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Since the 1980 's, the current narrative for disparate outcomes faced by minorities in America 's public schools has been shaped by the fear of violence thus creating the increasingly punitive and exclusionary methodology for school discipline that still exists today (Noguera, 1995). The zero-tolerance ideology from The War on Drugs became the basis for addressing school discipline and the results have been catastrophic. A growing body of evidence has emerged over the past forty years for what happens when zero-tolerance policies shape and guide school discipline and are used as the sole means for creating a safe and secure learning environment- it 's ineffective (Giroux, 2003; Heitzeg, 2009; NAACP, 2005; Skiba & Knesting, 2002). African American and Hispanic males have been on the receiving of these disparate outcomes for too long and a reverse in course is needed. A plethora of research exists on the influence of implicit and explicit biases of teachers (Carter et al. 2017; Peterson et al., 2016), poverty (Low SES) (Skiba et al., 2002), and zero-tolerance policies along with the overuse of suspension and expulsion (Skiba et al., 2006; Skiba et al., 2011) on the disparate outcomes of minorities in school. However, the literature is not as robust when examining this phenomenon from the principal 's perspective. Moving from acknowledgement to action is where current practitioners can begin to reverse the school-to-prison-pipeline. These North Texas schools use best practices such as Social Emotional Learning (SEL) techniques, Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies (PBIS), Restorative Practices (Circles) which are recommended as viable resources in the 2015 reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act which is now called the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) federal guidelines, but the disparate outcomes remain. A sad reality that exists in our nation 's public schools is that the earliest casualties of this current reality are in Pre-K (NAACP, 2005). For secondary schools, these young minorities enter middle and high school with negative attitudes towards schooling, dwindling hopes of graduating, and increasing distrust in the educational systems that are supposed to create a pathway to success, not jail. This research is important because these findings have costly ramifications far beyond the classrooms and school walls

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Examining the Relationship Between Principal's Beliefs and Attitudes Towards Discipline and
Disproportionate Outcomes for Minorities in Public Schools

By: Valerie L. Nelson

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development

Southern Methodist University

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This dissertation submitted by Valerie Nelson has been read and approved by the following faculty members of the Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development at Southern Methodist University. The final copy has been examined by the Dissertation Committee and the signatures which appear here verify the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given the final approval with reference to content, form and mechanical accuracy.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the 1980's, the current narrative for disparate outcomes faced by minorities in America's public schools has been shaped by the fear of violence thus creating the increasingly punitive and exclusionary methodology for school discipline that still exists today (Noguera, 1995). The zero-tolerance ideology from The War on Drugs became the basis for addressing school discipline and the results have been catastrophic. A growing body of evidence has emerged over the past forty years for what happens when zero-tolerance policies shape and guide school discipline and are used as the sole means for creating a safe and secure learning environment- it's ineffective (Giroux, 2003; Heitzeg, 2009; NAACP, 2005; Skiba & Knesting, 2002). African American and Hispanic males have been on the receiving of these disparate outcomes for too long and a reverse in course is needed. Today, our nation's academic and discipline gaps can be seen as our nation's "*educational debt*" (Ladson-Billings, 2006) the direct results of compounded economic, social, and political inequalities that have plagued the United States for centuries (Heitzeg, 2009). Therefore, this research set out to examine three specific things:

1. Current impact and existence of disproportionate discipline practices.
2. The influence of principal's attitudes, beliefs, and awareness of disciplinary practices and outcomes on their campuses.
3. Current alternatives or best practice that can reverse the trends.

A plethora of research exists on the influence of implicit and explicit biases of teachers (Carter et al. 2017; Peterson et al., 2016), poverty (Low SES) (Skiba et al., 2002), and zero-tolerance policies along with the overuse of suspension and expulsion (Skiba et al., 2006; Skiba et al., 2011) on the disparate outcomes of minorities in school. However, the literature is not as robust when examining this phenomenon from the principal's perspective. A study on consistent removal (Skiba et al., 2003) used a survey to measure how the principal's attitudes, beliefs, feelings about discipline influences a school's disciplinary practices. Previous research suggests that there are distinctly different perspectives among principals towards school discipline and that these differences may account for the disparities found within a school district, state or the Nation (Morrison, et al., 1999).

Utilizing The Disciplinary Practices survey, I measured the beliefs and attitudes of 32 secondary administrators from a medium size North Texas district. Using a five point Likert scale online survey, 1 Strongly Agree and 5 Strongly Disagree, this study examined if the building principal's philosophy about discipline (zero tolerance), beliefs about discipline (implicit and explicit), disciplinary practices (suspension and expulsion), and awareness of outcomes (disproportionality and poverty) can either help create and sustain the current outcomes for minority males or serve as the catalyst behind discipline equity on their campuses. My findings produced four themes that provide insight as to why disproportionality continues to exist. Among these principals there was general consensus that discipline should teach and remediate misbehavior and that schools have a shared responsibility in teaching expectations for discipline, my findings were 1) a lack of awareness of disproportionality exists, 2) principals feel zero tolerance policies limit their discretion in decisions, 3) additional resources are needed to

address behaviors, and 4) ongoing professional development to increase teacher and administrator capacity to address behavior to reduce exclusionary options.

Moving from acknowledgement to action is where current practitioners can begin to reverse the school-to-prison-pipeline. These North Texas schools use best practices such as Social Emotional Learning (SEL) techniques, Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies (PBIS), Restorative Practices (Circles) which are recommended as viable resources in the 2015 reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act which is now called the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) federal guidelines, but the disparate outcomes remain. A sad reality that exists in our nation's public schools is that the earliest casualties of this current reality are in Pre-K (NAACP, 2005). For secondary schools, these young minorities enter middle and high school with negative attitudes towards schooling, dwindling hopes of graduating, and increasing distrust in the educational systems that are supposed to create a pathway to success, not jail. This research is important because these findings have costly ramifications far beyond the classrooms and school walls.

II. FRAMING THE PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

a. Problem Statement

The over-identification of African American and Hispanic males in disciplinary placements has continued to rise over the past forty years (Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997; Thornton & Trent, 1988; Wu, Pink, & Moles, 1982). Researchers over these four decades have concluded that students of different races and ethnicities in U.S. schools experience learning in fundamentally different ways (Orfield, 2009); have different educational opportunities and resources (Carter & Welner, 2013; Duncan & Murnane, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2006), and experience different dropout and graduation rates (Wald & Losen, 2007). Along with these staggering statistics, between the years of 1992 and 2019, there have been unprecedented increases in the numbers of African American and Hispanic youth entering the judicial system due to suspensions or expulsions for low-level behaviors (Losen & Skiba, 2010). In 2005, the NAACP described this developing phenomenon as "the school to prison pipeline."

The Federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which was signed into law in January 2015, highlights the need to disrupt the school to prison pipeline with more inclusive classroom

practices. Although ESSA does not explicitly mention discipline disparities, the US Department of Education spells out the connection between disparate outcomes for African Americans and disciplinary placements. According to the Office for Civil Rights and the U. S. Government Accountability Office, these disparities are not by chance, and school districts need to take a closer look their practices to ensure they are not administering discipline in a discriminatory way based on race, gender, or national origin (GOA, 2018; Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

In Texas, a study conducted by Texas A & M University's Public Policy Research Institute concluded that a history of disciplinary referrals at school to be the single greatest predictor of future involvement in the juvenile justice system (Texas Appleseed, 2007). African American and Hispanic male s are at increased risk of being pushed out of schools into the streets, juvenile justice system, or adult jails. Many scholars have found infractions or disciplinary issues that once were addressed by school administrators or classroom teachers are now treated as crimes and students are arrested or referred to law enforcement (Russell, Rumberger & Losen, 2016; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2014). This increase has been attributed to the increasing use of ticketing as a form of punishment for low-level, nonviolent offenses like disrupting class, disorderly conduct, and truancy. The same state-wide study conducted by Texas A& M in conjunction with Texas Appleseed also found that students suspended or expelled for a discretionary school violation are three times more likely than other young people to have contact with the juvenile justice system the next year. Texas Appleseed estimated that more than 275,000 non-traffic tickets are issued to juveniles as young as six years old in Texas every year (Texas Appleseed, 2007). These systemic outcomes have become so pronounced that scholars, child advocates, and community activists now refer to it as the "schoolhouse to jailhouse track"

or as younger and younger students are targeted "the cradle to prison track" (Advancement Project 2006; Children's Defense Fund 2007; Walden and Losen 2003;;).

The state of Texas has begun to recognize that the Class C misdemeanor tickets students received for behaviors such as chewing gum in class, talking back to the teacher or for disrupting class in any way, had created a system of police disciplining students for the low-level behaviors that used to be addressed by classroom teachers. These occurrences were happening at such high rates, court dockets were strained, parents were repeatedly assessed fines they were unable to pay (up to \$500.00), and students were being arrested for unpaid fines as soon as they turned 17 years old (Texas Tribune, 2013). Texas Appleseed noted that a huge majority of the students receiving these citations were students of color and from low socioeconomic statuses.

In 2013, the 83rd Legislative Session made it a priority to decriminalize these low-level behaviors. Sen. Royce West introduced SB 393, which prevented school officers from issuing citations for misbehavior at school, excluding traffic violations (S.B. 393, 83rd Legislative Session, TX, 2013). The Texas Supreme Court reported that roughly 300,000 students were given citations each year for Class C misdemeanors. Of these citations issued annually, 113,000 are for truancy, which this bill does not address. Class C misdemeanors are the lowest level of misconduct punishable as a crime in the state of Texas (Texas Appleseed, 2010). These offenses at school include fighting, profanity, offensive gestures or noises, threats, indecent exposure, disruption of class, disruption of transportation, trespass, and minor in possession of alcohol. Senate Bill 1114 by Senator John Whitmire also addressed criminal citations for student misconduct. SB 1114 addressed the prosecution of certain Class C misdemeanor offenses committed by children. Prior to this bill, sending a child to court for a Class C misdemeanor was

a matter of issuing the citation for the misconduct (S.B. 1114, 83rd Legislative Session, TX, 2013).

Together these bills represented an attempt to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline by changing the way schools and law enforcement handles low-level student misbehavior in schools (Council of State Governments, 2011).

b. Argument

Nationally, there is a growing body of evidence regarding these disciplinary trends and their negative implications for African American and Hispanic youth in districts. Boys are referred to the office and receive a range of disciplinary consequences at a significantly higher rate than girls (Lietz and Gregory, 1978; Skiba et al., 1997). In the U. S. Office for Civil Rights data report from 1992, black boys were 16 times as likely to be subjected to corporal punishment as white females. Black males are mostly affected by overly punitive discipline and more likely to receive disciplinary referrals, be suspended, expelled, and placed in a school-to-prison track (Giroux, 2003; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Skiba & Peterson, 1997; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). Further, these authors cite evidence that African American and Latino families are more likely than their white peers to receive expulsion or out of school suspension as consequences for the same or similar problem behavior. Giroux (2003) suggest that their results are consistent with a long history of similar findings and demonstrate that race is not neutral.

A report published in 2018 by the United States Government Accountability Office found that increased disparities were widespread and persisted regardless of the type of disciplinary action, level of school poverty, or type of public school attended. Black students accounted for 15.5 percent of all public- school students but represented about 39 percent of students

suspended from school. Some of the increase through 2011 was the result of teachers and administrators punishing minor behavioral infractions (e.g., profanity, dress code violations) that in the past would have landed a student in detention, but later has led to harsher punishments such as suspensions, expulsions, or even arrests. Historically, out-of-school suspensions or expulsions were reserved for more severe infractions; however recent research has revealed that suspension has been used for a wide range of student behaviors or infractions such low-level behaviors as disobedience and disrespect, defiance, attendance problems, and general classroom disruptions (Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997). Suspension, therefore, is no longer a disciplinary consequence that is restricted to serious, safety threatening behaviors (Skiba et al., 1997). Although expulsion is still reserved for more disruptive severe, violent, or criminal behaviors and are less frequently used than suspension (Heaviside, Rowand, & Farris, 1998), in 2015, eleven million days of school were missed due to both suspensions and expulsions. That equates to 60,000 school years, more than 60 million hours of lost education, and billions of dollars wasted.

