

INEQUITIES IN JUVENILE JUSTICE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM  
ASSIGNMENTS BY THE ECONOMIC STATUS AND ETHNICITY/RACE OF  
TEXAS MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC  
ACHIEVEMENT: A MULTIYEAR, STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

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Doctor of Education

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by

Christopher A. Eckford

December, 2017

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## **DEDICATION**

To God be the glory for this great work. This dissertation is dedicated to my wife of 17 years, Franshell Eckford, whose unyielding love and support has fueled me throughout this journey. She always makes me feel like more than I am, and she always make me believe that I can do more than I can do. I love her to the moon and back! I also dedicate this dissertation to my children, Caleb and Kylah, who have, for the last two and a half years, made the ultimate sacrifice and allowed me to complete this work uncontested, and undisturbed. It is my hope that this journey has been more of a testament of what a person can do if s/he is truly willing to make the sacrifice. Now that this work has come to an end, it's time to PLAY HARD!

And to my mother Rachel Hicks, who gave me life, love, and has always been my greatest cheerleader. My joy is in continuing to make her proud. To my siblings, Sean Jones, Dr. Bernard Eckford, and Crystal Jones; the journey has never been easy, but through it all, we paved our own way. I also dedicate this work to my deceased father, Willie James Eckford, Jr. who left me something more valuable than money; he left me his love, but most importantly he left me his name Eckford. There is not a day that goes by that I do not think about him.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Eckford, Christopher A., *Inequities in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program assignments by the economic status and ethnicity/race of Texas middle school boys and their effects on academic achievement: A multiyear, statewide investigation*. Doctor of Education (Educational Leadership), December 2017, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this proposed journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which differences were present in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements by student demographic characteristics for Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas middle schools. In the first investigation, the degree to which Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements differed by the economic status (i.e., Poor, Not Poor) of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys was examined. In the second investigation, the degree to which Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements differed by the ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Hispanic, and Black) of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys was determined. Finally, in the third study, the extent to which Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements were related to the reading and mathematics achievement of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys was addressed. In the first two articles, four years of Texas statewide data was analyzed, whereas in the last article, only one school year of data were present.

### **Method**

In this investigation, a causal-comparative research design was used. Through a Public Information Request, archival data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years.

Specific data requested from the Texas Education Agency were student demographic characteristics and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement.

### **Findings**

In all four school years, statistically significant differences were present for the majority of the analyses by student demographic characteristics. In the first two studies, statistically significant differences were present in the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement by student economic status (i.e., Poor, Not Poor) and ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Black, and Hispanic). Boys who were poor and Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement statistically significantly more often than their counterparts. In the third study, statistically significant differences were present in reading and mathematics performance as a function of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program receipt. Boys who received this consequence had statistically significantly lower test scores than their peers who did not receive this consequence. Results from these three studies were congruent with existing literature.

**KEY WORDS:** Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, Boys, Economically Disadvantaged, Not Poor, Ethnicity/Race, White, Hispanic, Black, Reading, Mathematics, Academic Achievement

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION/REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Denying a child the opportunity to receive a quality education stifles his/her chance to be a productive citizen. In recognizing the benefits of education to the lives of people, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that all children were entitled to receive a quality public education; making education, today, the most important purpose of our state and local government (Smith & Harper, 2015). However, more than 60 years later, problems of inequality within our educational system continue to be present (Jones, Slate, & Martinez-Garcia, 2014, 2015; Skiba et al., 2011). Though inequities in graduation rates and test scores are most prominently observed, Smith and Harper (2015) argued that the inequitable actions of schools with respect to disciplinary consequences that actively place students at risk and make it difficult for them to succeed has become equally as important. Student suspensions, expulsions, or referrals to the criminal justice system for behaviors perceived to be unacceptable have become common discipline practices in schools (Skiba et al., 2011; Skiba & Knesting, 2001; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000).

The use of exclusionary discipline has greatly increased since 1970, a result that some attribute to “zero tolerance” policies (Lauer, 2014, p. 1). With the exception of zero tolerance policies, Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016) indicated campus administrators can exercise a vast range of discretionary power in deciding when and to whom to assign discipline consequences. Of importance is that each day school is in session, 18,000 public school students are suspended from school, and 560 students are expelled from school (Losen, 2013). In middle schools and in high schools across the United States, the

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014) has established that huge disparities are present in school discipline. These extensive discipline practices create concerns about the number of students who are removed from school for discipline reasons.

According to Henkel, Slate, and Martinez-Garcia (2015), the original premise behind assigning students disciplinary consequences that removed them from the classroom setting was the idea of school safety. However, Losen and Martinez (2013) reported minor infractions of school rules such as violating dress codes, truancy, excessive tardiness, cell phone use, loitering, or classroom disruption are the reasons for many student suspensions, rather than issues of safety. Allman and Slate (2013) argued when students are removed from the general education classroom to be assigned a discipline consequence, they are at a disadvantage as they miss educational opportunities.

### **Review of the Literature on Discipline Consequences and Student Economic Status**

India Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2015) stated education is the best and the least expensive way to fight poverty. However, continuously documented in the research literature are educational inequities that contribute to achievement gaps for marginalized students. Harlow (2003) contended that poverty is a contributing factor to increased exclusionary rates, dropout rates, student academic disconnections, and student incarceration rates. More recently, Butler, Lewis, Moore, and Scott (2012) determined that poverty is one of the greatest predictors of student suspensions. Accordingly, exclusionary discipline practices and zero-tolerance policies continue to affect young men and boys of color disproportionately (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). As



revealed in national data, middle schools and high schools do not use suspensions as a measure of last resort (Losen & Martinez, 2013).

Curtiss and Slate (2015) contended that the overuse of exclusionary discipline practices have negatively influenced education opportunities for all students despite their ethnicity/race, gender, or economic status. Jordan and Anil (2009), in a 2-year investigation, established that middle school students who were from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (i.e., qualified for the federal free or reduced price lunch program) were represented proportionately less than students who were not economically disadvantaged in the category where no referrals were generated. Conversely, students who were from economically disadvantaged backgrounds were five times more represented in the categories where one or more discipline referrals were generated compared to their peers who were not economically disadvantaged. More important than excessive absences, Jordan and Anil (2009) asserted that being poor, and especially being Black and poor, constitute the most salient indicators of discipline referrals. Moreover, Balfanz (2013) correlated suspension with dropping out, stating that one suspension in the Grade 9 doubles the chance of a student dropping out from 16% (not suspended) to 32% (suspended once). These statistics are three times higher than the previously reported national data from the U.S. Department of Education that showed an 11% dropout rate of students in poverty compared to only 5% and 2% for middle and high-income students respectively (Kaufman, Naomi, & Chapman, 2004). Ultimately, students who drop out and do not return to graduate from high school are four times more likely than college graduates to be unemployed; far more probable to end up incarcerated or on welfare; and they typically die at a much younger age (Jordan & Anil, 2009).

In a 2-year statewide analysis, Tiger and Slate (2017) documented that exclusionary discipline practices had been used excessively and resulted in inequities for Texas elementary students based on their economic status. Out of the 15,000 Grade 4 boys who had been assigned an in-school suspension in the 2013-2014 school year, Tiger and Slate (2017) established that in-school suspensions were more than twice as likely assigned to Grade 4 boys who were extremely poor than Grade 4 boys who were not poor. In the 2014-2015 school year, Tiger and Slate (2017) determined that the in-school suspension rate of Grade 4 boys who were economically disadvantaged were almost twice that of Grade 4 boys who were not economically disadvantaged. Additionally, the in-school suspension rate of Grade 4 boys who were moderately poor was almost two times the rate of Grade 4 boys who were not poor.

Of the 7,000 out-of-school suspensions assigned to Grade 4 boys in the 2013-2014 school year, Tiger and Slate (2017) determined that out-of-school suspension assignments were three times more likely to be given to Grade 4 boys who were extremely poor compared to Grade 4 boys who were not poor. Out-of-school suspensions were almost twice likely to be assigned to Grade 4 boys who were moderately poor compared to their peers who were not poor. Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, Grade 4 boys who were economically disadvantaged had an out-of-school suspension rate that was more than twice as high as for Grade 4 boys who were not economically disadvantaged. Additionally, the out-of-school suspension rate of Grade 4 boys who were moderately poor was almost twice as high as the rate of Grade 4 boys who were not poor.

Furthermore, Tiger and Slate (2017) determined that out of the 20,000 in-school suspensions assigned to Grade 5 boys in the 2013-2014 school year, in-school suspensions were more than twice as likely assigned to Grade 5 boys who were extremely poor compared to Grade 5 boys who were not poor. In-school suspensions were almost twice as likely to be assigned to Grade 5 boys who were moderately poor than to Grade 5 boys who were not poor. In the 2014-2015 school year, of the 15,000 in-school suspensions assigned to boys, the rate of in-school suspension assigned to Grade 5 boys who were extremely poor was almost two times more than the rate assigned to Grade 5 boys who were not poor. The in-school suspension rate for Grade 5 boys who were moderately poor was almost twice as high as the in-school suspension rate for Grade 5 boys who were not poor.

Of the 10,000 out-of-school suspensions assigned to Grade 5 boys in the 2013-2014 school year, Tiger and Slate (2017) established that the chance of being assigned an out-of-school suspension was more than three times likely for Grade 5 boys who were extremely poor compared to Grade 5 boys who were not poor. Out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Grade 5 boys who were moderately poor almost twice as likely than were assigned to Grade 5 boys who were not poor. Out of the 9,000 out-of-school suspensions assigned to Grade 5 boys in the 2014-2015 school year, Grade 5 boys who were extremely poor had an out-of-school suspension rate that was almost two times as high as that of Grade 5 boys who were not poor. The out-of-school suspension rate for Grade 5 boys was almost twice as high as the out-of-school suspension rate for Grade 5 boys who were not poor.

In a previous study, Khan and Slate (2016) analyzed 1-year statewide data to determine the degree to which the economic status of Grade 6 Black, Hispanic, and White students influenced the assignment of an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement for the 2011-2012 school year. They documented a statistically significant difference in that 33.5% of Grade 6 Black students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an in-school suspension compared to 19.93% of Grade 6 Black students who were not economically disadvantaged, that were assigned an in-school suspension. Of in-school suspensions assigned to Hispanic students, 20.2% of Hispanic students who were in poverty were assigned an in-school suspension compared to 12.0% of Hispanic students who were not in poverty, that were assigned an in-school suspension. Similarly, for Grade 6 White students, 23.1% of Grade 6 White students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an in-school suspension compared to 8.9% of Grade 6 White students who were not in poverty, that were assigned an in-school suspension.

Regarding out-of-school suspensions, Khan and Slate (2016) established a statistically significant difference was present, in that 21.3% of Grade 6 Black students who were assigned an out-of school suspension were poor compared to 9.7% of Grade 6 Black students who were not poor who were assigned an out-of-school suspension. Also, 9.0% of Grade 6 Hispanic students who were in poverty were assigned an out-of-school suspension compared to 4.1% of Grade 6 Hispanic students who were not in poverty, but were assigned an out-of-school suspension. Of the Grade 6 White students who were economically disadvantaged, 6.4% were assigned an out-of-school suspension compared to 1.9% of Grade 6 White students who were not in poverty.

Concerning Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, Khan and Slate (2016) determined that 4.0% of Grade 6 Black students who were poor were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program compared to 1.6% of Grade 6 Black students who were not in poverty, but were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program. Similarly, for Grade 6 Hispanic students, 2.2% of Grade 6 Hispanic students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program compared to 0.8% of Grade 6 Hispanic students who were not in poverty, that were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program. For Grade 6 White students, 2.1% of Grade 6 White students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program compared to 0.4% of Grade 6 White students who were not in poverty, that were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program.

