Reforming School Discipline and Reducing Disproportionality in Suspension and Expulsion

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Abstract

The use of suspension and expulsion in America's school has increased over the past 30 years. Yet there is no evidence that exclusionary school discipline has a beneficial effect on student behavior or school climate. The consistent overrepresentation of African American students in the use of school exclusion cannot be fully explained by either poverty or differential rates of disruptive behavior. Both school-wide positive behavior supports and systems of school discipline that use alternative strategies for reducing social-emotional learning strategies show promise as system-wide reform efforts for reducing the use of suspension and expulsion, while data on the effects of restorative justice are still emerging. Despite abundant documentation of racial and ethnic disparities in school suspension and expulsion, there is yet little research that could meet the urgent needs of schools and school districts to improve equity in school discipline.

Issues in the practice of school discipline appear to create a profound dilemma in early 21st century American education. Clearly, schools have both the right and responsibility to use all effective means to preserve school safety and the integrity of the learning environment. Incidents of school violence in the late 1990s provided strong motivation for schools to use all effective methods to promote safety, and issues of disruptive behavior remain at the top of concerns about education among teachers and parents.

Yet the predominant tools currently used for purposes of maintaining discipline, out-of-school suspension and expulsion, are interventions that can pose substantial risk to educational opportunity. Given a strong positive relationship between the amount and quality of engaged time in academic learning and student achievement (Greenwood, Bealer, & Udry, 2002), exclusionary discipline procedures that remove students from the opportunity to learn and potentially weaken the school bond must be viewed as potentially risky interventions. Since some racial/ethnic groups have been found to be consistently and sometimes severely overrepresented in
exclusionary discipline (Loezen & Skiba, 2010), the associated risk must be presumed to likewise fall disproportionately on those groups.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore what we know about school discipline, with a focus on racial and ethnic disparities in discipline. After reviewing the history, current status, and concerns about current exclusionary discipline practices, we will describe the conceptual basis, features, and evidence for addressing issues of school exclusion and inequity in discipline.

Current Status

The use of school exclusion as a disciplinary tool is extremely common and has increased over time, particularly for some groups. School suspension has consistently been found to be among the most widely used disciplinary techniques, perhaps the most frequently used disciplinary tool (American Psychological Association, 2008), while school expulsion has been used at a much lower rate (see e.g., Heavíside, Rowand, Williams, & Farris, 1998). The use of out-of-school suspension has approximately doubled since 1973, with much steeper increases for some groups, most notably African American students (Loezen & Skiba, 2010).

The overrepresentation of African American students in school suspension and expulsion has been widely documented (see e.g., Children’s Defense Fund, 1975; Skiba, Michael, Nardó, & Peterson, 2002; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Recent analyses have found rates of suspension for Black males over 50% among middle schools in some urban school districts (Loezen & Skiba, 2010). While disciplinary overrepresentation of Latino students has been reported in some studies (Rassiefe-Mendes & Knoff, 2003), the finding is not universal across locations or studies (e.g., Gordon, Della Piana, & Kelsher, 2000).

The correlation of race and socioeconomic status (SES) in American society (McLoyd, 1998) might suggest that apparent racial disproportionality in suspension and expulsion is a by-product of poverty. Yet although low SES has been found to be a risk factor for school suspension (Braungart, 1991), race remains a significant predictor of suspension and expulsion, even after controlling for SES (Wallace et al., 2008; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Mole, 1982). Further, investigations of student behavior, race, and discipline have yielded no evidence that African American overrepresentation in school suspension is due to higher rates of misbehavior (McFadden, Marsh, Prince, & Hwang, 1992; Skiba et al., 2002; Thesot & Dupper, 2010; Wu et al., 1982; Bradshaw, Mitchell, O’Brien, and Leaf (2010) reported that even after controlling for the student’s level of teacher-rated classroom behavior, Black students were significantly more likely than White students to receive office discipline referrals.

