ABSTRACT

Kenyann Brown Stanford, EVALUATING EQUITY IN STUDENT DISCIPLINE: A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SETTING (Under the direction of William Rouse, Jr.). Department of Educational Leadership, April 2017.

This program evaluation was a two-year Impact Assessment study, utilizing an explanatory case study design, of the PBIS program implemented at an urban elementary school in one Local Education Agency (LEA) in North Carolina. The revised PBIS program was designed to reduce race-based disparities in student discipline and to prioritize student exposure to academic instruction. Evaluation of the PBIS program focused on the desired outcomes identified by school stakeholders: reductions in overall student discipline referrals, reductions in racial disproportionality in student discipline, improvement in teacher perception of school-wide student discipline practice, and improvement in student perception of school connectedness and equity.

Study participants included all students and staff members present at the participating school from the 2014-2015 through the 2016-2017 school years. This mixed-methods impact assessment utilized pre-program student discipline data together with pre-program Teacher Working Conditions Survey (TWCS) data. Pre-program data, where available, were compared to concluding data which included two-year statistical student discipline data, broken down by demographics, school year, student discipline referral type, and consequence. Additional study data included post-program TWCS data, together with student interviews presented in the form of vignettes exploring student perceptions of equity in student discipline practice throughout the study period. Triangulated data revealed substantial decreases in the risk indices of minority and special education students over the study period, as well as increased staff awareness regarding

the importance of equity in student discipline and the availability of restorative practice as preemptive and culturally responsive alternatives to exclusionary discipline. Despite these positive outcomes, however, student discipline gaps persisted at the subject school, and staff survey data revealed concerns regarding clarity of expectation and consistency of practice. Implications for further program revision and the extension of culturally responsive classroom management and disciplinary response practices were considered.

EVALUATING EQUITY IN STUDENT DISCIPLINE: A PROGRAM EVALUATION

OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT

IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SETTING

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Kenyann Brown Stanford

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the students who have filled my classrooms and my rehearsal spaces; to those who have pushed my buttons and made me dig deep; and to those who now fill my breakfast and lunch groups, the various spaces in my office, my thoughts, and my continual searches for ideas at all hours of the day and night. They have taught me the importance of perseverance and empathy and connections, they have led me to discover useful phrases in English and Spanish and Somali, and they have inspired me to be the best version of myself.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In January 2014, the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education, citing statistics reflecting the disproportionate suspension of African American students in public schools and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, sent a "Dear Colleague" letter to every school district in the nation. The letter warned school districts that they were subject to legal action if they maintained discipline policies which effected "a disparate impact, i.e., a disproportionate and unjustified effect on students of a particular race," and offered guidance on ensuring equity in student discipline (Peterson, 2015). At the time, African American students made up approximately 15% of the US public school population, but accounted for 35% of suspensions and 36% of expulsions nationwide. Then-Attorney General Eric Holder, together with then-Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, explained the letter as necessary to address a growing disparity in student discipline among white students and their minority peers, describing the discipline gap as "disrupt[ive to] the learning process" and "a real problem today" (Peterson, 2015).

Response to the "Dear Colleague" letter was mixed but primarily negative. The policy was praised by progressive groups as necessary to equal the playing field for minority students and criticized by others as an inappropriate meddling by the federal government in matters which should be left to state and local policy. A 2015 survey of parents, teachers and the general public conducted by the Harvard Program on Education Policy and Governance revealed that only 23% of parents, 23% of teachers, and 21% of the population as a whole favor "federal policies that prevent schools from expelling or suspending African American and Hispanic students at higher

rates than other students." Whites were significantly more likely than minorities to express opposition (Peterson, 2015).

Not surprisingly, conservative commentators, in particular, expressed their disagreement with the policy, arguing that the letter effectively tied the hands of teachers and school administrators whose discipline policies were already "colorblind." Dr. Terry Stoops, writing for the conservative think tank The John Locke Foundation, expressed his opinion that compliance with federal mandates was "likely impeding the learning process for well-behaved students," continuing as follows:

> The solution to creating racially equitable discipline is not clear. The process of maintaining a disciplinary record that mirrors racial demographics would either require schools to discipline African American children less, punish students from other racial groups more, or simply abolish traditional methods of disciplining students. In those cases, the emphasis is misplaced. Correcting behavior that impedes the educational process, not fidelity to demographics, should be the focus of student discipline (Stoops, 2015).

Progressives disagreed with Stoops' opinion on the colorblind nature of student discipline. According to Shaun Harper, a University of Pennsylvania School of Education professor and the author of a 2015 report detailing his study on discipline in Southern schools, discipline data revealed that "[b]lack students tend to be disproportionately disciplined for things like dress code violations, or 'the kid was giving me an attitude,' which is completely subjective, whereas white kids in public schools tend to be referred most often to principals' offices for property destruction or smoking—things that are far less subjective" (Shelton, Stasio, & Clark, 2015).

Discipline Gaps in North Carolina Public Schools

In the 2013-2014 school year, North Carolina public schools were suspending African American students at a rate 3.4 times greater than their enrollment percentage (Shelton, Stasio, & Clark, 2015). As districts worked to respond to the 2014 letter, many increased their use of Positive Behavioral Intervention & Support (PBIS) practices, and some experimented with restorative discipline and community partnerships in efforts to establish whole-student "systems of care." (Shelton, Stasio, & Clark, 2015). North Carolina's school districts had been engaged in this work even prior to their receipt of the "Dear Colleague" letter, and the suspension rate for minority students in the State dropped 38% between 2012 and 2014, but remained the fifth highest in the nation. North Carolina's urban districts, unsurprisingly, maintain the worst discipline gap statistics.

The Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) is the largest and fastest-growing school system in North Carolina, and the 16th largest system in the nation. The WCPSS student population has almost tripled since 1980, and totaled 157,180 for the 2015-2016 school year. WCPSS maintains 106 elementary schools, 33 middle schools, 25 high schools, 4 alternative schools, and 3 academies housing students in grades K-8 or 6-12 (Wake County Public School System, 2016). In Wake County, African American students accounted for 25% of district enrollment for the 2014-2015 school year, but 62% of the district's 11,205 suspensions (Hui, 2015). Five-year suspension data for WCPSS shows significant reductions for the 2011-2012 school year, with recent plateaus and an increase in total suspensions for the 2014-2015 school year, with continuing disproportionality in the suspension of African American students (Wake County Public School System, 2015). These data are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Total WCPSS Suspensions by School Level: 5-Year Trend

Year	Elementary	Middle	High	Total
2014-2015	1,955	4,699	5,175	11,829
2013-2014	1,905	4,381	4,919	11,205
2012-2013	2,274	5,997	7,452	15,723
2011-2012	1,985	5,606	7,035	14,626
2010-2011	2,247	5,946	9,725	17,918

Table 2

2015-2016 WCPSS Suspension Gaps by Ethnicity

WCPSS Population (by ethnicity)	% Enrollment	% Suspensions
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.28%	0.52%
African American	23.83%	57.86%
Asian	7.75%	1.11%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.12%	0.14%
Hispanic	17.04%	17.21%
Multi-Racial	3.69%	4.31%
White	47.29%	18.85%

Discipline Gaps and Student Achievement

Not surprisingly, student achievement statistics mirror these discipline gaps both nationwide and in WCPSS. The achievement gap between minority students, in particular African American males, and their Asian and white peers has been well documented (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Vanneman, Hamilton, Anderson, & Rahman, 2009). In a recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the scale score achievement gap among African American and white students nationwide on NAEP 8th grade end of grade math assessments ranged from 18 to 21 points, with variations related to the concentration of African American students in the school population, even when controlling for socioeconomic status (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Gaps in WCPSS are similar. For the 2014-2015 school year, 82% of white students and 88% of Asian students in grades 3 through 12 demonstrated proficiency on End-of-Grade and End-of-Course assessments, while only 43% of African American students and 48% of Hispanic students met proficiency standards (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015).

The gap is even wider for the state's more stringent "Career and College Readiness" standard, which was introduced in March 2014 following the implementation of testing aligned with the Common Core State Standards (Achievement Level Information, 2014). Under the standards introduced in that school year, students demonstrate "Sufficient Proficiency" by scoring a Level III on state-mandated tests; however, "Career and College Readiness" is demonstrated by a Level IV or Level V score showing "Solid Proficiency" or "Superior Proficiency," respectively (Achievement Level Information, 2014). For the 2014-2015 school year, 74% of white students and 83% of Asian students met "Career and College Readiness"

standards, while only 32% of African American students and 37% of Hispanic students met the more stringent standard (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015).

Exclusionary discipline practices reduce affected students' exposure to academic instruction for minutes, hours, days or weeks, depending on the disciplinary consequence. Research has established the strong correlation between exposure to academic instruction and student achievement (Greenwood, Horton, & Utley, 2002), as well as the negative impact of frequent suspensions on achievement (Arcia, 2006; Davis & Jordan, 1994). There is little question that discipline gaps are contributing to achievement gaps (Gregory et al., 2010). While most research has focused on middle school and high schools, where out-of-school suspensions are more common (Arcia, 2006), exclusionary discipline in the form of time-out, office discipline referral and in-school suspension is likely to have a similar effect at the elementary school level.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), sometimes termed School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) or Positive Behavior Support (PBS), was introduced in the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Although PBIS was initially established as research-based behavior management strategy for students with disabilities, it gained popularity for its application to all students, and PBIS is currently defined as "the integration of valued outcomes, behavioral and biomedical science, empirically validated procedures, and systems change to enhance quality of life and minimize or prevent problem behaviors" (Sugai & Horner, 2006, p. 246). Its fundamental elements focus on the creation of a positive school climate through a focus on desired behaviors and on proactive responses, in three graduated tiers, to student behavior which

minimize the likelihood that problem behaviors will be repeated (Sugai & Horner, 2006). This three-tied support structure is illustrated in Figure 1.

In an attempt to reduce the overall suspension rate, WCPSS implemented PBIS programs in elementary and middle schools district-wide beginning in 2008, and the district has focused recent additional efforts on reducing suspension and increasing graduation rates through the provision of alternative education options (Gilleland & McMillen, 2009; Rhea, 2009; Rhea, 2010). PBIS schools in WCPSS are supported by district-level coaches and facilitators in the structured implementation of PBIS behavior management programs. Schools select a set of behavioral expectations defined in student-friendly terms and often supported by an easy-to remember acronym. Lesson plans are designed and presented to students at the start of each school year, and expectations are reviewed on a regular basis. Common language and location based behavioral rubrics are utilized throughout the school, and the focus in a PBIS school is on recognition and reward for positive behavior, rather than on punishment for inappropriate behavior. Students earn rewards in the form of tickets or tokens, on an individual and classroom basis, and these are exchanged for either tangible (school supplies, trinkets) or activity-based (extra recess, lunch with the teacher) rewards.

Although the implementation of PBIS and the district's focus on suspension alternatives reduced suspensions overall in WCPSS beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, as illustrated in Table 1, current data still reveal the suspension of minority students, particularly African American boys, at rates disproportionate to their representation in the general student population, as shown in Table 2. This is consistent with research showing that PBIS programs, while effective in reducing overall student discipline events and improving school climate in general,
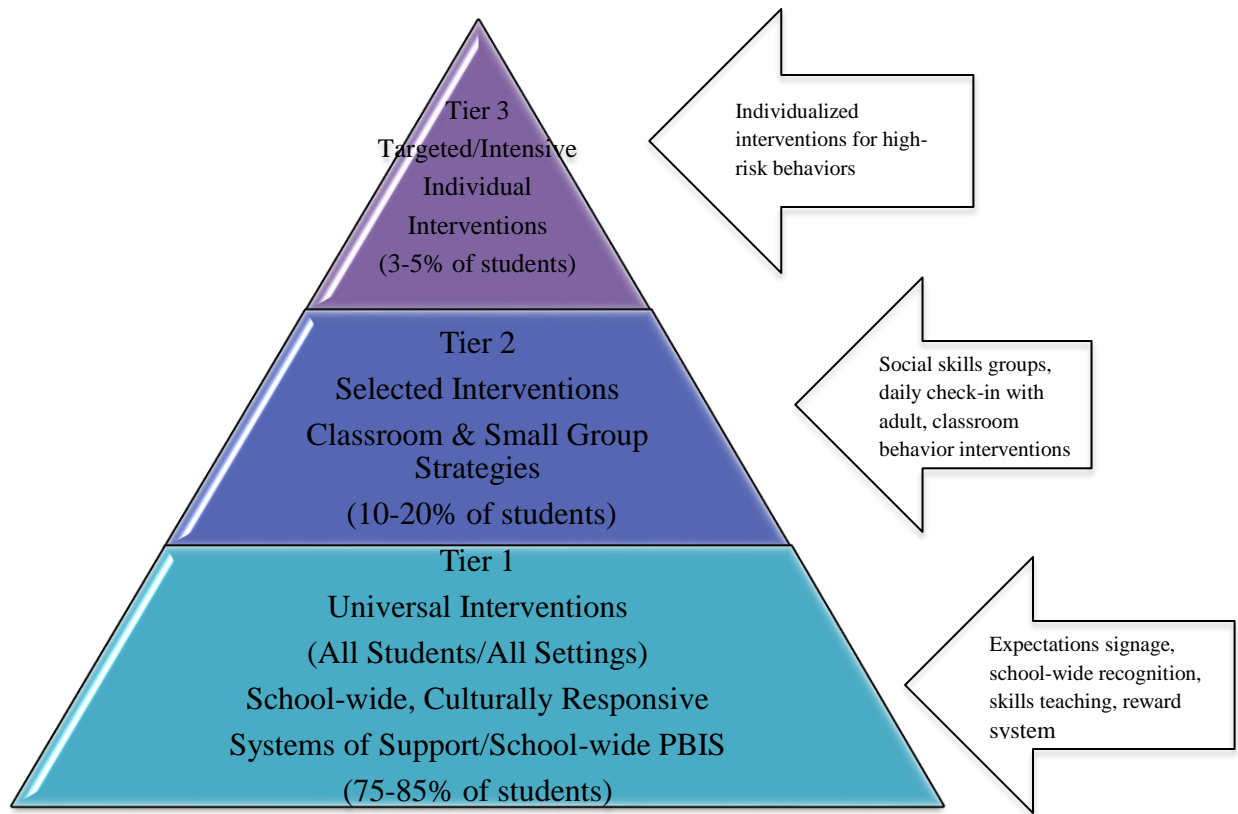
Note. Adapted from http://www.swpbs.org/module/behavior_overview.html.

Figure 1. Positive behavior intervention and support intervention tiers.

do not generally reduce discipline gaps unless implemented in a deliberately culturally responsive manner (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014).

Restorative Practice

Research increasingly supports the efficacy of holistic and restorative practices in both reducing behavioral issues and in reducing discipline gaps (González, 2012; Pane, 2010). Restorative behavior response programs focus on a shift away from punishment and toward restorative justice principles and whole-student support. Three key shifts in this regard are illustrated in Table 3.

Restorative communities (classroom and whole-school) utilize clear expectations memorialized by agreement, authentic communication that values all voices, and specific tools to resolve issues and conflicts in productive ways (Clifford, n.d., p. 6). School-based restorative justice programs focus on the use of conferences, mediations, and restorative dialogue "to repair the relationships between students, teachers, administrators, and the school community" (González, 2012, p. 286). Conflict resolution methods focus on structured "circles" which utilize clear processes (turn taking through the use of a "talking piece," affective statements which focus on the speaker, designed prompting questions by a facilitator) to engage an affected community in assuming group responsibility for the design of a solution (Clifford, n.d., p. 6). Through these techniques, students are provided with opportunities to voice their opinions and to accept responsibility for their actions, and the goal is to include input from all stakeholders in determining the best method for resolution. Although not yet widely in use in the school setting, restorative practice has shown potential for improving school climate and reducing discipline and achievement gaps (González, 2012; Pane, 2010).

Table 3

Three Shifts Toward Restorative Schools and Classrooms

From	To
Efforts to suppress misbehavior based on the view that misbehavior is evidence of failing students or classrooms	Recognizing and using the inherent value of misbehavior as an opportunity for social and emotional learning
Authority-driven disciplinary actions that focus only on the identified misbehaving students	Restorative circles that bring together everyone who is most immediately affected by the incident
Punishment and exclusion is used to control misbehavior and motivate positive behavior changes	Dialogue leading to understanding and action to set things right and repair and restore relationships

Note. Adapted from *Teaching Restorative Practices with Classroom Circles* (Clifford, n.d., p. 6).

11

Study Setting

This study was situated in a traditional calendar (August through June) elementary school within WCPSS which serves 571 students in grades kindergarten through 5. The subject school was established as an African American community school in 1962, opening as part of the then-segregated Raleigh City School System, with 240 students in grades 1-8 and one teacher per grade. The subject school was integrated following the 1976 merger of Raleigh City Schools and the Wake County School System into the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS). Because its population remained largely African American, and primarily low-income, the subject school was converted to a magnet school in 1982, initially focusing on Math, Science and Technology. That magnet theme was unsuccessful in reducing the subject school's concentration of low-income and minority students, and the school's magnet program was ultimately modified in the mid-1990s to establish at the subject school a Gifted and Talented/Academically or Intellectually Gifted Basics (GT/AIG Basics) theme. Through the GT portion of its theme, the subject school offers a variety of electives in visual arts, performing arts, health and physical education (PE), science, math, technology, and language arts, and seeks to develop the unique gifts and talents of each student. In addition, the subject school offers homogenous grouping for academically gifted students in grades 4 and 5, and serves AIG students at grades K-3 on an in-the-classroom (push-in) or outside-the-classroom (pull-out) model, through the AIG Basics theme.

Since its conversion to a GT/AIG Basics school, the subject school has maintained a relatively small geographic area for "base" or non-magnet students, and has drawn approximately 50% of its population as magnet students – mainly Asian/Indian – from the southern and western portions of Wake County. This results in a somewhat atypical

demographic profile for the school, as shown in Figure 2. Because the subject school is located

in a low-income setting, the school has consistently maintained a free and reduced lunch rate

above 40%.

Program

Students in all WCPSS schools are formally tested for identification as "academically or

intellectually gifted" in grade 3, and identified students are provided with academic enrichment

and curriculum extension, typically beginning in grade 4. For the 2015-2016 school year, 38.6%

of the subject school's fourth and fifth grade students were identified as academically gifted,

significantly exceeding the WCPSS average of 18.6% for elementary schools district-wide.

Although the stated goal of the WCPSS magnet program is to facilitate student achievement and

eliminate achievement gaps through the promotion of socioeconomic diversity and the provision

of unique educational opportunities, the subject school has been only moderately successful in

reducing the achievement gap between Asian and white students, the majority of whom are

identified as academically or intellectually gifted, and minority students. In fact, gaps were

significantly widened following the re-norming of statewide End of Grade tests to reflect

Common Core State Standards during the 2012-2013 school year. Despite federal Title I

funding and a focus on intervention, particularly in literacy, African American and Hispanic

students continue to lag considerably behind their Asian and white peers, as illustrated in Figure

3 and Figure 4.

The subject school has been a PBIS school since the 2007-2008 school year.

Nonetheless, student discipline data at the subject school revealed disproportionate office

discipline referrals ("major incidents") and classroom discipline reports ("minor incidents") for
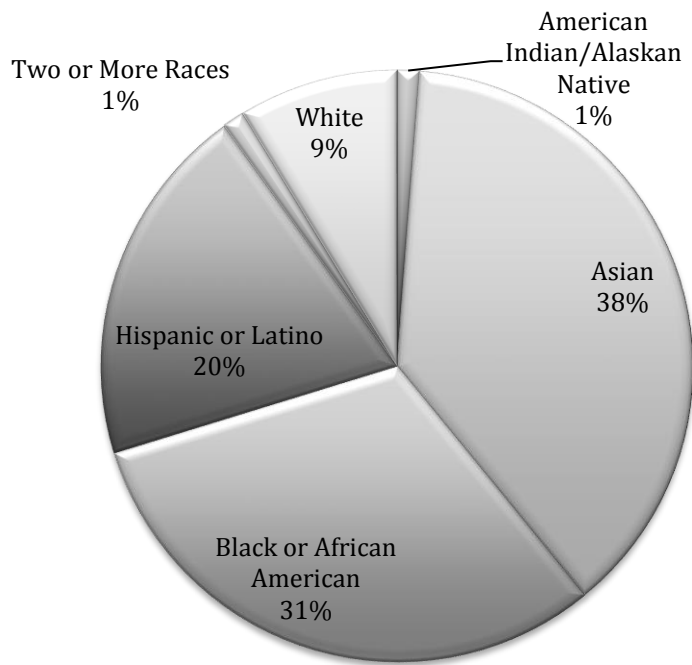
Figure 2. Subject school student demographics 2015-2016.
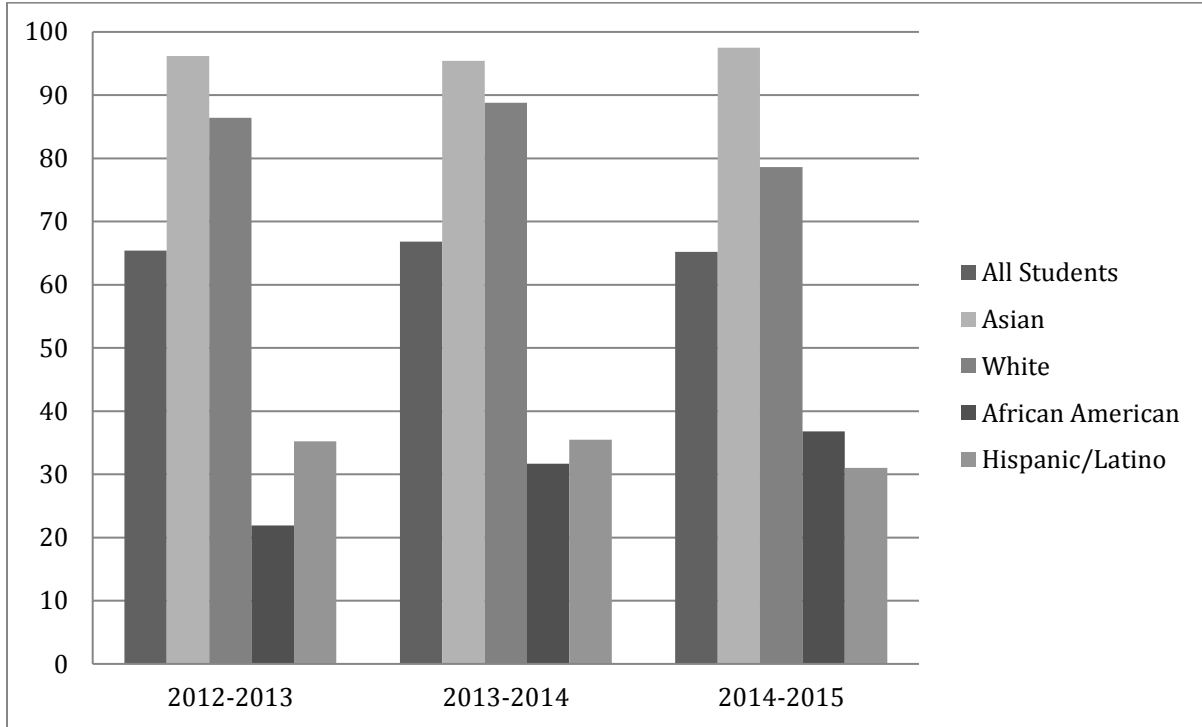
Figure 3. Grades 3-5 state-mandated End-of-Grade testing data: Percent proficient (Level III, IV or V) on both reading and math tests (composite score) by subgroup.
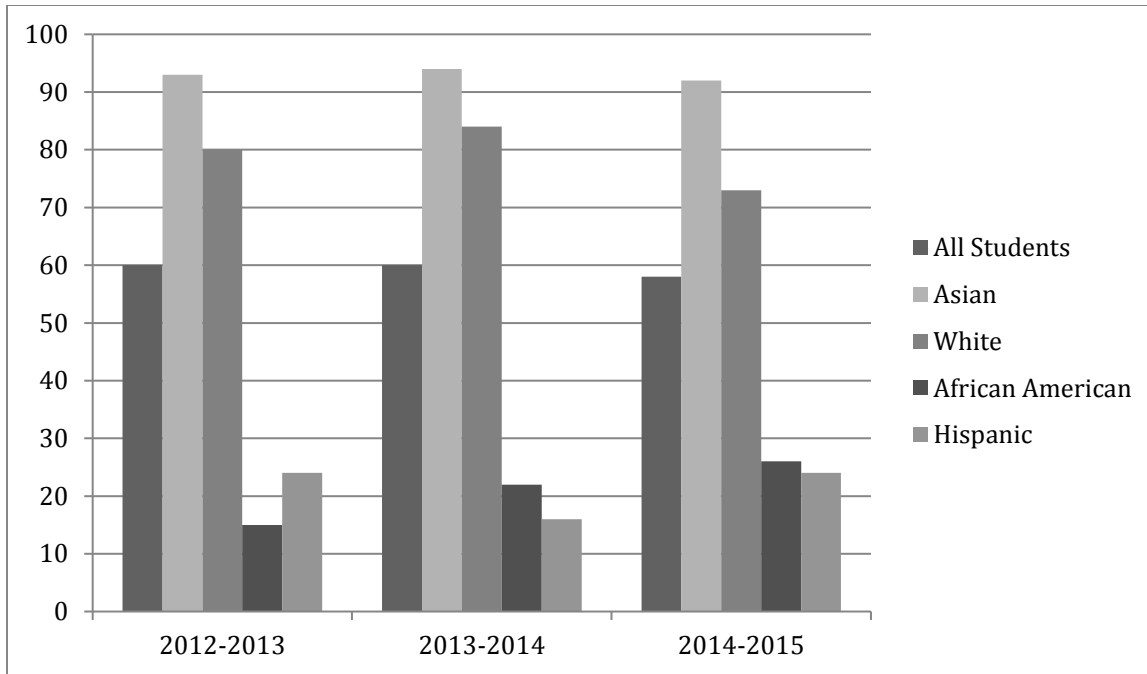
Figure 4. Grades 3-5 state-mandated End-of-Grade testing data: Percent career and college

ready (Level IV or V) on both reading and math tests (composite score) by subgroup.

African American and Hispanic students, who as of the 2014-2015 school year made up only 46% of the school's overall population, yet accounted for greater than 80% of student discipline reports, greater than 75% of office discipline referrals, and 100% of the school's short-term suspensions. The subject school's discipline gap as of the 2014-2015 school year is illustrated in Figure 5.

Initial study data and observations regarding non-suspendable offenses suggested that each office discipline referral at the subject school results in an average of 30-40 minutes of lost instructional time for the involved student, not considering the effect of in-school suspension or other similar consequences, and that a significant number of the incidents handled without office discipline referral resulted in a similar loss of instructional time where students were assigned "time-out" or a similar consequence in the classroom, the hallway, or some other location. Routine student discipline practices at the subject school have affected a disproportionate number of minority students and resulted in an excessive loss of instructional time for these students, likely contributing to achievement gaps between these students and their Asian and white peers.

In an effort to improve the efficacy and cultural responsiveness of PBIS at the subject school, to improve teacher, student, and parent perceptions of school climate and student discipline practice, and to reduce discipline gaps, the PBIS team, consisting of six teachers, the school counselor, and the primary investigator, conducted a re-design of the PBIS primary intervention structure in the spring of 2015. The PBIS theme was changed to GIFTS, an acronym representing five universal expectations: (1) Give your best; (2) be Independent; (3) Follow directions; (4) Take responsibility; and (5) Stay engaged (see Appendix C). Expectations graphics were created for each school setting (classroom, hallway, restroom, playground

17
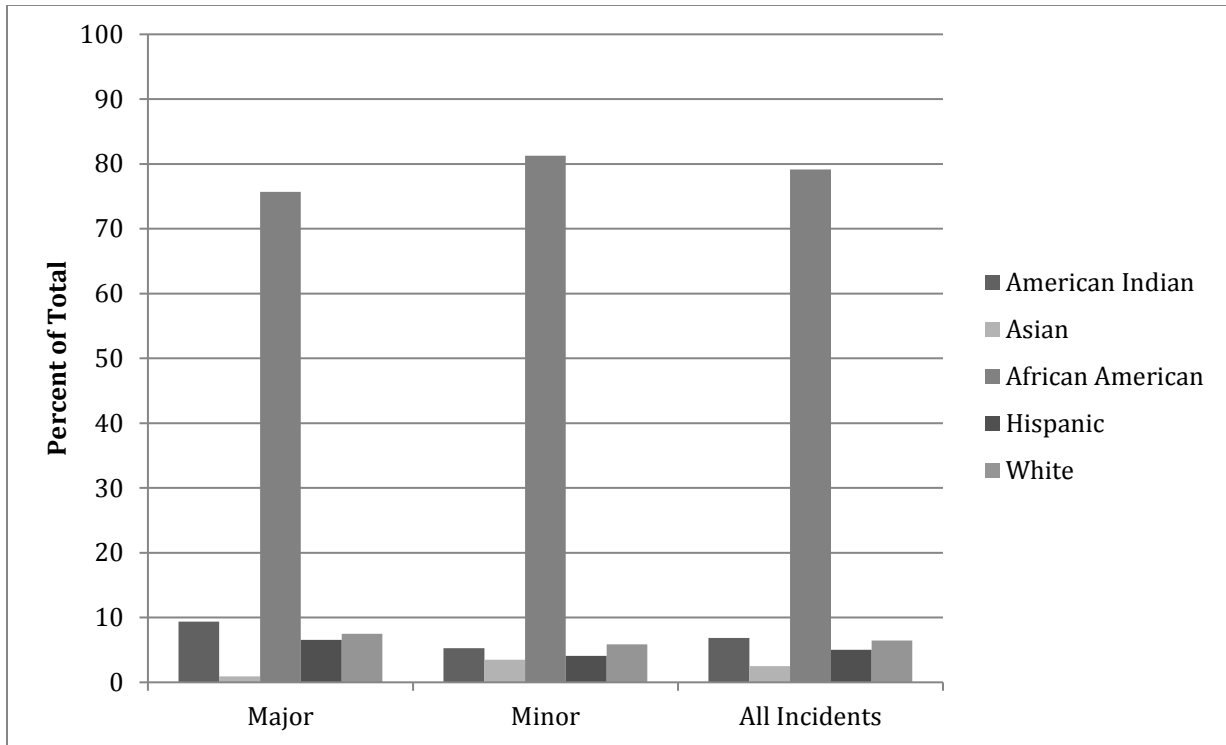
Figure 5. 2014-2015 Reported disciplinary incidents by category and student ethnicity.

cafeteria, carpool and performances) (see Appendix D), and a reward structure was established

utilizing "GIFTS" cards to be distributed by teachers, administrators and staff (see Appendix E).