Additionally, there have been unprecedented increases in the numbers of African American youth entering the judicial system after being subjected to suspension or expulsion for low-level behaviors (Losen & Skiba, 2010). In a 2004 report published by the U. S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, cited that, while African Americans are sixteen percent of the student enrollment, they represent twenty-seven percent of students referred to law enforcement and thirty-one percent of students subjected to a school-related arrest. Nearly half of all African American students who enter residential juvenile justice facilities have academic achievement levels that are below their White and Latino peers. In 2005 a study by Texas A&M University's Public Policy Research Institute reported that of all of the risk factors associated

with future involvement in the juvenile justice system, highlighted that the greatest predictor is the history of disciplinary referrals in schools (Texas Appleseed, 2007). This predictor appears to hold true in Texas, where one-third of all youth in a locked-down facility have already dropped out of school, and more than 80 percent of Texas adult inmates are high school dropouts (Texas Appleseed, 2007)

In Texas, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) cited that students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to repeat a grade or drop out of school, especially when disciplined repeatedly. In the report *Breaking School Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Students' Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement* published by the Council of State Governments Justice Center and Public Policy Research Institute, cited that in Texas, of the students disciplined eleven or more times, nearly sixty percent did not graduate from high school and of the students disciplined at least once, thirty-one percent repeated a grade and nearly ten percent dropped out. Thus, students who are not in school are more likely to miss instruction, fall behind, experience academic and behavioral frustrations, and eventually drop out. The suspension and expulsion of students for discretionary school violations nearly triples the likelihood of juvenile justice contact each year (Council of State Governments, 2011).

Disciplinary removals for extended periods increase the likelihood that students will drop out and or fail to graduate on time (APA, 2006). These disparate outcomes create a path for students of color to be pushed out of school and pushed into the juvenile justice system. School suspensions have been rising since the early 1970s, especially for children of color. The Center for Civil Rights Remedies reported that suspension from school is harmful to students, as it increases the risk of retention and school dropout. This report highlights the fact that school dropouts impose huge social costs on their states and localities, due to lost wages and taxes,

increased crime, higher welfare costs, and poorer health. This report estimates that reducing school suspension rates in Texas alone would save the state up to \$1 billion in social costs. The authors of this report only cite one study to date that has linked these two bodies of research (Rumberger & Losen, 2017).

My interest in this topic first developed in 2008 when the school district in which I worked was preparing for a discipline equity audit for the Office of Civil Rights. The district had been flagged for over-identification of African Americans in special education and disciplinary placements. As an African American principal, I had seen these disturbing trends at my own campus. At the time of my appointment, there was one African American teacher on the campus and myself. The teacher demographics were 90% White, 9% Hispanic and 1%. From 2008 to the current day, the district had been dangerously close to sanctions. Recently district-level data was reviewed and indicated this trend continues for African American students in this district. While overall discipline numbers for the district are lower, African American and Hispanic male students continue to be disciplined significantly more often than their White peers. African American females are becoming the next group to be disproportionately disciplined.

In 2019 I accepted a new position within my current district where I receive discretionary and mandatory disciplinary placements for the entire system. The current district placement data mirrors the national and state trends, with minorities being disciplined at much higher rates than their white peers. The questions that concern me daily were “why are Black and Hispanic students disciplined at much higher rates than their white peers?”

Current disciplinary practices in America’s public schools are producing severe and pervasive outcomes for students of color, especially African American males (Shaw and Braden, 1990; Skiba et al.,1997). The ramifications of these disparities are deeply troubling and should

be of great concern to all educational practitioners and school policy experts. There appears to be a gender-by-race interaction in the probability of being discipline (Skiba, et al., 2002). In this dissertation, I will explore the relationship between these current trends and the attitudes and beliefs of principals in regards to discipline and to what extent, if any, their attitudes and beliefs about discipline support the existence of racially disproportionate policies and practices on their campus.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

In reviewing the literature related to the issue of disproportionate discipline, the literature seemed to address one of the following three themes: the impact of disproportionate disciplinary practices, the factors that are believed to contribute to the disparate discipline and the strategies that are believed to show promise in terms of disrupting this phenomenon. In framing this problem of practice, I have focused on defining the problem of disproportionate discipline and its impact on society. Therefore, this literature review will be organized in the remaining two themes. First, the literature review will examine factors that, according to the literature, are believed to be contributing to the problem, and then it will discuss what the literature has identified as the best practices to remedy this problem.

Factors Contributing to Disparate Discipline

i. Zero Tolerance Policies

Many researchers feel that the integration of zero-tolerance zero tolerance policies in school discipline practices has contributed to the disproportionality of African American males negatively impacted by the system (Heitzeg, 2009; Reyes, 2006; Skiba at al., 2003). Zero

tolerance policies emerged four decades ago as part of the Gun-Free School Act. Although these policies were designed to address the use of weapons at schools, for many local schools and school districts, this ideology has gone beyond to include fights, threats, and perceived threatening behavior on and off-campus (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Zero-tolerance school discipline is based on the assumption of *deterrence*: irrespective of context, punishing school “troublemakers” severely sends a message that misbehavior will not be tolerated, and schools will be more orderly and safer for those remaining (Skiba, 2004). Current evidence strongly suggests that the philosophy and practice of zero tolerance school discipline has failed as an educational intervention to ensure student safety, improve school climate, advance student learning, or provide equitable results; yet the approach remains popular among many educational administrators and political leaders (Rausch & Skiba, 2006; Noguera & Akom, 2000).

The fear of school violence has driven the American public education system toward increasingly punitive and exclusionary zero tolerance methods of school discipline (Noguera, 1995). This has coincided with the emergence of the “school-to-prison pipeline,” in which student disciplinary cases -even for minor, nonviolent offenses, are increasingly being handled by the criminal (juvenile) justice system (Staats, 2014). The ramifications of zero tolerance policies on students of color have become so uneven, in January 2014; the U. S. Department of Education and the U. S. Department of Justice released a joint policy report on school discipline and school climate. This report acknowledged the “un-even landscape” of school discipline in which students of color are disproportionately impacted by disciplinary actions. Rather than creating an atmosphere of learning, engagement, and opportunity, zero tolerance practices seem to have increasingly blurred the distinction between jail and school (Heitzeg, 2009). The school to prison pipeline disproportionately impacts the poor, students with disabilities, and youth of

color, especially African Americans, who are suspended and expelled at the highest rates, despite comparable rates of infractions (Watt, 2007). Youth of color are at risk for being “pushed out” of schools – pushed into the streets, into the juvenile justice system, and into adult prisons and jails (Heitzeg, 2009; NAACP 2005; Advancement Project 2006; Children's Defense Fund 2007).

ii. *Implicit and Explicit Bias*

Implicit bias is the unconscious biases that people are unaware they hold but influence their perceptions, behaviors, and decision-making. When examining the persistence of disparate discipline outcomes for minorities, implicit bias, as defined, offers a powerful explanation for this and many other social inequities faced by minorities (Staats, 2014). The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University published a report in 2014 authored by Sheryl Staats entitled *Implicit Racial Bias and School Discipline Disparities: Exploring the Connection*. In this research, African Americans were 31% more likely disciplined even though they were not more likely to commit infractions that prompted removal. Her work further suggests White and Hispanic students were more likely than African Americans to engage in behaviors that merit mandatory expulsions, suggesting that African Americans were disciplined more often simply from the discretion of the school employee. Thus, punishments appear to be overly punitive for the severity of the infraction. Losen and Martinez, (2013), found a vast majority of suspensions were for minor infractions of school rules, such as disrupting class, tardiness, and dress code violations, rather than for serious violent or criminal behaviors.

Differences in teacher expectations are important not only because they can influence teacher's subjective judgments of their student's academic abilities and grades, but also because when teachers hold different expectations for particular groups of students, they may engage, support, and teach their students differently (Rubie-Davies, 2008). For example, many teachers,

consciously or unconsciously, believe that boys present more disciplinary problems than girls and that Black students are more likely to misbehave than youths of other races (Monroe, 2005).

Fear may also play a role in over-referral. Teachers who are influenced by stereotypes of adolescent African American males as threatening or dangerous may react more quickly to relatively minor threats to authority that might be ignored for other ethnic or racial groups (Ferguson, 2001). Both explicit and implicit stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes develop from repeated exposure to the pairings of a social group or object with a particular characteristic (Peterson et al., 2016).

Cultural deficit thinking, the perspective that students from certain cultural backgrounds are incapable of achieving, supports the marginalization of students and parents of color from the educational process. Teachers and other school personnel may harbor negative assumptions about the ability, aspirations, and work ethic of these students (Rudd, 2014; Ferguson, 2001). Because of the implicit associations we hold outside of conscious awareness; these biases do not necessarily align with our explicit biases. An example of this would be a school administrator who believes he or she is assigning equal punishments for similar infractions, when in fact the actual data reflects certain student populations are receiving harsher discipline; therefore, the subtle yet powerful influence of the administrator's implicit biases is at play (Staats, 2014). Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings' research highlights that culturally relevant teachers utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning. In her book *Dream Keepers*, Dr. Ladson-Billings makes the argument that if teachers continue to rely on "conventional wisdom" in regard to teaching pedagogy and practice, then we are promoting the intellectual death of minority students Ladson-Billings (2009). The ability to recognize, appreciate, and celebrate the cultures of others is a

foundational pillar to making and keeping friends. Culturally Relevant Teaching (CRT) is important to achieving the goals SEL strategies promote.

Gloria Ladson-Billings introduced the term *culturally relevant pedagogy* two decades ago as a form of teaching that calls for engaging learners whose experiences and cultures are traditionally excluded from mainstream settings. Based on her research of effective teachers of African American students, Ladson-Billings proposed three critical actions of culturally relevant teachers and schools. First, teaching must yield academic success. Second, teaching must help students develop positive ethnic and cultural identities while simultaneously helping them achieve academically. Third, teaching must support students' ability "to recognize, understand, and critique current and social inequalities (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

When culturally relevant pedagogy or teaching is missing, then cultural incompetence steps in. The absence of CRT supports a pattern of overreaction to low-level behaviors, thus creating an atmosphere where African American and Hispanic males are left to deal with increased classroom removal and suspensions because of the cultural dissonance between them and the teacher.

The notion of implicit bias is akin to what American scholar Robin DiAngelo calls "white fragility," which she describes as a concept that was born out of superiority and entitlement that is used as a powerful means to control and protect white advantage. Dr. DiAngelo argues that the idea that Blacks were inferior to whites was formed and indoctrinated throughout the colonization of America and slavery. She cites the work of Ibram Kendi:

The beneficiaries of slavery, segregation, and mass incarceration have produced racist ideas of Black people being best suited for or deserving of the confines of slavery,

segregation, or the jail cell. Consumers of these racist ideas have been led to believe there is something is wrong with Black people, and not the policies that have enslaved, oppressed and confined so many Black people” (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 16-17).

Dr. DiAngelo argues that challenging discussions related to race triggers a level of discomfort and anxiety that permeates every social interaction between whites and non-whites every day. The idea that educator bias permeates the classroom culture and shapes the teacher-student relationship is plausible and serves as a possible rationale for the overly punitive reactions to behaviors perceived by white educators as disruptive, disrespectful, or threatening.

The role of the implicit biases of an educator that are indoctrinated so deeply in their subconscious that they react without pause is an area that perpetuates the disparate outcomes for minorities when looking at disciplinary practices. Townsend (2000) suggested that the unfamiliarity of white teachers with the interactional patterns that characterize many African American males may cause these teachers to interpret impassioned or emotive interactions as combative or argumentative. Nevertheless, research suggests that explicit biases of educators are even more disturbing because it suggests that educators knowingly and intentionally discipline students of color more often and severely than their white peers. Teacher expectations are at the core of their thoughts and actions. According to Good and Findley (1987) teachers that have low expectations for minority students subconsciously do the following daily in their classrooms:

- Call on low-expectation (LE) students less often than their high expectations (HE) students.
- Give LE students less praise.
- Show less acceptance of ideas put forth by LE students.
- Give LE students less benefit of the doubt.

Ferguson (2001) research reveals that different teacher expectation falls along racial lines and teacher expectations for future success for black students are consistently lower and more negative than for their White students Boykin and Noguera (2011). Recent works by Tenenbaum and Ruck (2007) provides further evidence linked to teacher expectations. Their results indicate that teachers have a more positive expectation for White students than they do for Black or Latino students. They also found that teachers directed more positive speech (such as praise, affirmations, and positive feedback) towards white students, and Black and Latino students were given fewer opportunities to respond academically in class. Explicit biases are fed and sustained through beliefs of stereotypes about a race or people. When an explicit bias is at play, the individual is aware of their prejudices and attitudes, and they choose to act upon those beliefs. This bias becomes evident when a person perceives that person feels threatened by the actions or language of that person.

