$, $SD = .639$), $t(14,699) = 3.635$, $p < .001$. The size of the effect is $d = .066$, signifying a trivial effect.

Table 10

Crosstabulation of Office Discipline Referrals by Elementary Disability

<i>Disability</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	10413	70.8	70.8	70.8
	Yes	4288	29.2	29.2	100.0
	Total	14701	100.0	100.0	

Gender

Male students ($n = 11,285$, $M = 1.88$, $SD = .636$) had a significantly different number of office discipline referrals than Female students ($n = 3,416$, $M = 1.83$, $SD = .656$), $t(14,699) = 4.408$, $p < .001$. The size of the effect is $d = .086$, signifying a trivial effect.

Table 11

Crosstabulation of Office Discipline Referrals by Elementary Gender

<i>Gender</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	11285	76.8	76.8	76.8
	Female	3416	23.2	23.2	100.0
	Total	14701	100.0	100.0	

Free or Reduced Lunch

Students who received free or reduced lunch ($n = 13,605$, $M = 1.87$, $SD = .643$) did not have a significantly different number of office discipline referrals than students who did not receive free or reduced lunch ($n = 1,096$, $M = 1.86$, $SD = .620$), $t(14,699) = .786$, $p = .216 > 0.05$.

Table 12

Crosstabulation of Office Discipline Referrals by Elementary FRL

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	1096	7.5	7.5	7.5
	Yes	13605	92.5	92.5	100.0
	Total	14701	100.0	100.0	

Results for Research Question 3

RQ3: Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals of Black Elementary students before and after the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development?

H₀₂: There is not a statistically significant difference in the number of office discipline referrals of Black Elementary students before and after the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form professional development.

The researcher segmented the dataset, only using students classified as Black and in Secondary school. They performed the Independent Sample T-Test. The dependent variable is Incident Level. The Independent Variable is the Year, with the groupings being 2014 and 2019. The researcher also performed a Cohen's *d* to determine the effect size.

The 26,168 ($M = 1.59, SD = .645$) Black Secondary students from before the implementation of the Corrective Behavior Intervention professional development had a significantly different number of office discipline referrals than the 17,462 ($M = 1.76, SD = .668$) Black Secondary students after the implementation, $t(43,628) = 27.165, p < 0.001$. We reject the null hypothesis. The size of the effect is $d = .265$, signifying a small effect.

Table 13*Crosstabulation of Office Discipline Referrals by Secondary Incident Level*

<i>Incident Level</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	19340	44.3	44.3	44.3
	2	19964	45.8	45.8	90.1
	3	4186	9.6	9.6	99.7
	4	140	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	43630	100.0	100.0	

Subsequent research interests led the researcher to investigate the impact of Disability, Free and Reduced Lunch, and Gender on Office discipline referrals of Black Secondary students.

Disability

Students with Disabilities ($n = 11,476$, $M = 1.70$, $SD = .660$) had a significantly different number of office discipline referrals than Students without disabilities ($n = 32,154$, $M = 1.65$, $SD = .660$), $t(43,628) = 6.493$, $p < .001$. The size of the effect is $d = .075$, signifying a trivial effect.

Table 14*Crosstabulation of Office Discipline Referrals by Secondary Disability*

<i>Disability</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	32154	73.7	73.7	73.7
	Yes	11476	26.3	26.3	100.0
	Total	43630	100.0	100.0	

Gender

Male students ($n = 28,793$, $M = 1.67$, $SD = .650$) had a significantly different number of office discipline referrals than Female students ($n = 14,837$, $M = 1.64$, $SD = .680$), $t(43,628) = 3.688$, $p < .001$. The size of the effect is $d = .036$, signifying a trivial effect.

Table 15

Crosstabulation of Office Discipline Referrals by Secondary Gender

<i>Gender</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	28793	66.0	66.0	66.0
	Female	14837	34.0	34.0	100.0
	Total	43630	100.0	100.0	

Free or Reduced Lunch

Students who received free or reduced lunch ($n = 35,678$, $M = 1.68$, $SD = .665$) had a significantly different number of office discipline referrals than students who did not receive free or reduced lunch ($n = 7,952$, $M = 1.58$, $SD = .630$), $t(43,628) = 12.421$, $p < .001$. The size of the effect is $d = .154$, signifying a trivial effect.

Table 16

Crosstabulation of Office Discipline Referrals by Secondary FRL

<i>Free or Reduced Lunch</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	7952	18.2	18.2	18.2
	Yes	35678	81.8	81.8	100.0
	Total	43630	100.0	100.0	

Phase 2 Results

Phase two semi-structured questions were crafted based on the analysis from phase one. This allowed the instructional and administrative employees from both the elementary and secondary levels to discuss the findings from the phase one statistical analysis and each shared perspective on their district's results and current processes. Crafted open-ended, semi-structured questions are listed below:

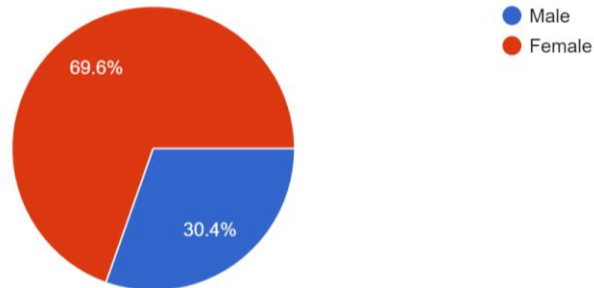
1. How and when do you use and document behavior interventions with students in your classroom?
2. Describe the expectations of your administration or district about using classroom-based behavior intervention forms.
3. From 2014 to 2019, Level 1 and Level 2 offenses have decreased across grade levels. Why do you think this happened?
4. From 2014 to 2019, level 3 offenses increased across the grade levels. Why do you think this has happened?
5. **Elementary:** Black students still make up almost 60% of all ODRs when they make up 27.8% of the total population. Why is this so?
6. **Secondary:** Think back over your tenure as an educator with the school district and describe how discipline practices have changed.
7. What professional development, if any, should be implemented to support the positive trend of the effect of the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form?