In a more recent study conducted in the state of interest for this article, Texas, Eckford and Slate (2016) determined that in the 2010-2011 school year, Grade 7 boys who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program at twice the placement rate of Grade 7 boys who were not economically disadvantaged. In the same study, Texas Grade 8 boys who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program at two times the placement rate of Grade 8 boys who were not economically disadvantaged. Of importance regarding the Eckford and Slate (2016) investigation was that their sample consisted of 100% of the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program assignments in Texas for one school year. The Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program is the highest form of consequence students can receive as it exposes

them to an alternative learning environment unconventional to the traditional public school.

Texas school enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year consisted of almost 5.5 million students. Of the 2,491 students in Texas public schools who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program, 1,775 of the students assigned were economically disadvantaged, whereas only 740 of the students assigned were not economically disadvantaged. Furthermore, of the 3,824 students who were expelled from their school district, 2,723 of the students expelled were economically disadvantaged, whereas only 1,159 of the students expelled were not economically disadvantaged (Texas Education Agency, 2015).

Along with documented ethnic/racial inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences, other researchers (e.g., Skiba et al., 2011) established that economic status has become an important predictor in the assignment of school suspension as a behavior consequence. Skiba et al. (2011) also added that in addition to ethnicity/race, being poor has been a characteristic strongly associated with inequitable school discipline practices for over 30 years. Most notable are the high suspension rates of students of poverty (Evans, Lester, & Anfara, 2010; Jones, Slate, & Martinez-Garcia, 2014, 2015; Sullivan, Klingbeil, & Van Norman, 2013). Skiba et al. (2011) further documented poverty as one of a few possible causation mechanisms to explain discrepancies in discipline referrals and suspension rates for Black, White, and Hispanic students. Coleman and Slate (2016) also agreed with Skiba et al. (2011) that poverty has become a deciding factor in school discipline assignments as a consequence for unacceptable behavior. Brault, Janosz, and Archambault (2014) contended that students who were economically disadvantaged were

targeted disproportionately for behavior problems in comparison to other student groups. Evidence exists that students of poverty are much more likely to be suspended and expelled from school, drop out of school, and have less access to highly qualified teaching staff and rigorous curriculum than are students who are not in poverty (U.S. Department of Education, 2014, 2015).

Specific to grade-level, Evans et al. (2010) reported that a disproportionate number of urban middle school students who were economically disadvantaged were more likely to receive stricter disciplinary consequences than suburban middle school students. Sullivan (2013) later added that students in poverty had a greater chance of receiving discipline referrals that lead to a visit to the office than their middle-class peers. In a recent analysis of discipline consequences assigned to Texas Grade 6 students, Coleman and Slate (2016) established that the rate of discipline consequences assigned to students in poverty was two times the discipline consequence rate for their peers who were not in poverty. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (2002) also documented that Black students overexposed to the pressures of poverty were more likely to be undersocialized with respect to school norms and rules. As a result, they were more likely to experience racial/ ethnic disproportionate discipline assignments.

Skiba et al. (2011) contended that students of color, having been subjected to various stressors related to poverty, may acquire and display behaviors different from school expectations that put them at risk for increased disciplinary contact. Khan and Slate (2016) agreed that students in poverty may lack the social or cultural capital (i.e., experience or knowledge) needed for them to act in accordance with school rules. Due to environmental circumstances associated with poverty, Gardner, Lopez, and Council

(2014) argued that children from poor families may behave differently because they lack the school-related skills compared to their more affluent peers.

Moreover, poverty is not specific to ethnicity/race. As indicated by Lopez and Slate (2016), more than four times the percentage of Grade 7 White students in poverty received an assignment to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement than did their counterparts who were not poor. Lopez and Slate (2016) established that more than 3 times the percentage of Grade 8 students who were economically disadvantaged received a discipline placement to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement than did their counterparts who were not poor. As a result, Lopez and Slate (2016) concluded that the economic status of students in school was directly related to the rate of discipline consequences they receive.

According to Fenning and Rose (2007), students who do not appear to be compatible in school as a result of ethnicity/race, academic challenges, or economic status, are unjustly targeted for removal. Similarly conveyed by previous researchers (e.g. Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000), groups of students who are poor or who have academic problems are essentially removed for harmless infractions indicated in the school discipline policy. That is, these students are assigned disciplinary consequences that remove them from the classroom setting for behaviors that do not call for mandatory consequences on the part of the school administrator.

### **Review of the Literature on Discipline Consequences and Student Ethnicity/Race**

The research on implicit bias, subjective assessment, and school discipline has generally been addressed from the context of ethnicity/race; however, the problem of prejudice perception occurs when race and gender are factored together (Morris & Perry,



2017). Collins (2005), Oeur (2016), and Rios (2011) contended that when combined with race, perceptions of masculinity increase and thereby create impressions of dangerous "hypermasculinity" (Morris & Perry, 2017, p. 129) for young men of color. Lunenburg (2012) and Skiba et al. (2011) asserted that educators penalize Black and Hispanic students more harshly than Whites for equivalent behaviors, suggesting that educators interpret misbehaviors more critically when they are displayed by children of color.

The U.S. Department of Education (2014) has established that young boys of color are affected by disproportionate discipline practices and zero-tolerance policies that exclude them from school. According to Smith and Harper (2015), 65% of the Black students expelled from public schools in the Southern states were assigned to Black boys, the highest among all ethnic/racial groups. Khan and Slate (2016) indicated that the assignment of discipline consequences have been unequally distributed to Black and Hispanic students compared to their Asian and White peers for over four decades. The Office for Civil Rights (2014) also established that in the 2011-2012 school year, 3.5 million of the 49 million students enrolled in U.S. public schools received an in-school suspension; almost 3.5 million students received an out-of-school suspension; and 130,000 students were expelled from school. Although evidence exists of some schools reducing their rates of exclusionary discipline practices, considerable racial/ethnic inequities exist (Losen, Hodson, Keith, Morrison, & Belway, 2015). In a recent report regarding the data on suspensions and expulsions, the National Center for Education Statistics (2016) indicated 36% of Black students, 21% of Hispanic students, 14% of White students, and 6% of Asian students have been suspended or expelled from school. Although school discipline policies and procedures abide to help establish and

maintain order, as well as to help provide a safe environment for learning, Geronimo (2010) contended the disproportionate use of exclusionary practices continues to deprive marginalized students of their civil liberties.

As indicated in the literature (Morris & Perry, 2017), persistent and harsh school consequences create a wide range of negative outcomes that are associated with lower academic achievement, individually and at the school levels. Students who are repeat recipients of disproportionate school sanctions often feel scorned by educational institutions, and in turn, develop a sense of disengagement that can ultimately lead to dropping out of high school and exposed to the criminal justice system (Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier, & Valentine, 2009; Peguero & Bracy, 2015). Barnes and Slate (2016) and Boneshefski and Runge (2014) agreed that the assignment of inequitable discipline practices increase disproportionate discipline consequences; increase the probability of Hispanic and Black students dropping out of school; and increase the channel of Black students through the School-to-Prison Pipeline.

In addition to zero-tolerance policies and the overuse of exclusionary school discipline practices documented as important factors in the School-to-Prison Pipeline phenomenon (Skiba & Rausch, 2006), Dahlberg (2012) asserted that the use of school resource officers to assist in managing student behaviors subjected students of color and students with disabilities to inequitable school-based arrest for behaviors not defined as criminal activity. In a study of 35,000 juvenile offenders, the Harvard Law Review (2015) noted that incarcerated juveniles were twice as probable to be imprisoned as adults compared to their peers who came from similar environments, committed similar delinquencies, but were afforded alternative consequences or none at all.

Originally implemented to improve school safety and climate (Englehart, 2014), the implementation of the Federal Gun Free School Act of 1994 by former President Bill Clinton, enacted zero-tolerance school policies that supported the implementation and use of exclusionary discipline practices (American Psychological Association, 2008). Lopez (2015) contended that although the act was mandated to remove students from school who posed a serious threat such as harassment, fighting, or assault (Mallett, 2016), zero tolerance policies do not, however, afford students the opportunity to learn how to correct undesirable behaviors. Furthermore, as indicated by Lopez (2015), the overrepresentation of Black and Hispanic students in receipt of punitive school discipline consequences is in direct proportion to the overrepresentation of Blacks and Hispanics that populate the prison system in the United States. Currently, no evidence exists regarding any positive effects of zero-tolerance policies in school discipline (Englehart, 2014). Neither does any evidence exist that punitive exclusionary practices decrease undesirable student behaviors (Skiba, 2014); if anything, Noguera (2003) and Skiba (2014) asserted that zero tolerance policies and exclusionary discipline practices have influenced more negative behaviors than they do positive behaviors.

Well established in the empirical literature are notable differences in patterns of discipline referrals across grade levels, with an upsurge in referrals occurring in the higher grades (Putnam, Luiselli, Handler, & Jefferson, 2003; Spaulding et al., 2010). More specifically are the inequitable differences in office discipline referrals for boys when the referrals are disaggregated (Kaufman et al., 2010). As documented by several researchers (e.g., Lunenburg, 2012; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002), Black

boys receive noticeably more office discipline referrals, and are more probable to be referred for subjective offenses (e.g., disrespect, excessive noise) than are White boys.

In regard to elementary school grade levels, Curtiss and Slate (2015) conducted a 2-year investigation into Texas discipline consequence assignments. When comparing the rate of Texas Grade 4 boys assigned an in-school suspension during the 2013-2014 school year, Black boys received an in-school suspension at a rate almost twice that of the in-school suspension rate for White boys, and almost three times that of the in-school suspension rate for Hispanic boys. In the 2014-2015 school year, Curtiss and Slate (2015) established that Grade 4 Black boys had more than twice the in-school suspension rate of either White boys or Hispanic boys. Conversely, when comparing the rate of Grade 5 boys assigned an in-school suspension during the 2013-2014 school year, Curtiss and Slate (2015) determined that Black boys received an in-school suspension at a rate more than twice the in-school suspension rate for White boys and for Hispanic boys. In the 2014-2015 school year, Curtiss and Slate (2015) documented that Grade 5 Black boys received an in-school suspension more than twice as often as White boys and almost three times more often than Hispanic boys.

With respect to out-of-school suspensions, Curtiss and Slate (2015), in their two-year study, established that Texas Grade 4 Black boys received an out-of-school suspension at a rate five times more than the out-of-school suspension rate for White boys, and four times more often than the in-school suspension rate for Hispanic boys. In the 2014-2015 school year, Curtiss and Slate (2015) determined that Grade 4 Black boys had five times the out-of-school suspension rate of either White boys or Hispanic boys.

When analyzing out-of-school suspension data on Grade 5 boys in the 2013-2014 school year, Curtiss and Slate (2015) established that Black boys received an out-of-school suspension five times more often than White boys and three times more often than Hispanic boys. In the 2014-2015 school year, Curtiss and Slate (2015) documented that Grade 5 Black boys received an out-of-school suspension five times more often than White boys and three times more often than Hispanic boys. Important in the Curtiss and Slate (2015) investigation was that Grade 5 boys were assigned 88% of the total discipline consequences that were assigned in this 2-year statewide study.

In a recent investigation directly related to this article, Eckford and Slate (2016) conducted a one-year statewide study into the possibility of inequities in the assignment of boys to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. They documented that Texas Grade 7 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement four times more often than White boys and one and a half times more often than Hispanic boys. Of the 367 Grade 7 boys who received a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, Eckford and Slate (2016) established that Black boys received 20% more Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements than their White peers.

Eckford and Slate (2016) also analyzed data on Grade 8 boys who had been assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. They determined that Texas Grade 8 Black and Hispanic boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement at a rate that was four times higher than for White boys. Of the 498 Grade 8 boys who received a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, Eckford and Slate (2016) established that Black and

Hispanic boys received 30% more placements than their White peers. Readers should note that an assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement is the most punitive consequence that students can receive, placing them in an alternative learning environment that is substantially different from that of a traditional public school environment. Such extreme discipline actions fail to reinforce desired behaviors, and ultimately can lead to a surge in future criminal activity (Lopez, 2015; Mallett, 2016).