Importance of the Issue

One would hope that the most widely used disciplinary technique would be predictive of punitive individual or school climate outcomes. Data on the outcomes of school exclusion appears to raise concerns at both the individual and school level, however.

Individual Risk

There appear to be a number of risk factors associated with the application of school suspension. Poor academic skill and achievement appears to place a student at increased risk for increased aggression and disruption (Skiba, & Nogueria, 2010); removing students from the opportunity to learn through suspension and expulsion may well increase this risk. Exposure to suspension and expulsion has also been associated with higher rates of dropout or failure to graduate on time (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; Rassiefe-Mendes, 2003).

A body of research has begun to explore connections between school punishments and the flow of youth into the juvenile justice system, termed the school-to-prison pipeline (e.g., Wald & Losen, 2003). Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier, and Valentine (2009) found racial disproportionality in out-of-school suspensions, which could not be explained solely by differences in delinquent behavior, to be a strong predictor of similar levels of racial disparity in juvenile court referrals, even after controlling for poverty, urbanization, and other relevant variables.

School Level Outcomes

Despite a widely held belief that removal of persistently troublemaking students will improve teaching and learning for the remaining students (Public Agenda, 2004), these does not appear to be evidence of benefits of exclusionary discipline relative to school climate or achievement. Schools with higher rates of suspension have been reported to have higher student-teacher ratios and a lower level of academic quality (Hellman & Brotot, 1986), spend more time on discipline-related matters (Davis & Jordan, 1994), and pay significantly less attention to issues of school climate (Bickell & Qualls, 1980). Rausch and Skiba (2005) found that higher school rates of out-of-school suspension were associated with lower school-wide passing rates on the state accountability test, regardless of the demographic, economic, or racial makeup of the school.

Recent data suggest that these negative effects of the use of school suspension fall more severely on African American students. Using a national sample of 294 public schools, Welch and Payne (2010) found that, regardless of levels of misbehavior and delinquency, schools with a higher percentage of Black students were more likely to use higher rates of exclusionary discipline and court action to implement zero tolerance policies, and use fewer mild disciplinary practices.

In response to similar data emerging over the past decade, the American Psychological Association convened a task force to examine the effectiveness of zero tolerance policies, and to offer recommendations for reform of such policies. That task force concluded that “Zero tolerance has not been shown to improve school climate or school safety. In application suspension and expulsion has not proven an effective means of improving student behavior. It has not resolved, and indeed may have exacerbated, minority overrepresentation in school punishment” (American Psychological Association, 2008).

Conceptual Basis

The following sections describe alternatives and approaches to school reform that have been applied to address issues of school discipline and disproportionality in discipline. All school disciplinary strategies appear to share two common conceptual goals: ensuring the safety of students and teachers, and creating a climate that is suitable for learning (Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Beyond those commonalities, however, the conceptual basis and presumptions made about school discipline appear to be somewhat different for zero tolerance and school exclusion than for the emerging alternatives.

Zero Tolerance, Suspension, and Expulsion

One conceptual feature that appears to be at the heart of the zero tolerance philosophy is the notion of using swift and certain consequences for all incidents to send a message of deterrence. Ewing (2000) argues that zero tolerance "appropriately denounces violent student behavior in no uncertain terms and serves as a deterrent to such behavior in the future by sending a
clear message that acts which physically harm or endanger others will not be permitted at school under any circumstances." In accordance with this belief, school administrators have, on numerous occasions, applied extended periods of suspension or expulsion to incidents ranging from paper or toy guns to possession of Advil to a student suspended for 10 days for using his cell phone in school to talk to his mother stationed in Iraq (American Psychological Association, 2008).

The evidence on school discipline, however, appears to contradict the presumption that school suspension and expulsion have a deterrent effect. Longitudinal studies of suspensions have found high rates of repeat offending in out-of-school suspension, ranging from 35% (Broidtich, 1975) to 42% (Costenbader and Markson, 1998). Raffle Meender (2003) reported that the strongest predictor of a middle school student's number of out-of-school suspensions was the number of out-of-school suspensions she or he received in late elementary school (fourth and fifth grade), even after statistically controlling for student SES, racial categorization, special education status, teacher ratings of student behavior, and academic achievement.