In addition, student discipline response rubrics were revised to eliminate required responses and

mandatory office discipline referrals except where required by law, and the PBIS team planned

professional development focusing on culturally responsive student discipline and culturally

responsive instruction to be delivered during the 2015-2016 school year. Revised PBIS

protocols and student discipline procedures were implemented with staff training and student

presentations at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year, and planned whole-staff

professional development was presented at intervals throughout the 2015-2016 school year.

Program Evaluation Standards

Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman (2004) define program evaluation as "the use of social

research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programs

that are adapted to their political and organizational environments and are designed to inform

social action to improve social conditions" (p. 16). Evaluation may be conducted for various

reasons: to aid in decision-making regarding changes to an existing program; to assess the utility

of a program; to assess the effectiveness of a program; or to satisfy accountability requirements

related to a program (Rossi et al., 2004). In addition, evaluations may contribute knowledge to a

particular field (Rossi et al., 2004). As defined by Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, and Caruthers

(2011), program evaluation is governed by thirty standards divided into five categories: (1)

utility; (2) feasibility; (3) propriety; (4) accuracy; and (5) evaluation accountability.

Evaluation has been further described as "the identification, clarification, and application

of defensible criteria to determine an evaluation object's value (worth or merit) in relation to

those criteria" (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2010, p. 7). Meaningful program evaluation

encompasses two components: (1) the gathering and analysis of data; and (2) the application of evaluative standards to the data in order to draw conclusions regarding the value or effect of the program being evaluated (Rossi, et al., 2004, pp. 16-17). Program evaluations utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods to assess one or more of five program domains: (1) the need for the program (Needs Assessment); (2) the design of the program (Program Theory Assessment); (3) the implementation and service delivery of the program (Program Process Assessment); (4) the outcomes or impact of the program (Impact Assessment); and/or (5) the efficiency of the program (Efficiency Assessment) (Rossi et al., 2004, p. 17).

Effective program evaluations are created in consideration of the questions posed by a program's stakeholders – those who hold a significant interest in the program (Rossi et al., 2004). In order to be meaningful, evaluations must address questions of relevance, and must provide timely information in a manner and format which is meaningful and useful to stakeholders (Rossi et al., 2004). Additionally, program evaluations must be conducted in a manner which is tailored to the structure of the organization housing the program and sensitive to the program's political context (Rossi et al., 2004). In addition to direct use in the application of the program being evaluated, program evaluation may inform and guide planning and policy with regard to similar programs in other organizational settings (Rossi et al., 2004).

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this study was to conduct a two-year Impact Assessment of the PBIS program at the subject school as revised for implementation in the 2015-2016 school year. For the purposes of this study, disciplinary responses which result in the removal of a student from the classroom, through office discipline referral, suspension, time out, or any other practice, are referred to as "exclusionary discipline practices." The subject school's PBIS program, as

20

revised, was designed to implement alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices in the focus

school setting. Through the introduction of revised PBIS matrices and revised administrative

expectations, together with the provision of professional development, the program under

consideration sought to reduce disproportionality in student discipline, as well as to reduce the

lost instructional time and negative impact on school perception related to both administrative

discipline referrals and classroom discipline incidents.

Evaluation of this PBIS program focused on the program's desired outcomes as identified

by the program's stakeholders. These included reductions in overall student discipline referrals,

reductions in discipline gaps, improvement in teacher perception of school-wide student

discipline practice, and improvement in student perception of disciplinary equity.

Study Questions

This study examined four questions. Those questions were as follows:

1. To what extent did the program affect overall student discipline referrals?

2. To what extent did the program affect discipline gaps (racial disproportionality) in student discipline?

3. To what extent did the program affect teacher perceptions and practices with regard to student discipline?

4. To what extent did the program affect student perceptions of discipline practices?

Limitations of the Study

Because this study was situated in a setting utilizing school-wide PBIS, it was not

possible to conduct the evaluation utilizing a randomized experimental design. All students were

exposed to the PBIS program, and no control group existed. To counter this limitation, this

study focused on the numeric and demographic change, if any, in schoolwide student discipline

referrals at the conclusion of the study as compared exclusively to pre-program data. Additional

design and contextual limitations were related to the presence of the primary investigator as the

assistant principal in the school in which the study was situated. These limitations were

countered through the triangulation of multiple data measures and the anonymization of student

discipline referral data, staff survey data, and student interview data. Study limitations are

discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Definitions of Key Terms

Achievement Gap - The difference in academic outcomes among students of varied ethnic

and socioeconomic backgrounds (Gregory et al., 2010).

Discipline Gap - Racial disparities in school discipline practice which result in the

disproportionate removal from classroom instruction or suspension from school of minority

students (Gregory et al., 2010).

Exclusionary Discipline - School discipline practices, such as classroom exclusion

(hallway seating or removal to another room), referral to the office, in-school suspension, or out-

of-school suspension, which remove a student from the classroom for any period of time.

Minority Students - Students from African American, Hispanic/Latino, or Native

American Backgrounds (Nichols, 2004).

Outcome - The state of the target population or the social conditions that a program is

expected to have changed (Rossi et al., 2004).

Restorative Justice/Restorative Practice - An approach to student discipline that engages

all parties in a balanced practice that brings together all people impacted by an issue or behavior

(González, 2012).

Risk Index - The proportion of a student subgroup that is at risk of a particular outcome, in this case a student discipline referral (Boneshefski & Runge, 2013).

Risk Ratio - The relative risk of a target group compared with the risk of a comparison group (usually the majority subgroup within a given setting) (Boneshefski & Runge, 2013).

School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (SWPBIS, PBIS, or PBS) - The application of positive behavioral intervention and organization-wide systems to achieve socially important behavior change. Critical components include: (1) setting consensus-driven behavior expectations; (2) teaching critical interpersonal skills; (3) providing systematic positive reinforcement for meeting and exceeding performance criteria; (4) monitoring intervention efficacy continuously through data collection and analysis; (5) involving all stakeholders in the formulation of student discipline practices; and (6) reducing and eliminating reactive, punitive, and exclusionary strategies in favor of a proactive, preventive and skill-building orientation (Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005).

School-to-Prison Pipeline - The relationship between lack of school success, school disengagement, and involvement in the criminal justice system, particularly as experienced by minority students (Rocque & Paternoster, 2011).

Zero-Tolerance Policy - A "zero tolerance policy" is a school or district policy that mandates predetermined consequences or punishments for specific offenses that are intended to be applied regardless of the seriousness of the behavior, mitigating circumstances, or situational context (González, 2012).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A significant body of educational research and study has been devoted over at least the past four decades to academic achievement gaps across racial and socioeconomic categories (Gregory et al., 2010). More recently, researchers and educational professionals have begun to document and discuss the "discipline gap," and significant evidence has established that minority students, particularly African American males, are subject to disproportionate discipline, and particularly to suspension, nationwide (Gregory et al., 2010; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Raffaele Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). These discussions have led, in turn, to consideration of the likely effect of these discipline practices on student achievement in the affected subgroups (Gregory et al., 2010; Kinsler, 2013). Researchers have universally concluded that suspensions and office discipline referrals which result in time away from class can only have an adverse effect on student achievement (Arcia, 2006; Davis & Jordan, 1994). In addition to the obvious loss of exposure to direct instruction and in-class learning, students who are repeatedly referred to the office or suspended are likely to disconnect from school and to lose motivation and self-confidence (Gregory et al., 2010).

The vast majority of discipline gap study to date has focused on the middle and high school setting, where suspensions are significantly more common than in elementary school. Study findings showing a correlation between student discipline practices and academic achievement are likely to be mirrored, if not exacerbated, in the elementary school setting, where students gain crucial foundational skills. Our own data show that our most frequently referred students are also among our most needy students from an academic standpoint, and additionally that these students frequently face challenges related to home and family circumstances.

Without changes in discipline policy at school, these students will continue to face a cycle of struggle and failure (Myers, Milne, Baker, & Ginsburg, 1987).

As an additional factor, we know that students develop crucial tethers to school beginning in the elementary years. These connections are vital to keeping students in school, and are ultimately strong indicators for academic, social and emotional success (Catalano, Habberty, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004). The creation of a school climate where all students, regardless their race, gender or socioeconomic status, can succeed has been, and should be, a primary stated purpose of public education (Debnam, Johnson, Waasdorp, & Bradshaw, 2014). Student perceptions of equity and fairness in their school can affect their motivation, effort and connection with their teacher (Marsh & Overall, 1980; Marsh & Roche, 1997). Ultimately, strong tethers to school contribute to student engagement, which correlates positively with academic achievement (Debnam et al., 2014). Elementary school discipline policies which lack equity and which systematically remove students from and thus devalue academic instruction, have the potential to damage student perceptions of school, and to weaken vital tethers to school for already at-risk students (Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013; Nichols, 2004).

Review of Literature

The Existence of the Discipline Gap

The study of racial/ethnic disparities in school discipline practice, particularly at the secondary level, gained popularity beginning in 1975, when the issue was first raised through a Children's Defense Fund study revealing that African American students nationwide were then overrepresented, by nearly 300% of their enrollment rate, in school suspensions at the secondary level (Children's Defense Fund, 1975). Current literature overwhelmingly supports the existence of race-based discipline gaps at both elementary and secondary school levels (Arcia, 2006;

Gregory et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2002). Although several studies have focused on Asian American or Native American students, the vast majority of the literature is devoted to distinctions in disciplinary practice among white and African American students (Gregory et al., 2010). Examination of suspension rates tends to show the disparate treatment of African American students most profoundly, while the inclusion of all exclusionary discipline practices reveals disproportionality involving Hispanic and Native American students, as well (Arcia, 2006; Gregory et al., 2010). Consistent research during the past four decades has established that African American students, in particular, are significantly more likely than their white peers to be subjected to office discipline referrals, exclusion from the classroom, suspension and expulsion (Gregory et al., 2010; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Skiba et al., 2002). Additionally, while suspension and expulsion rates declined between 1991 and 2005 for most minority student groups, they increased for African American students (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008).

Nichols (2004) began his study on discipline gaps by noting that the Gallop Poll of the Public Attitudes Toward the Public Schools has since its inception in 1969 revealed the public's concern with school discipline and the effect of student behavior on academic achievement. Nichols (2004) acknowledged that "poor student behavior impedes learning . . . and sets the stage for an ineffective educational environment" (p. 408). In addition, Nichols (2004) noted that responsive discussions had focused on "the disproportionate number of misbehavior incidents among minority students" (p. 408), as well as on the disparity in consequences effected among minority students and their white counterparts. Nichols' (2004) study utilized K-12 suspension and discipline data from a large Midwestern school system, and involved the examination of this data for inconsistencies and inequities in disciplinary procedures among

majority and minority students. Data revealed that minority student incident reports accounted for a disproportionate percentage of total discipline incidents and, more significantly, that minority students were twice as likely as majority students to receive out-of-school suspension as a disciplinary consequence (Nichols, 2004).

Examining discipline gaps, mainly at secondary school levels, Fenning and Rose (2007) summarized research dating to 1975 to establish the disparate treatment of African American students, particularly African American males, with regard to suspension and expulsion. These authors noted that research was inconsistent regarding other minority groups (e.g. Hispanics), but that exclusionary discipline was used in a similarly disparate fashion with students of poverty and struggling students regardless their ethnic background (Fenning & Rose, 2007). Fenning and Rose (2007) found that the overrepresentation of students of color in both poverty and struggling student categories resulted in the disparate use of classroom and school exclusion for these students.

Multiple authors have noted that disparities in disciplinary referrals for minority students are particularly pronounced for subjective infractions such as "disrespect" or "class disturbance" (Rocque, 2010; Rocque & Paternoster, 2011; Skiba et al., 2002; Theriot & Dupper, 2010). Examining the elementary to middle school transition for a large student cohort, Theriot and Dupper (2010) found a significant increase in overall discipline referrals, together with an increase in disproportionality among minority and white students, as the cohort moved from fifth to sixth grade. Additionally, Theriot and Dupper (2010) found that this disproportionality was even greater for subjective infractions.

Skiba et al. (2011) found a similar disproportionality in discipline referrals for both subjective and "objective" infractions in their examination of data from 364 elementary and

middle schools. Reviewing discipline referral data for pattern and practice, Skiba et al. (2011) found that African American students were 2.19 times more likely than their white peers at the elementary school level and 3.78 times more likely than their white peers at the middle school level to be referred to the office for similar behaviors. Additionally, these authors found that African American and Latino students were significantly more likely than white students to be disciplined through the use of exclusionary consequences, and that disproportionality was most evident for subjective disciplinary infractions such as defiance, disrespect or non-compliance (Skiba et al., 2011).

Rocque and Paternoster (2011) reviewed survey responses and discipline data from 22,000 students at 45 forty-five elementary schools in a large suburban/urban/rural consolidated school district. Their findings were consistent with prior research regarding racial disparities in exclusionary discipline; however, they found additionally that this disparate trend was exaggerated in schools with higher percentages of African American students (Rocque & Paternoster, 2011). Rocque and Paternoster (2011) found that African American students were more likely to receive discipline referrals and more likely to be subjected to exclusionary discipline practices, even when the study was controlled for differences in behavior, student demeanor or personality.

As a corollary to disparities in disciplinary consequences, Vincent, Tobin, Hawken and Frank (2012) also found that African American students tend to receive disparate intervention and support. Vincent et al. (2012) reviewed the significant body of research establishing the existence of discipline gaps, and utilized discipline data from 155 elementary and 46 middle schools to assess the provision of secondary intervention and support. Their review found that African American students were over-represented, as compared to white and Hispanic students,

among students with multiple discipline referrals, but that these students were less likely than their peers, at the middle school level, to receive secondary intervention and support (Vincent et al., 2012). "Secondary support" was assessed as effective at reducing subsequent behavior referrals, and was defined by the authors to involve (1) continuous availability; (2) increased adult contact; and (3) increased monitoring of behavioral performance (Vincent et al., 2012, p. 433).

Potential Explanations for the Discipline Gap

Researchers have generally discussed three potential reasons for the disproportionality in behavior incident reporting for African American students. These include: (1) the actual tendency of minority students and/or students of poverty to engage in a greater number of inappropriate behaviors, for a variety of cultural or behavioral reasons; (2) the intentional or unintentional application by teachers and school authorities of stereotypes and biased cultural expectations; and (3) cross-cultural misunderstanding (Kinsler, 2011; Nichols, 2004; Rong, 1996).

Individual student characteristics. The idea that individual characteristics of minority students and resultant actual behaviors might explain the discipline gap gained some popularity among educational organizations in the early 2000s (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2000). Researchers examining this theory have generally focused on: (1) student socioeconomic status; (2) low achievement and academic struggle; and (3) differential behavior (Gregory et al., 2010).

Student socioeconomic status. Research has generally supported a connection between student socioeconomic status, and particularly income level, and school behavior; however, the

29

majority of researchers agree that socioeconomic status is not sufficient, standing alone, to explain the discipline gap (Fenning & Rose, 2007).

Multiple studies have demonstrated that students living in high-poverty areas, particularly in urban settings, experience adversity such as violence, drugs, and abuse (Brantlinger, 1991; Gregory et al., 2010). Studies have failed, however, to link these experiences to increases in problem behaviors in the school setting (Rocque, 2010; Wallace, 2008), though some have suggested that the customs and norms associated with high-poverty neighborhoods might lead students to struggle with expectations and norms in school settings (Dance, 2002).

McCarthy and Hoge (1987) utilized longitudinal data to analyze potential explanations for disparities in school punishment among African American and white students. Although they found that socioeconomic status was a predictor for disruptive behavior and exclusionary discipline, this did not alone explain the discipline gap, as the data revealed that African American students tended to be punished more severely for similar behaviors (McCarthy & Hoge, 1987).

Brantlinger (1991) conducted interviews with middle and high school students regarding their reactions to school discipline. In the Brantlinger (1991) study, both low-income and high-income students reported that low-income students were unfairly targeted for exclusionary and other harsh disciplinary consequences. Additionally, there was a clear distinction in the types of discipline reported by the two groups. While high-income students reported receiving mild disciplinary sanctions, such as reprimands and seat reassignment, low-income students reported harsher sanctions, such as being yelled at in front of the class or being forced to stand in the hall all day, for similar behavioral infractions (Brantlinger, 1991).

Skiba et al. (2002) analyzed a year's worth of middle school discipline data from an urban school district to explore various hypotheses for the discipline gap. The authors acknowledged prior research establishing that low-income students are at greater risk for school suspension, but also noted that the sole study to that point which had controlled for socioeconomic status (Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982) still revealed race as the prominent factor in exclusionary discipline in all settings except rural high schools (Skiba et al., 2002). Skiba et al. utilized statistical controls for socioeconomic status and reported that significant racial disparities nonetheless remained (Skiba et al., 2002).

Wallace et al. (2008) conducted a similar study, controlling for individual student factors by including student reports of parental education, family structure, and neighborhood setting. The study revealed that socioeconomic status was a factor in predicting the likelihood of exclusionary discipline and was mildly contributory to discipline gaps (Wallace et al., 2008). However, the authors concluded that race remained the single most significant factor in predicting office discipline referral and exclusionary discipline even after statistically controlling for socioeconomic status (Wallace et al., 2008).

Rocque (2010) examined office discipline referral data for students in 45 elementary schools, analyzing the effect of race while controlling for school-level influences, individual student factors and ratings of student behavior. Rocque (2010) found that African American students were significantly more likely than other students to be referred to the office than other groups for similar behaviors, and he concluded that socioeconomic status alone was insufficient to explain the gap, though this did have a relevant effect (Rocque, 2010).

Skiba et al. (2011) examined in detail the possibility that race-based disparities in exclusionary discipline were related primarily to socio-economic disadvantage. The authors

31

reviewed various articles suggesting that African American students are overexposed to "the stressors of poverty" and are thus "more likely to be undersocialized with respect to school norms and rules" (p. 101). Skiba et al. (2011) argued against this proposition, noting that the discipline referrals tending to lead to the most disparate treatment of African American students were "disruption" and "non-compliance" – infractions requiring the subjective interpretation of teachers (p.101).

Low academic achievement. The persistent achievement gap between African American and Hispanic students and their Asian and white peers is well-documented in the United States (Gregory et al., 2010; Zhbanova, Rule, & Stichter, 2015), and several studies have considered the potential link between academic struggle and poor behavior. McCarthy and Hoge (1987) acknowledged the lower achievement of the African American students in their study, but also documented teacher bias in the perception of student achievement and behavior probabilities. They concluded that poor grades and past behavior infractions influenced teacher perceptions of current behavior in African American students, leading as a social construct to more severe punishment for African American students (McCarthy & Hoge, 1987).

Miles and Stipek (2006) studied a group of low-income children from kindergarten through fifth grade to measure the connection between social skill development, behavior, and literacy skill development. They found poor literacy achievement in the early grades to be a strong predictor of aggression in later primary grades (Miles & Stipek, 2006). The authors suggested that continual academic struggle may lead to frustration and low self-esteem, and that this may contribute to tendencies to engage in disruptive behavior (Miles & Stipek, 2006).

Additional studies have duplicated the results obtained by Miles and Stipek (2006), and it is generally well-accepted that low academic achievement is related to increased behavioral

difficulties (Arcia, 2006; Gregory et al., 2010). However, most researchers generally agree that low achievement is not sufficient to explain the discipline gap as a standalone issue, given that controls for academic achievement do not eliminate evidence of discipline gaps (McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Miles & Stipek, 2006; Myers, Milne, Baker, & Ginsburg, 1987).

  Differential behavior. An additional potential explanation for discipline gaps is that minority students, or at least students from certain ethnic backgrounds, engage in significantly more behaviors warranting exclusionary discipline than do students from other ethnic groups. Various early studies utilizing student self-reports of misbehavior, however, failed to find greater rates of misbehavior for African American students (McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986; Wu et al., 1982). Skiba et al. (2002) noted these studies, and further opined that "[t]he ideal test of [the hypothesis that discipline gaps represent actual differential behavior] would be to compare observed student behavior with school disciplinary data" (p. 325). Because this type of data was unavailable, Skiba et al. (2002) compared the types of behavior for which various student groups were referred to the office. Although the data revealed higher rates of office discipline referral for African American students, they failed to reveal evidence that African American students engaged in greater or more serious misbehavior (Skiba et al., 2002). Instead, the data revealed differences in the *types* of behavior for which white and African American students received discipline referrals (Skiba et al., 2002). White students were most often referred to the office for smoking, leaving without permission, obscene language, and vandalism, while African American students were more likely to be referred to the office for disrespect, excessive noise, threat, and loitering (Skiba et al., 2002). Comparing these data sets, Skiba et al. (2002) concluded that African American students were typically subjected to

exclusionary discipline based on subjective determinations of misbehavior, while white students were referred primarily for objective and verifiable misbehaviors (Skiba et al., 2002).

Gregory and Weinstein (2008) noted that "authority conflicts" between students and teachers comprise the largest category of referred offenses in middle and high schools, and that African American students are subjected most commonly to exclusionary discipline as the result of "defiance." The authors reviewed and considered research regarding "resistance theory" – the idea that African American students "may employ 'right to respect' coping strategies or exude a tough façade in response to explicit or implicit racism in schools" (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008, p. 457). Additionally, they noted that recent research had suggested that African American students are particularly susceptible to expectancy processes related to their teachers' underestimation of their ability, and that students respond more positively to adults whom they trust (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). The authors first reviewed discipline data from a diverse urban high school, finding the significantly disproportionate discipline referral of African American students in this category (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). Next, the authors invited defiance-referred students, referring teachers, and student-nominated trusted teachers to participate in the second stage of the study (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). Stage 2 involved the completion of survey packets focusing on classroom behavior, teacher caring, teacher expectations, and student trust in and obligation to teacher authority (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). The study revealed that teachers perceived African American students as more defiant and rule-breaking than other student groups; however, referred students did not behave defiantly with all teachers, but engaged in this behavior primarily with teachers they did not trust, whom they perceived as uncaring, or who they felt maintained low academic expectations for them (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). The authors interpreted the study data to show "that perceptions

34

of teachers as caring and holding high expectations predicted student trust in and obligation to teacher authority" (p. 470), and they suggested that the notion of "authoritative guidance" (p. 470) is conceptually useful to the school setting (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008).

Horner, Fireman, and Wang (2010) sought to extend prior research by exploring the connection between student peer relationships, or socialization, and discipline decisions. Horner et al. (2010) began with a review of literature showing the connection between disciplinary action and subsequent misbehavior, academic disengagement, lowered achievement, diminished self-esteem, and increased drop-out potential. Horner et al. (2010) examined data which included peer ratings of aggressive and prosocial behavior, peer status as reported by teachers and administrators, and demographic characteristics of a diverse sample of 1,493 elementary school students. Although the authors were not specifically looking for racial bias, their results showed overwhelmingly that, even when controlling for peer ratings of aggression and actual aggressive behaviors, race was the single most predictor for "serious disciplinary action," and that "being African American was associated with a significantly higher likelihood of discipline in comparison to the other races sampled" (Horner et al., 2010, p. 154). The authors found this result to be "consistent with [the] overall picture that cultural stereotypes and biases about race may influence teacher and administrator discipline decisions" (Horner et al., 2010, p. 155). They suggested that teachers might anticipate greater defiance or non-compliance from African American students, and that this presumptive bias may lead teachers "to notice misbehaviors more often from an African American student than a student from another race" (Horner et al., 2010, p. 155). The authors also noted the possibility that teachers may feel more threatened by the misbehavior of African American students than by that of white students, and that this might lead to harsher discipline (Horner et al., 2010).

Teacher bias and cultural misunderstanding. As early as 1975, studies suggested that teachers' ratings of student behavior tended to vary in predictable ways based on the race of the teacher and student (Eaves, 1975). Eaves (1975) examined teacher ratings of 458 fourth- and fifth-grade boys on a Behavior Problem Checklist measuring 55 common behavior problems. Eaves' analysis revealed that, while African American teachers' ratings did not differ statistically based on student race, white teachers consistently rated African American students as more deviant than white students (Eaves, 1975). Eaves noted the possibility that white teachers might be more susceptible to racial stereotyping, as well as the possibility that behavior ratings might be accurate but based on classroom interactions between races (Eaves, 1975). Eaves (1975) further noted the backdrop of the civil rights movement as a potentially causative factor in the perceptions and responses of white teachers.

Rong (1996) examined the combined effects of race and gender on teacher perception of student behavior by analyzing data from 984 white and African American teachers who rated the behaviors of 6- to 11-year-old African American and white students utilizing the Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC). Rong (1996) concluded that "teachers' perceptions of students' social behaviors are a result of complex interactions of student and teacher characteristics" (p. 278). Data revealed that teachers tended to rate students who shared their own race or gender more highly than other students (Rong, 1996). White female teachers rated white female students the highest, followed by African American female, white male, and African American male students (Rong, 1996). African American female teachers rated African American female students the highest, followed by white female, African American male, and white male students (Rong, 1996). Regardless of teachers' race, shared gender identity had

stronger effect than shared race (Rong, 1996). Rong (1996) interpreted these results as supportive of the crucial importance of a culturally diverse teaching force.

Noltemeyer, Kunesh, Hostutler, Frato and Sarr-Kerman (2012) extended Rong's research through the development and analysis of a teacher survey containing questions about a defiant student behavioral incident and the teacher's likely response. Noltemeyer et al. (2012) utilized various student names to imply different gender and ethnicity combinations, administering a pilot survey to 135 preservice teachers and a final survey to 57 practicing teachers. The study did not identify any definitive trends based solely on the implied student race and ethnicity; however, Noltemeyer et al. (2012) found that teacher characteristics were significant. Specifically, the study revealed that less experienced teachers were more likely to address behaviors directly than were their more experienced peers (Noltemeyer et al., 2012). The authors addressed the lack of apparent racial and gender bias, acknowledging that prior research had noted a general lack of bias when utilizing vignettes as opposed to analyzing real-life data (Noltemeyer et al., 2012). Noltemeyer et al. (2012) theorized that cultural mismatch might be more responsible for discipline gaps than bias, or that respondents may have been concerned with being perceived as biased, responding "out of concern for the way their answers would be interpreted" (p. 105). In addition to distinctions based on teacher experience, Noltemeyer et al (2012) noted varied disciplinary response based on implied student gender. Teachers were more likely to utilize punishment with female students, and they more often suggested that the behaviors of male students were attributable "to issues at home" (Noltemeyer et al., 2012, p. 105).

In a study of note for its unusual findings, Ishii-Jordan (2000) analyzed middle school teacher survey data regarding choice of behavioral intervention in similar scenarios involving

hypothetical students of varied ethnic backgrounds. The study found a distinction in the use of

exclusionary and punishing discipline based on student race; however, in the particular context

of the study, which was set in an unidentified mid-western state, teachers tended to utilize

exclusionary discipline most prominently with Asian-American students than with white,

Hispanic or African American students (Ishii-Jordan, 2000). As a potential explanation for this

disparity, Ishii-Jordan (2000) examined research indicating that teachers tend to select punitive

or exclusionary discipline as a response to overt behaviors which interfere with the teacher's own

sense of control or which generate emotional responses (anger, frustration) in the teacher herself.