Demographics of Focus Groups

There were 23 participants who participated in one of the four focus groups, in which 100% of the participants acknowledged, agreed, and completed the informed consent. When asked to note their gender, 69.6% identified as women and 30.4% as men. Below, Figure 3 illustrates the percentage of male and female focus group participants.

Figure 3

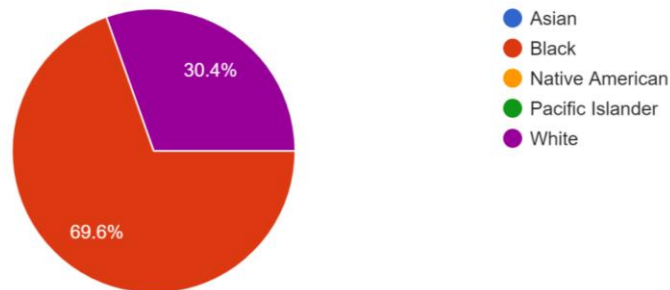
Participants' Gender



Focus group respondents varied in race and ethnicity. 26.1% of participants identified as Hispanic or Latino. 30.4% identified as white, and 69.6% identified as Black. Below, Figure 3 illustrates the percentages by race of focus group participants.

Figure 4

Participants' Race

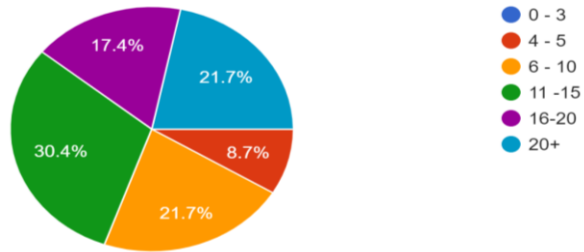


Of the 23 participants, 47.8% were teachers, including certified school counselors, 43.5% were school-based administrators, and 8.7% were district-based administrators. Participants were from both Title I and non-Title I schools, as well as urban and suburban schools within the observed area. Participants were from all subject areas: general education, exceptional student education (ESE), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), advanced/gifted, and vocational education. 52.2% of teachers were at the elementary level, 39.1% were at the secondary level, and 8.7% were district-based, which supported K-12 schools. Years of

experience varied; however, there were no participants with less than four years of experience. Below, Figure 4 illustrates the years of experience of focus group participants.

Figure 5

Participants' Years of Experience



Researcher Focus Group Observations

During each focus group, there were no notable observations. All participants appeared comfortable and answered each question calmly without hesitation.

Results for Research Question 4

The researcher conducted four focus groups, as outlined in the methodology chapter. During the focus groups, participants appeared comfortable and provided thoughtful, authentic responses that resonated from a sincere place. After analyzing and organizing data into codes, four themes were generated from the participant's responses.

Theme 1: Interventions

IQ1: How and when do you use and document behavior interventions with students in your classroom?

IQ2: Describe the expectations of your administration or district about using classroom-based behavior intervention forms.

Participant 1EA:

So even with the discipline, we were asking, teachers to have six solid weeks of data on what the intervention was, what it was used for, and how was it tracked before you

even come and sit in front of the team. I think what that does is it really makes teachers think deliberately about when the times are, what interventions they are going to use, and things like that. In the classroom, I think it is paid some dividends in some areas, and I think it has caused some challenges in others, but overall, I think it is a pretty positive practice.

Participant 5EA:

In using the intervention form in conjunction with a minor versus major form because what I was finding is that before I got to the school, they were not using the CBIR form, and they were just giving out referrals before implementing any sort of interventions. And so, when I implemented the CBIR because I was just using it in secondary, the referrals went down because they realized, wait a minute. I am given a referral for a very low-level minor situation because I am frustrated, versus it really being necessary to have a referral. So, it made the teachers also reflect on and understand that maybe this kid needs a little bit more help than just the writing of a referral because that's not going to change the situation.

Participant 6EA:

Definitely, after you see a student displaying behavior that is not becoming of the classroom or the students, you want to immediately then start implementing those interventions, and that is the when. How should it be implemented? You should look at ABCs. What caused that behavior, what triggered that behavior, and what was the child trying to get from displaying that behavior? Once you have the how and what all those questions answered, then you can start looking at what interventions to put in place based on the antecedent. Then you know what the child was trying to get

from it.

Participant 1SA:

We introduce the intervention form during a breakout session in preschool where our teachers go over, and I interview them all the school PBS expectations, protocols, how we focus on PBS, and how the interventions are implemented on campus. We use a corrective behavior form, so teachers know that those interventions are to be instituted in the classroom where they are utilizing all of their classroom management strategies and interventions prior to coming to administration.

Participant 1SI:

I get the referrals when there is some type of behavior infraction that happens. Usually, as far as the interventions, it is usually documented through either a school based team or something that I have done personally when I've decided to meet with the student as far as intervention. Usually, the documentation is in the form of a conference form either with the parent and the student or just the parent and sometimes includes the assistant principal.