These findings suggest the need to have honest conversations about implicit and explicit biases, social blind spots, and its impact on the disciplinary decisions of educators. This is an area of concern and a possible reason for the continuation of the disciplinary disparities between white children and non-white children in America. 82% of America's teaching core are white females between the ages of 25 - 45. This research hopes to serve as a catalyst for building principals and district leaders to start and move the conversation about discipline from analysis ad critiques to action and application; thus, provide pathways toward better academic, social and emotional outcomes for all students.

iii. Poverty

Race and socioeconomic status (SES) are highly connected in American society, and this correlation is present in disciplinary placements as well (Skiba et al., 2002; Wallace, Goodkind,

Wallace, & Bachman, 2008; Wu et al., 1982). The socioeconomic status of the district appears to play a substantial role in both the rate of discipline and racial disparities in suspension and expulsion. Rates are highest in poor urban districts (Losen & Skiba, 2010; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009). Several studies of school suspension have documented the overrepresentation of low-socioeconomic status (SES) students in disciplinary consequences. Students who receive free school lunches are at risk for school suspension (Skiba et al., 1997; Wu et al., 1982). While low SES students are more frequently disciplined than wealthier peers, disparities between black and white suspension rates are just as great or greater in higher resourced suburban districts (Eitle & Eitle, 2004; Rausch & Skiba, 2006; Wallace et al., 2008). Race and socioeconomic status (SES) are highly connected in American society (Skiba et al., 2011), thus laying the foundation for the argument that the racial disparities in school discipline mirror the disproportionality associated with SES. However, when researchers look at low SES and race when examining discipline outcomes, race continues to more of a significant factor than a student's social status (Skiba et al., 2002; Wu et al., 1982).

When examining the connections of race and socioeconomic status (SES) in regard to classroom behavior, we cannot ignore the significance of the neighborhood of the child. Many low-income students living in urban neighborhoods may encounter adversity, such as exposure to violence and substance abuse, which may increase the likelihood of their receiving school (Brantliner, 1991; Bureau of Justice, 2005). However, there is no definitive evidence that exposure to violence causes behavior difficulties I school, but correlation studies have shown links exposure to violence and student mental health and behavior in classroom (eg., Kuther & Fisher, 1998).

b. Current Best Practices to Reverse Trend of Disparate Discipline

With federal laws and guidance increasing the impetus for change, school districts have begun to increase their focus on restorative practices, social-emotional strategies, positive behavior interventions and support and other forms of school-wide discipline formats that encourage inclusivity in hopes of disrupting the trend of disparate discipline outcomes across our nation. In a report published by the American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force in 2008, there were several strategies identified that have demonstrated efficacy in promoting school safety and reducing the potential for youth violence. The need for prevention strategies has been highly consistent when looking at disciplinary alternatives to zero tolerance policies and practices (American Psychologist, 2008). These findings suggest that effective school discipline and school violence programs must include three levels of prevention to be effective:

- Primary prevention strategies targeted at all students,
- Secondary prevention strategies targeted at those students who may be at risk for violence or disruption, and
- Tertiary strategies targeted at those students who have already engaged in disruptive or violent behavior.

The strategies mentioned in this literature review, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), social-emotional learning (SEL), and Restorative Practice (Circles), fall within the primary and tertiary realms.

i) Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a school-wide behavior program that creates a common language and expectation for behaviors that everyone seeks to acknowledge throughout the building. Where SEL and Restorative practices can be school-wide initiatives, it is within the classroom dynamics where influence, implementation, and classroom goals can differ. PBIS, on the other hand, is designed to foster climate and culture of collaboration based on a rewards system where the previously discussed philosophies mention nothing about token economies or rewards. PBIS is grounded in developing school climate and culture that helps students identify a belief system of belonging and representation. School leaders help their schools establish a brand that supports their identity and bind the community. This section of IDEA was very detailed in its methods of identification and support of positive behaviors in the classroom. Shifting the focus of discipline toward recognizing positive behavior requires a shift in thinking. By rewarding the positive behaviors observed, the idea is that students will self-monitor and work to receive that positive acknowledgment and recognition within the classroom and school-wide.

PBIS incorporates a three-tiered framework for improving and integrating all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. The desired change in outcomes are measured and monitored constantly. The students are identified early and systems such as mentoring are put into place to support the students and hopefully reduce the number of discipline infractions involving the student. The outcomes have been promising when implemented with fidelity among certain age groups (American Psychologist, 2008, p. 856-857).

However, a study published in 2012 found that Hispanic Americans and White students were underrepresented among students with multiple discipline referrals and African Americans were overrepresented in schools where secondary prevention strategies like PBIS were

implemented. The study also acknowledged at the elementary level, the discrepancy was not as great for African American students as it was at the secondary levels (Vincent et al., 2012).

Therefore, suggesting that students have more opportunities to behavioral interventions at the elementary level than at the secondary level. The authors imply that teacher biases, beliefs, and fears of behavioral stereotypes of African American students (Skiba et al., 2011) make the frequent check in system less desirable at the secondary level, but hint at the possibility that African American students are less willing to engage in increased contact with adults when trust in teachers has eroded (Vincent et al., 2012).

iii) Social-Emotional Learning

School leaders across our Nation have begun to look at preventative, reformatory, and restorative disciplinary systems to reverse the trends. One way to support learning is to curb the overuse of disciplinary practices that remove students from the classroom by incorporating social and emotional learning (SEL) practices and developmentally appropriate approaches to behavior. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defined SEL more than two decades ago. CASEL defines social and emotional learning (SEL) as the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. SEL lessons focus on five key components: Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Born out of the work of James Comer at Yale and New Haven Public Schools, Roger Weissberg, and Timothy Shriver began to clearly define what social and emotional traits students would need to be successful at school. SEL, as we know it in its current state, was birth from a series of

meetings between researchers, practitioners, and child advocates called CASEL to define social, emotional learning for education.

A self-aware individual is able to accurately recognize his or her emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism. Students with the ability to exercise self-awareness seeks to problem solve to avoid conflict. This, in turn, allows the student to maximize the learning environment and control their emotions. This can be achieved by removing oneself from the group and working in private or relocating to a refocus spot in the classroom.

Self-management is the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals. When a student builds the capacity to model this behavior, the potential for classroom disruption is avoided because they can self-regulate and recognize the need for an intervention. This may look like a cool-down spot or requesting to visit with the counselor or another trusted adult or peer. This strategy allows a student regain composure as well re-establish a positive collaborative interaction with peers and teacher. This option is utilized instead office referrals or exclusionary practices.

An individual demonstrates social-awareness when he or she is able to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports. Creating a classroom culture that appreciates and values each other's uniqueness builds a strong foundation that supports and develops global citizenship skills. Often when a

student violates one of the written or unwritten structures at school, it usually has nothing to do with the actual situation but is an outward expression of the child's frustrations within that construct. Teachers should welcome the idea to teach students the behaviors they expect, then the playing field is leveled, and assumptions of responsibility is removed.

Relationship skills are the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed. A student's ability to make and keep friends requires children to learn how to share, take turns, and develop other social constructs that support positive communication, friendship, and collaboration skill sets. If a child's undesired behaviors are always met with exclusionary practices, he or she never learns how to make concessions or reach compromises. When this happens, teachers inadvertently create negative reputations for students that classmates willingly accept and act upon, thus making that child feel unwanted or "bad".

Responsible decision-making is the ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others. When students cannot or refuse to acknowledge the harm their behavior has caused, then it damages the trust between his peers and teachers. This component of the SEL model supports the creation of a safe space for students to make mistakes and learn from them, allowing for minimal instruction loss and time for relationships to mend. Responsible decision-making cannot be accomplished with suspensions and expulsions as the only response when behavior becomes disruptive.

Administrators and teachers who adopt SEL strategies are able to create a more inclusive learning environment for all students by helping students recognize and manage their emotions, establish positive goals, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations effectively (Skiba and Losen, 2015). These findings suggest that African American and Hispanic males can and do benefit from reduced use of exclusionary practices by teachers and administrators, thus increasing the learning opportunities, increasing the likelihood of changing the disruptive behavior, and replacing it with a more suitable interaction through practice and empathy.

iv) Restorative Practices (Circles)

Restorative practices are social science that studies how to build social capital and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making. The philosophy of restorative practice is borrowed from the field of restorative justice, which was used in prisons in the late 1970s. Howard Zehr's book *Changing Lenses – A New Focus for Crime and Justice*, published in 1990, is often credited as one of the first to articulate the theory of restorative justice. The use of restorative practices helps to reduce crime, violence, and bullying, improve human behavior, strengthen civil society, provide effective leadership, restore relationships, and repair harm. The literature suggests that restorative practices such as SEL strategies and PBIS, have each been effective in disrupting the trend of disproportionate discipline (Skiba & Losen, 2014). However, the literature also suggests when implicit bias and culturally responsive classroom management practices are absent, disproportionate outcomes currently faced by African American and Hispanic males remain.

The International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) distinguishes between the term's restorative practice and restorative justice. They view restorative justice as a subset of

restorative practices. Restorative justice is reactive, consisting of formal or informal responses to crime and other wrongdoing after it occurs. IIRP's definition of restorative practices also includes the use of informal and formal processes that precede wrongdoing, those that proactively build relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict and wrongdoing.

Where social capital—a network of relationships—is already well established, it is easier to respond effectively to wrongdoing and restore social order—as well as to create a healthy and positive organizational environment. Social capital is defined as the connections among individuals (Putnam, 2001), and the trust, mutual understanding, shared values and behaviors that bind us together and make cooperative action possible (Cohen & Prusak, 2001). Thus, creating an inclusive learning environment where conflicts and restitution are utilized to achieve a positive outcome for all before punitive disciplinary options such as suspension or expulsion are considered. This, in turn, naturally encourages inclusivity, reduces time loss from instruction, reduces the likelihood of early dropouts, and early entry into the juvenile justice system.

The social science of restorative practices offers a common thread to tie together theory, research, and practice in diverse fields such as education, counseling, criminal justice, social work, and organizational management. In most schools, restorative practices are introduced through the implementation of circle time. Circles are a foundational restorative practice that contributes to both relationship/community building and repairing harm when needed. There are a variety of types of circles, including talking, learning, listening, support, peace, celebration, re-entry, and more. Despite the variety of types of circles, they all have key components, including opening/closing, use of talking piece, and establishment of shared values. There are several

restorative practices that may help reverse the trend of disciplinary disproportionality for students of color.

Each of these programs or philosophies offers an alternative to the current disciplinary situation plaguing African American and Hispanic males in our public schools. Most of these strategies are researched-based, and all have the supports to be reproduced at scale in most of our Nation's schools. The question remains for current practitioners and policy makers, why are African American and Hispanic students continuing to experience disciplinary practices that remove them from classrooms every day.

c. Need for the Study

Despite four decades of research and findings, disparities in discipline continue to exist for African American males. These disparities seem to be linked to inequities in academic achievement as well as recidivism in the juvenile justice system. This is a complex educational problem that appears to be impacted by societal and school-based factors. The majority of the research in this area focuses on possible contributors to the problem, the costs associated with it, and a handful of restorative practice that seem promising to combat the problem. An area that deserves more focus is the mindset and beliefs of the building principal, who is a vital key to the climate and culture established around discipline. What an administrator feels and believes about discipline, sets the tone for the teachers and others who work with this targeted group. There is no way to truly measure a person's attitude or beliefs but using survey research and descriptive statistics allows us to look for patterns of behaviors or the likelihood for an outcome or rationale for the phenomenon being examined.

The goal of this study is to explore the relationship between the existence of disproportionate disciplinary outcomes and the personal beliefs and attitudes of building principals. This study will initiate dialogue between educators who seek to disrupt the pattern of disparate discipline for minority students and its cyclical consequences for our society. Subsequently, I hope to encourage educators to explore whether and how their own philosophies, feelings and beliefs impact their practices and the futures of the students they serve.

It is a moral and ethical dilemma that touches every school in America. Ongoing research is needed to prevent future generations of students from being marginalized, ostracized, and sacrificed; thus, limiting them academically, socially, and emotionally. Through this work, it is my hope that the conversation will move beyond the acknowledgment of needed action. This work will help to transform current practice and policy in a way that significantly improves the future outcomes for minorities in our American schools. Moving to change our policies, our practices, and our biases. I hope that all current and future practitioners will develop the courage to call this what it is, an injustice and move to cultivate generations of change agents that value education and address over-incarceration.