As reflected in the latest release of Texas statewide data, Texas public schools had almost 5.5 million students in the 2015-2016 school year. Of the 2,491 students in Texas who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement in the 2015-2016 school year, 563 were assigned to Black students, 1,452 were assigned to Hispanic students, and 479 were assigned to White students. Of the 3,824 students who were expelled from their school district in the 2015-2016 school year, Black students had 823 expulsions, Hispanic students had 2,288 expulsions, and White students had 793 expulsions (Texas Education Agency, 2015).

### **Review of the Literature on Discipline Consequences and Student Achievement**

In conjunction with documented disparities in student discipline, issues of unfairness based on student ethnicity/race continue to exist with respect to the achievement gap. Researchers such as Latimore, Peguero, Popp, Shekarkhar, and Koo (2017) contend that school-based discipline can have negative effects on the academic outcomes of students, specifically for racial/ethnic minorities. Henkel, Slate, and Martinez-Garcia (2015) asserted that students who are removed from the learning environment to serve discipline consequences experience learning deficits in comparison to their peers who are not removed from their regular classroom setting. As such,

exclusionary discipline practices may have long-term consequences on student academic achievement.

Increased levels of school suspension are associated with lower student academic achievement (Morris & Perry, 2017). Depending on the length of the suspension, students can be denied access to their regular classroom setting from one class period up to 10 days or more (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). Researchers (e.g., Fieldman & Matjasko, 2005; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002) have clearly established that students who are assigned discipline consequences that exclude them from school are more likely to receive failing grades, drop out, become academically disengaged, experience diminished self-worth, and eventually become incarcerated. Congruent with the negative effects of school based discipline, racial/ethnic inequities in the assignment of school consequences may continue to marginalize the very group of students who already struggle with other educational barriers (Kozol, 2005; Kupchik, 2010; Lunenburg, 2013; Noguera, 2003; Rios, 2011). In addition to being the most underprivileged, underserved, the most alienated, and the most likely to attend struggling schools (Gordon, Della Piana, & Keleher, 2001), Black and Hispanic male students are also the most socially and academically marginalized in public schools in the United States (Brown, 2007). Messages of civic and social disengagement are conveyed when certain groups of students are singled out or treated differently from their peers as a result of their economic status or ethnicity/race. The continuation of removing students from their learning environment not only violates their civil rights (Office for Civil Rights, 2014), but it exacerbates their social, emotional, and academic conditions (Skiba & Noam, 2002).

As mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), all public schools were obligated to exhibit progress regarding reducing the achievement gap among ethnic/racial groups and their White peers (Wenglinsky, 2004). However, the absence of a robust curriculum and ineffective instruction are present in schools embedded in high poverty communities, often consisting of high percentages of Black and Hispanic students (McLoyd & Purtell, 2008), thus increasing the risk for Black and Hispanic students to perform poorly and to be referred for special education placement. The extensive inequitable practices of excluding students from school, particularly Black and Hispanic students, as an initial discipline consequence have contributed to the achievement gap (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006). The negative effects of lost academic instruction due to exclusionary discipline practices in schools have been well documented in the literature (Gregory et al., 2010; Lo & Cartledge, 2006; Townsend, 2000; Vincent, Swain-Bradway, Tobin, & May, 2011).

Many researchers (e.g., American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Townsend, 2000) contended that suspensions were more likely assigned to boys who were at risk of failing, receiving special education services, economically disadvantaged, and/or involved in the criminal justice system (Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, & Leaf, 2010). After multiple occurrences of being excluded from school, students are eventually assigned to take remedial courses, perceived as a behavior problem, referred to special education; and as a result, they develop a negative outlook about school, eventually become truant and likely drop out (Gregory et al., 2010; Noguera, 2003; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Townsend, 2000).



Historically, Black boys receive exclusionary consequences that lead to them missing school. If repeatedly exposed to exclusionary consequences, Black boys may establish a pattern of academic failure and become a constant behavior problem (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). The National Center for Education Statistics (2014) identified gaps in reading and mathematics achievement for Black students, with the greatest disproportion for Black males. Taken from the National Center for Education Statistics (2014) report, less than 10% of Grade 8 Black boys scored at or above proficient levels in reading compared to 33% of Grade 8 White boys who scored at or above proficient levels in reading. Moreover, 17% of Grade 4 Black students scored at or above proficient levels in reading compared to 34% of Grade 4 White students who scored at or above proficient levels in reading.

In a study in the state of interest for this article, Texas, Hilberth (2010) conducted a statewide 1-year investigation to determine the degree to which the assignment of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement influenced the academic achievement of Black and White students enrolled in Texas middle schools during the 2008-2009 school year. Hilberth (2010) documented the presence of statistically significant lower Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Reading and Mathematics scores for Grades 6, 7, and 8 Black and White students who were assigned any of the three discipline consequences listed. Of particular relevance to this article were the lower reading and mathematics test scores of Grades 6, 7, and 8 Black and White students who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement in comparison to their peers who were not assigned such a discipline consequence.

In a more recent Texas investigation, Jones (2013) conducted a statewide 2-year study to determine the degree to which the assignment of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement affected the academic achievement of Hispanic and White students enrolled in Texas middle schools during the 2008-2009 and 2010-2011 school years. Jones (2013) established the presence of statistically significant lower Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Reading and Mathematics scores for Grades 6, 7 and 8 Hispanic and White students who were assigned any of the three discipline consequences mentioned. Of specific relevance to this article were the poorer reading and mathematics test scores of Grades 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic and White students who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement in comparison to their peers who were not assigned such a consequence.

In both the Hilberth (2010) and the Jones (2013) investigations, the assignment to any of the three discipline consequences had a negative effect on student reading and mathematics achievement. Mathematics test scores were more adversely influenced than were student reading test scores. Of note for this article was that assignment to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had a negative effect on student mathematics test scores than on reading test scores.

In an even more recent empirical analysis, Henkel, Slate, and Martinez-Garcia (2015) conducted a Texas statewide 2-year study to ascertain the extent to which a relationship existed between a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and the reading and mathematics achievement of Grades 6, 7 and 8 White, Black, and Hispanic students. Henkel et al. (2015) documented the presence of statistically

significantly lower Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Reading and Mathematics scores of Grades 6, 7, and 8 White, Hispanic, and Black boys who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement than their peers who did not receive such a consequence. Their results were commensurate for both school years of data they analyzed. Of interest in their investigation, Henkel et al. (2015) contended that ethnicity/race and grade level were not as influential on the mathematics performance of boys as was the assignment of a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement.

The Texas Education Agency (2015) reported Texas statewide school enrollment of almost 5.5 million students for the 2015-2016 school year. With respect to the numbers of students who were assigned a discipline consequence, out of 2,491 students in Texas who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program in the 2015-2016 school year, 2,013 of the students were students who were at risk, whereas only 310 of the students were students who were not at risk. Of the 3,824 students who were expelled from their school district, 2,972 of the students expelled were students who were at risk, whereas only 554 of the students expelled were not at risk (Texas Education Agency, 2015).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The effects of poverty are generally assumed to be an important predictor of rates of discipline and educational inequality (Chavez, 2014). Rates of students who are excluded from school are higher in poor urban districts (Losen & Skiba, 2010; Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier, & Valentine, 2009) than in wealthy suburban school districts. According to Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, and Bachman (2008), differences in the suspension rates of Black students and White students are more disproportionate in

more affluent suburban school districts. Skiba et al. (2014) affirmed that the rate of poverty of the school district tremendously influences school discipline and the racial inequities in exclusionary practices. Hinojosa (2008) contended various sociodemographic variables (e.g., absence of one or both parents; quality of life and home resources) as likely predictors of student suspensions. Other researchers (e.g., Petras, Masyn, Buckley, Ialongo, & Kellam, 2011) added that even when controlling for levels of aggressive behaviors, students who live in poverty were still more likely to be removed from school.

After controlling for poverty in their 2008 study, Wallace et al. concluded that consistent evidence was present that student ethnicity/race was a substantial predictor of school suspensions and expulsions. Other researchers (e.g., Rocha & Hawes, 2009; Welch & Payne, 2010) documented the presence of statistically significant relationships between Black student enrollment and increased punitive punishment. After controlling for school levels of noncompliance and misbehavior in their 2010 study, Welch and Payne established that schools with higher enrollments of Black students were more likely to have higher rates of suspensions, expulsions, court referrals, zero tolerance policies, and fewer supportive interventions for school discipline than schools with lower Black student enrollment. Peguero and Shekarkhar (2011) asserted emerging evidence of school related disproportionality with Hispanic students. Several researchers (Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Skiba et al., 2011) also provided evidence that Hispanic students, although underrepresented in exclusionary discipline practices at the elementary school level, were overrepresented at the secondary school level.

Although no evidence exists that exclusionary discipline practices reduce the rates of disruptive behavior or result in improved school climate, the American Psychological Association (2008) contended disciplinary consequences that remove students from the classroom did appear to have negative results on student outcomes and the learning environment. Osher, Bear, Sprague, and Doyle (2010) asserted student behavior patterns are affected when they are exposed to distracting or violent behavior in class, which in turn impedes their learning. Blank and Shavit (2016) agreed that considerable evidence exists nationwide that negative relationships exist between classroom misbehaviors and student achievement at the middle school level. Other researchers (e.g., Neidell & Waldfogel, 2010) indicated that it only takes a small number of disorderly students to disrupt the academic progress of their classmates. Using domestic violence in the home as an influential variable for disturbing behavior, Carrell and Hoekstra (2010) discovered the addition of just one more troubled male student to a classroom of 20 students negatively influenced test scores by almost 2 percentage points. A similar decrease in the academic achievement of students had been observed when the femininity of a male student's name was employed as an important variable for distracting behavior (Figlio, 2007).

Of the discipline consequences assigned, Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement is the most punitive discipline assignment in public education, fueling the School-to-Prison pipeline (Rocque & Paternoster, 2011). The School-to-Prison pipeline, as defined by the American Civil Liberties (2014), is a nationwide trend wherein children are routed from public schools into the juvenile and criminal justice system. Almost 2,500 of more than 5.5 million students enrolled in Texas schools during

the 2015-2016 school year were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (Texas Education Agency, 2015). Of the 2,491 students assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program, 1,236 were mandatory assignments and 1,335 were discretionary assignments. Of the 3,824 students who were expelled from their school district, 1,598 expulsions were mandatory whereas 2,431 were discretionary expulsions. Major discipline infractions that involve drugs, weapons, or assault warrant mandatory consequences (Texas Education Agency, 2013a), whereas discretionary consequences are subjective and are at the discretion of the school administrator assigning the consequence. The continued increase in the inequitable assignment of punitive school discipline practices throughout public schools in the United States, and specifically in Texas as it pertains to this empirical journal-ready dissertation, place enormous pressure on policymakers, educational leaders, and school personnel to reevaluate school discipline policies.

In each school year, schools districts are required to report various school based data (e.g., student demographics, academic performance, discipline data, personnel, financial, and organizational information) to the Texas Education Agency for consumer knowledge (Texas Education Agency, 2017c). Though the Texas Education Agency provides an excellent summary report, the extent to which statistically significant differences by gender or by ethnicity/race or poverty status cannot be determined through the use of aggregated data. Through empirical analyses of individual student level data, more detailed information can be provided than would be possible through summary reports.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this proposed journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which differences were present in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements by student demographic characteristics for Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas middle schools. In the first investigation, the degree to which Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements differed by the economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, or Extremely Poor) of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys was examined. In the second investigation, the degree to which Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements differed by the ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Hispanic, and Black) of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys was determined. Finally, in the third study, the extent to which Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements were related to the reading and mathematics achievement of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys was addressed. In the first two articles, four years of Texas statewide data was analyzed, whereas in the last article, only one school year of data were present. As such, this multiyear analysis permitted a determination of trends in the differential assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements to Grade 6, 7, and 8 Texas boys by their demographic characteristics.