Participant 3SI:

Most of the time, I have a good classroom management system in place. So, the last time that I had to use documentation as an intervention for behavior was an actual altercation that happened in my classroom. Besides that, everything I everything that happens I kind of solve it in-house, so I got to take ownership of my own classroom. If necessary, I will make a call to the parents to document that in my notes, and then if that does not solve the problem, I will follow up with a referral. But I have not reached that step in a very long time.

Participant 2SI:

So, the expectation, and we just went over the expectation at our beginning of the year meetings, is if you use a corrective behavior intervention form. You need to have some kind of intervention documented, meaning, what did you do to respond to the situation? So little Lulu is getting out of her seat, what did you do? Did you give a verbal warning? Did you conference with the student? Did you move the kid's seat because maybe that is why they keep getting up whatever? Then there needs to be a second and then a third intervention. The second intervention is going to be a little bit more escalated. Try to contact parents, and then the third is whatever intervention in the classroom you do, and it also becomes a referral. So, it is like three strikes, and you're out. It is a pattern. As long as you have done that, one, two, and three, and it needs to be based on the same behavior, not necessarily getting out of the seat, but disruption. It needs to be all related to the same type of behavior.

Theme 2: Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

IQ3: From 2014 to 2019, Level 1 and Level 2 offenses have decreased across grade levels. Why do you think this happened?

Participant 3EA:

I think they decrease because we have PBS, the positive behavior support system. I mean, I do not know what happened before 2014. But I mean, I remember Champs back in the day, but I do not really remember like, this is a requirement, and now it is a nonnegotiable to have Positive Behavior Support with all of the training. in addition to the internet and all the different support that is out there, as well as a better understanding of mental health and Social Emotional Learning. All those things

coupled with is going to give educators a better understanding of where the kids are coming from.

Participant 1EA:

I think I agree with you. It is part of the PBIS, and seeing it going from the assistant principal at my school to the principal. But 2014 to 2019 was definitely a period where we were trying to do those teachable moments or catch kids and set them up with mentors. We were trying not to write discipline referrals except as a last resort. We were not suspending kids and stuff like that after multiple out-of-school suspensions because there is no point in that, in my opinion. From 2014 to 2019, I would agree with participant three that all that training that we received was probably instrumental and kind of changing our viewpoint as to what we did prior to that.

Participant 4EA:

I think my mind immediately went to that; yes, I feel like some things have decreased across grade levels, but I'm somewhat on the flip side of this question a little because I've seen somewhat of an increase when it comes to some of the offenses that students have when it comes to discipline. So, I do not know, and maybe I'm zoned into some of the experiences that I had at my school over the last couple of years. Um, I somewhat feel like there has been an increase in maybe some of the harsher things. Maybe I am thinking in terms of mental health. In middle and high school, I have seen a large increase in the use of substance abuse, vaping, and those kinds of things. So, I guess that is what I immediately jumped to when I saw that question. I think maybe that is where my mindset is, but yeah. I think yeah, we are doing a lot of the SEL and PBIS or School-wide Positive Behavior.

Participant 2SA:

Just zeroing in on those tier I systems and making sure that they are in place. When Participant 4 stated that right at the beginning of the year, they placed a really strong focus on PBS, it is setting the expectations for every setting on-campus, school-wide. Start the year off strong and do those repeated assemblies throughout the year to reinforce the expectations. Remind them that the expectation is to provide those interventions early on before the behavior escalates.

Participant 5EI:

Part of it comes from PBS being implemented. Right after our district was in the lawsuit, PBS came to the forefront. I feel like a lot of schools have been using or have shifted towards a more proactive and positive approach to discipline. I think that is why you are seeing a lot more, even just one person on this call right now, with a lot of people thinking about giving out positive recognition to the students. Whether it be a token economy, whether it be HERO points, whatever the case is, to be able to have that incentivized approach to following those guidelines for success. Following the behaviors outlined in both your school matrix and classroom matrix, and being able to just have just some tools in your toolbox like corrective consequences and really staged interventions. I think you have seen, in the last two years, the increase in referrals and level of wellness because we have gone back to exclusionary practices. This is why you see our equity data out of whack. You see an increase in referrals, which might be the highest number of rules that we have had in the last ten years because we are going back to those practices; we did pre-lawsuit and pre-PBS.

Participant 4EI:

I agree with making those connections. I think that has been a big push recently, and it is something that we have not done. Like we do not want to go back in the day, but I really also feel like there's been a shift in the mindset as far as teaching behaviors and expectations. I think before, it was like well, we expect kids to know how they are supposed to act and behave. Then you start to have that shift, especially when PBS came out with, we cannot just assume that they know, right? We need to teach them what we expect, and we need to model it. So, I think that is a big part of why we are also seeing that change. Because now we are understanding we cannot just assume that kids know, we need to teach them what we expect and what it looks like and model it.

Participant 2 SI:

I agree 100%, and the timeframe of 2014 to 2019 is right before the pandemic, so it makes sense. Yeah, levels one and two. Uh, after a while, they, I know from experience at my previous school, tend to just get shoved in a drawer. Even if they really are happening because the numbers look bad. Now, I will go positive as well. There is always a positive behavior intervention support team. In the past, I was the person at that previous school, my last year there. There has been more of a push for positive behavior intervention to avoid and alleviate the use of reporting referrals for level one and two offenses.

Theme 3: Cultural Relevance

IQ4: From 2014 to 2019, level 3 offenses increased across the grade levels. Why do you think this has happened?

IQ5: Black students still make up almost 60% of all ODRs when they make up 27.8% of the total population. Why is this so?

