

DIFFERENCES IN EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE PRACTICES FOR GRADES 5  
AND 6 STUDENTS: A TEXAS MULTIYEAR STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Education

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by

Tim Harkrider

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my family – you are my “why.” To my wife, Toni, thank you for the little notes you put in my dinner each Wednesday night for two years. I never told you that they made me laugh many times when I needed a lift. I could not have completed this program without your support – I love you. To Reece and Meredith, thank you for your support and for not being frustrated with me when I was gone every Wednesday night. I missed you each time, but you knew I had a goal and you helped me achieve it. To Dylan, thank you for the late phone conversations each week as I drove home from class. I know I was probably pretty tired during each call, but you always gave me some energy when I needed it. I hope I have provided all three of you an example that you can do anything that you put your mind to no matter how difficult it can be. Last but not least – my Mom and Dad. Thank you for providing me with a work ethic very early in life that has been 100% responsible for my success in my educational career. There is nothing in my life that I have ever tried to do that I didn’t know I had your full support every step of the way – thank you.

## ABSTRACT

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### **Purpose**

The overall purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the degree to which economic status was related to the number of days that students were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence. In the first study, the effect of economic status (i.e., Not Poor and Poor) on the number of days that Grade 5 and 6 Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. In the second study, the effect of economic status (i.e., Not Poor and Poor) on the number of days that Grade 5 and 6 Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. In the third study, the effect of economic status (i.e., Not Poor and Poor) on the number of days that Grade 5 and 6 Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. As such, the extent to which trends are present in the number of days students were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence by their economic status for the four major ethnic/racial groups of boys over a 3-year time period was determined.

### **Method**

In this analysis, a causal-comparative research design was used. Archival data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency through a Public Information Request for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years.

### **Findings**

Results were consistent across all three school years and both grade levels and across all three articles in this journal-ready dissertation. For each exclusionary discipline

assignment investigated, Grade 5 and 6 boys and girls who were Poor were clearly assigned to more days of exclusionary discipline than Grade 5 and 6 boys and girls who were Not Poor. Grade 5 and 6 Black boys and Black girls who were Poor were assigned more days of exclusionary discipline than Asian, Hispanic, and White boys and girls who were Poor. The transition from Grade 5 to Grade 6 resulted in an increase in the number of days boys and girls who were Poor were assigned exclusionary discipline consequences. Results discussed herein were consistent with existing literature regarding exclusionary discipline assignments by economic status and ethnicity/race.

*Keywords:* In-school suspension, Out-of-school suspension, Ethnicity/Race, Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, Economic status, Poor, Not poor, Boys, Girls, Grades 5 and 6

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I would like to thank Dr. Mike Moses and the late Dr. Susan Simpson, my mentor, for pushing me to pursue to enter the SHSU program and obtain my doctorate. I know I put it off for a few years, but you never let me forget that I needed to get this done. To the most incredible Dissertation Chair whom I could ever imagine – Dr. John Slate, you my friend are a “machine.” You took my work ethic to a different level. Your support, guidance, and consistency were incredible every step of the way, and I will never be able to thank you enough for your effort in accomplishing this goal. To my Dissertation Committee Members, Dr. Lunenburg, Dr. Martinez-Garcia, and Dr. Hemmen, thank you for your work and support throughout this process.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In 1994, the Gun Free Schools Act became a national policy of zero tolerance for having weapons in schools. Included in this policy was a one year mandatory expulsion if violated (Skiba, 2008, 2010; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). When zero tolerance policies were created, the assumption was made by school administrators and policymakers that student misbehaviors would be eliminated through the use of these discipline techniques. Unfortunately, researchers (e.g., Curran, 2016; Green, Maynard, & Stegenga, 2018; Skiba, Arrendondo, & Williams, 2014) have documented that neither student misbehaviors have decreased nor has school safety improved. In fact, results from zero tolerance policies are predictive not only of larger increases in suspension rates for Black students but of 0.5 percentage point increases in school district suspension rates (Curran, 2016).

#### **Review of the Literature for In-School Discipline Consequences for Boys**

In the past two decades, the frequency of in-school suspension has been increasing in schools in the United States (e.g., Curran, 2016; Green, Maynard, & Stegenga, 2018; Lunenburg & Irby, 2017; Skiba, Arrendondo, & Williams, 2014). Fabelo et al. (2011) reported that one-third of all K-12 students will experience some form of exclusionary discipline during their school years. The overuse of these exclusionary discipline practices has created serious concerns (Lunenburg, 2013). For the 2013-2014 school year, the most recent year of data available from the United States Department of Education, 2.7 million students in the United States were assigned to one or more days in in-school suspension, days in which students were excluded from their

regular education classrooms (Office of Civil Rights, 2014, p. 1). Of this 2.7 million students, almost 2 million were boys (i.e., 1.8 million) and 863,269 were girls. Though boys were approximately half of the student enrollment, boys accounted for more than two-thirds, 68%, of the in-school suspension assignments in the United States. Of note is that although Black boys totaled 7.9% of the student enrollment in 2013-2014, they were assigned to almost one-third, 30.2%, of the in-school suspension assignments. Similarly, though Hispanic boys were 12.7% of the student enrollment, they were assigned to almost one-fourth, 23.1%, of the in-school suspensions. As such, Black and Hispanic boys were clearly assigned to in-school suspension at a rate almost twice as high as their percentages of the total student enrollment (Losen, 2015; Lunenburg, 2012; Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

Ethnic and racial disparities in discipline consequences, similar to well-established disparities in academic achievement, have been well documented in the United States (Anyon et al., 2014; Bowman-Perrot et al., 2013; Losen, 2015; Lunenburg, 2013; Skiba et al., 2014; Skiba, Eckes, & Brown, 2009). Skiba et al. (2011) examined data from 436 schools across the United States during the 2005-2006 school year. They determined that Black and Hispanic students were more statistically significantly likely to be disciplined for minor infractions than White students. In a recent analysis, Ritter and Anderson (2018) examined 7 years of student and infraction level data from every public school in Arkansas. In their investigation, they established that Black students were 2.4 times more likely to be assigned an exclusionary discipline consequence than their White peers. In another recent study, Sartain et al. (2015) analyzed data on 85,000 Chicago high school students in Chicago during the 2013-2014 school year. In their investigation,

Black students were assigned three more times often to exclusionary discipline consequences than Hispanic students and four times more often than White and Asian students.

With respect to the state of interest for this article, Texas accounted for 19% of all documented in-school suspension assignments in the United States (Office of Civil Rights, 2014). In the most recent year of Texas data available, the 2018-2019 school year, 5.5 million students were enrolled in Texas public schools. Out of this 5.5 million students, over one million (i.e., 1,092,027) of them were assigned to one or more days of in-school suspension. In-school suspension assignments in Texas for boys was commensurate with the national statistics previously discussed in the United States. Though boys were approximately half of the student enrollment, boys accounted for more than two-thirds, 67%, of the in-school suspension assignments in Texas. Of note is that although Black boys were 6.4% of the student enrollment in 2013-2014, they were assigned to over one-fifth, 21.9%, of the in-school suspension assignments. Similarly, though Hispanic boys were 26.5% of the student enrollment, they were assigned to almost half, 49.5%, of the in-school suspensions. Accordingly, Black and Hispanic boys in Texas were clearly assigned to in-school suspension at a rate over twice as high as their percentages of the total student enrollment (Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

In a Texas statewide study, Curtiss and Slate (2013) addressed discipline consequence assignments and reasons students were assigned to these consequences for Grades 4 and 5 boys and girls. They documented in their Texas statewide study the presence of clear inequities in the number of discipline consequence assignments by student gender. Grade 5 boys received 88%, 11,857, of the discipline consequences, and

Grade 4 boys received 95%, 3,513, of the discipline consequences. In relation to in-school suspension assignments, Grade 4 boys were assigned in-school suspension 2,568 times compared to Grade 4 girls being assigned in-school suspension only 116 times. Grade 5 boys were assigned in-school suspension 8,679 times compared to Grade 5 girls being assigned to an in-school suspension 1,193 times.

Addressed in the Curtiss and Slate (2013) investigation were inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences. Not examined in their study, nor in the majority of the extant literature (Ritter & Anderson, 2018; Sartain et al., 2015; Skiba et al., 2011), were the actual number of days that students were assigned to discipline consequences. Just as inequities have been clearly established in the assignment of discipline consequences (Curtiss & Slate, 2013; Khan & Slate, 2016; Theriot & Dupper, 2010), inequities could also be present in the number of days students are assigned to discipline consequences. In a recent analysis, White and Slate (2017) examined the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 students were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status. In Grade 6, students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned statistically significantly more days, 1.05 more, to in-school suspension than Grade 6 students who were not economically disadvantaged. Grade 7 students who were economically disadvantaged were also assigned statistically significantly more days, 1.09 days more, to in-school suspension than Grade 7 students who were not economically disadvantaged. Finally, Grade 8 students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned statistically significantly more days, 0.87 more, to in-school suspension than Grade 8 students who were not economically disadvantaged (White & Slate, 2017). As

such, clear inequities were documented in the number of days middle school students were assigned to a discipline consequence by their economic status.

In one of two most recent published works that could be located, White (2019) investigated the extent in which inequities were present in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension for Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black, Hispanic, and White boys during the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. During the four years examined, Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.96, 0.95, and 0.73 respectively in these four school years, more days of in-school suspension than Grades 6, 7, and 8 White boys. Grades 6, 7, and 8 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.62, 0.49, and 0.33 more days than Grades 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic boys respectively in these four school years. Grades 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic boys were assigned an average of 0.42, 0.48, and 0.42 more days than Grades 6, 7, and 8 White boys respectively in these four school years. Provided in the White (2019) publication was more evidence of the presence of inequities in the number of days middle school students were assigned to a discipline consequence by their ethnicity/race.

In the most recent published article that was located, Harkrider and Slate (2020) analyzed the effect of economic status on the number of days Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2015-2016 school year. In their Texas statewide investigation, poverty was statistically significantly related to the number of days boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 6 boys who were economically disadvantaged were assigned over one more day to an in-school suspension than Grade 6 boys who were not economically disadvantaged. Grade 7 boys who were economically disadvantaged were assigned over one more day to an in-school suspension

than Grade 7 boys who were not economically disadvantaged. Grade 8 boys who were economically disadvantaged were also assigned over one more day to an in-school suspension than Grade 8 boys who were not economically disadvantaged.

Of note in the Harkrider and Slate (2020) study were the total numbers of boys who were assigned to an in-school suspension. Of the almost 40,000 Grade 6 boys who were assigned to an in-school suspension, almost three-fourths of them were economically disadvantaged. Similar numbers and percentages were documented for Grades 7 and 8 boys. As such, poverty was determined to be related to not only the number of days students were assigned to an in-school suspension but to student assignment to an in-school suspension.

In this Texas, statewide investigation, Grades 5 and 6 are the focus because of well-documented issues regarding transitions from elementary school to middle school (Kennedy-Lewis, 2013; Theriot & Dupper, 2010). Few researchers, however, have addressed the transition from elementary school to middle school, with respect to discipline. In one such investigation, Khan and Slate (2016) analyzed data on Grade 6 students. In their Texas statewide study, 33.5% of Black students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension. In comparison, 19.93% of Black students who were not economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension. Similarly, higher percentages of Hispanic students who were economically disadvantaged (20.2%) were assigned to an in-school suspension than Hispanic students who were not in poverty (12.0%).

The transition from elementary school to middle school has been documented to result in more discipline incidents and increased use of exclusionary discipline practices.

For example, Theriot and Dupper (2010) analyzed data initially on Grade 5 students and then the next school year when they were enrolled in Grade 6. Of their sample of Grade 5 students, a small percentage, 7.9%, had been assigned to a discipline consequence. A much higher percentage of these same students the following year in Grade 6, 26.2% of them were involved in a discipline incident. With reference to in-school suspension, 5.4% of Grade 5 students had been assigned to an in-school suspension. In the next school year, as Grade 6 students, 48.1% of them had been assigned to an in-school suspension. As such, Theriot and Dupper (2010) established clear evidence of transition issues, with respect to discipline consequences.

These inequities are cause for concern because researchers (Hilberth, 2010; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Noltemeyer, Ward, & Mcloughlin, 2015) have established the presence of relationships between exclusionary discipline practices and negative academic outcomes. Noltemeyer et al. (2015) documented the presence of negative relationships between in-school suspension assignments and student achievement. Hilberth and Slate (2014) determined that exclusionary discipline practices decreased academic instructional time, resulting in lower reading and mathematics test scores on the Texas state-mandated assessments. Hilberth (2010), in a comprehensive Texas statewide analysis, examined the state-mandated reading and mathematics assessments for students who were assigned to an in-school suspension and for students who were not assigned to such a consequence. Hilberth (2010) established that Black students who were assigned to an in-school suspension had statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics test scores than Black students who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Moreover, White students assigned to an in-school suspension also had statistically

significant lower reading and mathematics test scores than White students who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. The documented inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences may be a contributing factor to increasing the academic achievement gap between students of color and White students.

### **Review of the Literature of In-School Discipline Consequences for Girls**

The overwhelming majority of research articles in school discipline has been written about boys because of their overrepresentation in exclusionary discipline practices (Skiba et al., 2014; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). In the past 10 to 15 years, however, inequities have begun to be documented in exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to girls. During the most recent year of data available at the national level, from 2013-2014, 863,369 girls in the United States were assigned one or more days of in-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2014, p. 1). Of note is that although Black girls were only 7.6% of the student enrollment in 2013-2014, they were assigned to over one-third, 37.1%, of the in-school suspensions. Similarly, though Hispanic girls were only 12.1% of the student enrollment, they were assigned to almost one-fourth, 23.7%, of the in-school suspensions. Black and Hispanic girls were clearly assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate over twice their percentages of the total student enrollment (Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

With respect to the state of interest for this article, Texas, girls accounted for 19.4% of the total in-school suspensions in the United States (Office of Civil Rights, 2014). When compared to national statistics from the United States Department of Education, similar disparities were present for girls with respect to inequities being present in in-school suspension assignments in Texas. Although Black girls in Texas

were only 6.1% of the state student enrollment, they accounted for over one-fourth, 25.2%, of the in-school suspension assignments. Hispanic girls were 25.2% of the state student enrollment, but were assigned over half, 52.2%, of the in-school suspension assignments for girls. Clearly, Black and Hispanic girls were assigned to in-school suspension at higher rates than White and Asian girls. In fact, Black and Hispanic girls in Texas were clearly assigned to in-school suspension over twice as much as their percentages of the total student enrollment (Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

In a recent Texas statewide investigation, Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016) examined the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black girls during the 2013-2014 school year. They documented that Black girls in Grade 4 were assigned to an in-school suspension 197 times whereas Hispanic and White girls in Grade 4 were assigned to an in-school suspension only 72 and 94 times, respectively. Readers should note that the percentages of Hispanic and White girls enrolled in Grade 4 in Texas are substantially higher than the percentages of Black girls. The numbers of in-school suspension assignments to Black girls increased by almost 6 times, 1,152 in Grade 5 and over 5 times more, 6,522 in Grade 6. Black girls in Grades 8-11 were assigned to an in-school suspension 9,987, 9,275, 14,390, 8,565, and 5,088 times, respectively. With respect to Hispanic girls, their numbers of in-school suspension assignments increased by almost 12 times, 848 in Grade 5, and almost 16 times more, 13,381 in Grade 6. Hispanic girls in Grades 8-11 were assigned to an in-school suspension 23,178, 40,907, 20,482, and 11,267 times, respectively. The large increases in the number of in-school suspension assignments to Black and Hispanic girls in

transition grades, Grades 6 and 9, are congruent with the extant literature (Lane, Oakes, Carter, & Messenger, 2015; Theriot & Dupper, 2010).

Previous researchers (e.g., Ritter & Anderson, 2018; Sartain et al., 2015) have focused on the the presence of inequities in exclusionary discipline assignments but not on the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline assignments. This issue of number of days is an important issue, because if inequities are present in the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline assignments, some student groups are missing more instructional time than their peers for similar discipline issues. In a recent study, White (2019) investigated the extent to which inequities were present in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension for Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black, Hispanic, and White girls during the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. Across the four years of data that were analyzed, Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls were assigned on average 0.90, 0.89, and 0.63 more days, respectively to an in-school suspension than Grade 6, 7, and 8 White girls. Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls were assigned an average of 0.56, 0.53, and 0.47 more days, respectively to an in-school suspension than Grade 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic girls, in these four school years. Grade 6 and 7 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.46 and 0.36 more days, respectively than Grade 6 and 7 White girls in these four school years. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned more days of in-school suspension, 0.21, than White girls during the 2014-2015 school year only. Because of these documented disparities in the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence, along with well-established inequities in the assignment to exclusionary discipline consequences, Black and Hispanic

girls are clearly excluded from learning opportunities much more often and for longer time periods than other racial/ethnic groups (Hilberth & Slate, 2014).

Exclusionary discipline practices have been linked to poorer academic performance for students receiving such consequences. Hilberth (2010) conducted a Texas statewide investigation on discipline consequences and state-mandated reading and mathematics assessments. The reading and mathematics performance of students in Grades 6-8 who were assigned a discipline consequence were compared to the reading and mathematics performance of their same grade level peers who were not assigned to a discipline consequence. Black students who were assigned to an in-school suspension had statistically significantly lower reading scores on the Texas state-mandated assessment than Black students who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Similarly, Black students who were assigned to an in-school suspension had statistically significantly lower mathematics scores on the Texas state-mandated assessment than Black students who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Similar results were present for White students, in that assignment to an in-school suspension was related to statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics performance scores on the Texas state-mandated assessment.

### **Review of the Literature of Out-of-School Discipline Consequences for Boys**

Exclusionary discipline practices have become a frequently used technique in discipline management plans across the United States (Green et al., 2018; Pyne, 2019; Skiba, 2008; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). One of the most prevalent exclusionary discipline consequences is that of out-of-school suspension. In the most recent data available from the United States Department of Education from the 2013-2014 school year, 2.6 million

students were assigned to one or more days of out-of-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2014, p. 1). Of the 2.6 million students, 1.8 million were boys. Although boys were approximately half of the student enrollment during the 2013-2014 school year, they accounted for 71% of the out-of-school suspension assignments in the United States. Enrollment numbers by ethnicity/race and out-of-school suspension assignments generate more cause for concern. Black boys made up 7.9% of the student enrollment, but they accounted for 37.5% of the out-of-school suspension assignments. Hispanic boys made up 12.7% of the student enrollment but accounted for 21.8% of the out-of-school suspension assignments. As such, Black boys were clearly assigned to out-of-school suspension at a rate of almost five times as high as their percentage of the total student enrollment and Hispanic boys were assigned almost two times their percentage of the total enrollment (Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

With respect to the state of interest for this article, Texas, 246,474 out-of-school suspension assignments were documented in the 2013-2014 school year (Office of Civil Rights, 2014). Boys accounted for 70%, 173,302, of the out-of-school suspensions in Texas. Although Black boys made up 6.4% of the enrollment in Texas, Black boys received 30.4% of the out-of-school suspensions. Similarly, Hispanic boys made up 26.5% of the enrollment in Texas, and Hispanic boys received 50.2% of the out-of-school suspensions (Office of Civil Rights, 2014). Black boys were assigned to almost five times more out-of-school suspensions than the percentage of their student enrollment and Hispanic boys were assigned almost two times more than their student enrollment in Texas.

In a recent Texas statewide investigation of middle school discipline consequence assignments, Hilberth and Slate (2014) addressed the degree to which disparities were present in out-of-school suspensions for Black and White students. In Grade 6, 19.4% of Black students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, but only 3.7% of White students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. In Grade 7, 22.6% of Black students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension but only 4.8% of White students were assigned out-of-school suspension. In Grade 8, 23.2% of Black students were assigned an out-of-school suspension but only 5.4% of White students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Readers should be aware that, in Texas, the percentage of White students as part of the total student enrollment is over two times more than the percentage of Black students. As such, Black students were assigned out-of-school suspension over 4 times more than White students.

Poverty is another factor that contributes to inequities in student discipline. In a recent Texas study, Khan and Slate (2016) addressed the relationship between poverty and exclusionary discipline consequences for Grade 6 students. Khan and Slate (2016) established that Black students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to 21.3% of the out-of-school suspensions in comparison to only 9.7% of Black students who were not economically disadvantaged and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Hispanic students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to 9.0% of the out-of-school suspensions compared to only 4.1% of Hispanic students who were not economically disadvantaged. White students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to 6.4% of the out-of-school suspensions compared to only 1.9% of White students who were not economically disadvantaged. In the Khan and

Slate (2016) Texas statewide analysis, students who were economically disadvantaged, regardless of their ethnicity/race, were assigned to at least two times more out-of-school suspension assignments than their same ethnic/racial group of students who were not economically disadvantaged.