The author noted that prior research has associated emotional restraint and internalized behavior

with Asian Americans and externalized (disruptive) behaviors with African Americans, and

acknowledged that this research was somewhat inconsistent with the findings of her study. She

hypothesized that her findings were influenced by the demographics of the subject region, which

was prominently white and Hispanic. Asian-American students in the region tended to be lower

in socioeconomic status, and the author noted that prior researchers have found punitive

discipline to be utilized more often with students in lower socioeconomic groups. Based on her

own study and on the research cited, Ishii-Jordan (2000) concluded that "racial and ethnic labels

have some influence over the types of interventions teachers use" (p. 307), and that teachers may

be more tolerant of students who are members of ethnic groups with which the teachers are more

comfortable or familiar. She suggested that teacher training programs include disciplinary best

practices, and that further research should focus on the potential connection between

"unconscious stereotypes or firmly held beliefs" and teacher choice in disciplinary practice

(Ishii-Jordan, 2000).

Chang and Sue (2003) conducted a study similar to Ishii-Jordan's, presenting teachers with behavior incident descriptions paired with a photograph and brief description of a white, Asian, or African American fourth grade boy. Teachers were asked to rate the level and typicality of the behavior, and were asked to provide their perceptions regarding the student's family life, academic performance, and behavior causality. Although the study failed to show bias in the ratings of African American students, the data revealed the existence of stereotypes related to the behavior traits of Asian students and to the propensities of their parents (Chang & Sue, 2003).

Downey and Pribesh (2004) reviewed national data, seeking to determine whether matching between teacher and student race had any effect on teachers' perceptions of student behavior. Looking at discipline data from two nationally representative data sets – one including kindergarten students and one including eighth graders – the authors found that the tendency for African American students' behavior to be rated lower than that of white students was eliminated when matching student and teacher race (Downey & Pribesh, 2004). The authors found that, "once black students and white students are both placed with same-race teachers, . . . black students' classroom behavior is rated *more favorably* than white students' (Downey & Pribesh, 2004, p. 277). The authors acknowledged prior research suggesting the existence of "oppositional culture," in which black students are more likely to resist white teachers than they are to resist black teachers, but concluded that data similarities among both student groups suggested that white teacher bias (the failure of white teachers to recognize black cultural styles), rather than oppositional culture, was the more likely explanation for the matching effect (Downey & Pribesh, 2004).

Utilizing summarized research, ethnographic studies, school staff and student interviews, and analysis of various school discipline policies, Fenning and Rose (2007) posited that discipline gaps, primarily affecting poor students of color, are related to teacher perceptions and fear of loss of classroom control. These authors utilized studies focusing on qualitative and anecdotal evidence to suggest that an improvement in cultural understanding among teachers and students are "critical in preventing and responding to common sources of discipline referrals that ultimately lead to the removal of students of color from the school setting" (p. 553). Fenning and Rose (2007) suggested that teachers tended to misunderstand the social exchanges and behavior responses of students "who are not seen as fitting into the norms of the school," (p. 555), and that this disconnect led to the over-use of exclusionary discipline.

Rocque and Paternoster (2011) similarly posited that race-based discipline disparities were related to teacher perceptions or "racial threat" within schools (p. 663). These authors found that disciplinary disproportionality was heightened in schools with greater percentages of African American students, and argued that this finding was "consistent with the . . . hypothesis that an increase in the minority population can be perceived as menacing by racial majorities who respond to the perceived menace with more stringent means of social control" (Rocque & Paternoster, 2011, p. 663).

Shirley and Cornell (2012) sought to examine whether discipline gaps might be explained in whole or in part by differing perceptions of white and minority students regarding the availability of help at school, the prevalence of bullying, and peer attitudes toward aggression. The authors conducted a survey-based study including 400 suburban public middle school students in Virginia. Students completed the School Climate Bullying Survey, and Shirley and Cornell (2012) analyzed both the survey results and student discipline data. Consistent with

prior research, the authors found a significant disparity in discipline referrals for African American students (Shirley & Cornell, 2012). Additionally, they found that students who endorsed higher levels of aggressive attitudes were more likely to receive discipline referrals, and that students who felt less supported by the teachers and adults in their school were more likely to be referred (Shirley & Cornell, 2012). When controlling for school climate factors, however, race remained the most predictive factor for disciplinary referral (Shirley & Cornell, 2012). The authors suggested, based on their research and on prior research suggesting the influence of racial bias and cultural misunderstanding in disciplinary decisions, that disengagement from school, lack of commitment to school, and frustration with school may be significant factors linked to misconduct (Shirley & Cornell, 2012).

The Effects of Discipline Gaps

Significant research has also focused on the effect of disparate discipline on minority students. Not surprisingly, there is overwhelming evidence that exclusionary discipline practices result in reduced academic growth for affected students (Arcia, 2006; Bowman-Perrot & Lewis, 2008; Gregory et al., 2010). Additionally, research has consistently revealed that exclusionary discipline does not result in improved student behavior, that repeatedly disciplined students tend to engage in repeated misbehavior, and that exclusionary discipline likely contributes to dropout rates (Shirley & Cornell, 2012).

Arcia (2006) examined pre-suspension and post-suspension academic and enrollment data for two demographically matched student cohorts in a large urban school district over three years. Cohort 1 included students who had received at least one suspension, while Cohort 2 included students with no suspensions. The study revealed both lower pre-suspension achievement for the Cohort 1 students, and an increased achievement gap for these students at

year 3 (Arcia, 2006). While the Cohort 1 students were already three grade levels behind their non-suspended peers at the outset of the study, they were five grade levels behind by the conclusion of the study (Arcia, 2006).

Significant research has also revealed the lack of efficacy of exclusionary discipline practice, and particularly of suspension. Raffaele Mendez (2003) conducted a longitudinal study utilizing suspension and achievement data from a cohort of students entering kindergarten in 1989 and projected to graduate in 2002. His findings were consistent with prior research revealing the over-representation of African American students among suspensions, and he also noted a particular disparity in the suspension rates of African American boys receiving special education services (over two-thirds of these students received at least one suspension by sixth grade, and over half received two or more) (Raffaele Mendez, 2003). The study revealed that students who were suspended in elementary school tended to receive additional suspensions in middle and high school, and that early suspension was a strong predictor for continued behavior referrals. Raffaele Mendez (2003) concluded that (1) suspension alone does not change or deter future behavior; and (2) suspension is a strong predictor for academic struggle and drop-out potential.

Notable for its conclusions contrary to those of the vast majority of similar research is Kinsler's 2013 discipline gap analysis. Kinsler (2013) utilized out-of-school suspension data from three of North Carolina's largest school districts – Wake County, Forsyth County, and Guilford County – to estimate the relationship between discipline and school achievement. Kinsler (2013) utilize middle school data, based on his assertion that "prior to middle school, students are for the most part well behaved and discipline is less of a concern" (p. 359). Without research or evidentiary support, Kinsler (2013) begins his report with the proposition that "[t]he

threat of a lengthy suspension can reduce infractions, leading to increased achievement for students who are on the margin of committing an offense" (p. 356), and he advocates "strict discipline" by arguing that "[l]onger suspensions reduce poor behavior in school" (p. 373). He also, however, discredits the entire body of prior research establishing the detrimental academic effect of exclusionary discipline by positing that it is not suspensions, but instead the decision of students to engage in repeat violations which incur continued suspensions, which accounts for the achievement gap (Kinsler, 2013). Based on his data review, Kinsler (2013) posits that "the threat of suspension deters students from ever committing an infraction" and that "losing classroom time as a result of suspension has a small negative impact on [academic] performance" (p. 382). Kinsler (2013) cites his own 2011 study as evidence that racial bias plays no part in disciplinary consequences, claiming that "a principal's choice of punishment is primarily driven [only] by the type of offense committed and whether the student has committed any offenses in the past" (p. 360). Ultimately, Kinsler's conclusions, without citation or peer research support, are that "male students, minority students, and students from poorly educated households are significantly more likely to be disruptive in school" (p. 375), that integration reduces achievement gaps only because diversity policies distribute "disruptive students . . . more evenly across schools" (p. 358), that "race and poor behavior are strongly correlated" (p. 360), and that "a school district seeking to maximize achievement should concentrate the most poorly behaved students in one school" (p. 381). Not surprisingly, Kinsler's work is not widely-cited or relied upon by researchers in the field.

The Importance and Effect of School Connectedness

Consistent research has established the importance of student engagement and connection to school for both behavioral and academic success (Brown & Evans, 2002; Hawkins, Smith, &

43

Catalano, 2004). Students who are bonded to school become more invested in their own success and are significantly less likely to engage in disruptive or delinquent behaviors (Hawkins et al., 2004). Although a significant body of work establishes the importance of school connection, less research has established the processes through which students develop tethers to school (Brown & Evans, 2002).

Brown and Evans (2002) examined the potential for the development of school connectedness through participation in extracurricular activities. They conducted interviews with a diverse sample of students from two large urban school districts in California, focusing on student perceptions of school connection, extracurricular activity participation (sports, fine arts, school-based clubs, out-of-school clubs), student ethnicity and student background (Brown & Evans, 2002). These data confirmed prior findings regarding the positive correlation between participation in extracurricular activities and connectedness to school, and revealed that the most significant correlation was with sports and fine arts activities (Brown & Evans, 2002). Additionally, the study revealed that the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and school connectedness was the same regardless of socioeconomic status or ethnicity (Brown & Evans, 2002). However, participation rates for minority students in extracurricular activities were significantly lower than those for their white and Asian peers, and the authors thus stressed the importance of developing strategies to increase extracurricular involvement by these at-risk student groups (Brown & Evans, 2002).

Sheldon and Epstein (2002) examined the effect of family and community involvement in schools through two rounds of data collection at 47 schools participating in efforts to increase family and community involvement. Participating schools provided baseline and follow-up survey responses regarding student behavior, student discipline, and the overall quality of the

school-family-community partnership program (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002). Based on the survey

data, Sheldon and Epstein (2002) concluded that parental involvement and volunteering were

effective in reducing the percentages of students receiving disciplinary actions. The authors

noted as important the participating schools' commitment to parent and community partnerships

and beliefs about the effectiveness of family and community connections to school (Sheldon &

Epstein, 2002).

Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, and Hawkins (2004) investigated the

development of school tethers through the examination of data compiled in two longitudinal

studies conducted beginning in 1981 by the Seattle Social Development Project and Raising

Healthy Children. Participating teachers, parents and students were interviewed each year from

first grade through tenth grade, again the students' senior year, and again at ages 21, 24 and 27.

Additionally various interventions, such as teacher training in instructional methods and direct

teaching of social skills, were implemented and maintained (Catalano et al., 2004). Catalano et

al. (2004) analyzed the significant data to reinforce prior research on the positive impact of

school bonding as regards behavior, academic performance and social competence.

Additionally, the studies revealed the value of various interventions designed to promote school

bonding: active learning, student-directed learning, direct teaching of social and emotional

skills, and an intentional focus on student connectedness to school (Catalano et al., 2004).

In a follow-up report on the Seattle Social Development Project studies, Hawkins et al.

(2007) reported that the positive results of the intervention study continued well past the

participants' graduation from high school. At graduation, participants reported better grades and

achievement, significantly less misbehavior, less exposure to violence and drugs, and less

involvement in sexual activity than the control group (Hawkins et al., 2007). At age 21,

45

participants were significantly less likely to have been involved in a variety of crimes, to have sold drugs, or to have received an official court charge (Hawkins et al., 2007).

Debnam, Johnson, Waasdorp, and Bradshaw (2014) examined the connection between student perceptions of school equity (the extent to which there is fair treatment for all students) in relation to their perceptions of connectedness and engagement within their school. Utilizing student survey data from 52 Maryland high schools, Debnam et al. (2014) found that student perception of equity was crucial to the development of connection to and engagement in school. Schools with higher minority student populations had lower reports of student connectedness, as did schools with greater student transience (Debnam et al., 2014). Interestingly, even in schools with high suspension rates, students reported strong connectedness to school where they also reported a strong sense of equity (Debnam et al., 2014).

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support: Elements of PBIS Systems

Sugai and Horner (2006) conducted a significant proportion of the early research and development surrounding Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) as a school-wide system. PBIS, also referred to as School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) or Positive Behavior Support (PBS), was introduced in the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Although PBIS was initially established as research-based behavior management strategy for students with disabilities, it gained popularity for its application to all students (Sugai & Horner, 2006). PBIS focuses on efforts to both prevent and change problem behavior across school settings, and is guided by three primary considerations: (a) preventions, (b) theoretically sound and evidence-based practice, and (c) systems implementation (Sugai & Horner, 2006, p. 246.)

PBIS systems utilize a three-tiered preventative behavior support structure in which the primary tier focuses on the creation of school-wide and setting-specific expectations which are taught to all students and which involve students, teachers, families, and community members. PBIS emphasizes the direct teaching of setting-appropriate social skills and expectations, and the positive reinforcement of expected behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Additionally, PBIS involves the structure and arrangement of teaching and learning environments to discourage inappropriate behavior and maximize student success (Sugai & Horner, 2006). In the three-tiered PBIS system, secondary intervention is comprised of specific strategies which are applied to an anticipated 5%-10% of students who require more than primary support for social success (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Secondary interventions are more intense and require increased adult involvement, but are typically managed by the classroom teacher with minimal outside support (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Tertiary interventions, which typically involve special educators, school psychologists, counselors, and behavior interventionists, are developed as student-specific and comprehensive ("wrap-around") behavior intervention plans for an anticipated 1%-5% of students (Sugai & Horner, 2006).

Sugai and Horner (2008) emphasized that PBIS is not consequence-based, but focuses on the establishment of "a social context that promotes and supports successful academic engagement" (p. 67). In further defining effective PBIS systems, Sugai and Horner (2008) noted the importance of "designing *and sustaining* teaching and learning environments that actively teach and promote contextually appropriate social behaviors and prevent the occurrence of norm- or rule-violating problem behaviors" (p. 67). In reviewing research regarding the implementation and efficacy of PBIS, Sugai and Horner (2008) noted the connection between improved behavior and school climate and academic achievement.

Efficacy of PBIS Systems

Researchers have long argued against the efficacy of no-tolerance discipline policies, and research has increasingly supported the value of whole-child theory and the intentional design of discipline practices (Sherrod & Getch, 2009; Ward, 1998). Prior to the formalization of PBIS systems, Ward (1998) explored the efficacy of varied discipline practices in the reduction of criminal behavior in schools in inner-city St. Louis, Missouri. She began with an examination of methods instituted by a Violence Task Force comprised of law enforcement and judicial system personnel following several high-profile instances of student-to-teacher violence (Ward, 1998). These included metal detectors, surveillance cameras, and an increase in security guards (Ward, 1998). Additionally, the act of striking a teacher or other school staff member was classified as a felony, and teachers were trained in response protocols (Ward, 1998). Ward (1998) proposed alternative responses, based on her work with an inner-city elementary school implementing proactive and comprehensive, rather than reactive and restrictive, solutions. Ward (1998) suggested measures which would "facilitate an inner locus of control and cooperation between students, school staff, parents, and the wider community focused on a common purpose" (p. 34). She proposed a proactive schoolwide approach focusing on "holding high expectations of all students; implementing engaging and appropriate educational activities; coaching for self-discipline, including instruction in conflict resolution skills; modeling appropriate behaviors; encouraging home-school linkages; and supporting multisystem and multisector community involvement" (Ward, 1998, p. 39).

Nelson, Martella, and Marchand-Martella (2002) evaluated a program similar to the one advocated by Ward (1998) in their review of an Effective Behavioral Support (EBS) policy in two elementary schools. Building on the work of Nelson (1996), who used EBS to develop a

48

SWPBIS system to improve the ability of elementary schools to address problem behaviors and maximize learning, the system analyzed by Nelson et al. (2002) focused on four main elements: (1) school-wide disciplinary practices; (2) school-wide classroom management procedures; (3) individualized student intervention plans; and (4) a leadership team to guide the program (Nelson et al., 2002). In addition, Nelson et al. (2002) incorporated a one-to-one reading tutoring program, conflict resolution training, and a video-based family management program. The participating schools experienced a significant decline in administrative disciplinary referrals, suspensions, emergency removals, while non-participating schools in the same district experienced an increase in these incidents (Nelson et al., 2002). Additionally, teachers expressed their support for and satisfaction with the program (Nelson et al., 2002).

Noguera (2003) examined "zero-tolerance" and punitive discipline policies as disparately applied to at-risk, primarily minority students. Based on anecdotal observations during his own work, as well as on a study of the experiences and perceptions of students at urban high schools, Noguera found that lack of academic expectation and lack of perception of teacher caring contributed to behavior issues, and that schools tended to focus on maintaining order and discipline, rather than on quality of instruction (Noguera 2003). The author argued that these policies and practices were directly responsible for the school-to-prison pipeline, and advocated for alternative disciplinary approaches which envisioned schools as extensions of families which focused on whole-child development (Noguera 2003).

Putnam, Luiselli, Handler, and Jefferson (2003) conducted two studies to investigate the effectiveness of post-referral behavioral interventions in an elementary school setting. In the initial study, discipline referrals from a one-year period were analyzed by type and distribution among teachers, students and grade levels. In the second study, the most-referred class and the

49

most frequently-referring teacher were provided with behavioral interventions, and subsequent discipline referrals were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the interventions utilized (Putnam et al., 2003). Interventions included teacher training in positive behavior reinforcement, the creation and class review of classroom rules, class creation of a list of preferred activities to incorporate into a program of positive reinforcement, and teacher training regarding a protocol to follow in giving instructions followed by positive reinforcement (Putnam et al., 2003). Following these interventions, behavior referrals from the targeted classroom decreased dramatically; however, the authors noted the significant size and unmatched cohort limitations of the study (Putnam et al, 2003).

Luiselli, Putnam, Handler and Feinberg (2005) reviewed meta-analyses of more than 800 studies involving school discipline protocols, concluding that the most effective programs incorporated social skills training, system-wide behavioral intervention, and modification to academic curricula. They noted that effective social skills training in this regard involved positive reinforcement and the establishment of positive social relationships between students and school staff (Luiselli et al., 2005). Luiselli et al. (2005) next reviewed student discipline and achievement data from a self-selected urban elementary school over three years throughout the implementation and application of a PBS behavior management system. The authors found that the implementation of the PBS system with fidelity led to a decrease in student discipline issues and to an increase in academic performance (Luiselli et al., 2005). As an explanation for the correlating increase in academic achievement, Luiselli et al. (2005) posited that "[r]educing student discipline problems should increase exposure to classroom instruction that, in turn, facilitates skill acquisition" (p. 193). As support for this proposition, Luiselli et al. (2005) cited a 2004 study calculating an average two-year net gain of 10,620 minutes (29.5 days) of

instructional time through a reduction in discipline referrals, and a 50 day gain when including suspensions.

Multiple subsequent studies focusing on the efficacy of SWPBIS/PBS systems have replicated the results reported by Luiselli et al. (2005) (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Green, 2009; Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008; Sherrod, Getch & Ziomek-Daigle, 2009). Muscott et al. (2008) evaluated the implementation of SWPBIS systems in 28 schools in a New Hampshire school district. In this study, SWPBIS resulted, in all settings, in significant reductions in exclusionary discipline incidents, in the recovery of significant instructional time, and in significant academic gains in math, with less significant academic improvement in language arts (Muscott et al., 2008).

Sherrod et al. (2009) evaluated PBS implementation in a single elementary school, focusing on the efficacy of the program to reduce discipline referrals. In addition to the schoolwide implementation of behavior expectations and the PBS model, secondary interventions in the form of a counseling group, called PRIDE (Positive Results in Discipline Education), were utilized for a target group of frequently-referred students. Following the initial program year, overall discipline referrals decreased by 26%, with discipline referrals in some categories decreasing by as much as 66% (Sherrod et al., 2009). Sherrod et al. (2009) lauded the efficacy of the program, but noted that results could have been affected by a change in the assistant principal during the course of the study.

Green (2009) participated as a district-level administrator in a study of the district-wide implementation of PBIS at the elementary and junior high levels in her Midwestern school district. Green (2009) reported on her involvement in the planning, implementation and analysis of the PBIS system, noting that the primary accomplishments of PBIS in her district were

common language, a unified approach, a decrease in discipline referrals, greater teacher supervision of students during transitions, a decrease in problem behaviors, and an increase in educational time. Green (2009) further reported that every school experienced a decrease in discipline referrals during the initial year of PBIS implementation, ranging from 21% - 44%.

Bradshaw et al. (2010) utilized data from a five-year longitudinal trial of SWPBIS conducted in 37 Maryland elementary schools to examine the impact of SWPBIS on exclusionary discipline practice and academic achievement. Participating schools were randomly assigned either to receive or not to receive SWPBIS training (Brandshaw et al., 2010). The study revealed strong and consistent implementation of SWPBIS in all schools following appropriate training, as well as significant reductions in exclusionary discipline and behavior reports in those schools (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Comparison schools included in the study did not receive training or implement SWPBIS, and these schools experienced no change in their rates of office discipline referral or suspension (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Although the authors set out to measure the impact of SWPBIS on academic achievement, this was hampered by the renorming of state tests in the second year of the study (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

PBIS and the Discipline Gap

Since the rise in popularity of PBIS systems, few studies have examined the effect of PBIS on the discipline gap. Boneshefski and Runge (2014) revisited discipline gap literature in their analysis of potential disparities in the application of PBIS to minority students. Boneshefski and Runge (2014) noted the consistent research establishing that African American students are four times more likely than their white peers to be suspended, and that Hispanic students are suspended and expelled at a rate twice that of their white peers (Rausch & Skiba, 2004). Although PBIS systems are designed to reduce the overall rate of exclusionary discipline

practices, Boneshefski and Runge (2014) found that African American students nonetheless continue to be subject to disproportionate office discipline referrals when compared to majority students. They suggested that schools analyze their PBIS data to determine whether disproportionality continues to occur, and that PBIS should be implemented in a culturally responsive manner (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014).

First, Boneshefski and Runge (2014) acknowledged the possibility that disproportionality might be related to actual disparities in misbehavior. They suggested that an appropriate response to disparate behavior in a SWPBIS system would be the revision of utilized interventions to assure cultural appropriateness (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). Additionally, the authors considered that disproportionality in discipline referrals might result from staff bias, suggesting professional development to include awareness of one's own culture and that of students, families, and the community, as well as professional development focusing on the validation of other cultures and interaction with students without bias (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). Additionally, Boneshefski and Runge (2014) suggested that "[t]he instructional techniques and resources used to teach the behavioral expectations and reinforcement systems must be culturally relevant to the students" (p. 153), and that this should include the use of teachers and staff of language "that is culturally compatible with their students" (p. 153). Boneshefski and Runge (2014) also addressed the possibility that disproportionality may result from cultural misunderstanding, or from teacher perception that student behavior is a factor of external influences beyond the school's control. They suggested that school expectations and behavioral practices are often different from those used in the homes of minority students, and that teachers and administrators should work with families when developing discipline interventions and practices (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). Finally, Boneshefski and Runge

(2014) suggested that disproportionality may result from a negative school climate, and they recommended the use of various instruments designed to gather climate data, followed by SWPBIS team development of a plan to respond to and address climate issues.

Cultural Responsiveness and Restorative Practice

Recognizing that PBIS is not necessarily a solution to the discipline gap, some researchers have proposed culturally responsive practices extending beyond those suggested by Boneshefski and Runge (2014). Pane (2010) compiled a significant literature review approaching teaching as an anthropological experience. She suggested viewing the classroom as a social community, and recommended culturally responsive pedagogy theory as a successful framework for developing classroom practices which will ensure the success of African American students (Pane 2010). Pane (2010) described culturally responsive pedagogy as being familiar with students' cultures, discovering students' strengths, and building on the unique strengths of each student (p. 89). According to Pane (2010), culturally responsive teachers are "warmly demanding," regarding student engagement and effort, and they engage in efforts to connect students' histories, cultures, and everyday lives to their classroom experiences. With regard to classroom discipline, Pane (2010) recommended that teachers approach discipline and classroom management, particularly with African American students, as a negotiable social practice through which students are included and integrated into a classroom society. Pane (2010) posited that "[v]iewing each classroom as a community of practice in which the teacher and . . . students . . . participate with each other and historically and generatively construct new cultural and societal forms of activity may transform the need for exclusionary discipline practices . . . (p. 95).

González (2012) examined the efficacy of punitive/zero tolerance discipline policies versus policies focusing on "restorative justice." In advocating for the broad inclusion of restorative justice practices in the school setting, González (2012) reviewed significant data establishing the "far-reaching negative impacts of zero-tolerance policies" (pp. 282-283). Citing statistics compiled by American Psychological Association's Zero Tolerance Task Force, González (2012) noted that "punitive discipline policies have led to a tripling of the national prison population from 1987 to 2007" (p. 283). Additionally, González (2012) reviewed data showing that exclusionary discipline practices and zero-tolerance policies are ineffective to deter or reduce problematic behaviors, but in fact perpetuate a cycle of failure and contribute to both delinquency and negative school climate.

The use of restorative justice programs in schools began with initiatives in Australia in the 1990s, but these practices have gained some momentum in the United States in the past decade (González, 2012). School-based restorative justice programs focus on the use of conferences, mediations, restorative dialogue, and circles "to repair the relationships between students, teachers, administrators, and the school community" (González, 2012, p. 286). Through these techniques, students are provided with opportunities to voice their opinions and to accept responsibility for their actions, and the goal is to include input from everyone involved in the conflict in determining the best method for resolution. González (2012) reviewed the implementation of restorative justice programs in school districts across twelve states, documenting positive outcomes in each case. Additionally, utilizing an extensive five-year case study located in a Denver, Colorado, high school, González (2012) documented extensive reductions in suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to law enforcement, as well as significant increases in the development of positive relationships between students, teachers and

administrators. She further reported that the school community had become "increasingly self-reflective and engaged" (González, 2012, pp. 334-335).

Student Perceptions of Equity and Efficacy in Discipline Practice

Multiple researchers have documented the chilling effect of disproportionality in discipline practice on student perception of and connectedness to school (Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013; Way, 2011). Rocque and Paternoster (2011) documented the disproportionate use of exclusionary discipline for African American students in a large consolidated school district, and also reviewed research related to the school-to-prison pipeline. They noted that "youths are likely to disengage from school and academic pursuits if they perceive negative information about themselves or their racial group within the school environment" (Rocque & Paternoster, 2011, p. 636). Additionally, Rocque and Paternoster (2011) found that student perceptions of racism or racial stereotypes employed by teachers led to poor performance and ultimately to detachment from the educational process. These authors argued that disciplinary disproportionality is directly responsible for "the school failure of African American students," that the school-to-prison pipeline "is not due to social class effects nor to the existence of some oppositional subculture whose values denigrate the value of a good education," and that "the actions of school officials themselves may be at least partially responsible for the academic failure all too often experienced by black students" (Rocque & Paternoster, 2011, p. 664).

Student perceptions of discipline practice, including perceptions of equity and appropriateness, are crucial to the effectiveness of disciplinary procedures (Lewis, 2001). Lewis (2001) examined student survey data from 42 primary and secondary schools. These revealed widespread student perceptions that teachers tended to respond to classroom behavior incidents with coercive or exclusionary discipline, rather than with behavior modification strategies

(Lewis, 2001). Additionally, the data revealed that students responded most positively to, and believed in the efficacy of, a social justice approach to misbehavior focusing on the provision of positive reinforcement and on the involvement of the students themselves in accepting responsibility and determining appropriate reactions to misbehavior (Lewis, 2001).

Robertson (2006) collected ethnographic data over a three-year period in a variety of urban and suburban private and public schools, asking students to describe their favorite teacher. In reporting on his research through a constructed panel discussion transcript, Robertson (2006) detailed students' preferences for and positive responses to teachers who refrain from an authoritarian stance, for teachers who establish their concern and care for students, for classrooms in which teacher and students hold high expectations for one another, for teachers who refrain from bias or prejudgment, and for teachers who engage in student-centered, respectful, and patient disciplinary practices (Robertson, 2006).

Kupchik and Ellis (2008) noted the growing body of research establishing the existence of the discipline gap and the inefficacy of zero-tolerance policies, and undertook an examination of student attitudes and perceptions regarding equity in school discipline practice. Utilizing National Crime Victimization Survey responses from a nationally representative and diverse student sample, Kupchik and Ellis (2008) found that African American students, relative to white students, perceived school discipline and school rules as unfair. Interestingly, Kupchik and Ellis (2008) found no distinction in perceptions of fairness among Latino/a students and white students. As a potential explanation for this difference among two minority groups, Kupchik and Ellis (2008) cited the research-based theory that Latino/a students tend to be the children of immigrant parents who have a more positive view of school and who are more involved in their children's schooling than the parents of many African American students (p. 567). Kupchik and

Ellis (2008) additionally found that school experience, and particularly participation in extracurricular activities, was influential to students' perceptions of fairness. Students who were active and involved in their schools were more likely to perceive discipline and rules as equitable (Kupchik & Ellis, 2008).

