Changing the Data, Changing Our Minds: Disproportionality and Improving Schools

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The Equity Project at Indiana University

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2008 OSEP Project Directors’ Conference
Protecting Equal Educational Opportunity

- Title VI of Civil Rights Act
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- No Child Left Behind
Protecting Equal Educational Opportunity

- Yet disparities remain:
  - Achievement gap
  - Special Education
  - Dropout/graduation
  - Gifted/talented
  - School discipline
Is School Discipline Fair?
Is School Discipline Fair?:
30 Years of Study

CDF (1975): Black students suspended 2-3x as frequently

Disproportionality found by:
- Advancement Project, 2000
- Costenbader & Markson, 1994
- Costenbader & Markson, 1998
- Eitle & Eitle, 2004
- Felice, 1981
- Glackman et al., 1978
- Gordon, Della Piana, & Keleher, 2000
- Gregory, 1997
Is School Discipline Fair?: 30 Years of Study (Cont’d)

- KAESER, 1979
- Larkin, 1979
- Lietz & Gregory, 1978
- Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 1986
- McCarthy & Hoge, 1987
- McFadden & Marsh, 1992
- McFadden, Marsh, Price, & Hwang, 1992
- Raffaele Mendez & Knoff, 2003
- Raffaele Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002
- Rausch & Skiba, 2004a
- Richart et al., 2003
- Shaw & Braden, 1990
Is School Discipline Fair?: 30 Years of Study (Cont’d)

- Skiba et al., 1997
- Skiba et al., 2002
- Streitmatter, 1986
- Taylor & Foster, 1986
- Thornton & Trent, 1988
- U.S. Department of Education, 2000
- Vavrus and Cole (2002)
- Wu et al., 1982
Background: This Didn’t Start Yesterday (or even in 1968)

- Thos. Jefferson: “...advance it as a suspicion”
- 1853: Margaret Douglas jailed
- 1897: *Plessy v. Ferguson*
  - Jim Crowe included burning of schools
- 1900-1930: Development of mental testing and eugenics
- The purpose of education before *Brown*
Is School Discipline Fair?:
What Do We Know

- Disproportionality found in:
  - Office referrals
  - Suspension & Expulsion
  - Corporal Punishment

- Latino disproportionality found inconsistently

Note: Derived from U.S. Department of Education, 2004
Out-of-School Suspension Incident Rate Comparison by Race and School Level

- African American:
  - Elementary: 6.19
  - Middle: 3.65
  - High: 3.97

- Hispanic:
  - Elementary: 1.76
  - Middle: 2.12
  - High: 2.33

Incident Rate Compared to White Students

Elementary  | Middle  | High
---|---|---
African American | 6.19 | 3.65 | 3.97
Hispanic | 1.76 | 2.12 | 2.33
Discipline Rates by Locale

Urban OSS Significantly higher; No statistical differences for EXP
Out-of-School Suspension Incident Rates by Race and Locale

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Locale</th>
<th>African American</th>
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<td>Rural</td>
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Incident Rate per 100 Students
Is Discriminary Removal Effective?

- 30-50% of students suspended are repeat offenders
  - “Suspension functions as a reinforcer...rather than as a punisher” (Tobin, Sugai & Colvin, 1996)

- Use of suspension correlates with
  - School dropout (school level) (Raffaele-Mendez; Ekstrom, 1986)
  - Juvenile incarceration (state level) (Skiba et al)
Percent Passing ISTEP by School Disciplinary Use (Adjusted for Demographic and Economic Indicators)

- **Low Usage**: 58.35%
- **High Usage**: 49.91%

Percentage of Students Passing Both Math and English Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Usage</th>
<th>High Usage</th>
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<tr>
<td>OSS</td>
<td>57.51%</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXP</td>
<td>48.59%</td>
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School Rate of Out-of-School Suspension and Expulsion
Risks of Suspension

- Educational opportunity as the strongest predictor of instruction
- Student perceptions of disparity
- School to prison pipeline?
  - Not yet empirically validated but
  - School alienation creates risk for delinquency
Alternative Explanations of Disciplinary Disproportionality

- Disproportionality is related to SES
  - SES and disproportionality correlate, but...
  - Effects of race remain after control
- Do black students misbehave more?
  - No supporting evidence
  - May in fact be treated more severely for same offenses
What Behaviors are Students Referred For? By Race

Of 32 infractions, only 8 significant differences:

- White students referred more for:
  - Smoking
  - Vandalism
  - Leaving w/o permission
  - Obscene Language

- Black students referred more for:
  - Disrespect
  - Excessive Noise
  - Threat
  - Loitering
What Might Be Causing Disciplinary Disproportionality?