III. METHODS OF INQUIRY

Measures and Procedures

In order to understand the continuance of the disproportionate disciplinary outcomes experienced by African American and Hispanic males in Texas schools, I explored the relationship between these disparate outcomes and the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of the building principal in a medium sized North Texas school district. By utilizing survey research

and descriptive statistics, principal's perceptions and practices related to school discipline were collected and analyzed by capturing the principal's beliefs and attitudes about the purpose, process and outcomes of school discipline. Survey research provides quantitative or numeric descriptions of trends, attitudes, and or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (Fowler, 2008; Creswell, 2014, p. 13). Central to survey research design is the construction of research questions and hypotheses to guide the project. Untested statements that specify a relationship between two or more variables are called hypotheses (Nardi, 2003, p. 36.) The assumption in this study is that there are other variables at play that contributed to the disproportionate disciplinary practices found in Texas and across our Nation. For the purpose of this research, I looked for evidence of a direct correlation between discipline outcomes and practices and the philosophies, beliefs, feelings and attitudes of building principals have on discipline practices and outcomes of their schools.

Using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to present the findings from the surveys helped to identify the possible relationships between the longitudinal discipline data from these schools and the principal's impact; thus creating a clearer interpretation of the relationships between discipline outcomes and the principal's beliefs and practices.

The quantitative approach for this research used an online survey designed by Dr. Russell Skiba and Dr. Heather Edl in 2004. This survey tool was designed to explore to what extent the beliefs, philosophies, and attitudes of building principals influence the disciplinary outcomes on their campuses. I chose this method of data collection for two reasons 1) it allows the researcher to receive information about a large population with a quick turnaround and 2) it allows for some level of anonymity to speak honestly about the topic.

Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2018). A qualitative researcher studies thing in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Therefore, the qualitative portion of this research will be satisfied through the use of open-ended questions included at the end of the survey that address the principal's desires to discipline differently as well as their thoughts about zero-tolerance policies.

This research was designed to include three phases: 1) administering the an online survey to every secondary administrator on the fifteen campuses and organizing the findings, 2) securing and analyzing the district's cumulative discipline data records for all 14 campuses from 2018 and 2019 (including local and state data sets from TAPR reports an DAEP placements), and 3) systematically evaluating schools by overall discipline entries, types of infractions (disruptive behaviors, fighting, under the influence, etc.), actions taken such as ISS, OSS, DAEP or JJAEP (expulsion), gender and race receiving actions or placements. This systematic and deliberate approach was to evaluate what relationship, if any, exists between the feelings and beliefs of principals and discipline practices, specifically regarding disparate discipline outcomes for African American and Hispanic males and current practices reflected in archived and current discipline data. The longitudinal data will provide a glimpse at the targeted groups in comparison to their peers and if the disproportionality is consistent with national trends or reveals a differing pathway for minority males.

When looking at potential causes for the disparate in discipline faced by African American and Hispanic males, it is important to look for the behaviors that can be analyzed for

patterns and trends. Taking a postpositivist approach allows a researcher to look for the relationships between what we see, disproportionality, and the influence of the beliefs and actions of principals on those outcomes. Through a postpositivist social justice lens, I hope to explain patterns of behavior, commonalities, and beliefs of principals in this North Texas school district that contributes to the misalignment between their philosophies, actions, beliefs, and actual disciplinary practices. My assumptions are there is some correlation between what principal's feel and believe about discipline and the disciplinary outcomes African American and Hispanic males face in public schools. Whether intentional or not, there are other variables besides the behavior of the students that contribute to these disparate conclusions.

Using the survey results and descriptive statistics, correlations or patterns between the principal's beliefs and practices and campus outcomes were identified; thus answering my essential question what influence, if any, does the principal's beliefs, attitudes and practices have on the discipline disparities African American and Hispanic males continue to experience in our Texas schools and across our Nation. The power of the survey was not as strong due the small sample size and low participation, which was under 50%. Seventy-one surveys were sent out to current building principals at the secondary level. Thirty-one participants completed the survey. One participant submitted a partially completed survey.

Site Selection

District

The site selected for this survey research was a North Texas school district in the Dallas-Fort Worth area with approximately 40,000 students. I chose this district because of my increasing concerns about the widening academic gaps between Black students and their Hispanic and White peers and the possible connection to days of lost instruction due to

disciplinary practices. Texas ranks among one of the highest states with disproportionate outcomes in regard to minorities in several categories, including, but not limited to discipline,

This school district has struggled for over a decade to close the achievement gap and reconcile its discipline disparities with its minority students, especially African American and Hispanic males, but minimal progress has been made. This North Texas district met the criteria for disproportionality due to having been identified previously by the Office of Civil Right as having an overidentification of African American students in special education and disciplinary placements within the past decade. The student and teacher demographics mirror national trends. See Table 1. A strong positive for this North Texas district is that minority graduation rates surpass national and states averages. (See Table 3)

Table 1.

***National, State, and District Demographics Overview**

	African American	Hispanic	White
National Teacher	7%	9%	80%
State Teacher	10.6%	27.7%	58.4%
District Teacher	16%	19%	62%
National Student	16%	24%	51%
State Student	12.6%	52.6%	27.4%
District Student	25%	58%	13%

*The demographics pulled from the 2018-2019 Texas Education Agency TAPR report.

**78% of the school district is economically disadvantaged. National numbers were pulled https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_clr.asp

Table 2.

National and State Comparison Data for Graduation and Discipline Rates

Ethnicity	District Graduation Rates	State Graduation Rates	National Graduation Rates	District Discipline Percentages	State Discipline Percentages	National Discipline Percentages
African American	92%	89%	79%	41%	24%	47%
Hispanic	91%	90%	81%	49%	37%	22
White	91%	95%	89%	7%	10%	36%

Data was pulled from the following sources: https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/dropcomp_2017-18_v3.pdf and <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/downloads/crdc-school-discipline-snapshot.pdf>

Schools

For the purpose of my study, secondary campuses were selected for participation. There are fifteen secondary campuses, nine middle schools, five high schools and one alternative high school campus. The campuses' enrollments ranged approximately from 600 – 1,200+ for middle schools and 2,000 – 3,300. The middle schools included grades 6 – 8 and the high schools included grades 9 - 12. There are seventy-one potential participants that serve in the role of building administrator. For this study, administrator is defined as a building principal or assistant principal. The demographics for the secondary campuses are reflective of the district.

An intentional focus was placed on secondary schools only for this research because this age group would provide a stronger sample to analyze for disproportionality. I chose to eliminate elementary campuses from the study because of the impact of Texas HB 674 on elementary discipline practices. Texas HB 674 took the option away to suspend children in grades Pre- K – 2 unless assault is the result of the child's behavior. Although research has shown that minority children as young as Pre-K are being pushed out of school and pushed into the school-to-prison-pipeline, at alarming rates (Skiba et al., 2011; Wallace et al., 2008) for this study I am choosing to look at the disciplinary practices and outcomes at the secondary level.

Participants

Of the seventy-one potential participants, total of 41 surveys were completed or partially completed giving me an initial participation rate of 57%. With only 31 completed in its entirety, participation dropped to 45%. One campus elected not to submit no responses. No additional

efforts were made after the window closed. Of the fifteen building principals, six are male, and nine are female. The years of experience range from 1 – 20+ years as principal or assistant principal. No administrator with 20+ years of experience chose to participate. See Appendix Table.

For those administrators that did not reply to the initial online request, a follow up email was sent every three to four days during the three-week window. For future research, it is noteworthy that comparing discipline practices of administrators Pre-K – 12 could be beneficial in their efforts to reverse the disparate trends by identifying practices by principals and teachers before students reach the secondary levels as well as identify points of emphasis for teacher and administrator training.

Respondents

Each secondary administrator received an online request to participate in this research. Administrator for the purpose of this study is defined as a current campus principals or assistant principals currently serving on a middle or high school campus. 31 participants completed the survey in its entirety and one partial entry. See Table 3.

Table 3.

Sample data characteristics of respondents

Percentage of Minority Administrators	44%
Percentage of White Administrators	56%
Percentage of Male Administrators	38%
Percentage of Female Administrators	62%
Percentage of Middle School Administrators	47%
Percentage of High School Administrators	53%

Positionality

As a building principal, I noticed disturbing discipline trends for my African American and Hispanic males at my previous campus and the same trends exists at my current campus. My current position affords me the privilege of seeing campus wide practices from a very narrow but telling perspective at the DAEP. Being an African American leader raising such sensitive matters as race with mostly White faculties has proven in the past to be challenging and frustrating. Now, I plan to raise this critical conversation again with my colleagues from a different perspective... their own. Although this group of leaders is more diverse than my teaching staff were at that time, however, the results appear to be the same for students of color, especially African American and Hispanic males, they are discipline at much higher rates than their peers.

The predominantly White teacher workforce is not reflective of the diverse student populations served at these secondary campuses. The potential cultural mismatch between teachers and students serve as a stimulus or catalyst for a teacher's implicit biases to contribute to discipline disparities. In addition to personal biases of teachers, I recognized demographics such as gender, race, and years of experience could play a significant role in the decision to refer to the office or not. The fact is that many disciplinary infractions have a subjective component, the 'pervasive societal implicit associations associated with blackness' (e.g., being dangerous, criminal, or aggressive) can influence perceptions of minorities in ways that affect the discipline they receive (Staats, 2014).

In order for current practitioners to disrupt and reverse the current trends for minorities in disciplinary placements, it is my sincere hope that the survey results will identify some common practices, beliefs, attitudes and feelings of building principals that create a climate and culture

that is inclusive and has students of color in class maximizing their learning potential. I believe the change starts the leadership, and it is up to all of us to right this wrong.

Data Collection and Sources

In addition to the survey data, the comparison data necessary to study the prevailing discipline trends for these secondary schools will be pulled from the district's secure data collection system, and from current data collected from DAEP/JJAEP placements. The DEAP for this study is defined as the district's alternative education placement program and JJAEP is defined as the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Placement program.

This survey research explored the possible beliefs, attitudes and practices that lead to the disproportionate number of African American and Hispanic males suspended, expelled or sent to an alternative placement such as DEAP or JJAEP, and how a school principal's attitudes about discipline policies, beliefs, and philosophy about discipline may be a direct influence on this phenomenon. Both of these alternative programs are closely aligned to zero-tolerance influenced policies which require removal from the home campus for a significant amount of time up to a full school year. These programs serve discretionary and mandatory placements in accordance with the school code of conduct, Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code, and the discretion of the administrator.

District Data Sources

Archived discipline reports from 2018 and 2019 for the secondary campuses were retrieved from the district's data management system with the help of the Director of Information systems. This secure data storing system is where each school administrator enters discipline infractions and actions taken to address the infraction. This system houses current and archived discipline data. The reports were used to specifically look at infractions resulting in removals.

Removals were defined as a student who is removed from the home campus. The race and gender of students who committed the infraction was included in this comparative analysis.

The principal researcher had access to the district DAEP and JJAEP data due to current job status and responsibilities. This data is important to this study because it compares the current school discipline outcomes for minorities to patterns of practice by administrators by infraction. This is important because it speaks to the discretion each administrator has as well as how they choose to exercise that discretion when dealing with placements not requiring mandatory removal.

The data used to present this comparative study is the current data set from the 2019-2020 school year and is comprised of 7.2 months of school due to COVID 19. The trend is consistent with the review of the 2018-2019 data. African Americans represent 24% of the school district's student population, but 41% of the discipline entries (See Table3). The districts percentages are reflective of the total number of entries for the district, divided by race. For example, there were 11,665 discipline entries for the 7.2 months of school. These infractions included tardies and dress code violations. Of the total, African Americans had 4,733, which is 41%. Although Hispanic students have the highest overall discipline percentages with 5,745 infractions, the percentages are commensurate with their enrollment.

Survey Tool

The Disciplinary Practices Survey was developed to gain perspectives of building principals regarding school discipline and violence prevention strategies. The survey goals are to gain a sense of attitudes of principals towards school discipline, explore the extent to which the principal's attitude and perspectives are related to the outcomes in Indiana's schools. The survey protocol came from the work of Dr. Russell Skiba and Dr. Edl (Skiba et al., 2003). This sixty-

question survey is organized into seven content areas that will serve as the variables for this study. The authors adapted the Disciplinary Practices Survey (Skiba, and Edl, 2004), from items generated based on a review of previous surveys of principals' perceptions and practices related to school discipline: National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools (Gottfredson et al., 2000), Discipline in Secondary Schools (Green & Barnes, 1993), Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools (Heaviside et al., 1998), Suspension, a Wake-up Call (Henderson & Friedland, 1996), and Indicators of School Crime and Safety (Kaufman et al., 2001).

In this modified version, items were deleted that address students with disabilities because that variable was not the focus of my study. Additional items were added to the survey in the form of open-ended questions to address zero tolerance, race and alternative to suspension on their campuses.