Participant 5EA:

Mr. Murphy, you gave us some statistics for your student population and district population, but what are the statistics for the teaching population? Because that is where the referrals are coming from. If I know the statistics, I think the teaching staff in our county is, I think, 70% Caucasian female. So, I will leave that there. So, really understanding the populations and the cultures that you serve is critical. What you may be seen as a person being sassy or disrespectful may be, culturally, what they've been taught to stand up for themselves and to fight for what they perceive as their rights. It is a lot of cultural misunderstandings, I think within our district and every district, there is a Eurocentric perspective on how a student should act and behave, which will, in turn, lead to greater referrals.

Participant 4EA:

I just like to add that it is a result of a system that I think is sick, maybe, for lack of a better way to say it. This is always such a very prickly kind of conversation, but I think it is systemic. You know, many things contribute to the overrepresentation of Black students, especially African-American males. But I agree with Participant Five regarding culture and just how we perceive students from various backgrounds and stereotyping as well as maybe a bit of racism.

Participant 3EA:

Education... knowledge is power and what I see in this profession that I've been in 27 years, not that I'm trying to date myself, but there's a lot of knowledge on how to teach instructional methods but, to support further what the other participants said, there's not enough knowledge on the actual students that we're trying to educate. So,

definitely, there needs to be an adjustment in educating the adults on the campus about the students, not just how to teach the students, but more so who are our students.

Participant 6EA:

So, if I could just be candid and point blank, I think that when it comes to this subgroup of students, the understanding from parents on their rights, and what they can and cannot push back is probably not always as clear for this demographic. These students do not always have representation that the other demographics have to show up and argue that this referral should not be processed, I know my rights. So, I think that is the first discrepancy. Then, I think the second one is that they are more focused on... it is almost like they don't have room to breathe, this demographic. So, for lack of a better word, they sneeze and do not get a tissue. They are automatically in that group of, oh my gosh, they do not know. As opposed to being more apt to say, okay, well, let's work with this type of stuff. Maybe this was a mistake. What I am saying is Black students can't breathe.

Participant 4SA:

I think because of the politics in the state of Florida right now behind our leadership at the top culturally responsive teaching, culturally responsive leadership, racial equity Institute, let's be real, it is a majority of the kids who are going through these discipline aspects look like me or you. So, until we can kind of equip our teachers to handle that on a culturally responsive side and deal with understanding cultural things, there is always going to be some type of gap or variants there.

Participant 4EI:

Well, I think that there are a lot of factors, and there is not a simple answer, but I really believe that one of the things has to do with making connections with students. Right? So, when you do that, we have to do it from a cultural lens, and sometimes there's this cultural gap and not necessarily a willingness on the educator's part to understand the culture of the students in your classrooms and to try to make connections in that sense. Sometimes, what you might feel is the way that you might interact with one student might be different based on race, and that might come from your cultural background and experiences. We talk about those biases that we just do not know about and do not realize we have. I think that has a lot to do with it. I can say I've seen in the past how a teacher of a different race interacts with a black student for the same events, and their interactions are different if it was a white student, and it's not necessarily because it's a race thing, there's also these biases that they may have in their background experiences that they don't realize that it comes into play there. So, I feel like we tried to have that conversation, but I feel like it has kind of stopped now with the way things are, but that's one of the factors that play into why we're seeing that discrepancy.

Participant 3EI:

I would like to piggyback off participant five response. I do a lot of work with PBS, and when we do model school conferences, we must go over the school's ODR data. In that data, we have to determine how many of those referrals are actually repeat offenders. Sometimes, we find that our school may have this dramatic number of ODRs, like forty-five referrals in the month of September. Out of those forty-five referrals, twenty were on one student, and it was a teacher writing them up for any

and every little thing. Even though the AP talked with the teacher. A lot of those numbers are viewed as double infractions. When we delve into it and subtract the one student with the twenty referrals, the number drops drastically.

Participant 4EI:

If I can just add that when you think about this and then when we think about the percentage of African American or minority students in advanced classes, right? I feel like there is a huge correlation because sometimes, unfortunately, there are going to be biases in that. We do not realize that if a student behaves a certain way, then you think, oh, they cannot be in an advanced class. So then, not only is the perceived behavior getting referrals or suspensions, but now it is preventing them from being in advanced classes. What if many students are behaving in ways that they are because they are not being challenged in the classroom, right? So, I feel like these two can go hand in hand. If we were to kind of provide the same opportunity and access to advanced classes for everyone and not just based on you know or XYZ criteria, you might see a shift in the behaviors.

Theme 4: Professional Development

IQ 7: What professional development, if any, should be implemented to support the positive trend of the effect of the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form?

Participant 2EA:

I think we are doing a good job with it, but there is always going to be more needed because our numbers, as noted in question five, are not good enough. So, interacting with the CBIR, real-world moments, and more coaching. I do believe that the ethnicity of a teacher matters, and I really understand and know the ethnicity of the

students in front of me. So, the school-wide information, interventions, and different things like that. It is just being coached on why it is important. What are examples? Knowing that they are not an example until we make it a teachable moment. All of those, I think, need to be included in professional development.

Participant 4EA:

I think with professional development, we have to think about if we know what to do before we get to the Corrective Behavior Intervention Form. I feel like if children feel whole and are validated, we believe in who they are and see them, then we would not get to the point of using the Correct Behavior Intervention Form because we have taught them to self-regulate. That is what we do as adults. I am thinking about Conscious Discipline. Being at the elementary level and working with students at the Pre-K/Head Start level, Conscious Discipline is something that I think is at the heart of teaching the youngest of our learners because it carries with them as they move through the continuum. So, that whole SEL piece and just being aware of who they are and then teachers being trained on how to support children with their feelings and emotions.”