Documented to date has been evidence of racial/ethnic disparities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences. Not as well established is the presence of potential inequities in the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences. After an extensive search of the literature, only two such research studies were located (Miller & Slate, 2019; White, 2019). White (2019) investigated the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence by ethnicity/race for middle school students in a statewide Texas study across four school years. For Grade 6, Black boys were assigned 0.57 more days to an out-of-school suspension than Hispanic boys, and 1.15 more days than White boys. Grade 6 Hispanic boys were assigned 0.58 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White boys. In Grade 7, Black boys were assigned 0.46 more days to an out-of-school suspension than Hispanic boys, and 1.28 more days than White boys. Grade 7 Hispanic boys were assigned 0.82 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White boys. For Grade 8, Black boys were assigned 0.38 more days of an out-of-school suspension than Hispanic boys, and 1.23 more days than White boys. Grade 8 Hispanic boys were assigned 0.85 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White boys. Clear inequities were present in the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black and Hispanic boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension when compared to White boys.

In a similar analysis as White (2019) but for high school students, Miller and Slate (2019) completed a Texas statewide analysis of out-of-school suspension assignments and number of days assigned to that consequence by the ethnicity/race of Grade 9, 10, and 11 boys. In Grade 9, Hispanic boys were 10 times more likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension than White boys and 7 times more likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension than White boys in Grades 10 and 11. A similar pattern was observed for Black and White boys. In Grades 9, 10, and 11 Black boys were 5 times more likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension than White boys. With respect to number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension Hispanic boys were assigned over one-tenth of a day more to an out-of-school suspension than White boys. Black boys were assigned about two-tenths of a day more to an out-of-school suspension than White boys. As such, clear inequities were present in the number of days Grade 9, 10, and 11 Hispanic and Black boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension when compared to White boys.

A reason why the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension is relevant is that exclusionary discipline practices have been established as contributions to poor academic performance. Hilberth (2010) conducted a Texas statewide analysis of Grades 6 through 8 out-of-school suspension discipline consequences and their relationship to reading and mathematics performance. Grade 6-8 Black students who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had statistically significantly poorer reading achievement than their peers who were not assigned to such a consequence. Grade 6-8 White students who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had statistically significantly lower reading performance than Grade 6-8 White students who were not

assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Performances on the mathematics assessments were similar in nature. Grade 6-8 Black and White students who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension assignment had statistically significantly lower mathematics achievement than Grade 6-8 Black and White students who were not assigned an out-of-school suspension assignment. The documented inequities in the assignment of out-of-school suspensions may be a contributing factor to increasing academic achievement gaps between students of color and White students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Exclusionary discipline practices decrease instructional time and, as a result, have negative effects on student achievement (Hilberth, 2010; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Noltemeyer et al., 2015). The primary exclusionary discipline consequence, that of in-school suspension, has been a major discipline consequence used in schools in the United States for well over the past two decades (Cholewa et al., 2018). For the 2013-2014 school year, the Office of Civil Rights (2014, p. 1) reported 2.7 million students in the United States were assigned to an in-school suspension. Inequities in the assignment of in-school suspension have been documented by student economic status (Harkrider & Slate, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; Pyne, 2019; White, 2019; White & Slate, 2017) and by student ethnicity/race (Anyon et al., 2014; Bowman-Perrot et al., 2013; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Skiba et al., 2009). Research on exclusionary discipline practices has been prevalent on boys for many years because of the inequities in the number of discipline assignments for boys (Skiba et al., 2002, 2014). In the past 10 to 15 years, however, inequities have begun to be documented in exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to girls. For the most recent year of national data in 2013-2014, 863,369 girls in

the United States were assigned to an in-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2014, p. 1).

The second major exclusionary discipline practice used by school administrators is out-of-school suspension. Not only are out-of-school suspension discipline consequences overused, more importantly they are being assigned in an inequitable and discriminatory manner (Chu & Ready, 2018; Lunenburg, 2013; Miller & Slate, 2019). During the 2013-2014 school year, over 2.6 million students were assigned one or more days of out-of-school suspension and 1.8 million were boys (Office of Civil Rights, 2014, p. 1). Similar to research findings on in-school suspension, inequities in out-of-school suspension assignments have been determined to be linked with student economic status (e.g., Khan & Slate, 2016) and with student race/ethnicity (e.g., Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller & Slate, 2019).

The extant literature, however, on inequities in the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences, such as in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension, is quite limited. In a recent publication, White (2019) established the presence of statistically significant differences in the number days assigned to out-of-school suspension. Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black and Hispanic boys were assigned to statistically significantly more days to an out-of-school suspension than their same grade level White boys. Miller and Slate (2019) also determined statistically significant differences existed in the number of days assigned to out-of-school suspension. Clear inequities were present in the number of days Grade 9, 10, and 11 Hispanic and Black boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension when compared to White boys.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The overall purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the degree to which economic status was related to the number of days that students were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence. In the first study, the effect of economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Extremely Poor) on the number of days that Grade 5 and 6 Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. In the second study, the effect of economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Extremely Poor) on the number of days that Grade 5 and 6 Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. In the third study, the effect of economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Extremely Poor) on the number of days that Grade 5 and 6 Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. As such, the extent to which trends are present in the number of days students were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence by their economic status for the four major ethnic/racial groups of boys over a 3-year time period was determined.

### **Significance of the Study**

A void exists in the extent research literature regarding the extent to which inequities might exist in the number of days assigned Grades 5 and 6 boys and girls are assigned to an in-school suspension. Numerous researchers have established the presence of disparities in exclusionary discipline consequence assignments by student ethnicity/race (e.g., Miller & Slate, 2019; Skiba et al., 2009, 2014; White, 2019) and by student economic status (e.g., Harkrider & Slate, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; Pyne, 2019; White, 2019; White & Slate, 2017). Khan and Slate (2016) documented the presence of discipline consequence differences for Grade 6 students. Economic status was

established to be clearly related to the assignment to exclusionary discipline consequences (Harkrider & Slate, 2020). Hilberth (2010) documented the presence of statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics performance on the Texas state-mandated assessments for students who were assigned to an in-school suspension than their peers who were not assigned to such a discipline consequence.

Literature is also available on the degree to which inequities exist in the number of days students are assigned to an out-of-school suspensions by student demographic characteristic. Similar to in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions have negative effects and interfere with student achievement. Moreover, out-of-school suspensions contribute to students having a greater risk for academic and psychosocial problems throughout their life (Anyon et al., 2014). Balfanz, Byrnes, and Fox (2015) determined that being suspended in Grade 9 doubled the risk of a student dropping out of high school. Each suspension decreased a students' odds of graduating high school by 20 percentage points. Out-of-school suspensions have become a punishment (Chu & Ready, 2018) rather than a discipline technique for major offenses which has led to a disconnect between suspended students and their campus. Establishing more research results on the Grade 5 to Grade 6 transition may be able to assist school administrators in developing more effective discipline practices to reduce the number of discipline incidents and exclusionary discipline practices.

### **Definition of Terms**

The key terms for the three research investigations in this journal-ready dissertation are provided for the reader below.

#### **Asian**

A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam (Texas Education Agency, 2018a, p. 4).

**Black**

The Texas Education Agency (2018a) defined Black as “a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups in Africa” (p. 4).

**Discipline Consequence**

A discipline consequence is an action taken by a teacher or school administrator that will teach children to respect and appropriately respect authority, to follow rules, and to accept responsibility for their behavior (Center for Parenting Education, p. 1).

**Economically Disadvantaged**

A category of students in Texas who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program are categorized as being economically disadvantaged. Family income determines the eligibility for the program (Texas Education Agency, 2013).

**Ethnicity**

Ethnicity determines whether a person is of Hispanic origin or not (Census Bureau, 2010, p. 1).

**Exclusionary Discipline Consequence**

Exclusionary discipline refers to disciplinary placements that remove a student from his or her regular classroom assignment (Texas Association of School Boards, 2019).

**Hispanic**

Hispanic is defined as person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Central American, or other Spanish culture of origin, regardless of race (Texas Education Agency, 2018a, p. 4).

**In-School Suspension**

According to the Texas Education Agency (2010), in-school suspension is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence by placing the student in a separate classroom during the school day (Sec. 37.005).

**Not Poor**

Families with incomes above 185% of the Federal poverty line are not eligible for the Federal free or reduced lunch program (Burney & Beilke, 2008) and are considered Not Poor.

**Out-of-school Suspension**

The removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence that prohibits the student from attending school. The out-of-school suspension cannot exceed three consecutive days (Texas Education Agency, 2010, Sec. 37.005).

**Poor**

Students who qualify for the Federal lunch program are required to have family home incomes between 131% to 185% of the Federal poverty line or 130% or less of the Federal poverty line and are considered Poor (Burney & Beilke, 2008).

### **Public Education Information Management System**

The Public Education Information Management System encompasses all data requested and received by the Texas Education Agency about public education, including student demographic and academic performance, personnel, financial, and organizational information (Texas Education Agency, 2018b).

### **Race**

The United States Census Bureau (2010, p. 1) defines race as a person's self-identification with one or more social groups. An individual can report as White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or some other race.

### **Texas Education Agency**

The Texas Education Agency is the state agency that oversees primary and secondary public education. It is headed by the commissioner of education. The Texas Education Agency will improve outcomes for all public-school students in the state by providing leadership, guidance, and support to school systems (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

### **White**

The Texas Education Agency (2018a) defined White as “a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa” (p. 4)

### **Literature Review Search Procedures**

For this journal-ready dissertation, the literature regarding exclusionary discipline practices (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension) was examined along with student demographic characteristics of ethnicity/race and economic status. The following

words or phrases were used in conducting an extensive and exhaustive review of the literature: in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Black, White, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, and economic status. Searches were conducted through the following databases: Education Source, EBSCO Host, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson), and Educational Administration Abstracts. The searches were filtered by peer-reviewed literature within the last 10-15 years.

### **Delimitations**

The three studies contained in this journal-ready dissertation were limited to Grade 5 and 6 Texas public school students only. Data on students who were enrolled in a private or charter school were not used in this journal-ready dissertation. Data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years on in-school suspension assignments and on out-of-school suspension assignments to Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White students. A Public Information Request form was submitted to the Texas Education Agency for the three latest years of data. The exclusionary discipline consequences of interest for this journal-ready dissertation were in-school suspension and out-of-suspension.

### **Limitations**

In this journal-ready dissertation, the effect of economic status on the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence were addressed. As a result, key limitations were present. Data analyses were limited to Grade 5 and 6 Texas Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White public-school students during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and

2017-2018 school years. Data were not analyzed for private or charter school students. Transition year relevance was also limited because not all Grade 6 campuses are separated from Grade 5. Quantitative data only were analyzed in the three studies in this journal-ready dissertation. Accordingly, the degree to which results were generalizable beyond the students whose data were analyzed herein is unknown. Archival data were used so the research design constitutes a causal-comparative study in which cause-effect relationships cannot be established.

### **Assumptions**

The major assumption for this journal-ready dissertation was that the data provided to the Texas Education Agency through the Public Education Information Management System were accurately reported. Any errors reported in relation to student ethnicity/race, economic status, gender, and exclusionary discipline consequences could negatively affect the results.

### **Organization of the Study**

In this journal-ready dissertation, three manuscripts were generated. In the first journal-ready dissertation article, the effect of economic status on the number of days assigned to in-school suspension for Grade 5 and 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White boys for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years was examined. In the second article, the effect of economic status on the number of days assigned to in-school suspension for Grade 5 and 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White girls for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years was investigated. In the last article, the effect of economic status on the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension for Grade

5 and 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White boys for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years was addressed.

This journal-ready dissertation was composed of five chapters. Chapter I contains the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, definition of terms, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of the three research investigations. In Chapter II, the framework for the first journal-ready investigation was provided with the effect of economic status on the number of days assigned to in-school suspension for Grade 5 and 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White boys. In Chapter III, the second journal-ready dissertation was an analysis into the effect of economic status on the number of days assigned to in-school suspension for Grades 5 and 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White girls. In Chapter IV, the third journal-ready dissertation investigation was provided with the effect of economic status on the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension for Grades 5 and 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White boys. Finally, in Chapter V, the results of the three articles were discussed.

**CHAPTER II**

ECONOMIC STATUS DIFFERENCES IN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION  
ASSIGNMENT DAYS OF GRADES 5 AND 6 BOYS: A TEXAS MULTIYEAR  
INVESTIGATION

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This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

### **Abstract**

Ascertained in this investigation was the effect of economic status on the number of days Grades 5 and 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White boys were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2015-2016 through the 2017-2018 school years. Inferential statistical procedures yielded statistically significant differences in all three school years at both grade levels for Black, Hispanic, and White boys who were Poor. In Grades 5 and 6 in all three school years, Black boys, Hispanic boys, and White boys who were Poor were assigned statistically significantly more days, on average, to an in-school suspension than were their peers who were Not Poor. Implications, as well as recommendations for future research, were made.

*Keywords:* In-school suspension, Ethnicity/Race, Poor, Not Poor, Asian, Black, White, Boys

ECONOMIC STATUS DIFFERENCES IN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION  
ASSIGNMENT DAYS OF GRADES 5 AND 6 BOYS: A TEXAS MULTIYEAR  
INVESTIGATION

In the past two decades, the frequency of in-school suspension has been increasing in schools in the United States (Cholewa, Hull, Babcock, & Smith, 2018; Curran, 2016; Rumberger & Losen, 2016). Fabelo et al. (2011) reported that one-third of all K-12 students will experience some form of exclusionary discipline during their school years. The overuse of these exclusionary discipline practices has created serious concerns. For the 2013-2014 school year, the most recent year of data available from the United States Department of Education, 2.7 million students in the United States were assigned to one or more days in in-school suspension, days in which students were excluded from their regular education classrooms (Office of Civil Rights, 2014, p. 1). Of this 2.7 million students, almost 2 million were boys (i.e., 1.8 million) and 863,269 were girls. Though boys were approximately half of the student enrollment, boys accounted for more than two-thirds, 68%, of the in-school suspension assignments in the United States. Of note is that although Black boys totaled 7.9% of the student enrollment in 2013-2014, they were assigned to almost one-third, 30.2%, of the in-school suspension assignments. Similarly, though Hispanic boys were 12.7% of the student enrollment, they were assigned to almost one-fourth, 23.1%, of the in-school suspensions. As such, Black and Hispanic boys were clearly assigned to in-school suspension at a rate almost twice as high as their percentages of the total student enrollment (Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

Ethnic and racial disparities in discipline consequences, similar to well-established disparities in academic achievement, have been well documented in the United States (Anyon et al., 2014; Bowman-Perrot et al., 2013; Skiba, Arrendondo, & Williams, 2014; Skiba, Eckes, & Brown, 2009). Skiba et al. (2011) examined data from 436 schools across the United States during the 2005-2006 school year. They determined that Black and Hispanic students were more statistically significantly likely to be disciplined for minor infractions than White students. In a recent analysis, Ritter and Anderson (2018) examined 7 years of student and infraction level data from every public school in Arkansas. In their investigation, they established that Black students were 2.4 times more likely to be assigned an exclusionary discipline consequence than their White peers. In another recent study, Sartain et al. (2015) analyzed data on 85,000 Chicago high school students in Chicago during the 2013-2014 school year. In their investigation, Black students were assigned three more times often to exclusionary discipline consequences than Hispanic students and four times more often than White and Asian students.

With respect to the state of interest for this article, Texas accounted for 19% of all documented in-school suspension assignments in the United States (Office of Civil Rights, 2014). In the most recent year of Texas data available, the 2018-2019 school year, 5.5 million students were enrolled in Texas public schools. Out of this 5.5 million students, over one million (i.e., 1,092,027) of them were assigned to one or more days of in-school suspension. In-school suspension assignments in Texas for boys was commensurate with the national statistics previously discussed in the United States. Though approximately half of the student enrollment, boys accounted for more than two-

thirds, 67%, of the in-school suspension assignments in Texas. Of note is that although Black boys were 6.4% of the student enrollment in 2013-2014, they were assigned to over one fifth, 21.9%, of the in-school suspension assignments. Similarly, though Hispanic boys were 26.5% of the student enrollment, they were assigned to almost half, 49.5%, of the in-school suspensions. Accordingly, Black and Hispanic boys in Texas were clearly assigned to in-school suspension at a rate over twice as high as their percentages of the total student enrollment (Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

In a Texas statewide study, Curtiss and Slate (2013) addressed discipline consequence assignments and reasons students were assigned to these consequences for Grades 4 and 5 boys and girls. They documented in their Texas statewide study the presence of clear inequities in the number of discipline consequence assignments by student gender. Grade 5 boys received 88%, 11,857, of the discipline consequences, and Grade 4 boys received 95%, 3,513, of the discipline consequences. In relation to in-school suspension assignments, Grade 4 boys were assigned in-school suspension 2,568 times compared to Grade 4 girls being assigned in-school suspension only 116 times. Grade 5 boys were assigned in-school suspension 8,679 times compared to Grade 5 girls being assigned to an in-school suspension 1,193 times.

Addressed in the Curtiss and Slate (2013) investigation were inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences. Not examined in their study, nor in the majority of the extant literature (Ritter & Anderson, 2018; Sartain et al., 2015; Skiba et al., 2011), were the actual number of days that students were assigned to discipline consequences. Just as inequities have been clearly established in the assignment of discipline consequences (Curtiss & Slate, 2013; Khan & Slate, 2016; Theriot & Dupper, 2010),

inequities could also be present in the number of days students are assigned to discipline consequences. In a recent analysis, White and Slate (2017) examined the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 students were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status. In Grade 6, students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned statistically significantly more days, 1.05 more, to in-school suspension than Grade 6 students who were not economically disadvantaged. Grade 7 students who were economically disadvantaged were also assigned statistically significantly more days, 1.09 days more, to in-school suspension than Grade 7 students who were not economically disadvantaged. Finally, Grade 8 students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned statistically significantly more days, 0.87 more, to in-school suspension than Grade 8 students who were not economically disadvantaged (White & Slate, 2017). As such, clear inequities were documented in the number of days middle school students were assigned to a discipline consequence by their economic status.

In one of two most recent published works that could be located, White (2019) investigated the extent in which inequities were present in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension for Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black, Hispanic, and White boys during the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. During the four years examined, Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.96, 0.95, and 0.73 more days, respectively of in-school suspension than Grades 6, 7, and 8 White boys. Grades 6, 7, and 8 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.62, 0.49, and 0.33 more days, respectively of in-school suspension than Grades 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic boys in these four school years. Grades 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic boys were assigned an average of 0.42, 0.48, and 0.42 more days than Grades 6, 7, and 8 White boys respectively in these four

school years. Provided in the White (2019) publication was more evidence of the presence of inequities in the number of days middle school students were assigned to a discipline consequence by their ethnicity/race.

In the most recent published article that was located, Harkrider and Slate (2020) analyzed the effect of economic status on the number of days Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2015-2016 school year. In their Texas statewide investigation, poverty was statistically significantly related to the number of days boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 6 boys who were economically disadvantaged were assigned over one more day to an in-school suspension than Grade 6 boys who were not economically disadvantaged. Grade 7 boys who were economically disadvantaged were assigned over one more day to an in-school suspension than Grade 7 boys who were not economically disadvantaged. Grade 8 boys who were economically disadvantaged were also assigned over one more day to an in-school suspension than Grade 8 boys who were not economically disadvantaged.

Of note in the Harkrider and Slate (2020) study were the total numbers of boys who were assigned to an in-school suspension. Of the almost 40,000 Grade 6 boys who were assigned to an in-school suspension, almost three-fourths of them were economically disadvantaged. Similar numbers and percentages were documented for Grades 7 and 8 boys. As such, poverty was determined to be related to not only the number of days students were assigned to an in-school suspension but to student assignment to an in-school suspension.