Conceptual Framework for Culturally Responsive Discipline and Classroom Management

A number of possible frameworks might be drawn upon as a conceptual basis for culturally responsive approaches to discipline, such as culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000). One theory that outlines the link between attitude and action is cultural reproduction, which argues that individuals may, regardless of their conscious intentions, contribute to or reproduce inequality through their participation in institutional mechanisms (Mehan, 1992). Unchallenged, such patterns can unintentionally recreate and reinforce existing inequities in school processes. Classroom management may well be one of the micro-level processes contributing to the reproduction of disciplinary disparities. Observing in urban classrooms, Varvas and Cole (2002) found that office referrals leading to school suspension were due less to serious disruption than to student-teacher authority struggles, and that students of color were most likely to be singled out in this process. Gregory and Weinstein (2008) reported that the most common reason for referral among African American males was defiance and that, even for students with multiple referrals, only certain student-teacher combinations yielded high rates of office referral.
Restorative Justice

Restorative justice has been implemented in schools internationally as a theoretical framework for responding to student misbehavior (Braine, 2002; Stinchcomb, Baze, & Rentenberg, 2006). Based on the assumption that wrongdoing damages relationships, it aims to restore relationships and repair harm that was caused. Common strategies utilized in restorative justice programs include: (a) engaging the community and involved parties in collaborative decision-making around restitution, (b) holding offenders accountable, (c) providing space for victims to express how they have been affected and how they can heal, and (d) preventing similar actions in the future by changing behavior and the conditions that caused it (Stinchcomb et al., 2006).

As an alternative to exclusionary discipline, restorative justice emphasizes the relationships between victims, offenders, and the community. School discipline practices built upon principles of restorative justice employ the use of formal and informal conferencing, classroom confer-ence circles, and or other frameworks of school disciplinary practice based on relationship- and community-building. Discussion regarding the impact offenders have on victims and the community is a key element in these processes. Evidence suggests that school-based restorative justice is most effective when it is linked to broader school reform and embedded in a school culture that values relationships and teaches curriculum that emphasizes social and emotional learning (Karp & Breslin, 2001; Stinchcomb et al., 2006).

Culturally Responsive Classroom Management and Discipline

Although it might be presumed that an intervention that reduced suspension/expulsion rates in general might also reduce disproportionality in discipline, emerging data may contradict this assumption. Skiba et al. (2011) explored patterns of office disciplinary referrals in a nationally representative sample of elementary and middle schools implementing school-wide PBD for at least one year. Although, in general, minor infractions tended to receive less severe punishments, African American and Latino students were far more likely than White students to receive sus-pension and expulsion for such infractions. Such data appear to indicate that explicit adaptations may be required to ensure that disciplinary interventions, including PBD, are equally effective with all groups.

Numerous researchers (D. Brown, 2004; Bondy, Ross, Gällingame, & Hambacher, 2007; Monroe & Obidah, 2004; Weinstein, Curran, & Tumlinson-Clark, 2004) have begun to examine the components that would increase the cultural responsiveness of classroom management. Qualitative observation and interview studies have identified a number of promising conventions of these components that describe and inform culturally responsive classroom manage-ment best practices. Managing student behavior based on culturally appropriate strategies means considering that African American, Hispanic, Native American, Asian American, and immigrant students have differing communication styles, behavioral norms, and parental engagement. Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM) "makes it explicit that classroom management is grounded in teachers’ judgments about appropriate behavior and that these judgments are informed by cultural assumptions" (Bondy, Ross, Gällingame, & Hambacher, 2007, p. 328). Weinstein, Tumlinson-Clark and Curran (2004) suggested five compo-nents that characterize CRCM: (a) recognition of one’s own ethnocentrism; (b) knowledge of students’ cultural backgrounds; (c) understanding of the broader social, economic, and political context; (d) ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate management strategies; and (e) a commitment to building caring classrooms.

