2021

Analysis of School Discipline Policies at a Title I High School in Texas

Kimberly N. Guess
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Kimberly Guess

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Andrea Wilson, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. David Weintraub, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Richard Hammett, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2021

Abstract

Analysis of School Discipline Policies at a Title 1 High School in Texas

by

Kimberly Guess

MEd, Concordia University, Texas 2010

MS, Texas Wesleyan University, 2008

BS, Texas Wesleyan University, 2000

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

August 2021

Abstract

Discipline referrals and suspensions are used as a last resort to address inappropriate student behavior in schools. The problem investigated in this study was the inconsistent trend in the number of discipline referrals and suspensions during implementation of three different discipline policies (zero tolerance, progressive discipline, and restorative practice) at a local Title I high school in north Texas from 2013 to 2019. Guided by Skinner's theory of behaviorism, the purpose of this quantitative, ex post facto study was to determine if significant differences in the total number of disciplinary referrals and suspensions existed between the 2-year implementation period of each discipline policy. Using the census of school-wide discipline data, differences in total number of discipline referrals and suspensions during implementation of each of the three different discipline policies were tested while controlling for students' GPA. ANCOVA analyses revealed that differences in discipline referrals were not significant ($p = .403$). For suspensions, significant differences were found for zero tolerance compared to progressive discipline and restorative practice ($p = .000$); however, these results need to be interpreted with caution due to violations of assumptions. Findings suggest that continuous monitoring of discipline data should be conducted as a necessary step toward refining discipline policy and practice at the school level. With enhancement of discipline data monitoring, positive social change may occur by fostering better-quality school discipline policy and practice, which may have a positive influence on student achievement, social-emotional wellbeing, and campus climate over time.

Analysis of School Discipline Policies at a Title 1 High School in Texas

by

Kimberly Guess

MEd, Concordia University Texas, 2010

MS, Texas Wesleyan University, 2008

BS, Texas Wesleyan University, 2000

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

August 2021

I would like to take the time to dedicate this project to my family, friends, and colleagues who have been with me every step of the way. I would like to thank Blaise Roberts for never doubting me; and my sisters, Demetra Pippylynn Aponte, Nedra Simmons, and Dedra Hill for motivating me. To my coworkers, Melisa Hightower, Diane Fernandez, Allison Voss, and Deedra Wynn; I am grateful for your help throughout this journey. Joyce Holloway, thank you for being a very patient mother as I constantly worked and did not make it to Kansas for family holidays. Thank you, Shane Tuggle, Keith Guess Jr., and Keiton Guess for your love and being the sons that light up my heart. My father, Herbert Holloway, is smiling down on me; rest easy Dad.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Section 1: The Problem

Background

School districts have implemented various types of discipline techniques, including corporal punishment, zero tolerance, progressive discipline, and restorative discipline. Corporal punishment, also known as paddling, was given to any child who violated a school rule no matter how minimal the violation was. As a third grader, I was on the receiving end of being paddled three times because I said one word due to my finger getting smashed. Nothing was learned from the paddling because I was not given the chance to explain what happened. I also watched those who were frequently paddled continue with the behaviors that got them into trouble. Looking back, I realize that corporal punishment and zero tolerance were very similar.

Zero tolerance was used because it was quick way to discipline students for unwanted behaviors (Wilson, 2014); however, zero tolerance was blamed for creating the school-to-prison pipeline (Skiba, 2014). Felesena (2013) defined progressive discipline policy as "fundamentally changing the way students, parents, teachers and administrators approach school discipline" (pp. 28-29). The problem with zero tolerance was that it led to an increase in suspensions even if the unwanted behavior was considered minor (Smith, 2020). Other notable problems of zero tolerance were (a) an increase of students arrested at school, (b) crime at schools did not change, (c) misbehaviors did not decrease, and (d) suspension of minority students increased. Students were being suspended for minor infractions that could have been managed by the classroom teacher (American Public Media, n.d.).

The use of progressive discipline emerged after the failure of zero tolerance. Progressive discipline allowed school staff to consider a variety of ways to offer students chances to correct unwanted behaviors before deciding disciplinary measures (Milne & Aurini, 2015). With progressive discipline, the most common procedure was to give students two chances to correct a behavior and then on the third referral, consequences such as lunch detention, suspension, and so forth were given. Progressive discipline was noted for looking into the circumstances of each student with the understanding that harsh consequences would not work the same for everyone when addressing a situation (Deery & Chiappino, 2021).

Restorative discipline was also known as restorative practice or restorative justice. This disciplinary approach began in Australian schools in 1994 (Payne & Welch, 2013). When implementing restorative discipline practices, communication and the ability to create solutions to fix inappropriate behavior aids in strengthening social connections and promotes taking responsibility for one another (Gregory et al., 2015). The restorative discipline model in schools focuses on the victim and on the student who caused harm to another person or property at the campus by violating school rules (Byer, 2016).

The Local Problem

The problem investigated in this study was the inconsistent trend in the number of discipline referrals and suspensions under three different discipline policies at a local Title I high school in north Texas over the last 6 years. Administrators gave no reasons for each of the changes in discipline policies, nor was data shared to show what worked

and what needed improvement. Analyzing whether these policies were successful was an important step in decision-making; however, there were no records of such analysis.

The local inner-city school where this research took place had populations of 1,100 or more students during the years of 2013 through 2018, and since the 2018-2019 school year, it has maintained a population of 1,317 or more students. The student demographics were 41.5% Hispanic, 37.1% African American, 11.7% Caucasian, 3.3% Asian, and 6.2% two or more races. Data from Texas Education Agency showed that 59% of the students were economically disadvantaged, and this school carried the Title I status. Since 2013, the school had two different principals and seven different assistant principals. Discipline data from 2013 through 2019 showed that 295 or more students received referrals each year. The total student population and students who received referrals during each school year are noted in Table 1.

Table 1

Student Population and Total Number of Students with

Discipline Referrals

School Year	Student Population	Students with Discipline Referrals	Percentage of Population with Referrals
2013-2014	1,238	380	31%
2014-2015	1,154	320	28%
2015-2016	1,171+	295	25%
2016-2017	1,228+	306+	25%
2017-2018	1,266+	493+	39%
2018-2019	1,254	507+	40%

Note. (+) indicates an increase in comparison to the previous school year.

The most reported forms of behaviors of concern were (a) cursing, (b) disrespect to staff, (c) persistent rule/rules violations, and (d) fighting (administrator, personal

communication, June 1, 2017). Per the campus's administrative team, two out of 84

teachers had not written any discipline referrals; however, there were 30 teachers whose

referrals were in the double-digits (administrator, personal communication, June 1, 2017).

The school's Site-Based Decision Making Committee noted the differences in behaviors

of concern and disciplinary action breakdown (Table 2).

Table 2

Behavior and Discipline Patterns

School Years	Behaviors of Concern	Disciplinary Action
2013-2015	4802	2309
2015-2017	4230	1777
2017-2019	6673+	3870+

Note. (+) *indicates an increase.*

When comparing the disciplinary action from year-to-year (see Table 3), there

were very few changes in the number of out-of-school suspensions, in-school

suspensions, conferences, or placement in an alternative education setting. It was not

clear whether any one of the discipline policies was more effective than the others.

Table 3

Disciplinary Actions by Discipline Policy and Year

Discipline Policy	School Years	Disciplinary Actions			
		OSS	ISS	Conference	DAEP
Zero-Tolerance	2013-2014	408	217	464	26
Zero-Tolerance	2014-2015	458+	364+	348	24
Progressive	2015-2016	314	214	440+	14
Progressive	2016-2017	230	74	483+	8
Restorative	2017-2018	154	139+	449	8
Restorative	2018-2019	198+	48	459+	12+

Note. (+) indicates an increase in comparison with the previous year.

An individual at each campus was assigned to serve as the campus behavior

facilitator; this individual may have been the principal or other campus administrator

chosen by the principal. In the U.S. Department of Education (2020), Texas Compilation of School Discipline Laws and Regulations, section 37.0012, it clearly states that a school district must designate one campus behavior facilitator per campus to be responsible for keeping up with student discipline and executing discipline management practices. The campus behavior facilitator has the option of applying school-based discipline for certain violations or sending the issue to the Student Discipline and Placement Office for evaluation. According to the local high school's Student Code of Conduct (2015-2019), there were deliberations in the decision-making process before sending individuals to in-school or out-of-school suspension. The campus behavior facilitator had to consider:

1. Was the student acting in self-defense?

2. Was the student's participation in this conduct intentional or unintentional?

3. Did the student have a disciplinary record?

4. Was there a disability that significantly impacted the student's ability to understand the inappropriateness of the conduct, regardless of whether the decision of the campus behavior facilitator involved a mandatory or discretionary action?

Administrators had the option of placing students in an in-school suspension program, which was placement in an alternative classroom within the campus, or out of school suspension, which is placement away from campus, depending on the severity of the offense. This district's suspension data was not separated by the two different types of suspension; however, at the campus level, the program used allowed administrators to notate whether a student was receiving in-school or out-of-school suspension. Texas state

law allows general education students to be suspended up to 3 school days per conduct violation, with an unlimited number of times general education students are suspended per semester or school year as per the Student Code of Conduct, 2015-2019. To analyze discipline data, there had to be discipline referrals submitted by faculty and/or other staff. These referrals were submitted to administrators who worked through the process of determining the appropriate disciplinary actions.

Having the discipline information from previous years would help plan strategies to deter the behaviors of concern. The data could be analyzed to uncover disproportionality in discipline responses, come up with solutions, and measure whether the school is headed toward their goals. This study only analyzed data from 1 out of 19 high schools that had also changed discipline policies every 2 years. Additional studies should be done to compare the data between all the high schools.

Rationale

All states have a set of laws and associated regulations governing school discipline practices as well as procedures for monitoring school discipline by the state's department of education. Within these laws and regulations, each state education agency and each school district within the United States has the authority to develop and establish codes of conduct (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Students at the high school received a Student Code of Conduct booklet each year. In these booklets there was a letter to the parents, the purpose of the Student Code of Conduct, and the discipline philosophy. The district, however, had not explained what type of discipline policy was being implemented. Each discipline policy had a unique way of dealing with students

before determining consequences. Failure to know which policy was in use may have caused unfair and inconsistent disciplinary actions. As reported by a teacher who was a member of the Site-Based Decision Making Committee (personal communication, April 19, 2018), neither faculty nor staff at the school were aware of the change from zero tolerance to progressive discipline policy and had not found out about the implementation of restorative discipline until the district made a big push for this [restorative] discipline to be implemented at secondary campuses a year after elementary campuses had been trained on and were using restorative discipline. The consensus among the faculty and staff, as reported by members of the Site-Based Decision Making Committee (personal communication, April 19, 2018), was that they were not given enough time to work with and become well-informed about a discipline policy before it changed without notice. When asked, members of the faculty, specifically 9th through 12th grade teachers, had not seen any reports that showed the results of each discipline policy, and many had questions regarding the change of policies without data (personal communications, April 19, 2018). The present analysis allowed school administrators to study the data, specifically the patterns from year to year, and possibly use the analysis to decide on discipline policies for future school years.

The purpose of this study was to investigate if significant differences in disciplinary suspensions and referrals existed under the three different discipline policies at a Title I high school in north Texas over a period of 6 years. I examined discipline data, specifically discipline referrals and suspensions, collected during the term of implementation of three different discipline policies over a 6-year period at a local high

school. The intent was to analyze the patterns of behaviors and consequences during each 2-year period implementation cycle to find out the effect each discipline policy had on the teachers' ability to decrease unfavorable behaviors and disciplinary actions. The data also assisted campus administrators and faculty in understanding why each policy did or did not have the expected outcome.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in this study. The definitions reflect how the terms were interpreted by the local school district and the local Title I high school.

Behaviors of concern: This is a group of behaviors that are reported more often than other behaviors. Level 1 offenses include (a) cursing, (b) disrespect to staff, and (c) persistent rule violations. According to the Student Code of Conduct, 2018-2019, a Level 2 offense is fighting, which includes assault by contact/persistent incidents of fighting.

Disciplinary alternative education placement: This action group pertains to all actions for students being placed or expelled to an off-campus educational setting for the current year or for a continuation from the prior year (Texas Education Agency, 2018). Students placed at a disciplinary alternative education placement had weapons violations or were suspended from the district's alternative educational placement. Disciplinary alternative education placement also includes the city's juvenile detention center.

In-school suspension: This action taken with students may suspend them for part of a school day or the entire school day at the home campus (Texas Education Agency, 2018).

Out-of-school suspension: This action group pertains to all out-of-school suspensions, whether full day or part day (Texas Education Agency, 2018). There are limitations on how many days students can be suspended under out-of-school suspension, usually a maximum of 3 consecutive days. Out-of-school suspension is also assigned to students who have been scheduled for third-party hearings, which is where decisions are made to send students to alternative educational settings or return them to their home campus.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support: Educational program initiative that aids in the promotion of positive behavior and engaged students (Better-Bubon et al., 2016). PBIS was sometimes used in conjunction with progressive and restorative discipline policies.

Significance of the Study

This research was important because analyzing the discipline data from three different discipline policies had not been completed for this campus. This was not a study to compare discipline policies to see which was more effective in reducing disciplinary issues; however, the research results showed administrators the increases or decreases, if any, in behaviors of concern and disciplinary actions evident during each discipline policy's implementation. Maintaining classroom control, promoting student learning, and ensuring a safe classroom environment for students and teachers could only be done if discipline practices were effective (Mayworm & Sharkey, 2014).

In my search for literature on the topics of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies I had only found literature that compared one discipline

policy against the other to find out which policy was better or literature that emphasized the high number of minorities who were being disciplined. Milne and Aurini (2015) suggested that progressive discipline was more equitable because zero tolerance was intended to deal with violent and disruptive school offenses and because the negative outcome was linked to high suspension and expulsion rates, which were thought to have encouraged the school-to-prison pipeline. Schools have gone from using corporal punishment to using suspensions; however, practiced use of suspensions resembles the operations of prisons and policing, such as familiarizing students to being closely watched, detained, and delinquent (Warnick & Scribner, 2020). Armour (2016) stated that zero tolerance and progressive discipline were harsh and not inclusive; restorative discipline was righting the wrongs of zero tolerance and progressive school discipline. Bamford (2019) suggested that the core of restorative discipline was to allow for both parties to be heard so that relationships could be mended and rebuilt, not just to assess and discipline as zero tolerance and progressive discipline had done. Therefore, this study had the potential to begin a discussion about the patterns in behaviors of concern and disciplinary actions that were seen with the use of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Discipline policy changes at the high school campus every 2 years without any reasons being stated was a concern for many educators at the local high school. States have laws that monitor accountability of school discipline, for example, detailing occurrences, parental notices, collaboration with law enforcement implementation,

exposure of school records, information gathering, and revealing of disciplinary

approaches and activities (Garen, 2014).