In this Texas, statewide investigation, Grades 5 and 6 are the focus because of well-documented issues regarding transitions from elementary school to middle school

(Kennedy-Lewis, 2013; Theriot & Dupper, 2010). Few researchers, however, have addressed the transition from elementary school to middle school, with respect to discipline. In one such investigation, Khan and Slate (2016) analyzed data on Grade 6 students. In their Texas statewide study, 33.5% of Black students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension. In comparison, 19.93% of Black students who were not economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension. Similarly, higher percentages of Hispanic students who were economically disadvantaged (20.2%) were assigned to an in-school suspension than Hispanic students who were not in poverty (12.0%).

The transition from elementary school to middle school has been documented to result in more discipline incidents and increased use of exclusionary discipline practices. For example, Theriot and Dupper (2010) analyzed data initially on Grade 5 students and then the next school year when they were enrolled in Grade 6. Of their sample of Grade 5 students, a small percentage, 7.9%, had been assigned to a discipline consequence. A much higher percentage of these same students the following year in Grade 6, 26.2% of them were involved in a discipline incident. With reference to in-school suspension, 5.4% of Grade 5 students had been assigned to an in-school suspension. In the next school year, as Grade 6 students, 48.1% of them had been assigned to an in-school suspension. As such, Theriot and Dupper (2010) established clear evidence of transition issues, with respect to discipline consequences.

These inequities are cause for concern because researchers (e.g., Hilberth, 2010; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Noltemeyer, Ward, & Mcloughlin, 2015) have established the presence of relationships between exclusionary discipline practices and negative

academic outcomes. Noltemeyer et al. (2015) documented the presence of negative relationships between in-school suspension assignments and student achievement.

Hilberth and Slate (2014) determined that exclusionary discipline practices decreased academic instructional time, resulting in lower reading and mathematics test scores on the Texas state-mandated assessments. Hilberth (2010), in a comprehensive Texas statewide analysis, examined the state-mandated reading and mathematics assessments for students who were assigned to an in-school suspension and for students who were not assigned to such a consequence. Hilberth (2010) established that Black students who were assigned to an in-school suspension had statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics test scores than Black students who were not assigned to an in-school suspension.

Moreover, White students assigned to an in-school suspension also had statistically significant lower reading and mathematics test scores than White students who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. The documented inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences may be a contributing factor to increasing the academic achievement gaps between students of color and White students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In-school suspension has been a major discipline consequence used in schools in the United States for well over the past two decades (Cholewa et al., 2018). For the 2013-2014 school year, the Office of Civil Rights (2014, p. 1) reported 2.7 million students in the United States were assigned to one or more days in in-school suspension. Inequities in the assignment of in-school suspension have been documented for students in poverty (Harkrider & Slate, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; Pyne, 2019; White, 2019; White & Slate, 2017) and by student ethnicity/race (Anyon et al., 2014; Bowman-Perrot

et al., 2013; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Skiba et al., 2009, 2014). Not as well established in the research literature are the presence of inequities in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension for students who were economically disadvantaged (Harkrider & Slate, 2020). Exclusionary discipline practices decrease instructional time and, as a result, have negative effects on student achievement (Hilberth, 2010; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Noltemeyer et al., 2015). In this investigation for Grade 5 and Grade 6 boys, the effect of their economic status on the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension was examined. Boys are the focus of this investigation because of the disparity in discipline consequences between boys and girls (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013). Grades 5 and 6 were investigated to determine the extent to which transition to a new grade level were related to the number of days students are assigned to an in-school suspension.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which economic status was related to the number of days that boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. Specifically examined were two economic status levels (i.e., Not Poor and Poor) and the number of days that Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. Analyses were conducted separately for boys in Grades 5 and 6, as well as separately for each of three school years (i.e., 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018). As such, the extent to which trends are present in the number of days boys were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status for the four major ethnic/racial groups of boys over a 3-year time period was determined.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study was conducted to fill a void in the extent research literature regarding the extent to which inequities might exist in the number of days Grades 5 and 6 boys are assigned to an in-school suspension. Khan and Slate (2016) documented the presence of discipline consequence differences for Grade 6 students. Economic status was established to be clearly related to the assignment to exclusionary discipline consequences (Harkrider & Slate, 2020). Theriot and Dupper (2010) provided evidence of discipline consequence increases as students transitioned from Grade 5 to Grade 6. School administrators can evaluate discipline practices in their district to address the degree to which inequities might be present in their Grade 6 exclusionary discipline practices. Establishing more research results on the Grade 5 to Grade 6 transition may be able to assist school administrators in developing more effective discipline practices to reduce the number of discipline incidents and exclusionary discipline practices.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) For Grade 5 boys, what is the effect of their economic status on the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension?; and (b) For Grade 6 boys, what is the effect of their economic status on the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension? These two research questions were answered separately for Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black boys. Moreover, these two research questions were analyzed for three school years (i.e., 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018). Accordingly, this research investigation was comprised of 16 research questions.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

A causal-comparative research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2020) was used in this investigation. A single independent variable, student economic status, was present. Two economic status groups were present: (a) Not Poor, (b) Poor. Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White boys constituted the four ethnic/racial groups of students whose data were analyzed herein. The dependent variable was number of days Grades 5 and 6 boys were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. The advantage of using a causal-comparative research design is the ability to analyze archival, pre-existing data from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System.

Causal-comparative research designs do have disadvantages such as the inability to make definitive cause and effect relationship statements (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). That is, should statistically significant differences be documented, the reason for such differences cannot be conclusively determined. Another disadvantage with respect to this investigation is that some Grade 5 boys made a transition to a different school campus for Grade 6, whereas some Grade 5 boys remained on the same school campus for Grade 6.

### **Participants and Instrumentation**

Participants in this study were Grades 5 and 6 boys who were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, or the 2017-2018 school year. These data were analyzed to determine the degree to which student economic status influenced the number of days assigned to in-school suspension. Economic status was defined by

two categories: (a) Not Poor and (b) Poor. Families with incomes above 185% of the Federal poverty line are not eligible for the Federal free or reduced lunch program (Burney & Beilke, 2008) and were considered as Not Poor. Students who qualify for the Federal reduced or free lunch program are required to have family home incomes between 131% to 185% of the Federal poverty line or 130% and less of the Federal poverty line (Burney & Beilke, 2008) and were considered Poor for this study.

According to the Texas Education Agency (2010), in-school suspension is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence by placing the student in a separate classroom during the school day (Sec. 37.005). The discipline data for this study were obtained through a Public Information Request to the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System. Data were then imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software program for statistical analysis.

## **Results**

Prior to conducting inferential statistics to determine whether statistically significant differences were present in the number of days of in-school suspension assigned to Grade 5 and Grade 6 boys by their economic status, checks were conducted to determine the extent to which these data were normally distributed. Though not all of the assumptions were met, Field (2018) contends that the parametric independent samples *t*-test procedure is sufficiently robust to withstand violations of its underlying assumptions. Accordingly, parametric independent samples *t*-tests were calculated to answer the previously discussed research questions.

### Results for In-School Suspension and Grade 5 Boys

In this section, results will be presented by school year and by ethnicity/race. Findings will be discussed first for Asian boys, followed by Black boys, Hispanic boys, and then White boys. Tables 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 contain the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. Regarding the 2015-2016 school year for the extent to which differences were present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension by the economic status (i.e., Not Poor and Poor) of Grade 5 Asian boys, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(161.51) = -1.52, p = .13$ . For the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present,  $t(143.21) = -2.08, p = .04$ , for Grade 5 Asian boys. This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.15 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 2.2, Grade 5 Asian boys who were Poor were assigned to over one half-day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were their Grade 5 Asian peers who were Not Poor. In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(188.98) = -1.22, p = .22$ . For two of the three school years, Asian boys were assigned to a similar number of days, on average, to an in-school suspension, regardless of their economic status.

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Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded for Grade 5 Black boys,  $t(1346.9) = -7.01, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.12 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 2.1, Grade 5 Black boys who were Poor were assigned to almost one more day, on average, to an in-

school suspension than were their Grade 5 Black peers who were Not Poor. For the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded for Grade 5 Black boys,  $t(1473.33) = -6.98, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.12 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 2.2, Grade 5 Black boys who were Poor were assigned to almost one more day, on average, to an in-school suspension than were their Grade 5 Black peers who were Not Poor. In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed for Grade 5 Black boys,  $t(1228.5) = -5.81, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.10 (Cohen, 1988). As contained in Table 2.3, Grade 5 Black boys who were Poor were assigned to over three fourths of a day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were their Grade 5 Black peers who were Not Poor.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 5 Hispanic boys, the parametric independent samples  $t$ -test revealed a statistically significant difference,  $t(2571.2) = -8.58, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.11 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.1, Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned almost three fourths of a day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. In the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present,  $t(2445.04) = -7.67, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.10 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 2.2, Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned almost three fourths of a day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference, was present,  $t(2510.1) = -6.77, p < .001$ . This difference represented a below

small effect size (Cohen's *d*) of 0.09 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 2.3, Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned over one half-day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor.

In the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 5 White boys, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension,  $t(5419.3) = -9.21, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's *d*) of 0.12 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 White boys who were Poor were assigned four tenths of a day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 White boys who were Not Poor. Table 2.1 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis. In the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension,  $t(5454.79) = -10.55, p < .001$ , Cohen's *d* of 0.12, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 2.2, Grade 5 White boys who were Poor were assigned over one day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 White boys who were Not Poor. For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension,  $t(5888.6) = -8.07, p < .001$ , Cohen's *d* of 0.10, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 White boys who were Poor were assigned almost one day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 White boys who were Not Poor. Table 2.3 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Results for In-School Suspension and Grade 6 Boys**

In this section, results will be presented by school year and by ethnicity/race. Findings will be discussed first for Asian boys, followed by Black boys, Hispanic boys, and then White boys. Tables 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 contain the descriptive statistics for the

2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. Regarding the 2015-2016 school year for the extent to which differences were present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension by the economic status (i.e., Not Poor and Poor) of Grade 6 Asian boys, a statistically significant difference was present,  $t(251.30) = -2.79, p = .01$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.13 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 2.4, Grade 6 Asian boys who were Poor were assigned to almost one day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were their Grade 6 Asian peers who were Not Poor. For the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(399.54) = -1.04, p = .30$ , for Grade 6 Asian boys. In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(413.77) = -1.81, p = .07$ . For two of the three school years, Asian boys were assigned to a similar number of days, on average, to an in-school suspension, regardless of their economic status.

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Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded for Grade 6 Black boys,  $t(2862.3) = -10.5, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.14 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 2.4, Grade 6 Black boys who were Poor were assigned to almost one and a half-days more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were their Grade 6 Black peers who were Not Poor. For the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded for Grade 6 Black boys,  $t(2477.33) = -9.88, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.13 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 2.5, Grade 6 Black

boys who were Poor were assigned to over one and a quarter day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were their Grade 6 Black peers who were Not Poor. In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed for Grade 6 Black boys,  $t(2323.0) = -8.38, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.12 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black boys who were Poor were assigned to over one and a quarter day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were their Grade 6 Black peers who were Not Poor (see Table 2.6).

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 6 Hispanic boys, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(4846.6) = -9.70, p < .001$ . This difference represented a below small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.09 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.4, Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned almost one more day, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. In the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded,  $t(5709.87) = -12.57, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.09, a below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned over one more day, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor (see Table 2.5). For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present,  $t(5296.9) = -13.1, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.12, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 2.6, Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned over one more day, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor.

In the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 6 White boys, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension,

$t(7909.5) = -16.6, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.17, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 White boys who were Poor were assigned over one and a half-days more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor. Table 2.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis. In the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension,  $t(8385.73) = -16.38, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.17, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 2.5, Grade 6 White boys who were Poor were assigned over one and a half-days more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor. For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension,  $t(8985.4) = -12.9, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.13, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 White boys who were Poor were assigned over one day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor. Table 2.6 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Discussion**

In this investigation, the degree to which differences existed in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension based on the economic status of Grade 5 and 6 boys was analyzed for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. In each school year and at each grade level, the average number of days assigned to in-school suspension for Grade 5 and 6 boys who were Poor and Not Poor were calculated to determine if their economic status affected the number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension. Grades 5 and 6 were specifically selected because they are transition years for most students. A majority of school districts in the State of Texas

have Grade 5 at the elementary level and Grade 6 begins middle school at a different campus.

In this empirical, multiyear statewide investigation, the results of Grade 5 to Grade 6 were troubling. Grade 6 Black, Hispanic and White boys who were Poor were assigned on average one and a half-days more of in-school suspension than Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White boys who were Not Poor. Provided below are the results by grade level and school year.

Regarding Grade 5 boys who were assigned in-school suspension during the three years analyzed, poverty was clearly related to the number of days they were assigned to in-school suspension. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and the 2017-2018 school years, Grade 5 Black boys who were Poor were assigned 3.74, 3.72, and 3.57 days of in-school suspension whereas Grade 5 Black boys who were Not Poor were assigned 2.76, 2.79, and 2.79 days of in-school suspension. As such, Grade 5 Black boys who were Poor served almost one more day of in-school suspension each year than Grade 5 Black boys who were Not Poor. In the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and the 2017-2018 school years, Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned 3.05, 3.10, and 2.92 days of in-school suspension whereas Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor were assigned 2.32, 2.40, and 2.39 days of in-school suspension. Accordingly, Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Poor served over one half-day more of in-school suspension each year than Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Depicted in Figures 2.1 and 2.2 are these averages for Grade 5 Black and Hispanic boys.

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Also addressed herein were the number of days that Grade 5 Asian and White boys were assigned by an in-school suspension and its relationship to their economic status. In contrast to the results for Grade 5 Black and Hispanic boys, the economic status of Grade 5 Asian boys was not related to the number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension in two of the three school years. In the 2016-2017 school year, Grade 5 Asian boys who were Poor were assigned 2.40 days of in-school suspension compared to 1.81 days for Grade 5 Asian students who were Not Poor.

With respect to Grade 5 White boys, results were similar to the results for Grade 5 Black and Hispanic boys. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years, Grade 5 White boys who were Poor were assigned 3.36, 3.57, and 3.59 days of in-school suspension. In comparison, Grade 5 White boys who were Not Poor were assigned 2.56, 2.55, and 2.72 days of in-school suspension.

Regarding Grade 6, economic status was established to be statistically significantly related to the number of days Black boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and the 2017-2018 school years, Grade 6 Black boys who were Poor were assigned 5.21, 5.04, and 5.08 days of in-school suspension. Grade 6 Black boys who were Not Poor were assigned 3.78, 3.72, and 3.76 days of in-school suspension. Accordingly, Grade 6 Black boys who were Poor served over one more day of in-school suspension each year than Grade 6 Black boys who were Not Poor. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and the 2017-2018 school years, Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned 4.58, 4.46, and 4.40 days of in-school suspension. Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor were assigned 3.64, 3.42, and

3.31 days of in-school suspension. As such, Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Poor served almost one day more of in-school suspension during the 2015-2016 school year and over one day more during the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years than did Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Revealed in Figures 2.1 and 2.2 are these averages for Grade 5 Black and Hispanic boys.

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Data on Grade 6 Asian and White boys were also analyzed to determine the extent to which poverty was related to the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Similar to the results for Grade 5 Asian boys, the economic status of Grade 6 Asian boys was not related to the number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension in two of the three school years. In 2015-2016, Grade 6 Asian boys who were Poor were assigned 3.02 days of in-school suspension compared to 2.10 days for Grade 6 Asian boys who were Not Poor. With respect to Grade 6 White boys, the results were similar to the results for Grade 6 Black and Hispanic boys. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years, Grade 6 White boys who were Poor were assigned 4.87, 4.90, and 4.53 days of in-school suspension. In comparison, Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor were assigned 3.32, 3.33, and 3.34 days of in-school suspension. Grade 6 White boys who were Poor served almost one and a half-days more of in-school suspension than Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor.

### **Connections with Existing Literature**

In this multiyear, statewide investigation, differences in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 5 and 6 boys by their economic status were established. These differences have not been well documented in the extant literature. Khan and Slate (2016) established differences in discipline consequences for Grade 6 students. Harkrider and Slate (2020) demonstrated that economic status was clearly related to exclusionary discipline assignments. In Theriot and Dupper (2010), discipline consequences for students increased in the transition from Grade 5 to Grade 6. In another study of in-school suspension assignments in Texas, White and Slate (2017) examined the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 students were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status. In Grade 6, students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned statistically significantly more days, 1.05 more, to in-school suspension than Grade 6 students who were not economically disadvantaged. For this study, the transition from Grade 5 to Grade 6 produced some alarming results. Grade 6 Black, Hispanic and White boys who were Poor were assigned on average one and a half-days more of in-school suspension than Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White boys who were Poor.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

Major implications for policy and practice can be supported from the findings in this investigation. First, school administrators can disaggregate the in-school suspension assignments at their own campus. The number of in-school suspension assignments by ethnicity/race and economic status will generate trends and possibly inequities that campus leaders can address to eliminate any disparities. Second, the loss of instructional time is another detriment of exclusionary discipline practices. Educational leaders are

encouraged to cross-reference disciplinary discipline data with academic performance to evaluate if discipline practices are negatively affecting student performance. Third, student discipline is a campus-wide initiative. Creating a campus-wide behavioral plan can be effective in all stakeholders understanding the goals and purposes of student discipline and how it should be handled. Finally, reducing exclusionary discipline practices and using alternative forms of student discipline, such as restorative discipline, may have a positive influence on school climate and student performance.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

As established in the trends of this empirical investigation, Grade 5 and 6 boys who were Poor were clearly assigned to more days of in-school suspension than Grade 5 and 6 boys who were Not Poor. The presence of inequities in the assignment of in-school suspension as a function of student economic status remains a serious concern for Texas school administrators and must be addressed by researchers in future studies. First, researchers are encouraged to study potential inequities in the assignment of in-school suspension days for girls. Secondly, given the clear disproportionality of days assigned to in-school suspension for this study, researchers can extend this study to investigate potential inequities in the number of days assigned to out-of-school suspension by student economic status. Finally, funding is always a major topic in Texas when it comes to public education. Researchers can target the financial effects of using out-of-school suspension as a discipline consequence. Students who are assigned out-of-school suspension are coded as absent on those days in the current funding system in Texas. Researchers are also encouraged to replicate this investigation in other states to ascertain the degree to which results delineated herein would be generalizable. Readers should

note that in all of the extant literature involving exclusionary discipline practices, not a single researcher has documented that students who are poor commit more discipline infractions than students who are not poor. As such, researchers are encouraged to investigate in more depth the underlying reasons for the phenomenon established in this multiyear analysis.

### **Conclusion**

In this multiyear analysis, the degree to which economic status was related to the number of days that boys were assigned to an in-school suspension was addressed. Specifically examined were two economic status levels and the number of days that Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. Analyses were conducted separately for boys in Grades 5 and 6, as well as separately for each of three school years (i.e., 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018). Across all three years, Grade 5 and 6 boys who were Poor were clearly assigned to more days of in-school suspension than Grade 5 and 6 boys who were Not Poor. Given that no empirical studies have been conducted in which boys who were poor committed more misbehaviors than their peers who were not poor, the reasons for the documented inequities in days assigned to an in-school suspension are unknown. Because these inequities result in time taken away from learning, an argument could be made that these students' rights to an equal education are being violated.