The literature has consistently identified a number of characteristics of culturally responsive approaches to classroom management, including an inviting physical setting, a combination of high expectations and strong interpersonal support, the cultural congruency of instruction, and high levels of parental involvement. The physical setting is organized in a way that is warm and inviting, and communicates awareness of and respect for students’ cultural heritage. Educational environments have shown that the physical arrangement of the classroom can affect the behavior of both students and teachers (Savage, 1999; Sawt & Evans, 1997). The classroom also contributes to improve student academic and behavioral outcomes (MacAulay, 1999; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995), and that attention to the physical setting can act as a symbol to students and others regarding what teacher’s values in behavior and learn-ing (Savage, 1999).

Second, teachers who support a culture of achievement for students of differing cultural backgrounds and socioeconomic status typically exhibit a combination of high expectations and strong interpersonal relations, identified as warm demanding (Vasquez, 1988). That is, such class-room environments are characterized by high behavioral and academic expectations that are clearly and consistently asserted, yet at the same time establish warm and personal climates that stress personal relationships, caring, and terms of endurance (Bondy et al., 2010; D. Brown, 2004; Weinstein et al., 2003).

Third, communication and language in classrooms that are effective with diverse students are culturally congruent, and teachers are committed to inclusion of students’ cultures in the classroom (Ware, 2006). Teachers in such classrooms demonstrate an acceptance of dialect or communicative patterns (e.g., call-and-response), rather than dismissing or problematizing such interactions (D. Brown, 2004). D. Brown (2004) reported that teachers who apply culturally congruent instructional rules in their lessons improved participation by students.

Finally, culturally responsive classrooms are characterized by opportunities for high levels of parental involvement and interaction in meaningful ways. An extensive literature has documented the importance of school and family connections for increasing student success in school and strengthening student behavior (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Hyl, 1995; Sheldon & Epstein, 2002). The importance of respectful and inclusive parent interaction (E. Brown, 2002; Weinstein et al., 2004) has emerged as a common theme in studies of culturally responsive classroom management.