Participant 6EA:

So, there are two different professional developments that we do offer, but they are optional, and I think they should not be optional. I think they should be district-wide, but district-wide as far as still being tailored to each individual school. Those trainings are Intervention versus Consequences and Minors versus Majors. The order should be Minors versus Majors first, and then Interventions versus Consequences. Minor versus major says we are going to focus on what we consider major behaviors,

which are those level three and four incidents that you spoke about earlier. Then, minor behaviors, and then we come to an agreement as a school that these are level one and two incidents. This training is interesting because even on one campus where you try to create that single school culture, you find that so many different people will view one problem as major and others as minor. So, once we have a shared agreement on minor versus major, then we move into understanding interventions and consequences. When do I implement an intervention versus when do I implement the consequence? This is when teachers have that aha moment that you can absolutely give a consequence but still have to intervene after that. So, the behavior does not just warrant a consequence. For example, for students fighting, we all know this is a level three or level four offense. While the consequence will be a referral or days home. There still needs to be an intervention that takes place because those kids still have to come back to that same classroom or that same teacher and that's why interventions and consequences go hand in hand. Those would be the two professional developments that I say should not be optional.

Participant 3EI: “Majors versus Minors, Ratio of Positive Interactions, and Interventions and Consequences. Those are three that the PBS team actually promotes to be done each year. They are very valuable.”

Participant 4EI:

I think that they have to be reoccurring. You cannot just start off gung-ho, and then as you go throughout the year, you get back into old habits, and now we are not doing any interventions that we talked about. We are not thinking about majors and minors and all of that. So, always check in, review, and offer professional development (PD)

throughout the year. This helps to ensure that it stays at the forefront, and then we do not fall back into the habit of not using research-based interventions that we know actually help.

Participant 5EI:

Last year, we got the highest number of referrals that we have had in a while. This year, we had the most requests for PBS and SEL professional development. So, from 2014 to 2019, the ratio of referrals was better. It was like pulling teeth to get opportunities, especially on the SEL side. I feel like we had to experience that spike because now everybody wants that professional development again.

Participant 2EI:

I think major versus minor is really important, but now that I have been teaching fourth and fifth grade, I think a professional development that teaches teachers classroom management and positive incentives and how to build more of a community in your classroom. It is really beneficial because, in my first year, I realized that nobody really prepares you for the first year. I am sure everybody cried during their first year of teaching, or at least I did. When you are in the classroom, it is one thing to say, okay, this is a major offense or minor offense, but I wish I were taught classroom management skills and the importance of it in my first year.

Because as we were saying, it is really good modeling, and everything should model the expectation consistently throughout the year. So, I think professional development that goes over classroom management and some kind of system around the classroom community to build those relationships will be really beneficial for teachers.

Participant 4EI:

I think Participant 2 emphasizes a great point that not only having PDs but PDs that consist of modeling, coaching, and someone reviewing the dynamics of the room. Giving you feedback and one-on-one mentoring. Coaching is so impactful, and it really makes a big difference. I consider it as the next layer after you have your recurring PD with the grade level or your school. Then let's get to that one-on-one support because everybody has different situations, and sometimes that is what you need to really make it work.

Summary of Analyses

The purpose of this sequential phase explanatory mixed methods study was to discover to what extent the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form mitigates the disproportionality in school discipline of urban schools in a large school district in the Southeastern United States. The research acquired archival data from school years 2013/2015 and 2018/2019. The archival data were analyzed through SPSS using an independent sample t-test. The results of the t-test were used to develop open-ended questions were used for the four focus groups.

Data from the four focus groups were dual recorded and edited for accuracy. The data was then analyzed and organized into codes to generate the following four themes: [1] Interventions; [2] Positive Behavior Support; [3] Cultural Relevance; [4] Professional Development. Qualitative research revealed that the perception of classroom-based interventions is a critical component in reducing the number of office discipline referrals.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The researcher's goal was to gather insight to discover to what extent the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form affects disproportionality in school discipline. Classroom-based interventions play a critical role in reducing the number of office discipline referrals. Studies have revealed that such implementation can positively affect the percentage of disproportionality in school discipline. For this study, archival data was collected for two years, the school year 2013-14 and the school year 2018-19. Data were analyzed, and results were thoroughly examined. After that, open-ended questions were developed, and several focus groups were conducted. Data was cleaned up, combined, and coded for acquiring themes. The result of this study further confirms that the need for research-based behavior interventions is effective if implemented at the correct stage of the process.

Summary of Results

Research Question One: Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals before and after the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report Form professional development?

Using the independent sample T-test, the researcher concluded that there was a significant difference in the number of office discipline referrals before and after professional development. Pre-data reported 64,312 students with office discipline referrals, and post-data reported 46,080 office discipline referrals. This was a difference of 18,232. In the deeper dive into the data, it was also revealed that there was a significant difference in the number of office discipline referrals by school level. Also, Black students had a significant difference in the number of referrals compared to their White and multiracial counterparts. Male students

had a significantly higher number of office discipline referrals than their female counterparts. Finally, free and reduced lunch students showed a significant difference of 49,594 referrals greater than students not identified as having free and reduced lunch.

Research Question Two. Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals of Black elementary students before and after the Corrective Behavior Intervention form professional development?