Way (2011) utilized longitudinal data from the National Education Study of 1988 to examine the relationship between student perceptions of equity in discipline practice and actual student classroom behavior. Specifically, Way (2011) contrasted traditional "deterrence" frameworks, which focus on punitive measures, with "normative" practices, which recognize the importance of perceptions of fairness and community. She found that deterrence-based systems actually engender higher levels of disruptive and defiant behavior by creating student perceptions of inequity and detachment (Way, 2011). By contrast, the study revealed that discipline processes which provide students with a voice and with ownership engender high levels of trust and commitment, and more effectively reduce the recurrence of problem behaviors (Way, 2011). The study confirmed the findings of several previously-discussed studies which showed that students respond the most positively – from an academic and behavior standpoint – to teachers whom they perceive as caring, competent and respectful (Way, 2011, p. 366).

Mitchell and Bradshaw (2013) collected and analyzed data from 1,902 elementary school students regarding the students' perceptions of school climate. Their research results mirrored those of the Way (2011) study – when juxtaposed with data regarding discipline procedures in the represented schools, the data showed that the use of positive behavior supports, rather than exclusionary discipline, led to stronger student perceptions of order, fairness, student-teacher relationships, and academic motivation (Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013). This, in turn, led to reduced disciplinary infractions and fewer repeated behavior issues (Mitchell & Bradshaw,

2013). The authors suggested that all pre-service teacher training programs and school-based professional development sessions should include instruction focused on reduced reliance on exclusionary measures and promoting the use of classroom-based positive behavior intervention (Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013).

Kennedy-Lewis (2013) focused on student perceptions of equity in discipline during the transition to middle school, noting the sharp increase in the use of exclusionary discipline in this setting following the proliferation of zero-tolerance policies. Kennedy-Lewis noted that urban African American middle school students, in particular, are most likely to experience the discipline gap as regards exclusionary discipline practice. Additionally, she noted that suspensions at this level are strong predictors for academic struggle and drop-out (Kennedy-Lewis, 2013, p. 100). Against this backdrop, Kennedy-Lewis (2013) set out to "gain insight into the disproportionality of middle school discipline by examining persistently disciplined students' experiences through their eyes in order to bring their perspectives to bear on [reform]" (p. 100). Through an interview process focusing on students in a magnet middle school with a 60% African American, 24% white, 5% Latino/a, and 4% Asian population, Kennedy-Lewis examined the experiences of eleven students who had received two or more out-of-school suspensions before April of the previous school year. Collectively, the students had an average GPA of 1.5, and had spent 74 days in in-school suspension and incurred 41 out-of-school suspensions (Kennedy-Lewis, 2013). Kennedy-Lewis (2013) found that study participants consistently described the middle school transition as marking the beginning of serious and repeated trouble, and they attributed this to a distinction in the way middle school teachers and administrators reacted to and established relationships with them, versus the way they were treated by teachers and administrators in elementary school. The students interpreted teachers'

rules regarding bathroom privileges and obtaining water as unnecessary claims of control and as disrespectful of students' personal needs. Additionally, they perceived the use of exclusionary consequences as uncaring and authoritarian, as they recognized that exclusion from class led to lower academic achievement despite their efforts to catch up (Kennedy-Lewis, 2013). Students reported that discipline events, especially those in which they were publicly shamed or yelled at, heightened their sense of disengagement and decreased their ability to connect with and feel that they belonged in school (Kennedy-Lewis, 2013). Finally, students felt that their teachers maintained low expectations for them, and that they put little effort into the planning and delivery of instruction. This led, in turn, to increased disengagement and lack of school connection (Kennedy-Lewis, 2013). Like Boneshefski and Runge (2014) and Pane (2010), Kennedy-Lewis (2013) recommended the use of culturally relevant curriculum and instructional practices which recognize the varied learning styles of diverse students. Additionally, she emphasized the importance of relationship-building and of the establishment of classroom social community and structure. Finally, Kennedy-Lewis (2013) recommended that exclusionary discipline be replaced with restorative justice practices.

Professional Development

Appropriate staff development is a critical element of any change process, and staff development on a variety of topics has the potential to significantly impact student achievement (Newman & Wehlage, 1997). Newman and Wehlage (1997) examined the impact of effective professional learning communities, supported by strong staff development to ensure implementation of expectations with fidelity. They found that these elements alone were associated with improved student attendance, lower drop-out percentages, and improved student achievement in all academic subject areas (Newman & Wehlage, 1997).

Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) examined the impact of professional learning through a variety of models and in a variety of settings nationwide. They found that effective teacher professional development was clearly linked to improved student achievement, and that effective professional learning could support school-wide or system-wide change in practice. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) found that the most effective professional development was school-wide, collaborative, and linked directly to teacher practice, allowing teachers to work together to form stronger relationships as they connected their learning to other school initiatives. Based on their study, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) recommended that teacher professional development meet the following criteria: (1) Professional development should be intensive, ongoing, and connected directly to practice; (2) Professional development should focus on student learning and on the teaching of specific content; (3) Professional development should align with school priorities and with school improvement goals; and (4) Professional development should facilitate the development of strong working relationships among teachers.

Specifically regarding student discipline, professional development "can play a critical role in shaping the ways in which schools respond to students' misbehavior" (Gonsoulin, Zablocki, & Leone, 2012, p. 310). Gonsoulin et al. (2012) examined the potential effect of high-quality staff development on student discipline and, specifically, the school-to-prison pipeline. Reviewing the literature on professional development, as well as discipline gap literature, these authors recommended a three-tiered professional development model: Tier I: Universal professional development targeting all members of the school community, including parents and community members; Tier II: Targeted professional development focusing on staff members dealing directly with students on a daily basis; and Tier III: Intensive professional development for teachers, school administrators and school resource officers, as appropriate (Gonsoulin et al.,

2012). Using this model, Tier I professional development would include the provision of cultural awareness training, as well as training regarding non-punitive approaches to student behavior and training regarding consistent vocabulary and positive behavior reinforcement structures (Gonsoulin et al., 2012). Tier II professional development would include specific training regarding available support structures for ongoing problem behaviors, as well as school-population-specific training regarding student needs and barriers (e.g. language barriers, mental health issues) (Gonsoulin et al., 2012). Tier III training would include intensive and student-specific strategies such as training a "crisis team" or training regarding the identification of criminal offenses (Gonsoulin et al., 2012). Although these researchers recognized the need for further investigation regarding this issue, they concluded that effective staff development, following the recommended model, had the potential to create safer schools and ultimately to stem the school-to-prison pipeline (Gonsoulin et al., 2012).

Explanatory Case Study Design

Case study is well-recognized in the literature as a valid methodology for in-depth analysis of educational programs (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2010; Tellis, 1997). As described by Tellis (1997), "case studies are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data" (p. 1). Yin (2003) described four applications for the case study model: (1) to explain causal links in real-life interventions; (2) to describe real-life context in which intervention has occurred; (3) to describe an intervention itself; and (4) to explore a situation in which an intervention being evaluated has no clear set of outcomes.

Yin (2003) and Stake (1995) identified seven types of case studies. Explanatory studies are designed to link program implementation with program effects (Yin, 2003); exploratory

studies are designed to provide familiarity with interventions having no clear, single set of outcomes (Yin, 2003); descriptive case studies are utilized to describe an intervention or program and its context (Yin, 2003); multiple (Yin 2003) or collective (Stake, 1995) case studies are utilized to compare and replicate findings across programs or cases; intrinsic case studies are utilized when the researcher has a particular interest in the case and a desire to understand it more fully (Stake, 1995); and instrumental case studies provide insight into a particular issue or help to refine a particular theory (Stake, 1995).

According to Baxter and Jack (2008), "[a] hallmark of case study research is the use of multiple data sources, a strategy which also enhances data credibility" (p. 554). Investigators engaged in case study research may collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data, "which facilitates reaching a holistic understanding of the phenomenon being studied" (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Trustworthiness in case study research is achieved through (1) clear study questions; (2) appropriate design as related to the study questions; (3) purposeful and appropriate sampling strategies; (4) systematic data collection and management; and (5) correct data analysis (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Baxter and Jack (2008) further suggest that case study researchers are most effective when they devise "opportunities to have either prolonged or intense exposure to the phenomenon under study within its context so that rapport with participants can be established and so that multiple perspectives can be collected and understood" (p. 556).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Setting and Participants

As described in Chapter 1, the study took place in an urban public elementary school serving 571 students in grades K through 5. The subject school is in session ten months (180 school days) per year, on a traditional (late August – early June) calendar. The subject school maintains a Gifted and Talented/Academically or Intellectually Gifted magnet theme which sets aside approximately 50% of the school's available enrollment seats for students who are enrolled through an application and lottery process. The subject school is located in a high-poverty, primarily minority neighborhood, but draws its magnet students from affluent suburban neighborhoods. For the 2015-2016 school year, the subject school's demographics were 38% Asian, 31% African American, 20% Hispanic, and 9% white, and the subject school maintained a free and reduced lunch percentage of 43%.

The subject school maintains a school-wide PBIS system which is utilized in all settings by all instructional and support staff and administrators. Participants in the study included all students enrolled in the school for the two-year duration of the study.

Explanatory Case Study Design

This formative evaluation utilized a mixed methods explanatory case study design (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2010). As described by Baxter and Jack (2008), case study design "facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources, . . . ensur[ing] that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood" (p. 544). Mixed-methods case study design permits the effective understanding and analysis of the efficacy and outcomes of a single-setting program through the collection of both quantitative and

qualitative data (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Fitzpatrick et al., 2010). Explanatory case study design

was appropriate in this instance given the single-school focus of the study, the unavailability of a

control group for randomized experimental design, and the desire of the study to explore causal

links between the program being studied and its outcomes (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004;

Yin, 2003). The two-year study was conducted in three phases: Phase One involved revision of

the existing PBIS program and the implementation of program revisions with the provision of

associated professional development during year one. Phase Two involved the addition of

restorative practices to existing disciplinary response procedures, implemented through the

provision of continuing professional development regarding cultural responsiveness and

restorative practice during the first semester of school year two. Finally, Phase Three consisted

of data collection and analysis, at the start of the final semester of year two, in order to determine

the causal relationship between the program and desired outcomes, if any.

Phase One: Program Implementation (2015-2016 School Year)

The PBIS committee, which consisted of six teachers, the school counselor, and the

primary investigator, worked with a district-level PBIS coach at a full-day retreat in May 2015 to

revise the existing PBIS program for re-introduction during the 2015-2016 school year. Both the

primary expectations matrix and the primary reward structure were revised, and the previously-

existing disciplinary response flow chart, which had mandated various responses to individual

behaviors, was eliminated. In addition to this program revision, the PBIS committee planned

professional development sessions through which to introduce the revised program to staff

members at the start of the 2015-2016 school year, as well as an assembly to introduce the

revised program to students.

Revised PBIS Matrix and Visuals

In order to connect PBIS with the school's "Gifted and Talented" magnet program, the PBIS expectations were changed to the acronym "GIFTS." Each letter stands for a behavioral expectation: "Give your best;" "be Independent;" "Follow directions;" "Take responsibility;" and "Stay engaged." A school-wide rubric was created to define these expectations in various school settings (see Appendix C), and posters were created for display in each classroom. In addition to the school-wide rubric, posters were created to define location-specific (hallway, restroom, playground, etc.) expectations (see Appendix D).

Under the prior system in place at the subject school, students earned individual tickets for meeting behavioral expectations, and these were collected by students for singular rewards in the form of "prize box" items or other individual reinforcers. With the 2015 system revision, PBIS reinforcement and rewards structures were revised to change the focus to whole-class rewards. "GIFTS" card tokens (see Appendix E) were created for staff members to distribute to individual students observed "using their GIFTS," (i.e. meeting behavioral expectations). Tokens were collected by the collective members of each classroom community, and were displayed on collection boards outside each classroom (see Appendix F). When 100 tokens were collected, the class received an initial whole-class reward (e.g. a popcorn party) and one printed letter in the word "GIFTS," to be displayed on a collection poster (see Appendix G). When all five letters were earned, the class received a more significant reward (e.g. extra recess or lunch in the courtyard), together with a bronze, silver, or gold credit card-sized "GIFTS" card to be displayed beneath the collection poster. The specific rewards to be earned by each class within the PBIS structure were determined by each classroom community at the outset of the school

year. Classroom "GIFTS" card totals were displayed on a school-wide bulletin board located centrally in the school building.

At the start of the 2015-2016 school year, the revised PBIS system was presented to the staff at a whole-staff meeting which occurred on a teacher workday prior to first day of school for students. The revised program was presented and explained in an hour-long presentation by the PBIS committee, and "GIFTS" card tokens and visuals were provided to each staff member. The process through which the revised program was developed was explained to the staff, and all staff members engaged in a discussion regarding the GIFTS expectations and the program's goals as envisioned by the PBIS committee.

In order to present the revised program to students, classroom teachers conducted initial student presentations on the first regular school day. Additionally, rotating specialists (art, music, physical education, drama and dance teachers) designed a lesson plan utilized with each grade level in whole-grade assemblies during specials instruction time on the first regular school day.

Professional Development

To support staff buy-in and to establish cultural responsiveness in the implementation of the revised PBIS system, the primary investigator conducted a one-hour professional development session attended by all school staff in August 2015, prior to the start of the 2015-2016 school year. Schoolwide discipline, achievement data, and socioeconomic data from the 2014-2015 school year were presented together with research regarding discipline gaps and their potential connection to achievement gaps. Additionally, beginning in August 2015, staff members participated in one of two self-directed nine-month book studies: *Conscious Classroom Management: Unlocking the Secrets of Great Teaching*, (Smith, 2004); or *Culturally*

Proficient Instruction: A Guide for People Who Teach (Nuri-Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, &

Terrell, 2011). Book study groups consisted of ten to twelve teachers and teacher assistants,

grouped across grade levels and subjects, and met six times during the course of the 2015-2016

school year for self-directed book study and analysis.

Phase Two: Introduction of Restorative Practice

Restorative practice encompasses the use of classroom circles and discussion protocols to

involve a classroom community in responding to individual or group behaviors in equitable and

non-exclusionary ways (González, 2012). Restorative practice aligns with PBIS procedures in a

focus on both practices to prevent undesired behaviors and responses or interventions when

undesired behaviors have occurred (Clifford, n.d.). Restorative practice offers options to

punitive or exclusionary discipline, and involves the application of agreed-upon norms and

expectations in structured community dialogue (Clifford, n.d.). Dialogue is conducted utilizing

affective statements – students and adults focus on active listening and on expressions of feelings

and impact. In addition, students are encouraged, through the use of restorative questions, to

reflect on their actions and their outcomes (see Appendix H). Research has established the use

of restorative practice as effective in reducing exclusionary discipline, in improving student

perceptions of equity in behavioral response, and in improving school climate (González, 2012).

During Phase Two of the study, restorative practice was introduced to the school

community through the delivery of a one-hour professional development session by the primary

investigator in August 2016, prior to students' first day of school. Teachers and support staff

were provided with information regarding the background and research basis for restorative

practice, as well as with an implementation guide (see Appendix H). Although teachers were not

required to implement restorative practices, they were provided with this option, and an

additional professional development sessions was provided in October 2016. Restorative

discussions and formal restorative conferences were utilized during the 2016-2017 school year

by administrators and the school counselor for all students receiving office discipline referrals.

<center>**Phase Three: Assessment of Program Outcomes**</center>

Data for this study were collected from both quantitative and qualitative sources. The

utilization of multiple measures of program outcomes allowed for a broader understanding of

overall program impact, and compensates for potential weaknesses in any one measure (Rossi et

al., 2004). In addition, the collection of multiple forms of both quantitative and qualitative data

ensured the validity of study results by allowing for comparison and predictions among measures

(Rossi et al., 2004).

Quantitative Results: Student Discipline Data

Quantitative data included student discipline data as collected through the entry of

student discipline referrals into the Student Incident Referral System (SIRS) module of the

WCPSS Electronic Access to Student Information (EASi) system. The focus school has been

utilizing SIRS, which is available through the WCPSS intranet, for electronic student discipline

incident reporting of both major (office discipline referral) and minor (classroom/teacher-

managed) incidents since the start of the 2014-2015 school year. SIRS provides access to

significant data regarding student discipline incidents, including date, time, location, and nature

of incident, incident narrative, disciplinary consequence, student age, student grade, and student

ethnicity. Data accessed through SIRS can be anonymized and reported using categories defined

by the user. Pre-program data was compared with post-implementation data to determine

program outcomes, focusing on the change, if any, in discipline gaps and on the overall change,

if any, in student discipline referrals.

<center>69</center>

Qualitative Results: Survey Data

Qualitative data collected and analyzed included an anonymous staff survey assessing perceptions of student conduct, student discipline procedures, and school climate. A staff survey was administered to all instructional staff in February 2017 (see Appendix I). The staff survey consisted of questions taken directly from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS), as well as questions designed by the principal investigator. The NCTWCS is an anonymous statewide survey of licensed school-based educators administered biennially, in the spring of even-numbered years, by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions, 2016). The NCTWCS is designed to measure various components of public school settings, including student conduct and disciplinary procedures. Part I of the staff survey utilized in this study included the "Managing Student Conduct" section of the NCTWCS, which contains seven Likert-type items measuring agreement, on a "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree" scale, with statements regarding student conduct and school discipline. Data obtained from Part I of the staff survey was compared with and analyzed as compared to pre-program data from the 2014 NCTWCS.

Seven additional Likert-type items were added by the principal investigator to Part I of the staff survey to address program-specific goals such as restorative practice and equity. Part II of the staff survey was drafted by the principal investigator and consists of short answers to items assessing perceptions related to the program (see Appendix G). This data was analyzed as relevant to the overall impact and effect of the program on staff perception and student discipline practice.

Qualitative Results: Student Vignettes

In order to assess the impact of the program on student perceptions of discipline practice and equity, four students – one in fourth grade and three in fifth grade – were chosen to be interviewed by the principal investigator regarding their experience and perception of discipline practices and the PBIS program at the subject school over the relevant time period. These students were chosen based on their high frequency of pre-program discipline referral and their consistent enrollment at the subject school for the duration of the study.

Student interviews were conducted by the primary investigator in February 2017, and consisted of questions and follow-up regarding each student's experiences with classroom discipline and "getting in trouble." Students were encouraged to discuss their perceptions regarding PBIS at the subject school, as well as their perceptions of equity in the application of expectations and disciplinary responses across grade levels and school settings. Individual student responses, statements, and characterizations are summarized in vignettes presented in the final chapters of this paper.

Estimation of Program Outcomes

As addressed in the preceding sections, this study assessed multiple measures of program outcomes, focusing on the program's effect on (1) overall student discipline referrals; (2) discipline gaps; (3) teacher perception and practice with regard to behavior management; and (4) student perception of student discipline and behavior management practices. Data categories and their application to each study question were summarized (see Table 4). Cumulative data was compared to same-category pre-program implementation data, where this was available, and study analysis focused on direct interpretation as described by Stake (1995). Data analysis focused directly on the identified study questions, and data from all categories was converged

71

Table 4

Summary of Relevant Data

	Source is Relevant to Study Question:			
Data Source	1. Program Effect on Overall Discipline Referrals	2. Program Effect on Discipline Gaps	3. Program Effect on Teacher Perception & Practice	4. Program Effect on Student Perception
Annual Cumulative Student Discipline Reports by Category (Critical, Major & Minor Incidents)	X	X	X	
Annual Cumulative Student Discipline Reports by Student Ethnicity		X	X	
TWCS Data (Pre- and Post-Program)			X	
Investigator-Designed Post-Implementation Staff Survey Questions			X	
Student Interview Vignettes				X

and correlated in order to permit holistic analysis of overall program outcomes (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Limitations of the Study

A contextual limitation of the current study was that the primary investigator was an administrator in the subject school. Fitzpatrick, Worthen, and Sanders (1997) noted both potential disadvantages and advantages in the presence of an internal evaluator. As a disadvantage, Fitzpatrick et al. (1997) cited the lack of objective "outside" perspective. Fitzpatrick et al. (1997) also noted, however, that an internal investigator can have an intimate understanding of program history, goals and objectives, and might be uniquely suited to utilize the program evaluation to drive program changes and ongoing practices. In the present study, the primary investigator made efforts to ensure objective review through the use of anonymized quantitative student discipline data, as well as through the examination of these data through a variety of lenses. The intimate familiarity of the primary investigator with the subject school setting, as well as the primary investigator's personal involvement in the implementation of the program being evaluated, facilitated the implementation of the revised PBIS program with fidelity, and also facilitated and ensured the collection and thorough evaluation of comprehensive program data.

A design limitation of the current study was the potential for researcher bias given the primary investigator's personal involvement and investment in the program and in the subject school setting. This limitation was addressed and limited through (1) the utilization of a school-based PBIS committee, not selected by the primary investigator, in the design and implementation of the program and related professional development; (2) the anonymization of student discipline data and survey responses; and (3) the triangulation of both quantitative and

73

qualitative data from multiple sources in describing study results to ensure an unbiased and holistic review of program outcomes.

An additional design limitation of the study relates to the lack of prior consistent use of the online SIRS module utilized by staff members at the subject school to record student discipline reports. As previously discussed, the SIRS module was first introduced in the school year immediately preceding the introduction of the PBIS program being studied, and the learning curve related to staff member familiarity with the system may have affected overall student discipline referral totals during the study period. This limitation affected the analysis of Study Question One relating to the effect of the program on overall student discipline referral totals; however, it did not affect the disaggregated data related to the remaining study questions.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the mixed methods explanatory case study utilized to conduct an impact assessment of the revised PBIS program implemented at an elementary school in one Local Education Agency (LEA) in North Carolina. As previously discussed, the purpose of the evaluation was to assess the effect, if any, of the revised PBIS program's desired outcomes as identified by stakeholders at the school. Multiple data were collected and analyzed, in comparison to pre-program data where available, in order to address four specific study questions. These study questions were as follows:

1. To what extent did the program affect overall student discipline referrals?

2. To what extent did the program affect discipline gaps (racial disproportionality) in student discipline?

3. To what extent did the program affect teacher perceptions and practices with regard to student discipline?

4. To what extent did the program affect student perceptions of discipline practices?

Quantitative Results: Student Discipline Data

Study questions one and two were addressed specifically through the analysis of quantitative data related to student discipline referrals throughout the two-year study period and as these data compare to pre-program data. As a limitation of this data, it must be noted that the online Student Incident Referral System (SIRS) data collection tool utilized by the participant school was first introduced in the school setting at the start of the 2014-2015 school year, replacing a paper documentation tool. It may be anticipated that incident documentation would increase over the first several years of implementation of the new tool, and that user familiarity with the system might affect overall student discipline referral numbers during the period of the study. Although teachers were encouraged to document all student discipline incidents in SIRS

beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, only student discipline incidents involving office discipline referrals ("Major incidents") were formally required by school administration to be documented in SIRS for that school year. Documentation of all student discipline incidents in SIRS was required beginning with the 2015-2016 school year; however, teachers initially reported the system as burdensome and time-consuming, and it is possible, if not likely, that there was at least some initial suppression in the overall total number of student discipline incidents reported. There is no way to estimate the effect of this particular factor on the quantitative data related to total student discipline referrals. Except as otherwise indicated, student discipline referral data includes school-based student discipline reports only, and does not include incidents reported by school bus drivers as occurring on school transportation vehicles, as school bus drivers did not participate in any training or other facet of program implementation and did not utilize or apply the PBIS program during the evaluation period.

Overall Student Discipline Referrals

Overall student discipline referral data for the 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years were summarized. In order to ensure the comparison of similar data for all years reflected in the study, which concluded mid-year, in February 2017, student discipline referrals were tallied only for the first semester of each school year. For purposes of data analysis and evaluation, the 2015-2016 school year will be referred to as "Year One," and the 2016-2017 school year will be referred to as "Year Two." Data for the 2014-2015 school year are referred to as "Pre-program" data (see Table 5).

Data revealed a significant increase in overall student discipline referrals in each of the first two years of program implementation, and suggest that the PBIS program was ineffective in reducing overall student discipline referrals. These data, however, were subject to limitations, as previously described, in that overall student discipline referral totals may have been affected by

76

Table 5

Student Discipline Referrals by Category

	School Year					
	2014-2015 (Pre-Program)		2015-2016 (Year One)		2016-2017 (Year Two)	
Category	n	%	n	%	n	%
Critical (Board Policy Violations Warranting Suspension)	0	0.00	2	0.56%	2	0.48%
Major (Office Discipline Referral)	107	38.49%	119	33.24%	152	36.19%
Minor (Managed in Classroom)	171	61.51%	237	66.20%	266	63.33%
Total	278		358		420	

an increase, over the study period, in user familiarity with the SIRS system and an increase in the speed at which staff members were able to input incidents as they increased their skill with the online platform. As described above, expectations for the consistent utilization of the SIRS module were not in place until the 2015-2016 school year (Year One of the study), and it may be anticipated that some indeterminate number of student discipline incidents were simply not documented during the system's infancy.

Although overall student discipline incident reports increased throughout the period of the program evaluation, there was a slight decline in the proportion of student discipline incidents referred to administrative offices ("Major" incidents) as compared to student discipline incidents managed in the classroom ("Minor" incidents). This may suggest an increase in efforts to manage student discipline in the classroom, rather than to refer a student or to interrupt instructional time; however, the decrease is slight (38.5% pre-program to 36.2% for Year Two) and the data also reflect a slight increase, after a greater initial decrease, from Year One (33.2%) to Year Two (36.2%).

Summary: Study Question One

Study question one, "To what extent did the program affect overall student discipline referrals?" was answered through analysis of these data, subject to the limitations on these data described above and in greater detail at the conclusion of this Chapter. Although it is impossible to estimate the effects of user familiarity with the SIRS system on overall student discipline referral totals, these data suggest that the PBIS program was ineffective in reducing overall student discipline referrals. It is not possible, due to the limitations discussed, to determine whether the increase in overall student discipline referral totals was related in any way to the PBIS program.

Student Discipline Referrals by Race, Gender and Category

Study question two was addressed through a review of subgroup discipline referral data. Student discipline referral data were disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, special education status, and incident category. Incident categories included Critical (involving School Board policy violations), Major, or Minor (see Table 6).

These data revealed an increase in the raw number of reported incidents each year throughout the evaluation period, again potentially related to increased usage of the SIRS system, and also possibly due to an increase in emphasis on reporting related to the program itself and/or to staff knowledge of the evaluation. An analysis of student discipline referral numbers in isolation revealed a decrease in the overall percentage of student discipline referrals attributable to African American students. The decrease is most significant for Minor incidents (-12.8 percentage points from Pre-Program to Year Two for all African American students; -17.0 percentage points from Pre-Program to Year Two for African American boys). For Major incidents, although the overall percentage attributable to African American students declined slightly (-3.3 percentage points from Pre-Program to Year Two), the percentage attributable to African American boys increased by 10.8 percentage points. Conversely, the percentage of student discipline reports attributable to Asian students increased for both Major (+10.27 percentage points) and Minor (+10.79 percentage points) incidents. School bus discipline data, though not directly related to the PBIS program given the lack of involvement of school bus drivers in program training and implementation, is included solely as an area of interest, and in this category only. Interestingly, school bus drivers reported disciplinary incidents involving Asian students at significantly higher rates than any other ethnicity, and at rates that closely mirrored their school bus ridership percentages.