The independent variable in this study was the discipline policy type: (a) zero

tolerance, (b) progressive, and (c) restorative. The dependent variables were the total

number of discipline referrals and the number of suspensions during the three different

discipline policies. Given that the students were not the same individuals across the full

6-year period when these discipline policy changes occurred, measures needed to be

taken to manage the inherent variability within the groups. The one control variable that

seemed most appropriate for this purpose was student grade point average (GPA), as all

students in the school had a documented GPA, which followed standard methods of

calculation. GPA had been consistently shown to be related to student behavioral

performance and discipline outcome. One study that supported the connection between

academic performance and behavior found problems in general academic competencies

such as reading, writing, and math were shown by students who openly expressed

behavior problems and/or were disruptive (Metsäpelto et al., 2015). Thus, I used GPA as

the control variable. The following two quantitative research questions were the focus of

this study.

RQ1: When controlling for GPA, what were the differences, if any, in the total

number of discipline referrals during the implementation of zero tolerance,

progressive discipline, and restorative discipline policies?

$H_0 1$: There were no significant differences in the total number of discipline referrals during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies.

$H_1 1$: There were significant differences in the total number of discipline referrals during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies.

RQ2: When controlling for GPA, what were the differences, if any, in the total number of students suspended, during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive discipline, and restorative discipline policies at the local high school?

$H_0 2$: There were no significant differences in the total number of suspensions during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies.

$H_1 2$: There were significant differences in the total number of suspensions during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policy.

Review of the Literature

Discipline is an important part of education because it helps manage classrooms to foster learning, and it creates a safe school climate. School discipline policies and practices impact the development of students (Mayworm & Sharkey, 2014). In the literature review I examined zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies and how they influence behavior and disciplinary actions.

The strategy used to conduct the literature review was using keywords/terms such as *discipline policies, zero tolerance, progressive discipline, restorative discipline, monitoring discipline policies,* and *discipline data.* The following databases were used: Google Scholar, ERIC, and Sage. The U.S. Department of Education website, Texas Education Agency website, and the local school district website were searched, as well. The peer-reviewed literature began with searches from the period 2012-2017, 2013-2018, and 2014-2019. The most recent searches were from 2017-2021

Student behaviors and disciplinary actions were of great concern throughout schools in Texas. Texas secondary schools' discipline policies were determined by each district and monitored by the Texas Education Agency. Data validation monitoring for discipline for the purpose of intervention guidance for districts did not include all districts. One of the activities done during the data validation monitoring was identifying trends and patterns. It was recommended that schools, districts, and state leaders monitor discipline by collecting and analyzing data, then use the outcome of the analysis for planning, decision making, and completing needs assessments (Morgan et al., 2014).

Theoretical Foundation

Behaviorism, specifically operant conditioning, was the theoretical framework for this study. Behaviorism has been viewed as the management of changes in behavior and how the environment influences these changes (Dastpak et al., 2017). Lan and Sher (2019) stated that the fundamental feature associated with behaviorism is that conduct is kept up by its results; in this way, conduct changes when the possibilities of support are adjusted. The behaviorist approach viewed motivated behavior as based in a relationship,

or association, between an environmental stimulus and a response by the individual

(Kaplan & Patrick, 2016). If a particular reaction was strengthened, its progression into a

habit has formed (Dastpak et al., 2017). First introduced by John B. Watson, then

revisited by B. F. Skinner in the 1940s, operant conditioning is one of two learning

paradigms that characterize behaviorism. Operant conditioning underlines the

relationship between an incentive and behavior, or results of the behavior (Kretchmar,

2014) and behaviors as they are maintained with the aid of consequences, or effects of the

behavior (Armstrong et al., 2014). According to the principles of operant conditioning, a

creature would, in general, elevate the recurrence of reactions that tend to reward them

(Ozcelik, 2017). The theory of operant conditioning was founded on the belief that

environmental conditions impacted behaviors by increasing or decreasing rewards or

punishments; unwanted behaviors may cease, while good behaviors remained and

became stronger (Dastpak et al., 2017). According to Kaplan and Patrick (2016), the

operant conditioning mechanism began with an environmental cue that signaled to the

individual that certain types of responses may be called for. "Favorable behaviors were

rewarded, while behaviors of concern warranted consequences and/or disciplinary actions

that should change the behavior for the better" (Kaplan & Patrick, 2016, para. 3). Bryant

and Wilson (2020) suggested that social learning theory and behaviorism were the basis

of discipline practices used in schools and classrooms (Bryant & Wilson, 2020).

According to Jung (2020), behaviorism emphasized that behaviors should be measurable

and visible in a quantitative way. Behaviorism worked in this study because with each

discipline policy, there were consequences for unfavorable behaviors, and the

consequences were put in place to deter individuals from repeating the behaviors of concern.

Review of the Broader Problem

In 2014, Education Secretary Arne Duncan and Attorney General Eric Holder asked districts to rethink their policies by revealing a set of national school discipline guidelines (Cohen, 2016). The federal government's point of view and move towards discipline was made known in 2015 during the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, now called Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 or ESSA (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). ESSA had many goals, and one of them was to stop the abuse of suspensions and expulsions that caused students to miss valuable instructional time by being removed from the classroom. ESSA created five strategies to make the goal successful.

I presented six sections in this review. First, zero tolerance policy was examined to uncover what it was meant to do and why it was no longer an option. Secondly, the pros and cons of progressive discipline were examined. The third section covered PBIS, which was sometimes combined with progressive discipline. In restorative discipline policy, the fourth section, I explained the most current policy that was being used at the local high school. The fifth section explained why data from discipline policies should be analyzed before making important decisions. The last section briefly touched on discipline referrals. Policies and procedures affected how discipline was managed in districts, schools, and classrooms. Tefera et al. (2017), stated that current policies and procedures are significantly affected by past ones (Tefera et al., 2017).

Zero Tolerance Discipline Policy

The zero tolerance discipline policy originated in the 1980s from state and federal drug enforcement policies. This policy punished students for all offenses they committed as if they were severe, even minor offenses. The zero tolerance approach required the use of serious consequences that had already been established for unfavorable behavior in schools, and it was situated partially on the belief that extreme punishments prevented wrongdoing (Fissel et al., 2018). Occurrences of school violence and drug use motivated the use of zero tolerance. According to Skiba (2014), the core of zero tolerance reasoning and policy was the belief that harsh penalties will stop other problematic students. The philosophy of zero tolerance was based on what is known as the broken-window theory. The broken-window theory stated that we as a community must react and show force to all disruptions in our social order, whether minor or major, to send a message that certain behaviors will not be tolerated (Skiba, 2014). Cornell and Limber's (2015) study found the following:

> To some educators, zero tolerance simply means that a certain form of misbehavior will not be ignored; however, the practice of zero tolerance in schools typically includes a specified punishment, typically long-term suspension, or expulsion, regardless of the seriousness of the infraction, or whether it was intentional or unintentional. (p. 338)

The zero tolerance approach was not a proactive response to behavior; instead, was a reaction to misbehavior that was based on the thoughts introduced in deterrence theory, which stated that human beings took part in delinquency when the advantages were larger

than the expenses (Fissel et al., 2018). Zero tolerance discipline policies have been blamed for more negative impacts than positive ones. Fronius et al. (2016) suggested that discipline policies based on zero tolerance regularly gave students harsh consequences such as suspension for unwanted behavior that could have been dealt with by using punishments that had non exclusionary penalties. The missing preventative effect of zero tolerance policies may have been because school punishments were not determined by the severity of the offense (Hirschfield, 2018). In other words, all students were punished severely no matter how major or minor the offense may have been. During its implementation, zero tolerance discipline policy was blamed for low academic achievement, high dropout rates, and the school-to-prison pipeline because of its exclusionary discipline practices. In public education, the school-to-prison pipeline implied that social and academic needs of students were not being met, especially in areas where the poverty rate was high and there was separation of race (Kim et al., 2010).

According to Curtis (2014), the seriousness of school violence and consistent punishment of students with disciplinary referrals were the two reasons for zero tolerance policies. Curtis (2014) also proposed that school discipline referrals were the easiest and swiftest way for students to go into the juvenile justice system. Occasionally, schools responded to disruptive students by involving school resource officers, which may have had an outcome of juvenile or criminal charges and/or placement in detention centers. African American students were affected by zero tolerance policies at a much higher rate than other students, ultimately placing them on the road to the school-to-prison pipeline (Katic, 2017). Numerous educators and policymakers, with the expectation of zero

tolerance to keep students secure, have assisted in minority students being suspended and expelled at unequal rates (Scott et al., 2017).

Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2014) stated that many students, specifically students of color and those with disabilities, were overly impacted due to being removed from class each year for major and minor violations of school rules due to exclusionary discipline practices. Curtis (2014) stated that students were pushed into the juvenile and criminal justice system because of the harshness of zero tolerance discipline that made students feel overwhelmed, therefore causing them to drop out of school. In January 2014, the Department of Education and the Department of Justice released a joint Dear Colleague letter that covered the issues of too much school discipline, with a center on racially unbalanced rates of suspension (Kupchik et al., 2014, p. 7). According to Jones (2017), exclusionary discipline did not lead to more secure schools, changed behavior for students, or any other positive results. Violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act occurred when zero tolerance policies failed to make schools safer by their discriminatory actions. Zero tolerance placed more emphasis on discipline, instead emphasizing the development of positive behaviors students required in school and in life (Weingarten, 2016). States and school districts across the nation created new policies moving codes of conduct towards restorative approaches as a replacement for punitive and exclusionary discipline practices while discipline policy changes were being made at the federal level (Skiba & Losen, 2016). Both the American Academy of Pediatrics and American Psychological Association advocated for the removal of the zero tolerance policy and be

replaced with discipline policies that gave students a sense of belonging to the school, by being inclusive (Corrales, 2020).

Progressive Discipline Policy

The objective of progressive discipline was to establish a secure learning and teaching environment in which students could reach their full potential (District School Board of Niagara, 2015). According to Felesena (2013), the objective of progressive discipline was to suppress persistent behaviors that were disruptive to the learning environment for other students, not exclusion. While implementing progressive discipline, there were campus rules created by the district, as well as class rules that were created by students, along with consequences for students who broke the class rules. "Compared to the Safe Schools Act (or zero tolerance), progressive discipline subscribed to the method of discussion-based discipline by engaging students in conversations about rules and expectations" (Milne & Aurini, 2015, p. 61). Progressive discipline worked toward concurrent responsibility and change in behavior; the objective was helping students learn from their mistakes to prevent the negative behavior from occurring again. According to the District School Board of Niagara (2015), progressive discipline was an approach that consisted of a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences, building up plans that fostered positive behaviors.

There were three main stages in progressive discipline: (a) promoting positive behaviors and preventative strategies, (b) early intervention and helping students recognize and change undesirable behaviors with desirable behaviors, and (c) interventions that include addressing mental, physical, social, behavioral, and family

environmental impacts that may inspire problematic behavior (Milne & Aurini, 2015).

Progressive discipline policy worked by giving students chances to correct behaviors.

The ability to tailor progressive discipline to fit prior disciplinary structures had changed

the way school discipline is managed by administrators and the school community

(Felesna, 2013). According to Milne and Aurini (2015), with progressive discipline

school staff had unlimited use of discretion and permitted school staff to take a variety of

considerations into account when deciding on the length and harshness of disciplinary

measures. In addition, with progressive policy parents were given opportunities to

participate in disciplinary proceedings, conferenced with school staff on how to improve

their child's behavior, and discussed appropriate interventions. Progressive discipline had

both positive and negative impacts on students (Baird, 2014). Positive impacts were

administrators asking questions and considering the context of the situation prior to

disciplinary actions, which gave students tools to improve future behavior. Impacts

considered negative were students not understanding the consequences; this caused

negative reactions and students who thought progressive discipline to be unfair.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support

Progressive discipline was occasionally combined with PBIS. PBIS, an

educational program initiative, helped schools promote positive behavior and engaged

students through a tiered support system. The 3 tiers of PBIS are:

1. Tier 1: Preventative systems of support were created, which included the
   development of schoolwide expectations and monitoring student behavioral
   data.

2. Tier 2: At-risk students were introduced to methodical and rigorous behavior approaches.

3. Tier 3: Continuous interventions were provided for at-risk youth and/or families in crisis.

The four key elements of PBIS were results, practices, systems, and the use of data. The foundation of any PBIS program were student results and behavior and academic success (Betters-Bubon et al., 2016). Data used with PBIS included academic success, school security, and behavioral indicators. According to Betters-Bubon et al. (2016), the purpose of PBIS was to encourage school environments that were more likely to enhance feelings of security and positive connections, as well as more successful educating and learning. Zero tolerance came with strict guidelines for responses to referrals and PBIS allowed administrators to create plans that addressed the needs of individual students, which made implementing PBIS more enjoyable (Robert, 2020). Evidence-based behavioral procedures, as well as formal and continuous data-based choice making, were used with PBIS. The overall goal of progressive discipline, along with PBIS, was to help prevent inappropriate student behavior from happening again.

Restorative Discipline Policy

Mowen et al. (2017) stated that the objective of restorative discipline was to recognize key issues that contributed to student misbehavior and to create suitable supports to deal with undesirable behavior; and according to Rich et al. (2017), the objective of restorative justice was the effective restoration of both victim and offender as useful individuals of secure communities. Restorative discipline for schools may be

called circles, restorative practices, restorative processes, restorative measures, restorative

approaches, and restorative justice (Armour, 2016). Restorative justice originated in

Australia (Fronius et al., 2016); however, according to McFaul (2017), one of the most

consistent references placed the earliest view of restorative justice within the indigenous

Maori culture of New Zealand, as well as, to the Native North American and First Nation

Canadians.

   Within the school setting, restorative discipline included different program types

and could be categorized as a way of working through various types of conflict without

the use of punishment (Fronius et al., 2016). Three fundamental parts to forming

restorative school cultures were (a) making fair and impartial learning situations, (b)

sustaining solid connections, and (c) mending hurt and altering discord (Evans &

Vaandering, 2016). Those who implemented restorative discipline policy observed

violence, weakening communities, and fear-based responses as signs of damaged

relationships. It was thought to be a best practice, when using restorative justice, to have

the victim and offender be a part of the team who comes up with a solution rather than

the use of third parties to make discipline decisions (Katic, 2017). As an alternative to

distancing students from the community after conflicts occur, restorative practices helped

all participants involved by promoting relationship building and mending the hurt that

was carried out (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). Personnel in schools that used restorative

discipline met with the offender, the offender's parents, school administrators,

counselors, behavior interventionist, and victim in the same setting. According to Byer,

(2016), the restorative practices modeled in schools focused on the victim and the student

who caused the harm to the victim or property. The purpose of restorative practices was to include and collaborate with those who had a stake in the circumstance (Zehr, 2015). Gibson and Barr (2013) stated that during restorative practices individuals experienced social-emotional involvement and learning care and concern for others, empowering positive connections, making sensible choices, and handling challenging circumstances positively and morally. The intent of those who used restorative practices was to focus on the damage caused by the student violating the school rules, not the actual rule violation (Vaandering, 2014).