The segmented data of students classified as Black and elementary students in the pre and post-data sets. When evaluated, the data revealed a significant difference in the number of referrals of Black elementary students in the pre and post-data sets. In addition, the researcher delves into the set and compares students with disabilities and gender. Gender revealed a significant difference of 7,869 referrals greater than the post-data set. Finally, Black elementary students who were classified as having free and reduced lunch did not have a significant difference in the number of office discipline referrals.

Research Question Three. Is there a difference in the number of office discipline referrals of Black elementary students before and after the Corrective Behavior Intervention form professional development?

The data analysis revealed that Black secondary students determined that there was a significant difference of 8,706 referrals greater than the post data set. Students with disabilities and students identified as having free and reduced lunch also showed a significant difference in the number of referrals. Finally, Gender revealed that there was a significant difference of 13,956 referrals to the post data set.

Research Question Four. What are the perceptions of the large urban school district

staff of the phase one quantitative analysis?

That analysis of the archival data led the researcher to draft several open-ended questions to ask administrative and instructional staff members of the surveyed district in several focus groups. The questions were as follows:

1. How and when do you use and document behavior interventions with students in your classroom?
2. Describe the expectations of your administration or district about using classroom-based behavior intervention forms.
3. From 2014 to 2019, Level 1 and Level 2 offenses have decreased across grade levels. Why do you think this happened?
4. From 2014 to 2019, level 3 offenses increased across the grade levels. Why do you think this has happened?
5. **Elementary:** Black students still make up almost 60% of all ODRs when they make up 27.8% of the total population. Why is this so?
6. **Secondary:** Think back over your tenure as an educator with the school district and describe how discipline practices have changed.
7. What professional development, if any, should be implemented to support the positive trend of the effect of the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form?

After focus group data were analyzed and organized, four themes were generated from the participant's responses:

- Theme One: Interventions
- Theme Two: Positive Behavior Support
- Theme Three: Cultural Relevance
- Theme Four: Professional Development

Overall, qualitative data indicated that the perception of classroom-based interventions is a critical component in reducing the number of office discipline referrals.

Discussion of Results

In analyzing the holistic data, the researcher could deduce that classroom-based interventions are highly effective because of the difference in office discipline referrals (McIntosh et al., 2018). Data revealed that the school year 2018-19 showed a reduction of 24% or 22,279 referrals when compared to the school years of 2013-14. When comparing level one incidents, school year 2018-19 showed a 58% reduction, a difference of 13,146 reported incidents. Level two incidents reported an 18% reduction, a difference of 10,060 incidents reported. However, level three incidents reported an increase of 6% or an increase of 822 reported incidents. Level four incidents also reported an increase of 31% or an increase of 108 reported incidents. However, even with the significant reduction in recorded discipline incidents, there is a level of disproportionality when it comes to Black and Hispanic students (Bottiani et al., 2018). Understanding that the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report Form was implemented to target level one and two incidents, the raw data shows that the implementation of this system was highly effective in reducing level one and two incidents (Knoster & Drogan, 2016). This process, led through Positive Behavior Support, proved to be effective in its efforts in each school's schoolwide behavior management system (Sprick & Knight, 2018). However, the increase in the level three and four incidents is also a significant increase in the reported incidents. While level three and four incidents are more egregious offenses that must administratively be managed.

K-5 segmented data revealed that holistically, there was a 20% decrease or a difference of 2,645 in the number of office discipline referrals reported in the school year 2018/19. Second-grade data revealed an 11% (252) increase in incidents and a 30% (135) increase in level 3 incidents. Third grade level four incidents increased by 12 incidents,

which was 120%. Finally, fifth-grade level four data increased by 150% (24).

The Black student aggregate data across grades K-5 revealed that 23% decreased, a 1,831 difference in reported incident codes. Kindergarten showed a decrease of 29%, which was a difference of 241 reported incidents. First-grade data decreased by 47%, representing 537 reported incidents. Second-grade students had an increase of 6%, which was representative of 74 incidents reported. Third-grade data revealed a decrease of 21%, representing a 332 difference in reported incidents. Fourth-grade data showed a 24% decrease, a 358-difference in reported incidents. Finally, fifth grade showed a 27% decrease in reported incidents, which is a 437 difference in reported incidents. These results align with national data trends that state that elementary school has and continues to have adverse disproportionate outcomes for minority students (UCLA Law Review, 2014).

Secondary aggregate data, covering grades 6-12, revealed a 34% decrease overall, or a 19,461 difference in the reporting incidents. All racial subgroups showed a decrease in reported office discipline referrals.

Black secondary students showed a decrease across all grade levels. However, level four incidents showed an increase within five and of the seven grade levels. Eleventh-grade students showed an increase in every incident level except for level one incidents. However, eighth and ninth grade students were the only two grade levels that had a decrease in all incident levels.

Finally, the four research focus groups comprised of administrators and inspirational units render the ability to generate four themes:

- Theme One: Interventions
- Theme Two: Positive Behavior Support

- Theme Three: Cultural Relevance
- Theme Four: Professional Development

When discussing interventions, most staff members noted the robust emphasis on using the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form. However, one could ascertain through conversation that it was used differently at each campus. Additionally, staff members discussed that there should be a place within their student information software to track what has been used with the student and to be able to show the successfulness or non-successfulness of the intervention. Teachers noted that students are often transferred from classes, and behavior intervention data never follows.

For this district, Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is required to be implemented on each campus (Camacho & Krezmien, 2020). The school reviews and implements that plan as directed by the school's PBS team. Most agreed that this was effective and served as an initiative-taking approach to working with student behavior. However, as with any plan, there are a few holes that can be fixed to improve the implementation and sustainability of the concept.