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Table 2.1

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Boys as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2015-2016 School Year.*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2015-2016			
Asian			
Not Poor	88	1.67	1.40
Poor	87	2.05	1.82
Black			
Not Poor	721	2.76	3.19
Poor	3,779	3.74	4.54
Hispanic			
Not Poor	1,202	2.32	2.41
Poor	6,330	3.05	3.89
White			
Not Poor	2,661	2.56	2.68
Poor	3,004	3.36	3.76

Table 2.2

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Boys as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 School Year*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2016-2017			
Asian			
Not Poor	80	1.81	1.23
Poor	94	2.40	2.41
Black			
Not Poor	814	2.79	3.23
Poor	3,959	3.72	4.30
Hispanic			
Not Poor	1,293	2.40	2.77
Poor	6,718	3.10	3.98
White			
Not Poor	2,657	2.55	2.87
Poor	3,149	3.57	4.44

Table 2.3

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Boys as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2017-2018 School Year*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2017-2018			
Asian			
Not Poor	117	2.00	2.45
Poor	105	2.49	3.35
Black			
Not Poor	731	2.79	3.20
Poor	4,193	3.57	4.25
Hispanic			
Not Poor	1,380	2.39	2.48
Poor	7,111	2.92	3.41
White			
Not Poor	2,715	2.72	4.13
Poor	3,369	3.59	4.29

Table 2.4

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Boys as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2015-2016 School Year.*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2015-2016			
Asian			
Not Poor	246	2.10	1.65
Poor	206	3.02	4.49
Black			
Not Poor	1,479	3.78	4.37
Poor	6,476	5.21	5.93
Hispanic			
Not Poor	2,816	3.64	4.46
Poor	13,873	4.58	5.66
White			
Not Poor	4,722	3.32	3.52
Poor	4,520	4.87	5.19

Table 2.5

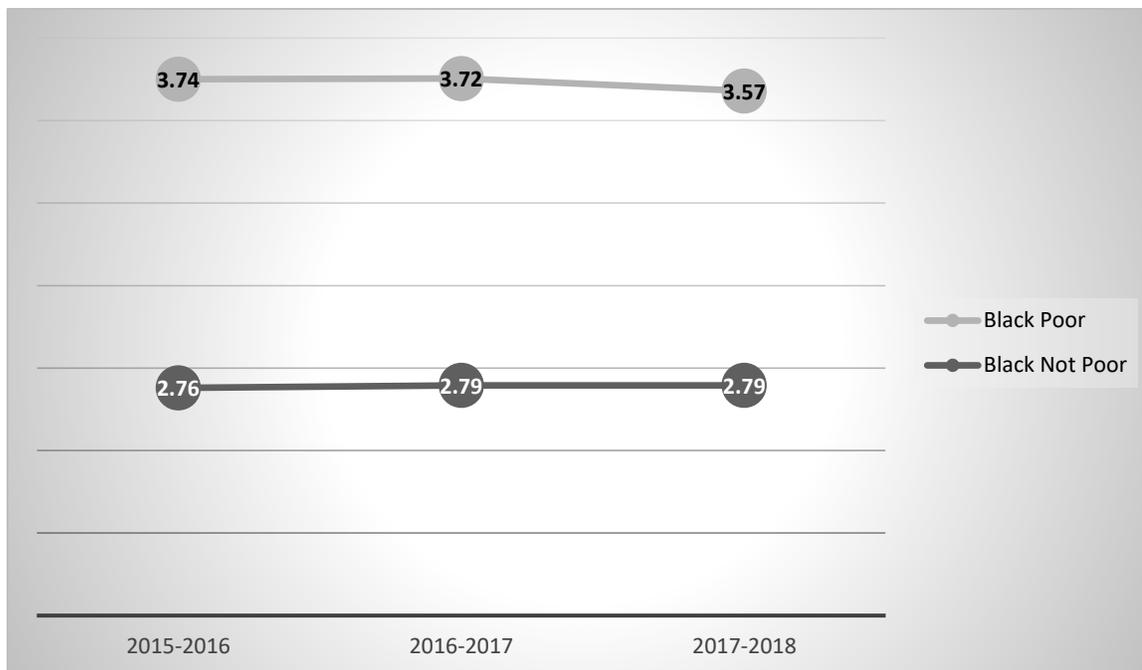
*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Boys as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 School Year.*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2016-2017			
Asian			
Not Poor	232	2.47	2.98
Poor	208	2.81	3.67
Black			
Not Poor	1,462	3.72	4.45
Poor	6,587	5.04	5.31
Hispanic			
Not Poor	3,087	3.42	3.92
Poor	14,551	4.46	5.25
White			
Not Poor	4,639	3.33	3.77
Poor	4,652	4.90	5.31

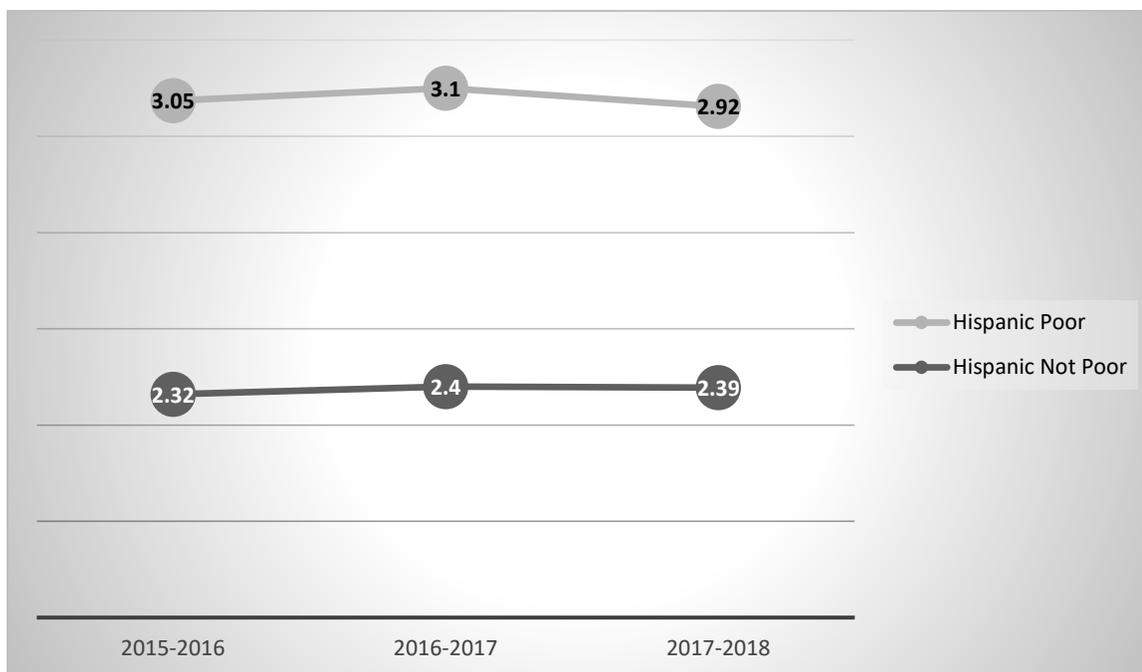
Table 2.6

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Boys as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2017-2018 School Year.*

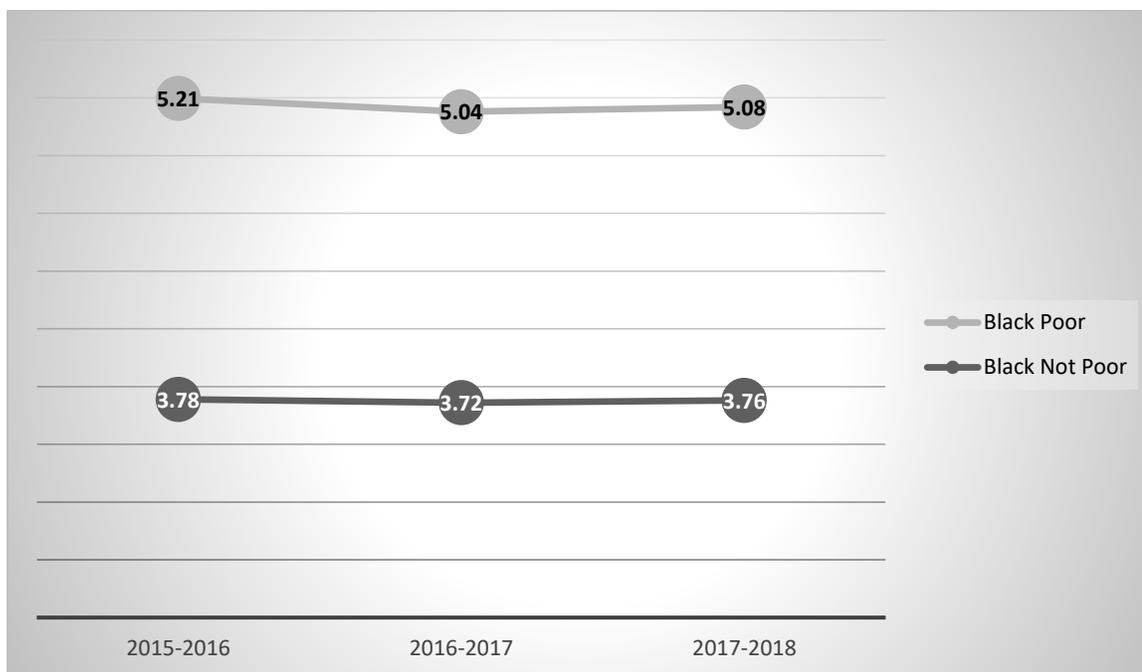
School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2017-2018			
Asian			
Not Poor	239	2.38	2.53
Poor	221	2.88	3.27
Black			
Not Poor	1,429	3.76	5.25
Poor	6,495	5.08	5.96
Hispanic			
Not Poor	2,874	3.31	3.78
Poor	14,448	4.40	5.20
White			
Not Poor	4,351	3.34	3.80
Poor	4,884	4.53	5.05



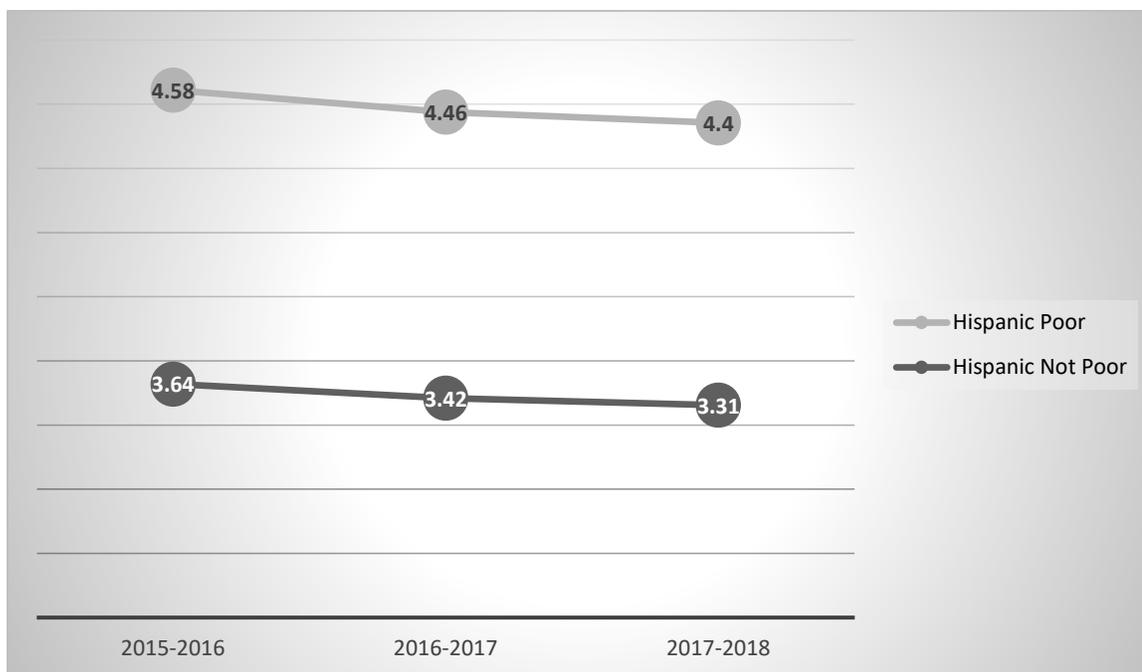
*Figure 2.1.* Average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 5 Black boys by their economic status during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years.



*Figure 2.2.* Average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 5 Hispanic boys by their economic status during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years.



*Figure 2.3.* Average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 6 Black boys by their economic status during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years.



*Figure 2.4.* Average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 6 Hispanic boys by their economic status during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years.

**CHAPTER III**  
DIFFERENCES IN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION ASSIGNMENT DAYS BY THE  
ECONOMIC STATUS OF GRADES 5 AND 6 GIRLS: A TEXAS  
MULTIYEAR ANALYSIS

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This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

### **Abstract**

Ascertained in this investigation was the effect of economic status on the number of days Grades 5 and 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension for the 2015-2016 through the 2017-2018 school years. Inferential statistical procedures yielded statistically significant differences in all three school years at both grade levels for Black girls who were Poor. Grade 5 Hispanic and White girls who were Poor had statistically significant differences in two of the three years, and Grade 6 Hispanic and White girls who were Poor had statistically significant differences in all three years. In Grades 5 and 6 in all three school years, Black girls who were poor were assigned statistically significantly more days of in-school suspension than Asian, Hispanic, and White girls who were Not Poor. Implications of these findings for policymakers and for practitioners were discussed, along with recommendations for future research.

*Keywords:* In-school suspension, Ethnicity/Race, Poor, Not poor, Asian, Black, White, Girls

DIFFERENCES IN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION ASSIGNMENT DAYS BY THE  
ECONOMIC STATUS OF GRADES 5 AND 6 GIRLS: A TEXAS  
MULTIYEAR ANALYSIS

The overwhelming majority of research articles in school discipline has been written about boys because of their overrepresentation in exclusionary discipline practices (Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). In the past 10 to 15 years, however, inequities have begun to be documented in exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to girls. During the most recent year of data available at the national level, from 2013-2014, 863,369 girls in the United States were assigned one or more days of in-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2014, p. 1). Of note is that although Black girls were only 7.6% of the student enrollment in 2013-2014, they were assigned to over one-third, 37.1%, of the in-school suspensions. Similarly, though Hispanic girls were only 12.1% of the student enrollment, they were assigned to almost one-fourth, 23.7%, of the in-school suspensions. Black and Hispanic girls were clearly assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate over twice their percentages of the total student enrollment (Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

With respect to the state of interest for this article, Texas, girls accounted for 19.4% of the total in-school suspensions in the United States (Office of Civil Rights, 2014). When compared to national statistics from the United States Department of Education, similar disparities were present for girls with respect to inequities in in-school suspension assignments in Texas. Although Black girls in Texas were only 6.1% of the state student enrollment, they accounted for over one-fourth, 25.2%, of the in-school suspension assignments. Hispanic girls were 25.2% of the state student enrollment, but

were assigned over half, 52.2%, of the in-school suspension assignments for girls. Clearly, Black and Hispanic girls were assigned to in-school suspension at higher rates than White and Asian girls. In fact, Black and Hispanic girls in Texas were clearly assigned to in-school suspension over twice as much as their percentages of the total student enrollment (Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

In a recent Texas statewide investigation, Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016) examined the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black girls during the 2013-2014 school year. They documented that Black girls in Grade 4 were assigned to an in-school suspension 197 times whereas Hispanic and White girls in Grade 4 were assigned to an in-school suspension only 72 and 94 times, respectively. Readers should note that the percentages of Hispanic and White girls enrolled in Grade 4 in Texas are substantially higher than the percentages of Black girls. The numbers of in-school suspension assignments to Black girls increased by almost 6 times, 1,152 in Grade 5 and over 5 times more, 6,522 in Grade 6. Black girls in Grades 8-11 were assigned to an in-school suspension 9,987, 9,275, 14,390, 8,565, and 5,088 times, respectively. With respect to Hispanic girls, their numbers of in-school suspension assignments increased by almost 12 times, 848 in Grade 5, and almost 16 times more, 13,381 in Grade 6. Hispanic girls in Grades 8-11 were assigned to an in-school suspension 23,178, 40,907, 20,482, and 11,267 times, respectively. The large increases in the number of in-school suspension assignments to Black and Hispanic girls in transition grades, Grades 6 and 9, are congruent with the extant literature (Lane, Oakes, Carter, & Messenger, 2015; Theriot & Dupper, 2010).

Previous researchers (e.g., Ritter & Anderson, 2018; Sartain et al., 2015) have focused on the the presence of inequities in exclusionary discipline assignments but not on the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline assignments. This issue of number of days is an important issue, because if inequities are present in the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline assignments, some student groups are missing more instructional time than their peers for similar discipline issues. In a recent study, White (2019) investigated the extent to which inequities were present in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension for Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black, Hispanic, and White girls during the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. Across the four years of data that were analyzed, Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls were assigned on average 0.90, 0.89, and 0.63 more days, respectively to an in-school suspension than Grade 6, 7, and 8 White girls. Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls were assigned an average of 0.56, 0.53, and 0.47 more days, respectively to an in-school suspension than Grade 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic girls in these four school years. Grade 6 and 7 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.46 and 0.36 more days, respectively than Grade 6 and 7 White girls in these four school years. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned more days of in-school suspension, 0.21, than White girls during the 2014-2015 school year only. Because of these documented disparities in the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence, along with well-established inequities in the assignment to exclusionary discipline consequences, Black and Hispanic girls are clearly excluded from learning opportunities much more often and for longer time periods than other racial/ethnic groups (Hilberth & Slate, 2014).

Exclusionary discipline practices have been linked to poorer academic performance for students receiving such consequences. Hilberth (2010) conducted a Texas statewide investigation on discipline consequences and state-mandated reading and mathematics assessments. The reading and mathematics performance of students in Grades 6-8 who did not receive a discipline consequence were compared to the reading and mathematics performance of their same grade level peers who did receive a discipline consequence. Black students who were assigned to an in-school suspension had statistically significantly lower reading scores on the Texas state-mandated assessment than Black students who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Similarly, Black students who were assigned to an in-school suspension had statistically significantly lower mathematics scores on the Texas state-mandated assessment than Black students who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Similar results were present for White students, in that assignment to an in-school suspension was related to statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics performance scores on the Texas state-mandated assessment.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Research on exclusionary discipline practices has been prevalent on boys for many years because of the inequities in the number of discipline assignments for boys (Skiba et al., 2002, 2014). In the past 10 to 15 years, however, inequities have begun to be documented in exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to girls. According to Arcia (2007), Black girls in middle school are at a higher risk for suspensions than the same ethnic/racial peers in elementary K-8 schools. For the most recent year of national data (i.e., 2013-2014), 863,369 girls in the United States were assigned to an in-school

suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2014, p. 1). Inequities in in-school suspension assignments for students in poverty (Harkrider & Slate, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; White, 2019) and for student ethnicity/race have been documented (Bowman-Perrot et al., 2013; Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Only a limited number of published empirical studies could be located on the presence of inequities in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension for students in poverty (Harkrider & Slate, 2020). Inequities in in-school suspension assignments have negative effects on academic performance because of the amount of reduced classroom instruction (Hilberth, 2010; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Perry & Morris, 2014). In this investigation for Grade 5 and Grade 6 girls, the effect of their economic status on the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension were examined.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which economic status was related to the number of days that girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Specifically examined were the two economic status levels (i.e., Not Poor and Poor) and the number of days that Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Analyses were conducted separately for girls in Grades 5 and 6, as well as separately for each of three school years (i.e., 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018). Accordingly, the extent to which trends are present in the number of days girls were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status for the four major ethnic/racial groups of girls over a 3-year time period was determined.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study was conducted to add to the void in existing literature regarding the extent to which inequities might exist in the number of days Grade 5 and 6 girls are assigned to in-school suspension. Slate et al. (2016) documented the presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences for Black girls in a statewide Texas study during the 2013-2014 school year. White (2019) established that Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls were assigned more days of in-school suspension than Hispanic and White girls during the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. The economic status of students was determined to be clearly related to the assignment of in-school suspension for discipline consequences (Harkrider & Slate, 2020). Hilberth (2010) documented the presence of statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics performance for students who were assigned to an in-school suspension than their peers who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Establishing more research findings on girls could assist school administrators in developing more effective discipline practices to reduce the number of exclusionary discipline practices used.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) For Grade 5 girls, what is the effect of their economic status on the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension?; and (b) For Grade 6 girls, what is the effect of their economic status on the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension? These two research questions were answered separately for Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black girls. Moreover, these two research questions were analyzed for three school years (i.e., 2015-

2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018). Accordingly, this research investigation was comprised of 16 research questions.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

A causal-comparative research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2020) was used in this investigation. A single independent variable, student economic status, was present. Two economic status groups were present: (a) Not Poor, (b) Poor. Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White girls constituted the four ethnic/racial groups of students whose data were analyzed herein. The dependent variable was number of days Grades 5 and 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. The advantage of using a causal-comparative research design is the ability to analyze archival, pre-existing data from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System.

Disadvantages also exist when using causal-comparative research designs such as the inability to make definitive cause and effect relationship statements (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). If statistically significant differences are documented, the reason for such differences cannot be conclusively determined. Another disadvantage with respect to this investigation is that some Grade 5 girls made a transition to a different school campus for Grade 6, whereas some Grade 5 girls remained on the same school campus for Grade 6.