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports

School-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBS) have been linked to improved behavioral outcomes from elementary through high school. In a randomized control trial over a five-year period in New Hampshire, Bradshaw, Mitchell, and Leaf (2010) compared 21 elementary schools who received PBS training with 16 elementary schools that had not. Results indicated that the treatment schools significantly decreased the percent of students with a major or minor ODR, as well as the number of major and minor ODRs per student, although effect sizes were relatively small. Using the same treatment and control schools, Bradshaw, Koth, Bevac, Ilango, and Leaf (2008) and Bradshaw, Koth, Thorntow, and Leaf (2009) reported that the implementation of PBS positively impacted overall school climate. Staff perceptions of the school’s organizational health, resource influence, and staff affiliation were significantly higher in the 21 schools implementing PBS over a three-year period (Bradshaw et al., 2009). Bradshaw et al. (2009) confirmed these results across the four years of the trial and also found that PBS implementation significantly increased staff perceptions of academic emphasis. In a three-year randomized, wait-list controlled effectiveness trial in Illinois and Hawaii, Fornier et al. (2009) compared 33 elementary schools who received PBS training at one year with 30 schools who received training one year later. Staff at the 33 treatment schools who received training at year one reported significantly lower behavioral risk factors than the 30 control/delay schools.
PBIS training, school staff at both treatment and control/delay elementary schools reported their school to be safer and more socially supportive. Non-experimental studies have demonstrated encouraging results as well, particularly in the reduction of disciplinary referrals. Large-scale PBIS evaluations in Maryland and Nevada (2006) found a significant decrease in office referrals (Nelson, Martella, Marchand-Martella, 2002; Luissi, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005). In a PBIS implementation in an urban, inner-city middle school Lassen, Steele, and Sailor (2006) reported that PBIS significantly reduced the mean number of ODRs per student per day and decreased the number of long-term suspensions over a three-year period. While a growing number of studies have demonstrated PBIS' effectiveness in urban settings (Lassen et al., 2006; Luissi et al., 2005), there is a paucity of research exploring the impact of PBIS on all racial/ethnic groups within schools. Although case studies have reported promising results when cultural adaptations are made in PBIS implementation (Jones, Caravaca, Cizek, Horner, & Vincent, 2006; Wang, McCoy, & Turebullah, 2007), there are as yet no broad-scale or experimental studies exploring the extent to which PBIS implementation works equally well for all racial and ethnic groups, suggesting that PBIS' impact on disproportionality in discipline is still unknown.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Several studies link the completion of SEL programs to an increase in prosocial behaviors and a decrease in misbehaviors (CASEL, 2003; Zinn, 2001). In 2008, CASEL published a report, The Positive Impact of Social and Emotional Learning for Kindergarten to Eighth-grade Students: Findings from Three Scientific Reviews, of three meta-analytic reviews of various K–eighth-grade SEL programs (Pytton et al., 2008). Findings were based on 317 studies with a total of 324,303 participants. One review was conducted on universal school-based SEL programs, a second review was done on programs directed at students identified as displaying early signs of emotional or behavioral problem, and the third review examined SEL programs integrated into after-school programs. Each of these three SEL program reviews found strong and consistent support that students participating in SEL programs exhibit significantly lower rates of conduct problems and more positive social behaviors (Pytton et al., 2008). In a meta-analysis of after-school programs aimed at enhancing the personal and social skills of students ages 5 to 18, Durak, Wiesburg, and Pachan (2010) found that students who participated in SEL programs demonstrated significant increases in their self-perceptions and bonding to school, positive social behaviors, levels of academic achievement, and significant reductions in problem behaviors. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 2002 published a list of evidence-based model SEL programs found useful in facilitating the development of student factors related to academic achievement, and reported that program completion was correlated with a reduction in school suspensions and/ or misconduct and aggression at school. Evaluations of two programs implemented in Baltimore City, Maryland, public elementary schools explored the impact of SEL on discipline and behavior in schools. Ilongo, Poduaka, Werthamer, and Kellam (2001) reported the results of a randomized block design study on the effects of two SEL programs in first-grade classes, one classroom-centered and one focused on family-school partnerships, covering 678 children demographically representative of the fifth grade in nine Baltimore City public elementary schools. Follow-ups when participants were in the sixth grade indicated that both experimental groups received significantly lower teacher ratings of conduct problems than the control group, and that children who had participated in the program were significantly less likely to have been suspended from school in the previous year.

Restorative Justice

Research surrounding the effects of restorative justice implementation in U.S. public schools is in its early stages. Evidence supporting the use of restorative justice programs to reduce ODRs and suspensions in five Pennsylvania public schools is included in a report released by the International Institute for Restorative Practices, Improving School Climate: Findings from Schools Implementing Restorative Practice (2009). Based on reports provided by principals in five schools over the course of three years (2003–2006), data reveals that the implementation of restorative practices in the school was associated with reductions in out-of-school suspensions, as well as incidents of violence and misbehavior. Additionally, the results of a three-year implementation of restorative circle conferencing in a Saint Paul, Minnesota, elementary school showed a drop in physical aggression from 773 to 153 acts, a reduction in out-of-school suspensions from 30 to 11, and a decline in the number of behavioral referrals from 1,143 to 407 (Steinchenbuhler et al., 2006). In descriptive case study evaluations of three Denver, Colorado, public middle schools and one Denver public high school, Jennings, Gover, and Hitchcock (2008) reported decreases in in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and infractions involving police intervention in three Denver public middle schools implementing a pilot restorative justice program. In the same study, however, data at the high school showed increases in the same measures; the research suggests this failure was due to administrative turnover that impeded the implementation process. Similarly, the results of a three-year implementation of restorative circle conferencing in four Minnesota school districts as an alternative response to discipline problems showed mixed results (Umbricht, Vos, Costes, & Lightfoot, 2006), with decreases in suspensions and behavioral referrals in some schools. In sum, while the results of pilot studies reflect possibilities that these approaches can reduce problem behaviors and the need for disciplinary actions in schools, more data is needed on the overall effects of sustained restorative justice programs.