Table 6

Student Discipline Referrals by Incident Category & Ethnicity

Incident Category	Ethnicity/Subgroup	Pre-Program		Year 1		Year 2	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Critical							
	All						
	Total	0		2		2	
	Girls	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%
	Boys	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	2	100.0%
	American Indian						
	Total	0		0		0	0.0%
	Girls	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Boys	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Asian						
	Total	0		0		0	0.0%
	Girls	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Boys	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	African American						
	Total	0		2		1	50.0%
	Girls	0	0.0%	1(1)	50.0%	0	0.0%
	Boys	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	1(1)	50.0%
	Hispanic	0		0		0	0.0%
	Total	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Girls	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Boys						
	White						
	Total	0		0		1	50.0%
	Girls	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Boys	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%
	SPED						
	Total	0		1	50.0%	1	50.0%
	Girls	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%
	Boys	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%

Table 6 (continued)

Incident Category	Ethnicity/Subgroup	Pre-Program		Year 1		Year 2	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Major							
	All						
	Total	107		119		152	
	Girls	25	23.4%	53	44.5%	17	11.2%
	Boys	82	76.6%	66	55.5%	135	88.8%
	American Indian						
	Total	10	9.4%	23	19.3%	1	0.7%
	Girls	0	0.0%	1(1)	0.8%	0	0.0%
	Boys	10(7)	9.4%	22(21)	18.5%	1	0.7%
	Asian						
	Total	1	0.9%	4	3.4%	17	11.2%
	Girls	1	0.9%	1	0.8%	0	0.0%
	Boys	0	0.0%	3	2.5%	17(6)	11.2%
	African American						
	Total	81	75.7%	81	68.1%	110	72.4%
	Girls	20(3)	18.7%	51(35)	42.9%	7	4.6%
	Boys	61(8)	57.0%	30(3)	25.2%	103(41)	67.8%
	Hispanic						
	Total	7	6.5%	7	5.9%	16	10.5%
	Girls	2	1.9%	0	0.0%	10	6.6%
	Boys	5(3)	4.7%	7(5)	5.9%	6	4.0%
	White						
	Total	8	7.5%	4	3.4%	8	5.3%
	Girls	2(1)	1.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Boys	6(2)	5.6%	4(1)	3.4%	8(3)	5.3%
	SPED						
	Total	24	22.4%	66	55.5%	50	32.9%
	Girls	4	3.7%	36	30.2%	0	0.0%
	Boys	20	18.7%	30	25.2%	50	32.9%

Table 6 (continued)

Incident Category	Ethnicity/Subgroup	Pre-Program n	Pre-Program %	Year 1 n	Year 1 %	Year 2 n	Year 2 %
Minor							
	All						
	Total	171		237		266	
	Girls	28	16.4%	62	26.2%	64	24.1%
	Boys	143	83.6%	175	73.8%	202	75.9%
	American Indian						
	Total	9	5.3%	22	9.3%	9	3.4%
	Girls	0	0.0%	4(4)	1.7%	2	0.8%
	Boys	9(2)	5.3%	18(10)	7.6%	7	2.6%
	Asian						
	Total	6	3.5%	42	17.7%	38	14.3%
	Girls	0	0.0%	3	1.3%	1	0.4%
	Boys	6	3.5%	39	16.5%	37(8)	13.9%
	African American						
	Total	139	81.3%	143	60.3%	183	68.8%
	Girls	23(7)	13.5%	51(18)	21.5%	48(2)	18.1%
	Boys	116(23)	67.8%	92(4)	38.8%	135(32)	50.8%
	Hispanic						
	Total	7	4.1%	21	8.9%	21	7.9%
	Girls	1	0.6%	4(3)	1.7%	13	4.9%
	Boys	6(3)	3.5%	17(10)	7.2%	8(1)	3.0%
	White						
	Total	10	5.9%	9	3.8%	15	5.6%
	Girls	4	2.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Boys	6(3)	3.5%	9(3)	3.8%	15(4)	5.6%
	SPED						
	Total	38	22.2%	52	21.9%	47	17.7%
	Girls	7	4.1%	25	10.6%	2	0.8%
	Boys	31	18.1%	27	11.4%	45	16.9%

Table 6 (continued)

Incident Category	Ethnicity/Subgroup	Pre-Program		Year 1		Year 2	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Bus							
	All						
	Total	17		69		64	
	Girls	5	29.4%	21	30.4%	9	14.1%
	Boys	12	70.6%	48	69.6%	55	85.9%
	American Indian						
	Total	2	11.8%	2	2.9%	1	1.6%
	Girls	1	5.9%	1	1.5%	0	0.0%
	Boys	1	5.9%	1	1.5%	1	1.6%
	Asian						
	Total	9	52.9%	24	34.8%	36	56.3%
	Girls	1	5.9%	7	10.1%	6	9.4%
	Boys	8	47.1%	17	24.6%	30	46.9%
	African American						
	Total	2	11.8%	17	24.6%	6	9.4%
	Girls	1	5.9%	6	8.7%	1	1.6%
	Boys	1	5.9%	11(8)	15.9%	5	7.8%
	Hispanic						
	Total	3	17.7%	16	23.2%	5	7.8%
	Girls	2	11.8%	6(1)	8.7%	1	1.6%
	Boys	1	5.9%	10	14.5%	15	23.4%
	White						
	Total	1	5.9%	10	14.5%	16	25.0%
	Girls	0	0.0%	1	1.5%	1	1.6%
	Boys	1	5.9%	9	13.0%	15	23.4%
	SPED						
	Total	0	0.0%	9	13.0%	0	0.0%
	Girls	0	0.0%	1	1.5%	0	0.0%
	Boys	0	0.0%	8	11.6%	0	0.0%

Note. Numbers in parenthesis indicate SPED students included in total.

Enrollment Percentage as Compared to Discipline Referral Percentage

Despite the revised PBIS program and a decrease in the percentage of incidents attributable to African American students, discipline gaps persisted at the subject school, though they declined slightly over the evaluation period, and African American, American Indian, and Special Education students continued to be represented in both Major and Minor student discipline reports at rates which significantly exceeded their enrollment percentages (see Figures 6, 7, and 8).

These data revealed that discipline gaps declined slightly, though not significantly throughout the evaluation period, and that African American students continued to account for a significant majority (72.37%) of office discipline referrals, as well as for a significant majority (68.80%) of reported Minor student discipline incidents. These numbers indicated that, despite PBIS, African American students, in particular, were subject throughout the evaluation period to discipline at rates which far exceeded their enrollment percentage. Special Education students were similarly at risk for excessive discipline referrals. Enrollment percentages were compared to discipline referral percentages at the subject school over the evaluation period (see Figure 9).

Pre-program, African American students were subject to Major discipline referrals at rates 2.48 times their enrollment percentage, and to Minor discipline referrals at rates 2.66 times their enrollment percentages. The risk for Special Education students was 2.19 for Major discipline referrals and 2.17 for Minor discipline referrals pre-program. By year two, the risk for African American students had decreased only for Minor discipline referrals, to 2.36. The risk for Special Education students increased over the evaluation period to 3.26 for Major discipline referrals, and declined slightly, to 1.75, for Minor discipline referrals. Taken as a whole, these data lead to the conclusion that the PBIS program, as revised, did little to affect disproportionalities in discipline for African American and Special Education students (the

84
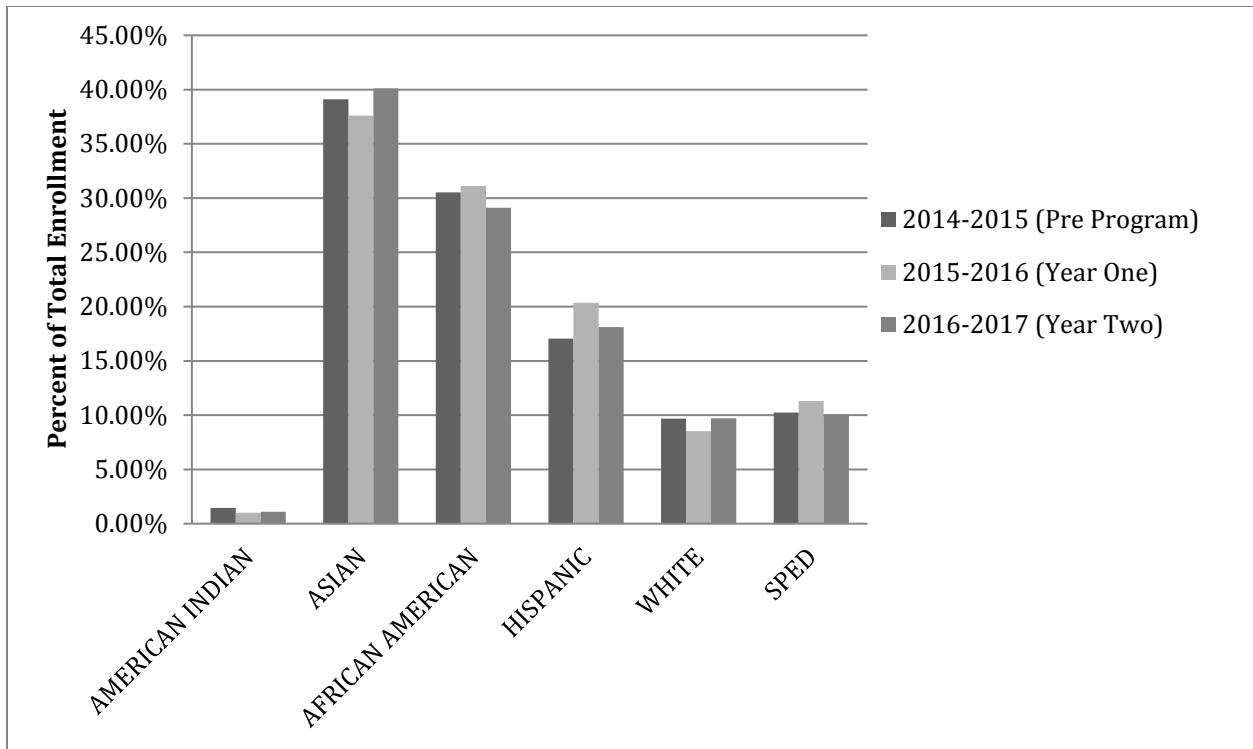
Figure 6. Enrollment by ethnicity - three-year trend.
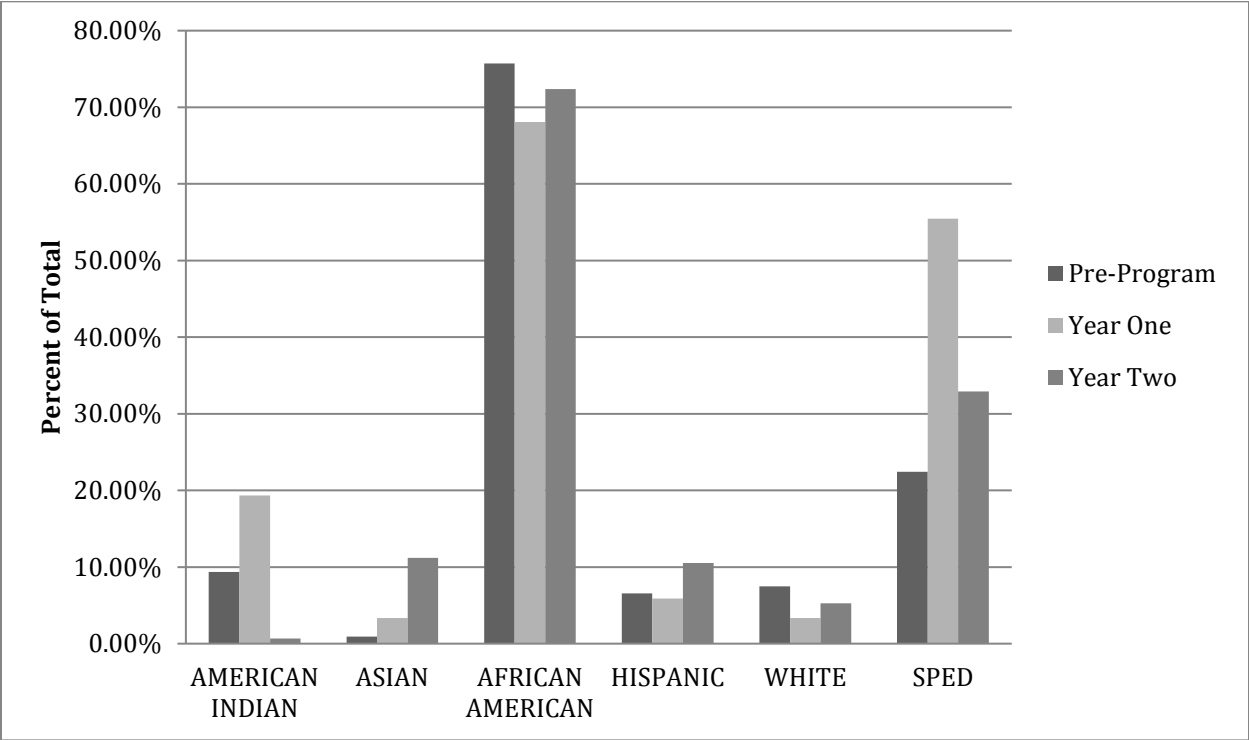
Figure 7. Major disciplinary incidents (office discipline referrals) by student ethnicity.
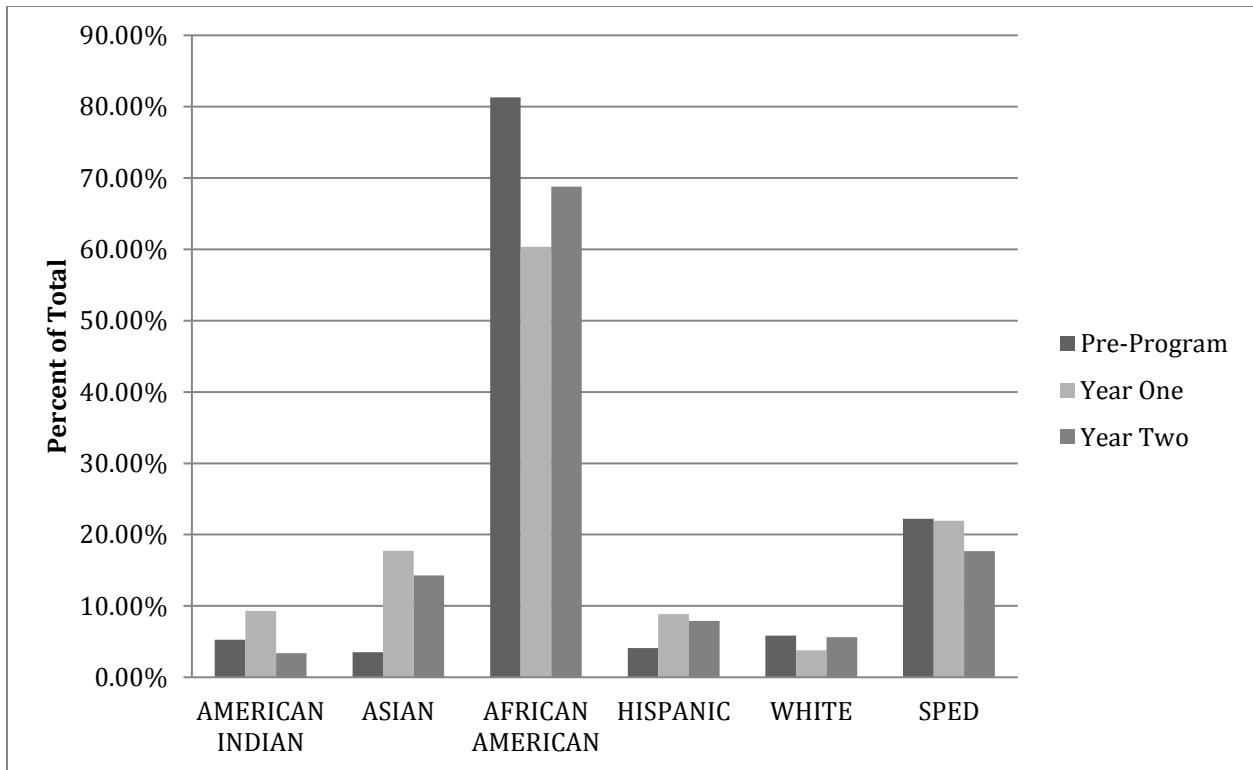
Figure 8. Minor disciplinary incidents by student ethnicity.
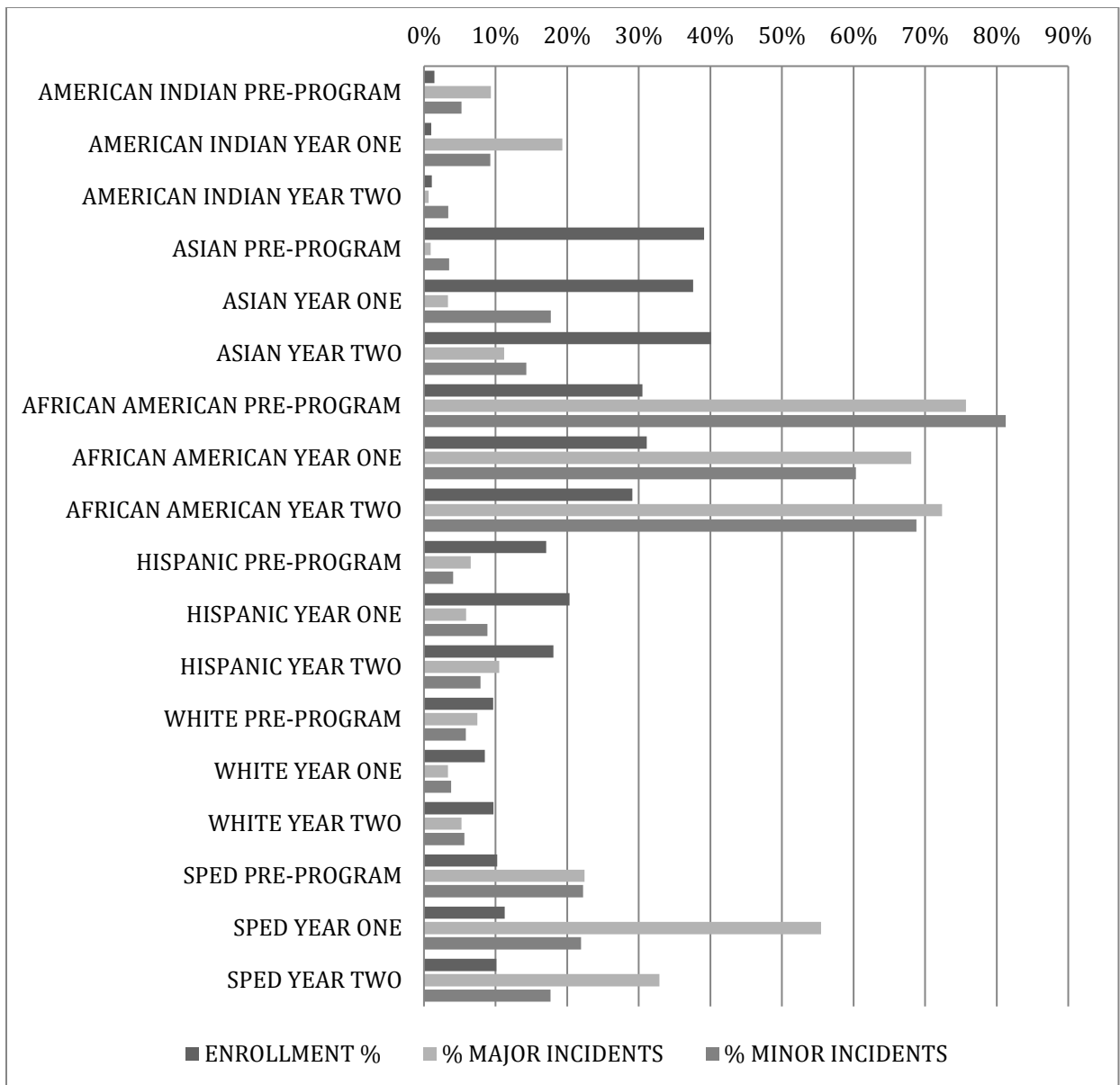
Figure 9. Comparison of enrollment percentage and percentage of discipline referrals by

ethnicity – three-year trend.

majority of whom were African American at the subject school). The introduction of restorative practice at the start of Year Two similarly had no appreciable affect on the quantitative data; however, it must be noted that these practices were in use for only 90 school days, and may not have been expected to effectuate significant quantitative results within that time period.

Risk Indices and Risk Ratios

To reduce the disproportionate effect of recurring student discipline referrals related to one or more frequently-referred students, as well as the effect of multiple discipline reports which may have been entered specifically for purposes of data collection/documentation in connection with behavior plans or special education placements for particular students, disaggregated student discipline referral data were utilized to calculate the risk index and risk ratio for each subgroup (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). Risk indices were calculated by determining the risk of each particular subgroup for one or more Major or Minor student discipline referrals, as follows:

$$\text{Risk Index} = \frac{\text{Number of [subgroup] students receiving one or more discipline referrals}}{\text{Total number of enrolled students in [subgroup]}}$$

Risk indices are interpreted through utilization of a comparison group to calculate a risk ratio, in order to provide context to one group's risk in relation to that of a comparison group and to allow for determinations as to whether disproportionality exists (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). Different comparison groups may be utilized depending on the purpose of the study and the nature of the setting, and white students are most commonly used in the school setting (Skiba et al., 2011). The use of white students as the comparison group may not always be appropriate, however, particularly when they do not comprise the majority in the study setting (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). In determining risk ratio for the purposes of this study, Asian students were

utilized as the comparison group, as there are comparatively few white students enrolled in the

subject school, and as Asian students comprise the majority subgroup in the subject school

setting (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). Risk Ratio was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Risk Ratio} = \frac{\text{Risk index of [target subgroup]}}{\text{Risk index of Asian students}}$$

In interpreting risk ratios, disproportionality exists where one group is represented at a

rate significantly higher or lower than the comparison. A risk ratio of 1.0 indicates exact

proportionality between the target group and the comparison group, while a risk ratio greater

than 1.0 indicates overrepresentation and a risk ratio less than 1.0 indicates underrepresentation

(Boneshefski & Runge, 2014). Ideally, within the context of school discipline, all subgroups

should be equally proportional (Skiba et al., 2002). Risk indices and risk ratios for all subgroups

in the current study were summarized (see Table 7).

These data revealed outcomes particularly consistent with program goals, and suggested

that discipline gaps were reduced significantly over the evaluation period. Risk ratios for all

minority subgroups – American Indian, African American, and Hispanic – declined significantly,

by an average of 76%, in Year One of the program. (It should be noted here that the American

Indian subgroup was very small, ranging from 6 to 8 students over the study period. Boneshefski

and Runge (2014) cautioned against relying heavily on risk ratio data for to subgroups with few

members, as minor changes in input data are reflected disproportionately in risk ratios for these

groups.) The risk ratio for Special Education students declined similarly, by 68%, in Year One.

Risk ratios for American Indian and Special Education students declined further in Year Two,

while risk ratios for African American and Hispanic students showed only minimal (<0.8)

change. Although risk ratios for all targeted subgroups remained greater than 1, indicating

Table 7

Risk Index and Risk Ratio by Subgroup

Subgroup	n	Pre-Program (2014-2015) Risk Index	Risk Ratio	n	Year One (2015-2016) Risk Index	Risk Ratio	n	Year Two (2016-2017) Risk Index	Risk Ratio
American Indian	8	0.88	44.00	7	1.00	11.10	6	0.50	5.00
Asian	218	0.02	N/A	216	0.09	N/A	235	0.10	N/A
African American	170	0.34	17.00	179	0.35	3.89	168	0.39	3.90
Hispanic	95	0.11	5.50	117	0.12	1.33	104	0.14	1.40
White	54	0.20	10.00	49	0.16	1.78	56	0.30	3.00
SPED	57	0.26	13.00	65	0.38	4.22	58	0.28	2.80

Note. (n=Students in Subgroup).

continued disproportionality, declines represented a significant positive outcome for the program under evaluation.

Student Discipline Referrals by Incident Type, Race and Gender

Although discipline gaps persisted, with varied significance based on the method of data analysis, data revealed several shifts in the nature of student discipline referrals which may have been related to program goals. In particular, there was a decline in the percentage of student discipline referrals related to the somewhat subjective offenses "Disrespect" and "Bullying," with an increase in the percentage of student discipline referrals related to objectively-verifiable offenses such as "Physical Aggression." Student discipline referrals for "Noncompliance," however, increased, and in the case of subjective student discipline referrals such as "Disrespect" and "Noncompliance," African American students continued to account for a disproportionate percentage of these reports (see Tables 8, 9, and 10).

As discussed in the preceding chapters, multiple researchers have noted that disparities in disciplinary referrals for minority students are particularly pronounced for infractions such as "disrespect," "defiance," or "class disturbance" (Rocque, 2010; Rocque & Paternoster, 2011; Skiba, et al., 2002; Theriot & Dupper, 2010). "Subjective" infractions are those which require interpretation by the teacher, or which may be related to the teacher's personal reaction, as opposed to objective infractions such as "fighting" or "property damage" which are independently verifiable (Skiba, et al., 2002). As illustrated by these study data, African American students – particularly African American boys - continued to account for the majority of student discipline referrals for "Noncompliance," "Disrespect," "Physical Aggression," and "Class/Activity Disturbance." Special Education students also accounted for a disproportionate percentage of student discipline referrals in these categories, and were most often also African American.

92

Table 8

Major (Office) Student Discipline Referrals by Incident Type

Incident Type	2014-2015 (Pre-Program)		2015-2016 (Year One)		2016-2017 (Year Two)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Noncompliance	10	9.35%	38	31.93%	29	19.08%
Disrespect	12	11.21%	4	3.36%	7	4.61%
Class Attendance	1	0.93%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Inappropriate Language	4	3.74%	2	1.68%	5	3.29%
Inappropriate Dress	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.66%
Electronic Devices	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.66%
Integrity	0	0.00%	1	0.84%	0	0.00%
Property Damage	2	1.87%	10	8.40%	3	1.97%
Theft	2	1.87%	0	0.00%	3	1.97%
Indecent Exposure/Sexual Behavior	2	1.87%	1	0.84%	3	1.97%
Harassment/Bullying	15	14.02%	8	6.72%	10	6.58%
Sexual Harassment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.66%
Threat/False Threat	6	5.61%	2	1.68%	2	1.32%
Physical Aggression/Fighting	42	39.25%	42	35.29%	74	48.68%
Violation of Computer Access	0	0.00%	4	3.36%	2	1.32%
Class/Activity Disturbance	9	8.41%	6	5.04%	11	7.24%
School Disturbance	1	0.93%	1	0.84%	0	0.00%

Table 8 (continued)

Incident Type	2014-2015 (Pre-Program)		2015-2016 (Year One)		2016-2017 (Year Two)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Fire Setting/Incendiary Materials	1	0.93%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total Major Incidents	107		119		152	

Table 9

Minor Student Discipline Referrals by Incident Type

Incident Type	2014-2015 (Pre-Program)		2015-2016 (Year One)		2016-2017 (Year Two)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Noncompliance	70	40.94%	115	48.52%	139	52.26%
Disrespect	33	19.30%	22	9.28%	34	12.78%
Class Attendance	1	0.58%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Inappropriate Language	4	2.34%	9	3.80%	13	4.89%
Inappropriate Dress	1	0.58%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Electronic Devices	1	0.58%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Integrity	3	1.75%	5	2.11%	1	0.38%
Property Damage	2	1.17%	6	2.53%	1	0.38%
Theft	2	1.17%	1	0.42%	5	1.88%
Threat/False Threat	4	2.34%	7	2.95%	4	1.50%
Physical Aggression	29	16.96%	22	9.28%	50	18.80%
Inappropriate Literature	1	0.58%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Computer Access Violation	0	0.00%	1	0.42%	0	0.00%
Class/Activity Disturbance	20	11.70%	49	20.68%	19	7.14%
Total Minor Incidents	171		237		266	

Table 10

Student Discipline Referrals (n) by Type, Ethnicity/Subgroup & Gender

| | | Girls | | | Boys | | |
| | | PP | Yr. 1 | Yr. 2 | PP | Yr. 1 | Yr. 2 |
Ethnicity/Subgroup	Incident Type						
American Indian							
	Major Incidents						
	Noncompliance	0	0	0	3	4	0
	Disrespect	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class Attendance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inappropriate Language	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Inappropriate Dress	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Electronic Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Integrity	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Property Damage	0	0	0	0	2	0
	Theft	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Indecent Exposure/Sexual Behavior	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Harassment/Bullying	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Sexual Harassment	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Threat/False Threat	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Physical Aggression/Fighting	0	1	0	5	14	1
	Violation of Computer Access	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class/Activity Disturbance	0	0	0	0	1	0
	School Disturbance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fire Setting/Incendiary Materials	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Minor Incidents						
	Noncompliance	0	3	2	3	5	6
	Disrespect	0	0	0	0	2	0
	Class Attendance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inappropriate Language	0	0	0	1	2	1
	Inappropriate Dress	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Electronic Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Integrity	0	0	0	1	1	0
	Property Damage	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Theft	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Threat/False Threat	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Physical Aggression	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inappropriate Literature	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Violation of Computer Access	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class/Activity Disturbance	0	1	0	2	8	0

Table 10 (continued)

Ethnicity/Subgroup	Incident Type	Girls			Boys		
		PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2
Asian							
	Major Incidents						
	Noncompliance	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Disrespect	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class Attendance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inappropriate Language	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Inappropriate Dress	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Electronic Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Integrity	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Property Damage	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Theft	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Indecent Exposure/Sexual Behavior	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Harassment/Bullying	1	1	0	0	0	0
	Sexual Harassment	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Threat/False Threat	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Physical Aggression/Fighting	0	0	0	0	0	13
	Violation of Computer Access	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Class/Activity Disturbance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	School Disturbance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fire Setting/Incendiary Materials	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Minor Incidents						
	Noncompliance	0	3	0	1	24	23
	Disrespect	0	0	0	2	2	4
	Class Attendance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inappropriate Language	0	0	1	1	1	2
	Inappropriate Dress	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Electronic Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Integrity	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Property Damage	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Theft	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Threat/False Threat	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Physical Aggression	0	0	0	1	8	4
	Inappropriate Literature	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Violation of Computer Access	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class/Activity Disturbance	0	0	0	1	3	3

Table 10 (continued)

Ethnicity/Subgroup	Incident Type	Girls			Boys		
		PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2
African American							
	Major Incidents						
	Noncompliance	2	23	2	2	8	24
	Disrespect	3	4	0	7	0	3
	Class Attendance	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Inappropriate Language	1	0	1	3	0	1
	Inappropriate Dress	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Electronic Devices	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Integrity	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Property Damage	1	5	0	1	1	2
	Theft	1	0	0	0	0	3
	Indecent Exposure/Sexual Behavior	1	1	0	0	0	2
	Harassment/Bullying	3	1	0	7	4	7
	Sexual Harassment	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Threat/False Threat	0	1	0	4	1	2
	Physical Aggression/Fighting	7	12	2	27	11	47
	Violation of Computer Access	0	1	0	0	1	1
	Class/Activity Disturbance	1	2	2	7	3	9
	School Disturbance	0	1	0	1	0	0
	Fire Setting/Incendiary Materials	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Minor Incidents						
	Noncompliance	16	21	34	44	42	53
	Disrespect	1	7	6	28	10	23
	Class Attendance	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Inappropriate Language	0	3	0	2	3	6
	Inappropriate Dress	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Electronic Devices	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Integrity	0	0	0	2	4	0
	Property Damage	0	1	0	2	4	0
	Theft	0	1	0	1	0	5
	Threat/False Threat	0	4	1	1	1	1
	Physical Aggression	3	5	4	20	6	38
	Inappropriate Literature	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Violation of Computer Access	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class/Activity Disturbance	2	9	3	14	22	9