### **Participants and Instrumentation**

Participants in this study were Grades 5 and 6 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, or the 2017-2018 school years. These

data were analyzed to determine the degree to which student economic status effects the number of days assigned to in-school suspension. Economic status was defined by two categories: (a) Not Poor and (b) Poor. Families with incomes above 185% of the Federal poverty line are not eligible for the Federal free or reduced lunch program (Burney & Beilke, 2008) and were considered as Not Poor. Students who qualify for the Federal reduced or free lunch program are required to have family home incomes between 131% to 185% of the Federal poverty line or 130% and less of the Federal poverty line (Burney & Beilke, 2008) and were considered Poor for this investigation.

According to the Texas Education Agency (2010), in-school suspension is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence by placing the student in a separate classroom during the school day (Sec. 37.005). The discipline data for this study will be obtained through a Public Information Request to the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System. Data were imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software program for statistical analysis.

## **Results**

Prior to conducting inferential statistics to determine whether statistically significant differences were present in the number of days of in-school suspension assigned to Grade 5 and Grade 6 girls by their economic status, checks were conducted to determine the extent to which these data were normally distributed. Though not all of the assumptions were met, Field (2018) contends that the parametric independent samples *t*-test procedure is sufficiently robust to withstand violations of its underlying assumptions.

Accordingly, parametric independent samples *t*-tests were calculated to answer the previously discussed research questions.

### **Results for In-School Suspension and Grade 5 Girls**

In this section, results will be presented by school year and by ethnicity/race. Findings will be discussed first for Asian girls, followed by Black girls, Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 contain the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. Regarding the 2015-2016 school year for the extent to which differences were present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension as a function of economic status (i.e., Not Poor and Poor) for Grade 5 Asian girls, an independent samples test could not be computed because no Grade 5 Asian girls who were poor were assigned to an in-school suspension. For the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(17.40) = 0.00, p = 1.00$ , for Grade 5 Asian girls. In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(26.84) = -0.75, p = .46$ . For all three school years, Asian girls were assigned to a similar number of days, on average, to an in-school suspension, regardless of their economic status.

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 Insert Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 about here  
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Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present for Grade 5 Black girls,  $t(281.5) = -1.64, p = .10$ . For the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded for Grade 5 Black girls,  $t(364.37) = -3.92, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's *d*) of 0.12

(Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.2, Grade 5 Black girls who were Poor were assigned to over one half-day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 Black girls who were Not Poor. In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed for Grade 5 Black girls,  $t(475.34) = -6.64, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.17 (Cohen, 1988). As contained in Table 3.3, Grade 5 Black girls who were Poor were assigned to almost one more day, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 Black girls who were Not Poor.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 5 Hispanic girls, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(516.5) = -2.63, p = .01$ . This difference represented a below small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.07 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 3.1, Grade 5 Hispanic girls who were Poor were assigned over one quarter of a day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. In the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(504.24) = -1.10, p = .27$ . For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference, was present,  $t(600.39) = -5.03, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.12 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 3.3, Grade 5 Hispanic girls who were Poor were assigned over one half-day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor.

In the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 5 White girls, a statistically significant difference was not yielded in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension,  $t(710.1) = -0.73, p = .45$ . In the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension,

$t(1388.12) = -3.98, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.10, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.2, Grade 5 White girls who were Poor were assigned over one half-day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 White girls who were Not Poor. For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension,  $t(1292.3) = -4.15, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.11, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 White girls who were Poor were assigned almost one half-day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 White girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.3 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Results for In-School Suspension and Grade 6 Girls**

In this section, results will be presented by school year and by ethnicity/race. Findings will be discussed first for Asian girls, followed by Black girls, Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Tables 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 contain the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. Regarding the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 6 Asian girls, a statistically significant difference was present,  $t(49.87) = -2.36, p = .02$ . This difference represented a below small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.09 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.4, Grade 6 Asian girls who were Poor were assigned to over one and a quarter day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were their Grade 6 Asian peers who were Not Poor. For the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(107.13) = -0.91, p = .36$ , for Grade 6 Asian girls. In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(32.76) = -0.84, p = .41$ . For two of the three school years, Asian girls were

assigned to a similar number of days, on average, to an in-school suspension, regardless of their economic status.

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 Insert Tables 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 about here  
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Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded for Grade 6 Black girls,  $t(887.01) = -4.80, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.10 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 3.4, Grade 6 Black girls who were Poor were assigned to almost one day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were their Grade 6 Black peers who were Not Poor. For the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded for Grade 6 Black girls,  $t(1112.84) = -7.46, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.14 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.5, Grade 6 Black girls who were Poor were assigned to over one day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were their Grade 6 Black peers who were Not Poor. In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed for Grade 6 Black girls,  $t(749.23) = -5.36, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.12 (Cohen, 1988). As contained in Table 3.6, Grade 6 Black girls who were Poor were assigned to over one day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 Black girls who were Not Poor.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 6 Hispanic girls, the parametric independent samples  $t$ -test revealed a statistically significant difference,  $t(1653.1) = -6.78, p < .001$ . This difference represented a below small effect size

(Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.10 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 3.4, Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Poor were assigned almost one more day, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. In the 2016-2017 school year, the parametric independent samples  $t$ -test yielded a statistically significant difference,  $t(2253.35) = -8.47, p < .001$ . This difference represented a below small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.11 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.5, Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Poor were assigned almost one more day, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference, was present,  $t(1667.1) = -7.26, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.11 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 3.6, Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Poor were assigned three quarters of a day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor.

In the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 6 White girls, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension,  $t(2617.6) = -7.28, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 White girls who were Poor were assigned almost one day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 White girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis. In the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension,  $t(2512.01) = -5.26, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.10, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.5, Grade 6 White girls who were Poor were assigned over one half-day more, on average, to an in-school suspension

than were Grade 6 White girls who were Not Poor. For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension,  $t(2473.7) = -7.21, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.14, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 White girls who were Poor were assigned almost one day more, on average, to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 White girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.6 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Discussion**

In this investigation, the degree to which differences existed in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension based on the economic status of Grade 5 and 6 girls was analyzed for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. In each school year and at each grade level, the average number of days assigned to in-school suspension for Grade 5 and 6 girls who were Poor and Not Poor were calculated to determine if their economic status affected the number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension. Grades 5 and 6 were specifically selected because they are transition years for most students. A majority of school districts in the State of Texas have Grade 5 at the elementary level and Grade 6 begins middle school at a different campus.

In this empirical, multiyear statewide investigation, the results of Grade 5 to Grade 6 were troubling. Grade 6 Black, Hispanic and White girls who were Poor were assigned on average over one and a quarter-day more of in-school suspension than Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls who were Poor. Provided below are the results by grade level and school year.

Regarding Grade 5 girls who were assigned in-school suspension during the three years analyzed, poverty was clearly related to the number of days they were assigned to in-school suspension. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and the 2017-2018 school years, Grade 5 Black girls who were Poor were assigned 2.81, 3.00, and 2.84 days of in-school suspension whereas Grade 5 Black who were Not Poor were assigned 2.43, 2.31, and 1.95 days of in-school suspension. As such, Grade 5 Black girls who were Poor served over one half-day more of in-school suspension each year than Grade 5 Black girls who were Not Poor. In the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and the 2017-2018 school years, Grade 5 Black girls who were Poor were assigned on average almost one half-day more of in-school suspension than Hispanic and White girls who were poor. Depicted in Figures 3.1 are these averages for Grade 5 Black girls.

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Insert Figure 3.1 about here  
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Also addressed herein were the number of days that Grade 5 Asian, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned by an in-school suspension and its relationship to their economic status. In contrast to the results for Grade 5 Black girls, the economic status of Grade 5 Asian girls was not related to the number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension in all three school years.

For Grade 5 Hispanic girls, results were similar to the results for Grade 5 Black girls for two of the three school years. In 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years, Grade 5 Hispanic girls who were Poor were assigned 2.37 and 2.43 days of in-school

suspension. For the same two school years, Grade 5 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor were assigned 1.99 and 1.86 days of in-school suspension

With respect to Grade 5 White girls, results were similar to the results for Grade 5 Black girls for two of the three school years. During the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years, Grade 5 White girls who were Poor were assigned 2.65 and 2.43 days of in-school suspension. In comparison, Grade 5 White girls who were Not Poor were assigned 2.14 and 1.99 days of in-school suspension.

Regarding Grade 6, economic status was established to be statistically significantly related to the number of days Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and the 2017-2018 school years, Grade 6 Black girls who were Poor were assigned 4.19, 4.17, and 4.25 days of in-school suspension. Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor were assigned 3.27, 3.00, and 3.15 days of in-school suspension. Accordingly, Grade 6 Black girls who were Poor served on average almost one more day of in-school suspension than Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor during the 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 school years and over one day more during the 2016-2017 school year. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and the 2017-2018 school years, Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Poor were assigned 3.80, 3.52, and 3.49 days of in-school suspension. Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor were assigned 2.98, 2.71, and 2.74 days of in-school suspension. As such, Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Poor served almost one day more of in-school suspension each year than did Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor.

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Insert Figures 3.2 and 3.3 about here  
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Data on Grade 6 Asian and White girls were also analyzed to determine the extent to which poverty was related to the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Similar to the results for Grade 5 Asian girls, the economic status of Grade 6 Asian girls was not related to the number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension in two of the three school years. In 2015-2016, Grade 6 Asian girls who were Poor were assigned 3.00 days of in-school suspension compared to 1.69 days for Grade 6 Asian girls who were Not Poor. With respect to Grade 6 White girls, the results were similar to the results for Grade 6 Black and Hispanic girls. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years, Grade 6 White girls who were Poor were assigned 3.55, 3.43, and 3.65 days of in-school suspension. In comparison, Grade 6 White girls who were Not Poor were assigned 2.59, 2.70, and 2.66 days of in-school suspension. Grade 6 White girls who were Poor served on average almost one day more of in-school suspension than Grade 6 White girls who were Not Poor.

### **Connections with Existing Literature**

In this multiyear, statewide investigation, differences in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 5 and 6 girls by their economic status were established. These differences have not been well documented in the extant literature. Although Black girls in Texas were only 6.1% of the state student enrollment, they accounted for over one-fourth, 25.2%, of the in-school suspension assignments (Office of Civil Rights, 2014). Hispanic girls were 25.2% of the state student enrollment, but were

assigned over half, 52.2%, of the in-school suspension assignments for girls. In a recent Texas statewide investigation, Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016) examined the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black girls during the 2013-2014 school year. The numbers of in-school suspension assignments to Black girls increased by almost 6 times, 1,152 in Grade 5 and over 5 times more, 6,522 in Grade 6. The economic status of students was determined to be clearly related to the assignment of in-school suspension for discipline consequences (Harkrider & Slate, 2020). In another study of in-school suspension assignments in Texas, White and Slate (2017) analyzed the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 students were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status. In Grade 6, students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned statistically significantly more days, 1.05 more, to in-school suspension than Grade 6 students who were not economically disadvantaged. For this study, the transition from Grade 5 to Grade 6 produced some alarming results. Grade 6 Black, Hispanic and White girls who were Poor were assigned on average one day more of in-school suspension than Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls who were Poor.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

Major implications for policy and practice can be supported from the findings in this investigation. First, school administrators can disaggregate exclusionary discipline assignments at their own campus. The number of exclusionary discipline assignments by ethnicity/race and economic status may show trends and inequities that campus leaders can address to eliminate any disparities. Second, the loss of instructional time is another detrimental consequence of exclusionary discipline practices. School district and campus leaders are encouraged to compare exclusionary discipline assignments to academic

performance to see if these practices are negatively affecting students in the classroom. Third, student discipline should be a district-wide initiative. Creating a district-wide vision for a behavioral plan can be effective in all school personnel understanding the goals and purposes of student discipline and how to properly handle it. Finally, exploring discipline methods other than exclusionary discipline practices must be a priority to maximize student academic performance as well as to promote a safe and secure learning environment.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

As established by the results of this investigation, Grade 5 and 6 girls who were Poor were clearly assigned to more days of in-school suspension than Grade 5 and 6 girls who were Not Poor. The presence of inequities in the assignment of in-school suspension as a function of student economic status needs to be addressed by future researchers. First, researchers are encouraged to address other grade levels to determine the degree to which inequities might be present there with respect to in-school suspension assignments. Secondly, given the clear disproportionality of days assigned to in-school suspension for this study, researchers are encouraged to investigate out-of-school suspension assignments by student economic status. Finally, researchers can also target discipline alternative education placement assignments by campus or district to ascertain if inequities exist amongst student ethnicity/race and/or student economic status. Researchers are also encouraged to replicate this investigation in other states to ascertain the extent to which the results delineated herein are generalizable to other states. Readers should also note that in the plethora of research on exclusionary discipline

practices no evidence has been published showing that students who are poor commit more misbehaviors at school than students who are not poor.

### **Conclusion**

In this multiyear analysis, the degree to which economic status was related to the number of days that girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was addressed. Specifically examined were two economic status levels and the number of days that Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Analyses were conducted separately for girls in Grades 5 and 6, as well as separately for each of three school years (i.e., 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018). Across all three years, Grade 5 and 6 girls who were Poor were clearly assigned to more days of in-school suspension than Grade 5 and 6 girls who were Not Poor. Given that no empirical studies have been conducted in which girls who were poor committed more misbehaviors than girls who were not poor, the reasons for the documented inequities in days assigned to an in-school suspension are unknown. Because these inequities result in time taken away from learning, an argument could be made that these students' rights to an equal education are being violated.

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Table 3.1

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Girls as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2015-2016 School Year.*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2015-2016			
Asian			
Not Poor	13	1.38	0.65
Poor	0	0	0
Black			
Not Poor	215	2.43	3.20
Poor	1,608	2.81	3.38
Hispanic			
Not Poor	282	1.99	2.05
Poor	1,719	2.37	3.08
White			
Not Poor	477	2.45	5.34
Poor	819	2.65	3.44

Table 3.2

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Girls as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 School Year*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2016-2017			
Asian			
Not Poor	10	1.40	0.70
Poor	10	1.40	0.84
Black			
Not Poor	226	2.31	2.34
Poor	1,716	3.00	3.41
Hispanic			
Not Poor	339	2.20	2.09
Poor	2,033	2.34	2.44
White			
Not Poor	561	2.14	2.13
Poor	895	2.65	2.74

Table 3.3

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Girls as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2017-2018 School Year*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2017-2018			
Asian			
Not Poor	13	1.69	2.21
Poor	20	2.30	2.34
Black			
Not Poor	218	1.95	1.61
Poor	1,787	2.84	3.27
Hispanic			
Not Poor	337	1.86	1.79
Poor	2,130	2.43	2.66
White			
Not Poor	540	1.99	1.83
Poor	922	2.43	2.19

Table 3.4

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Girls as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2015-2016 School Year.*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2015-2016			
Asian			
Not Poor	56	1.68	1.05
Poor	45	3.00	3.64
Black			
Not Poor	586	3.27	4.16
Poor	3,513	4.19	4.96
Hispanic			
Not Poor	1,017	2.98	3.40
Poor	6,633	3.80	4.63
White			
Not Poor	1,102	2.59	2.96
Poor	1,529	3.55	3.84

Table 3.5

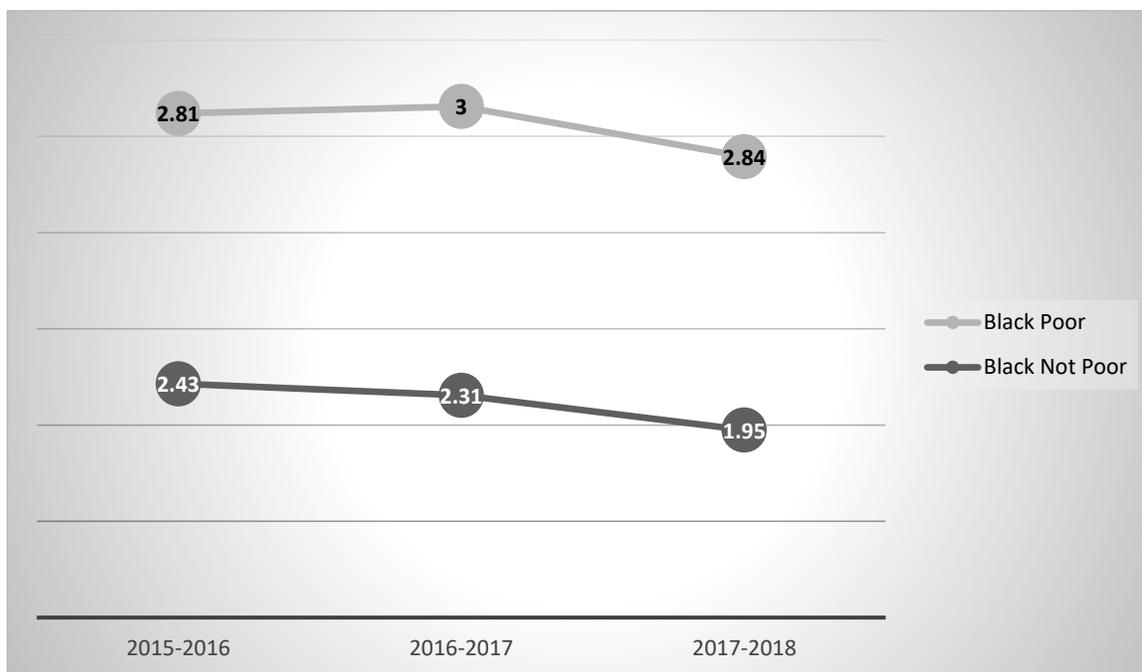
*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Girls as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 School Year.*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2016-2017			
Asian			
Not Poor	58	1.83	1.50
Poor	66	2.17	2.56
Black			
Not Poor	624	3.00	3.35
Poor	3,597	4.17	4.77
Hispanic			
Not Poor	1,204	2.71	2.81
Poor	6,988	3.52	4.21
White			
Not Poor	1,040	2.70	3.13
Poor	1,592	3.43	3.87

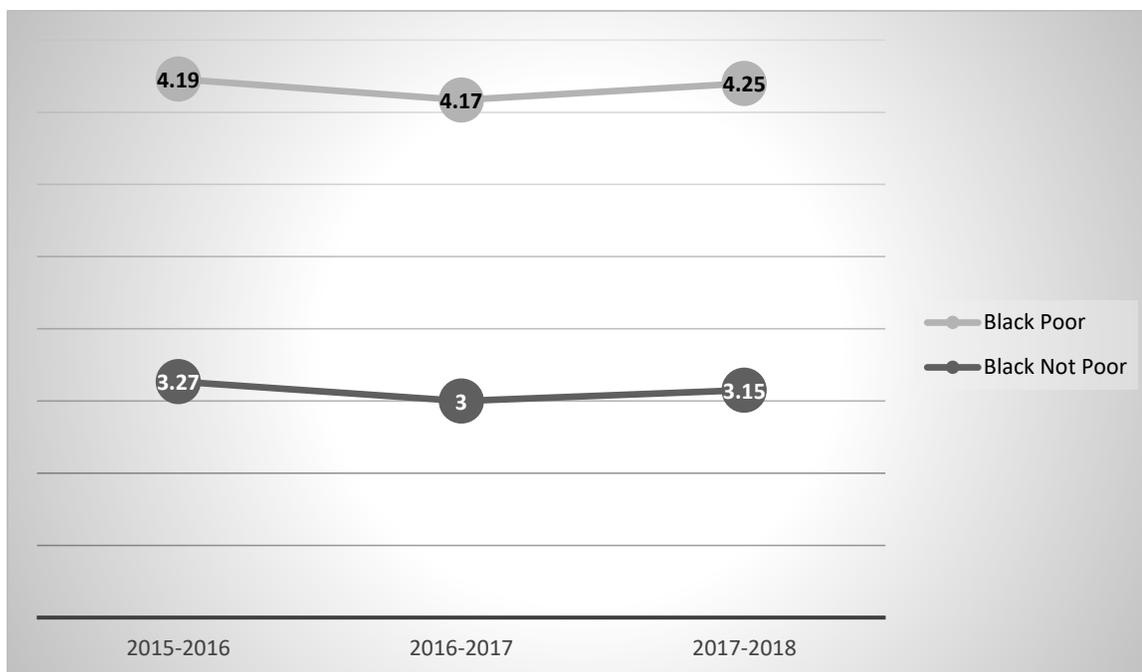
Table 3.6

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Girls as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2017-2018 School Year.*

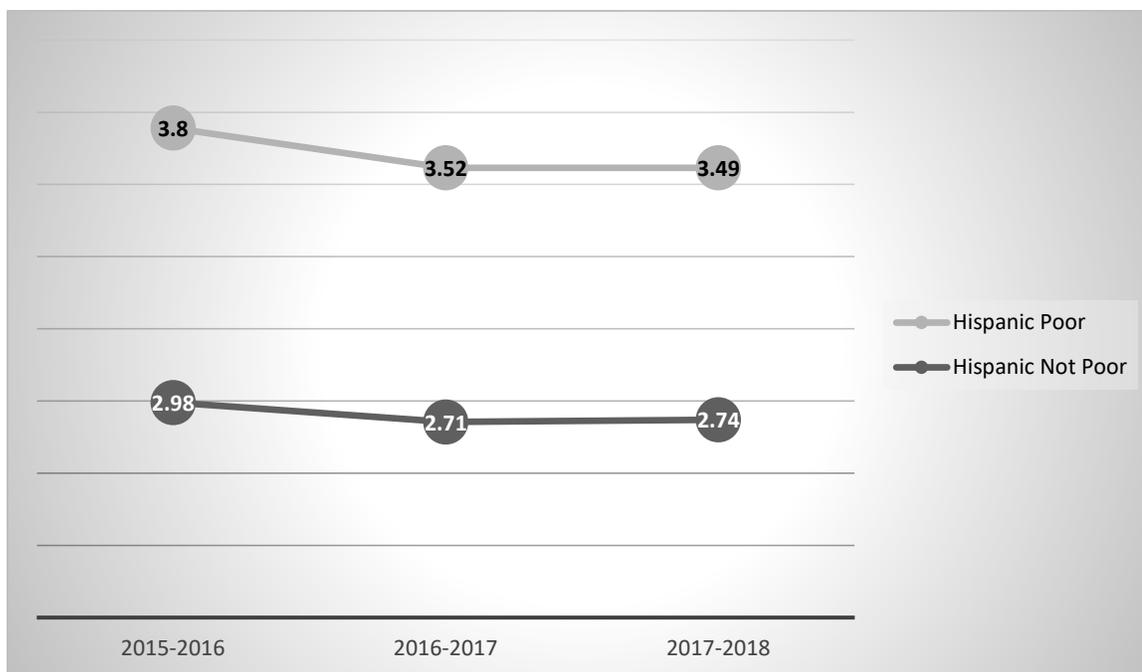
School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2017-2018			
Asian			
Not Poor	22	2.23	2.99
Poor	58	2.83	2.50
Black			
Not Poor	518	3.15	4.23
Poor	3,633	4.25	5.10
Hispanic			
Not Poor	1,012	2.74	2.89
Poor	6,755	3.49	4.04
White			
Not Poor	1,014	2.66	3.21
Poor	1,764	3.65	3.96



*Figure 3.1.* Average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 5 Black girls by their economic status during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years.