My survey tool utilized questions from all seven concepts. Those concepts are: a) attitude toward discipline in general, b) awareness and enforcement of disciplinary procedures, c) beliefs concerning suspension/expulsion and zero tolerance, d) beliefs about responsibility for handling students misbehaviors, e) resources available for Discipline, f) attitude toward and availability of preventative strategies as an alternative to exclusion, and attitude toward differential discipline of disadvantaged students or students with disabilities. Thirty-eight questions from the sixty original questions were either selected and used in its original format or combined to generate a new question. This decision was made so that the length of the survey would not deter participants from competing. of the questions assess principal opinion of these aspects of discipline, using a five-point Likert scale (1, strongly agree to 5, Strongly Disagree), and the final three open-ended questions will address awareness current discipline outcomes

impacting minorities, the impact of zero tolerance on school discipline, and other tools provided or created at the campus level to address misbehaviors other than suspension.

I eliminated certain questions from the original survey because they were not relevant to my study. The last two concepts measured the principal's attitudes towards differential discipline of disadvantaged students or students with disabilities. Removing these questions did not alter the validity or reliability of the survey tool because the survey still contains ample questions that address the six remaining categories that support my assumptions. I included three open-ended questions to provide opportunity for clarification about the beliefs, philosophy, and desired discipline practices of this sample group. The online surveys will be sent before the end of the fifth six weeks.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected and kept in a password protected electronic file. Qualtrics was used to compose instrument and collect participant responses. SPSS was used to analyze survey data. The Disciplinary Practices Survey created by Dr. Russell Skiba and Dr. Heather Edl was used to conduct this research study. Permission was granted by Dr. Skiba to use in a modified state. For the purpose of my study, I reduced the length by eliminating questions. The reliability of this tool was not jeopardized through the reduction of questions. The responses of the participants are consistent across the themes.

From the participants who completed the survey, a comparative analysis of the survey results and current discipline data trends was conducted to identify any themes or patterns that correlate with the principal's beliefs, philosophy, and practices and suspensions, expulsions and alternative placements to DAEP or JJAEP.

Data used was collected during the 2019-2020 school year. On May 1, 2020, an email was sent requesting campus level administrators at the secondary level (principals and assistant principals) to complete the online survey. A reminder email was sent on May 7, May 12, and May 15. COVID 19 disrupted the school year the original timeline. The data collection took place for three weeks during the 2019-2020 school year. Thirty-one administrators, 44% completed the survey in its entirety. There was one partial entry that was included in select responses thus increased the total participation percentages to 45%. Of the 32 responses, 47% were completed by middle school administrators and 53% from the high school level.

Principals were asked to rate their levels of agreement with 38 statements addressing the purpose, process, and outcomes for school discipline (Skiba and Edl, 2004). To gauge perspectives of school discipline among building administrators, they were given a 38- question Likert scaled online survey along with 3 open-ended questions (OEQ) that were analyzed through six different factors. The five-point Likert scale (1, Strongly Agree to 5, Strongly Disagree) measured the amount of agreement or disagreement of principals as it related to six content areas: a) attitudes towards discipline in general, b) awareness and enforcement of disciplinary procedures, c) beliefs concerning suspension, expulsion and zero-tolerance, d) beliefs about responsibility for handling student misbehaviors, e) resources available for discipline, and f) attitude toward and availability of prevention strategies as an alternative to exclusion. Three additional questions were given to specifically address zero tolerance and its impact on school discipline decisions, the perceived impact of the principal on the disproportionate outcomes faced by minorities on their perspective campuses and alternative resources or programs utilized on their campus to suspension or expulsion.

Analysis and Data Validity

My research pursued answers to several secondary questions 1) Do students from different racial/ethnic backgrounds experience the same rates of exclusion from the classroom or school? 2) Do race, gender, and years of experience of the administrator influence discretionary placements? 3) Are other disciplinary options used to address low-level behaviors? An exclusion will be defined as removal to In-School Suspensions (ISS), Out of School Suspensions (OSS), and District Alternative Education Placement (DAEP) placement or Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Placement (JJAEP) resulting in a change of placement or loss instruction time. The district data sample from 2019-200 provided a valid account of discipline infractions and actions assigned for the selected year towards African American and Hispanic males.

It is important to note that prior research has indicated that student gender, race, and socioeconomic status have all been connected evidence of disproportionality (Skiba et al. 2000); For this study, the race, gender, and years of experience of principals will be analyzed for patterns in conjunction with the suspensions and expulsions data percentages. Principals have shown from previous administrations of this survey tool to have significantly differing beliefs about discipline, but for my study, I am looking for statistically significant differences between this sample group survey results of their beliefs and what their current practices the current discipline outcomes reflect.

IV. SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

Attitudes and beliefs about discipline are as varied as the experiences of the administrators dispensing the punishments. The answer to the question why minorities are disproportionately over-represented in disciplinary placements was not directly answered by this survey, however, influence of the feelings and attitudes of principals about discipline did provide insight as to why enforcement and awareness continues to be inconsistent within this district. The results from my survey research highlights the struggle that most administrators face when dealing with discipline. The desire to discipline in a way that is inclusive and reformatory was voiced within each composite measure. I will present those findings and then the four major themes that emerged from the principal's open-ended responses that present possible causes that directly and indirectly contribute to the current discipline trends for this district 1) a lack of awareness of the administrative role in perpetuating disproportionate discipline outcomes, 2) a lack of alignment between beliefs about discipline and practices, 3) limited principal discretion in assigning consequences, and 4) the need for additional professional development and reformatory supports.

Discipline disparities are not readily detected from the survey questions themselves. It was in the open-ended responses I began to see significant differences in the perspectives of the administrators.

Survey Results

To present and compare findings from the survey, the thirty-eight were grouped into composite measures. These measures were generated from the themes from Skiba and Edl's work. For each composite measure, a value of 1 indicates that the principal responded Strongly

Agree to all questions and a value of 5 indicates the principal responded Strongly Disagree to all questions.

I used the principal practices survey tool in part to gauge principal attitudes around five composite measures: 1) their general attitudes about discipline, 2) their beliefs about suspension/expulsion and zero tolerance policies, 3) attitudes about resources, 4) awareness of policies and practices and 5) beliefs about responsibility for handling misbehaviors.

In general, respondents believed the role of discipline should be educative and preventative. This was reflected in their strong opposition to zero tolerance influenced consequences such as out of school suspensions and expulsions. This was further reflected in their agreement that suspension and expulsion should be used as a last resort and missed instruction time was detrimental to students academically. Further they believed there were often inadequate resources and supports available to them to utilize as on-campus disciplinary alternatives to suspension and expulsion. Lastly, respondents indicated they believed discipline is a shared responsibility between the school and home, and that all stakeholders had a general awareness and understanding of school behavioral expectations. Further examination of the survey results by race, gender and years of experience yielded no significant differences.

The findings from my survey research were in alignment to the results of the previous findings in several areas. The systemic removal of students through suspension and expulsion is not simply an inevitable result of disruptive behavior. Instead, disciplinary removal appears to be to some degree a choice associated with principal attitudes towards discipline, students, and policies (Skiba, et al., 2003). This belief is associated with a number of items that addressed increasing behaviors and that schools lack the sufficient resources to handle such behaviors. Principals found common ground on the ineffectiveness of zero tolerance influenced policies that

require increased use of suspension and expulsion. Their high scores of agreements indicate that it is not an effective disciplinary tool. Lastly, principals acknowledge that exclusionary practices may be effective temporarily, but in the long term, removals create increased risks for dropping out, opportunities to engage in more troublesome behaviors, and disengagement from school.

The survey responses further highlighted beliefs and attitudes of principals in regard to zero tolerance policies and the impact on their decisions, alternative measures to suspension and expulsion on their campus, the direct impact of disciplinary practices on minorities. Four major themes emerged from the principal's open-ended responses that support the possible causes directly and indirectly that sustains the discipline data sets in Table 3: 1) a lack of awareness of the administrative role in perpetuating disproportionate discipline outcomes, 2) a lack of alignment between beliefs about discipline and practices, 3) limited principal discretion in assigning consequences, and 4) the need for additional professional development and reformative supports.

A lack of awareness among building principals in this North Texas school district about their roles in perpetuating disparate outcomes for minorities on their campus. From the survey results, there is a no significant statistical differences in the overall awareness of disciplinary practices, policies, or disproportionate impact on minorities by principals when looking at gender, race or years of experience. Statistical Significance is (Sig.<.05) and is reached when the assumption of equal variance is violated. In this test, $p = .171$, therefore we can say that there is no significant difference between male and female administrator's overall awareness in disciplinary procedures or enforcement of policies and practices (See chart 6). But when reviewing the open-ended questions submitted by the respondents, there were differing opinions. Respondents were asked to think about how their beliefs, feelings, and attitudes about the roles

of discipline impacted minorities on their campuses. Most administrators acknowledged that their decisions impacted their minority students directly because minorities are the majority on their campuses, but they did not feel their decisions impacted them in a disproportionate way. District data shows there are some strong disparities in that African Americans are disciplined at higher rates than their peers. African Americans are 24% of the total enrollment in this North Texas school district but received 51% of all suspensions and 35% of expulsions to the DAEP. When looking at the Hispanic population, they represent 58% of the total student enrollment and 40% of the suspensions. Hispanic students in this district represent the highest DAEP expulsions with 56%. The gap is even wider between both groups and their white peers. White students represent 13% of the total population and -1% of all suspensions and expulsions. (See Table 4)

This lack of awareness of the disproportionate outcomes for African American students by administrators is somewhat embedded in the fact that many campus leaders describe their entire campus as predominantly “minority” and that all students are disciplined equally, “Nothing is done intentionally to single any race out”. It is dangerous to generalize the student body this way because it creates a false sense of equity and equality when looking at disproportionality. Administrators do not appear to be looking at consistency or frequency in regard to practice or choice of consequence, such as OSS, ISS or placement DAEP. Therefore, a student’s prior discipline history and the subjectivity of the administrator, becomes an active part in the discipline process. One administrator shared she knew a student’s previous behavior was often the driving force behind disciplinary decisions. Where this consideration can be a great practice for some, it also leads to increased subjectivity that is influenced by the implicit and explicit biases one may hold.

Misalignment between administrator's beliefs and their practices. Trying to identify the misalignment between administrator's beliefs and practices involved combining responses from several factors used to measure principal's beliefs and attitudes about discipline. 90% of the respondents felt the duties of teaching students how to behave was a shared responsibility of the all stakeholders. The administrators found common ground on several beliefs such as the overall attitudes toward discipline, the negative impact of zero tolerance policies and the ineffectiveness of suspension and expulsion but, somewhat varied on whether suspending students helped create a better learning environment or effectively changed any student behaviors in the classrooms. 89% of the administrators felt teachers are capable of addressing most behaviors in their classrooms and are aware of the school discipline procedures, while 87% were in agreement of the need of additional training and behavioral support.

84% of administrators felt ISS was a more viable alternative to OSS and 91% of respondents felt OSS should be used as a last resort. 56% believe that OSS is a 'necessary' tool for maintaining school order 97% felt suspension and expulsion causes significant loss of instruction time. This perspective from these administrators is echoed in research. There is little to no documentation that the increased use of school exclusion as a disciplinary tool leads to improved student behavior or school climate (Skiba & Knesting, 2002). The misalignment between beliefs and practice appears to strongly be correlated to district policy and tradition. Administrators want their students in school but feel their options are few, thus in their efforts to keep students in school, the use of ISS, detentions (before, after, and during lunch) have become the preferred options. In-School Suspension is still an exclusionary practice, but it allows access to campus teachers for academic support. Detentions on the other hand, preserve instruction time and addresses the behavior. 90% of administrators believe discipline should a reformative

component and every school represented shared alternatives or initiatives in place to satisfy addressing the misbehavior and the problem, such as peer mediation, counseling and community service options. Yet, the majority of actively used measures are punitive in nature and promotes exclusion. (See Table 4) For example, In Table 4, African Americans are arrested 52% of the time while the largest student group is arrested 42% of the time.

The actions and beliefs of administrators are often at odds with one another. The balancing act of creating a safe and secure learning environment, while helping all students maximize their learning potential in the classroom is a difficult feat. The respondents shared alternative options but feel strongly that more resources are needed to address the current social and emotional needs in schools today. Discipline discretion becomes extremely difficult when the behavior has a legal component such as illegal weapons, drug and alcohol possession, under the influence, or intent to distribute or sell prohibited items. Social justice reforms such as Restorative Practices, PBIS, and the Ron Clark's House Systems are present on several campuses, but impact has not been measured.