Those who implemented restorative discipline policies intended to promote social-emotional well-being, as well as build relationships, whether it be between students, or between students and adults. "A goal of every school should be to understand how restorative practices can change the students' behavior towards building positive relationships between themselves and their teachers, thus improving the school climate," (Parker, 2020, p. 15). The intent of those who used restorative approaches was to take into consideration the relationships that had been damaged, how to set things right, including the student, who caused the damage, in the school community while implementing restorative discipline (Katic, 2017). Ortega et al. (2016) stated that restorative programming might have impacted other critical variables such as the culture or climate of the school, maturation of social skills, and student-staff relationship quality. Under this policy, negative behaviors and disciplinary consequences should have decreased. Gregory et al. (2016), suggested restorative practices may have been successful at inspiring teacher-student participation, promoting conflict resolution, and

bring about impartial disciplinary methods. The use of restorative discipline may have advanced interpersonal support and association, maintained structure and decency, and allowed students to have input. Keeping youth in school, addressing where the behavior issues began, and mending relationships have been observed when restorative justice has been used (Fronius et al., 2016).

As a result of restorative styles of discipline and punishment, schools have shown more positive results for students as compared to schools who used harsher forms of reprimand in which the focus was on the result of the unwanted behavior instead of trying to figure out where the behavior stems from (Mowen et al., 2017). Implementing Restorative discipline policies have proven to be beneficial at some campuses by decreasing out-of-school suspension and enhancing students' academic achievement. Song and Swearer (2016) suggested that the implementation of restorative discipline had reduced suspension and promoted academic growth. Research on restorative practices, implemented in schools, centers on results that had shown decreases in student behaviors and decreases in the number of suspensions and expulsions (Ortega et al., 2016). According to Rafa (2018), some states considered restorative practices and positive behavioral supports and interventions as substitutions to harsh punishments due to relieving negative impacts, keeping students in school, and making progress towards a better school climate.

Discipline Policy Reviews and Analyzing Data

School discipline policies were decided upon by law at the federal and state level, which influenced district and school policies (Curran, 2017). At the campus level

classroom rules and procedural safeguards were established by individual teachers. The Gun-Free Schools Act and Every Student Succeeds Act were federal laws that had specific disciplinary actions for certain offenses (Curran, 2017).

The federal Department of Education was responsible for guiding disciplinary consequences such as corporal punishment and expulsions. The state-level provided laws that governed the types of discipline used, how resource officers were used at campuses, monitored discipline, and provided professional development training on discipline (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). According to Curran (2017), school district policies usually had certain requirements that were limited to only that district; and at the campus level, establishing behavior expectations and deciding on the punishment for major violations were the responsibility of principals because they had the authority to make these decisions at their appointed campuses. Discipline reform had been seen at the federal government and state government level; however, it was difficult to find information at the district level. Legal guidance had led to a federal review of districts with possible discipline violations, as well as changes in those civil rights compliance violations. For example, in Texas, where the study took place, the state required school districts to audit and report the following findings: (a) discipline/dropout data, (b) discipline data, and (c) assessment data (Texas Education Agency, 2018). The results from the audit helped the Performance-Based Monitoring (PBM) Division determine whether monitoring or interventions were needed. According to Petrosino et al. (2017), districts could look at their disciplinary information to survey how often exclusionary disciplinary actions are being used, especially for minor offenses; whether discipline

policies or practices for dealing with infractions had shown to target certain kinds of students, and how disciplinary actions were related to academic results.

Rafa (2018), advised about the latest state legislation, associated with the use of replacements to punitive and exclusionary discipline in schools, that addressed the following three areas of policy:

1. School employees such as administrators, teachers, school resource officers and other staff participated in professional development and training programs.

2. Committees were established to study other forms of punishment that were different from punitive and exclusionary discipline.

3. Reduced use of punitive disciplinary measures with the required implementation of restorative practices, positive behavioral interventions, trauma-informed schools, and other approaches in certain circumstances.

Throughout the Texas Education Agency's discipline information, there was no mention of reviewing discipline policies. There were three reasons why collecting and reporting data are necessary, (a) the recurrence of suspensions, and the resulting inequalities could shift significantly; therefore data could create baselines explaining current areas of need and campuses that were doing well, (b) data could assists administrators and faculty with tracking their own progress as they incorporated new discipline approaches, in order to replace or adjust the discipline approaches that were not working and to commend the approaches that were working, and (c) school communities required transparency in regards to minor violations and those involving safety and security or those violations

that led to arrests or referrals to law enforcement (Skiba & Losen, 2016). Petrosino et al. (2017) suggested that administrators and faculty should be clear about what was being analyzed because data may have been helpful if a campus had thought about making a change in discipline policy. Discipline data may have been necessary to make policy shifts. Analyzing the discipline data assisted with making informed decisions, whether for or against, implementing new policies. Several state legislations decided to use a quality and efficiency value lever, which outlined the rationale for modifications in school discipline policies (Fergus, 2018). Quality was the educational experience as defined by those receiving it, for example, instructional time, discipline, and interventions for behavior. Efficiency suggested that appropriate and effective interventions were being used with students. While there are state-level discipline policies, school districts and the schools within those districts had discipline policies that were designed specifically for each district and its campuses.

Rafa (2019) reported that numerous states took advantage of opportunities presented under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which simply meant that school discipline data was included in their systems for accountability and school improvement. If states decided to report discipline data under the ESSA, they would have to submit to the following:

1. Requirements – Under ESSA requirements, all states must have gathered information on suspensions, in-school and/or out-of-school, percentages and incorporate that information on state report cards.

2. School Quality and Student Success Indicator (SQSS) – In conjunction with

measures of academic success, graduation rates, and English language proficiency, statewide accountability systems must have contained a minimum of one measure of SQSS. ESSA gives states some flexibility in choosing which measures to include, which leaves room to include school discipline data.

3. Informing School Improvement – Under ESSA requirements, states must have had plans in place for mediating in schools that had been flagged through their accountability system as in need of improvement. It was the choice of the state whether to use discipline information to show schools that needed improvement; however, they were still required to use discipline data to inform the improvement process for struggling schools.

Three states used suspension rates directly within their SQSS measure (Kostyo et al., 2018). According to the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education (2014), discipline actions that are exclusionary as well as the number of days given for suspensions, whether in-school or out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and/or placed in an alternative educational setting must have been reported to the state education agency for federal and state reports. School districts would have a district improvement plan that was created, assessed, and amended annually, and on this plan, along with other information, there must have been a section of discipline management that detailed what the campus had strengthened and where improvements were necessary (Texas Compilation of School Discipline Laws and Regulations, 2017). "Under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states and districts were required to produce report cards that

included in or out of school suspensions, expulsions, and school-related arrests and referrals to law enforcement" (Aspen Institute, 2018, p. 4).

Discipline Referrals

The Texas Legislature had authorized the Board of Trustees and its employees to oversee independent school districts and discipline students. Schools had the authority to hand out discipline any time the interest of the school was involved, on or off school property, in combination with or independent of classes and school-sponsored activities (FWISD Student Code of Conduct, 2018-2019). Behavior violations, seen as common or ordinary, may have not been a cause for a student to be expelled from class or to be placed in an alternative education setting; however, it could have possibly brought about a referral to the office where the student may have received less harsh disciplinary action.

Implications

In this quantitative project study, I chose to focus on the inconsistent trends in the number of disciplinary referrals and suspensions over a 6-year period of implementation of three different discipline policies. Zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies, in that order, were implemented for 2 consecutive years; policy changes occurred without notice. In the literature review I provided descriptions of each discipline policy along with the pros and cons of each. The study was designed to address inconsistent trends in the total number of discipline referrals and suspensions under zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies. This study was also designed to highlight how monitoring discipline data throughout the current school year may help decrease referrals and suspensions. In this project study, I attempted to show campus

administrators ways to monitor discipline data to assist with students who have high numbers of referrals and suspensions and/or assist teachers who have high numbers of referral submissions. Findings could affect the relationship of the school's administration/faculty and parents by sharing discipline data with parents to familiarize them with what was going on at the campus and had the ability to share their concerns and/or assisted with decision-making. "Schools have a choice in how they approach school discipline, and that choice matters for student behavior and student achievement" (Black, 2016, p. 51).

Summary

This study used an ex post facto research design to analyze three different discipline policies that were implemented at a local high school. Every 2 years from 2013 through 2019, there had been changes in the discipline policy at the local high school. Administrators gave no reason for each of the changes. Analyzing data from the three different discipline policies was an important step in the decision-making process.

The review of literature focused on zero tolerance, progressive and restorative discipline policies, as well as discipline policies, analyzing data, and discipline referrals. The literature review on zero tolerance described it as a creation from the criminal justice system, as well as helping students go from school to prison because regardless of whether the offense was minor or major the discipline was the same (Curtis, 2014). The literature review on progressive discipline policy revealed both positive and negative attributes; positive because students had an opportunity to improve behavior by getting chances to do better and negative because progressive discipline did not always deter

behaviors of concern (Baird, 2014). The literature review on restorative discipline showed that social-emotional well-being is promoted, along with relationship building; however, restorative discipline required a strong community and may take a longer time to implement due to having to complete restorative circles. The literature on discipline policies and analyzing data stated multiple times that policy changes, with respect to discipline, were determined by the federal and state levels. The literature on discipline referrals focused on state laws, tracking referrals, and keeping records on school staff referring students. Information from discipline referrals, such as expulsions or suspensions had to be reported by school districts. The local high school's Student Code of Conduct defined when suspensions or expulsions were warranted and how the decisions for these actions were made. Throughout the literature review, these three words surfaced numerous times: "well-implemented program"; suggesting that regardless of the discipline policy, a well-implemented program should have reduced behavior problems and lessened disciplinary actions.

In Section 2: The Methodology, I explained the research design and approach that was chosen, as well as gave a description of the setting and sample, instrumentation and materials, and data collection and analysis. This section also explained the assumptions, limitations, scope, delimitations, and the protection of participants' rights.

Section 2: The Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate if significant differences in disciplinary suspensions and referrals existed under the three different discipline policies at a Title I high school in north Texas over the last 6 years. Discipline data was analyzed to identify differences, if any, in the total number of referrals and suspensions over a 6-year period. The outcome of this study would assist administrators and faculty in the decision-making process about discipline practices.

Research Design and Approach

The research design for this study was quantitative ex post facto using data to analyze the three different discipline policies that were implemented at a local high school from the 2013 through 2019 school years. Ex post facto means from what was done afterward and assisted in analyzing patterns of behaviors of concern and disciplinary actions, specifically suspensions that occurred under each discipline policy. According to Simon and Goes (2013), ex post facto research was best for performing social research when it was impossible or unacceptable to control the characteristics of human participants.

I completed an analysis using archival data for the 2-years of each discipline policy's implementation at the local high school. Discipline data from 2013 through 2019 school years were analyzed to investigate differences, if any, in the total number of referrals and suspensions. The appropriate research method for this study was quantitative because I compared numbers using specific variables and testing hypotheses, not trying to understand nor explain social interactions (Apuke, 2017).

Setting and Sample

The population for this study were all students who were enrolled in the local high school where the research was conducted during the period from 2013 to 2019. The local high school housed 9th through 12th grade students, which included general education, special education, and a language center. The student demographics were 41.5% Hispanic, 37.1% African American, 11.7% Caucasian, 3.3% Asian, and 6.2% two or more races. Data from Texas Education Agency showed that 59% of the students were economically disadvantaged.

The sampling strategy for this study was census sampling, as all students who were part of the population were included in the data set. The data used for this study were provided by the local school district and only included deidentified, archival data that were collected as part of the school's normal daily operations. Therefore, the recruitment of individual participants was not necessary.

It was important for the number of participants to be verified to determine whether there would be enough data to run an analysis. G*Power was used to conduct post hoc power analysis and calculated the effect size of F as an input parameter using calculated partial eta-squared values. For both referrals and suspensions, the probability of a Type 1 error (err prob) was entered as .05. The sample size was entered ($N = 1,528$ for RQ1; $N = 1,527$ for RQ2); numerator degrees of freedom were entered as 1. The number of groups entered was 3 with 1 covariate. For both referrals and suspensions, a small effect, .25, was observed and the post hoc power was 1 based on the input parameters.

Instrumentation and Materials

Discipline referrals were submitted by teachers and faculty through a web-based program and were retrieved by the grade level administrator. Once the administrator received the notice regarding new referrals, they met with the student and assigned the appropriate consequence. Teachers and faculty could see when the referral was completed by an administrator, as well as see the consequence that was given.

Upon receiving Institutional Review Board approval, I began examining archived discipline data for this campus, which was provided by the school district's Grants Compliance and Monitoring Department. All archival data that was obtained for the purpose of this study was owned and maintained by the school and school district where the study was conducted. The data were collected and maintained as part of normal school operations. I requested data from the school district for the purpose of this study only. No individual data points could or would be released by me to any other individual. All discipline data received from the local district was stored on a USB drive that was kept in a locked file. The USB drive will be destroyed after 5 years.

Data Collection and Analysis

After receiving approval from the district and submitting the paperwork to Walden's Institutional Review Board, I was granted approval to conduct the research (approval number 02-11-20-0579843). The second required document for the district was a confidentiality agreement, which was required for anyone using district data. The requested archival data from the local school district consisted of discipline data and

students' GPAs from the total population of students from this campus, Grades 9 through 12, from the years 2013 through 2019. Students' names and school identification numbers were concealed.

An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to examine the differences in data if any. According to Kim (2018), an ANCOVA is comparative to the ANOVA model, but it incorporates endless dependent variables, as well as categorical variables as independent variables. In this study, the ANCOVA was used to test for differences in discipline referrals and suspensions between the different discipline policies while using GPA as the covariate. The independent variable in this study was the discipline policy type: zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative. The dependent variables were the total number of discipline referrals and number of suspensions during the three different discipline policies. The one control variable that seemed most appropriate for this purpose was student GPA, as all students in the school would have a documented GPA, which followed standard methods of calculation. Discipline data from the census sample came from 2013 through 2019 school years. The groups of students who experienced each discipline policy would not be equivalent because the population of students constantly changed, and during the duration of each discipline policy, there was not one cohort of students who experienced all three policies, so using ANCOVA would help correct for the inherent group differences.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

With this study, I assumed that faculty and administrators understood which discipline policy was being used and that faculty and administrators were trained on how

each discipline policy should be used. The second assumption was that the district's discipline records were an accurate reflection of the discipline procedures that were followed at the time of implementation of each discipline policy. Thus, the assumption was that these discipline records had not been altered to show greater or fewer numbers of discipline referrals or disciplinary actions given and that these same records were also used for the state Department of Education's annual discipline reporting requirements.

Limitations of this study were (a) student referrals with no record of disciplinary actions and (b) disciplinary actions given to students with no records of referrals. The scope of this study was that each teacher set their own classroom rules even though there were district rules that campuses had to adhere to. The delimitation of this study was only using data from 1 out of 19 high schools in this district, which made this study only relevant to this campus.