Table 10 (continued)

		Girls			Boys		
Ethnicity/Subgroup	Incident Type	PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2
Hispanic							
	Major Incidents						
	Noncompliance	1	0	2	1	1	0
	Disrespect	0	0	2	1	0	0
	Class Attendance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inappropriate Language	0	0	2	0	1	0
	Inappropriate Dress	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Electronic Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Integrity	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Property Damage	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Theft	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Indecent Exposure/Sexual Behavior	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Harassment/Bullying	0	0	3	0	1	0
	Sexual Harassment	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Threat/False Threat	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Physical Aggression/Fighting	0	0	1	1	4	6
	Violation of Computer Access	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class/Activity Disturbance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	School Disturbance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fire Setting/Incendiary Materials	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Minor Incidents						
	Noncompliance	1	3	8	0	12	6
	Disrespect	0	0	0	2	0	0
	Class Attendance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inappropriate Language	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inappropriate Dress	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Electronic Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Integrity	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Property Damage	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Theft	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Threat/False Threat	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Physical Aggression	0	0	3	1	2	0
	Inappropriate Literature	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Violation of Computer Access	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class/Activity Disturbance	0	1	2	1	3	1

Table 10 (continued)

Ethnicity/Subgroup	Incident Type	Girls			Boys		
		PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2
White							
	Major Incidents						
	Noncompliance	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Disrespect	0	0	0	1	0	2
	Class Attendance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inappropriate Language	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inappropriate Dress	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Electronic Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Integrity	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Property Damage	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Theft	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Indecent Exposure/Sexual Behavior	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Harassment/Bullying	0	0	0	3	1	0
	Sexual Harassment	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Threat/False Threat	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Physical Aggression/Fighting	2	0	0	0	0	4
	Violation of Computer Access	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Class/Activity Disturbance	0	0	0	1	0	0
	School Disturbance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fire Setting/Incendiary Materials	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Minor Incidents						
	Noncompliance	4	0	0	1	2	7
	Disrespect	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Class Attendance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inappropriate Language	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Inappropriate Dress	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Electronic Devices	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Integrity	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Property Damage	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Theft	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Threat/False Threat	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Physical Aggression	0	0	0	4	1	1
	Inappropriate Literature	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Violation of Computer Access	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Class/Activity Disturbance	0	0	0	0	2	1

Table 10 (continued)

Ethnicity/Subgroup	Incident Type	Girls			Boys		
		PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2
SPED							
	Major Incidents						
	Noncompliance	0	16	0	3	6	14
	Disrespect	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Class Attendance	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Inappropriate Language	1	0	0	0	2	1
	Inappropriate Dress	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Electronic Devices	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Integrity	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Property Damage	0	5	0	0	3	1
	Theft	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Indecent Exposure/Sexual Behavior	0	1	0	0	0	2
	Harassment/Bullying	0	0	0	1	1	3
	Sexual Harassment	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Threat/False Threat	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Physical Aggression/Fighting	2	10	0	7	16	24
	Violation of Computer Access	0	1	0	0	1	0
	Class/Activity Disturbance	0	2	0	1	1	0
	School Disturbance	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Fire Setting/Incendiary Materials	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Minor Incidents	4	13	2	12	12	10
	Noncompliance	1	2	0	4	2	4
	Disrespect	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Class Attendance	0	0	0	0	3	4
	Inappropriate Language	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Inappropriate Dress	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Electronic Devices	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Integrity	0	1	0	2	1	0
	Property Damage	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Theft	0	1	0	2	0	2
	Threat/False Threat	1	2	0	6	2	22
	Physical Aggression	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Inappropriate Literature	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Violation of Computer Access	1	6	0	3	7	3
	Class/Activity Disturbance						

Assigned Disciplinary Consequences

Relevant quantitative data also included assigned consequences. Stakeholders expressed concerns regarding lost instructional time related to both office discipline referrals and classroom discipline incidents, and a goal of the program was to improve student connectedness to school and to increase exposure to instructional time. Although the current evaluation did not undertake to quantify any increase or decrease in exposure to instruction related to the PBIS program, an analysis of disciplinary response was relevant to study question three: "To what extent did the program affect teacher perceptions and practices with regard to student behavior?" These data were summarized and disaggregated by gender and ethnicity (see Tables 11 and 12).

These data revealed that student conferences remained, throughout the study period, a popular consequence for Major student discipline referrals, representing 29.94% of assigned consequences in this category. However, student conferences decreased as a documented consequence for Minor student discipline incidents. Potentially significant shifts in the cumulative data included an increase in the use of the restorative practice "peer mediation" during Year Two, as well as a decline in both out-of-school (-6.7 percentage points for Major incidents) and in-school (-5.22 percentage points for Major student discipline incidents) suspensions. The use of "Time Out" also decreased for both Major (-4.92 percentage points) and Minor (-1.84 percentage points) student discipline incidents. The use of the targeted intervention "Restriction of School Activities" (e.g. loss of self-directed computer or iPad access, structured recess, loss of a privilege) increased by 14.12 percentage points (from 0.00%) for Major student discipline referrals and by 1.94 percentage points for Minor student discipline incidents as of Year Two. Finally, the use of Written Reflections (a restorative practice introduced through professional development at the start of Year Two) increased dramatically, from 0.55% Pre-Program to 32.00% in Year Two.

Table 11

Assigned Consequence by Frequency

Assigned Consequence	2014-2015 (Pre-Program)		2015-2016 (Year One)		2016-2017 (Year Two)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Major Incidents						
Behavior Contract	1	0.68%	1	0.63%	1	0.56%
Conference with Parent	6	4.08%	8	5.03%	6	3.39%
Conference with Student	44	29.93%	32	20.13%	53	29.94%
Contact Parent	24	16.33%	29	18.24%	32	18.08%
Counseling	5	3.40%	4	2.52%	2	1.13%
ISS	11	7.48%	9	5.66%	4	2.26%
Lunch Detention	16	10.88%	13	8.18%	17	9.60%
Peer Mediation	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	8	4.52%
Social Skills Instruction	3	2.04%	10	6.29%	0	0.00%
Restriction of School Activities	0	0.00%	21	13.21%	25	14.12%
Suspension	14	9.52%	3	1.89%	5	2.82%
Time Out	23	15.65%	28	17.61%	19	10.73%
Verbal Warning	0	0.00%	1	0.63%	4	2.26%
Written Reflection	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.56%
Total Major	147		159		177	

Table 11 (continued)

Assigned Consequence	2014-2015 (Pre-Program)		2015-2016 (Year One)		2016-2017 (Year Two)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Minor Incidents						
Behavior Contract	8	4.42%	2	0.86%	5	1.82%
Conference with Parent	3	1.66%	4	1.72%	2	0.73%
Conference with Student	65	35.91%	84	36.21%	38	13.82%
Contact Parent	33	18.23%	44	18.97%	42	15.27%
Counseling	4	2.21%	0	0.00%	2	0.73%
ISS	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.36%
Lunch Detention	16	8.84%	44	18.97%	11	4.00%
Peer Mediation	1	0.55%	2	0.86%	2	0.73%
Restriction of School Activities	9	4.97%	7	3.02%	19	6.91%
Suspension	1	0.55%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Time Out	29	16.02%	14	6.03%	39	14.18%
Verbal Warning	11	6.08%	11	4.74%	26	9.45%
Written Reflection	1	0.55%	20	8.62%	88	32.00%
Total Minor	181		232		275	

Note. More than one consequence may be assigned per incident.

Table 12

Assigned Consequence (n) by Ethnicity and Gender

Ethnicity	Assigned Consequence	Girls			Boys		
		PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2
American Indian							
	Major Incidents						
	Behavior Contract	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Parent	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Conference with Student	0	1	0	3	4	0
	Contact Parent	0	1	0	1	6	0
	Counseling	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ISS	0	0	0	0	4	0
	Lunch Detention	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Peer Mediation	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Social Skills Instruction	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Restriction of School Activities	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Suspension	0	0	0	4	2	0
	Time Out	0	0	0	4	16	0
	Verbal Warning	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Written Reflection	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Minor Incidents						
	Behavior Contract	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Conference with Parent	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Student	0	0	0	3	5	0
	Contact Parent	0	1	0	3	0	0
	Counseling	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ISS	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Lunch Detention	0	3	0	2	7	0
	Peer Mediation	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Restriction of School Activities	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Suspension	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Time Out	0	0	0	0	2	0
	Verbal Warning	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Written Reflection	0	0	2	0	2	7

Table 12 (continued)

| | | Girls | | | Boys | | |
| | | | Yr. | Yr. | | Yr. | Yr. |
Ethnicity	Assigned Consequence	PP	1	2	PP	1	2
Asian							
	Major Incidents						
	Behavior Contract	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Parent	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Conference with Student	1	0	0	0	1	9
	Contact Parent	0	0	0	0	1	4
	Counseling	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ISS	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Lunch Detention	0	0	0	0	1	3
	Peer Mediation	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Social Skills Instruction	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Restriction of School Activities	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Suspension	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Time Out	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Verbal Warning	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Written Reflection	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Minor Incidents						
	Behavior Contract	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Parent	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Student	0	1	1	3	15	4
	Contact Parent	0	0	0	3	13	4
	Counseling	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ISS	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Lunch Detention	0	1	0	0	6	4
	Peer Mediation	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Restriction of School Activities	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Suspension	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Time Out	0	0	0	1	2	0
	Verbal Warning	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Written Reflection	0	0	0	0	4	26

Table 12 (continued)

Ethnicity	Assigned Consequence	Girls			Boys		
		PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2
African American							
	Major Incidents						
	Behavior Contract	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Conference with Parent	0	2	0	4	4	5
	Conference with Student	10	9	0	22	14	34
	Contact Parent	7	3	1	12	13	23
	Counseling	2	1	0	1	2	2
	ISS	1	1	0	9	3	2
	Lunch Detention	5	2	0	10	8	8
	Peer Mediation	0	0	0	0	0	4
	Social Skills Instruction	0	8	0	3	1	0
	Restriction of School Activities	0	18	0	0	0	21
	Suspension	1	0	1	9	0	4
	Time Out	4	9	3	10	2	15
	Verbal Warning	0	0	2	0	1	1
	Written Reflection	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Minor Incidents						
	Behavior Contract	0	0	0	7	2	5
	Conference with Parent	0	2	0	3	1	2
	Conference with Student	8	11	6	44	44	25
	Contact Parent	0	7	6	22	21	27
	Counseling	0	0	0	3	0	2
	ISS	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Lunch Detention	4	10	0	9	11	5
	Peer Mediation	0	0	0	0	1	2
	Restriction of School Activities	1	2	1	8	2	18
	Suspension	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Time Out	8	6	7	16	4	24
	Verbal Warning	3	1	13	7	6	8
	Written Reflection	0	4	16	1	5	23

Table 12 (continued)

Ethnicity	Assigned Consequence	Girls			Boys		
		PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2
Hispanic							
	Major Incidents						
	Behavior Contract	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Parent	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Student	2	0	5	2	1	1
	Contact Parent	1	0	2	2	2	0
	Counseling	0	0	0	1	0	0
	ISS	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Lunch Detention	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Peer Mediation	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Social Skills Instruction	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Restriction of School Activities	0	0	0	0	3	1
	Suspension	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Time Out	1	0	1	1	1	0
	Verbal Warning	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Written Reflection	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Minor Incidents						
	Behavior Contract	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Parent	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Student	0	1	0	3	4	0
	Contact Parent	0	0	1	2	2	1
	Counseling	0	0	0	1	0	0
	ISS	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Lunch Detention	0	3	0	0	0	0
	Peer Mediation	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Restriction of School Activities	0	0	0	0	2	0
	Suspension	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Time Out	0	0	6	0	0	1
	Verbal Warning	0	0	4	0	3	0
	Written Reflection	0	0	4	0	3	4

Table 12 (continued)

Ethnicity	Assigned Consequence	Girls			Boys		
		PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2
White							
	Major Incidents						
	Behavior Contract	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Parent	0	0	0	1	1	0
	Conference with Student	2	0	0	2	2	4
	Contact Parent	0	0	0	1	3	2
	Counseling	0	0	0	1	1	0
	ISS	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Lunch Detention	0	0	0	0	1	4
	Peer Mediation	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Social Skills Instruction	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Restriction of School Activities	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Suspension	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Time Out	1	0	0	2	0	0
	Verbal Warning	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Written Reflection	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Minor Incidents						
	Behavior Contract	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Parent	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Student	1	0	0	3	3	2
	Contact Parent	0	0	0	3	1	3
	Counseling	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ISS	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Lunch Detention	0	0	0	1	3	2
	Peer Mediation	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Restriction of School Activities	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Suspension	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Time Out	3	0	0	1	0	1
	Verbal Warning	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Written Reflection	0	0	0	0	2	6

Table 12 (continued)

Ethnicity	Assigned Consequence	Girls			Boys		
		PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	PP	Yr. 1	Yr. 2
SPED							
	Major Incidents						
	Behavior Contract	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Parent	0	1	0	3	1	4
	Conference with Student	3	2	0	3	4	11
	Contact Parent	3	2	0	1	7	13
	Counseling	0	1	0	1	1	1
	ISS	0	0	0	2	3	2
	Lunch Detention	2	1	0	2	1	1
	Peer Mediation	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Social Skills Instruction	0	6	0	0	2	0
	Restriction of School Activities	0	18	0	0	3	13
	Suspension	0	0	1	8	3	1
	Time Out	0	8	0	6	17	2
	Verbal Warning	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Written Reflection	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Minor Incidents						
	Behavior Contract	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Conference with Parent	0	1	0	1	0	0
	Conference with Student	4	1	0	15	7	10
	Contact Parent	0	5	1	8	3	10
	Counseling	0	0	0	1	0	0
	ISS	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Lunch Detention	0	6	0	1	5	1
	Peer Mediation	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Restriction of School Activities	1	1	0	0	2	10
	Suspension	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Time Out	1	4	0	4	2	5
	Verbal Warning	1	0	1	1	2	1
	Written Reflection	0	0	0	0	5	6

A review of subgroup data for Year Two revealed that African American students remained the most likely to receive disciplinary consequences which resulted or which may have resulted in a loss of instructional time (ISS, Suspension, Time Out). For both Major and Minor student discipline incidents, Asian and white students were most likely to be assigned disciplinary consequences which were less disruptive to their instructional day (Conference with Student, Contact Parent, Lunch Detention, Written Reflection).

Summary: Study Question Two

Study question two, "To what extent did the program affect discipline gaps (racial disproportionality) in student discipline?" was addressed through the analysis of quantitative student discipline referral data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender and special education status. Analysis of these data solely based on student discipline referral percentages, without adjustments for repeat referrals, revealed only minor decreases in the percentage of student discipline referrals attributable to African American students. Additionally, and again without adjustment for repeat referral, African American students continued to account for student discipline referrals at rates which significantly exceeded their enrollment percentages. Risk ratio and risk index calculations, however, which are adjusted for repeat referrals, revealed significant (averaging 76%) decreases in the risk indices of African American and Special Education students, suggesting that the PBIS program was successful in reducing, though not eliminating, discipline gaps.

<div align="center">

Qualitative Results: Survey Data

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Teacher Working Conditions Survey Questions

Study question three, "To what extent did the program affect teacher perceptions and practices with regard to student behavior?" was further examined through analysis of the 2014

Teacher Working Conditions Survey (TWCS) and the investigator-designed survey completed by teachers and instructional staff at the subject school in February 2017 (the 2017 Survey). Part 1 of the 2017 Survey consisted of seven Likert-type questions identical to those contained within the "Managing Student Conduct" section of the TWCS. The Pre-Program and Year Two responses of instructional staff at the subject school were summarized (see Table 13) and compared by question (see Figures 10 through 17).

Survey data, when viewed in comparison to pre-program data, suggested that teachers and instructional staff generally agreed that students understand expectations. However, there was a decline in the perception that students follow rules of conduct (89% pre-program to 80.7% in Year Two). Additionally, there was a slight decrease (78% to 73.1%) in the perception that teachers understand rules and expectations for student conduct, suggesting that expectations which focus on restorative and non-punitive disciplinary response were not as well-understood as the rubrics utilized under the former PBIS system to set out and mandate defined responses to specific behaviors.

The most significant changes in teacher perception over the study period related to administrative enforcement of student expectations and administrative support of teachers. While 70% of instructional staff in 2014 agreed that administrators consistently enforced expectations for student conduct, this number decreased to 61.6% in 2017. The percentage of respondents selecting "strongly agree" in response to this question decreased from 29% in 2014 to 15.4% in 2017. Although a variety of factors, including teacher turnover and individual teacher experiences with various administrators, might contribute to this declining perception, this statistic was important to note within the context of this study.

Perception of administrative support for teachers (in response to the survey item,

Table 13

TWC Survey Questions: 2014/2017 Comparison

Q.5.1	Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about managing student conduct in your school:	% Agree	
		2014 (n=49)	2017 (n=26)
a.	Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.	88.0%	92.3%
b.	Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	89.0%	80.7%
c.	Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty and staff.	78.0%	73.1%
d.	School administrators consistently enforce expectations for student conduct.	70.0%	61.6%
e.	School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.	88.0%	69.2%
f.	Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	88.0%	76.9%
g.	The staff works in an environment that is safe.	94.0%	92.3%

Question 1: Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.
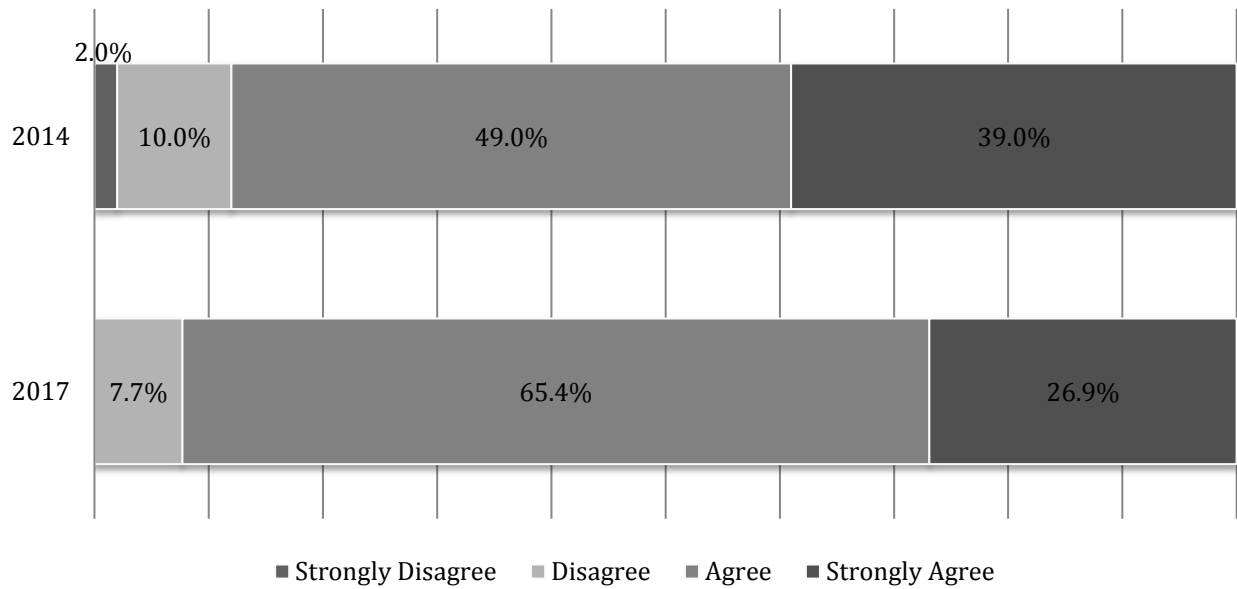
Figure 10. Survey question 1: Detailed comparison.

Question 2: Students at this school follow rules of conduct.
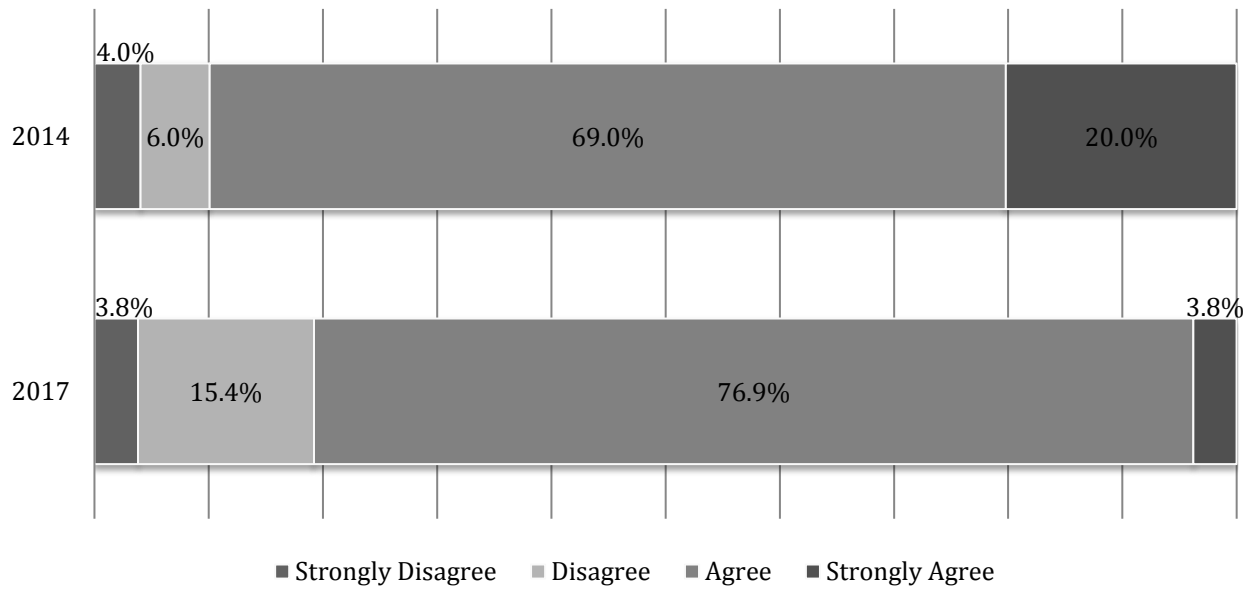
Figure 11. Survey question 2: Detailed comparison.

Question 3: Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty and staff.

2014
- 2.0%
- 20.0%
- 49.0%
- 29.0%

2017
- 26.9%
- 46.2%
- 26.9%

■ Strongly Disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Agree   ■ Strongly Agree
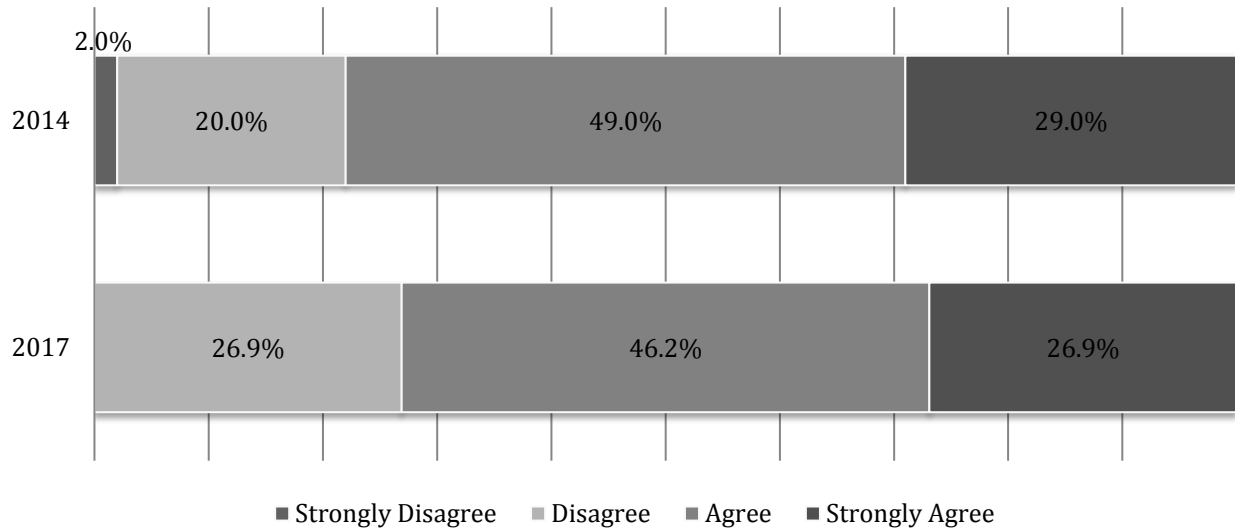
Figure 12. Survey question 3: Detailed comparison.

Question 4: School administrators consistently enforce expectations for student conduct.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
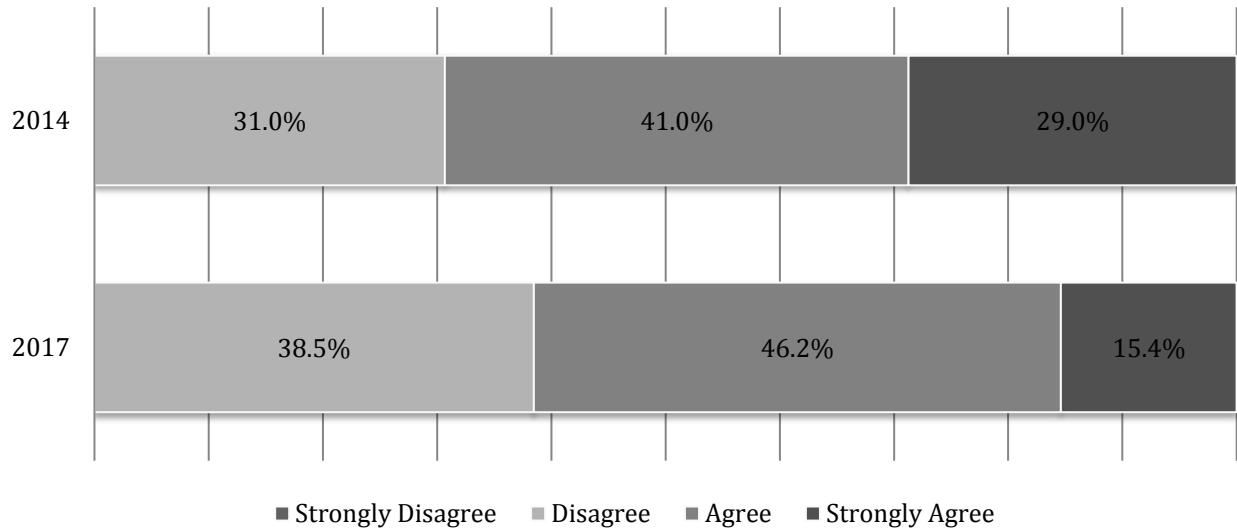
Figure 13. Survey question 4: Detailed comparison.

Question 5: School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.

2.0%

2014	10.0% — 51.0% — 37.0%
2017	30.8% — 50.0% — 19.2%

■ Strongly Disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Agree   ■ Strongly Agree
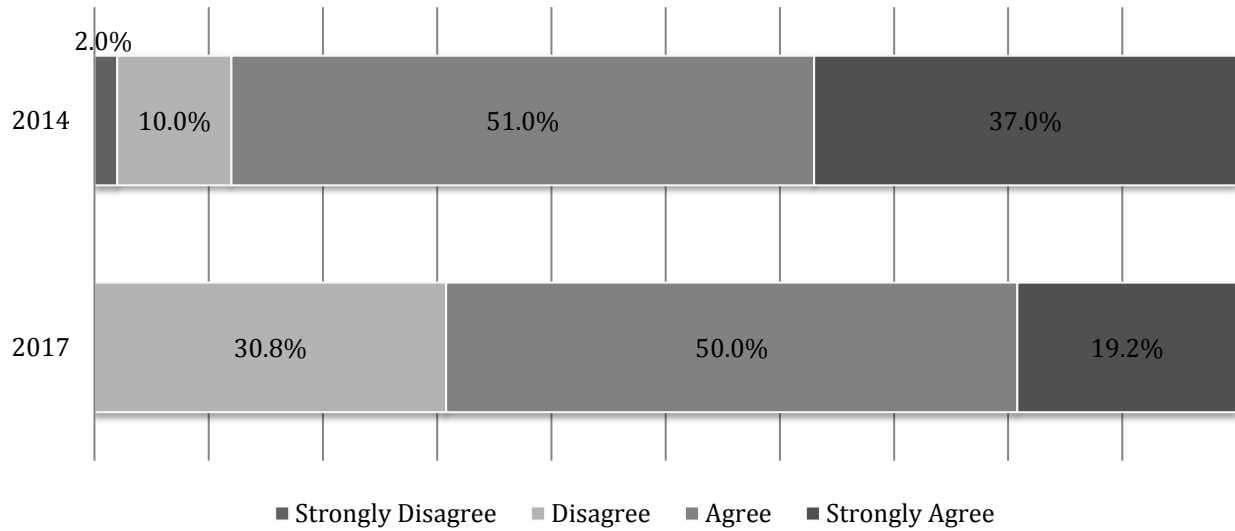
Figure 14. Survey question 5: Detailed comparison.