### **Significance of the Study**

The implementation of punitive school discipline policies has resulted in students being removed from their educational environment and funneled on a path toward the prison system referred to as the School-to-Prison Pipeline phenomenon (Archer, 2010). Historical inequalities, racism, segregated schooling, and concentrated poverty support this pipeline theory that threatens students of color (Advancement Project, 2010;

Hirschfield, 2008; Nocella, Parmar, & Stovall, 2014). In this proposed journal-ready dissertation, the degree to which inequities existed in the assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements to Texas middle school boys was addressed. With separate analyses being conducted by student economic status, ethnicity/race, and academic achievement, findings obtained from this multiyear investigation will provide educational leaders with information regarding variables that may be related to the assignment of a severe discipline consequence that removes students from the classroom setting and from opportunities to learn. As such, findings from this journal-ready dissertation may be used to support the need to incorporate substantial changes to current discipline methods used in Texas schools.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms, used in this study, were defined to assist the reader in understanding the context of this investigation.

#### **At-risk**

The Texas Education Agency (2011b) defined at-risk as a student at-risk of dropping out of school, who is under age 21, and who meets one or more of the following criteria:

- 1) was not advanced from one grade level to the next for one or more school years; 2) did not perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument administered to the student under Texas Education Code (TEC) Subchapter B, Chapter 39; 3) is pregnant or a parent; 4) has been placed in an alternative education program in accordance with TEC §37.006 during the preceding or current school year; 5) has been expelled in accordance with TEC §37.007 during the preceding or current



school year; 6) is currently on parole, probation, deferred prosecution or other conditional release; 7) was previously reported through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) to have dropped out of school.

### **Black**

The Texas Education Agency (2010a) defined Black as a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (p. 9).

### **Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement**

The Texas Education Agency defined a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program as established in conformance with the Texas Education Code (TEC), §37.008, and this section as an educational and self-discipline alternative instructional program, adopted by local policy, for students in elementary through high school grades who are removed from their regular classes for mandatory or discretionary disciplinary reasons and placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program. Students in the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program shall be separated from students in a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program and students who are not assigned to the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (Texas Education Agency, 2010b). Hilberth and Slate (2014) defined Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement as a discretionary in-district alternative education setting assigned to students who commit non-criminal offenses or persistent misbehaviors.

### **Disproportionality**

Discretion is given to each state to define what constitutes significant disproportionality. Annually, each state is obligated to collect and examine data to determine whether significant disproportionality based on race or ethnicity is occurring in

their state or local education agencies with respect to: (a) identifying students with disabilities or partial impairments, (b) placement of student in particular educational settings and (c) the incidence, duration, and type of disciplinary actions including suspensions and expulsions (Texas Education Agency, 2016a).

### **Economically Disadvantaged**

The Texas Education Agency (2013b) defines economically disadvantaged as “students in Texas who are eligible for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program”. Eligibility for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program is determined by family income. Students from families with an income of 130% or less of the federal poverty line are eligible for free-lunch, whereas students from families with an income of 131% to 185% of the federal poverty line are eligible for reduced-price meals (Burney & Beilke, 2008). Due to the very small sample size of boys in the Moderately Poor group, only two groups (i.e., Poor, NOT Poor) were used. In this study, students from families who were eligible for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program were referred to as Poor, whereas students from families who were not eligible for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program were referred to as NOT Poor.

### **Ethnicity**

The Texas Education Agency (2009) defined ethnicity as students in Texas being classified as American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian or Pacific Islander; Black, not Hispanic origin; Hispanic, or White, not of Hispanic origin or Latin descent.

### **Expulsion**

Hirschfield (2008) defined expulsion as the permanent removal or banning of a student from a traditional school setting for persistently violating school rules. Section

37.0081 of the Texas Education Agency (2013a) requires that students who are expelled must be placed in a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program if the school district is located in a county that operates a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program, or the school district contracts with the juvenile board of another county for the provision of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education program.

### **Extremely Poor**

The phrase Extremely Poor was used to refer to a group of students who were determined to be eligible for the federal free lunch program (Texas Education Agency, 2013b). Regarding students who were Extremely Poor, they were from families at the income range of 130% or less of the federal poverty line (Federal Register, 2016).

### **Hispanic**

The Texas Education Agency (2010a) defined Hispanic as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race (p. 9).

### **Incarceration**

Incarceration is the state of being imprisoned or confined. In the United States, various types of institutions are used to incarcerate persons convicted of crime. There are state prisons and local jails for adults convicted in state courts; federal prisons for persons convicted in federal courts; and various types of residential institutions (for example, training schools) for juveniles delinquent in juvenile courts (US Legal, 2016). Texas Education Code §39.053(g-1), requires a student who is incarcerated in a state jail or federal penitentiary as an adult or as a person certified to stand trial as an adult to be

excluded from campus and district rate calculations used for state accountability purposes (Texas Education Agency, 2011b).

### **Inequity**

In this investigation, the term, inequity, was used in a manner similar to that of disparate impact. As noted in legal doctrine under the Fair Housing Act, disparate impact states that policy may be considered discriminatory if it has a disproportionate “adverse impact” against any group based on race, national origin, color, religion, sex, familial status, or disability when no legitimate, non-discriminatory business need is present for the policy (National Fairing Housing, 2015, p. 1). Specifically in reference to this journal-ready dissertation, inequities were determined to exist when a statistically significant difference is present among ethnic/racial groups in their receipt of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement.

### **Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program**

The Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program is designed to provide an alternative educational setting for students who have been mandatorily expelled from their home school for serious infractions (Texas Juvenile Justice Department, 2012) as indicated in Texas Education Code 37.011 (Texas Education Agency, 2013a). Juvenile justice differs from the adult system in that a juvenile can be arrested for crimes that are considered ‘status offenses’ such as truancy or a curfew violation – these are crimes only because a juvenile has not reached the age of majority and the underlying act would not be criminal if the juvenile were an adult (Sanborn, Lew, Hazeltine-Shedd, & Kimball, 2011). Counties with a population greater than 125,000 shall develop a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program, subject to the approval of the Texas Juvenile Justice

Department. Counties with a population of 125,000 or less may develop a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program and is entitled to count the student in the district's average daily attendance for purposes of receipt of state funds under the Foundation School Program (Texas Education Agency, 2013a).

### **Moderately Poor**

The phrase Moderately Poor was used to refer to a group of students who were determined to be eligible for the federal reduced lunch program (Texas Education Agency, 2013b). Regarding students who are Moderately Poor, they were from families within the income range of 131% to 185% of the federal poverty line (Federal Register, 2016).

### **Non-Educationally Disadvantaged**

Texas Education Code §39.301(c)(10) requires the Texas Education Agency to report the percentage of students who are not educationally disadvantaged. Students who are non-educationally disadvantaged are not eligible to participate in free or reduced-price lunch, or receive any other public assistance (Texas Education Agency, 2016a). Included in this group of students may also be students whose parents did not apply for the free or reduced lunch program, but who would have been eligible, had they completed the application process.

### **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. For the Public Education Information Management System electronic

collection, school districts submit their Public Education Information Management System data file four times each school year following a schedule established by the Public Education Information Management System Data Standards. The Data Standards provide instructions on the submission of Public Education Information Management System data by school districts to the Texas Education Agency (Texas Education Agency, 2017b).

### **Race**

The United States Department of Education (2008) defined race as students in Texas being classified as American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, or White.

### **School-to-Prison Pipeline**

The School-to-Prison Pipeline is defined as the pattern of schools having policies that may marginalize disadvantaged students into making decisions that may send them into a trajectory toward prison (Nocella, Parmar, & Stovall, 2014).

### **Texas Education Agency**

This Texas agency provides leadership, guidance, and resources to help schools meet the educational needs of all students. Located in Austin, the Texas Education Agency is the administrative unit for primary and secondary public education. Under the leadership of the commissioner of education, the agency manages the textbook adoption process, oversees development of the statewide curriculum, administers the statewide assessment program, administers a data collection system on public school students, staff and finances, rates school districts under the statewide accountability system, operates research and information programs, monitors for compliance with federal guidelines and

serves as a fiscal agent for the distribution of state and federal funds (Texas Education Agency, 2017a).

### **Texas Education Code**

Established by the Texas Legislature, the Texas Education Code is a set of state statutes (laws) governing public education in Texas. Unless specifically excluded by the code, it is applicable to all educational institutions supported solely or in part by Texas tax funds unless specifically excluded by the code. The TEC directs the goals and framework of public education in Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2017a).

### **White**

White as defined by the Texas Education Agency (2010a) is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa (p. 9).

### **Zero-tolerance**

Zero-tolerance is defined as the absence of any leniency or exception in the enforcement of a law, rule, or regulation, especially a law against antisocial behavior (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 2006). The American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force (2008) defined zero tolerance as a disciplinary policy that calls for a mandatory sanction for student disciplinary infractions without regard for the severity of the misconduct.

### **Literature Review Search Procedures**

For the purpose of this proposed journal-ready dissertation, the literature regarding Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement by economic status, by ethnicity/race, and by reading and mathematics achievement were examined. Phrases that were used in the search for relevant literature were: middle school, student,

discipline, economic status, ethnicity/race, White, Hispanic, Black, gender, and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program. All searches were conducted through following databases: EBSCO Host, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), SAGE Journals, and the American Psychological Association (Psych NET) database that contained scholarly peer reviewed articles.

### **Delimitations**

The three empirical analyses in this proposed journal-ready dissertation were delimited to students who were enrolled in traditionally configured public middle schools in Texas, specifically middle schools comprised of Grades 6 through 8. Only data on Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas middle schools in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years were analyzed. Data on boys who were enrolled in private, charter, or alternative schools was not be used in this journal-ready dissertation. Only quantitative data regarding Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements that were provided by the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System were analyzed in the three articles in this journal-ready dissertation. This study was comprised of only four school years of data, therefore the degree to which results are generalizable beyond the students whose data were analyzed herein is not known.

### **Limitations**

In this proposed journal-ready dissertation, the relationship of student economic status, ethnicity/race, and reading and mathematics achievement with the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements of middle school boys was addressed. As such, several important limitations are present. A major limitation involves the fact that



the school variables of economic status and ethnicity/race are self-reported by each middle school campus to the Texas Education Agency. As such, inaccuracy in the data reported by each school campus to the Texas Education Agency may be present. This limitation was believed to be minimal in nature, primarily because the Texas Education Agency conducts audits of each school's data provided and penalizes schools that do not provide accurate data. A second limitation involved the fact that only quantitative data were used to measure the reading and mathematics achievement of boys who received or who did not receive a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program receipt across four school years. Accordingly, the extent to which other factors (e.g., test anxiety) contributed to the reading and mathematics achievement of boys is not known. A third limitation involved the use of archival data. The use of archival data in this research design constituted a causal-comparative study in which a cause-effect relationship cannot be made.

### **Assumptions**

For the purpose of this journal-ready dissertation, the assumption is made that the data provided to the Texas Education Agency through the Public Education Information Management System were accurate and consistent statewide. Any errors that are present with regard to the reporting of student economic status, ethnicity/race, reading and mathematics achievements, and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program receipt have the potential to affect results.

### **Organization of the Study**

In this empirical journal-ready dissertation, three journal ready articles were produced. In the first article, the degree to which inequities might exist in the assignment

of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements by the economic status (i.e., Not Economically Disadvantaged, Moderately Poor, or Very Poor) of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas middle schools in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years were addressed. In the second article, the extent to which disproportionalities might be present in the assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements for Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys as a function of their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and White) were determined. In the third article, the degree to which the assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements influence the reading and mathematics achievement of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys were examined for the 2010-2011 school year.

Five chapters compose this journal-ready dissertation. Chapter I includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, definitions of terms, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the three proposed research investigations. In Chapter II, readers are provided with the framework for the first journal-ready article on Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements for boys by their economic status. In Chapter III, the framework for the second journal-ready dissertation investigation on Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements for boys by their ethnicity/race is provided. Finally, in Chapter IV, Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements and their influence on the reading and mathematics achievement of Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys are discussed. A separate Method and Data Analysis section was generated for each of these proposed studies.