Cultural Relevance was a well-voiced concern within all groups (Price, 2020). Administrative and instructional staff members discussed the efforts of bringing cultural competency courses to their district; however, the work has been placed on hold due to current legislation from the state. These newly enacted bills have placed a stigma on any work surrounding cultural understanding and competence. They have also made it taboo to discuss due to the harsh penalties if accused. Despite this, staff members noted that the need for the work is critical (Young et al., 2018).

Professional development (PD) was a well-used term in all focus groups. Members

discussed whether they have PD sessions during pre-school and throughout the year.

However, the comments of instructional members indicated that more training on available interventions and behavior management is needed. Additionally, it was mentioned that PDs should never be one-and-done but should be continually addressed to maintain momentum throughout the school year (LeRoy, 2017). Two distinct sessions were mentioned in the focus groups: Interventions vs. Consequences and Majors vs. Minors. Both pieces of training are available through the district's PBS initiative; however, the school must request them to be scheduled.

Limitations

- **Data Cost:** The study intended to focus on archival data over a ten-year period: five years of pre-implementation data and five years of post-implementation data. However, due to the cost of data, the researcher opted to reduce it to two years: one year prior to implementation and the other after implementation.
- **Participant participation:** Participants were acquired through solicitation via email to school principals. While this course gave room to consider a high probability of participants, some may have internally felt unsafe answering feely with the sessions being video and audio recorded. Additionally, the truthfulness of participants' responses and the complicated conversation of disproportionality and equity.
- **District Size:** This data looked at one large urban district and may not be generalizable to small rural districts or urban districts where the teacher ratio mirrored the student ratio.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study has explored the effects of classroom-based intervention and its effect on

disproportionate school discipline. While this investigation falls under a broad umbrella and numerous studies complement this work, further investigation is needed in the following areas:

- **Administrative Action to Office Discipline Referrals:** This recommended study should explore the process of applying action codes to submitted referrals within a school system.
- **Rates of Referrals vs. Teacher Education Background:** This study should seek to examine the teacher rates of referrals and compare them to the teacher education background. Seeking to see if a teacher from a pre-service education program submits more referrals than a teacher from a non-educational background.
- **Pre-Service Teacher Education Programs:** This study should examine the effectiveness of classroom management courses and whether they truly meet the needs of today's educational society.

Summary

This body of research identified that between 2013-14 and 2018-19, there was a statistical and numerical difference in the number of office discipline referrals before and after the implementation of the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form. Additionally, when analyzed by school level, race, disability, gender, and free and reduced lunch, all revealed statistical and numerical differences for the better.

When examining Black students at the elementary level, it was found that there was a statistical and numerical difference in the number of office discipline referrals before and after the implementation of the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form. Additionally, when examining Black students at the secondary, it was also found that there was a statistical

and numerical difference in the number of office discipline referrals before and after the implementation of the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form. However, there is still a level of disproportionality when compared to their white counterparts.

While significant work has been done to decrease discipline regarding disproportionality, there is still much more work to be done!

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APPENDIX A: LYNN UNIVERSITY IRB APPROVAL



Institutional Review Board
3601 North Military Trail
Boca Raton, FL, 33433
T:561-237-7012
561-237-7000|lynn.edu
Melissa Knight, MA, Chair

Date: 3/22/2022

TO: Gregory Murphy
FROM: Melissa Knight
PROJECT NUMBER: 21.11
PROTOCOL TITLE: Breaking the Cycle: Effects of Classroom-Based Behavior Interventions of Disproportionate School Discipline
PROJECT TYPE: New Project
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited
ACTION: Approved
APPROVAL DATE: 3/22/2022
EXPIRATION DATE: 3/22/2023

Thank you for your submission for this research study. The Lynn University IRB has APPROVED your NEW Project. This approval is in accordance with 45 CFR §46.111 Criteria for IRB approval of research. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

It is important that you retain this letter for your records and present upon request to necessary parties.

- This approval is valid for one year. **IRB Form 4: Application to Continue (Renew) a Previously Approved Project** will be required prior to the expiration date if this project will continue beyond one year.
- Please note that any revision to previously approved materials or procedures must be approved by the IRB before it is initiated. Please submit **IRB Form 5 Application for Procedural Revisions or Changes in Research Protocol and/or Informed Consent Form 1 of a Previously Approved Project** for this procedure.
- All serious and unexpected adverse events must be reported to the IRB. Please use **IRB Form 6 Report of Unexpected Adverse Event, Serious Injury or Death** for this procedure.
- At the completion of your data collection, please submit **IRB Form 8 IRB Report of Termination of Project**.

If you have any questions or comments about this correspondence, please contact the chair of the Lynn University IRB, Melissa Knight (mknight@lynn.edu).

Melissa Knight, Institutional Review Board Chair

Institutional Review Board
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APPENDIX B: THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY IRB

APPROVAL



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL

PAUL HOUCHENS
DIRECTOR

ADAM MILLER, Ph.D.
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT,
PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

RESEARCH & EVALUATION
3300 FOREST HILL BOULEVARD, B-246
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33406
PHONE: 561-434-8469 / FAX: 561-357-7611
WWW.PALMBEACHSCHOOLS.ORG

May 12, 2022

Gregory L. Murphy, Jr.
gmurph1906@gmail.com
cc: jlesh@lynn.edu

Dear Mr. Murphy,

On behalf of The School District of Palm Beach County, the Superintendent's Research Review Committee has approved your request to conduct research entitled, "Breaking the Cycle: Effects of Classroom-Based Behavior Interventions on Disproportionate School Discipline."