Protection of Participants' Rights

The local high school that was the study site for this study was not one that I been been employed at. Because this was an ex post facto study, archival data from the district was used. No personal information, such as names, dates of birth, or school identification numbers, were divulged to the readers or me. Approval was requested from the district's director of Grants Compliance and Monitoring Department and the campus principal to obtain discipline data.

Data Analysis Results

This section described the sample, the statistical assumptions for ANCOVA used to test the null hypotheses, and report findings of the analysis. The purpose of this study

was to investigate if significant differences in disciplinary suspensions and referrals existed under the three different discipline policies at a Title I high school in north Texas over the last 6 years. To answer the two research questions, I used a one-way ANCOVA to analyze discipline data for a six-year period in which three different discipline policies were implemented for a 2-year period.

Referrals Assumptions Testing

When using ANCOVA, a test of the nine assumptions must be performed to make sure the data can be analyzed and give valid results. The nine assumptions are:

1. the dependent variable and covariate should be measured on a continuous scale;

2. the independent variable should have two or more independent groups that are categorized;

3. there is no relationship between the observation in each group or between the groups;

4. there should be no significant outliers;

5. residuals should be normally distributed for each category of the independent variable;

6. test for homogeneity of variances;

7. the covariate should be linearly related to the dependent variable;

8. show homoscedasticity by producing a scatterplot; and

9. the homogeneity of regression slopes should show no interaction between covariate and the independent (Allen et al., 2018, pp. 134-135).

All nine assumptions for referrals were met. To test for inequality of error variance of the dependent variable, Levene's test of equality of error variance was performed and the results showed not significant ($p = .185$), which meant the variances were equal, and with no known errors in the data, I proceeded to the analysis phase using ANCOVA.

Results for Research Question 1

RQ1: When controlling for GPA, what were the differences, if any, in the total number of discipline referrals during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive discipline, and restorative discipline policies?

To answer this research question, referral data from 1528 participants was analyzed using ANCOVA to find out if there was a difference in the total number of discipline referrals during the implementation of the three different discipline policies, while controlling for GPA. The referrals' rate was greater in zero tolerance discipline policy period ($M = 4.604$) as compared to progressive discipline policy ($M = 4.176$) and restorative discipline policy ($M = 4.263$) but not significantly. The test of between-subjects effects showed that there was a difference in the amount of discipline referrals under each discipline policy, $F(2, 1524) = .910$, $p = .403$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$. With a value of $p = .403$ which is higher than $.05$, there were no significant differences in the total number of referrals during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies when controlling for GPA. The null hypothesis stated there were no significant differences in the total number of referrals during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies, and so I failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Suspensions Assumptions Testing

The tests for assumptions were done for suspensions, with a different outcome

than the error-free assumptions test for referrals (Table 4).

Table 4

Assumptions Testing for Suspensions

Assumptions	Outcome
1. The dependent variable and covariate should be measured on a continuous scale.	Met
2. The independent variable should have two or more independent groups that are categorized.	Met
3. There was no relationship between the observation in each group or between the groups.	Met
4. There should be no significant outliers	Met
5. The residuals should be normally distributed for each category of independent variables.	Met
6. Test for homogeneity of variances.	Not Met
7. The covariate should be linearly related to the dependent variable.	Not Met
8. Show homoscedasticity by producing a scatterplot.	Met
9. Homogeneity of regression slopes should show no interaction between covariate and independent variables.	Met

(Allen et at., 2018, pp. 134-135)

Levene's test of equality of error variances showed the error variance of the dependent

across groups to be unequal, $p = .000$; which violated Assumption 6, the test for

homogeneity of the relationship between the independent variable and covariate was not

linear. The test of between-subjects effects showed that Assumption 7 was violated, $F(2,$

$1521) = 17.020$, $p = .000$; the covariate should be linearly related to the dependent

variable.

Due to Assumptions 6 and 7 having not been met, proceeding to ANCOVA was

delayed so I could determine if using ANOVA for analyzing the data would show a

difference in the outcome of assumptions testing. ANOVA assumptions testing showed

nonlinearity, $F(2, 1524) = 39.798$, $p = .000$, Levene's test of homogeneity of variances

showed an error variance, $p = .000$, and Welch's robust tests of equality of means to be

unequal, $p = .000$. With violations using ANOVA, I looked for outliers and cleaned the

data by: (a) omitting data with zero suspensions, (b) using only half of the discipline data,

and (c) selecting the perimeters for grade point average. Suspension data that showed

zero was a very large number, so by removing that data I was hoping to get a result of no

significant differences in the total number of suspensions. In the SPSS data set, I was able

to set the sample size and the program randomly selected data by the number of

suspensions I chose to be used. Selecting the parameters for grade point average, also

accomplished in the SPSS program, was done by setting the perimeters between 2.5 to

1.0 then 3.0 to 1.5.

After continuously not meeting Assumptions 6 and 7, I made the decision to

proceed with my initial plan and run the analysis for suspensions using ANCOVA.

According to Vanhove (2018), when checking for assumption violations it was more

about finding out if the assumption was a reasonable approximation and not about

whether the assumption was genuinely true. As a reminder, these data were analyzed

even though it did not pass two of the assumptions for ANCOVA. This means that the

results that follow needed to be interpreted with caution as there was no way to determine

exactly how the violations of the assumptions may have influenced the outcomes.

Results for Research Question 2

RQ2: When controlling for GPA, what were the differences, if any, in the total

number of students suspended, during the implementation of zero tolerance,

progressive discipline, and restorative discipline policies at the local high school?

To answer this research question suspension data from 1527 participants was analyzed to find out if there was a difference in the total number of suspensions during the implementation of the three discipline policies, using GPA as the control variable. The test of between-subjects effects for suspensions showed that there was a difference in the number of suspensions under each discipline policy, $F(2, 1523) = 45.970$, $p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .057$. With a value $p = .000$ which is less than .05, there was a significant difference in the total number of suspensions during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies when controlling for GPA. The null hypothesis stated there were no significant differences in the total number of students suspended during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies. The ANCOVA revealed significant differences in the total number of suspensions, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Suspensions Post Hoc Tests

Due to the significant differences in the total number of suspensions during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies when controlling for GPA, post hoc testing was conducted using ANCOVA to confirm where the differences occurred between groups. With a sample size of 1527, post hoc testing of suspensions was reviewed, using Bonferroni's method of testing. Bonferroni post hoc was chosen because Tukey post hoc test was not recommended for use when covariates were a part of the data (Field, 2016). These findings needed to be interpreted with caution due to the violation of assumptions for the ANCOVA omnibus test.

Suspensions during zero tolerance policy (M = 1.532) was significantly higher than suspensions during progressive discipline policy (M = .695) and restorative discipline policy (M = .612); suspensions during progressive and restorative discipline policies were close. Both the tests of between-subjects effects and univariate tests showed a significant difference in suspensions during implementation of all three discipline policies, F = (2, 1524) = 39.798, p = .000, partial η^2 = 0.50. According to Bonferroni's post hoc testing, the comparisons showed zero tolerance to have a significantly higher number of suspensions when compared to progressive and restorative disciplines, where p = .000. The comparison between progressive discipline and restorative discipline, where p = .286, showed no significant difference.

Summary

This study sought to find answers to two research questions by using archival data to perform a nonexperimental quantitative research method. Archival data, from the years of 2013 through 2019 consisted of discipline referrals and suspensions from a high school campus in a large Title I high school district in north Texas. The sample size for referrals was 1,528 and the sample size for suspensions was 1,527. Large samples could have an advantage, such as allowing for the discovery of rare associations or events that would not be revealed by small samples; and a disadvantage, such as the p-values approaching zero, guaranteeing statistical significance (Khalilzadeh & Tasci, 2017).

An ANCOVA was performed to determine if there were significant differences in the total number of referrals and suspensions during the 2-year implementations of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies over a 6-year period. After

adjusting for grade point average (GPA), the ANCOVA revealed that the numbers of referrals and number of students suspended, when controlling for GPA, during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies had significant differences. With no significant differences in the total number of referrals during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies, I failed to reject the null hypothesis for the first research question, "there were no significant differences in the total number of suspensions during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies." Because of the significant differences in the total number of suspensions the null hypothesis for second research question, "there were no significant differences in the total number of suspensions during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies," was rejected. The results may have been impacted by the extremely large sample size and the possibility of unequal groups. Khalilzadeh and Tasci (2017) stated that the power of the test increased when the size of the group grew larger, showing unrealistic results.

Section 3 will include an outline of the project, as well as a description and goals of the project intended to assist with the local problem of the inconsistent trends in the number of discipline referrals and suspensions under three different discipline policies at the Title I high school in north Texas for a period of 6 years. This section will also include a rationale for the project, review of literature, evaluation plan, and implications for social change. The project, in the Appendix, is a policy recommendation.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate if significant differences in disciplinary referrals and suspensions existed under the three different discipline policies at a Title 1 high school in north Texas over a period of 6 years. Discipline referral and suspension data from each 2-year implementation of three different discipline policies were collected and analyzed. After obtaining a data use agreement, the local school district provided archived, de-identified discipline data for the years of 2013 through 2019. Once the data were analyzed and interpreted, it was time to decide on the type of project I was going to do. It seemed that a policy recommendation in the form of a position paper was the most appropriate project for this study.

In this section, I described the rationale for addressing the problem of significant differences, if any, in the total number of referrals and suspensions under three different discipline policies. This section also included the literature review, project description and goals, the evaluation plan for the project, and possible implications for social change.

Rationale

The purpose of this quantitative, ex post facto study was to investigate if significant differences in disciplinary referrals and suspensions existed under three different discipline policies at a Title 1 high school in North Texas. As explained in Section 1, the significant differences occurred under three different discipline policies that existed over a 6-year period, allowing for a 2-year implementation of each policy.

An evaluation report was ruled out because in this study, because I was not evaluating discipline policies to offer insight into which one proved to be best. Researching whether there were significant differences in the total number of referrals and suspensions had nothing to do with curriculum or discipline policy training for school personnel, so both curriculum plan and professional development/training were ruled out as well. After determining that an evaluation report, curriculum, or professional development were not appropriate, a position paper with policy recommendation was the only choice due to the results of the analyzed data showing evidence of significant differences in suspensions during the different discipline policies. Looking at the significant differences in the data and knowing that the discipline policies were only implemented for 2 years per policy, I wanted to find out if the numbers for referrals and suspensions would have been different with a longer implementation time and the monitoring of data per year. The policy recommendation had data to support the problem in this study. Successful policymaking decisions are based on some form of evidence (Eden & Wagstaff, 2020).

Review of the Literature

This literature review was guided by the genre being used for the project, which was a position paper with policy recommendation. The following terms were used to search for literature: *policy recommendations, education policy, policy decisions, decision-making, school discipline, policy statement,* and *position statement*. Topics covered in this literature review include (a) defining the objective, (b) policy theory, (c)

knowing your audience, (d) problem for the policy recommendation, and (e) design choice.

The genre of a position paper with policy recommendation was chosen to address the problem of the significant differences in the total number of suspensions under three different discipline policies that were implemented within a 6-year period; each policy was implemented for a 2-year period. As the campus moved towards research-based discipline approaches, each reportedly better than the other, the referrals did not show significant differences in the total number; however, the suspensions showed significant differences.

Define the Objective

Raising awareness about the past discipline policies, as well as sharing information regarding the problem of significant differences in the total number of suspensions by presenting data, and making recommendations were the goals of the project. There were no significant differences in the total number of discipline referrals but there were significant differences in the total number of suspensions during the 2-year implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies.

A policy recommendation paper was developed to provide a course of action for the local high school. The recommendation offered ways to monitor discipline data that would assist with improving the current discipline policy and/or creating a new discipline policy by describing the problem, providing the data for evidence, providing evaluation criteria, and providing alternatives. Armstrong (2018) suggested that manage-and-

discipline models for teachers, schools, or policymakers were not available when making decisions about a student's conduct.

Policy Theory

Various theories have been developed to explain policy development and change. According to Feldman (2019), theories of policy development and change were essential because each theory helped us understand how, why, and when changes occur, as well as provided the steps needed to achieve the development and changes. Theories helped people understand phenomena, conditions, and events that did not have an explanation (Rinfret et al., 2019). There were four theories that considered the creation of social policies and the changes implemented in them as established through a political process, where people argued about and competed over ideas and resources: (a) neo-institutional theory, (b) elite theory, (c) resource mobilisation theory, and (d) interdependent power theory (De Corte & Roose, 2018). Firstly, the neo-institutional theory simply stated that institutions had an important role in influencing political outcomes, including policy outcomes. Secondly, the elite theory stated that people with significant economic power influenced the policymaking process. Thirdly, the resource mobilisation theory was created by the assumption that mass-membership social movements were crucial for achieving changes in policy and society at large; policy change was a direct product of collective action. Lastly, the independent power theory suggested that social movements could win changes in policy when those movements were disruptive, unorganized, and engaged in unconventional political action. The independent power theory also suggested

that there was some power that a group of people used over others to proceed with a policy change or block a policy change from occurring.

The following reasons have been suggested as answers to why theories of public policy are pursued:

- there was an infinite number of people and/or organizations who implemented public policy,

- theories may have helped establish timelines for policies,

- some issues may have involved more than one policy,

- theories helped us look at different ways issues are recognized and managed, and

- theories help us see patterns and similarities as well as provided a framework with which policies may have been created (Sabatier, 2007, as cited in Rinfret et al., 2019).

Theories provided a framework that made it easier to understand how to influence policies. A combination of key political science concepts was used to describe the important parts of the policymaking settings (Cairney & Oliver, 2018).

Know Your Audience

A major step in developing a policy recommendation was deciding on whom the most important stakeholders were. Presenters should have familiarized themselves with the target audience such as their names and what role they had in the decision-making process; as well as understanding the busy and noncommittal lives of the audience (Docquier, 2017), and according to Seroka (2021), presenters should have identified,

researched, and understood the target audiences; not doing so could lead to a failed presentation. The target audience for this policy recommendation were education stakeholders. Education stakeholders were concerned with the progress, welfare, and success of students and the school (Yaro et al., 2016). Education stakeholders, for this study, included district officials, campus administrators, teachers, students, parents, and members of the community where the school was located. It was important to make connections in the school system to gain support for presenting a policy recommendation without making anyone uncomfortable. Presenters should exhaust every way of engaging with the target audience (Malakoff, 2017), while also respecting their time and expertise (Jo Clift Consulting, 2016). The first targeted audience for my policy recommendation were the administrators at the local high school. Their approval of the policy recommendation was needed before presenting to other stakeholders such as the faculty and other staff.