## CHAPTER II

INEQUITIES IN JUVENILE JUSTICE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

PLACEMENTS BY THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF TEXAS

GRADE 6, 7, AND 8 BOYS: A MULTIYEAR, STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

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

### **Abstract**

Examined in this study was the extent to which Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements differed by the economic status (i.e., Poor, Not Poor) of Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 White, Hispanic, and Black boys for the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years. Inferential statistical procedures, used on Texas statewide data, yielded statistically significant differences in all 4 school years and for all 3 grade levels examined. White, Hispanic, and Black Boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement at statistically significantly higher rates than White, Hispanic, and Black boys who were Not Poor. Implications, suggestions, and recommendations for policy and practice are provided.

**Keywords:** Poor, Not Poor, Economic Status, Texas, boys, Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, White, Hispanic, Black

INEQUITIES IN JUVENILE JUSTICE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM  
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India Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2015) stated education is the best and the least expensive way to fight poverty. However, continuously documented in the research literature are educational inequities that contribute to achievement gaps for marginalized students. Harlow (2003) contended that poverty is a contributing factor to increased exclusionary rates, dropout rates, student academic disconnections, and student incarceration rates. More recently, Butler, Lewis, Moore, and Scott (2012) contended that poverty is one of the greatest predictors of student suspensions. Accordingly, exclusionary discipline practices and zero-tolerance policies continue to affect young men and boys of color disproportionately (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). As revealed in national data, middle schools and high schools do not use suspensions as a measure of last resort (Losen & Martinez, 2013).

Curtiss and Slate (2015) contended that the overuse of exclusionary discipline practices have negatively influenced education opportunities for all students despite their ethnicity/race, gender, or economic status. Jordan and Anil (2009), in a two year investigation, established that middle school students who were from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (i.e., qualified for the federal free or reduced price lunch program) were represented proportionately less than students who were not economically disadvantaged in the category where no referrals were generated. Conversely, students who were from economically disadvantaged backgrounds were five times more represented in the categories where one or more discipline referrals were generated

compared to their peers who were not economically disadvantaged. More important than excessive absences, Jordan and Anil (2009) asserted that being poor, and especially being Black and poor, is the most significant indicator of discipline referrals. Moreover, Balfanz (2013) correlated suspension with dropping out, stating that one suspension in the ninth grade doubles the chance of a student dropping out from 16% (not suspended) to 32% (suspended once). These statistics are three times higher than the previously reported national data from the U.S. Department of Education that showed an 11% dropout rate of students in poverty compared to only 5% and 2% for middle and high-income students respectively (Kaufman, Naomi, & Chapman, 2004). Ultimately, students who drop out and do not return to graduate from high school are four times more likely than college graduates to be unemployed; far more probable to end up incarcerated or on welfare; and they typically die at a much younger age (Jordan & Anil, 2009).

In a 2-year statewide analysis, Tiger and Slate (2017) documented that exclusionary discipline practices had been used excessively and resulted in inequities for Texas elementary students based on their economic status. Out of the 15,000 Grade 4 boys who had been assigned an in-school suspension in the 2013-2014 school year, Tiger and Slate (2017) established that in-school suspensions were more than twice as likely assigned to Grade 4 boys who were extremely poor than Grade 4 were boys who were not poor. In the 2014-2015 school year, Tiger and Slate (2017) documented that the in-school suspension rate of Grade 4 boys who were economically disadvantaged were almost twice that of Grade 4 boys who were not economically disadvantaged. Additionally, the in-school suspension rate of Grade 4 boys who were moderately poor was almost twice the rate of Grade 4 boys who were not poor.

Of the 7,000 out-of-school suspensions assigned to Grade 4 boys in the 2013-2014 school year, Tiger and Slate (2017) determined that out-of-school suspension assignments were three times more likely to be given to Grade 4 boys who were extremely poor compared to Grade 4 boys who were not poor. Out-of-school suspensions were almost twice likely to be assigned to Grade 4 boys who were moderately poor compared to their peers who were not poor. Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, Tiger and Slate (2017) established that Grade 4 boys who were economically disadvantaged had an out-of-school suspension rate that was more than twice as high as for Grade 4 boys who were not economically disadvantaged. Additionally, the out-of-school suspension rate of Grade 4 boys who were moderately poor was almost twice as high as the rate of Grade 4 boys who were not poor.

Furthermore, Tiger and Slate (2017) documented that out of the 20,000 in-school suspensions assigned to Grade 5 boys in the 2013-2014 school year, in-school suspensions were more than twice as likely assigned to Grade 5 boys who were extremely poor compared to Grade 5 boys who were not poor. In-school suspensions were almost twice as likely to be assigned to Grade 5 boys who were moderately poor than to Grade 5 boys who were not poor. In the 2014-2015 school year, Tiger and Slate (2017) established that of the 15,000 in-school suspensions assigned to boys, the rate of in-school suspension assigned to Grade 5 boys who were extremely poor was almost two times more than the rate assigned to Grade 5 boys who were not poor. The in-school suspension rate for Grade 5 boys who were moderately poor was almost twice as high as the in-school suspension rate Grade 5 boys who were not poor.

Of the 10,000 out-of-school suspensions assigned to Grade 5 boys in the 2013-2014 school year, Tiger and Slate (2017) established that the chance of being assigned an out-of-school suspension was more than three times likely for Grade 5 boys who were extremely poor compared to Grade 5 boys who were not poor. Out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Grade 5 boys who were moderately poor almost twice likely than were assigned to Grade 5 boys who were not poor. Tiger and Slate (2017) also determined that out of the 9,000 out-of-school suspensions assigned to Grade 5 boys in the 2014-2015 school year, Grade 5 boys who were extremely poor had an out-of-school suspension rate that was almost two times as high as that of Grade 5 boys who were not poor. The out-of-school suspension rate for Grade 5 boys was almost twice as high as the out-of-school suspension rate for Grade 5 boys who were not poor.

In a previous study, Khan and Slate (2016) analyzed 1-year statewide data to determine the degree to which the economic status of Grade 6 Black, Hispanic, and White students influenced the assignment of an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement for the 2011-2012 school year. They documented a statistically significant difference in that 33.5% of Grade 6 Black students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an in-school suspension compared to 19.93% of Grade 6 Black students who were not economically disadvantaged, that were assigned an in-school suspension. Of in-school suspensions assigned to Hispanic students, 20.2% of Hispanic students who were in poverty were assigned an in-school suspension compared to 12.0% of Hispanic students who were not in poverty, that were assigned an in-school suspension. Similarly, for Grade 6 White students, 23.1% of Grade 6 White students who were economically



disadvantaged were assigned an in-school suspension compared to 8.9% of Grade 6 White students who were not in poverty, that were assigned an in-school suspension.

Regarding out-of-school suspensions, Khan and Slate (2016) established a statistically significant difference was present, in that 21.3% of Grade 6 Black students assigned out-of school suspension were poor compared to 9.7% of Grade 6 Black students who were not poor, that were assigned an out-of-school suspension. Also, 9.0% of Grade 6 Hispanic students who were in poverty were assigned an out-of-school suspension compared to 4.1% of Grade 6 Hispanic students who were not in poverty, but were assigned an out-of-school suspension. Equally, 6.4% of Grade 6 White students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an out-of-school suspension compared to 1.9% of Grade 6 Hispanic students who were not in poverty, that were assigned an out-of-school suspension.

Concerning Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, Khan and Slate (2016) indicated that 4.0% of Grade 6 Black students who were poor were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program compared to 1.6% of Grade 6 Black students who were not in poverty, but were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program. Similarly, for Grade 6 Hispanic students, 2.2% of Grade 6 Hispanic students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program compared to 0.8% of Grade 6 Hispanic students who were not in poverty, that were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program. As for Grade 6 White students, 2.1% of Grade 6 White students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program compared

to 0.4% of Grade 6 White students who were not in poverty, that were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program.

In a more recent study conducted in the state of interest for this article, Texas, Eckford and Slate (2016) determined that in the 2010-2011 school year, Grade 7 boys who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program at twice the placement rate of Grade 7 boys who were not economically disadvantaged. In the same study, Texas Grade 8 boys who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program at two times the placement rate of Grade 8 boys who were not economically disadvantaged (Eckford & Slate, 2016). Of importance regarding the Eckford and Slate (2016) investigation was that their sample consisted of 100% of the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program assignments in Texas for one school year. Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program is the highest form of consequence students can receive as it exposes them to an alternative learning environment unconventional to the traditional public school.

Texas school enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year consisted of almost 5.5 million students. Of the 2,491 students in Texas public schools who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program, 1,775 of the students assigned were economically disadvantaged, whereas only 740 of the students assigned were not economically disadvantaged. Furthermore, of the 3,824 students who were expelled from their school district, 2,723 of the students expelled were economically disadvantaged, whereas only 1,159 of the students expelled were not economically disadvantaged (Texas Education Agency, 2015).

Along with documented ethnic/racial inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences, other researchers (e.g., Skiba et al., 2011) established that economic status has become an important predictor in the assignment of school suspension as a behavior consequence. Skiba et al. (2011) also added that in addition to ethnicity/race, being poor has been a characteristic strongly associated with inequitable school discipline practices for over 30 years. Most notable are the high suspension rates of students of poverty (Evans, Lester, & Anfara, 2010; Jones, Slate, & Martinez-Garcia, 2014, 2015; Sullivan, Klingbeil, & Van Norman, 2013). Skiba et al. (2011) further documented poverty as one of a few possible causation mechanisms to explain discrepancies in discipline referrals and suspension rates for Black, White, and Hispanic students. Coleman and Slate (2016) also agreed with Skiba et al. (2011) that poverty has become a deciding factor in school discipline assignments as a consequence for unacceptable behavior. Brault, Janosz, and Archambault (2014) further added that students who were economically disadvantaged were targeted disproportionately for behavior problems in comparison to other student groups. Evidence exists that students of poverty are much more likely to be suspended and expelled from school, drop out of school, and have less access to highly qualified teaching staff and rigorous curriculum than are students who are not in poverty (U.S. Department of Education, 2014, 2015).

Specific to grade-level, Evans et al. (2010) reported that a disproportionate number of urban middle school students who were economically disadvantaged were more likely to receive stricter disciplinary consequences than suburban middle school students. Sullivan (2013) later added that students in poverty had a greater chance of receiving discipline referrals that lead to a visit to the office than their middle-class peers.

In a recent analysis of discipline consequences assigned to Texas Grade 6 students, Coleman and Slate (2016) established that the rate of discipline consequences assigned to students in poverty was two times the discipline consequence rate for their peers who were not in poverty. Skiba et al. (2011) documented that Black students overexposed to the pressures of poverty were more likely to be undersocialized with respect to school norms and rules. As a result, they were more likely to experience racial/ ethnic disproportionate discipline assignments.

Skiba et al. (2011) noted that students of color, having been subjected to various stressors related to poverty, may acquire and display behaviors different from school expectations that put them at risk for increased disciplinary contact. Khan and Slate (2016) speculated that students in poverty may lack the social or cultural capital (i.e., experience or knowledge) needed for them to act in accordance with school rules. Due to environmental circumstances associated with poverty, Gardner, Lopez, and Council (2014) contended that children from poor families may behave differently because they lack the school-related skills compared to their more affluent peers.

Moreover, poverty is not specific to ethnicity/race. As indicated by Lopez and Slate (2016), more than four times the percentage of Grade 7 White students in poverty received an assignment to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement than did their counterparts who were not poor. Additionally, Lopez and Slate (2016) established that more than 3 times the percentage of Grade 8 students who were economically disadvantaged received a discipline placement to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement than did their counterparts who were not poor. As a result,

Lopez and Slate (2016) concluded that the economic status of students in school was directly related to the rate of discipline consequences they receive.