Culturally Responsive Disciplinary Approaches

Although a conceptual basis for an explicitly culturally responsive approach to classroom management and discipline has begun to emerge in the literature (e.g., Udey, Kozlaski, Smith, & Draper, 2002; Weinstein et al., 2003), research to date is sparse on the implementation of specific reform strategies or interventions for reducing disproportionality in school discipline. Research on culturally responsive classroom management has relied on teacher interview (D. Brown, 2004), or ethnographic field study and observation (Bonyad et al., 2007; E. Brown, 2002; Monroe & Ohidad, 2004) to identify themes of cultural responsiveness. For PBIS, there have been individual (Wang et al., 2007) and school-wide (Jones, Caravaca, Cizek, Horner, & Vincent, 2006) case studies that have documented how attention to issues of culture can lead to more effective intervention. Similarly, Wearmouth, McKinney, and Glynn (2007) used an individual case study to documented adaptations in a typical restorative justice implementation that appeared to make it more applicable in a Moasic context in New Zealand. Although preliminary results of incorporating cultural elements into these practices provide intriguing directions for future study, and some indications that such elements can make disciplinary reforms more effective for non-majority groups, there is insufficient data available to be able to offer substantive guidance to the field on cultural adaptations for classroom management or school discipline strategies.

Critique and Limitations

The current status of school discipline might well be characterized as a widening gulf between typical practice and best evidence. Despite comprehensive evaluations suggesting that suspension and expulsion have not made a contribution to school safety or improved student behavior
(APA, 2008), national and state surveys of school discipline suggest that the rate of out-of-school suspension and expulsion continues to increase, and these increases are particularly dramatic for African American students. There is increasing evidence that racial disparities in discipline cannot be explained by either poverty or differential rates of behavior. Research has shown, however, that disciplinary exclusion is effective in either improving student behavior or preventing school disruption and violence. Indeed, suspension and expulsion appear to be associated with a variety of negative outcomes, including risk of lower achievement and increased contact with the juvenile justice system.

The systemic approaches of SWPBS, SEL, and restorative justice have been implemented and their effects tested on rates of school discipline. Although there is consistent evidence that SWPBS reduces ODSRs and suspensions, research needs to be conducted linking SWPBS to other educational outcomes. Meta-analysis and other research support the use of SEL in schools to reduce discipline and improve student behavior, but more research is needed to explore the effectiveness of SEL programs with high schools students. Osler et al. (2010) presented a compelling case for combining elements of SWPBS and SEL in schools, suggesting that students need both types of programming and neither alone is sufficient to fully address the constellation of student needs. While results of pilot studies reflect possibilities that restorative justice approaches can

**Table 38.1 Implications for Practice: Reforming School Discipline and Reducing Disproportionality in Suspension and Expulsion**

1. **Disciplinary exclusion**—out-of-school suspension and expulsion—is among the most frequently used procedures to maintain discipline and its use has increased in the last thirty years, despite a lack of evidence for its effectiveness. While necessary in some cases, alternative methods that provide supervision and productive engagement should be used in order to minimize the use of school exclusion.

2. African American students and to some extent Latino students have been found to be over-represented in suspension and expulsion. The evidence indicates that this disproportionality is not due to effects of poverty or different rates of disruption.

3. Disciplinary removal creates risk for students in terms of decreased academic opportunity, higher dropout, and risk of juvenile justice involvement, and these risks are faced to a greater degree by African American students. These outcomes strongly suggest a need for alternative approaches that can minimize exclusion.