Problem for the Policy Recommendation

A clearly defined problem is the first step in designing a policy recommendation. "The first stage of the policy process is to figure out what the problem is and to define it" (Rinfret et al., 2019, p. 27). In this doctoral project study, the problem investigated was the significant differences in the total number of discipline referrals and suspensions under three different discipline policies at a local Title I high school in north Texas over a 6-year period. There were no reasons given for the changes in discipline policies, nor was data shared that showed what worked and what needed improvement. Zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies were implemented, with each policy being

used for a 2-year period from 2013 through 2019. The total number of suspensions during

the implementation of the three policies showed significant differences; however, the

research showed no significant differences in the total number of disciplinary referrals.

The result of no significant differences in referrals showed that essentially none of the

policies produced better results than the others. When presenting the research, it should

be relevant, detailed, and understandable (Fleming & Tyson, 2017; Olander et al., 2017).

The objective for providing a policy recommendation was because this local high school

implemented three different discipline policies over a 6-year period without examining

data before each policy change. The proposed policy recommendation urged decision-

makers to examine discipline data before making changes to discipline policies,

especially because the analyzed data did not show differences significant enough to state

that one discipline policy worked better than the others. Clark (2021) suggested that

people often see problems as a management or policy problem, then try to find a way out

of the problem when it was their own problematic beliefs and behaviors that caused the

problems. Policy mandates needed to be coupled with additional resources to help

schools implement effective alternatives without negatively impacting students (Anyon &

Wiley, 2017).

Design Choice

Presenters needed to understand how stakeholders processed information and the

environment they worked in. To communicate effectively, I had to do the following: (a)

not overwhelm the audience with evidence, (b) find the right window of opportunity to

influence their audience, and (c) use real world policymaking; in other words, I had to

make recommendations that were attainable. According to Larrick (2016) fostering trust was one way to help with group decision-making. Petes and Meyers (2018) suggested using storytelling as a method to persuade policymakers of a plan. Collaborating with policymakers, to build relationships, may be necessary to get evidence into policy (Eisenstein, 2017; Green, 2016). When groups of people are decision-makers the collaboration may lead to conflict so ground rules would have been needed to be established. An agreement about processes and outputs may be needed for a successful collaboration (Hutchings & Stenseth, 2016). The presenter's confidence that the presentation of evidence was received positively was another way to encourage group decision-making (Cairney et al., 2017).

My job of the presenter was not just providing a simple summary of what one thought was best evidence, but more so, the job was to frame implications to make it policy relevant and in demand by policymakers (Topp et al., 2018). Sharing the data from previous years may have promoted accountability and helped explain how each discipline policy worked; as well as assisted with making decisions about adopting new programs or policies (Feldman & Maynard, 2020). There were some challenges for evidence-based policy recommendations, such as, providing data that lacked the necessary information due to research that was not relevant to policy needs, the lack of written reports that were suitable for different audiences, and how data was presented to different stakeholders (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2017).

Project Description

The planned project was a policy recommendation, in the form of a position paper, presented to the campus stakeholders beginning with the administrators. The project (see Appendix) included an overview of data, from the research, for each of the three discipline policies: (a) zero tolerance, (b) progressive, and (c) restorative; and the importance of the data to for decision-makers . The project suggested ways to monitor the discipline data. The proposed policy recommendations to the leadership team took place in July 2021.

Resources and Existing Supports

The proposed policy recommendation used resources and supports from the existing discipline policy. The policy recommendation did not require a change in how the school operates, but instead enhanced how the school kept track of discipline referrals and suspensions. An existing resource was FOCUS, the program where referrals and disciplinary actions, such as suspensions, were recorded. The discipline data in FOCUS would be used to monitor the effects of the current discipline policy. The campus already had a program, to pull data from, so there was no need for extra funds unless the individual responsible for compiling data completed the work outside of business hours. When the individual had to work on the discipline data after school hours or during the weekend, the hours were tracked by filling out a timecard that was submitted to the campus payroll secretary and approved by the principal. Time and commitment were the two major factors needed of the individual tasked with the responsibility of running the data.

Potential Barriers

When contemplating potential barriers, the first that came to mind was the stakeholders' reactions to the collected data. Some might argue that since they were not at the campus during one or more of the discipline policies, the data did not apply to them and using my policy recommendation was not necessary. In a case like this, it became my responsibility to explain how the policy recommendation had nothing to do with blaming administrators who worked referrals and issued suspensions. The policy recommendation was a way to better monitor the discipline activity at the campus, allowing everyone to have a clearer picture of what the numbers looked like so they could work together to resolve any issues they observed.

A second potential barrier would be the leadership team's decision to not adopt the recommendation. Nonadoption of the recommendation meant the project would not be used and all the effort put into creating the policy recommended was wasted. The third potential barrier would be changes in leadership, such as the district moving principals to different campuses; this would be problematic because I had been working with the current principal and a new administrator would have no knowledge of my work. The last potential barrier would be the adoption of the policy recommendation, by the campus administrators, but failed to follow through by not monitoring the discipline data.

Implementation and Timeline

The high school where the project took place began school in August, however, administrators returned to campus in July. I presented the project, a policy recommendation, at a leadership team meeting, that was held during the last two weeks of

July 2021 and needed a timeframe of 3 to 4 hours to present. If the project were approved by the leadership team, the person tasked with the responsibility of monitoring discipline data would begin monitoring at the end of each semester, beginning in August 2021. The process of my presentation to the school's faculty should be completed by May 2022.

Roles and Responsibilities

The position paper with policy recommendation included relevant research, data analysis, and results, as well as action goals. It was my responsibility to create a policy recommendation that was researched-based and contained reasonable evidence. According to Henson et al. (2020), the researchers' primary goal was to create good research that included strong research designs and results that both the researcher and stakeholders comprehended. My role, as the researcher, was identifying the problem, conducting literature reviews about the problem, collecting and analyzing data, and finally presenting a position paper with policy recommendation to the campus administrators for approval. The role of the campus administrators was to approve, then implement the recommendations listed in the position paper with policy recommendation. If the administrators accepted the policy recommendation, they would be tasked with making sure the numbers from discipline referrals and suspensions were examined at the end of each semester. It would be easier to look at this information after a semester ends than to break it down after several years.

<div align="center">

Project Evaluation Plan

</div>

There were a few ways to evaluate the project. One way was to use a survey with questions about the ease of monitoring data discipline at the end of each semester, the

time needed to pull the data and review the discipline referrals and suspensions, and how the information was shared with stakeholders. I evaluated how effective the project was by meeting with the administrators and reviewing the data and made sure that the campus was still on course going into the next semester.

Goal of the Project

The first goal of the position paper was to provide stakeholders with discipline data from each discipline policy to allow them to see where the results of the research came from; and understand the results. The second goal was to make sure that stakeholders understood the structure of each discipline policy. The third goal was to provide the stakeholders with a policy recommendation that would fit their needs, as well as maintain low discipline numbers.

Stakeholders

Discipline policies were set by the school board, however, the main stakeholders, at the campus level, participating in the policy recommendation were the administrators and other members of the leadership team at the local high school. The administrators who include the principal, and three assistant principals had important roles. It would be the assistant principals' responsibility to analyze discipline data at the end of each semester or designate the data analyst to complete this job, then report the findings to the principal. The principal would share the discipline information with the remaining members of the leadership team, which were the counselors; then the information would be shared with the teachers and other support staff. It was the responsibility of the administrators to make sure that faculty and other staff knew what type of discipline

policy the campus was implementing and making sure everyone understood the structure of the policy and what the expectations were while using the policy. I provided support throughout the implementation timeline.

Project Implications

Sociologists have defined social change as changes in the interactions and relationships [of humans] that change cultural and social institutions (Dunfey, 2019). Social change in society could be a result of the need to provide solutions to specific social problems that a society is dealing with (Akujobi & Jack, 2017). The implications for positive social change from this study include providing administrators and other stakeholders with an ex post facto study that presents information to adopt a data driven decision making process regarding discipline policies.

The recommendations as noted in the policy paper, if accepted, could assist administrators with making decisions, regarding discipline policies, based on analyzing student discipline data before making changes. If the local high school approves and adopts the policy recommendation, other implications will be that other stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, students, and community members will have a voice and work closely with administrators when breaking down the data which would build trust and respect within the campus and community. Other implications for positive social change show up in the form of: (a) administration-to-faculty relationships strengthening by analyzing discipline data together and/or (b) teacher-to-teacher relationships improving due to analyzing the school's discipline data, in place of only having access to the referrals they submitted. Findings could possibly affect the relationship of the school's

administration/faculty and parents by sharing discipline data, familiarizing them [parents] with what is going on at the campus. Sharing discipline data gives parents the ability to share their concerns and/or allows them to have a voice in decision-making.

Conclusion

In Section 3, I presented a description of the policy recommendation position paper that was designed from this study. This section included a review of literature, project description, project evaluation, and project implication. Section 4 includes: (a) project strengths and limitations, (b) recommendations for alternative approaches, (c) scholarships, (d) project development and evaluation, and (e) leadership and change. Section 4 also includes reflections, implications, and a conclusion.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

The purpose of this quantitative ex post facto study was to investigate the differences, if any, in the total number of discipline referrals and suspensions at a Title I high school in north Texas. The data used for this study was from 6 years of three different discipline policies, each implemented for 2 years. Zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies were implemented from 2013 through 2019, and in that order. Suspensions during zero tolerance policy ($M = 1.532$) were significantly higher than those during progressive discipline policy ($M = .695$) and restorative discipline policy ($M = .612$). Both the tests of between-subjects effects and univariate tests showed a significant difference in suspensions during implementation of all three discipline policies, $F = (2, 1524) = 39.798$, $p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.50$.

Based on the problem of inconsistent trends in the number of discipline referrals and suspensions, I developed a policy recommendation for monitoring discipline referrals and suspensions during the current school year. In this section, I include the strengths and limitations of the project, recommendations for alternative approaches, and the project development and evaluation, and I reflect on the importance of the work, implications, applications, and directions for future research.

Project Strengths and Limitations

A strength of this project was that it was evidence-based and offered a way to keep track of current information rather than using outdated information for decision-making. At the time of this study, there was no discipline monitoring system specific to this campus. I recommended that the campus principal assign the task of monitoring the

discipline data to one of the assistant principals or the data analyst. I also suggested that the data be monitored after each semester; however, it could be done at the end of the school year. This project would be the first research study based on discipline data from three different discipline policies implemented at the local campus that outlined a problem and offered a way to solve it. The limitation that would be most hazardous to this project study would be a change in leadership, specifically the campus principal, and the policy recommendation being pushed aside and forgotten.

One goal of the project was to provide discipline data from each discipline policy to show where the results of the research came from and to understand the results. Another goal was to make sure the structures of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies were understood. The final goal was to provide a policy recommendation that would fit the needs of the campus and assist with discipline numbers.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

An alternative approach for the project would have been an evaluation report. Even though I was not evaluating the discipline policies, an evaluation would have addressed the local need by allowing the results of the research to be shown. An evaluation may have paved the way for the discussion regarding the monitoring of discipline data. I did not pursue creating an evaluation report because there was no intent to examine each discipline policy to determine how well it worked at the campus, nor was I trying to find out if one policy worked better than the others.

A curriculum plan would not have worked as an alternative for the project because discipline data had no ties to the curriculum used by the school. Professional development was not an option as I was not providing training on discipline data nor was training provided on discipline policies. My only and best course of action was to choose the policy recommendation for this study.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

This study contributed to the continuous task of improving discipline referrals and suspensions within school systems. There was plenty of literature on discipline, such as the increase in numbers and inequities with children of color. Literature on zero tolerance and restorative discipline policies was much easier to find than literature on the progressive discipline policy. Hopefully, my contribution will make a difference by providing the leadership team with a simpler yet thorough way to monitor discipline, as well as showing the leadership team how to present current discipline data for referrals and suspensions to the stakeholders in a way that all will understand the importance of how the data will assist at the campus level. Developing this project opened my eyes to so many other issues with the topic of discipline and made me want to contribute to correcting some of these issues. There is a need for improvement in the amount of discipline referrals being submitted, as well as improvement in the number of students being suspended at the local high school study site. As an educator of 27 years, I have experienced and had submitted discipline referrals under zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies, not necessarily knowing which policy was in use. Being a counselor for 13 of the 27 years in education, I understand the teachers' view of

discipline and submitting referrals, but also as an advocate for the students, I must acknowledge that some referrals are disguises for some personal biases.

My personal growth came in the form of writing skills. I did not know how much my writing skills lacked until I started this doctoral journey. I thought as an educated individual, I had the writing skills necessary to succeed and get through this program quickly. The crow I ate was very bitter, and I learned to take things one day at a time. I am not very patient and had to learn, with the help of others, to take the necessary time to make sure the writing was worthy of submission. The other personal growth is presenting to groups of people. I am comfortable presenting to students because in my mind, they do not know if or when I made a mistake. Presenting to colleagues and/or other professional adults is very uncomfortable for me as I must concentrate on making no mistakes. I will continue perfecting my presentation skills as they will be needed when communicating with all stakeholders.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

The research conducted helped me contribute to finding a way for schools to monitor discipline data more closely. The topics of school discipline, discipline policies, and differences in discipline numbers across the races are ongoing conversations among many. I hope my research study will be among those conversations as my policy recommendation assists the local research site with monitoring students' discipline data.

The research paper will be submitted to the local district's research department. After their review of the position paper in the form of a policy recommendation for the

local research site, the results may be shared with the district's school board. The school board could use this type of discipline data when making decisions on discipline policies.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This study was conducted to address the inconsistent trends in the number of discipline referrals and suspensions during a 6-year implementation of three different discipline policies, each implemented for 2 years. The results from the analyzed data showed discipline referrals had no significant differences and suspensions had significant differences. The implications for future research could vary depending on how the discipline data will be used. One implication is because there were no significant differences in discipline referrals a future study can be done to examine whether one discipline policy works better than the other. The literature notes that zero tolerance was not good and led students through the school-to-prison pipeline. Literature also noted that restorative discipline was the better option; however, according to the results in my research study there were no significant differences in the total number of discipline referrals under zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies. The final implication, the use of this evidence-based research study as a guide to monitor discipline data at the campus, is an important step in keeping track of discipline numbers by students, teachers writing the referrals, and behaviors of concern.

Future research on this topic could be quantitative or qualitative, depending on what information the researcher is trying to relay to stakeholders. Quantitative research should include discipline data that has been analyzed after the data has been filtered using one or more of the following: (a) grade, (b) race, (c) gender, and/or (d) teacher. By

filtering data, comparisons can be done to retrieve more information such as which race of students have the most referrals, students in which grade are suspended more, and is there a teacher who stands out as having written the most referrals.

Qualitative research could include one of the following: (a) data from surveys designed to gather information from campus staff, students, and parents; or (b) one-to-one interviews. Surveys are well-liked because they are easy to administer and can be administered to numerous groups (Spaulding, 2014). The qualitative method will give insight from some individuals who have a role in how the discipline data is compiled, such as the teachers who submit the referrals and the students who receive the consequences.