According to Fenning and Rose (2007), students who do not appear to be compatible in school as a result of ethnicity/race, academic challenges, or economic status, are unjustly targeted for removal. Similarly conveyed by previous researchers (e.g., Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000), groups of students who are poor or who have academic problems are essentially removed for harmless infractions indicated in the school discipline policy. That is, these students are assigned disciplinary consequences that remove them from the classroom setting for behaviors that do not call for mandatory consequences on the part of the school administrator.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Consistent with McLoyd (1998), Skiba et al. (2011) noted the connection between ethnicity/race and economic status in American society, increasing the chance that any findings of ethnic/racial injustice in school discipline can be accounted for by inequalities associated with economic status. Indicated by previous researchers (e.g., Frazier, Bishop, & Henretta, 1992), individual characteristics (e.g., gender and socioeconomic status) and community characteristics (e.g., poverty, urbanization, and income inequality), increase the probability that minority youth will be exposed to the juvenile justice system.

A preponderance of researchers (e.g., Eitle & Eitle, 2004; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000) asserted the effects of school consequences are inequitably distributed on racial/ethnic minority youth and lower-income youth, increasing the probability for each group to be excluded from their learning environment compared to White or middle-class youth. Inequities have clearly been documented in

the assignment of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program as a function of both ethnicity/race and economic status. The intersection of the two characteristics has not been as well analyzed, as well as the fact that Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements are an under-investigated issue. If the inequities already documented for in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs also hold true for Juvenile Justice Alternative Education programs, then serious concerns should be present because of the seriousness of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements by the economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Poor) of Texas Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8 boys. As such, the primary focus of this multiyear analysis was on the degree to which student level of poverty was related to Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements. By analyzing Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements for Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys by their economic status, a comparison of results across grade level and across multiple school years was conducted. Archival data that were requested and obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System were analyzed separately for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years in Texas public schools. Accordingly, results obtained in this multiyear study were examined to determine the extent to which trends might be present in the differential assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements by student economic status.

### **Significance of the Study**

In this study, the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement by the economic status of Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys were examined for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and the 2015-2016 school years. For Grade 6, 7, and 8 White, Hispanic, and Black boys, the degree to which differences might be present in their Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program assignment as a function of their economic status was ascertained. Given the emphasis placed on academic instruction, unfair exclusionary practices of students from their learning environment generate concerns of civil rights violations. Therefore, results of this investigation may yield evidence of inequities in discipline consequences by the economic status for White, Hispanic, and Black boys. The degree to which economic status may influence the placement of boys in Grade 6, 7, and 8 in a Juvenile Justice Alternative Educational Program in each of the grade levels, over four consecutive school years, may provide useful information to assist educational leaders and policy makers in establishing equitable discipline policies.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this investigation: (a) What is the difference in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement by the economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Poor) of Grade 6 boys?; (b) What is the difference in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement by the economic status of Grade 7 boys?; (c) What is the difference in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement by the economic status of Grade 8 boys?; and (d) To what extent are trends present in the assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program

receipt by the economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys? Each of these research questions were conducted separately for White, Hispanic, and Black boys. The first three questions were repeated for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and the 2015-2016 school years whereas the fourth research question involved all four years of data.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

In this multiyear investigation, previously obtained statewide archival data from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System were analyzed. These data were obtained from a previously submitted and fulfilled Public Information Request form by the Texas Education Agency. As such, already existing data were examined to answer the previously mentioned research questions. Because the data that were analyzed have already occurred, a non-experimental, ex post facto research design was present (Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). In such a research design, neither the independent variable nor the dependent variables are capable of being manipulated, nor can extraneous variables be controlled. Accordingly, cause-and-effect relationships cannot be established.

In this study, the independent variable was comprised of two groups: (a) boys who did not meet the requirements for the free/reduced lunch program (i.e., Not Poor); (b) boys who met the requirements for the free/reduced lunch program (i.e., Poor). The dependent variable was whether or not each boy received a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. These independent and dependent variables were analyzed separately for White, Hispanic, and Black boys, as well as separately for each grade level.



## **Participants**

Participants were Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas middle schools in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. This sample was comprised of boys who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, as well as boys who did not receive this consequence. The ethnicity/race of three groups of boys was obtained: White, Hispanic, and Black, because these three ethnic/racial groups constitute the majority of the student population in Texas. Specific information analyzed was the economic status of boys in middle school during the four years being analyzed. Data on middle school campuses that are private schools or that are charter schools were not analyzed in this investigation as they are not considered a traditional public school.

## **Instrumentation and Procedures**

As discussed in the research design section of this article, the data that were analyzed in this article were previously obtained through a submitted and fulfilled Public Information Request form by the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System. These data that were used in this study to answer the research questions had not yet been analyzed. These data were obtained on Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8 boys in a Texas public school in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years respectively. Specifically relevant to this article was whether or not boys had been assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement for each school year, as a function of their economic status, and for three ethnic/racial groups (i.e., White, Hispanic, and Black). Archival data were imported into the

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software and then labeled and reduced to include only variables related to this study.

Regarding the federal free- and reduced-lunch program, Burney and Beilke (2008) reported that students from families with an income of 130% or less of the federal poverty line are eligible for the federal free lunch program, whereas students from families with an income of 131% to 185% of the federal poverty line are eligible for the federal reduced price lunch program. Students from families who did not meet the federal income poverty requirements were not eligible for either the federal reduced price lunch or the free lunch program. Due to the very small sample size of boys in reduced price lunch program, only two groups (i.e., Poor, Not Poor) were used in this study. Students from families who were eligible for either the federal free-lunch program or the federal reduced-lunch program were referred to as Poor, whereas students from families who were not eligible for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program were referred to as Not Poor. Reliability and validity are not applicable in this investigation as student economic status is reported by their respective campus to the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System. Therefore, any errors resulting from the self-reported data are assumed to be minimal.

The definition for Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program was used as defined by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (2012), assigned to a student as a result of violating Texas Education Code Chapter 37 listed offenses which include: (a) mandatory expulsion from their home school for serious infractions of the Student Code of Conduct, (b) discretionary expulsions for serious infractions that occur off-campus as

well as other infractions of the Student Code of Conduct, or (c) are court ordered due to Title V offenses or probation conditions.

## **Results**

Examined herein was the extent to which student economic status was related to the assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program for Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys. Data were analyzed for Texas middle school students who had been assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. Because frequency data were present for both categorical variables: economic status (i.e., Poor and Not Poor) and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program assignment (i.e., received this consequence or did not receive this consequence), Pearson chi-square procedures were calculated. This statistical procedure was viewed as the optimal statistical procedure (Field, 2009; Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011) to use when nominal data are present. The available sample size per cell was more than five; therefore, the assumptions underlying a Pearson chi-square were met for each research question (Field, 2013). Results will now be provided, beginning with Grade 6 boys in the 2012-2013 school year and end with the 2015-2016 school year and with Grade 8 students.

### **Research Question One Results for Grade 6 White Boys**

In the first research question, the focus was on whether differences were present in the assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program by the economic status of Grade 6 boys in Texas public schools for the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years. The first analyses were conducted for White boys. With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment

of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 10.22, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 White boys by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .01 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.1, Grade 6 White boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program almost twice as often as Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor.

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 Insert Table 2.1 about here  
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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 14.31, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 White boys by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 2.1, Grade 6 White boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement more than two times as often as Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, the Pearson chi square procedure revealed a statistically significant difference in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 17.80, p < .001$  to Grade 6 White boys by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 White boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement almost three times more than Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are contained in Table 2.1.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 11.93, p < .001$ . The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .01 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 White boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more often than Grade 6 White boys who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 2.1 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

### **Research Question One Results for Grade 6 Black Boys**

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.24, p = .63$ , to Grade 6 Black boys by their economic status. Although not statistically significant, readers should note that the numbers of Grade 6 Black boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost four times more than for Grade 6 Black boys who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this school year are revealed in Table 2.2.

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 Insert Table 2.2 about here  
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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.52, p = .47$ , to Grade 6 boys by their economic status. Although not statistically significant, readers should note that the numbers of Grade 6 Black boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were

almost three times more than for Grade 6 Black boys who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 2.2 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was not revealed in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.08, p = .77$ , to Grade Black 6 boys by their economic status. Though not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 6 Black boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost three times more than for Grade 6 Black boys who were Not Poor. Table 2.2 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year

With regard to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.60, p = .44$ , to Grade 6 Black boys by their economic status. Similar to the results for the previous three school years, the numbers of Grade 6 Black boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost four times more than for Grade 6 Black boys who were Not Poor. Revealed in Table 2.2 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

### **Research Question One Results for Grade 6 Hispanic Boys**

Regarding the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.34, p = .56$ , to Grade 6 Hispanic boys by their economic status. Although not statistically significant, readers should note that the numbers of Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program

placement were almost four times more than for Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this school year are presented in Table 2.3.

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 Insert Table 2.3 about here  
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With respect to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.08$ ,  $p = .78$ , to Grade Hispanic 6 boys by their economic status. Although not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost three times more than for Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Revealed in Table 2.3 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

With regard to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was not revealed in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.02$ ,  $p = .90$ , to Grade 6 Hispanic boys by their economic status. Though not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost three times more than for Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this school year are presented in Table 2.3.

Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.87$ ,  $p = .35$ , to Grade 6 Hispanic boys by their economic status. Although not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were

Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost four times more than for Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor.

Contained in Table 2.3 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

### **Research Question One Results for Grade 7 White Boys**

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 15.80, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 White boys by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.4, Grade 7 White boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement almost twice as often as Grade 7 White boys who were Not Poor.

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Insert Table 2.4 about here  
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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 26.81, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 White boys by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 White boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program more than twice as often as Grade 7 White boys who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are contained in Table 2.4.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program



placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 24.90, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 White boys by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 White boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program almost two times more than Grade 7 White boys who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 2.4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With regard to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 18.53, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 White boys by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 White boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement twice as often as Grade 7 White boys who were Not Poor. Revealed in Table 2.4 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

### **Research Question One Results for Grade 7 Black Boys**

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.80, p = .37$ , to Grade 7 Black boys by their economic status. Though not statistically significant, readers should note that the numbers of Grade 7 Black boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were twice as much as for Grade 7 Black boys who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this school year are presented in Table 2.5.

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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program,  $\chi^2(1) = 1.04, p = .31$ , to Grade 7 Black boys by their economic status. Although not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 7 Black boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost four times more than for Grade 7 Black boys who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 2.5 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 5.51, p = .02$ , to Grade 7 Black boys by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement five times more often than Grade 7 Black boys who were Not Poor. Revealed in Table 2.5 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

With regard to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 2.44, p = .12$ , to Grade 7 Black boys by their economic status. Though not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 7 Black boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost twice more than for Grade 7 Black boys who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are contained in Table 2.5.

### Research Question One Results for Grade 7 Hispanic Boys

Regarding the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 3.10, p = .08$ , to Grade 7 Hispanic boys by their economic status. Though not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost five times more than Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Table 2.6 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

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 Insert Table 2.6 about here  
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With respect to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.39, p = .04$ , to Grade 7 Hispanic boys by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .01 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement almost five times more than Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this school year are presented in Table 2.6.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was not revealed in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.55, p = .46$ , to Grade 7 Hispanic boys by their economic status. Although not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement

were three times more than for Grade 7 Black boys who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 2.6 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

For the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 16.35, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 Hispanic boys by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .01 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement seven times more than Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 2.6 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Research Question One Results for Grade 8 White Boys**

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 20.26, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 White boys by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 White boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement almost two times more than Grade 8 White boys who were Not Poor. Revealed in Table 2.7 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

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 Insert Table 2.7 about here  
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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program,  $\chi^2(1) = 24.47, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 White boys by their economic status. The effect size for this

finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 White boys who were Not Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement almost two times more than Grade 8 White boys who were Poor. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are contained in Table 2.7.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 27.18, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 White boys by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 White boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement almost two times more than Grade 8 White boys who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 2.7 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

For the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.05, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 White boys by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .01 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 White boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement almost two times more than Grade 8 White boys who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this school year are presented in Table 2.7.