Table 4. Combined Discipline Actions for High School

Disciplinary Action	African	Hispanic	White	Male	Female
ISS	51%	48%	.07%	65%	34%
OSS	42%	40%	.07%		
DAEP	35%	56%	.06%		
Counseling	40%	51%	.07%		
Detention	40%	48%	.09%		
Arrested	52%	42%	.03%		

*7680 total infractions for males; *3983 total infractions for female. Total recorded discipline actions for 2019-2020 11,665. Data retrieved from district 2019-2020 archived data system.

Administrators feel their discretion has been restricted due to policies. The personal beliefs of campus administrators about suspension/expulsion and zero-tolerance policies, reflect

feelings of compassion and conflict. Respondents had a strong level of agreement 97% when asked if suspension and expulsion cause students to lose instruction and 91% feel suspension and expulsion do not really solve discipline problems.

In OEQ_1, respondents were asked what their thoughts were about zero-tolerance policies and its impact on school discipline. This group of administrator's beliefs and attitudes varied slightly about the effects of zero tolerance with 44% of respondents feeling that zero tolerance sends a clear message to disruptive students about appropriate behaviors in school, while 56% neither agreed nor disagreed. 56% of the respondents also feel suspension and expulsion makes students less likely to misbehave in the future. What, if any, beliefs, attitudes or feelings of administrators continue to create disparate outcomes for African American students still is not clear. What is prevalent in the data that principal discretion without district level consistency may be a source. For example, a student at high school A should not receive 45 days at the DAEP for a fight that disrupts lunch while a student at high school B receives 15 days in ISIP or ISS. The inconsistencies in the application of consequences is what feeds the disparities I analyze from the current data.

Certain infractions required students to be removed from the home campus and placed in an alternative education placement for the district, which is for this North Texas school district's DEAP. The administrator's ability to discipline on a "case by case" basis is infringed upon by zero-tolerance influenced policies and laws. Many feel this is where zero-tolerance interferes with their desires to discipline differently. For example, several administrators expressed they did not believe these types of policies are effective at addressing individual circumstances. All factors need to be considered when working with students. One principal shared that he was fan of zero tolerance policies when he worked outside of the school arena, but soon realized these

policies often do not account for the context and individual circumstances involved. Most believe there should be some wiggle room for administrator discretion.

From the results, zero-tolerance policies are a difficult concept for principals to agree with completely. Drugs, alcohol, and other dangerous substances on the campus jeopardizes the safety of the school and in these cases, most of the respondents feel zero tolerance is an important tool to have as a resource. However, the overuse or misuse of zero tolerance is where disproportion can happen. The implicit and explicit biases administrators have about certain societal ills that infiltrate the school walls cannot easily or naturally be omitted from the decision-making process. Biases left unchecked, can and often leads to inconsistency and distrust. One administrator shared, “Zero-tolerance can have the tendency to be abused and used for reasons to punish certain clientele who we have already a low tolerance for. I don’t think it is a proactive measure in addressing or in changing student behavior.”

Zero-tolerance policies have become synonymous with school discipline so much so, that for some administrators, it has shaped their thinking their entire career. Many administrators shared there is a place for these types of policies for certain actions but feel the same policies have done more harm than good. One respondent put it like this, “Every student and every situation is different, and zero-tolerance neglects those differences”.

Whether it is revising the policies that influence practices beyond the administrator’s instinctive desires or being given more autonomy to discipline on a case by case basis, one thing is for sure, the responses are as varied as the disciplinarian. Why administrators suspend or expel does not rest in just the seriousness of the infraction, but in the interpretation of the policies, their beliefs about discipline and their feelings about the behavior displayed.

Principals feel there is a need for additional behavioral supports and professional development. Respondents believe that their beliefs, feelings, and attitudes impact the way we ‘react’ to student’s misbehaviors. They also had strong agreement in OEQ_3, administrators acknowledge of various initiatives currently on their campuses to help with low level offenses. Restorative Practices, peer mediation, behavior contracts/plans, tiered systems and student success teachers have been utilized to support behavioral needs in addition to referrals to the school counselor, At-Risk Coordinators and/or district level Behavioral Specialist. Not every campus has these additional resources and not all campuses are required to have them. The lack in resources and uniformity in expectations, creates inconsistencies for administrators. All of these resources are still contingent upon the administrator’s choice to utilize. The Code of Conduct presents several options for consideration, but exclusion continues to be the top protocol to address misbehavior.

Professional development that supports awareness and reflective practice is crucial to reversing the trend currently facing African American students. Administrators responded with 90% agreement that additional training was needed for teachers and administrators to improve approaches to discipline concerns. I believe taking a more proactive approach to discipline requires additional PD and time. 87% of the respondent recorded high agreement that it is important to build relationships with students and parents prior to disciplinary action is taken. Where the survey did not reveal administrators felt that African American are disproportionately disciplined in comparison to their peers, the survey result did produce perspectives about policy and a need for something more than currently is in practice. The respondent to the survey expressed repeatedly a desire to create an environment that is more inclusive, than exclusive. Having additional options and trainings to help sustain that desire is wanted and needed.

Discussion

What research has pointed to as a possible contributing factors to the disparate outcomes for minority students, especially African American males are implicit and explicit biases of White teachers (Devin et al., 2012; Peterson et al., 2016; Staats, 2014) , poverty (GOA, 2018; Skiba et al., 2000), and the impact of zero tolerance policies on school discipline practices (APA, 2008; Losen, 2010; Skiba et al., 2012; Noguera & Akom, 2000). This North Texas district is not exempt from this undesirable truth. It mirrors the national trend of disproportionate representation for African American males (see Table 2). Minorities are glaringly absent in our classrooms.

On the surface African American students appear to experience learning at the same rates as their peers, if not in some cases, better when compared to their white peers. It is when you look at the frequent use of exclusionary practices is where you see major differences. This is significant and has the potential to undo the current positive trends students of color are experiencing. This observation is critical to disrupting the current state of affairs for African American and Hispanic students. Classroom teachers are typically the first line of defense that results in students of color being sent to the office for misbehaving or disrupting the learning environment (Noguera & Akom, 2000; Peterson, 2016). Successful school discipline programs provide teachers with primary prevention strategies, secondary prevention strategies, and tertiary supports that can help create a more inclusive learning environment while reducing the overreaction to the disruptive behavior and provide a pathway to discipline with dignity instead of removal (APA, 1993; Elliott et al., 2001; Hamilton et al., 2019). This district has several of these strategies available for use, but it is not a system-wide expectation to utilize these strategies prior to suspension or expulsion for discretionary offenses.

The extensive loss of instructional days has the potential to derail positive gains in graduation rates, fuel frustrations for those who struggle academically and emotionally, influence dropout rates, and early entry into the juvenile justice system. Lost instruction time is a costly practice our society can no longer afford to finance. African Americans at the secondary level in this district represent 25% of the student enrollment, but 41% of the total discipline infractions. When you dive deeper into the infractions, what becomes apparent is that all students are not disciplined the same, nor are they discipline proportionately to their representation. In section four I will summarize my survey findings and highlight significant themes that emerged in reviewing the survey responses of principals. See Table 4.

Section V. Strategic Response

The role principal's beliefs and attitudes play in the disproportionate outcomes for African American and Hispanic males is not as clear as my assumptions once anticipated. What has emerged is a clear distinction in disciplinary outcomes for African American males in this North Texas school district. Hispanic and White students are discipline commensurate to their enrollment percentages, but African American males and females are disciplined more. Although administrators had strong agreement about the ineffectiveness of suspension and expulsion, yet it continues to be the most frequently used method when dealing with disruptive behavior for African American males. (See Table 4 and Table 5).

The prior discipline history of the student cannot not be excluded from the decision to suspend any more than you can eliminate the personal beliefs of administrators about the "good" zero tolerance policies provide in establishing peace and order in schools. But what can be examined is why African American are disciplined at much higher rates than their white and Hispanic peers. Although I did not receive responses from every secondary administrator, I

believe the data revealed disproportionality still exists in this district after decades of attempting to address it.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study that altered the picture of this district and its disciplinary practices. The first limitation the sample size. I was not able to obtain response from all secondary administrators. There was one middle school campus where no one completed the survey. It would have been a value add to see what the beliefs and practices were of those administrators because they had some of the lowest numbers at the DAEP. I also think not having follow up interviews with the participating principals left a lot of perspective untapped about what discipline looks like on their campuses. The second limitation was the principle researcher is a colleague within this district. That in itself presented an opportunity for answers to not be as forthcoming as if the principle researcher conducting this survey was free of professional relationships or ties to this district. No one wants to be seen in a negative light. The third limitation was that I modified the survey and removed questions I felt were not directly in alignment to the current research question I wanted to answer, as well as my desire to reduce the length to increase participation. I can see how all of the data would have provided a more complete picture for this district to evaluate their discipline practices. An additional limitation for this study was the absence of student voice. Having students' perspectives about their feelings, attitudes, and perceptions of fairness about disciplinary practices at their school would have. Understanding whether alternatives were used prior to suspension or expulsion to address their behavior could have added some depth and complexity to a very difficult topic as well as identify what campus with low numbers are doing to keep their students in school or on campus. Student voice provides another lens for interpretation of practices from those on the receiving

end. Identifying the inconsistencies and discrepancies that erode trust, is needed to do the work necessary to change the trajectory for African American students in all public schools.

The role of a campus administrator is a complicated one. There are many facets of the job that require them to align their personal and professional values into one and provide the safest, inclusive environment that is conducive to learning as possible. The idea of intentionally minimizing or underserving any student population goes against what most educators instinctively believe and represent as campus leaders. But when that is not the case, and all does not seem to mean all, then the hard work begins with a reflective process that identifies lapses in awareness that produced the disparities, personal biases of administrators and teachers that hinder acceptance of disproportionality, and research-based strategies that build the capacity of all to re-establish trust and social justice for the students and communities they serve.

Recommendations

There are four recommendations I would make to all school district or campus struggling with disproportionality (See chart SR-1). The 90-day implementation plan below is vital to ensuring the work ahead to ensure the core values of this district are in action for all students.

Principal Survey: Administer an evaluative tool district-wide to measure all current and aspiring principal's feelings, beliefs, and attitudes about discipline K-12.

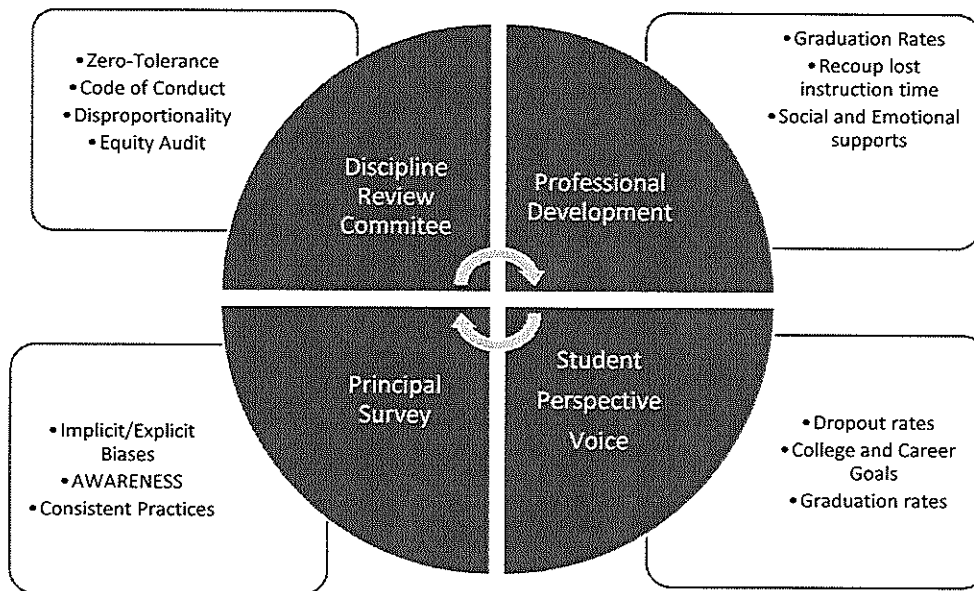
Discipline Review Committee: Establish a committee with educators and current mental health practitioners to monitor the disciplinary practices and outcomes for over identified groups and to take a deep dive into the Code of Conduct and discipline practices to identify areas of misalignment and unjust practices.

Student Perspective: Solicit student feedback to gain insight into their discipline experiences for perspective of perceive fairness or potential violations/inconsistencies.

Professional Development: Provide research-based professional development to strengthen capacity of teachers and administrators to cope with challenging behaviors. This includes but not limited to campus level support positions to monitor and support

teachers and administrators with high level of disproportion in discipline practices. The PD must be ongoing.