As this study is conducted, please be governed by all guidelines as outlined in [District's Policy 2.142](#): including the following items:

- Section 7 – Document, Character, and Other Requirements, Item E – *Research Subjects*. Researchers must use independent research subjects in their studies. Researchers must not have a position of authority over proposed research subjects or have conflict of interest with proposed research subjects.
- Section 7 – Document, Character, and Other Requirements, Item F – *Data Requests*: Researchers may not request data directly from schools or departments. All data requests must be submitted to the Department of Research and Evaluation for handling.
- Any researcher who is not a school district employee and who is provided direct access to one or more student(s) must undergo background screening and fingerprinting. Please go to the [School Police website](#) for information or contact them directly at (561) 434-8300. Please forward copy of vendor badge to the Department of Research and Evaluation when received.
- Contact **NO** school or department other than approved by the Department. District policy provides that no one has the right to access students, staff or data, and prohibits researchers from requesting data directly from schools or departments.
- When contacting school administrators, either by email or in person, to obtain permission, please provide a copy of this approval letter.
 - Please ensure that you provide a copy of the approval from school principal received through email or school letterhead to the Department of Research and Evaluation - research@palmbeachschools.org.
- Research activities at schools must not occur during the testing window of the Florida Standards Assessments and End-of-Course Assessments – March 22 – May 26, 2022.
- Summarize findings for reports prepared from this study and do not associate responses with a specific school or individual. Information that identifies the District, schools, or individual responses will not be provided to anyone except as required by law.

The School District of Palm Beach County, Florida
A Top High-Performing A-Rated School District
An Equal Opportunity Education Provider and Employer

- Research study shall be concluded at the time your IRB expires.
- If the study requires the use of additional resources or change in participants in the future, a written request must be submitted to this office. Please wait for an approval before proceeding.

Please submit one copy of the study results to the Department of Research and Evaluation no later than one month after completion of the research.

Thank you for your interest in our District.

Sincerely,



Paul Houchens
Director

PH/ik

APPENDIX C: EMAIL SOLICITING FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Dear Participant:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a classroom-based behavior interventions focus group that is connected to my doctoral research at Lynn University.

The purpose of this research is to gather research in order to reduce disproportionality in school discipline data. Additionally, your participation will assist in providing insight into the effectiveness of classroom-based interventions and disproportionate discipline.

Participation in this is entirely voluntary, and all your responses are anonymous. None of the responses will be connected to identifying information. Interviews will be kept confidential and de-identified after being analyzed. Data and information will be stored on a password-protected computer for up to two years and permanently deleted from the researcher's computer two years after the study's completion. Only the researcher will have access to the data and password.

The focus group will take no more than 60 minutes to complete.

To confirm participation, please click the following link: <https://forms.gle/1iP5F3uG2H74zf3H6>

If you have any questions or difficulty registering, please contact me via email at gmurphy1906@gmail.com or gmurphy@email.lynn.edu.

Focus Group Date: August 15, 2022
Focus Group Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Note: This focus group has been approved in accordance with Lynn University's IRB. The platform used to conduct this focus group is Zoom, cloud-based software that stores data on secure servers.

Respectfully,

Gregory L. Murphy, Jr.
Doctoral Candidate
Lynn University
561-436-6670
gmurphy@email.lynn.edu

For any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact:

Melissa Knight
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Lynn University
mknight@lynn.edu

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENTS - FOCUS GROUPS (4)

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to gather research in order to reduce disproportionality in school discipline data.

Specific Procedures

Your participation in this focus group will assist in providing insight into the effectiveness of classroom-based interventions and disproportionate discipline.

Duration of Participation and Compensation

The total duration of your participation should be no longer than 60 minutes. There will be no compensation for participation.

Risks

Participants face minimal risk as a result of their participation in the study. However, if participants feel stressed or uncomfortable during any part of the study, they may withdraw without consequence or ramifications to their employment.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to participating in the study. However, an indirect benefit is that participants will understand the impact of the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form and help build literature.

Confidentiality

Participation in focus groups is strictly confidential, and there will be no identifying information kept or known to the researchers. All responses to questions will be de-identified, and pseudonyms assigned to all participants and schools.

Data Storage and Disposal

Interviews will be kept confidential and de-identified after being analyzed. All data and informed consent will be stored on a password protected computer for up to two years and permanently deleted from the researcher's computer two years after the study's completion. Only the researcher will have access to the data and password.

Confirmation

By clicking agree, you are "signing" your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the study.

Thank you for your participation,

Gregory L. Murphy, Jr.
Doctoral Candidate, Lynn University
Email: gmurphy@email.lynn.edu

Melissa Knight
Chair - Institutional Review Board
Lynn University
Email: mknight@lynn.edu

APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOLS, INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How and when do you use and document behavior interventions with students in your classroom?
2. Describe the expectations of your administration or district about using classroom-based behavior intervention forms.
3. From 2014 to 2019, Level 1 and Level 2 offenses have decreased across grade levels. Why do you think this happened?
4. From 2014 to 2019, level 3 offenses increased across the grade levels. Why do you think this has happened?
5. **Elementary:** Black students still make up almost 60% of all ODRs when they make up 27.8% of the total population. Why is this so?
6. **Secondary:** Think back over your tenure as an educator with the school district and describe how discipline practices have changed.
7. What professional development, if any, should be implemented to support the positive trend of the effect of the Corrective Behavior Intervention Report form?