### **Research Question One Results for Grade 8 Black Boys**

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.10, p = .75$ , to Grade 8 Black boys by their economic status. Though not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 8 Black boys who were Poor and who

were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were two times more than Grade 8 Black boys who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this school year are revealed in Table 2.8.

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 Insert Table 2.8 about here  
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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.00, p = .10$ , to Grade 8 Black boys by their economic status. Although not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 8 Black boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost three times more than for Grade 8 Black boys who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 2.8 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was not revealed in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 1.55, p = .21$ , to Grade 8 Black boys by their economic status. Though not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 8 Black boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost two times more than for Grade 8 Black boys who were Not Poor.. Revealed in Table 2.8 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

For the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.01, p = .92$ , to Grade 8 Black boys by their economic status. Although not statistically

significant, the numbers of Grade 8 Black boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost three times more than for Grade 8 Black boys who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are contained in Table 2.8.

### **Research Question One Results for Grade 8 Hispanic Boys**

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.88, p = .35$ , to Grade 8 Hispanic boys by their economic status. Though not statistically significant, readers should note that the numbers of Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were three times more than for Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Table 2.9 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

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Insert Table 2.9 about here

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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was not revealed in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.10, p = .75$ , to Grade 8 Hispanic boys by their economic status. Although not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost three times more than for Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this school year are presented in Table 2.9.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.23, p = .63$ , to Grade 8 Hispanic boys by their economic status. Although not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost three times more than for Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this school year are revealed in Table 2.9.

For the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.57, p = .45$ , to Grade 8 Hispanic boys by their economic status. Though not statistically significant, the numbers of Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were Poor and who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were almost three times more than for Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 2.9 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Trends by Economic Status**

Across the four years of data and the three grade levels, the economic status of White boys was statistically significantly related to whether or not they were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. In all analyses involving White boys, White boys who were Poor received statistically significantly higher rates of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement than White boys who were Not Poor. In contrast, only one statistical analysis was statistically significant for Black and two statistical analyses for Hispanic boys. In that one analysis, Black boys received statistically significantly higher rates of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program



placement than Black boys who were Not Poor. Readers should note, however, that in all of the analyses involving Black and Hispanic boys, the Poor group always had higher rates of boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement than the Not Poor group.

### **Discussion**

In this investigation, the degree to which differences were present in the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement as a function of the economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 White, Black, and Hispanic boys during the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years was addressed. Inferential statistical procedures were used to answer the research questions previously discussed. Following these analyses, the degree to which trends were present was determined. Results will now be summarized.

Across each of the grade levels, in every school year, White boys who were Poor were assigned statistically significantly higher rates of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement than White boys who were Not Poor. Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates for White boys who were Poor were two to five times higher than for White boys who were Not Poor. These results are congruent with Lopez and Slate (2016) who established the presence of statistically significant relationships between student economic status and higher rates of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Readers are directed to Table 2.10 for a summary of the results of the statistical analyses of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates by the economic status of White boys across the four school years.

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Insert Table 2.10 about here  
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With respect to Black boys, only one analysis, (i.e., Grade 7 Black boys in the 2014-2015 school year), resulted in a statistically significant difference. Even so, in all grade levels and in all four school years, the numbers of Black boys who were Poor and who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were ranged from two to five times higher than for Black boys who were Not Poor. Readers are directed to Table 2.11 for a summary of the results of the statistical analyses for Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements by the economic status of Black boys across the four school years.

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Insert Table 2.11 about here  
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Concerning Hispanic boys, only two analyses yielded a statistically significant result (i.e., Grade 7 Hispanic boys in the 2013-2014 and 2015-2016 school years). Though the other analyses did not result in statistically significant differences, readers should note that in all cases the numbers of Hispanic boys who were Poor and who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were two to seven times higher than for Hispanic boys who were Not Poor. Table 2.12 contains a summary of the results of the statistical analyses for Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates by the economic status of Hispanic boys across the four school years.

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Insert Table 2.12 about here  
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### **Connection with Existing Literature**

In this multiyear, statewide investigation, results were congruent with a preponderance of researchers (e.g., Coleman & Slate, 2016; Jordan & Anil, 2009; Lopez & Slate, 2016; Skiba et al, 2011) who established that poverty is a statistically significant indicator of school discipline referrals. Also commensurate with other researchers (e.g., Barnes & Slate, 2016; Eckford & Slate, 2016; Khan & Slate, 2016; Lopez & Slate, 2016) were statistically significant differences in the percentage of Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys who were in poverty and who were assigned exclusionary consequences. In all four school years and at all three grade levels in this statewide investigation, boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two to seven times more often than boys who were Not Poor.

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

In this study, essential findings were provided regarding economic status and its relationship to Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Based upon these results, several implications for policy and for practice can be made. First, school district leaders and campus administrators are encouraged to examine their current discipline policies and procedures to determine the extent to which the economic status of their boys is related to their assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Such analyses, should inequities be determined to be present, could be used to generate revisions in school discipline procedures that allow for students to

correct their behavior rather than continuing to exclude them from their learning environment. Readers should note that no empirical evidence exist that indicate harsh exclusionary discipline practices improve student behavior.

Second, in addition to reviewing discipline policies and procedures, educational leaders should invest in educating and training teachers and staff members on how to address the social and cultural capital inequities of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Student behaviors that are perceived to be socially acceptable may not be behaviors acceptable in a school setting. Cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity training would equip educators to understand not only the backgrounds from which their students come from, but it would also enable them to be more sensitive to the social norms acceptable in the communities in which their students live. As a result, fewer occurrences of exclusionary discipline practices should be reflected in future school discipline data.

A third implication for practice would be for school leaders to incorporate programs that equip students with social skills and conflict resolution skills that become useful in helping students to navigate school and beyond. Khan and Slate (2016) contended that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds may lack social and cultural capital. As a result, their behaviors are perceived to be exacerbated by staff who are not culturally aware of or sensitive to what is considered to be socially common in their culture. Educating students about behaviors that are socially acceptable can not only help decrease exclusionary school discipline practices, but the training from these programs have lasting benefits for student who are in poverty far beyond the school walls.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In this empirical investigation, the relationship between student poverty and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements for boys in Grades 6, 7, and 8 was examined. Given the importance of the findings in this investigation, several recommendations for future research can be made. First, researchers are encouraged to extend this study into other states. The extent to which the findings of this study would be generalizable to middle school boys in poverty in other states is not known. A second recommendation is for researchers to extend this study to White, Black, and Hispanic girls. Such an analysis would determine whether similar results delineated herein on boys would be generalizable to girls. A third recommendation would be for researchers to extend this study to other student groups (e.g., students who receive special education services, English Language Learners, and students who are determined to be at-risk). To what extent are these groups of students inequitably assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement? A fourth recommendation would be for future researchers to extend this study to boys at the high school level. This analysis would be helpful in determining whether the inequities documented herein are also occurring at the high school level. Finally, researchers are encouraged to extend this investigation to other discipline consequences such as in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. The degree to which inequities exist in the assignment of other discipline consequences merits additional research studies.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this investigation was to determine the degree to which Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements was assigned inequitably to Texas

Grades 6, 7, and 8 White, Hispanic, and Black boys on the basis of their economic status. Texas statewide data on all Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System. Inferential statistical procedures yielded the presence of statistically significant differences in the assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements as a function of their economic status. White, Hispanic, and Black boys who were Poor were disproportionately assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement compared to their peers who were Not Poor. As such, clear inequities in the assignment of this disciplinary consequence were established.

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Table 2.1

*Frequencies and Percentages of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program*

*Placements by the Economic Status of Grade 6 White Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 17) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 19,654) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 12) 0.0%	( <i>n</i> = 43,497) 100%
2013-2014		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 15) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 19,149) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 7) 0.0%	( <i>n</i> = 42,824) 100%
2014-2015		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 14) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 18,159) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 5) 0.0%	( <i>n</i> = 43,348) 100%
2015-2016		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 12) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 18,086) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 6) 0.0%	( <i>n</i> = 43,174) 100%

Table 2.2

*Frequencies and Percentages of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program*

*Placements by the Economic Status of Grade 6 Black Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 38) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 19,373) 99.8%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 15) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 6,590) 99.8%
2013-2014		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 17) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 18,998) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 6,668) 99.9%
2014-2015		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 11) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 18,232) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 5) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 7,085) 99.9%
2015-2016		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 17) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 18,347) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 9) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 7,065) 99.9%

Table 2.3

*Frequencies and Percentages of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program**Placements by the Economic Status of Grade 6 Hispanic Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 57) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 67,976) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 15) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 21,185) 99.9%
2013-2014		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 44) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 67,474) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 15) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 21,137) 99.9%
2014-2015		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 36) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 68,495) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 13) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 23,779) 99.9%
2015-2016		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 54) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 70,241) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 14) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 24,066) 99.9%

Table 2.4

*Frequencies and Percentages of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program*

*Placements by the Economic Status of Grade 7 White Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 26) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 19,115) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 20) 0.0%	( <i>n</i> = 45,185) 100%
2013-2014		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 25) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 19,011) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 11) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 44,545) 100%
2014-2015		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 33) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 17,879) 99.8%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 23) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 44,351) 99.9%
2015-2016		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 16) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 17,792) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 7) 0.0%	( <i>n</i> = 43,830) 100%



Table 2.5

*Frequencies and Percentages of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program*

*Placements by the Economic Status of Grade 7 Black Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 61) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 18,999) 99.7%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 28) 0.4%	( <i>n</i> = 7,113) 99.6%
2013-2014		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 69) 0.4%	( <i>n</i> = 19,359) 99.6%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 19) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 6,941) 99.7%
2014-2015		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 60) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 18,229) 99.7%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 12) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 7,544) 99.8%
2015-2016		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 35) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 18,058) 99.8%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 22) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 7,438) 99.7%

Table 2.6

*Frequencies and Percentages of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program**Placements by the Economic Status of Grade 7 Hispanic Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 120) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 65,082) 99.8%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 28) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 21,932) 99.9%
2013-2014		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 150) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 68,506) 99.8%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 33) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 22,491) 99.9%
2014-2015		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 107) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 67,026) 99.8%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 34) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 24,643) 99.9%
2015-2016		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 106) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 68,672) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 15) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 24,763) 99.9%

Table 2.7

*Frequencies and Percentages of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program*

*Placements by the Economic Status of Grade 8 White Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 43) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 18,342) 99.8%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 41) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 45,115) 99.9%
2013-2014		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 57) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 18,020) 99.7%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 60) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 46,040) 99.9%
2014-2015		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 44) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 17,642) 99.8%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 38) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 45,748) 99.9%
2015-2016		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 20) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 17,398) 99.9%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 25) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 44,788) 99.9%

Table 2.8

*Frequencies and Percentages of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program*

*Placements by the Economic Status of Grade 8 Black Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 67) 0.4%	( <i>n</i> = 18,009) 99.6%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 30) 0.4%	( <i>n</i> = 7,517) 99.6%
2013-2014		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 66) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 18,923) 99.7%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 26) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 7,464) 99.7%
2014-2015		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 55) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 18,307) 99.7%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 31) 0.4%	( <i>n</i> = 7,803) 99.6%
2015-2016		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 73) 0.4%	( <i>n</i> = 17,773) 99.6%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 33) 0.4%	( <i>n</i> = 7,866) 99.6%

Table 2.9

*Frequencies and Percentages of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program**Placements by the Economic Status of Grade 8 Hispanic Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 167) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 62,908) 99.7%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 51) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 22,318) 99.8%
2013-2014		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 161) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 66,103) 99.8%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 54) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 23,329) 99.8%
2014-2015		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 178) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 66,466) 99.7%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 65) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 26,029) 99.8%
2015-2016		
Poor	( <i>n</i> = 184) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 66,377) 99.7%
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 79) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 25,739) 99.7%