- Doesn’t appear to be related to AA enrollment
- Perhaps correlated with overuse of suspension and expulsion
- May originate at classroom level
  - No differences at office level (Skiba et al., 2002)
What Else Might Be Causing Disciplinary Disparities?

- **Classroom Management**
  - "Violations of implicit interactional codes" (Vavrus & Coles, 2002)
  - Interactions of some teachers/some students?

- **Cultural Disparities**
  - Cultural misinterpretations
  - Lower or different expectations

- **Influence of stereotypes**
  - How are African American boys perceived?
  - Different standards of "boys will be boys"
  - Differential standards for "respect", "loitering", "threat"
...so what do we do?
APA Task Force Recommendations: Reducing Suspension/Expulsion

- Implement “graduated discipline” systems
- Teach alternative ways of getting along
- Improve communication and connection w/ students, parents
- Increase available options
APA Recommendations: Reducing Disciplinary Disproportionality

- Teacher Training in Classroom Behavior Management
- Reducing Cultural Mismatch
- Avoid One-Size-Fits-All Discipline
- Use Data to Transform
How Do We Create Change in School Reform?

- Look at the data
- Make meaning of the data
- Develop an intervention
- Evaluate
How Do We Create Change in School Reform?

- Look at the data
A National Database for Exploring Disproportionality

- 2005-06 Academic Year
- 436 Elementary and Middle Schools in 17 States
  - Implementing PBS at least 1 year
- 180,670 students
- 372,642 Office Discipline Referrals
Effective Disciplinary Systems: What We Assume

- Effective disciplinary systems should
  - Scale disciplinary consequences in proportion to seriousness of offenses, AND
  - Be proportional across racial categories, since there is no data to support any other distribution
## Referral: Odds Ratios (Elem)

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<th>% with at least one ODR</th>
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<td>25,051</td>
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<td>African American</td>
<td>30,961</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White/Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>54,690</td>
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## Referral: Odds Ratios (Elem and Middle)

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## Graduated Discipline

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ODR & Administrative Consequences: Aggregated Data

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**2005-06 African American (Elementary) Odds Ratio with White as comparison**
## 2005-06 African American (Elementary and Middle) Odds Ratio with White as comparison

<table>
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| Use/ Possession | **N too small for odds ratio calculation** |
### 2005-06 Hispanic/ Latino (Elementary) Odds Ratio with White as comparison

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N too small for odds ratio calculation
General Conclusions & Implications

- Disproportionality begins at referral
- Administrative consequences appear to be distributed rationally in general
- But when disaggregated, see significant disproportionality
- African American and Latino students more likely to receive harsher punishment for same ODR
  - Esp. for minor misbehavior
How Do We Create Change in School Reform?

- Look at the data
- Make meaning of the data
Studying Equity at Home: Local Equity Action Development (LEAD)

- School/District Reflection
  - Data Mining
  - Discussions on Diversity
- Identify Actions of Greatest Potential Impact
- Develop a Plan
- Implement, Assess, Adapt
The Difficulty of Talking About Race

“When you say minorities, are you, what are you speaking of?...[INTERVIEWER: Ethnic and racial minorities]...Oh....OK...Alright...We have like...I guess we have about half and half. I don’t know that I’ve ever really paid attention to it.”

--Classroom Teacher
**Perspectives on Katrina:**

*Washington Post/ABC News Poll, 9/13/05*

**Q:** Overall, do you think problems with the hurricane relief effort are or are not an indication of racial inequality in this country?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Among:</th>
<th>SIGN OF RACIAL INEQUALITY</th>
<th>NOT ABOUT RACIAL INEQUALITY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHITES</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLACKS</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>36</td>
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No opinion not shown.
"Adolescents play pranks. I don’t think it was a threat against anybody."
~Roy Breithaupt, Superintendent, Jena Public Schools
“[The noose] meant the KKK, it meant 'We're going to kill you, we're gonna' hang you 'til you die.'”

~Caseplia Bailey, Parent of one of Jena 6 students
What is Our Theory?

- Poverty?
- Deficits in classroom management?
- Negative community influences?
- Lack of cultural competence?
- Negative peer culture?
- Historical discrimination?
How Do We Create Change in School Reform?

- Look at the data
- Make meaning of the data
- Develop an intervention
CONTINUUM OF SCHOOL-WIDE INSTRUCTIONAL & POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

Primary Prevention: School-/Classroom-Wide Systems for All Students, Staff, & Settings

Secondary Prevention: Specialized Group Systems for Students with At-Risk Behavior

Tertiary Prevention: Specialized Individualized Systems for Students with High-Risk Behavior

~80% of Students

~15%

~5%
Individualized Systems: Students w/ High Risk Behavior

Specialized Group Systems for Students with At-Risk Behavior

Primary Prevention: Schoolwide Classroom Systems
If you teach kids the behaviors that are expected, you have a greater likelihood of success.'