SR-1. Strategic Response to Addressing Disproportionality



Discipline is addressed in teacher preparation programs at a very minimal level, but as educators move up the ranks, less training is offered to strengthen the campus leader's skills in this area. Most school administrators create discipline models that reflect their expectations according to their values. These perspective most likely accounts for some of the varied approaches and beliefs this survey revealed, but not all. A person's upbringing, implicit and explicit biases, and values drive everything they do including, disciplining a child. It is the awareness of these influences and their impact on administrator's discipline decisions is where this survey attempted to scale.

When district and school leaders address discipline reform for these four areas of Principal Perspective, Professional Development, Policy Reform and Student Voice, there are opportunities to disrupt the school-to-prison-pipeline. Once potential implicit and explicit biases are revealed through the principal survey data, school discipline data points can be used to

analyze honestly and intentionally. This allows for professional development opportunities address specific goals and needs. Establishing clear expectations for disciplinary practices will promote consistency across the district. If the goal for school discipline is to remediate and reform, then strategies that are more inclusionary as options in the district's Code of Conduct can thus reduce the opportunity for varied interpretations. Lastly, student voice about discipline can help detect possible discrepancies not identified through the practices survey but are present in disciplinary practices. Including student voice creates opportunities for students to be heard and valued which helps teachers and administrators to recognize when micro aggressions are present and influencing discipline decisions. The cultural mismatches that exist between minorities and school personnel must be acknowledged, so that, trust can be reestablished in the systems that are supposed to lead to paths of success.

The Principal Survey

My first recommendation would be that the Superintendent require all administrators, current and future, K-12 take the Disciplinary Practices Survey in its entirety. I feel the district leaders have implemented several initiatives such as PBIS, SEL techniques, House Systems, Restorative Practices, community service, mentoring, peer mediation groups to name a few, with the goal of creating and sustaining an inclusive environment for all of its students. A comprehensive approach to address the implicit and explicit biases of all stakeholders is important. Too often, the work focuses on the students as the sole problem. Where it is unrealistic to expect every principal to administer discipline 100% the same, there does need to be a clear consensus of what behaviors warrant a DAEP placement. These placements are for 45-90 days. Students who committed the same offense, often do not receive same punishments. For instance, a fight on one campus was handled with ISS or ISIP for 15 days, but on another

campus, all fighters were sent to the DAEP for 45 days. How a principal interprets the policy is a big part of the discipline process. Deciding whether to counsel, suspend or expel is totally up to the administrator. Students with frequent visits are often punished. Discretion and professional autonomy are fine, but it becomes problematic when there is no consistency across the district. The implication of unfairness and subjectivity by administrators makes acceptance of disciplinary placements difficult for students and parents.

Students cannot not learn and thrive if they are removed constantly from classrooms without reform-based interventions to help them change the behaviors. Punitive measures do not correct misbehavior. Research cited in this paper revealed the complete opposite is happening thus keeping a fresh supply of African American students entering in the school-to-prison-pipeline.

The Principal Disciplinary Practices survey protocol is great for administrators to use to identify their areas of discrepancy, but teachers are the first line of defense and often are the ones to send students to the office or refer to a counselor for behavioral concerns. A crucial part to this process is completing an equity audit to help identify other areas of disproportionality that may be contributors to disruptive behaviors. Identifying who and why students are removed is key to reversing the trends. Identifying areas that may be a direct result of low expectations of teachers toward students that misbehave or disrupt class is significant to the climate and culture that shapes discipline. Principals who have a positive disposition towards social justice reforms are less likely to use suspension or expulsion for low level behaviors.

Discipline Review Committee

My second recommendation is to establish a committee with educators and current mental health practitioners to monitor the disciplinary practices and outcomes for over identified groups. An important task of this committee would be to take a closer look at the Code of Conduct to see if it is biased towards any race of students as well as the mandatory and discretionary placements to DAEP. Many administrators felt that their hands were tied by the zero-tolerance policies and individualization had been dissolved. It cannot stop there. It will also require advocating for changes at the state level. The Code of Conduct Handbook is a combination of federal, state and local policies. Petitioning the lawmakers to change mandatory placements that were birthed out Federal legislation from the War on Drugs is a huge step in the right direction. The fear of violence has high jacked the public school's discipline practices and policies with zero tolerance policies leading the charge.

These practices that are costing us millions in lost days of instruction, early entry into the juvenile justice system with every school related arrest, and increased dropout rates with leads to limited financial opportunities. Looking at the drug-related suspensions and expulsions from a more preventative, reformatory approach instead punitive is also needed. 65% of the DAEP placements were for drug possession or under the influence charges. Many students were removed for months at a time without any consistent, reformatory intervention supports for their addictive behaviors. A serious look at discipline reform is long overdue. Creating a committee to look at discipline from an educational and mental health perspective is critical to substantially disrupting the school-to-prison-pipeline. When looking at this district's discipline data, low level behaviors were the majority of the suspensions to ISS and OSS. Many of the infractions for which students are disciplined have a subjective component, meaning the school's administrators' interpretation of the situation plays a role in judging, and to what extent

discipline is merited (Staats, 2014). Disrupting the exclusionary practices that remove students for extended periods of time rest in consistency of interpretation and guidelines for dispensing punishments. For example, unless serious bodily injury results in an ambulance being called, then all fights should be handled the same on every campus and not referred to the DEAP for 45-day placements. Currently there is no parameters to guide these discretionary removals. One campus sends fights to off campus placements while others utilize on campus placements like ISS or ISIP. Each school dispenses discipline as they see fit at the high school levels. Middle schools do not have ISIP, therefore, OSS and ISS are heavily relied upon. None of these options have a remediation, restoration or reformative component to support changing the behaviors.

Having disciplinary practices that are exclusionary and punitive in nature will not yield the desires of most principals surveyed. They believe that suspension and expulsion does not change the behaviors and should be used as a last resort. They also expressed that results in lost instruction time and increases academic deficits.

Professional Development (PD)

Disruptive classroom behaviors have increased in intensity and most teachers and administrators are not prepared or trained to deal with these behaviors effectively. Having more supports such as behavioral intervention counselors and behavioral specialist would help all stakeholders be successful in and out of school. Creating an educational experience that provides students and teachers with the tools to be a productive and proactive and not reactive is key. This committee would need to examine in detail the types of infractions students of color are being removed for and analyze the action assigned for those infractions. This step is important. It is not to tie the hands of administrators, but to help them see trends of disproportionality on their campus. When most of your students are minorities, one can believe

that discipline is dispersed equally and fairly on the surface. Students who commit the same infraction should receive the same punishment. Prior discipline history or implicit or explicit biases of the administrator should not dictate outcomes? Specific and intentional researched-based PD is needed at all levels to address disproportionality in discipline. Awareness and acceptance are two different things. The overreaction to low level behaviors that remove students from the classroom contribute to a student's beliefs and attitudes about school and their futures. The explicit and implicit biases teachers and administrators have disrupted the work that should be done to address the root causes. Time is a huge factor in this process. Therefore, having professional staff in addition to teachers and administrators to assist can reverse the current trajectory for all students, especially African American students. This work requires a shift in thinking, practice, and clear expectations for how students are disciplined. This moves beyond rules in a book. An organization must decide whether it will discipline with dignity or continue the societal stronghold that zero-tolerance policies have on public schools through exclusionary measures.

Student Perspective

My last recommendation is to simply talk to the students, especially those who are disproportionately impacted by the discipline policies and practices. Too often adults attack a problem with the best intentions because they see a need but eliminate the people from the conversation most effected by the decisions. Gaining perspectives about what is working and what is not can save money, time, and other valuable resources. The incorporating behavior Specialist and intervention counselors early when misbehaviors present themselves allow the school leadership and classroom teacher to create and sustain an inclusive learning environment where students feel valued instead undervalued. Proactive and supportive tools that help student

develop appropriate social and emotional skills is the vital to the success of any and all academic goals. The relationships between African American students and authority has been damaged and rightfully so. The findings from this survey are very promising. Administrators want to utilize other resources and create different outcomes of inclusion and not exclusion. A lot of money and initiatives have been tried on each campus. The hearts of most administrators are not innately linked to zero tolerance thinking. They believe in second chances and their abilities to help students reach their full potential. Administrators know that school safety and security are a top priority. The act of balancing academic desires and disruptive behaviors is a tough job, but with new perspectives, new policies and additional mental health supports, inclusivity and social just schools can exist for every student.

On the surface, African American students appear to benefit from the educational experience at the same rates as their peers. Representing 24.6% of the total enrollment, current dropout rates for African Americans are the lowest in the district at 1.2%, and graduation rates are at 90.1%. But when you look at the career readiness numbers, it shows a very different outlook. African American students are graduating but are not college or career ready. Only 29.6% are college, career and military ready while Hispanic and White students are 44.5% and 47.4% respectively. One assumption could be lost instructional days are having an impact on graduation rates, as well as the instructional endorsements African American students are selecting. When students are constantly removed, they are not receiving quality instruction and therefore have limited understanding of the curriculum and limited ability for application.

The above-mentioned recommendations would be a part of a 3-5-year strategic action plan to reverse disproportionate trends for the initial target group, as well as closely monitor and

identify other potential areas of concern. It is a moral and ethical dilemma that requires financial and multi-level commitment.

Financial Costs

- Hire additional behavioral specialist at the elementary level and additional intervention counselors at each of the secondary campuses, starting with the ones with the highest needs.
- Hire additional Intervention Counselors that are licensed professional counselors for secondary campuses. The cost of their programs or campus needs to mental health needs, drug abuse and other addictions will vary. Each campus will need PD and resources.
- Establish a school and community represented discipline committee to do deep dives into data to look for trends that marginalize or underserve student populations, evaluate current systems and practices, monitor discretionary and mandatory placements, and provide supports to campuses that identify with a critical need. Including current practitioners and mental health staff on campus, provides an opportunity for practical interventions students and PD support for staff. Cost: Time and Commitment of the selected staff and community members on this committee.
- Professional Development (PD) that supports Restorative Practices, SEL techniques and culturally responsive teaching techniques is an area that needs intentional and specific goal-driven outcomes. The end goals are to change practices of the adults and create a more equitable, inclusive learning environment for all students. The cultural mismatch that exists between students and teachers and administrators are rooted in implicit and explicit biases held by all stakeholders. Cost will vary based on Intervention Counselors capacities and areas of expertise.

SR- 2. Financial Obligations

Additional Supports	Target	Cost
Behavior Specialists	Behavior - Students and Teacher Supports	4 additional specialist @ \$55,000.00 annually = \$220,000
Intervention Counselor (licensed)	Substance Abuse - Student and Parent Supports Emotional Disturbances/imbbalances	\$65,000 – \$75,000 depending on licensure – one for each secondary campus = 1,125,000.000 approximately annually
Professional Development - All School Staff	Social Emotional Strategies, Culturally Relevant Teaching Techniques, Restorative Practices	Ongoing offerings – costs will vary

Conclusion

Examining the relationship between principal's beliefs and attitudes towards discipline and the disproportionate outcomes for African American and Hispanic males in public schools was an area that deserved closer scrutiny. The building principals set the tone that supports the culture of a school. All stakeholders look to the building administrators to provide clear expectations for everything from expectations for academic excellence to acceptable social behaviors. The way by which administrators go about establishing these beliefs and practices are as varied as the principals themselves. A principal's implicit and explicit biases cannot be separated from who they are as a leader. However, leaders who possess a strong awareness of their implicit and explicit biases understand its influence on their decisions about, inclusion, diversity, and equality are able to own the uncomfortable truths and initiate honest conversations that evaluate and address disproportionality wherever it exists. There is overwhelming evidence from the principal's responses of their agreement on the need for more autonomy when it comes to discipline as well as the need for additional training for themselves and the staff to handle the challenging disruptions in their schools.

Initiating honest conversations about what the data shows, establishing clear goals and outcomes for school discipline and other related services such as the DAEP, will position this district to begin the reformative work that supports an inclusive culture and a less punitive one. Schools are microcosms of society. Whatever ills afflict our communities, find their way into our schools. Traditional punitive measures will not create the citizenry we desire for our future leaders nor will not produce self-determinant adults in charge of their own destiny. Without restructuring, reevaluating, and recommitting to social justice driven change, the disproportionality for African American students will remain and our society will continue to

pay a high price for our failure, through increased incarceration, poverty, and emotional trauma. This cycle impacts funding, academic outcomes, and district personnel in an adverse way. What this research has shown is the time is now to be systemically proactive and create new pathways of success for all students or be forced to address the residuals of decades of poor policies and inconsistency which is the current reality. The vicious cycle will continue, and our public schools will continue to underperform and overreact to social constructs that are a mismatch to its teachers and its community. We have a moral and ethical obligation to stop the school-to-prison-pipeline. The time is now to intervene and change course.