Question 6: Teachers consistently enforce expectations for student conduct.
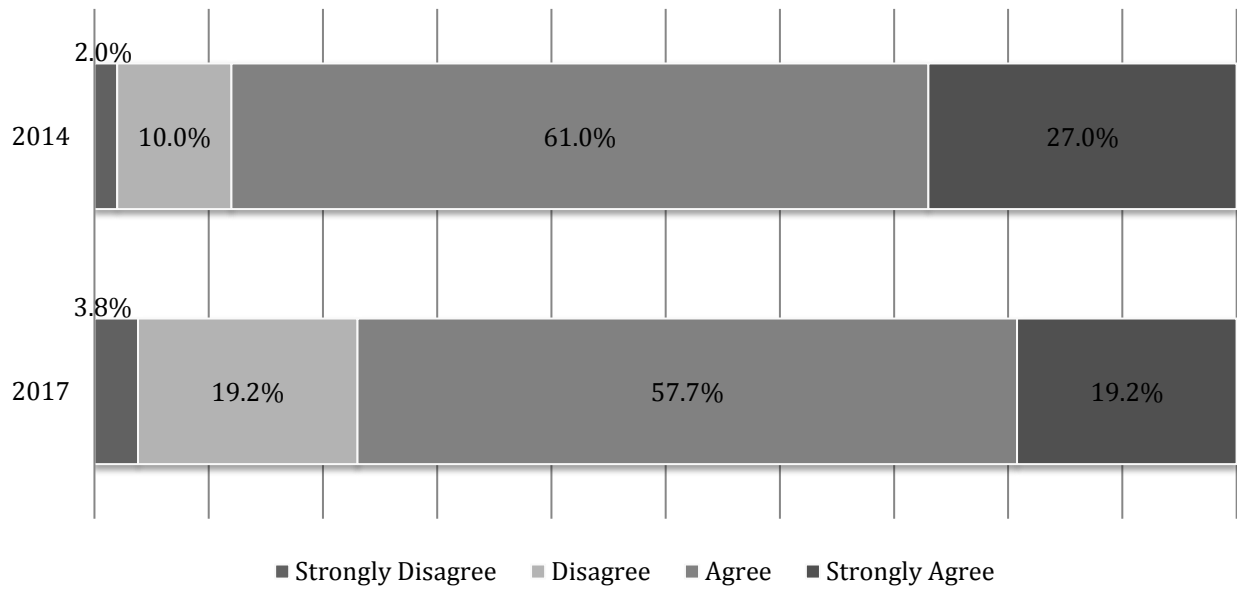
Figure 15. Survey question 6: Detailed comparison.

Question 7: The staff works in an environment that is safe.
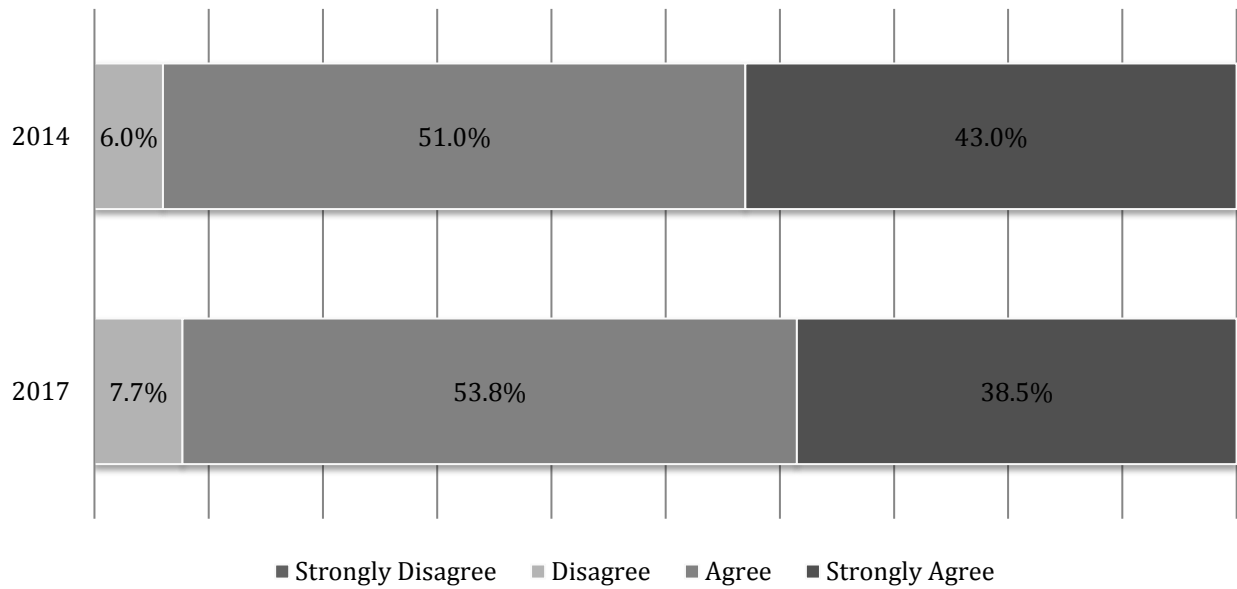
Figure 16. Survey question 7: Detailed comparison.

"Administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom") decreased from 88% in 2014 to 69.2% in 2017. Again, the percentage of respondents indicating "strongly agree" in response to this question decreased significantly, from 37% in 2014 to 19% in 2017. As with other items, although a number of factors external to the PBIS program itself could have contributed to this decline, this data was important to note in evaluating the role of school administration in PBIS and disciplinary response.

Overall, a comparison of TWCS data from Pre-Program through Year Two suggested both a general decline in the perception of clarity to teachers regarding disciplinary expectation and a decline in the perception of administrative support and consistency. Additionally, although teachers generally perceived (92.3% agree, up from 88% in 2014) that students understood expectations for conduct, a lower percentage of teachers in 2017 agreed that students were following behavioral expectations (80.7% as compared to 89% pre-program).

2017 Staff Survey: Additional Likert-Type Items

In addition to the seven survey items aligned to the TWCS, the 2017 Survey included seven additional Likert-type items linked to PBIS program goals, as well as four open-ended questions. Responses to the additional Likert-type items were summarized (see Table 14). No similar pre-program data was available for comparison.

Taken as a whole, these survey responses indicated general agreement with the goals of the PBIS program as identified by stakeholders at inception. Additionally, these data indicated a generally positive response to the introduction of restorative practices and culturally responsive behavior management. A significant minority (23.1%) (n=26), of responding staff was cognizant of disparities in student discipline at the subject school, and 100% agreed that it is important to reduce disparities in discipline between minority and non-minority students. A significant

Table 14

Staff Survey Responses

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about managing student conduct in your school:	% Strongly Disagree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Strongly Agree
8. Discipline procedures in my school are applied in a manner which is equitable to all students regardless their gender or ethnicity.	7.7%	15.4%	57.7%	19.2%
9. Student discipline is managed at my school in a way which prioritizes student exposure to academic instruction.	0.0%	3.8%	69.2%	26.9%
10. Restorative practices are valuable in responding to disciplinary issues and building classroom community.	3.8%	7.7%	50%	38.5%
11. I believe in the importance of culturally responsive student behavior response practices.	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
12. I am currently more knowledgeable regarding culturally responsive behavior response practices than I was during the 2015-2016 school year.	0.0%	11.5%	61.5%	26.9%
13. I make efforts to utilize culturally responsive behavior management practices in my work with students.	0.0%	7.7%	61.5%	30.8%
14. I believe that it is important to reduce disparities in discipline between minority and non-minority students in my school.	0.0%	0.0%	26.9%	73.1%

Note. (n=26).

majority (88.5%) (n=26) agreed that restorative practices are valuable in classroom management, and 100% (n=26) agreed that cultural responsiveness in disciplinary practice is important. Consistent with the PBIS program goal of prioritizing instructional time over disciplinary response, 96.1% (n=26) of respondents agreed that student discipline, as of Year Two, was handled in a manner which prioritized student exposure to academic instruction.

Pre-program data regarding these staff perceptions are not available; however, the survey data suggested that the PBIS program may have been successful in influencing staff perceptions as desired by stakeholders regarding equity in student discipline and regarding culturally responsive student discipline practices.

2017 Staff Survey: Open-Ended Questions

In addition to the fourteen Likert-type items discussed above, the 2017 Survey contained four short-response questions. These questions were as follows:

1. Please describe the restorative practices you are currently utilizing in your work with students.

2. Please describe the practices, if any, in which you engage in order to ensure the equitable application of disciplinary practices among minority and non-minority students.

3. Please describe the practices, if any, which you utilize in order to prioritize instructional time for students involved in behavior incidents.

4. Please describe the ways, if any, in which you feel that student discipline and/or behavior response at [the subject school] has changed during the past two years.

In response to Question 1, all respondents (n=26) indicated that restorative practices were being utilized to at least some extent in their classrooms. Examples included "morning circles,"

as well as a variety of "mindfulness activities" and a focus on classroom community. One respondent indicated the use of "morning circles, one-on-one coaching, mindful lunches with school counselor, morning and lunchtime yoga, [and] lunch bunch." Several respondents mentioned restorative conferences and reflective student activities such as think sheets. In this regard, one respondent reported that "when a student makes a mistake, they write about what happened and how they will do better in the future. They are forced to reflect on the situation and how to fix it, and then communicate that to their parents." Relationship-building was a commonly-recurring theme, and a majority reported engaging students in reflective and restorative conferences or conversations.

All but three respondents (n=26) indicated, in answer to Question 2, the use of practices to ensure disciplinary equity. Approximately one-third of respondents identified "consistency" in response to this question. These respondents reported practices such as "having the same expectations for all students," "all students receiv[ing] the same consequences," or "treating all students equally within the same setting." One respondent indicated "I believe I need more training on this issue." Nine respondents (of 26) identified practices relating to the recognition of student individuality and culture. These respondents reported "being cognizant of under-represented groups," "being able to understand students [sic] culture or behaviors and allowing for those students to feel comfortable and nurtured at school," and "making sure that I am looking at the particular student's needs." Several respondents identified teacher reflection before providing a consequence as important in this regard.

In response to Question 3, 25 (of 26) respondents reported efforts to prioritize instructional time. These included deliberate efforts to handle disciplinary matters during recess or lunch, as well as pro-active techniques such as "setting expectations at the start of each

lesson." Several also reported making efforts to remediate or "catch up" for a student who was been forced to miss class time. Several respondents also detailed efforts to manage student discipline within the classroom through strategies such as "alternative/strategic seating," "using a calm-down spot in the classroom" and "incorporating family circle into the daily schedule."

In response to Question 4, 9 (of 26) respondents reported either that they had not been at the subject school long enough to respond or that they saw no change in student discipline/behavior response. Of those who reported changes, respondents noted the school's new focus on and use of restorative practice, as well as efforts to prioritize instructional time. One respondent indicated "I believe that student behavior . . . has greatly improved since implementing the GIFTS program. I see a positive change in all of my classes." Another indicated, "I believe we are taking a more restorative approach that individualizes discipline responses to students. We slow down to truly understand the student and the circumstances involved. We strive to be equitable and recognize that appropriate, meaningful discipline is child-specific." Two respondents noted in increase in administrative responsiveness and efforts to problem-solve. Three respondents, however, expressed concerns that "severe" or "serious" behavior issues are not being handled appropriately. One indicated that some students "are given too many chances and [are] a clear safety concern for others," and one indicated that some teachers are permitted to "yell and/or talk harshly toward students, [while] others get in trouble for doing the same thing." The majority of respondents noting change, however, commented on the student-centered nature of disciplinary response. One summative comment indicated,

> I think that once we were made aware of the intention of student discipline . . it was easier to understand the change in methods. I think we are looking at many more ways to help students cope with situations and to help them develop skills that they can use

throughout their lives. . . . I feel that we are more concerned with helping the child to cope with difficult situations than inflicting a consequence. Hopefully, this will have a more long-lasting effect on our students.

Overall, these qualitative data indicate that staff members understood and were receptive to the goals of the PBIS program. All survey respondents reported utilizing restorative practices in at least some way, and the vast majority (88%) of respondents reported taking steps to improve equity in student discipline practice. Additionally, a significant majority (96%) of respondents reported taking steps to prioritize instructional time and reduce the impact of student discipline on exposure to instruction. These data further revealed an increased awareness of the importance of equity in student discipline and of the availability of alternatives to exclusionary student discipline practices.

Summary: Study Question Three

Study question three, "To what extent did the program affect teacher perceptions and practices with regard to student discipline?" was answered through analysis of quantitative student discipline referral data related to reported student discipline incidents and assigned disciplinary consequences, as well as through analysis of the qualitative survey data. When triangulated, these data suggested that the PBIS program resulted in shifts away from subjective student discipline reports for minority students, as well as shifts toward the use of restorative practices such as written reflections and restorative circles. Staff survey data suggested that the PBIS program was successful in raising staff awareness regarding discipline gaps and the importance of equity, as well as in increasing efforts to prioritize instructional time over response to student discipline incidents. These data also revealed, however, that teacher perception of

support from their school administrators decreased as a result of the PBIS program, and also that teachers perceived decreased clarity surrounding the PBIS program.

Qualitative Results: Student Interviews

Study question four, "To what extent did student perceptions of discipline practices change as a result of the program?" was answered through interviews of several students who have been enrolled at the subject school for at least the past four academic school years. Students were selected based on their enrollment at the school throughout this period, as well as based on their involvement in at least five student discipline referrals throughout the evaluation period. Written informed consent was obtained from appropriate student guardians, and each student was interviewed by the primary investigator in February 2017. A series of guiding questions was utilized to ensure consistency in interview topics and outline. Interviews were recorded by audio means. Student comments are summarized in four vignettes, below. Student names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

Student Vignette #1: Tevin

Tevin, a fifth-grade African American boy, began attending the subject school as a kindergartener. When asked about his favorite teachers, Tevin identified his homeroom teachers from fourth and fifth grade, as well as his current math teacher, the music teacher, his fourth grade language arts teacher, and the school social worker. When asked what made these teachers his favorites, Tevin indicated that these teachers "teach me what I need to know." He identified these teachers – all women – as "strict," but as people who cared about his learning, as evidenced, in his opinion, by their efforts to ensure that he got his work done. Tevin felt that teachers who don't care about students "will not notice if you're not getting your work done," and don't care "if you don't know what you are supposed to know."

127

When asked about the GIFTS matrix and asked to compare it to the prior "Fuller Four,"

Tevin indicated that he thought the GIFTS expectations "help you out," and he placed emphasis

on the expectation to "Give your best." Tevin felt that the PBIS program and the GIFTS

expectations made sense for the school community, but wondered why "be safe" wasn't

included. He shared that the fifth grade teachers were not consistently using the classroom

reward system, and indicated that the GIFTS program would work better if students had a "treat"

or reward they were working toward. Tevin shared that his classmates were not as motivated by

the GIFTS cards as they could be, because his teachers "never give a reward." Despite this,

Tevin felt that the GIFTS matrix was a slight improvement over the former "Fuller Four,"

because it included some important expectations that hadn't been included before.

Tevin shared his experiences with "getting into trouble" at school, and indicated that he

always felt he had been treated fairly. According to Tevin, "You have to get a consequence for

everything that you do." Tevin felt like his consequences, which included "think sheets" and a

recent in-school suspension, had always been fair. In discussing his in-school suspension

experience, Tevin indicated that he felt this to be a fair consequence; however, he indicated that

he was already sorry for his actions (he hit another student) before serving the consequence, and

that his teacher had talked with him at length before the consequence was assigned. Tevin

indicated that no one spoke to him during his time in in-school suspension regarding the related

incident or regarding his behavior choices.

When asked his opinions regarding the overall equity ("fairness") of student discipline at

the subject school, Tevin shared that he did not feel that all students were always treated equally.

Tevin felt that sometimes some students "got into trouble" for things that other students didn't.

When asked follow-up questions, Tevin identified two students – a Hispanic girl and an African-

American girl, who he said were frequently reprimanded for requests to get water or use the restroom, while other students (he identified a white girl) making similar requests always received permission.

Tevin was asked to relate his experiences with classroom circles, peer mediation, or other restorative practices. Tevin shared that he had participated in a classroom circle with his homeroom teacher on one occasion, and that the circle involved sharing "something good" about someone else in the circle. Tevin was positive about this experience, indicating that "it was fun to say something good about other people," and that this made him feel good. Tevin indicated that his teacher had promised to conduct more circles, but that this had not occurred.

Student Vignette #2: Khalil

Khalil, a fifth grade African American boy, had been enrolled at the subject school since first grade. He identified as his favorite teachers his third and fourth grade homeroom teachers, his fifth grade language arts teacher, and the Physical Education teacher. When asked to talk about what made these teachers his "favorites," Khalil said, "because they give me inspiration to keep going and push harder." Regarding his language arts teacher, Khalil indicated "when I do the work, even if it is good, she will give it back to me and want me to make it great." Similarly, he indicated that his Physical Education teacher had pushed him to run faster to improve his time in the mile, and had impressed upon him the importance of working hard. Khalil felt that adults in the subject school generally cared about students. He shared that he had seen students "talk back" to teachers, and that the teachers "still show up the next day and keep their emotions inside."

Khalil felt that the GIFTS expectations were reasonable, but indicated that, "if it was up to me, I would include stuff like 'think before you speak,' or 'think before you act.'" Khalil felt

that it was important for students to be encouraged to think about how their actions impacted other people. Khalil felt that the GIFTS concept was effective, indicating that it gave students a reason to make good choices. He felt, however, that the program was more effective for younger students than for fifth-graders, as "fifth graders aren't so focused on GIFTS cards."

When asked about his experiences with "getting in trouble," Khalil indicated that he got into trouble frequently – for minor things such as talking out of turn – in fourth grade, in particular. Khalil indicated that his fourth grade teachers often assigned him "think sheets," but that he had not gotten any "think sheets" in fifth grade. Khalil shared that he worried, when he got into trouble, about how the teacher and his parents would feel, and shared that he felt that getting into trouble frequently might eventually cause the teacher not to "stick up for you."

Khalil felt that he had been treated fairly when he got into trouble, and he felt that discipline and expectations were fair for all students at the subject school. Khalil shared that he did not feel this way in third grade, when he felt that teachers had "favorite students." Khalil indicated that he began to realize, mid-way through fourth grade, that his teachers were treating all students the same.

When asked about his experiences with restorative practice, Khalil shared that his fifth grade teacher conducted "circle time" each Friday. During this time, the class discussed topics that helped them get to know one another better – hobbies, favorite foods, favorite sports teams, etc. Khalil indicated that he liked this practice, because it made him feel "like I am getting to know the people in my class more."

Student Vignette #3: Jaylen

Jaylen, a fourth-grade African American boy, had the most pre-program discipline referrals (as a then-second-grader) of any student. When asked about his favorite teachers, he

identified all of his homeroom teachers with the exception of his second grade teacher. Jaylen indicated that these teachers were his favorites because they "helped me when I was struggling." In addition to helping him make better behavior choices, Jaylen indicated that his "favorite" teachers had helped him become better at reading and math, and had helped him improve his End of Grade test and CASE21 (a local quarterly summative assessment) scores.

When asked about his experiences with "getting into trouble," Jaylen shared that he had received a variety of consequences, including out-of-school suspension, for things like fighting, talking out of turn, and being disrespectful. He indicated that he felt these consequences to be fair. Jaylen shared that he had not gotten into trouble at all during the current school year, and that his last discipline referral had occurred during the 2015-2016 school year, when he was in third grade.

Although Jaylen indicated that he perceived discipline practices at the subject school as "fair," he also indicated that he did not always feel that all students were treated the same. Jaylen shared that he had seen situations where more than one student engaged in a particular behavior (e.g. fighting), but only one student received a discipline referral. Jaylen also shared that his perception in second and third grade – when he received multiple discipline referrals – was that discipline was not fair. When asked to elaborate on this perception, Jaylen shared that he did not feel that he had been given a "new start" when he came back to class or back to school after getting into trouble. Jaylen indicated that the teachers who took the time to "help me when I'm frustrated" or to help him make good choices were those who cared about him.

When asked about his experiences with classroom circles and other restorative practices, Jaylen shared that his teacher had conducted classroom circles. Jaylen indicated that he felt that circles were "good," because they "help you know about other people and how they are feeling."

Jaylen shared that he liked school as a fourth-grader more than he had in the past, and identified the variety of electives (cup stacking, cooking) and school activities available to him in that school year as the reason.

Student Vignette #4: Caiden

Caiden was a fifth-grade African American boy whose discipline referral history included both in-school and out-of-school suspension. Caiden identified his favorite teacher as a teacher who, "when you are in the wrong . . . tries to figure it out before [sending] you to the office just to deal with it." It was important to Caiden that his teacher made efforts to understand exactly what had happened in handling discipline incidents and issues between students.

When asked his opinions regarding the GIFTS expectations, Caiden indicated that he felt these expectations made sense for students. Caiden emphasized the expectation that students "give your best," indicating that this was important both in school and in life. Caiden also emphasized the importance of "taking responsibility," and he interpreted this most vividly to mean not cheating or letting other people influence your actions.

In discussing his experiences with "getting into trouble," Caiden identified "hitting people" and "talking back" as the things for which he had most often been referred to the office. Caiden felt best about his discipline experiences when the involved adults took the time to talk to him about his choices before imposing a punishment. When asked if he felt he had been treated fairly, Caiden said, "sometimes, but sometimes no." When asked to elaborate, Caiden shared that he felt it was unfair when he got sent to the office for "just one thing," like talking to someone when he wasn't supposed to be, or for doing something that was then misinterpreted by the teacher (e.g. taking a long time to line up at recess when he was far away at the time the teacher blew the whistle). Caiden indicated that he felt like he was not always allowed to explain

his actions to the involved teacher, and indicated that "you don't want to talk back, so you just have to say nothing." Caiden also shared that he felt it was particularly hard for students to meet expectations when not all teachers responded or acted in the same way.

Despite feeling like he had occasionally been treated unfairly, Caiden indicated that he felt that the teachers and other adults in the subject school cared about him and about other students. He felt that teachers' first priority was always to protect students, and that this was the reason for most teacher choices and decisions.

Caiden did not perceive a change in student discipline or in equity over the past three school years. He indicated that he participated in the current school year in classroom circles every Friday, but he had neither strong positive nor strong negative feelings about them. Caiden felt that sometimes circles might not be a good idea, because they might be difficult for students who are shy.

Summary: Study Question Four

Study question four, "To what extent did the program affect student perceptions of discipline practices?" was answered through the analysis of these student interview data. Student interview data, when considered as a whole, revealed that these students generally perceived student discipline as fair throughout the evaluation period, and that they did not perceive a significant change in practice or in disciplinary equity related to the revised PBIS program. Where students did identify perceptions of "unfairness," they discussed scenarios in which teachers didn't listen to their version of events or in which some students were treated differently than others without a clear reason. In the case of differential treatment, students identified white and Asian students as those given preferential treatment over Hispanic and African American students; however, they did not articulate racial bias or discuss student race or ethnicity

133

specifically. Significantly, each student interviewed identified as their "favorite" teachers those whom they perceived to be invested in their success. All the students identified relationships with their teachers as important to their success in school, and expressed appreciation for the teachers who allowed "second chances" or "fresh starts" following students' academic or behavioral mistakes or lapses in judgment. Reflective conversations were important to the students; however, they also all expressed the importance, as well as the perceived fairness, of the consequences which had been assigned for their referred behaviors.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to conduct a two-year Impact Assessment of the PBIS program at the participating school as revised by the school's PBIS committee for implementation in the 2015-2016 school year. The program's stakeholders, who included the PBIS committee, the school principal, and the primary investigator, were concerned with the loss of instructional time related to exclusionary discipline practices. Additionally, data revealed significant racial discipline gaps among African American students, in particular, and their white and Asian peers at the subject school. Evaluation of the PBIS program focused on the program's desired outcomes as identified by the program's stakeholders. These desired program outcomes included decreasing overall student discipline referrals, decreasing discipline gaps, improving teacher perception of school-wide student discipline practice, and improving student perception of disciplinary equity.

This formative evaluation utilized a mixed methods explanatory case study design focusing on a holistic review of the PBIS program (Fitzpatrick et al., 2010). The study examined the program through both quantitative student discipline data and qualitative staff survey and student interview data as a means to ensure that program outcomes were examined and analyzed from multiple viewpoints (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Multiple measures of program outcomes allowed for a broader understanding of overall program impact, and compensated for potential weaknesses in any one measure (Rossi et al., 2004). In addition, the collection of multiple forms of both quantitative and qualitative data ensured the validity of study results by allowing for comparison and predictions among measures (Rossi et al., 2004). Quantitative data included student discipline data as collected through the entry of student discipline referrals into the Student Incident Referral System (SIRS) module of the WCPSS Electronic Access to Student

Information (EASi) system, while qualitative data included teacher survey responses and student interviews. Chapter 4 presented the statistical analysis of data collected throughout the two-year study period. This chapter summarizes the findings, presents their implications for program stakeholders, and presents recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

The first two study questions were addressed through the analysis of quantitative student discipline referral data. Because the study concluded following the first semester of the second school year of program implementation, only first semester data for each relevant school year were utilized. Student discipline referral data was retrieved from the SIRS module and disaggregated by school year and by student race/ethnicity and gender, as well as by incident type and consequence type. Analysis of the quantitative data suggested that the program was not effective in reducing overall student discipline referrals, as student discipline referral numbers increased over the evaluation period; however, there were limitations associated with this data related to the relative infancy of the SIRS module. When disaggregated and analyzed using risk indices and risk ratios, student discipline data suggested that the program had reduced disproportionality significantly, though discipline gaps still existed.

The third study question was addressed through the analysis of quantitative data related to assigned disciplinary consequences, as well as through the analysis of qualitative data related to teacher perception and practice. These data suggested an increase in the use of restorative practices such as peer mediation and reflection, as well as an increase in teacher awareness of restorative practices and belief in the importance of culturally responsive and equitable student discipline practices.

The final study question was addressed through the analysis of qualitative student interview data related to student perceptions of disciplinary equity. These data revealed that the students interviewed had generally positive responses to the program, and that the students generally, with limited exceptions, felt that disciplinary practice was equitable. These data did not reveal a significant shift in student perception related directly to the program.

Study Question 1: To What Extent Did the Program Affect Overall Student Discipline Referrals?

Study question 1 was addressed through the analysis of overall student discipline referral data for the two years of the study, as compared to overall student discipline referral data for the school year immediately preceding the study. These data revealed a significant increase in overall student discipline referrals in each of the first two years of program implementation, suggesting that the PBIS program was ineffective in reducing overall student discipline referrals. As discussed in Chapter 4, however, the online SIRS module through which student discipline referrals are documented at the subject school was first introduced at the start of the school year prior to program implementation. It is possible that user unfamiliarity with the module, which was initially reported by staff members to be time-consuming, led to minimal usage and lower documentation of student discipline incidents in the initial year of implementation. In that case, overall student discipline referral totals may have been affected by an increase, over the evaluation period, in user familiarity with the SIRS system and an increase in the speed at which staff members were able to input incidents as they increased their skill with the online platform. It is possible, if not likely, that some indeterminate number of student discipline incidents were simply not documented during the system's infancy, and that overall student discipline referral totals might have been expected to increase over the evaluation period for this reason alone.

Study Question 2: To What Extent Did the Program Affect Discipline Gaps (Racial Disproportionality) in Student Discipline?

Study Question 2 was addressed through the analysis of quantitative student discipline referral data as disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, and special education (SPED) status, compared to the same Pre-Program data. An analysis of these data by student discipline referral percentage (portion of overall student discipline referrals attributable to each subgroup) revealed a decrease in the overall percentage of discipline referrals attributable to African American students, suggesting a program outcome consistent with program goals. The decrease was most significant for Minor incidents. For Major incidents, the overall percentage attributable to African American students declined slightly; however, the percentage represented by African American boys increased. The percentage of discipline reports representing Asian students increased for both Major and Minor incidents.

Despite these positive program outcomes, discipline gaps persisted at the subject school, though they declined slightly over the evaluation period, and African American, American Indian, and Special Education students continued to account for percentages of student discipline referrals which significantly exceeded their enrollment percentages. African-American students continued to account for a significant majority of Major discipline referrals, as well as for a significant majority of reported Minor discipline incidents. Special Education students were similarly at risk for excessive discipline referrals when utilizing this type of data analysis.