Conclusion

Guided by Watson's and Skinner's behaviorism theory, specifically operant conditioning, the study questions addresses whether there were significant differences in the total number of discipline referrals and suspensions. The findings of the study show discipline referrals to have no significant differences and suspensions to have significant differences. As a researcher, I expected there to be significant differences in the total number of discipline referrals with decreases in the numbers as each policy changed. I find it hard to believe that discipline policies were changed without showing better results than with the prior policy. These results prompted the creation of a policy recommendation with a position paper. The policy suggests that an assistant principal or the data analyst at the campus monitor discipline data during current school years, either at the end of each semester, or at the end of the year beginning with the 2021-2022 school

year. The implemented project could change the way discipline data is managed and

shared.

References

Akujobi, T. & Jack, J. (2017). Social change and social problems. In E. M. Abasiekong, E. A. Sibiri, & N. S. Ekpenyong (Eds.), *Major themes in sociology: An introductory text* (pp. 491-526). Mase Perfect Prints.

Allen, P., Bennett, K., & Heritage, B. (2018). *SPSS statistics: A practical guide* (4th ed.). Cengage AU.

American Public Media. (n.d.). *Spare the rod: Reforming school discipline.* https://www.apmreports.org/files/sparetherod.pdf

An, D. & Carr, M. (2017). Learning styles theory fails to explain learning and achievement: Recommendations for alternative approaches. *Personality and Individual Differences, 116,* 410-416. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.04.0500191-8869/

Anyon, Y. & Wiley, K. (2018). *NEPC review: The academic and behavioral consequences of discipline policy reform: Evidence from Philadelphia (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, December 2017).* National Education Policy Center. http://nepc.colorado.edu/thinktank/review-discipline-reform

Apuke, O.D. (2017). Quantitative research methods. A synopsis approach. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review, 6*(10), 40-47. https://doi.org/10.12816/0040336

Armour, M. (2015). Restorative practices: Righting the wrongs of exclusionary school discipline. *University of Richmond Law Review, 50*(3), Article 9.

https://scholarship.richmond.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3106&context=lawr
eview

Armstrong, D. (2018). Addressing the wicked problem of behaviour in schools.
International Journal of Inclusive Education, 22(9), 997-1013.
https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.14137332

Armstrong, K. H., Ogg, J. A., Sundman-Wheat, A. N., & St. John Walsh, A. (2014).
*Early childhood development theories. Evidence-Based interventions for children
with behavior.* Springer.

Aspen Institute. (2018). Seizing the moment: Addressing disproportionate exclusionary
discipline. The Aspen Institute. https://ESSA-Addressing-Disproportionate-
Exclusionary-Discipline

Baird, S. (2014). *The implementation of progressive discipline within Ontario schools
and its effect on the experience for the transgressors and victims.* Ontario Institute
for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

Bamford, D. (2019). *Effectiveness of restorative discipline in alternatives schools.*
[Unpublished master's thesis]. California State University San Marcos.

Betters-Bubon, J., Brunner, T., & Kansteiner, A. (2016). Success for all? The role of the
school counselor in creating and sustaining culturally responsive positive
behavior interventions and supports programs. *The Professional Counselor, 6*(3),
263-277. https://doi.org/10.15241/jbb.6.3.263

Black, D. (2016). Reforming school discipline. *University of South Carolina Scholar
Commons, 111*(1), 1-74. https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/law_facpub

Bogdan, C., & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods.* Allyn & Bacon.

Bryant, D. & Wilson, A. (2020). Factors potentially influencing discipline referral and suspensions at an affiliated charter high school. *Journal of Educational Research & Practice, 10*(1), 119-128. https://doi.org/10.5590/JERAP.2020.10.1.08

Byer, L. (2016). *Restorative practices in the school setting: A systemic review.* Master of Social Work Research Papers, St. Catherine's University. http://sophia.stkate.edu/msw_papers/564

Cairney, P. & Kwiatkowski, R. (2017, November). How to communicate effectively with policymakers: Combine insights from psychology and policy studies. *Palgrave Communications, 3*(1). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-017-0046-8

Cairney, P. & Oliver, K. (2018, September). How should academics engage in policymaking to achieve impact? *Political Studies Review, 18*(2), 228-244. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929918807714

Chin, J. K., Dowdy, E., Jimerson, S. R., & Rime, W. J. (2012). Alternatives to suspensions: Rationale and recommendations. *Journal of School Violence, 11*(2), 156-173. https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2012.652912

Clark, S. (2021). Educational policy and ethics for human-nature (wildlife) coexistence: An inquiry, a case, and recommendation. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 13*(1), 5-29.

Cohen, R. M. (2016, November 2). Rethinking school discipline. *The American Prospect.* http://prospect.org/article/rethinking-school-discipline

Cornell, D., Comma, G. & Mayer, M. J. (2010). Why do school order and safety matter? *Educational Researcher, 39*(1), 7-15. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357616

Cornell, D. & Limber, S. (2015, May-June). Law and policy on the concept of bullying at school. *American Psychological Association, 70*(4), 333-343. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038558

Corrales, B. (2020). *School policies and its effects on female minority students* [Unpublished master's thesis]. California State University Stanislaus.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* Pearson Education.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Sage Publications.

Curran, F. (2017, December). Influence over school discipline policy: Variation across levels of governance, school contexts, and time. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives, 25*(119), 5. https://eppa.asu.edu/ojs/

Curran, F. (2017). The law, policy, and portrayal of zero tolerance school discipline: Examining prevalence and characteristics across levels of governance and school districts. *Educational Policy,* Online First, 1-39. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904817691840

Curtis, A. (2014). Tracing the school-to-prison pipeline from zero-tolerance policies to juvenile justice dispositions. *The Georgetown Law Journal, 102,* 1251-1277.

Dastpak, M., Behjet, F., & Taghinezhad, A. (2017). A comparative study of Vygotsky's perspective on child language development with nativism and behaviorism.

International Journal of Languages Education and Teaching, 5(2), 230-238.

https://doi.org/10.18298/ijlet.1748

Deery, S. & Chiappino, K. (2021). Grad night surprise: Ethic of care and restorative

justice. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership,* 1-10.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1555458921997521

District School Board of Niagara. (2015) *School operations policy G-28: Student*

discipline. http://policy.dsbn.org/G-28

Docquier, D. (2017). *Communicating your research to policymakers and journalists.*

Author Services. https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/communicating-

science-to-policymakers-and-journalists/

Dunfey, T. S. (2019, May 29). *What is social change and why should we care?* Southern

New Hampshire University Newsroom. https://www.snhu.edu/about-

us/newsroom/2017/11/what-is-social-change

Eden, L. & Wagstaff, M. F. (2020). Evidence-based policymaking and the wicked

problem of SDG 5 gender equality. *Journal of International Business Policy.*

https://doi.org/10.1057/s42214-020-00054-w

Eisenstein, M. (2017, November). The needs of the many. *Nature,* 551.

https://doi.org/10.1038/456296a

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Pub. L. 89-10, 79 Stat. 27 (1965).

Evans, K. & Vaandering, D. (2016). *The little book of restorative justice in education:*

Fostering responsibility, healing, and hope in schools. Good Books.

Every Student Succeeds Act *of* 2015*,* Pub. L. 114-95 *§* 114 Stat. 1177 *(*2015–2016*).*

Ergun, M. (2014). Analyzing disciplinary punishments in high schools in terms of different variables in Turkish education system. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences, 6*(1), 58-71. http://dx.doi.org/10.15345/iojes.2014.01.007

Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A., & Buchner, A. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods, 39*(2), 175-191. https://doi.org/10.3758/bf03193146

Felesena, M. D. (2013). Does your district have a progressive discipline policy? *The Illinois School Board Journal, 81,* 39-42. https://www.iasb.com/about-us/publications/journal/2013/january-february/does-your-district-have-progressive-discipline-pol/

Feldman, A. & Maynard, R. (2020, January 30). *The evidence-based policy revolution waiting to happen.* Government Executive. https://www.govexec.com/management/2020/01/evidence-based-policy-revolution-waiting-to-happen/162749/print/

Feldman, G. (2019). Making the connection between theories of policy change and policy practice: A new conceptualization. *British Journal of Social Work, 50*(4), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcz081

Fergus, E. (2018). The role of policy in promoting efficient and quality discipline reform. *School Psychology Review, 47*(2), 199-202. https://doi.org/10.17105/SPR-2018-0019.V47-2

Field, A. (2016). *Discovering statistics using SPSS: And sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll* (4th ed., pp. 1-14). Sage. https://www.discoveringstatistics.com. (Original work published 2013).

Fissel, E., Wilcox, P. & Tillyer, M. (2018). School discipline policies, perceptions of justice, and in-school delinquency. *Crime & Delinquency,* 1-28. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011128718794186

Fleming, A. & Pyenson, N. (2017). How to produce translational research to guide artic policy. *BioScience, 67*(6), 490-493. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/bix002

Fort Worth Independent School District. (2015-2016). *Student code of conduct.* https://www.fwisd.org

Fort Worth Independent School District. (2016-2017). *Student code of conduct.* https://www.fwisd.org

Fort Worth Independent School District. (2018-2019). *Student code of conduct* https://www.fwisd.org

Foxen, S. (2017). *Getting your research into parliament.* Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology. https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/getting-your-research-into-parliament/

Fronius, T, Persson, H., Guckenburge, S., Hurley, N., & Petrosino, A. (2016). *Restorative justice in U.S. schools: A research review.* https://www.WestEd.org

Garen, J. (2014). School choice and school discipline: Why we should expect the former

    to improve the latter. *Journal of School Choice, 8,* 618-636.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2014.973781

Gibson, E. L., & Barr, R. D. (2015). *Building a culture of hope for at-risk students*

    [Poster presentation]. National Youth-At-Risk Conference, Savannah, Georgia.

    http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/nyar_savannah/2015/2015/19

Golson, J. O. (2018). *Deconstructing exclusionary discipline: A paradigm shift to*

    restorative leadership practices [Doctoral Dissertation, Delaware State].

    https://search.proquest.com

Green, D. (2016, September 23). *How academics and NGOs can work together to*

    influence policy: Insights from the InterAction report. LSE Impact.

    http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2016/09/23/how-academics-and-

    ngos-can-work-together-to-infuence-policy-insights-from-the-interaction-report/

Gregory, A. & Fergus, E. (2017). Social and emotional learning and equity in school

    discipline. *The Future of Children, 27*(1), 117-136.

    https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.2017.0006

Gregory, A., Clawson, K., Davis, A., & Gerewitz, J. (2015). The promise of restorative

    practices to transform teacher-student relationships and achieve equity in school

    discipline. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 26*(4), 325-

    353. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2014.929950

Gregory, A., Skiba, R., & Noguera, P. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline

gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Researcher, 39,* 59.

https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357621

Hanover Research. (2013). *Ensuring equitable discipline: Practices and policies.*

Prepared for Loudoun County Public Schools. https://www.hanoverresearch.com

Henson, R., Stewart, G., & Bedford, L. (2020). Key challenges and some guidance on

using strong quantitative methodology in education research. *Journal of Urban*

Mathematics Education, 13(2), 42-59.

Hirschfield, P. (2018). Schools and crime. *Annual Review of Criminology,* (1), 149-169.

Hutchings, J. & Stenseth, N. (2016), Communication of science advice to

government. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution, 31*(1), 7-11.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2015.10.008

Jo Clift Consulting. (2016). *Are you trying to get your voice heard in government?*

http://jocliftconsulting.strikingly.com

Jones, C. (2017). *Learning uninterrupted: Supporting positive culture and behavior in*

schools. Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center. https://www.massbudget.org

Jones, F. (1987). *Positive classroom discipline.* McGraw-Hill.

Jung, C. (2020). *A casual-comparative study of strategies designed to decrease discipline*

incidents in urban elementary schools [Unpublished doctoral dissertation].

Liberty University.

Kaplan, A. & Patrick, H. (2016). Learning environments and motivation. In K.Wentzel &

D. Miele (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation at school* (251-274). Routledge.

Katic, B. (2017). *Restorative justice practices in education: A quantitative analysis of suspension rates at the middle school level* [Doctoral dissertation, California State University]. http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/495

Khaldi, K. (2017). Quantitative, qualitative, or mixed research: Which research paradigm to use? *Journal of Educational and Social Research, 7*(2),15-23. https://doi.org/10.5901/jesr.2017.vn2p15

Khalilzadeh, J. & Tasci, A. (2017). Large sample, significance level, and the effect size: Solutions to perils of using big data for academic research. *Tourism Management, 62,* 89-96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.03.026

Kim, C., Losen, D., & Hewitt, D. (2010). *The school-to-prison pipeline: Structuring legal reform.* University Press.

Kim, H. (2018). Statistical notes for clinical researchers: Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). *Restorative Dentistry & Endodontic, 43*(4), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.5395/rde.2018.43.e43

Kretchmar, J. (2014). *Behaviorism: Research starters education.* Ebsco Information Services. Great Neck Publishing.

Kretchmar, J. (2008). *Social learning theory: Research starters education.* Ebsco Information Services. Great Neck Publishing.

Konstan, E. (2013). *Understanding progressive discipline: Discipline Code 2013.* NYC Department of Education. https://www.text.nyc.edu

Kostyo, S., Cardichon, J. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2018). *Making ESSA's equity promise real: State strategies to close the opportunity gap.* Learning Policy

Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/ESSA_Equity_Promis_Suspension_Brief.pdf

Kupchik, A. Green, D. A., & Mowed, T. J. (2014). School punishment in the US and England: Divergent frames and responses. *Youth Justice.* https://doi.org/10.1177/1473225414540556

Lund, A. & Lund, M. (n.d.). *Laerd statistics: Assumptions in spss.* https://statistics.laerd.com

Lan, J. & Sher, T. (2019). Cognitive-behavioral family therapy. In J. Lebow, A. Chambers, and D. Breunlin (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Couple and Family Therapy*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-15877-8_40-1

Larrick, R.P. (2016). The social context of decisions. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 3,* 441-467. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurevorgpsych-041015-062445

Leppink, J. (2018). Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) vs. moderated regression (MODREG): Why the interaction matters. *Health Professions Education, 4,* 225-232. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hpe.2018.04.001

Lodico, M., Spaulding, D. & Voegtle, K. (2010). *Methods in educational research. From theory to practice.* Jossey-Bass.