*Figure 3.2.* Average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 6 Black girls by their economic status during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years.



*Figure 3.3.* Average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 6 Hispanic girls by their economic status during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years.

**CHAPTER IV**

DIFFERENCES IN DAYS ASSIGNED TO OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION BY  
THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF GRADES 5 AND 6 BOYS: A  
MULTIYEARSTATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

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This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

### **Abstract**

Ascertained in this investigation was the effect of economic status on the number of days Grades 5 and 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2015-2016 through the 2017-2018 school years. Inferential statistical procedures yielded statistically significant differences in all three school years at both grade levels for Black, Hispanic, and White boys who were Poor. In Grades 5 and 6 in all three school years, Black boys, Hispanic boys, and White boys who were poor were assigned statistically significantly more days, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were their peers who were Not Poor. Implications, as well as recommendations for future research, were discussed.

*Keywords:* Out-of-school suspension, Ethnicity/Race, Poor, Not poor, Asian, Black, White, Boys

DIFFERENCES IN DAYS ASSIGNED TO OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION BY  
THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF GRADES 5 AND 6 BOYS: A MULTIYEAR  
STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

Exclusionary discipline practices have become a frequently used technique in discipline management plans across the United States (Green, Maynard, & Stegenga, 2018; Pyne, 2019; Rumberger & Losen, 2016; Skiba, 2008; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). One of the most prevalent exclusionary discipline consequences is that of out-of-school suspension. In the most recent data available from the United States Department of Education from the 2013-2014 school year, 2.6 million students were assigned to one or more days of out-of-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2014, p. 1). Of the 2.6 million students, 1.8 million were boys. Although boys were approximately half of the student enrollment during the 2013-2014 school year, they accounted for 71% of the out-of-school suspension assignments in the United States. Enrollment numbers by ethnicity/race and out-of-school suspension assignments generate more cause for concern. Black boys made up 7.9% of the student enrollment, but they accounted for 37.5% of the out-of-school suspension assignments. Hispanic boys made up 12.7% of the student enrollment but accounted for 21.8% of the out-of-school suspension assignments. As such, Black boys were clearly assigned to out-of-school suspension at a rate of almost five times as high as their percentage of the total student enrollment and Hispanic boys were assigned almost two times their percentage of the total enrollment (Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

With respect to the state of interest for this article, Texas, 246,474 out-of-school suspension assignments were documented in the 2013-2014 school year (Office of Civil

Rights, 2014). Boys accounted for 70%, 173,302, of the out-of-school suspensions in Texas. Although Black boys made up 6.4% of the enrollment in Texas, Black boys received 30.4% of the out-of-school suspensions. Similarly, Hispanic boys made up 26.5% of the enrollment in Texas, and Hispanic boys received 50.2% of the out-of-school suspensions (Office of Civil Rights, 2014). Black boys were assigned to almost five times more out-of-school suspensions than the percentage of their student enrollment and Hispanic boys were assigned almost two times more than their student enrollment in Texas.

In a recent Texas statewide investigation of middle school discipline consequence assignments, Hilberth and Slate (2014) addressed the degree to which disparities were present in out-of-school suspensions for Black and White students. In Grade 6, 19.4% of Black students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, but only 3.7% of White students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. In Grade 7, 22.6% of Black students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension but only 4.8% of White students were assigned out-of-school suspension. In Grade 8, 23.2% of Black students were assigned an out-of-school suspension but only 5.4% of White students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Readers should be aware that, in Texas, the percentage of White students as part of the total student enrollment is over two times more than the percentage of Black students. As such, Black students were assigned out-of-school suspension over 4 times more than White students.

Poverty is another factor that contributes to inequities in student discipline. In a recent Texas study, Khan and Slate (2016) addressed the relationship between poverty and exclusionary discipline consequences for Grade 6 students. Khan and Slate (2016)

established that Black students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to 21.3% of the out-of-school suspensions in comparison to only 9.7% of Black students who were not economically disadvantaged and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Hispanic students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to 9.0% of the out-of-school suspensions compared to only 4.1% of Hispanic students who were not economically disadvantaged. White students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to 6.4% of the out-of-school suspensions compared to only 1.9% of White students who were not economically disadvantaged. In the Khan and Slate (2016) Texas statewide analysis, students who were economically disadvantaged, regardless of their ethnicity/race were assigned to at least two times more out-of-school suspension assignments than their same ethnic/racial group of students who were not economically disadvantaged.

Documented to date has been evidence of racial/ethnic disparities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences. Not as well established is the presence of potential inequities in the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences. After an extensive search of the literature, only two such research studies were located (Miller & Slate, 2019; White, 2019). White (2019) investigated the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence by ethnicity/race for middle school students in a statewide Texas study across four school years. For Grade 6, Black boys were assigned 0.57 more days to an out-of-school suspension than Hispanic boys, and 1.15 more days than White boys. Grade 6 Hispanic boys were assigned 0.58 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White boys. In Grade 7, Black boys were assigned 0.46 more days to an out-of-school suspension than Hispanic boys, and 1.28

more days than White boys. Grade 7 Hispanic boys were assigned 0.82 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White boys. For Grade 8, Black boys were assigned 0.38 more days of an out-of-school suspension than Hispanic boys, and 1.23 more days than White boys. Grade 8 Hispanic boys were assigned 0.85 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White boys. Clear inequities were present in the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black and Hispanic boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension when compared to White boys.

In a similar analysis as White (2019) but for high school students, Miller and Slate (2019) completed a Texas statewide analysis of out-of-school suspension assignments and number of days assigned to that consequence by the ethnicity/race of Grade 9, 10, and 11 boys. In Grade 9, Hispanic boys were 10 times more likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension than White boys and 7 times more likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension than White boys in Grades 10 and 11. A similar pattern was observed for Black and White boys. In Grades 9, 10, and 11 Black boys were 5 times more likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension than White boys. With respect to number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension Hispanic boys were assigned over one-tenth of a day more of an out-of-school suspension than White boys. Black boys were assigned about two-tenths of a day more of to an out-of-school suspension than White boys. As such, clear inequities were present in the number of days Grade 9, 10, and 11 Hispanic and Black boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension when compared to White boys.

A reason why the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension is relevant is that exclusionary discipline practices have been established as contributions to

poor academic performance. Hilberth (2010) conducted a Texas statewide analysis of Grades 6 through 8 out-of-school suspension discipline consequences and their relationship to reading and mathematics performance. Grade 6-8 Black students who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had statistically significantly poorer reading achievement than their peers who were not assigned to such a discipline consequence. Grade 6-8 White students who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had statistically significantly lower reading performance than Grade 6-8 White students who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Performances on the mathematics assessments were similar in nature. Grade 6-8 Black and White students who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension assignment had statistically significantly lower mathematics achievement than Grade 6-8 Black and White students who were not assigned an out-of-school suspension discipline consequence. The documented inequities in the assignment of out-of-school suspensions may be a contributing factor to increasing academic achievement gaps between students of color and White students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Not only are out-of-school suspension discipline consequences being overused, more importantly they are being assigned in an inequitable and discriminatory manner (Anyon et al., 2014; Bowman-Perrot et al., 2013; Chu & Ready, 2018; Skiba, Arrendondo, & Williams, 2014; Skiba, Eckes, & Brown, 2009). During the 2013-2014 school year, over 2.6 million students were assigned one or more days of out-of-school suspension and 1.8 million were boys (Office of Civil Rights, 2014, p. 1). Inequities in out-of-school suspension assignments have been determined to be linked with poverty (Khan & Slate, 2016) and race/ethnicity (Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller & Slate, 2019).

The extant literature, however, on the possibility of inequities in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension is quite limited. In a recent publication, White (2019) determined statistically significant differences existed in the number days assigned to out-of-school suspension. Inequities were clearly present in the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black and Hispanic boys were assigned to out-of-school suspension when compared to White boys. Miller and Slate (2019) also established the presence of statistically significant differences in the number of days assigned to out-of-school suspension. Clear inequities were present in the number of days Grades 9, 10, and 11 Hispanic and Black boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension when compared to White boys. The importance of this issue is that out-of-school suspensions by definition creates a loss of instructional time for students. Hilberth (2010) documented that Grade 6-8 Black and White students who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension assignment had statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics performance than Grade 6-8 Black and White students who were not assigned to such consequences.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which economic status was related to the number of days that boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Specifically examined were two economic status categories (i.e., Not Poor and Poor) and the number of days that Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Analyses were conducted separately for boys in Grades 5 and 6, as well separately for each of three school years (i.e., 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018). As such, the extent to which trends were present in the number of

days assigned to an out-of-school suspension by economic status for the four major ethnic/racial groups of boys over a 3-year time period was determined.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study was conducted to add to the limited existing literature available on inequities in the number of days students are assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Out-of-school suspensions have negative effects, interfere with student achievement, and contribute to students having a greater risk for academic and psychosocial problems throughout their life (Anyon et al., 2014). Balfanz, Byrnes, and Fox (2015) determined that being suspended in Grade 9 doubled the risk of a student dropping out of high school. Each suspension decreased the odds of graduating high school by 20 percentage points.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) For Grade 5 boys, what is the effect of their economic status on the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension?; and (b) For Grade 6 boys, what is the effect of their economic status on the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension? These two research questions were answered separately for Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black boys. Moreover, these two research questions were analyzed for three school years (i.e., 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018). Accordingly, this research investigation was comprised of 16 research questions.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

A causal-comparative research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2020) was used in this investigation. A single independent variable, student economic status, was present. Two economic status groups were present: (a) Not Poor and (b) Poor. Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White boys constituted the four ethnic/racial groups of students whose data were analyzed herein. The dependent variable was number of days Grades 5 and 6 boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. Through use of a causal-comparative research design, pre-existing data from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System could be analyzed.

Causal-comparative research designs do have disadvantages. One disadvantage is the inability to make definitive cause and effect relationship statements (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). If statistically significant differences are documented, the reason for such differences cannot be conclusively determined. Another disadvantage with respect to this investigation is that some Grade 5 boys made a transition to a different school campus for Grade 6, whereas some Grade 5 boys remained on the same school campus for Grade 6.

### **Participants and Instrumentation**

Participants in this study were Grades 5 and 6 boys who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, or the 2017-2018 school years. These data were analyzed to determine the degree to which student economic status was related to the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Economic status

was defined by two categories: (a) Not Poor and (b) Poor. Families with incomes above 185% of the Federal poverty line are not eligible for the Federal free or reduced lunch program (Burney & Beilke, 2008) and were considered as Not Poor. Students who qualify for the Federal reduced or free lunch program are required to have family home incomes between 185% or less of the Federal poverty line and are considered Poor in this investigation (Burney & Beilke, 2008)

According to the Texas Education Agency (2010), out-of-school suspension is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence that prohibits the student from attending school. The out-of-school suspension cannot exceed three consecutive days (Texas Education Agency, 2010, Sec. 37.005). The discipline data for this study were obtained through a Public Information Request to the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System. Data were then imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software program for statistical analysis.

## **Results**

Prior to conducting inferential statistics to determine whether statistically significant differences were present in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension to Grade 5 and Grade 6 boys by their economic status, checks were conducted to determine the extent to which these data were normally distributed. Though not all of the assumptions were met, Field (2018) contends that the parametric independent samples *t*-test procedure is sufficiently robust to withstand violations of its underlying assumptions. Accordingly, parametric independent samples *t*-tests were calculated to answer the previously discussed research questions.

### Results for Out-of-School Suspension and Grade 5 Boys

In this section, results will be presented by school year and by ethnicity/race. Findings will be discussed first for Asian boys, followed by Black boys, Hispanic boys, and then White boys. Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 contain the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. Regarding the 2015-2016 school year for the extent to which differences were present in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension by the economic status (i.e., Not Poor and Poor) of Grade 5 Asian boys, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(39.83) = -1.64, p = .11$ . For the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(49.84) = -0.82, p = .42$ , for Grade 5 Asian boys. In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(40.80) = 0.68, p = .50$ . For all three school years, Asian boys were assigned to a similar number of days, on average, to an out-of-school suspension, regardless of their economic status.

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Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded for Grade 5 Black boys,  $t(557.66) = -2.79, p = .01$ . This difference represented a below small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.07 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 4.1, Grade 5 Black boys who were Poor were assigned to almost one half-day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were their Grade 5 Black peers who were Not Poor. For the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded for Grade 5 Black boys,  $t(1409.91) = -6.76, p < .001$ . This difference represented

a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.12 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.2, Grade 5 Black boys who were Poor were assigned to almost one more day, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were their Grade 5 Black peers who were Not Poor. In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed for Grade 5 Black boys,  $t(457.11) = -2.43, p = .02$ . This difference represented a below small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.07 (Cohen, 1988). As contained in Table 4.3, Grade 5 Black boys who were Poor were assigned to almost a half-day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were their Grade 5 Black peers who were Not Poor.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 5 Hispanic boys, the parametric independent samples  $t$ -test revealed a statistically significant difference,  $t(634.90) = -3.25, p = .001$ . This difference represented a below small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.08 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 4.1, Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned almost one half-day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. In the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present,  $t(771.15) = -4.62, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.10 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.2, Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned almost one half-day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference, was present,  $t(664.24) = -5.71, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.12 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 4.3, Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned over one half-day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor.

In the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 5 White boys, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension,  $t(1467.5) = -4.75, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.12 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 White boys who were Poor were assigned over one-quarter day more on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 5 White boys who were Not Poor. Table 4.1 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis. In the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension,  $t(1230.96) = -2.64, p = .01$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.07, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.2, Grade 5 White boys who were Poor were assigned over one-quarter day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 5 White boys who were Not Poor. For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension,  $t(1549.4) = -6.19, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.15, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 White boys who were Poor were assigned over one half-day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 5 White boys who were Not Poor. Table 4.3 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Results for Out-of-School Suspension and Grade 6 Boys**

In this section, results will be presented by school year and by ethnicity/race. Findings will be discussed first for Asian boys, followed by Black boys, Hispanic boys, and then White boys. Tables 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 contain the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. Regarding the 2015-2016 school year for the extent to which differences were present in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension by the economic status of Grade 6 Asian boys, a statistically

significant difference was not present,  $t(122.53) = -1.01, p = .31$ . For the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(98.52) = -0.92, p = .36$ , for Grade 6 Asian boys. In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $t(155.62) = -1.18, p = .24$ . For all three school years, Asian boys were assigned to a similar number of days, on average, to an out-of-school suspension, regardless of their economic status.

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Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded for Grade 6 Black boys,  $t(1410.5) = -6.49, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.11 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 4.4, Grade 6 Black boys who were Poor were assigned to over three quarters of a day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were their Grade 6 Black peers who were Not Poor. For the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded for Grade 6 Black boys,  $t(1570.52) = -7.24, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.12 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.5, Grade 6 Black boys who were Poor were assigned to over three quarters of a day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were their Grade 6 Black peers who were Not Poor. In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed for Grade 6 Black boys,  $t(1333.2) = -7.60, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.13 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black boys who were

Poor were assigned to over nine tenths of a day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were their Grade 6 Black peers who were Not Poor (see Table 2.6).

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 6 Hispanic boys, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(1591.3) = -5.10, p < .001$ . This difference represented a below small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.07 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 4.4, Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned over one half-day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. In the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded,  $t(1868.59) = -6.40, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.09, a below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned over one half-day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor (see Table 4.5). For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present,  $t(1798.1) = -7.45, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.11, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 4.6, Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned over seven tenths of a day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor.

In the 2015-2016 school year for Grade 6 White boys, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension,  $t(2461.6) = -8.02, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.15, a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 White boys who were Poor were assigned over one nine tenths of a day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor. Table 4.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis. In the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the number of days assigned to an out-

of-school suspension,  $t(2647.14) = -5.18, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.10, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.5, Grade 6 White boys who were Poor were assigned over one half-day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor. For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension,  $t(2790.2) = -5.91, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d$  of 0.11, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 White boys who were Poor were assigned over one half-day more, on average, to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor. Table 4.6 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Discussion**

In this investigation, the degree to which differences existed in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension based on the economic status of Grade 5 and 6 boys was analyzed for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. In each school year and at each grade level, the average number of days assigned to out-of-school suspension for Grade 5 and 6 boys who were Poor and Not Poor were calculated to determine if their economic status affected the number of days they were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Grades 5 and 6 were specifically selected because they are transition years for most students. In Texas, a majority of school districts have Grade 5 at the elementary level and Grade 6 begins middle school at a different campus.

In this empirical, multiyear statewide investigation, the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension increased from Grade 5 to Grade 6. Grade 6 Black, Hispanic and White boys who were Poor were assigned on average almost two tenths of a

day more of out-of-school suspension than Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White boys who were Not Poor. Provided below are the results by grade level and school year.

Regarding Grade 5 boys who were assigned out-of-school suspension during the three years analyzed, poverty was clearly related to the number of days they were assigned to out-of-school suspension. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and the 2017-2018 school years, Grade 5 Black boys who were Poor were assigned 3.31, 3.35, and 3.22 days of out-of-school suspension whereas Grade 5 Black boys who were Not Poor were assigned 2.90, 2.44, and 2.86 days of out-of-school suspension. As such, Grade 5 Black boys who were Poor served on average over one half-day more of out-of-school suspension than Grade 5 Black boys who were Not Poor. In the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and the 2017-2018 school years, Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned 2.71, 2.77, and 2.71 days of out-of-school suspension whereas Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor were assigned 2.34, 1.84, and 2.16 days of out-of-school suspension. Accordingly, Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Poor served on average over one half-day more of out-of-school suspension than Grade 5 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Depicted in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 are these averages for Grade 5 Black and Hispanic boys.