In order to control for excessive discipline reports related to one or more frequently-referred student, as well as for student discipline reports entered primarily for purposes of data collection (related to SPED or behavior management processes), disaggregated student discipline data was utilized to calculate risk indices and risk ratios for each subgroup. In risk ratio

calculation, Asian students were utilized as the comparison group, as this subgroup comprises a significant majority at the subject school. These data revealed outcomes consistent with program goals, and suggested that discipline gaps were reduced significantly over the evaluation period. Risk ratios for all minority subgroups – American Indian, African American, and Hispanic – declined by an average of 76%, in Year One of the program. The risk ratio for Special Education students declined similarly, by 68%, in Year One. Risk ratios for American Indian and Special Education students declined further in Year Two, while risk ratios for African American and Hispanic students remained stable. Although risk ratios for all subgroups remained greater than 1, these declines represented a significant targeted outcome for the program under evaluation.

Study Question 3: To What Extent Did the Program Affect Teacher Perceptions and Practices with Regard to Student Discipline?

Study Question 3 was addressed through the analysis of quantitative data regarding the nature of student discipline referrals and assigned consequences, as well as through qualitative teacher survey data.

Quantitative data revealed several shifts in the nature of student discipline referrals which may have been related to program goals. In particular, there was a decline in the percentage of student discipline referrals related to more subjective offenses such as "Disrespect" and "Bullying." Student discipline referrals for "Noncompliance," however, increased, and in the case of subjective discipline referrals such as "Disrespect" and "Noncompliance," African American students continued to account for a disproportionate percentage of these reports.

Quantitative data related to assigned disciplinary consequence revealed an increase in the use of the restorative practice "peer mediation" during Year Two, as well as a decline in both out-of-school and in-school suspensions and "Time Out." The use of the targeted intervention

139

"Restriction of School Activities" (e.g. loss of self-directed computer or iPad access, structured recess, loss of a privilege) increased, as did the use of Written Reflections (a restorative practice introduced through professional development at the start of Year Two). African American students, however, remained the most likely to receive disciplinary consequences which resulted or which may have resulted in lost exposure to instruction (ISS, Suspension, Time Out).

Staff survey data, when viewed in comparison to pre-program data, revealed a decline in perceptions of clarity surrounding rules and expectations for student conduct, as well as a significant decline in the perception of administrative enforcement of student expectations and administrative support of teachers' efforts to maintain student discipline in the classroom. A variety of factors, including teacher turnover and individual teacher experiences with various administrators, might have contributed to this decline. Additionally, although teachers generally perceived that students understood expectations for conduct, a lower percentage of teachers in Year Two agreed that students were following behavioral expectations than Pre-Program.

Additional staff survey data for which no pre-program comparison data were available suggested that the program may have been successful in influencing staff perceptions as desired by stakeholders regarding equity in student discipline, regarding the importance of maintaining instructional time when handling student discipline incidents, regarding the value of restorative practice, and regarding culturally responsive student discipline practices. Staff responses to these questions were positive for the implementation of classroom-based preventative and responsive restorative practices, as well as for efforts to reduce lost instructional time related to behavior management. Several staff members, however, expressed concerns that severe disciplinary issues were not being handled seriously enough, and that students were being given "too many chances."

Study Question 4: To What Extent Did the Program Affect Student Perceptions of

Discipline Practices?

Study Question 4 was addressed through the interviews conducted by the primary

investigator with four fourth- and fifth-grade students at the subject school. Guiding questions

were utilized to ensure consistency of topic, and students were encouraged to discuss their

perceptions of the program and of disciplinary equity in the subject school setting. Students

expressed minor concerns regarding fairness, most grounded in teacher misunderstanding or

failure to provide opportunities for student explanation, and one shared that he felt some students

were treated differently than others. All, however, generally perceived student discipline as fair

and the universal PBIS expectations as reasonable. All had participated in and had generally

positive feelings about restorative classroom circles. None perceived significant changes in

disciplinary equity over the program evaluation period.

Study Implications

As discussed in Chapter 2, researchers have explored three potential areas of explanation

for race-based discipline gaps. These include: (1) the potential that minority students actually

engage in a greater number of inappropriate behaviors as the result of ethnicity, socioeconomic

status, or low academic achievement; (2) the intentional or unintentional application by teachers

and school authorities of stereotypes and biased cultural expectations; and (3) cross-cultural

misunderstanding (Kinsler, 2011; Nichols, 2004; Rong, 1996). Research has consistently ruled

out student-specific factors such as race, poverty, or poor grades, as studies controlling for these

factors have found that discipline gaps nonetheless persist (Gregory et al., 2010; Skiba et al.,

2002). Researchers investigating teacher bias and cultural mis-matching have generally found

that student discipline reports vary in predictable ways based on the race and gender of teachers

and students (Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Noltemeyer et al., 2012). Additionally, research has established the tendency of referrals for minority students to be based on subjective infractions, rather than on objectively-observable behaviors (Skiba et al., 2002).

The current study did not disaggregate student discipline referrals by individual teacher, and thus did not seek to examine the effect of teacher ethnicity on student discipline. However, the current study clearly replicated research suggesting that African American students tend to be disproportionately referred, in particular, for disciplinary violations involving subjective teacher judgment – "noncompliance," "disrespect," "physical aggression." Additionally, the current study suggested, as have others, that even effective PBIS systems are insufficient to eliminate discipline gaps, and that elements of cultural responsiveness must be added to ensure the equitable application of student discipline practices.

Similarly, study data was consistent with prior research regarding the impact of student-teacher relationships and student tethers to school (Brown & Evans, 2002; Hawkins, Smith, & Catalano, 2004; Kennedy-Lewis, 2013). Qualitative student interview data confirmed the importance of authentic relationships and of teacher expectation, as well as the importance of student perceptions of equity in discipline practice. The students interviewed within the current study identified, without exception, the teachers who held them to high standards and considered their point of view as those who were the most effective and as those who had the greatest impact on both their academic and behavioral success.

Finally, the current study suggested that, while restorative practice and culturally responsive instruction have the potential to reduce discipline gaps, these must be implemented with fidelity and consistency in order to have sustained impact. Teacher survey data suggested a heightened understanding regarding the existence of discipline gaps, as well as growing

142

awareness that discipline gaps are undesirable. Most teachers reported attempts to implement culturally responsive and/or restorative classroom management practices; however, these tended to be relatively superficial – for example, "holding all students to the same standard," using student reflection or "think sheets," or engaging in occasional classroom circles. While these practices are a step forward, they do not encompass the culturally-responsive pedagogy described by researchers such as Pane (2010), who envisioned teachers becoming familiar with students' cultures, discovering students' strengths, building on the unique strengths of each student, and engaging in efforts to connect students' histories, cultures, and everyday lives to their classroom experiences. Although the data gathered in the current study suggested that teachers were open to these ideas, and that teachers were more aware of both the existence of inequity and of the existence of restorative practices, they did not show implementation of culturally responsive practices with depth and fidelity, nor did they show that restorative practice was yet effecting an impact on disciplinary equity in the participating school setting.

Recommendations

As the result of this study, recommendations were made in two categories: recommendations for practice and recommendations for future study.

Recommendations for Practice

In the area of practice, the following recommendations were made: (1) implement ongoing professional development designed to build capacity among staff to engage in preventative primary student behavior management practices; (2) implement ongoing professional development designed to raise cultural awareness among staff members and to build capacity among staff members to utilize culturally responsive student discipline practices; (3)

engage staff members and school administrators in refining school-wide PBIS program goals and practices.

This study highlights the potential for reducing disproportionalities in student discipline through a combination of a well-structured PBIS program and the use of restorative and culturally responsive student discipline practices. Initial professional development in Year One of this study focused on raising awareness regarding discipline gaps and their converse relation to achievement gaps, and restorative practices were not implemented until Year Two. Even without a significant focus on culturally responsive student discipline practices, the participating school saw, in Year One, an immediate reduction in risk indices for minority students.

Analysis of global student discipline data, without accounting for the effect of repeat discipline referrals for single students, revealed the existence of discipline gaps, and risk indices also revealed continued, though reduced, disproportionalities. Given that most "repeat offenders" in the subject school setting are African American students, even for objectively-verifiable offenses such as "fighting," the possibility of actual disparities in student behavior must be addressed. Boneshefski and Runge (2014) suggested that an appropriate response to disparate behavior in a SWPBIS system would be the revision of utilized interventions to assure cultural appropriateness. Moving forward, additional and ongoing professional development surrounding preventative practices, as well as surrounding the implementation of both restorative and culturally responsive classroom management practices on a school-wide basis, should be undertaken. Ideally, all teachers and administrators would utilize preventative and responsive classroom management and student discipline practices which are culturally relevant to students, utilizing language, music, and images that are compatible with student culture and relatable to students.

144

Students' perceptions of their teachers' classroom management practices, and particularly students' perceptions of efficacy, equity and appropriateness, are crucial to the effectiveness of preventative and responsive student disciplinary procedures (Lewis, 2001). According to Lewis (2001), students respond most positively to, and believe in the efficacy of, a social justice approach to misbehavior focusing on the provision of positive reinforcement and on the involvement of the students themselves in accepting responsibility and determining appropriate reactions to misbehavior. Robertson (2006) detailed students' preferences for and positive responses to teachers who refrain from an authoritarian stance, for teachers who establish their concern and care for students, for classrooms in which teacher and students hold high expectations for one another, for teachers who refrain from bias or prejudgment, and for teachers who engage in student-centered, respectful, and patient disciplinary practices. These research findings were replicated in the student interview data collected during this study.

Staff members at the participating school would benefit from ongoing professional development regarding student-centered primary (Tier I) behavior management practices. Professional learning in this regard should be structured to encourage collaboration among staff members, and to raise awareness and confidence in relationship-based and highly responsive student behavior management practices. Study data revealed that participating staff had begun a shift from consequence-based/punitive student discipline practices to more restorative and community-based practice, and this momentum should be continued through the presentation of well-designed and research-based professional learning. In addition, to the extent that continued disproportionalities may result from staff bias, the participating school should consider the provision of professional development – ideally presented by an outside/objective facilitator - to include awareness of one's own culture and that of students, families, and the community, as

well as professional development focusing on the validation of other cultures and interaction with students without bias (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014; Gonsoulin, Zablocki, & Leone, 2012; Pane, 2010).

Finally, the participating school would benefit from collaborative efforts to define and clarify PBIS program goals and the roles of all stakeholders. Staff survey results suggested some discomfort with and/or a lack of perceived clarity of PBIS program foci, as well as a declining perception of school administrator support in managing student behavior. These staff perceptions must be addressed in order to further PBIS program goals. Tier I professional development, as defined by Gonsoulin et al. (2012), began in conjunction with the current study, and recommendations for its ongoing provision are discussed above. The participating school should now begin to engage staff in collaborative training and whole-staff work to define and apply consistent vocabulary and positive behavior reinforcement structures across school settings (Gonsoulin et al., 2012). Additionally, staff members and school-based administrators should engage in Tier II professional development to define available support structures for ongoing problem behaviors, as well as Tier II professional development regarding the student needs and barriers (e.g. language barriers, mental health issues) specific to the participating school's student population (Gonsoulin et al., 2012).

Collaborative efforts among the PBIS Committee, school-based staff, and school administrators should focus on defining PBIS program goals and procedures, to identifying and implementing a common language of practice, and identifying and building capacity to utilize support structures for targeted students and/or identified behaviors. These efforts will improve perceptions of clarity, perceptions of collaboration and support, and perceptions of appropriate responsiveness to intense or problem student behaviors.

Recommendations for Future Research

In the area of future research, three recommendations were made: (1) research regarding the effect of whole-school restorative practice on discipline gaps at the elementary school level; (2) research regarding the impact of student discipline practice on student exposure to academic instruction at the elementary school level; and (3) research regarding impact of student discipline practice on student achievement at the elementary school level.

There exists a relative paucity of research examining the efficacy of PBIS as a method for reducing discipline gaps in the elementary school setting; however, the limited research that exists suggests that PBIS alone is not sufficient to eliminate racial disequities in student discipline (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014; Pane, 2010). The current study examined the effectiveness of a PBIS program to reduce discipline gaps when combined with restorative practice, and found that discipline gaps were reduced significantly, but not eliminated, over the two-year study period. Within the current study, however, restorative practice was implemented only in Year Two, and not on a mandatory school-wide basis. Future research involving the school-wide implementation of restorative practices over a more significant time period to examine the effect of this type of initiative on discipline gaps is recommended.

Although the PBIS program evaluated in this study emphasized the prioritization of instructional time during student behavior management, in recognition of the converse alignment of student discipline gaps and student achievement gaps, the effect of student discipline on exposure to academic instruction was not specifically addressed in this study. Research focusing directly on the effect of exclusionary student discipline practices on exposure to academic instruction, and specifically research focusing on the instructional time lost by individual

students as the result of various assigned disciplinary consequences, would significantly enhance this body of work.

Finally, there is a significant body of research surrounding the relationship between discipline gaps and student achievement gaps; however, the vast majority of this research is situated at the middle school and high school level (Arcia, 2006; Bowman-Perrot & Lewis, 2008; Gregory et al., 2010). Future research is recommended regarding the effect of discipline gaps on student achievement gaps at the elementary school level, and on the impact of reductions in discipline gaps on student achievement. The current study did not attempt to connect enhanced equity in student discipline to changes in individual student or subgroup academic achievement; however, this is a logical next step in advancing the issues addressed through this study.

Conclusion

Mandated by the federal government and spurred by research showing the connections between suspension from school, reduced academic achievement, and ultimately drop-out and involvement in the criminal justice system, school districts nationwide are seeking ways to reduce, in particular, the disproportionate suspension of minority students. The discussion surrounding this topic tends to focus on middle and high schools, where the vast majority of suspensions are enacted. Exclusionary student discipline practices, however, begin at the elementary school level, where the disproportionate impact of student discipline practice is seen in the overrepresentation of minority students in discipline referrals involving "time out," in-school suspension, and other practices which remove these students from academic instruction. Recognizing the broad implications of elementary school systems which fail to prioritize equity in student discipline, this program evaluation analyzed the impact of a PBIS program which was designed and implemented in an effort to reduce disproportionalities in student discipline.

148

Although the program was not successful by every measure, it did serve to significantly reduce the disciplinary risk indices of minority students in the subject school setting and to increase awareness of equity issues and competence with restorative practices among school staff. These positive program outcomes provide strong support for further program refinement and for the combination of strong PBIS programming with restorative and culturally responsive practices in this and other school settings.

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office
4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** · **www.ecu.edu/irb**

Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: Kenyann Stanford
CC:
          Art Rouse
Date: 12/5/2016
Re: UMCIRB 16-000652
          Evaluating Equity in Student Discipline

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 12/3/2016 to 12/2/2017. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category #5, 6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

APPENDIX B: LEA APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

From: Brandon Simmons/ProgramAccountability/WCPSS
To: Kenyann Stanford/FullerES/WCPSS@STAFF

Date: Tuesday, December 06, 2016 12:42PM
Subject: Re: Your Research Request

Dear Kenyann Stanford,
Your request to conduct research in the Wake County Public School System has been approved. We wish you well in conducting your study, "Evaluating Equity in Student Discipline: A Program Evaluation of PBIS in an Elementary School Setting"
.

This letter serves as evidence of project approval and you are free to share it with relevant staff and supervisors as needed. Remember that in accordance with WCPSS Board Policy 2550, approved research must at all times be conducted in a manner that is consistent with your original application and you must provide us with interim and final results as they become available. Please refer to the following link to read more about the district's policies, rules, and procedures: http://webarchive.wcpss.net/policy-files/series/policies/2550-bp.html.
Refer to your project number -1292- in further correspondence with us. We look forward to learning your results.
Please remember to send us a status report by August of each year (specifying whether you have completed data collection and when results will be available) or a summary of your findings if the study is complete.
Let us know if you have questions.

Thanks

Brandon

Brandon D. Simmons Ph.D, Ed.D, MBA
Senior Administrator
Data, Research, and Accountability
Wake County Public School System
Crossroads I Building
5625 Dillard Drive
Cary, NC 27518
T 919.533.7729 (New Number)
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E bsimmons2@wcpss.net

APPENDIX C: REVISED PBIS RUBRIC

Fuller Pledge – At Fuller Elementary we use our GIFTS.

Fuller Pledge	Carpool	Hallway	Restrooms	Cafeteria	Playground	Performances
Give my best ☐ I will...	• Enter and exit the building quietly.	• Walk silently on the right side.	• Put trash in the trashcan.	• Keep hands and feet to myself. • Use inside voices at the table.	• Use kind words. • Take turns.	• Respond appropriately to the performers.
Be Independent ☐ I will...	• Listen carefully to hear my number called. • Watch for my number. • Go directly to my destination.	• Go directly to my destination.	• Use time wisely. • Respect others' privacy.	• Take the top tray. • Eat a healthy meal. • Eat my own food.	• Play only approved games. • Report injuries to the teacher.	• Support my peers during the performance.
Follow Directions ☐ I will...	• Move when given directions.	• Stop with my class at the stop signs.	• Wait my turn. • Wash hands with soap and water (1 push only). • Dry hands with paper towels (3 pushes only).	• Make only one trip through the serving line. • Remain seated at the table. • Raise my hand if I have a question.	• Play by the rules. • Line up quickly.	• Follow the directions of the speaker or guest. • Enter and exit in an orderly manner.
Take responsibility ☐ I will...	• Sit silently in assigned row. • Keep hands and feet to myself. • Keep all materials in backpack.	• Keep hands and feet to myself.	• Report problems to an adult. • Keep the restrooms clean.	• Clean up after myself. • Complete table washer or sweeper job quickly and quietly.	• Take care of playground equipment. • Throw trash away. • Bring items back to class.	• Keep hands and feet to myself.
Stay engaged ☐ I will...	• Respond quickly to adult directions.	• Walk facing forward. • Stay in a single file line.	• Walk in and out of the bathroom. • Flush. • Turn off the water.	• Move along the serving line.	• Exercise. • Stay in the appropriate areas.	• Sit facing forward. • Remain seated the whole time. • Stay focused on the performance.

HALLWAY

G GIVE MY BEST	I will • Walk silently on the right side of the hallway.
I BE INDEPENDENT	I will • Go directly to my destination.
F FOLLOW DIRECTIONS	I will • Stop with my class at the stop signs.
T TAKE RESPONSIBILITY	I will • Keep hands and feet to myself.
S STAY ENGAGED	I will • Walk facing forward. • Stay in a single file line.

PERFORMANCES

G GIVE MY BEST	I will • Respond appropriately to the performers.
I BE INDEPENDENT	I will • Support my peers during the performance.
F FOLLOW DIRECTIONS	I will • Follow the directions of the speaker or guest. • Enter and exit in an orderly manner.
T TAKE RESPONSIBILITY	I will • Keep hands and feet to myself.
S STAY ENGAGED	I will • Stay focused on the performance. • Sit facing forward • Remain seated the whole time.

PLAYGROUND

|	
G GIVE MY BEST	I will • Use kind words • Take turns.
I BE INDEPENDENT	I will • Play only approved games. • Report injuries to the teacher.
F FOLLOW DIRECTIONS	I will • Play by the rules. • Line up quickly.
T TAKE RESPONSIBILITY	I will • Take care of playground equipment. • Throw trash away. • Bring items back to class.
S STAY ENGAGED	I will • Exercise. • Stay in the appropriate areas.

CAFETERIA

G GIVE MY BEST	I will • Keep hands and feet to myself. • Use inside voices at the table.
I BE INDEPENDENT	I will • Take the top tray. • Eat a healthy meal. • Eat my own food.
F FOLLOW DIRECTIONS	I will • Make only one trip through the serving line. • Remain seated at the table. • Raise my hand if I have a question.
T TAKE RESPONSIBILITY	I will • Clean up after myself. • Complete table washer or sweeper job quickly and quietly.
S STAY ENGAGED	I will • Move along the serving line.

APPENDIX E: PBIS "GIFTS" CARDS REWARDS TOKENS

GIFTS CARD COUNT

APPENDIX G: "GIFTS" CARDS CLASSROOM DISPLAY BOARD
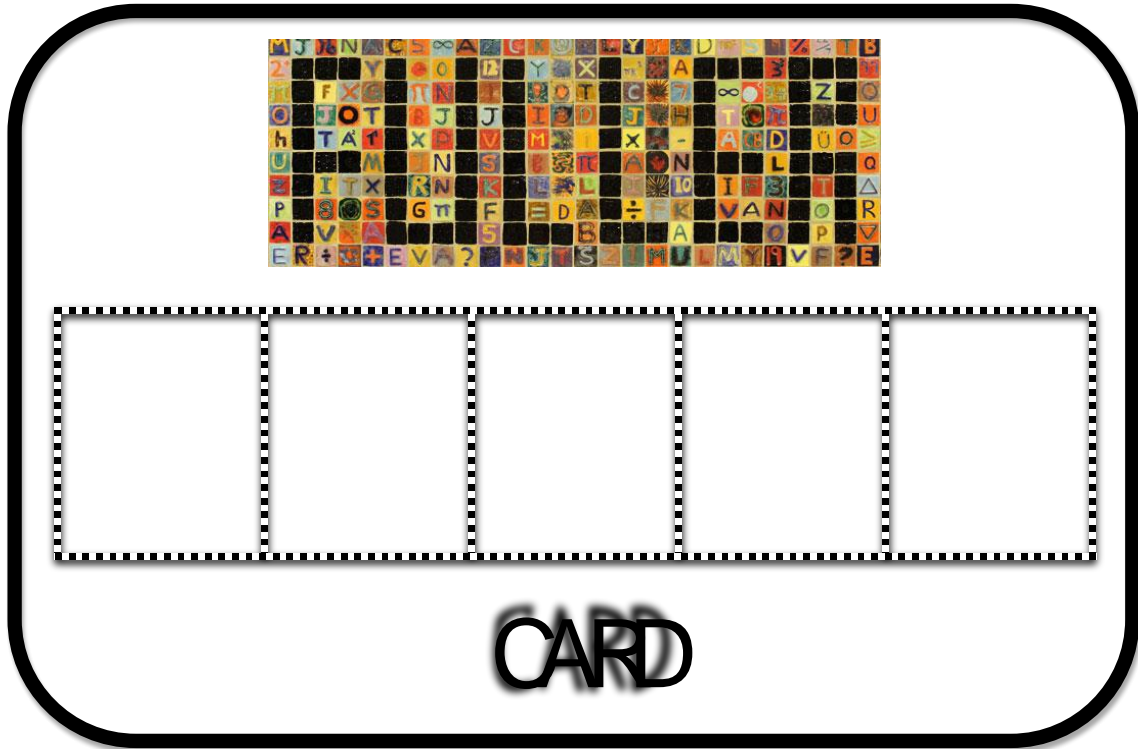
CARD

Each class affixes this poster to the classroom door. For each 100 "GIFTS" cards tokens received by the combined members of the class, the class receives one letter in the word GIFTS, to be affixed to the poster. Once the entire word is affixed to the poster, the class receives a class-chosen reward (*e.g.* extra recess, a movie/popcorn event, lunch in the courtyard) and a credit card-sized "GIFTS" card to be affixed below the poster. The first "GIFTS" card is bronze, the second is silver, and the third is gold. Class reward options increase with each subsequent "GIFTS" card.

Class "GIFTS" card totals are maintained on a centrally-located bulletin board.
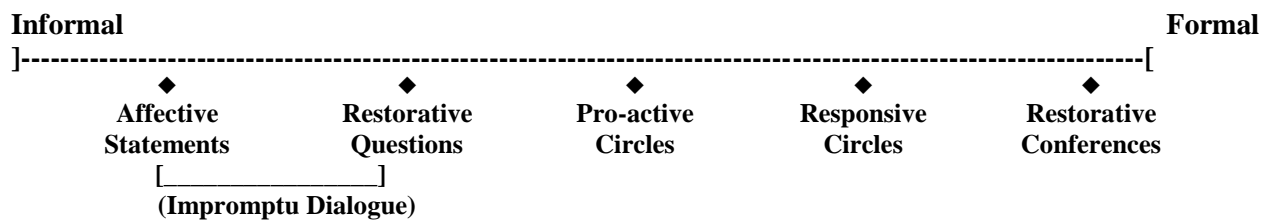
APPENDIX H: RESTORATIVE PRACTICES GUIDE

Restorative Practices Continuum

The core of restorative practice is building and restoring relationships.

Restorative practices range from informal to formal. Informal practices include the use of affective statements and questions that communicate individual feelings and allow students to reflect on how their behavior has affected others. Informal restorative conferences and circles are more structured, and formal restorative conferences require scheduling and preparation. As restorative processes become more formal, they involve more people, require more planning and time, and are more structured and complete.

Although a formal formative process might have a dramatic impact, informal practices have a strong cumulative impact when they become a part of every day community routine.

Informal				**Formal**
]--[				
◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Affective Statements	**Restorative Questions**	**Pro-active Circles**	**Responsive Circles**	**Restorative Conferences**
[_____]				
(Impromptu Dialogue)				

<u>**Affective Statements:**</u> The starting point for all restorative processes, involving active non-judgmental listening and expression of feelings and impact. Affective statements allow for students and staff to build strengthened relationships by genuinely presenting oneself as someone who cares and has feelings. This authentic expression offers one the opportunity to learn and reflect on how their behavior has affected others.

<u>**Restorative Discussion:**</u> A restorative approach to help those harmed by another's actions, as well as to respond to challenging behavior. Restorative discussion involves the use of Restorative Questions:

<u>Key Questions:</u>   1. **What happened, and what were you thinking at the time?**
2. **What have you thought about since?**
3. **Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?**
4. **What about this has been hardest for you?**
5. **What do you think you need to do to make things as right as possible?**

<u>**Proactive & Responsive Circles:**</u> Circles can be used for team building and problem solving. They enable a group to get to know each other, build inclusion, and allow for the development of trust, mutual respect, sharing, and concern. Circles provide students with opportunities to share their feelings, ideas, and experiences in order to establish relationships and develop social norms on a non-crisis basis. When there is wrongdoing, circles address the wrong and play an active role in making things right.

<u>**Restorative Meetings & Conferences:**</u> Formal restorative processes involve those who have acknowledged causing harm meeting with those they have harmed, seeking to understand each other's perspective and coming to a mutual agreement which will repair the harm as much as possible. Often all sides bring supporters, who have usually been affected, and have something to say from a personal perspective.

Note: Adapted from Berkowitz, K. (n.d.) Restorative Practices Whole-School Implementation Guide. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Unified School District Student, Family, Community Support Department.

APPENDIX I: STAFF SURVEY

Dear Participant,

I am a student at East Carolina University in the Educational Leadership department. I am asking you to take part in my research study entitled, "Evaluating Equity in Student Discipline: A Program Evaluation of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support in an Elementary School Setting."

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness and fairness of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) as a behavior management system in our school. By doing this research, I hope to learn more about how effective PBIS is in our school, more about how our staff as a whole perceives student behavior management, and more about whether and to what extent our staff is utilizing restorative practice. Your participation is completely voluntary.

You are being invited to take part in this research because you are a staff member in our school. The amount of time it will take you to complete this survey is about 20-30 minutes.

If you agree to take part in this survey, you will be asked questions that relate to your perceptions of our PBIS program, your perceptions of student behavior, your perceptions of administrative support, and your use of restorative practice. Your responses to this survey will be anonymous.

This research is overseen by the ECU Institutional Review Board. Therefore some of the IRB members or the IRB staff may need to review my research data. However, the information you provide will not be linked to you. Therefore, your responses cannot be traced back to you by anyone, including me.

If you have questions about your rights when taking part in this research, call the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, call the Director of ORIC, at 252-744-1971.

You do not have to take part in this research, and you can stop at any time. If you decide you are willing to take part in this study, please continue with and submit the following survey.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my research.

Sincerely,

Kenyann Stanford, Principal Investigator

Part I:

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about managing student conduct in your school:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.				
2. Students at this school follow rules of conduct.				
3. Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty and staff.				
4. School administrators consistently enforce expectations for student conduct.				
5. School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.				
6. Teachers consistently enforce expectations for student conduct.				
7. The staff works in an environment that is safe.				
8. Discipline procedures in my school are applied in a manner which is equitable to all students regardless their gender or ethnicity.				
9. Student discipline is managed at my school in a way which prioritizes student exposure to academic instruction.				
10. Restorative practices are valuable in responding to disciplinary issues and building classroom community.				
11. I believe in the importance of culturally responsive student behavior response practices.				
12. I am currently more knowledgeable regarding culturally responsive behavior response practices than I was during the 2015-2016 school year.				
13. I make efforts to utilize culturally responsive behavior management practices in my work with students.				
14. I believe that it is important to reduce disparities in discipline between minority and non-minority students in my school.				

Part II:

1. Please describe the restorative practices you are currently utilizing in your work with students:

2. Please describe the practices, if any, in which you engage in order to ensure the equitable application of disciplinary practices among minority and non-minority students.

3. Please describe the practices, if any, which you utilize in order to prioritize instructional time for students involved in behavior incidents.

4. Please describe the ways, if any, in which you feel that student discipline and/or behavior response at [your school] has changed during the past two school years.