—George Sugai, education professor at the University of Connecticut who helped create a positive behavioral program being tried in 6,500 schools
What Does a Culturally Responsive Disciplinary Intervention Look Like?  
(Jones, Caravaca, Cizek, Horner, & Vincent, 2006)

- “An awareness and appreciation of the multiple factors that may influence the values and perspectives of individual families and children.”

- “Our message is that cultural responsiveness should not be viewed as an ‘added element’ but as an initial design feature that is to be implemented on a large scale.”
PBIS at Chee-Dodge Elementary

- Yahtahey, NM; 99% Dine

- Elements of program
  - Made Dine language a central part of PBS
  - *PAWS*: Developed culturally competent lessons

- Results
  - 80% of surveyed students knew expectations
  - High score on Self-Assessment Form
  - 0.12 ODR’s per day per 100 students (3rd lowest in NM)--less than half national mean rate
Proactive Culturally Responsive Discipline: Cordova Middle School

- Phoenix, AZ; 83% Latino, 7% White, 5% Native American, 4% Asian/PI

- Elements of program
  - **CHA CHA**: Choose High Achievement, Citizenship, Homework, and Attendance
  - Rights and Responsibilities Program
  - Individually focused supports

- Results
  - Homework completion from 60% to 90%
  - ODR’s down 42%
How Do We Create Change in School Reform?

- Look at the data
- Make meaning of the data
- Develop an intervention
- Evaluate
The Beneficial Effects of Disciplinary Reform in General

- Schools can implement comprehensive systems with fidelity
- Rates of problem behaviors can be decreased
- Students with serious problem behavior benefit from positive behavioral interventions based on FBA’s
- Improvements in student behavior & school climate are related to improvements in academic outcomes
Discipline Rates

Incident Rate Per 100 Students

Overall Rate

Disaggregated Rate

28.35

40.47

20.25

BLACK

WHITE

OVERALL

Center for Evaluation & Education Policy
Discipline Rates

Incident Rate Per 100 Students

Overall Rate

Disaggregated Rate

18.35

20.25

40.47
Discipline Rates Disaggregated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Rate</th>
<th>Disaggregated Rate</th>
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<td>18.35</td>
<td>40.47</td>
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<td>10.13</td>
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Incident Rate Per 100 Students

- BLACK
- WHITE
- OVERALL
Discipline Rates

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<th>Overall Rate</th>
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Overall Rate

Disaggregated Rate
Discipline Rates: Equity

<table>
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<tr>
<td>OVERALL</td>
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Center for Evaluation & Education Policy
Possible Steps in Culturally Responsive Disciplinary Reform

- Look at the data on disparities
  - How great are the disparities?
  - In what infractions? In what consequences?
- Interpretation and hypothesis development
  - Must represent *all* groups and perspectives
  - What are the cultural differences?
- Implement culturally responsive intervention
- Evaluate impact on racial/ethnic disparities
Examine and Change Practices

Willingness to Address Issues of Culture
Willingness to Examine and Change Culturally Influenced Practices
When Did Segregation End?

- **Brown v. Board of Education**
  - “with all deliberate speed...”

- **Alexander v. Holmes County Bd. of Ed.**
  - “There is no reason why such a wholesale deprivation of constitutional rights should be tolerated another minute.”
Some Relative Lengths...

- State sponsored discrimination: 351 years
- Since its end: 37 years
- Why would we assume there would not be culturally influenced practices in our educational systems?
The Meaning of Equity...

- Ownership interest in a corporation in the form of common stock or preferred stock. It also refers to total assets minus total liabilities, in which case it is also referred to as shareholder's equity or net worth or book value. In real estate, it is the difference between what a property is worth and what the owner owes against that property (i.e. the difference between the house value and the remaining mortgage or loan payments on a house). In the context of a futures trading account, it is the value of the securities in the account, assuming that the account is liquidated at the going price. In the context of a brokerage account, it is the net value of the account, i.e. the value of securities in the account less any margin requirements.
The Meaning of Equity

“The Meaning of Equity

“No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main; if a Clod be washed away by the Sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.”

~John Donne, Meditation XVII from “Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions” (1623)
Websites:

- Equity Project at Indiana University
  - ceep.indiana.edu/equity
- Children Left Behind
  - ceep.indiana.edu/ChildrenLeftBehind
- APA Zero Tolerance Report
Russ Skiba

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skiba@indiana.edu