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Also addressed herein were the number of days that Grade 5 Asian and White boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension and its relationship to their economic status. In contrast to the results for Grade 5 Black and Hispanic boys, the economic status of Grade 5 Asian boys was not related to the number of days they were assigned to

an out-of-school suspension in all three school years. With respect to Grade 5 White boys, results were similar to the results for Grade 5 Black and Hispanic boys. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years, Grade 5 White boys who were Poor were assigned 2.85, 2.77, and 2.95 days of out-of-school suspension. In comparison, Grade 5 White boys who were Not Poor were assigned 2.28, 2.43, and 2.27 days of out-of-school suspension.

Regarding Grade 6, economic status was established to be statistically significantly related to the number of days Black boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and the 2017-2018 school years, Grade 6 Black boys who were Poor were assigned 4.33, 4.30, and 4.25 days of out-of-school suspension. Grade 6 Black boys who were Not Poor were assigned 3.45, 3.43, and 3.27 days of out-of-school suspension. Accordingly, Grade 6 Black boys who were Poor served almost one more day of out-of-school suspension each year than Grade 6 Black boys who were Not Poor. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and the 2017-2018 school years, Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned 3.79, 3.80, and 3.65 days of out-of-school suspension. Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor were assigned 3.21, 3.13, and 2.94 days of out-of-school suspension. As such, Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Poor served over one half-day more of out-of-school suspension each year than did Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor.

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Insert Figures 4.3 and 4.4 about here  
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Data on Grade 6 Asian and White boys were also analyzed to determine the extent to which poverty was related to the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Similar to the results for Grade 5 Asian boys, the economic status of Grade 6 Asian boys was not related to the number of days they were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in all three school years. With respect to Grade 6 White boys, the results were similar to the results for Grade 6 Black and Hispanic boys. During the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years, Grade 6 White boys who were Poor were assigned 3.70, 3.47, and 3.32 days of out-of-school suspension. In comparison, Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor were assigned 2.71, 2.86, and 2.71 days of out-of-school suspension. Grade 6 White boys who were Poor served almost three-quarters of a day more of out-of-school suspension than Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor.

### **Connections with Existing Literature**

In this multiyear, statewide investigation, differences in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension for Grade 5 and 6 boys by their economic status were established. Boys accounted for 70%, 173,302, of the out-of-school suspensions in Texas. Although Black boys made up 6.4% of the enrollment in Texas, Black boys received 30.4% of the out-of-school suspensions. Similarly, Hispanic boys made up 26.5% of the enrollment in Texas, and Hispanic boys received 50.2% of the out-of-school suspensions (Office of Civil Rights, 2014). Harkrider and Slate (2020) demonstrated that economic status was clearly related to exclusionary discipline assignments. Hilberth and Slate (2014) addressed the degree to which disparities were present in out-of-school suspensions for Black and White students in Texas. In Grade 6, 19.4% of Black students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, but only 3.7% of White students were

assigned to an out-of-school suspension. In another study of out-of-school suspension assignments in Texas, White (2019) investigated the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence by ethnicity/race for middle school students across four school years. For Grade 6, Black boys were assigned 0.57 more days to an out-of-school suspension than Hispanic boys, and 1.15 more days than White boys. Grade 6 Hispanic boys were assigned 0.58 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White boys. For this study, the transition from Grade 5 to Grade 6 produced an increase of out-of-school suspension assignments. Grade 6 Black, Hispanic and White boys who were Poor were assigned on average two tenths of a day more of out-of-school suspension than Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White boys who were Poor.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

Major implications for policy and practice can be supported from the findings in this investigation. First, school administrators can disaggregate the out-of-school suspension assignments at their own campus. The number of out-of-school suspension assignments by ethnicity/race and economic status will generate trends and possibly inequities that campus leaders can address to eliminate any disparities. Second, the use of out-of-school suspension creates isolation periods for students as they are separated from their school. Third, developers and implementors of discipline management systems need to focus on why the behavior occurred and less on behavioral practices that exclude students. If administrators can better understand the why behind the behavior, they can target interventions to help prevent the behavior from occurring again. Finally, administrators and teachers need to work on building stronger relationships with their

students. Students need to feel welcomed and supported as they navigate their school years.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

As established in the trends of this empirical investigation, Grade 5 and 6 boys who were Poor were clearly assigned to more days of out-of-school suspension than Grade 5 and 6 boys who were Not Poor. The presence of inequities in the assignment of out-of-school suspension as a function of student economic status remains a serious concern for Texas school administrators and must be addressed by researchers in future studies. First, researchers are encouraged to analyze potential inequities in the assignment of out-of-school suspension days for girls. Secondly, given the clear disproportionality of days assigned to out-of-school suspension for this study, researchers can extend this study to investigate potential inequities in the number of days assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement campus by student economic status. Finally, researchers can target the financial effects of using out-of-school suspension as a discipline consequence. Students who are assigned out-of-school suspension are coded as absent on those days in the current funding system in Texas. School districts using out-of-school suspension in their discipline management plans are using an ineffective practice and reducing their funding. Researchers are also encouraged to replicate this investigation in other states to ascertain the degree to which results delineated herein would be generalizable. Readers should note that in all of the extant literature involving out-of-school suspension, not a single researcher has documented that students who are poor commit more discipline infractions than students who are not poor.

### **Conclusion**

In this multiyear analysis, the degree to which economic status was related to the number of days that boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension was addressed. Specifically examined were two economic status levels and the number of days that Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Analyses were conducted separately for boys in Grades 5 and 6, as well as separately for each of three school years (i.e., 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018). Across all three years, Grade 5 and 6 boys who were Poor were clearly assigned to more days of out-of-school suspension than Grade 5 and 6 boys who were Not Poor. Given that no empirical studies have been conducted in which boys who were poor committed more misbehaviors than their peers who were not poor, the reasons for the documented inequities in days assigned to an out-of-school suspension are unknown. Because these inequities result in time taken away from learning, the argument could be made that these students' rights to an equal education are being violated.

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Table 4.1

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to Out-of-School Suspension for Grade 5 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Boys as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2015-2016 School Year.*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2015-2016			
Asian			
Not Poor	25	1.56	0.96
Poor	30	2.33	2.35
Black			
Not Poor	379	2.90	2.61
Poor	2,588	3.31	3.19
Hispanic			
Not Poor	434	2.34	2.15
Poor	3,080	2.71	2.65
White			
Not Poor	608	2.28	1.91
Poor	862	2.85	2.66

Table 4.2

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to Out-of-School Suspension for Grade 5 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Boys as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 School Year*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2016-2017			
Asian			
Not Poor	27	1.67	0.96
Poor	53	1.85	0.91
Black			
Not Poor	440	2.44	2.03
Poor	2,629	3.35	4.75
Hispanic			
Not Poor	475	1.84	2.77
Poor	3,316	2.77	2.59
White			
Not Poor	578	2.43	2.43
Poor	933	2.77	2.45

Table 4.3

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to Out-of-School Suspension for Grade 5 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Boys as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2017-2018 School Year*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2017-2018			
Asian			
Not Poor	25	2.48	2.20
Poor	24	2.13	1.39
Black			
Not Poor	330	2.86	2.48
Poor	2,557	3.22	2.93
Hispanic			
Not Poor	424	2.16	1.77
Poor	3,365	2.71	2.54
White			
Not Poor	586	2.27	1.74
Poor	993	2.95	2.58

Table 4.4

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to Out-of-School Suspension for Grade 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Boys as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2015-2016 School Year.*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2015-2016			
Asian			
Not Poor	59	2.10	1.53
Poor	86	2.36	1.49
Black			
Not Poor	781	3.45	3.22
Poor	4,211	4.33	4.49
Hispanic			
Not Poor	1,080	3.21	3.41
Poor	7,060	3.79	4.07
White			
Not Poor	1,080	2.71	2.21
Poor	1,514	3.70	3.96

Table 4.5

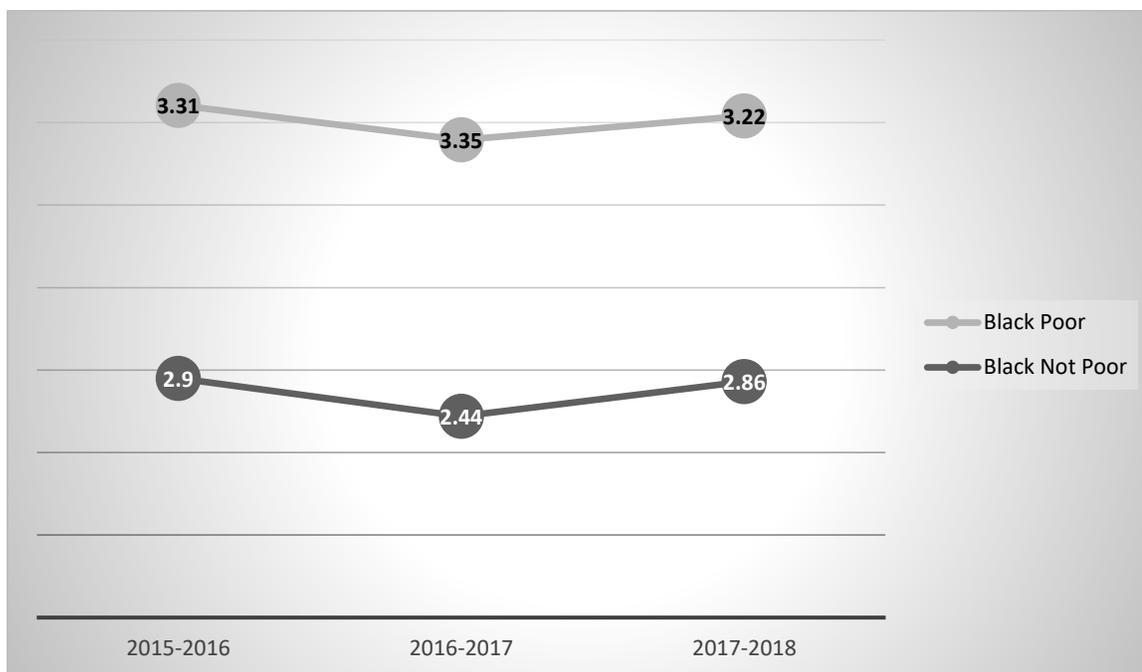
*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to Out-of-School Suspension for Grade 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Boys as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 School Year.*

School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2016-2017			
Asian			
Not Poor	60	2.25	2.67
Poor	84	2.62	1.86
Black			
Not Poor	790	3.43	2.80
Poor	4,195	4.30	4.26
Hispanic			
Not Poor	1,121	3.13	3.07
Poor	6,984	3.80	4.21
White			
Not Poor	1,120	2.86	2.58
Poor	1,530	3.47	3.46

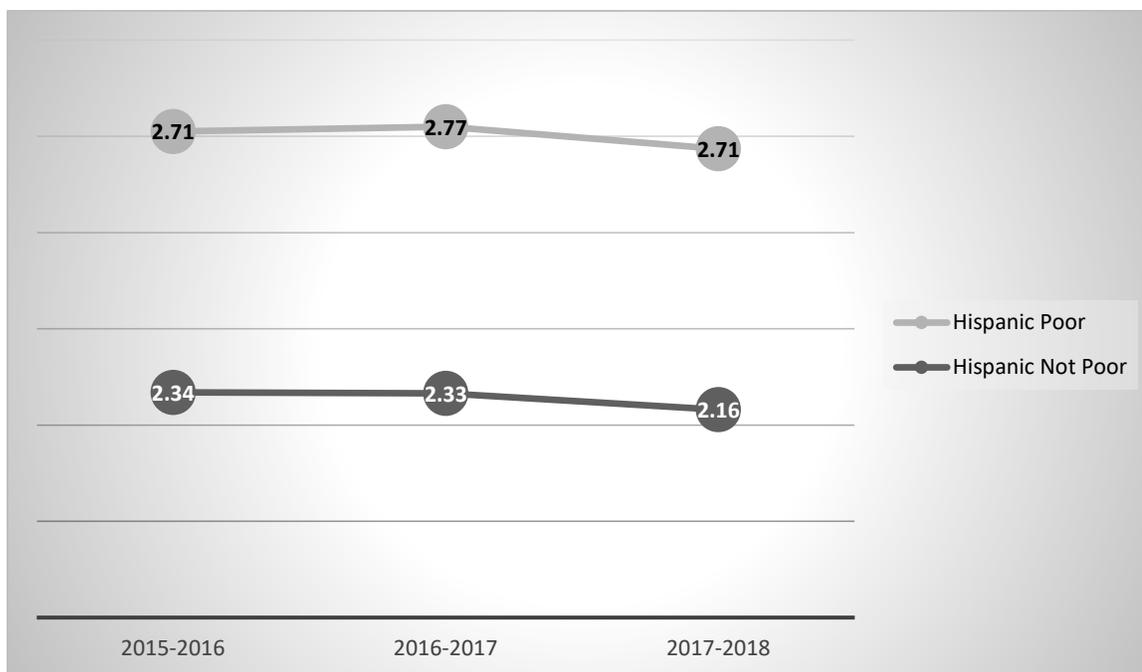
Table 4.6

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to Out-of-School Suspension for Grade 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White Boys as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2017-2018 School Year.*

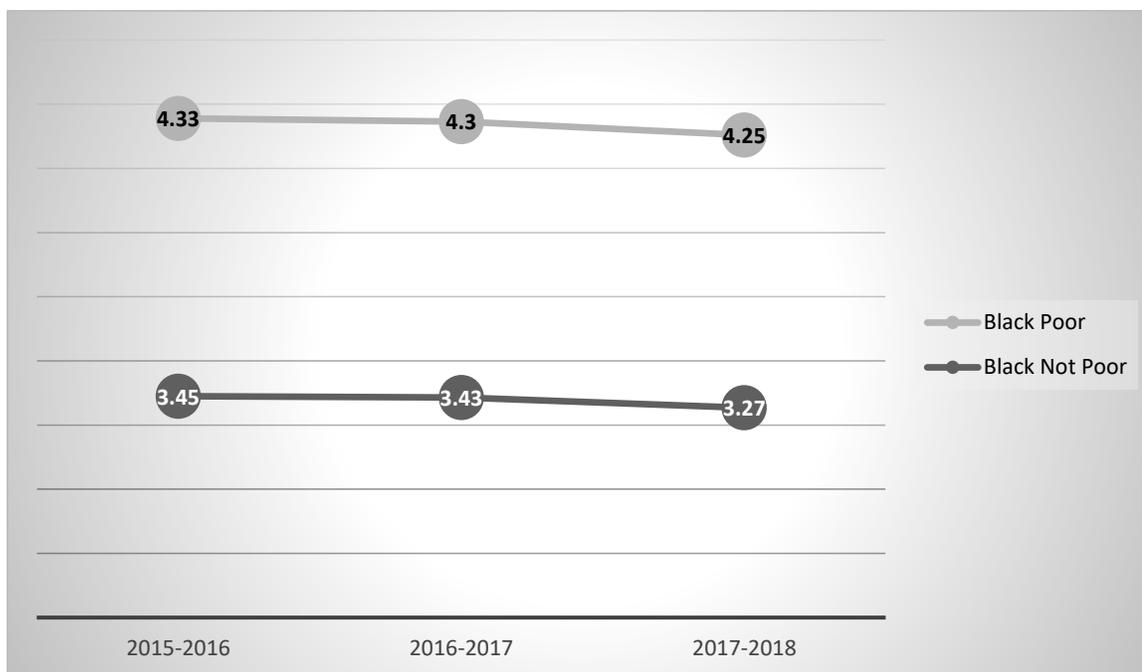
School Year, Ethnicity/Race, and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M%</i>	<i>SD%</i>
2017-2018			
Asian			
Not Poor	72	2.36	2.53
Poor	87	2.76	2.22
Black			
Not Poor	717	3.27	2.91
Poor	4,047	4.25	4.27
Hispanic			
Not Poor	1,120	2.94	2.82
Poor	7,060	3.65	3.71
White			
Not Poor	1,188	2.71	2.41
Poor	1,612	3.32	3.11



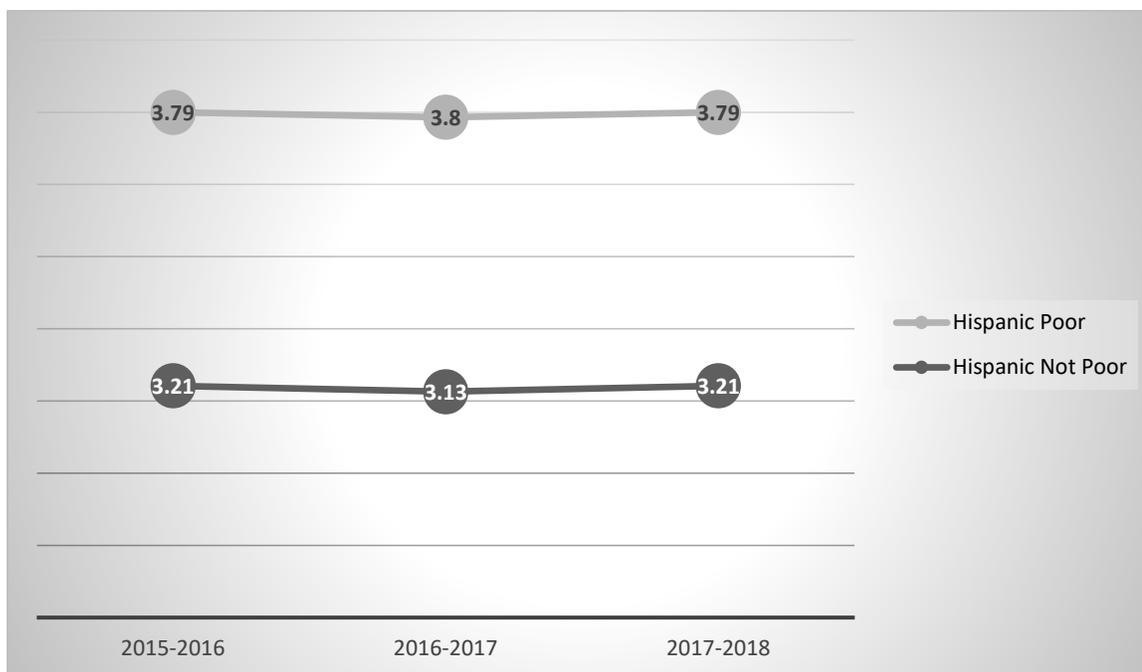
*Figure 4.1.* Average number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension for Grade 5 Black boys by their economic status during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years.



*Figure 4.2.* Average number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension for Grade 5 Hispanic boys by their economic status during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years.



*Figure 4.3.* Average number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension for Grade 6 Black boys by their economic status during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years.



*Figure 4.4.* Average number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension for Grade 6 Hispanic boys by their economic status during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the degree to which economic status was related to the number of days that students were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence. In the first study, the effect of economic status (i.e., Not Poor and Poor) on the number of days that Grade 5 and 6 Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. In the second study, the effect of economic status (i.e., Not Poor and Poor) on the number of days that Grade 5 and 6 Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. In the third study, the effect of economic status (i.e., Not Poor and Poor) on the number of days that Grade 5 and 6 Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. As such, the extent to which trends are present in the number of days students were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence by their economic status for the four major ethnic/racial groups of students over a 3-year time period was determined. In this chapter, the results of the three articles are discussed and a summary of each of the three articles is provided. Implications for policy and practice are discussed along with recommendations for future research.

#### **Summary of Results for Study One**

In the first investigation, the effect of economic status on the number of days Grades 5 and 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White boys were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2015-2016 through the 2017-2018 school years was addressed. Three school years of archival data from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System were analyzed to determine the effect of economic

status on the number of days Grades 5 and 6 boys were assigned to an in-school suspension by ethnicity/race.

For the three school years analyzed, Asian boys who were Poor only had a statistically significant difference in 2016-2017 for Grade 5 and in 2015-2016 for Grade 6. The range of in-school suspension assignment days for Asian boys who were Poor were 2.40 days to 3.02 days. According to Table 5.1, Asian boys who were Poor were assigned between 0.34 to 0.92 more days of in-school suspension than Asian boys who were Not Poor

Table 5.1

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 and Grade 6 Asian Boys for the 2015-2016 Through the 2017-2018 School Years.*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	More Days Assigned	How Many More Days
Grade 5			
2015-2016	No	Poor	0.38
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	0.59
2017-2018	No	Poor	0.49
Grade 6			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.92
2016-2017	No	Poor	0.50
2017-2018	No	Poor	0.34

Across all three school years and both grade levels, Black boys who were Poor had a statistically significant difference in number of days assigned to in-school suspension. The range of in-school suspension assignment days for Black boys who were Poor were 3.57 days to 5.21 days. Black boys who were Poor were assigned between 0.78 to 1.43 more days of in-school suspension than Black boys who were Not Poor (See Table 5.2).