Malakoff, D. (2017). A battle over the best science. *American Association for the Advancement of Science, 335*(6330), 1108-1109. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.355.6330.1108

Mayworm, A. & Sharkey, J. (2014). Ethical considerations in a three-tiered approach to school discipline policy and practice. *Psychology in the Schools, 51*(7), 693–704. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21782

McCusker, K. & Gunaydin, S. (2014). Research using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods and choice based on the research. *Perfusion,* 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267659114559116

McFaul, H. (2017). The redesign of school discipline: One school's approach to rethink and redesign discipline practices through the restorative justice model. [Doctoral dissertation, Illinois State University]. https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd/792

Metsäpelto, R., Pakarinen, E., Kiuru, N., Poikkeus, A., Lerkkanen, M., & Nurmi, J. (2015). Development dynamics between children's externalizing problems, task-avoidant behavior, and academic performance in early school years: A 4-year follow-up. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 107*(1), 246-257. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037389

Milne, E. & Aurini, J. (2015). Schools, cultural mobility, and social reproduction: The case of progressive discipline. *Canadian Journal of Sociology 40*(1), 51-74. https://doi.org/10.29173/cjs20891

Morgan, E., Salomon, N., Plotkin, M., & Cohen, R. (2014). *The school discipline consensus report: Strategies from the field to keep students engaged in school and out of the juvenile justice system.* The Council of State Governments Justice Center.

https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/The_School_Discipline_Consensus_Report.pdf

Mowen, T., Mowen, G. & Brent, J. (2017). Working inside the gate: School discipline on post. *Youth Justice, 17*(2), 99-115. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473225417699166

Nishioka, V., Shigeoka, S., & Lolich, E. (2017). School discipline data indicators: A Guide for districts and schools. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs

Norlin, B. (2016). School jailhouse: Discipline, space, and the materiality of school morale in in early-modern Sweden. *History of Education 45*(3), 263-284.

Olander, L., Polansky, S., Kagan, J., & Johnston, R. (2017). So you want your research to be relevant? Building the bridge between ecosystem services research and practices. *Ecosystem Services, 26,* 170-182. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2017.06.003

Ortega, L., Lyubansky, M., Nettles, S., & Espelage, D. (2016). *Outcomes of restorative circles program in a high setting.* American Psychological Association. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/vio0000048

Osher, D., Bear, G, G., Sprague, J. R., & Doyle, W. (2010). How can we improve school discipline? *Educational Researcher 39*(1), 48-58. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357618

Ozcelik, A. (2017). Aggression theories revisited: Lorenz's neoinstinctivism, Wilson's

socio-biology and Skinner's behavioral theories. *Journal of Asian Scientific*

Research 7(2), 38-45. https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.2.2017.72.38.45

Parker, N. (2020). *The effects of a restorative practice program on discipline Referrals,*

discipline, absences, and teacher perspective in a Title I middle school In East

Tennessee [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Milligan College.

Payne, A. A., & Welch, K. (2015). Restorative justice in schools: The influence of race

on restorative discipline. *Youth & Society, 47*(4), 539-564

https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X12473125

Petes, L. & Meyer, M. (2018). An ecologist's guide to careers in science policy advising.

Frontiers in Ecology and Environment, 16(1), 53-54.

https://doi.org/10.1002/fee.1761

Petrosino, A., Fronius, T., Goold, C., Losen, D., and Turner, H. (2017). *Analyzing*

student-level disciplinary data: A guide for districts (REL 2017-263). U.S.

Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for

Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory

Northeast and Islands. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs

Prehn, T. (2018, May 24). *Thomas Prehn's innovation diary: What I learned at mindlab.*

Apolitical.

Purdon, S., Lessof, C., Woodfield, K. & Bryson, C. (2001). *Research methods for policy*

evaluation. National Centre for Social research. Crown. www.hmsogov.uk.

Rafa, A. (2019). *Policy analysis: The status of school discipline in state policy.* Education

Commission of the States. https://www.ecs.org

Rafa, A. (2018). *Alternative school discipline strategies: What is the issue and why does*

it matter? Education Commission of the States. https://www.ecs.org

Reed, M. & Evely, A. (2016). *How can your research have more impact? Five key*

principles and practical tips for effective knowledge exchange. LSE Impact, 1-5.

https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2015/07/07/how-can-your-research-

have-more-impact-5-key-principles-tips/

Regional Services Group. (2019). Policy & review: Improving school governance.

Department of Education and Training. Melbourne: Victoria.

https://www.education.vic.gov.au

Resh, W. G. & Pitts, D. W. (2013). No solutions, only trade-offs? Evidence about conflict

in street-level bureaucracies. *Public Administration Review,* 132-142.

Rich, L., Mader, N., & Pacheco-Applegate, A. (2017). *Restorative justice programming*

and student behavioral and disciplinary outcomes. Chapin Hall at the University

of Chicago.

Rinfret, S., Scheberle, D., & Pautz, M. (2019). *Public policy: A concise introduction.* CQ

Press.

Robert, C. (2020). Implementing discipline reform: One district's experience with PBIS.

School Leadership Review, 15(1), Article 22.

https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/slr/vol15/iss1/22

Ryan, T. G. & Goodram, B. (2013). The impact of exclusionary discipline on students. *International Journal of Progressive Education, 9*(3), 169-177.

Sabatier, P. A. (2007). *Theories of the policy process.* Westview Press. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-011-9143-5

Scott, J., Moses, M., Finnigan, K., Trujillo, T., & Jackson, D. (2017). *Law and order in school and society: How discipline and policing policies harm students of color, and what we can do about it.* National Education Policy Center. http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/law-and-order

Seroka, L. (2021). Audience 1 versus audience 2: Adapting a project for multiple audiences using verbal and multimedia platforms. *Communication Teacher, 35*(2), 122-128. https://doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2020.1842899

Simon, M.K. & Goes, J. (2013). Dissertation and Scholarly Research: Recipe for Success. Dissertations Success LLC. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282979346_Dissertation_and_scholarly_research_Recipes_for_success.pdf

Skiba, R. (2014). The failure of zero tolerance. *Reclaiming Children and Youth 22*(4), 27-33. http://reclaimingjournal.com/sites/default/files/journal-article-pdfs/22_4_Skiba.pdf

Skiba, R. J. & Losen, D. J. (2016). From reaction to prevention. Turning the page on school discipline. *American Educator,* 4-11. https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ae_winter2015skiba_losen.pdf

Smith, D. (2016). *A humanizing approach to improving school disciplinary culture* [Bank Street Occasional Paper Series, No. 35]. http://educate.bankstreet.edu/occasional-paper-series/vol2016/iss35/7

Smith, S. R. (2020). *How does the progressive accountability classroom intervention effect discipline outcomes in urban middle school students* (Publication No. 27832157) [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Memphis]. Available from ProQuest.

Song, S. and Swearer, S. (2016). The cart before the horse: The challenge and promise of restorative justice consultation in schools. *Journal of Educational Psychological Consultation, 26*(4), 313-324. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2016.1246972

Spaulding, D. T. (2014). *Program evaluation in practice. Core concepts and examples for discussion and analysis.* Jossey-Bass

Syed, D. and Khan, M. A. (2016). Stress and coping strategies of achievers and underachievers. A comparative study. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research, 1*(5), 82-96.

Tefera, A., Siegel-Hawley, G. & Levy. R. (2017). *Why do racial disparities in school discipline exist? The role of policies, processes, people, and places* [Paper presented at the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium, Richmond, Va.]. https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/merc_pubs

Texas Education Agency. (2016). *Data validation monitoring for discipline: Intervention guidance for districts.* Division of School Improvement. http://www.tea.state.us

Texas Education Agency. (2016). 2015-2016 *School report card.*

http://rptsvrl.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/2016/index.html

Texas Education Agency. (2017). 2016-2017 *School report card.*

http://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/2017/index.html

Topps, L., Mair, D., Smille, L., & Cairney, P. (2018). Knowledge management policy

impact: the cases of European Commission's Joint Research Centre. *Palgrave*

Communications, 4(1), 87. Nature Publishing Group.

https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-018-0143-3

Triola, M. (2012). *Elementary statistics.* Pearson/Addison Wesley.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. (2017, February).

Large-scale assessment data and learning outcomes: Linking assessments to

evidence-based policy making and improved learning.

https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247413

U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Improving basic programs operated by local*

educational agencies (Title 1, Part A).

https://www2.ed.gov/programs/title1parta/index.html

U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Sec. 4141 Gun-Free requirements*.

http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg54.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2016). *Compendium of school discipline laws and*

regulations for the 50 states, District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories.

https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/discipline-compendium

U. S. Department of Education. (2020). *Texas compilation of school discipline laws and regulations* (p. 154). https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/discipline-compendium/Texas%20School%20Discipline%20Laws%20and%20Regulations.pdf

U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education. (2014). *Notice of language assistance: Dear colleague letter on the nondiscriminatory administration of school discipline.* https://www.gabar.org/committeesprogramssections/sections/childprotectionandadvocacy/upload/DOJ_DOE_DearColleague-Letter.pdf

Vaandering, D. (2014). Implementing restorative justice practice in schools: What pedagogy reveals. *Journal of Peace Education, 11*(1), 64-80. https://doi.org/10.1080/17400201.2013.794335

Vanhove, J. (2018). *Checking the assumptions of your statistical model without getting paranoid.* University of Fribourg.

Warnick, B. & Scribner, C. (2020). Discipline, punishment, and the moral community. *Theory and Research in Education, 18*(1), 98-116. https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878520904943

Watchel, T. (2001). *Safer saner schools: Restoring community in a disconnected world.* International Institute of Restorative Practices. http://www.safersanerschools.org/Pages/restorativepractices.html

Weingarten, R. (2015-2016). Where we stand: Moving past punishment toward support. *American Educator, 39*(4), 1. https:// www.aft.org/ae/winter2015-2016/wws

Wilson, H. (2014). Turning off the school-to-prison pipeline. *Reclaiming Children and Youth, 23*(1), 49-53. http://dignityinschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Turning_Off_STPP_Wilson-1.pdf

Yaro, I., Arshad, R., & Salleh, D. (2016). Education stakeholder's constraints in policy decisions for effective policy implementation in Nigeria. Briti*sh Journal of Education, Society & Behavioural Science, 14*(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.9734/BJESBS/2016/22606

Zehr, H. (2015). *Changing lenses: Restorative justice for our times* (25th anniversary ed.). Herald Press.

Appendix: The Project

A policy recommendation, position paper to the leadership team at the study site high school concerning discipline policies.

Introduction

This position paper with policy recommendation is to address differences in discipline referrals and suspensions during the implementation of three different discipline policies during a period of 6 years. Each policy was implemented for 2 years before a change was made. Some important challenges that surfaced were 1) discipline data not being monitored, and 2) some faculty and/or staff were not aware of a discipline policy change. This position paper with policy recommendation will focus on monitoring discipline referrals and suspension data to make evidence-based decisions regarding discipline policies. Eden and Wagstaff (2020) stated that successful policymaking decisions are based on some form of evidence. Sharing data from previous years may help when adopting new programs or policies (Feldman & Maynard, 2020).

The Problem

The problem at this Title I high school in north Texas was the inconsistent trend in the number of discipline referrals and suspensions under three different discipline policies implemented over a 6-year period; each policy implemented for 2 years. Zero tolerance discipline policy was implemented from fall semester of 2013 through spring semester of 2015, progressive discipline policy was implemented from fall semester of 2015 through the spring semester of 2017, and restorative discipline was implemented from the fall semester of 2017 through the spring semester of 2019.

Past Discipline Policies

At the local campus, zero tolerance discipline policy was used from 2013 until 2015. The Guns-Free Act of 1994 helped create zero tolerance policies. Schools were required to suspend students for a minimum of one year for having firearms on campus to receive federal funds (Heise et al., 2020). Under the Zero tolerance discipline policy was said to cause the school-to-prison pipeline, a term used to describe a path that leads the educational system to the criminal justice system (Parker, 2020). According to Heise et al. (2020), schools began using zero tolerance for other offenses, such as, tardiness, dress code violations, fighting, and possession of drugs and alcohol. This path, from the school system to the prison system, resulted in inequalities for children of color (McCarter, 2017; Redfield et al., 2016). Out-of-school suspensions and expulsion were common disciplinary actions used during zero tolerance (Kobie, 2020). Christle et al. (2004) completed a study of 161 Kentucky middle schools and found that 52% of the students were suspended more than one time; and those students who were suspended once were likely to be suspended again.

The progressive discipline policy was used at the local campus from 2015 until 2017. Progressive discipline engaged students in reflecting on their misbehavior to improve on behavior that was considered a conduct issue (Khan et al., 2019). The progressive discipline policy uses consequences that go from less serious to more serious based on the initial severity or on repetition of the problem behaviour (State of Montana, 2013). The Philadelphia school district adopted the progressive discipline policy to reduce disparities. According to Camacho et al. (2020), after comparing Philadelphia to

other school districts in Pennsylvania, the results showed that the policy change to progressive discipline only led to a short-term reduction in suspensions and economically disadvantage schools had an increase in suspensions. In the districts that had lower suspension rates due to the use of progressive discipline, the numbers for minority groups and students with disabilities had not lowered (Camacho et al., 2020).

The Current Discipline Policy

The restorative discipline policy was implemented in 2017 and continues to be used at the local campus study site. Under restorative discipline, an environment is created that allows students to talk about the deep-rooted issues rather than just focusing on the action that got them into trouble (DeJong et al., n.d.). Buckmaster (2020) stated that restorative discipline requires a choice by the victim, the offender, and the community to implement the policy. There are challenges when implementing discipline policies, such as not following through, and in the case of the Chicago Public Schools where exclusionary discipline referrals are still taking place (Sartain et al., 2015). Some of the positive documentations from restorative discipline are (a) lower number of discipline events that received referrals, (b) fewer class disruptions, and (c) standardized test scores increased (Sherman & Strange, 2007). The dean of Beginner middle school in the Bronx, New York believes the positive conversations that are a part of restorative discipline are helping to build positive relationships between staff and students (Diaz-Mendoza, 2020).

Under restorative discipline, there will still be referrals and in some cases, students will be suspended; however, reports from schools indicated that restorative

discipline policy has a better outcome than zero tolerance and progressive discipline policies. Koehler (2020) researched the philosophical alignment and discipline outcomes of restorative discipline with results showing a small relationship between restorative discipline and the decrease in the number of discipline referrals. Cole Middle School in Oakland, California had been suspending 30.3% of the student population, however after implementation of restorative discipline practices, the percentage of suspended students dropped to 10.3% (Jain et al., 2014). Zheng et al. (2018) stated the Toronto District Board in Canada reported that 73% of students who participated in the restorative discipline program never received another suspension throughout the rest of their school career. In the Pittsburg Public School District, implementation of the restorative discipline policy had positive effects such as a decrease in the number of suspensions, a decrease in the suspension rates between high and lower income students, and teachers reported an improvement in school climate (Augustine et al., 2018). According to Kaveney and Drewery (2011), teachers using restorative discipline reported having better relationships with their students.

If the campus study site decides to accept and implement my recommendation, the data that will be monitored will be that which has been collected under the restorative discipline policy. This is important because the current discipline data could be compared with the data from 2017 through the present school year to examine differences, if any. It is possible that other campuses may follow, and administrators can get the school board involved. The district's school board presides over changes in discipline policies.

Research

An important component of preparing for this position paper with policy recommendation was reviewing scholarly peer-reviewed journals. The focus of my policy recommendation was the discipline data and the administrators because they will be responsible for monitoring the discipline referrals and suspensions data. Datafication is a way of interpreting and understanding data associated with classroom management and student discipline (Selwyn, 2015) Datafication is also referred to as converting social action into quantifiable data for the purpose of tracking people in real-time (Manolev et al., 2018). To successfully implement a policy, the factors that support the policy implementation are needed (Wandasari et al., 2019).