Theory of Action

If..	Then.....
Administrators and teachers are provided relevant professional development that aides in the awareness of personal biases, disproportionate outcomes, and restorative practices	Responses to low-level behaviors can be addressed with an inclusive approach that reduces lost instructional time. Thus, improving CCMR percentages, graduation rates and reducing dropout rates.
Administrators are administered The Disciplinary Practices Survey in its entirety	District Support staff can see how their campus leaders perceive the role of discipline, assist in minimizing the inconsistencies that exist, reduce varied interpretations of the discipline policies, which reduces the likelihood of OCR violations for overidentification in disciplinary practices.
If the district and campus leaders create diverse and inclusive committees (including all stakeholders) to analyze discipline data by race, infraction and actions given	Inconsistencies that exists across the district can be minimized, culturally biased policies removed from the Code of Conduct, and reduce numbers of arrests, suspensions, and expulsions for low level behaviors reserving its use for more serious offenses. Thus, reestablishing trust between all stakeholders and reducing early entry into the juvenile justice system.
Additional mental health and trauma sensitive personnel (counselors and interventionist) are added to campuses at the secondary level.	Students can receive discipline support from a reformative an inclusive approach that addresses the behaviors from a root cause, provide perspective and ongoing support for the teacher and students. Thus, allowing the student to be disciplined with dignity, reduce likeliness of suspension, or arrest.

APPENDIXES

Table 4
Combined Infractions for High School through March 2020

Ethnicity	Demographics	Total Infractions	Percentages
African American	25%	4,733	41%
Hispanic	58%	5,745	49%
White	13%	846	7%
Multi Race	3%	254	2%
Other (Am. Ind. Asian)	1%	67%	1%

Table 5.
Combined Infractions for Middle School through March 2020

Ethnicity	Demographics	Total Infraction	Percentages
African American	25%	3,777	40%
Hispanic	59%	4,674	50%
White	12%	758	1%
Multi Race	3%	229	.02%
Other (Am. Ind/Asian)	1%	78	.015%

Table 6.
Independent Samples T-Test Results for Race

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	p-value
Attitude					
White	17	1.95	.371	26.2	.137
Other races	15	1.99	.469		
Zero Tolerance					
White	17	1.81	.420	28.31	.957
Other races	15	1.97	.471		
Responsibility					
White	17	3.18	1.42	28.99	.343
Other races	15	4.21	1.19		

Table 6.

Independent Samples T-Test Results for Race (cont.)

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	p-value
Awareness					
White	17	1.99	.501	29.94	.360
Other Races	15	2.08	.460		
Resources					
White	17	2.47	.434	29.86	.720
Other Races	15	2.42	.356		

Table 7

Independent Samples T-Test Results for Gender

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	p-value
Attitude					
Male	12	2.09	.404	24.069	.213
Female	19	1.90	.416		
Zero Tolerance					
Male	12	2.02	.419	25.134	.168
Female	19	1.78	.458		
Responsibility					
Male	12	4.00	1.13	28.225	.270
Female	19	3.42	1.54		
Awareness					
Male	12	2.12	.475	24.231	.486
Female	19	1.99	.493		
Resources					
Male	12	2.58	.418	21.25	.198
Female	19	2.39	.367		

Table 8

One-way ANOVA Test Years of Experience (YOE)

YOE		Resources	Responsibility	Attitude	Awareness	Zero Tolerance
0-3	Mean	3.18	3.55	2.00	2.04	2.00
3-5		2.67	4.17	2.19	2.07	1.75
5-10		2.36	3.00	2.17	2.00	1.83
10+		2.39	3.63	1.79	2.03	1.84

Appendix A

Items Included in the Disciplinary Practices Scale

The Disciplinary Practice Survey Questions created By Dr. Russell Skiba and Dr. Heather Edl. The questions below 1-38 were taken directly from the work of the creators. Questions 32- 39 were created by combining existing questions from the Disciplinary Practice Survey protocol to create new questions about preventative measures and practices. The three open-ended questions were created by the principal investigator for this research.

A. Attitude toward Discipline in General

- I feel that getting to know students individually is an important part of discipline
- Although it would be nice to get to know students on an individual basis, especially those who need help, my duties as an administrator simply don't allow me the time.
- I feel it is critical to work with parents before suspending a student from school.
- Regardless of the severity of a student's behavior, my objective as a principal is to keep all students in school.
- The primary purpose of discipline is to teach appropriate skills to the disciplined student.
- The majority of this school's discipline problems could be solved if we could only remove the most persistent troublemakers.
- Repeat offenders should receive more severe disciplinary consequences than first-time offenders.
- Regardless of the circumstances, fights that happen on school grounds result in arrest, OSS and anger management counseling.

B. Awareness and Enforcement of Disciplinary Procedures

- Teachers at my school are aware of school disciplinary procedures.
- I believe students at my school are aware of the disciplinary policies.
- Violence is getting worse at my school.
- Disciplinary policies are strictly enforced in my school.

C. Beliefs concerning Suspension/Expulsion and Zero Tolerance

- Out of school suspension makes students less likely to misbehave in the future.
- Suspension and expulsion do not really solve discipline problems.
- I believe suspension and expulsion allow students time away from school that encourages them to think about their behavior.
- Out-of-school suspension is a necessary tool for maintaining school order.
- Zero tolerance send a clear message to disruptive students about appropriate behaviors in school.

- Students who are suspended or expelled are only getting more time on the streets that will enable them to get in more trouble.
- I believe suspension is unnecessary if we provide a positive school climate and challenging instruction.
- Out-of-school suspension is used at this school only as a last resort.
- Zero-tolerance increases the number of students being suspended or expelled.

D. Beliefs about Responsibility for Handling Student Misbehaviors

- Teachers ought to be able to manage the majority of students' misbehavior in their classroom.
- Schools must take responsibility for teaching students how to get along and behave appropriately in school.
- Teachers apply restorative practices to create and address behavior concerns prior to writing office referrals.
- Administrators supply alternative approaches to address behavior prior to suspension or expulsion.
- Teachers at this school were for the most part adequately trained by their teacher-training program to handle problems of misbehavior and discipline.
- Time spent on prevention programs or individualized behavior programming is wasted if students are not willing to take responsibility for their behavior.

E. Resources Available for Discipline

- Suspension and expulsion hurts students by removing them from academic learning time.
- In-school suspension is a viable alternative disciplinary practice to suspension and expulsion.
- I believe that putting in place prevention program (e.g., bullying programs, conflict resolution, improved classroom management) can reduce the need for suspension.
- Time spent on prevention programs or individualized behavior programming is wasted if students are not willing to take responsibility for their behavior.
- Prevention programs would be a useful addition at our school, but there is simply not enough time in the day.
- At our school peer mediation or other intervention strategies are used to deescalate situations.
- Students who have a high risk for behavioral concerns have a mentor and meet regularly as a preventative measure
- I have noticed that time spent in developing and implementing prevention programs pays off in terms of decreased disruption and disciplinary incidents.
- Disciplinary consequences should be scaled in proportion to the severity of the problem behavior.
- Conversations with students referred to the office are important, and should be factored into most decisions about disciplinary consequences.

Open-ended questions

OEQ 1 – What are your thoughts about zero tolerance policies and its impact on school discipline?

OEQ 2 – As a building leader, how do our beliefs, feelings, and attitudes about discipline impact minorities on your campus?

OEQ 3 – What other disciplinary options have you created on your campus to utilize prior to suspension or expulsion?

Demographic Questions

1. How many years have you been in education?
2. Select your preferred ethnicity
3. How do you identify?
4. How many years have you served as an administrator?
5. Did you graduate from a traditional (4-year) Teacher preparation program?

Appendix B

The Disciplinary Practices Survey

Q50 - Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	I feel that getting to know students individually is an important part of discipline.	1.00	5.00	1.13	0.70	0.48	32
2	I believe that students at my school are aware of the school disciplinary policies.	1.00	4.00	1.66	0.73	0.54	32
3	I believe that teachers at my school are aware of school disciplinary policies.	1.00	5.00	1.84	0.75	0.57	32
4	Teachers should be able to handle the majority of disruptive behaviors in their classrooms.	1.00	4.00	1.44	0.66	0.43	32
5	Repeat offenders should receive more severe disciplinary consequences than first time offenders.	1.00	5.00	2.44	1.06	1.12	32
6	Out-of-school suspension is used as a last resort.	1.00	5.00	1.53	1.00	1.00	32
7	Disciplinary policies are strictly enforced at my school.	1.00	5.00	1.94	0.90	0.81	32
8	I believe that putting in place preventative programs can reduce the need for suspension and expulsion.	1.00	5.00	1.22	0.74	0.55	32
9	Schools must take some responsibility for teaching students how to get along and behave appropriately at school.	1.00	5.00	1.34	0.81	0.66	32
10	In-school suspension is a viable alternative disciplinary practice to out-of-school suspension and expulsion.	1.00	5.00	1.81	0.95	0.90	32

Q51 - Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	I feel it is critical to work with parents before suspending a student from school.	1.00	4.00	1.56	0.79	0.62	32
2	The primary purpose of discipline is to teach appropriate skills to the disciplined student.	1.00	4.00	1.59	0.78	0.62	32

3	Out-of-school suspension is a necessary tool for maintaining school order.	1.00	5.00	2.75	1.32	1.75	32
4	Suspension and expulsion causes students to lose instruction time.	1.00	5.00	1.25	0.75	0.56	32
5	I have noticed that time spent in developing and implementing prevention programs pays off in terms of decreased disruption and disciplinary incidents.	1.00	3.00	1.63	0.65	0.42	32
6	Suspension and expulsion do not really solve discipline problems.	1.00	4.00	1.69	0.81	0.65	32
7	Disciplinary policies are strictly enforced at my school.	1.00	3.00	1.81	0.68	0.46	32
8	There is really nothing a school can do if students are not willing to take responsibility for their behavior.	2.00	5.00	3.81	1.01	1.03	32
9	Teachers and Staff in my school make building relationships a priority.	1.00	3.00	1.53	0.56	0.31	32
10	I believe violence is getting worse in my school.	2.00	5.00	3.78	0.86	0.73	32

Q52 - Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Suspension makes students less likely to misbehave in the future.	2.00	5.00	3.59	1.09	1.18	32
2	Zero tolerance increases the numbers of the students being suspended or expelled.	1.00	4.00	2.03	1.16	1.34	32
3	Regardless of the severity of a student's behavior, my objective as a principal/assistant principal is to keep all students in school.	1.00	5.00	2.31	1.26	1.59	32
4	Students who are suspended or expelled are only getting more time on the streets that will enable them to get into more trouble.	1.00	4.00	2.31	0.95	0.90	32
5	The majority of this school's discipline problems could be solved if we could remove the most persistent troublemakers.	1.00	5.00	2.97	0.92	0.84	32
6	I believe suspension is unnecessary if we provide a positive school climate and challenging instruction.	1.00	5.00	2.72	1.23	1.51	32

7	Zero tolerance sends a clear message to disruptive students about appropriate behaviors in school.	1.00	5.00	3.09	1.13	1.27	32
8	Prevention programs would be a useful addition at our school, but there is simply not enough time in the day.	1.00	5.00	3.16	1.25	1.57	32
9	Although it would be nice to know students on an individual basis, especially those that need help, but my duties as an administrator simply don't allow me the time.	2.00	5.00	3.81	1.10	1.21	32
10	I believe suspension allows students time away from school to think about their behavior.	2.00	5.00	3.72	1.01	1.01	32

Q53 - Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Students with a strong behavior history have a individual behavior plan or participates in programs for disruptive students.	1.00	5.00	2.65	1.09	1.20	31
2	Before any student is given a discretionary placement at the DAEP, they receive counseling or therapy for repetitive behaviors.	1.00	5.00	2.48	1.34	1.80	31
3	Teacher's regardless of years of experience, receive anger management training to support classroom management.	1.00	5.00	3.65	1.38	1.91	31
4	Teachers apply restorative practices to create and address behavior concerns prior to writing office referrals.	1.00	5.00	2.42	0.94	0.89	31
5	Administrators apply alternative approaches to address behavior prior to suspension or expulsion.	1.00	4.00	1.77	0.91	0.82	31
6	Regardless of the circumstances, fights that happen on school grounds result in arrest, OSS and anger management counseling.	1.00	5.00	3.03	1.31	1.71	31
7	At our school, peer mediation or other intervention strategies are used to deescalate situations.	1.00	5.00	2.32	1.25	1.57	31
8	Students who have a high risk for behavioral concerns have a mentor and meet regularly as a preventative measure.	1.00	5.00	2.84	1.22	1.49	31

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