Table 5.2

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 and Grade 6 Black Boys for the 2015-2016 Through the 2017-2018 School Years.*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	More Days Assigned	How Many More Days
Grade 5			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.98
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	0.93
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.78
Grade 6			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	1.43
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	1.32
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	1.32

Across all three school years and both grade levels, Hispanic boys who were Poor had a statistically significant difference in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension. The range of in-school suspension assignment days for Hispanic boys who were Poor were 2.92 days to 4.58 days. Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned between 0.53 to 1.09 more days of in-school suspension than Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Table 5.3 contains a summary of these analyses.

Table 5.3

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 and Grade 6 Hispanic Boys for the 2015-2016 Through the 2017-2018 School Years.*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	More Days Assigned	How Many More Days
Grade 5			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.73
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	0.70
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.53
Grade 6			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.94
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	1.04
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	1.09

Across all three school years and both grade levels, White boys who were Poor had a statistically significant difference in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension. The range of in-school suspension assignment days for White boys who were Poor were 3.36 days to 4.53 days. As depicted in Table 5.4, White boys who were Poor were assigned between 0.80 to 1.57 more days of in-school suspension than White boys who were Not Poor.

Table 5.4

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 and Grade 6 White Boys for the 2015-2016 Through the 2017-2018 School Years.*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	More Days Assigned	How Many More Days
Grade 5			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.80
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	1.02
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.87
Grade 6			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	1.55
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	1.57
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	1.19

### **Summary of Results for Study Two**

In the second investigation, the effect of economic status on the number of days Grades 5 and 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2015-2016 through the 2017-2018 school years was addressed. Three school years of archival data from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System were analyzed to determine the effect of economic status on the number of days Grade 5 and 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension by ethnicity/race.

For the three school years analyzed, Asian girls who were Poor only had a statistically significant difference in 2015-2016 for Grade 5. The range of in-school suspension assignment days for Asian girls who were Poor were 1.40 days to 3.00 days. As delineated in Table 5.5, Asian girls who were Poor were assigned between 0.32 to 0.61 more days of in-school suspension than Asian girls who were Not Poor.

Table 5.5

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 and Grade 6 Asian Girls for the 2015-2016 Through the 2017-2018 School Years.*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	More Days Assigned	How Many More Days
Grade 5			
2015-2016	No	Not Poor	1.38
2016-2017	No	Same	0.00
2017-2018	No	Poor	0.61
Grade 6			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.32
2016-2017	No	Poor	0.34
2017-2018	No	Poor	0.60

Across all three school years and both grade levels, Black girls who were Poor had a statistically significant difference in number of days assigned to in-school suspension. The range of in-school suspension assignment days for Black girls who were Poor were 2.81 days to 4.25 days. As shown in Table 5.6, Black girls who were Poor were assigned between 0.38 to 1.17 more days of in-school suspension than Black girls who were Not Poor

Table 5.6

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 and Grade 6 Black Girls for the 2015-2016 Through the 2017-2018 School Years.*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	More Days Assigned	How Many More Days
Grade 5			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.38
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	0.69
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.89
Grade 6			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.92
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	1.17
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.90

For the three years analyzed and two grade levels, Hispanic girls who were Poor had a statistically significant difference in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension except for Grade 5 during the 2016-2017 school year. The range of in-school suspension assignment days for Hispanic girls who were Poor were 2.34 days to 3.80 days. Hispanic girls who were Poor were assigned between 0.14 to 0.82 more days of in-school suspension than Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Table 5.7 contains the summary of these analyses.

Table 5.7

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 and Grade 6 Hispanic Girls for the 2015-2016 Through the 2017-2018 School Years.*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	More Days Assigned	How Many More Days
Grade 5			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.38
2016-2017	No	Poor	0.14
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.57
Grade 6			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.82
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	0.81
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.75

For the three years analyzed and two grade levels, White girls who were Poor had a statistically significant difference in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension except for Grade 5 during the 2015-2016 school year. The range of in-school suspension assignment days for White girls who were Poor were 2.43 days to 3.65 days. White girls who were Poor were assigned between 0.20 to 0.99 more days of in-school suspension than White girls who were Not Poor (See Table 5.8).

Table 5.8

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 5 and Grade 6 White Girls for the 2015-2016 Through the 2017-2018 School Years.*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	More Days Assigned	How Many More Days
Grade 5			
2015-2016	No	Poor	0.20
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	0.51
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.44
Grade 6			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.96
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	0.73
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.99

### Summary of Results for Study Three

In the third investigation, the effect of economic status on the number of days Grades 5 and 6 Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2015-2016 through the 2017-2018 school years was addressed. Three school years of archival data from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System were analyzed to determine the effect of economic status on the number of days Grade 5 and 6 boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension by ethnicity/race.

For the three school years analyzed, Asian boys who were Poor did not have a statistically significant difference in the number of days assigned to out-of-school suspension. The range of out-of-school suspension assignment days for Asian boys who were Poor were 1.85 days to 2.76 days. As depicted in Table 5.9, Asian boys who were Poor were assigned between 0.34 to 0.92 more days of out-of-school suspension than Asian boys who were Not Poor except for Grade 5 during the 2017-2018 school year.

Table 5.9

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to Out-of-School Suspension for Grade 5 and Grade 6 Asian Boys for the 2015-2016 Through the 2017-2018 School Years.*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	More Days Assigned	How Many More Days
Grade 5			
2015-2016	No	Poor	0.77
2016-2017	No	Poor	0.18
2017-2018	No	Not Poor	0.35
Grade 6			
2015-2016	No	Poor	0.26
2016-2017	No	Poor	0.37
2017-2018	No	Poor	0.40

Across all three school years and both grade levels, Black boys who were Poor had a statistically significant difference in number of days assigned to out-of-school suspension. The range of out-of-school suspension assignment days for Black boys who were Poor were 3.22 days to 4.33 days. As delineated in Table 5.10, Black boys who were Poor were assigned between 0.36 to 0.98 more days of out-of-school suspension than Black boys who were Not Poor

Table 5.10

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to Out-of-School Suspension for Grade 5 and Grade 6 Black Boys for the 2015-2016 Through the 2017-2018 School Years.*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	More Days Assigned	How Many More Days
Grade 5			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.41
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	0.91
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.36
Grade 6			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.88
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	0.87
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.98

Across all three school years and both grade levels, Hispanic boys who were Poor had a statistically significant difference in the number of days assigned to out-of-school suspension. The range of out-of-school suspension assignment days for Hispanic boys who were Poor were 2.71 days to 3.80 days. As shown in Table 5.11, Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned between 0.37 to 0.93 more days of out-of-school suspension than Hispanic boys who were Not Poor.

Table 5.11

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to Out-of-School Suspension for Grade 5 and Grade 6 Hispanic Boys for the 2015-2016 Through the 2017-2018 School Years.*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	More Days Assigned	How Many More Days
Grade 5			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.37
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	0.93
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.55
Grade 6			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.58
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	0.67
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.71

Across all three school years and both grade levels, White boys who were Poor had a statistically significant difference in the number of days assigned to out-of-school suspension. The range of out-of-school suspension assignment days for White boys who were Poor were 2.77 days to 3.70 days. White boys who were Poor were assigned between 0.34 to 0.99 more days of out-of-school suspension than White boys who were Not Poor. Table 5.12 contains the summary of these analyses.

Table 5.12

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to Out-of-School Suspension for Grade 5 and Grade 6 White Boys for the 2015-2016 Through the 2017-2018 School Years.*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	More Days Assigned	How Many More Days
Grade 5			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.57
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	0.34
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.68
Grade 6			
2015-2016	Yes	Poor	0.99
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	0.61
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	0.61

### **Connections with Existing Literature**

In this multiyear, statewide investigation for the first article, differences in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 5 and 6 boys by their economic status were established. These differences have not been well documented in the extant literature. Khan and Slate (2016) established differences in discipline consequences for Grade 6 students. Harkrider and Slate (2020) demonstrated that economic status was clearly related to exclusionary discipline assignments. In Theriot and Dupper (2010), discipline consequences for students increased in the transition from Grade 5 to Grade 6. In another study of in-school suspension assignments in Texas, White and Slate (2017) examined the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 students were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status. In Grade 6, students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned statistically significantly more days, 1.05 more, to in-school suspension than Grade 6 students who were not economically disadvantaged. For this study, the transition from Grade 5 to Grade 6 produced some alarming results. Grade 6 Black, Hispanic and White boys who were Poor were assigned on average one and a half-days more of in-school suspension than Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White boys who were Poor.

For the second article, differences in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 5 and 6 girls by their economic status were established. These differences have not been well documented in the extant literature. Although Black girls in Texas were only 6.1% of the state student enrollment, they accounted for over one-fourth, 25.2%, of the in-school suspension assignments (Office of Civil Rights, 2014). Hispanic girls were 25.2% of the state student enrollment, but were assigned over half,

52.2%, of the in-school suspension assignments for girls. In a recent Texas statewide investigation, Slate et al.(2016) examined the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black girls during the 2013-2014 school year. The numbers of in-school suspension assignments to Black girls increased by almost 6 times, 1,152 in Grade 5 and over 5 times more, 6,522 in Grade 6. The economic status of students was determined to be clearly related to the assignment of in-school suspension for discipline consequences (Harkrider & Slate, 2020). In another study of in-school suspension assignments in Texas, White and Slate (2017) analyzed the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 students were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status. In Grade 6, students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned statistically significantly more days, 1.05 more, to in-school suspension than Grade 6 students who were not economically disadvantaged. For this study, the transition from Grade 5 to Grade 6 produced some alarming results. Grade 6 Black, Hispanic and White girls who were Poor were assigned on average one day more of in-school suspension than Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls who were Poor.

Finally, in the third article, differences in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension for Grade 5 and 6 boys by their economic status were established. Boys accounted for 70%, 173,302, of the out-of-school suspensions in Texas. Although Black boys made up 6.4% of the enrollment in Texas, Black boys received 30.4% of the out-of-school suspensions. Similarly, Hispanic boys made up 26.5% of the enrollment in Texas, and Hispanic boys received 50.2% of the out-of-school suspensions (Office of Civil Rights, 2014). Harkrider and Slate (2020) demonstrated that economic status was clearly related to exclusionary discipline assignments. Hilberth and Slate (2014)

addressed the degree to which disparities were present in out-of-school suspensions for Black and White students in Texas. In Grade 6, 19.4% of Black students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, but only 3.7% of White students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. In another study of out-of-school suspension assignments in Texas, White (2019) investigated the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence by ethnicity/race for middle school students across four school years. For Grade 6, Black boys were assigned 0.57 more days to an out-of-school suspension than Hispanic boys, and 1.15 more days than White boys. Grade 6 Hispanic boys were assigned 0.58 more days to an out-of-school suspension than White boys. For this study, the transition from Grade 5 to Grade 6 produced an increase of out-of-school suspension assignments. Grade 6 Black, Hispanic and White boys who were Poor were assigned on average two tenths of a day more of out-of-school suspension than Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White boys who were Poor.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

Major implications for policy and practice can be supported from the findings in this investigation. First, school administrators are encouraged to disaggregate the in-school suspension assignments at their own campus. An analysis of the number of in-school suspension assignments by ethnicity/race and economic status will generate trends and possibly inequities that campus leaders can address to eliminate any disparities. Second, the loss of instructional time is a serious consequence of exclusionary discipline practices. Educational leaders are encouraged to cross-reference disciplinary discipline data with academic performance to evaluate if discipline practices are negatively affecting student performance. Third, student discipline is a campus-wide initiative.

Creating a campus-wide behavioral plan can be effective in all stakeholders understanding the goals and purposes of student discipline and how it should be handled. Finally, reducing exclusionary discipline practices and using alternative forms of student discipline, such as restorative discipline, may have a positive influence on school climate and student performance.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In this journal-ready dissertation, the differences in the assignment of exclusionary discipline practices were troubling. Grade 5 and 6 boys and girls who were Poor were clearly assigned to more days of exclusionary discipline than Grade 5 and 6 boys and girls who were Not Poor. The presence of inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline as a function of student economic status remains a serious concern for Texas school administrators and must be addressed by researchers in future studies. First, researchers are encouraged to study potential inequities in the assignment of in-school suspension days for boys and girls in other grade levels. Secondly, given the clear disproportionality of days assigned to in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension for this journal-ready dissertation, researchers can extend this study to investigate potential inequities in the number of days assigned to discipline alternative education placements by student economic status. Finally, funding is always a major topic in Texas when it comes to public education. Researchers can target the financial effects of using out-of-school suspension as a discipline consequence. Students who are assigned out-of-school suspension are coded as absent on those days in the current funding system in Texas. Researchers are also encouraged to replicate these investigations in other states to ascertain the degree to which results delineated herein

would be generalizable. Readers should note that in all of the extant literature involving exclusionary discipline practices, not a single researcher has documented that students who are poor commit more discipline infractions than students who are not poor. As such, researchers are encouraged to investigate in more depth the underlying reasons for the phenomenon established in this multiyear analysis.

### **Conclusion**

In this multiyear journal-ready dissertation, the degree to which economic status was related to the number of days that students were assigned an exclusionary discipline consequence was addressed. Across all three years analyzed, Grade 5 and 6 students who were Poor were clearly assigned to more days of exclusionary discipline than Grade 5 and 6 students who were Not Poor. The trends in the data for Black students were especially troubling. In all three journal articles, Black students who were Poor were assigned more days of exclusionary discipline than Asian, Hispanic, and White students who were Not Poor. Another aspect of this journal-ready dissertation was the transition of students from Grade 5 to Grade 6. For all three years of data analyzed in this journal-ready dissertation, statistically significant increases were established in the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence for Grade 6 students who were Poor over Grade 5 students who were Not Poor. An additional area of concern was the increase in the number of days Grade 6 students who were Not Poor were assigned an exclusionary discipline consequence when compared to Grade 5 students who were Not Poor. The reliance on exclusionary discipline consequences by school districts in Texas needs to be addressed with changes in discipline management plans and possible legislation of more effective techniques that does not hurt students academically.

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## APPENDIX

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From: [orsp@irb.shsu.edu](mailto:orsp@irb.shsu.edu) <[orsp@irb.shsu.edu](mailto:orsp@irb.shsu.edu)>  
 Sent: Monday, June 22, 2020 5:00 PM  
 To: Slate, John; [Harkrider](mailto:Harkrider), Timothy  
 Cc: Miles, Sharla  
 Subject: IRB-2020-160 - Initial: Exempt from IRB Review

**Error! Filename not specified.**

Date: Jun 22, 2020 5:00 PM CDT

TO: Timothy [Harkrider](mailto:Harkrider), John Slate  
 FROM: SHSU IRB  
 PROJECT TITLE: Differences in Exclusionary Discipline Practices for Grades 5 and 6: A Texas Multiyear Statewide Investigation  
 PROTOCOL #: IRB-2020-160  
 SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial  
 ACTION: Exempt  
 DECISION DATE: June 22, 2020  
 EXEMPT REVIEW CATEGORY: Category 4. Secondary research for which consent is not required: Secondary research uses of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens, if at least one of the following criteria is met:  
 (i) The identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens are publicly available;  
 (ii) Information, which may include information about biospecimens, is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, the investigator does not contact the subjects, and the investigator will not re-identify subjects;  
 (iii) The research involves only information collection and analysis involving the investigator's use of identifiable health information when that use is regulated under 45 CFR parts 160 and 164, subparts A and E, for the purposes of "health care operations" or "research" as those terms are defined at 45 CFR 164.501 or for "public health activities and purposes" as described under 45 CFR 164.512(b); or  
 (iv) The research is conducted by, or on behalf of, a Federal department or agency using government-generated or government-collected information obtained for ~~nonresearch~~ activities, if the research generates identifiable private information that is or will be maintained on information technology that is subject to and in compliance with section 208(b) of the E-Government Act of 2002, 44 U.S.C. 3501 note, if all of the identifiable private information collected, used, or generated as part of the activity will be maintained in systems of records subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a, and, if applicable, the information used in the research was collected subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.

Greetings,

Thank you for your submission of Initial Review materials for this project. The Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

**Since Cayuse IRB does not currently possess the ability to provide a "stamp of approval" on any recruitment or consent documentation, it is the strong recommendation of this office to please include the following approval language in the footer of those recruitment and consent documents: IRB-2020-160/June 22, 2020.**

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

**\* What should investigators do when considering changes to an exempt study that could make it nonexempt?**

It is the PI's responsibility to consult with the IRB whenever questions arise about whether planned changes to an exempt study might make that study nonexempt human subjects research.

In this case, please make available sufficient information to the IRB so it can make a correct determination.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 936-294-4875 or [irb@shsu.edu](mailto:irb@shsu.edu). Please include your project title and protocol number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Chase Young, Ph.D.  
 Chair, IRB  
 Hannah R. Gerber, Ph.D.  
 Co-Chair, IRB

**VITA****Tim Harkrider****EDUCATIONAL HISTORY**

Doctorate of Education – Educational Leadership, December 2020

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas

Dissertation: Differences in Exclusionary Discipline Practices for Grades 5 and 6

Students: A Texas Multiyear Statewide Investigation

Master of Education, Education Leadership and Policy Studies, May 2009

*University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas*

Bachelor of Science, May 2001

Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Superintendent, Willis Independent School District, July 2013-present

Principal, Willis High School, Willis Independent School District, June 2012-July 2013

Principal, Reagan Middle School, Grand Prairie Independent School District, June 2010-June 2012

Principal, Dickinson Elementary School, Grand Prairie Independent School District, June 2009-June 2010

Administrative Intern, South Grand Prairie High School, Grand Prairie Independent School District, July 2007-June 2009

Teacher/Coach, White Settlement High School, White Settlement Independent School District, July 2006-July 2007

Teacher/Coach, Kilgore High School, Kilgore Independent School District, July 2004-  
July 2006

Teacher/Coach, Pine Tree 7<sup>th</sup> and Junior High, Pine Tree Independent School District,  
July 2002-July 2004

Teacher/Coach, Union Grove High School, Union Grove Independent School District,  
July 2001-July 2002

### **RECOGNITIONS**

Texas K12 CTO Council Empowered Superintendent Award, 2019-2020

Outstanding Student Award Recipient, SHSU Educational Leadership Scholarship, 2019-  
2020

Texas Music Educators Association Distinguished Administrator, 2019

Career and Technology Association of Texas Area 5 CTE Champion of the Year, 2019

TASB Superintendent of the Year State Finalist, 2018

Region 6 Superintendent of the Year, 2018

Willis Community Development Corporation Citizen of the Month, June 2018

7-5A District Coach of the Year, 2009

17-4A District Coach of the Year, 2005

**PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS**

- Harkrider, T., & Slate, J. R. (2020). Inequities in days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences by economic status: Even more cause for concern. In J. R. Slate (Ed.), *Exemplars of conducting archival data analyses: A collection of K-12 and Higher Education Studies*. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers.
- Harkrider, T. (2020, January). *Building Lifelong Learners at Willis ISD*. Presentation given at the Texas K-12 CTO Council Winter Leadership Summit. Austin, TX
- Harkrider, T., Carbrera, J., & Kuhrt, M. (2020, January). *Empowered Superintendents: Leading Digital Transformation*. Presentation given at the Texas Association of School Administrators Midwinter Conference. Austin, TX
- Harkrider, T., Claus, S., & Utecht, T. (2019, September). *Realizing Success in Willis ISD Today for Tomorrow's Learners*. Presentation given at the Texas Association of School Boards and the Texas Association of School Administrators Conference. Dallas, TX
- Harkrider, T. (2019, September). *Roundtable presented at the Texas Council of Professors of Educational Administration Graduate Research Exchange*. Dallas, TX
- Harkrider, T. (2017, May). *Why Did you Want to Become a Teacher?* Presentation given at Sam Houston State University's College of Education Spring Celebration. Huntsville, TX
- Harkrider, T., Boyter, R., & McDaniel, R. (2017, January). *Prevailing on Election Day as a First-Time Superintendent*. Presentation given at the Texas Association of

School Boards and the Texas Association of School Administrators Conference.

Dallas, TX

Harkrider, T., Boyter, R., & McDaniel, R. (2016, September). *Prevailing on Election Day as a First-Time Superintendent*. Presentation given at the Texas Association of School Administrators Midwinter Conference. Austin, TX