Synopsis of the Study

I began this study by discussing the local problem of inconsistent trends in the number of discipline referrals and suspensions during the 6-year implementation of three different discipline policies. The problem was defined by using discipline data from the study site. Research questions were created, and a literature review was completed using zero tolerance discipline, progressive discipline, and restorative discipline, as well as, discipline policy reviews, discipline referrals, and analyzing data. After completion of the literature review, the research design and approach used for the study were discussed. Setting and sample, and instrumentation and materials were also discussed.

The purpose of this quantitative ex post facto study was to investigate the inconsistent trends in the total number of discipline referrals and suspensions for zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies that were all implemented

within a 6-year period. The findings showed there were insignificant differences in the total number of referrals and significant differences in total number of suspensions during each 2-year implementation of each discipline policy.

Referral data from 1,528 participants was analyzed using ANCOVA to find out if there was a difference in the total number of discipline referrals during the implementation of the three different discipline policies while controlling for GPA. The referrals' rate was greater during the zero tolerance discipline policy period ($M = 4.604$) as compared to progressive discipline policy ($M = 4.176$) and restorative discipline policy ($M = 4.263$) but not significantly. The test of between-subjects effects showed that there were no significant differences in the number of discipline referrals under each discipline policy, $F(2, 1524) = .910$, $p = .403$. With a value of $p = .403$ which is higher than .05, the results, for the research study showed there were no significant differences in the total number of referrals during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive and restorative discipline policies when controlling for GPA. The finding of no significant differences, in this research study, is not the result that we would like to have received because it tells us that changing the discipline policy from zero tolerance to progressive, then from progressive to restorative did not make a difference in what was happening at this campus. The large sample size that was used usually presents a significant result; however, this study failed to present the results that were expected. Six years of three different discipline policies with no significant differences between them is unacceptable and hard to digest. This, in my opinion, was an injustice to the students who received referrals and possibly received suspensions for those referrals.

Suspension data from 1,527 participants were analyzed to find out if there was a difference in the total number of suspensions during the implementation of the three discipline policies, using GPA as the control variable. The test of between-subjects effects for suspensions showed that there were differences in the number of suspensions under each discipline policy, $F(2, 1523) = 45.970$, $p = .000$. With a value $p = .000$ which is less than .05, there were significant differences in the total number of suspensions during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies when controlling for GPA. Due to the differences in the total number of suspensions during the implementation of zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies when controlling for GPA, post hoc testing was conducted using ANCOVA to confirm where the differences occurred between groups. With a sample size of 1527, post hoc testing of suspensions was reviewed, using Bonferroni's method of testing. These findings need to be interpreted with caution due to the violation of assumptions. Suspensions during zero tolerance policy ($M = 1.532$) was significantly higher than suspensions during progressive discipline policy ($M = .695$) and restorative discipline policy ($M = .612$); suspensions during progressive and restorative discipline policies were close. Both the tests of between-subjects effects and univariate tests showed a significant difference in suspensions during implementation of all three discipline policies, $F = (2, 1524) = 39.798$, $p = .000$. According to Bonferroni's post hoc testing, the comparisons showed zero tolerance to have a significantly higher number of suspensions when compared to progressive and restorative disciplines, where $p = .000$. The comparison between progressive discipline and restorative discipline, where $p = .286$,

showed no significant difference. No significant differences between progressive discipline and restorative discipline are not what was expected because as stated before, this means that the discipline policies likely did not make much difference in what was happening at the campus.

There could be many reasons for the discipline referrals that showed no significant differences. First, if faculty were not aware of a policy change, then it is possible that referrals were written under the assumption that zero tolerance or progressive was still being implemented. Second, faculty may not have been trained on the specifics and expectations of each discipline policy and how it was to be used at the campus. Third, there may be faculty that have zero tolerance for any behavior issues and use referrals as an easy way to have students removed.

Reasons for the comparable number of suspensions under progressive and restorative discipline policies are more difficult to come up with since only administrators can make decisions on this disciplinary action. I believe that some of the suspensions under restorative discipline were decided on without the use of the restorative circle, a meeting with the victim and the person who harmed the victim or property. The restorative circle should be implemented before moving to the punishment phase; however, the suspensions were dealt as the first course of action. Time may have played a role in how and why students received suspensions; it is much easier and takes less effort to suspend students then to create a restorative circle and listen to both sides which can sometimes take hours. Administrators at this large urban high school have numerous referrals to go through during a school day; then add lunch duty, classroom walk-

throughs, and other duties as assigned there is not enough time to sit for hours working through restorative circles so assigning suspensions, which takes very little time becomes the norm and possibly eases some of the daily stress.

The Policy Recommendation

The policy recommendation, based on the results of the research, is for the administrative team at the study site. Discipline data from zero tolerance (2013-2015), progressive (2015-2017), and restorative (2017-2019) were analyzed to find the differences, if any, existed in the total number of discipline referrals and suspensions. The results of the study showed that over the 6-year span of the three different discipline policies, the differences in the total number of discipline referrals were insignificant and the differences in the total number of suspensions were significant. The reasons for this policy recommendation are (a) the findings from the research, and (b) there was no evidence that the discipline data has been monitored at this campus.

Due to the findings, it is recommended that the study site monitor discipline referrals and suspension data during current school years before initiating any changes. It is understood that discipline policies are decided upon by the school board, however, if the campus has data to share with the deciding parties it may change direction of the school board's decision. At the campus, principals have the authority and are responsible to setting school-wide rules and teachers have the right to exercise when, how, and whom to discipline (Curran, 2017). The study site has three or more assistant principals that can easily take on the task of monitoring the discipline data. This site also has two data analyst that could monitor and report the findings of the discipline data.

Recommended Course of Action

This policy recommendation took the position that before changes are made to discipline policies, discipline data for current school years should be monitored. Jean-Pierre et al. (2018) suggest that schools create committees to manage the movement to alternative school discipline using discipline-related data. Policies propose future courses of action and can be modified if or when needed (King & Kraemer, 2019). This policy recommendation requires no funding; it only requires the time needed to extract the discipline data.

The recommendation is for discipline data to be extracted and examined at the end of each semester, however as a last resort this task can be done at the end of the school year if time does not permit it to be done in the first and second semesters. I do not suggest waiting until the new school year to pull the data from the previous year. The data are not only helpful for decision-making, but it will also be helpful with keeping track of students with excessive referrals or suspensions, tracking teachers who write excessive discipline referrals, and tracking disproportionate referrals and suspensions when breaking data down by race, gender, or disability. According to National Association of School Principals (2015), school leaders should review discipline data that has been broken down by race, ethnicity, gender, and disability to see if any problems exist and monitor progress of school discipline reforms. Monitoring current discipline data will also help with tracking students who frequently receive discipline referrals and/or suspensions. By monitoring the frequency of students' referrals, administrators have the options of bringing in counselors or intervention specialists to work with these

students and their parents to reveal the underlying problems that may be the cause of behavioral issues. Monitoring discipline data will help the campus administrator with making sure that discipline referrals and suspensions are not impacted by students' race, gender, or disability. Options for using the discipline data are unlimited.

This policy recommendation will assist with monitoring discipline data at the study site high school. The policy recommendation was presented to the principal and assistant principals at a weekly Leadership Team meeting. If the data-based recommendation of monitoring discipline data is adopted, the implementation will take place during the 2021-2022 school year.

Project Evaluation

A policy recommendation should be evaluated to measure the usefulness to those who are implementing the policy. Evaluation means examining the past to better the future and is an important investigative process in well-organized, academic events (Khan et al., 2017). This policy recommendation was evaluated using data, for the study site, that was retrieved from the district's Grants Compliance and Monitoring Department. The purpose of the policy was to address monitoring the high school's discipline referral and suspension data for each school year to make evidence-based decisions regarding discipline and/or discipline policies. By monitoring the most current discipline data, campus leadership will be able to see differences if any from one semester to the other and make changes if necessary; or if time is an issue, discipline data can be viewed at the end of the current school year. Either method of monitoring discipline data will evaluate the progress of the policy recommendation.

Conclusion

Monitoring discipline referral and suspension data in a timely manner is important when making decisions about student discipline. The findings of the research, 6 years of three different discipline policies each with a 2-year implementation period showed the following: (a) no significant differences in the total number of discipline referrals, (b) significant differences in the total number of suspensions; and (c) no reasons given for the changes in discipline policies nor did some of the faculty know when the discipline policies changed from zero tolerance to progressive discipline, then from progressive discipline to restorative discipline. The fact that there were no significant differences in the total number of referrals during zero tolerance, progressive, and restorative discipline policies tell us that these policies did not make a difference in what was happening at the campus. This should set off an alarm and make those in charge responsible for ensuring that discipline policies are implemented in a way that they [policies] do what is intended and that is to decrease the number of referrals and suspensions.

The restorative discipline policy is still being implemented at the campus and administrators could use current data and data from this study as a comparison to find out how well the campus data has improved from 2019. The ideal results from monitoring discipline data would be to observe decreases in referrals and suspensions since restorative discipline has been implemented longer than zero tolerance and progressive discipline policies were implemented. Archival discipline data for fall 2019 through spring 2021 could be requested from the district.

Although the local district's school board is responsible for making decisions

regarding discipline policies, the leadership team at the campus level can produce their data and possibly aide in the process of revising or amending discipline policies or completely changing policies. If adopted, this policy recommendation will begin with the 2021-2022 school year.

References

Augustine, C., Engberg, J., Grimm, G., Lee, E., Wang, E., Christianson, K., & Joseph, A. (2018). *Can restorative discipline practices improve school climate and curb suspensions? An evaluation of the impact of restorative practices in a mid-sized urban school district.* Rand. https://www.rand.org/t/RR2840

Buckmaster, D. (2020). *From zero tolerance to restorative practices: A narrative inquiry of the transition in policy and practice.* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Oklahoma.

Camacho, K., Duchemin, A., Nickerson, A., Wallace, R., & Krezmien, M. (2020, October 24). *Using progressive discipline to reduce disproportionate suspension in schools.* [PowerPoint slides]. https://nepsych.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Kristine-Camacho-Camacho_Duchemin_Nickerson_Wallace_Krezmien_Suspension.pdf

Christle, C., Nelson, M., & Jolivett, K. (2004). School characteristics related to the use of suspension. *Education and Treatment of Children, 27*(4), 509-526.

Curran, F. (2017, December). Influence over school discipline policy: Variation across levels of governance, school contexts, and time. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives, 25*(119), 5. https://eppa.asu.edu/ojs/

DeJong, P., Trupe, E., & Zwingel, E. (n.d.). Motivating students positively through restorative justice discipline. *Empowering Research for Educators, 4*(1). https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/ere/vol4/iss1/2

Diaz-Mendoza, V. (2020). *Doing discipline different: Evaluating the implementation of restorative justice as an alternative to punitive discipline in New York City public schools* [Doctoral dissertation, City University of New York]. City University of New York Academic Works. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/4000

Eden, L. & Wagstaff, M. F. (2020). Evidence-based policymaking and the wicked problem of SDG 5 gender equality. *Journal of International Business Policy.* https://doi.org/10.1057/s42214-020-00054-w

Feldman, A. & Maynard, R. (2020, January 30). *The evidence-based policy revolution waiting to happen.* Government Executive. https://www.govexec.com/management/2020/01/evidence-based-policy-revolution-waiting-to-happen/162749/print/

Heise, M. & Nance, J. (2020). To report or not to report: Data on schools, student discipline, and a school-to-prison pipeline. Cornell Law School. http://ssrn.com/abstract=3677247

Jaine, Henrissa, B., Brown, M. & Pretty, K. (2014). *Restorative justice in Oakland schools, implementation and impact: An effective strategy to reduce racially disproportionate discipline, suspensions, and improve academic outcomes.* https://www.ousd.org/cms/lib/CA01001176/Centricity/Domain/134/OUSD-RJ%20Report%20revised%20Final.pdf

Kaveney, K. & Drewery, W. (2011). Classroom meetings as a restorative practice: A Study of teachers' responses to extended professional development innovation.

International Journal on School Disaffection, 8(1), 5-12.

https://files.eric.gov/fulltext/EJ962367.pdf

Khan, A., Naz, B., Iqbal, J., & Ghaffar, A. (2019). Maintenance of students' code of conduct in developing progressive school discipline. *Journal of Education, Society, and Behavioural Science, 30*(1), 1-6.

https://doi:10.9734/JESBS/2019/v30i130119

Khan, A. & Rahman, M. (2017). The role of evaluation at the stages of policy formulation, implementation, and impact assessment. *AGATHOS, 8*(4), 173-186.

https://www.agathos-international-review.com

Kobie, A. (2020). Defiant or deterred? *School discipline practices, student perceptions, and juvenile delinquency* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Sam Houston State University.

Koehler, K. (2020). *School-based restorative justice: Philosophical alignment and discipline outcomes* [Unpublished dissertation]. University of Dayton.

King, J. L., & Kraemer, K. L. (2019). Policy: An information systems frontier. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 20*(6), 842-847.

https://doi:10.17705/1.jais.00553

Manolev, J., Sullivan, A., & Slee, R. (2018). The datafication of discipline: ClassDojo, surveillance and performative classroom culture. *Learning, Media, and Technology.* https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2018.1558237

McCarter, S. (2017). The school-to-prison pipeline: A primer for social workers. *Social Work, 62*(1), 53-61. https://doi:10.1093/sw/swww078

NASSP Policy & Advocacy Center. (2015). *Position statement: School discipline.* National Association of Secondary School Principals. nassp.org/advocacy Education Commission of the States. https://www.ecs.org

Parker, S. (2020). *A comparative, relational study of social-emotional learning and school discipline by race* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. American College of Education.

Redfield, S. & Nance, J. (2016). *The school-to-prison pipeline: Preliminary report.* American Bar Association. https://www.americanbar.org/

Sartain, L., Allensworth, E., Porter, S., Mader, N., & Steinberg, M. (2015). *Suspending Chicago's students.* University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research. https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/suspending-chicagos-students-differences-discipline-practices-across-schools

Sherman, L. & Strang, H. (2007). *Restorative justice: The evidence.* Smith Institute.

State of Montana. (2013). *Discipline handling guide.* State Human Resources Division Department of Administration. https://hr.mt.gov/Portals/201/newdocs/guidesandforms/disciplinehandlingguide.pdf?ver=2014-11-03-155603-563

Wandasari, Y., Kristlawan, M., & Arafat, Y. (2019). Policy evaluation of school's literacy movement on improving discipline of state high school students. Inter-national *Journal of Scientific & Technology Research, 8*(4), 194. https://www.ijstr.org

Zheng, S., & De Jesus, S. (2018). *Effects of restorative practices on suspended pupils'*

school engagement, academic achievement, and post-secondary destinations.

Toronto District School Board.

https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/research/docs/reports/RestorativePractices-

Study2006-07to2016-17.pdf