4. The conceptual framework for zero tolerance, deterrence, is intuitive, but appears to lack any empirical validation. Several research-based models, including Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Supports and Safe and Responsive Schools can help produce better results than zero tolerance.

5. The three-tiered primary prevention model has become widely accepted as an organizing framework in school discipline, while a variety of theoretical frames have been applied to the interaction of rate and discipline. Schools should base their programming on a research based framework, and monitor the outcomes of school discipline to ensure effectiveness.

6. Discipline is a process that involves students, teachers, administrators and school structures, and hence requires attention to systemic issues.

7. School-wide positive behavior supports, social-emotional learning, restorative justice, and culturally responsive classroom management have been used to create change in the manner in which schools address student discipline.

8. There is some evidence that both school-wide positive behavior supports and social-emotional learning can influence school disciplinary outcomes, reducing rates of suspension and expulsion.

9. Despite consistent documentation of the existence and negative effects of racial/ethnic disparities in discipline, there has been insufficient research attention paid to developing and evaluating strategies to reduce disciplinary disparity. As a result, practitioners have an urgent need for evidence-based strategies that could guide necessary change in this area.

produce problem behaviors and the need for disciplinary actions in schools, more data is needed on the overall effects of restorative justice in American schools.

Given highly consistent documentation of racial disparities in the application of school exclusion, the scarcity of research on interventions to address disciplinary disproportionality is somewhat surprising. Despite the emergence of promising themes from both research and case studies describing the characteristics of culturally responsive classroom management and discipline, it is clear that the data is nowhere near sufficient in order to offer useful guidance to schools throughout the nation struggling with inequity in discipline.

Some scholars have begun to make a case that in science, no less than in American society in general, mainstream discourse reflects a predominantly majority viewpoint. The American Educational Research Association convened the Commission on Research in Black Education (CORE 1986) in part to study the absence of equity research coming out of the experience of the African American community (King, 2005), that effort found the work and the theoretical perspectives of African American scholars to be underrepresented in mainstream research in education and psychology. More representative participation of multiple race-ethnicities and cultures in the school discipline research base would likely provide schools and school districts with urgently needed strategies to develop and maintain positive, effective, and equitable systems of school discipline.

In summary, the need for disciplinary reform is supported by extensive evidence that has failed to provide support for the effectiveness of suspension and expulsion, and consistent documentation of racial and ethnic disproportionality in the application of those procedures. These disparities are not due simply to economic disadvantage or higher rates of disruptive behavior among students of color. A number of systemic approaches, including positive behavior supports, social-emotional learning, and restorative justice, appear to show promise as methods for the reform of school discipline. Yet although culture appears to play a distinct role in the application of school discipline, there remains an urgent need for increased research on specific interventions designed to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the application of school discipline.

**References**


The Impact of Safe Schools/Healthy Students Funding on Student Well-Being

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THE HELP GROUP'S RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITY FOR ADOLESCENTS WITH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND BEHAVIORAL CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Since 1999, the Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) Initiative has provided communities in the United States with funding to implement a comprehensive set of programs and services that focus on creating safe school environments, promoting healthy childhood development, and preventing youth violence and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) use. This chapter describes a repeated-measures, quasi-experimental design with SS/HS funded schools and matched-comparison schools to examine the extent to which student health, protective factors, and academic performance changed in SS/HS schools compared to similar schools that did not receive SS/HS services. Results suggest that student well-being variables such as student health-related behavior, protective factors, and academic performance improved more in SS/HS grantee schools than in similar schools that did not receive SS/HS funding among fifth graders and seventh graders. Among ninth graders and eleventh graders, SS/HS funding status was not consistently related to changes in student well-being. When examining the degree to which SS/HS impacts varied across grantee sites, results indicated that three sites exhibited the most consistent positive program effects. An examination of program practices in the sites with the most consistent improvements in student well-being indicated that more students were exposed to SS/HS services, staff received professional development in more areas, and