Table 2.10

*Summary of Results of the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Placement*

*Analyses by the Economic Status of Grade 6-8 White Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

Grade Level, and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest Rate
Grade 6			
2012-2013	.01	Below Small	Poor
2013-2014	.02	Below Small	Poor
2014-2015	.02	Below Small	Poor
2015-2016	.01	Below Small	Poor
Grade 7			
2012-2013	.02	Below Small	Poor
2013-2014	.02	Below Small	Poor
2014-2015	.02	Below Small	Poor
2015-2016	.02	Below Small	Poor
Grade 8			
2012-2013	.02	Below Small	Poor
2013-2014	.02	Below Small	Poor
2014-2015	.02	Below Small	Poor
2015-2016	.01	Below Small	Poor

Table 2.11

*Summary of Results of the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Placement**Analyses by the Economic Status of Grade 6-8 Black Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014,**2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

Grade Level, and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest Rate
Grade 6			
2012-2013	.00	Below Small	Poor
2013-2014	.00	Below Small	Poor
2014-2015	.00	Below Small	Poor
2015-2016	.00	Below Small	Poor
Grade 7			
2012-2013	.01	Below Small	Poor
2013-2014	.01	Below Small	Poor
2014-2015	.02	Below Small	Poor
2015-2016	.00	Below Small	Poor
Grade 8			
2012-2013	.00	Below Small	Poor
2013-2014	.00	Below Small	Poor
2014-2015	.00	Below Small	Poor
2015-2016	.00	Below Small	Poor

Table 2.12

*Summary of Results of the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Placement Analyses by the Economic Status of Grade 6-8 Hispanic Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

Grade Level, and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest Rate
Grade 6			
2012-2013	.00	Below Small	Poor
2013-2014	.00	Below Small	Poor
2014-2015	.00	Below Small	Poor
2015-2016	.00	Below Small	Poor
Grade 7			
2012-2013	.00	Below Small	Poor
2013-2014	.01	Below Small	Poor
2014-2015	.00	Below Small	Poor
2015-2016	.01	Below Small	Poor
Grade 8			
2012-2013	.00	Below Small	Poor
2013-2014	.00	Below Small	Poor
2014-2015	.00	Below Small	Poor
2015-2016	.00	Below Small	Poor



### CHAPTER III

INEQUITIES IN JUVENILE JUSTICE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM  
PLACEMENTS BY THE ETHNICITY/RACE OF TEXAS GRADE 6, 7, AND 8 BOYS:  
A MULTIYEAR, STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

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

### **Abstract**

The degree to which differences were present in the assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements as a function of the ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Black, and Hispanic) of Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys for the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years was addressed in this investigation. Inferential statistical analyses of Texas statewide data yielded the presence of statistically significant differences in all school years and at all three grade levels. Black boys in all three grade levels were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement at statistically significantly higher rates than either White or Hispanic boys. Hispanic boys in all three grade levels were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement at statistically significantly higher rates than White boys. Implications, suggestions, and recommendations for policy and practice are provided.

**Keywords:** Ethnicity/Race, White, Black, Hispanic, White, Texas, boys, Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, Grades 6, 7, and 8

INEQUITIES IN JUVENILE JUSTICE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM  
PLACEMENTS BY THE ETHNICITY/RACE OF TEXAS GRADE 6, 7, AND 8 BOYS:  
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The research on implicit bias, subjective assessment, and school discipline has generally been addressed from the context of ethnicity/race; however, the problem of prejudice perception occurs when race and gender are factored together (Morris & Perry, 2017). Collins (2005), Oeur (2016), and Rios (2011) contended that when combined with race, perceptions of masculinity increase and thereby create impressions of dangerous "hypermasculinity" (Morris & Perry, 2017, p. 129) for young men of color. Lunenburg (2012) and Skiba et al. (2011) asserted that educators penalize Black and Hispanic students more harshly than Whites for equivalent behaviors, suggesting that educators interpret misbehaviors more critically when they are displayed by children of color.

The U.S. Department of Education (2014) has established that young boys of color are affected by disproportionate discipline practices and zero-tolerance policies that exclude them from school. According to Smith and Harper (2015), 65% of the Black students expelled from public schools in the Southern states were assigned to Black boys, the highest among all ethnic/racial groups. Khan and Slate (2016) indicated that the assignment of discipline consequences have been unequally distributed to Black and Hispanic students compared to their Asian and White peers for over four decades. The Office for Civil Rights (2014) also established that in the 2011-2012 school year, 3.5 million of the 49 million students enrolled in U.S. public schools received an in-school suspension; almost 3.5 million students received an out-of-school suspension; and 130,000 students were expelled from school. Although evidence exists of some schools

reducing their rates of exclusionary discipline practices, considerable racial/ethnic inequities exist (Losen, Hodson, Keith, Morrison, & Belway, 2015). In a recent report regarding the data on suspensions and expulsions, the National Center for Education Statistics (2016) indicated 36% of Black students, 21% of Hispanic students, 14% of White students, and 6% of Asian students have been suspended or expelled from school. Although school discipline policies and procedures abide to help establish and maintain order, as well as to help provide a safe environment for learning, Geronimo (2010) contended the disproportionate use of exclusionary practices continues to deprive marginalized students of their civil liberties.

As indicated in the literature (Morris & Perry, 2017), persistent and harsh school consequences create a wide range of negative outcomes that are associated with lower academic achievement, individually and at the school levels. Students who are repeat recipients of disproportionate school sanctions often feel scorned by educational institutions, and in turn, develop a sense of disengagement that can ultimately lead to dropping out of high school and exposed to the criminal justice system (Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier, & Valentine, 2009; Peguero & Bracy, 2015). Barnes and Slate (2016) and Boneshefski and Runge (2014) agreed that the assignment of inequitable discipline practices increase disproportionate discipline consequences; increase the probability of Hispanic and Black students dropping out of school; and increase the channel of Black students through the School-to-Prison Pipeline.

In addition to zero-tolerance policies and the overuse of exclusionary school discipline practices documented as important factors in the School-to-Prison Pipeline phenomenon (Skiba & Rausch, 2006), Dahlberg (2012) asserted that the use of school

resource officers to assist in managing student behaviors subjected students of color and students with disabilities to inequitable school-based arrest for behaviors not defined as criminal activity. Per the Harvard Law Review (2015), who conducted a study of 35,000 juvenile offenders, incarcerated juveniles were twice as probable to be imprisoned as adults compared to their peers who came from similar environments, committed similar delinquencies, but were afforded alternative consequences or none at all.

Originally implemented to improve school safety and climate (Englehart, 2014), the implementation of the Federal Gun Free School Act of 1994 by former President Bill Clinton, enacted zero-tolerance school policies that supported the implementation and use of exclusionary discipline practices (American Psychological Association, 2008). Lopez (2015) contended that although the act was mandated to remove students from school who posed a serious threat such as harassment, fighting, or assault (Mallett, 2016), zero-tolerance policies do not, however, afford students the opportunity to learn how to correct undesirable behaviors. Furthermore, the overrepresentation of Black and Hispanic students in being assigned punitive school discipline consequences is in direct proportion to the overrepresentation of Blacks and Hispanics that populate the prison system in the United States (Lopez, 2015). Currently, no evidence exists regarding any positive effects of zero-tolerance policies in school discipline (Englehart, 2014). Neither does any evidence exist that punitive exclusionary practices decrease undesirable student behaviors (Skiba, 2014). If anything, Noguera (2003) and Skiba (2014) asserted that zero-tolerance policies and exclusionary discipline practices have influenced more negative behaviors than they do positive behaviors.

Well established in the empirical literature are notable differences in patterns of discipline referrals across grade levels, with an upsurge in referrals occurring in the higher grades (Putnam, Luiselli, Handler, & Jefferson, 2003; Spaulding et al., 2010). More specifically are the inequitable differences in office discipline referrals for boys when the referrals are disaggregated (Kaufman et al., 2010). As documented by several researchers (e.g., Lunenburg, 2012; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002), Black boys receive noticeably more office discipline referrals and are more likely to be referred for subjective offenses (e.g., disrespect, excessive noise) than are White boys.

In regard to elementary school, Curtiss and Slate (2015) conducted a 2-year investigation into Texas discipline consequence assignments. When comparing the rate of Texas Grade 4 boys assigned an in-school suspension during the 2013-2014 school year, Black boys received an in-school suspension at a rate almost twice that of the in-school suspension rate for White boys, and almost three times that of the in-school suspension rate for Hispanic boys. In the 2014-2015 school year, Grade 4 Black boys had more than twice the in-school suspension rate of either White boys or Hispanic boys. Conversely, when comparing the rate of Grade 5 boys assigned an in-school suspension during the 2013-2014 school year, Black boys received an in-school suspension at a rate more than twice the in-school suspension rate for White boys and for Hispanic boys. In the 2014-2015 school year, Curtiss and Slate (2015) documented that Grade 5 Black boys received an in-school suspension more than twice as often as White boys and almost three times more often than Hispanic boys. With respect to out-of-school suspensions, Curtiss and Slate (2015), in their 2-year study, established that Texas Grade 4 Black boys received an out-of-school suspension at a rate five times more than the out-of-school

suspension rate for White boys, and four times more often than the in-school suspension rate for Hispanic boys. In the 2014-2015 school year, Grade 4 Black boys had five times the out-of-school suspension rate of either White boys or Hispanic boys.

When analyzing out-of-school suspension data on Grade 5 boys in the 2013-2014 school year, Curtiss and Slate (2015) established that Black boys received an out-of-school suspension five times more often than White boys and three times more often than Hispanic boys. In the 2014-2015 school year, Grade 5 Black boys received an out-of-school suspension five times more often than White boys and three times more often than Hispanic boys. Important in the Curtiss and Slate (2015) investigation was that Grade 5 boys were assigned 88% of the total discipline consequences that were assigned in this 2-year statewide study.

In a recent investigation directly related to this article, Eckford and Slate (2016) conducted a one-year statewide study into the possibility of inequities in the assignment of boys to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. They documented that Texas Grade 7 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement four times more often than White boys and one and a half times more often than Hispanic boys. Of the 367 Grade 7 boys who received a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, Black boys received 20% more Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements than their White peers.

Eckford and Slate (2016) also analyzed data on Grade 8 boys who had been assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. They determined that Texas Grade 8 Black and Hispanic boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement at a rate that was four times higher than

for White boys. Of the 498 Grade 8 boys who received a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, Black and Hispanic boys received 30% more placements than their White peers. Readers should note that an assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement is the most punitive consequence that students can receive, placing them in an alternative learning environment that is substantially different from that of a traditional public school environment. Such extreme discipline actions fail to reinforce desired behaviors, and ultimately can lead to a surge in future criminal activity (Lopez, 2015; Mallett, 2016).

As reflected in the latest release of Texas statewide data, Texas public schools had almost 5.5 million students in the 2015-2016 school year. Of the 2,491 students in Texas who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement in the 2015-2016 school year, 563 were assigned to Black students, 1,452 were assigned to Hispanic students, and 479 were assigned to White students. Of the 3,824 students who were expelled from their school district in the 2015-2016 school year, Black students had 823 expulsions, Hispanic students had 2,288 expulsions, and White students had 793 expulsions (Texas Education Agency, 2015).

### **Statement of the Problem**

School exclusionary policies and practices are influential factors in educational inequality. Although discipline is a necessary condition for learning, Morris and Perry (2017) indicated that punishments differ substantially by ethnicity/race, class, and gender. The Children's Defense Fund (1975) was the first to bring awareness to these disparities, revealing in a report that Black students were twice as likely to be suspended compared to White students. The fact that issues of discipline disparities between students are still



being addressed today is a clear indication that very little progress, if any, has been made. Moreover, the alarming differences in school punishments have a less simplistic relationship to gender inequality. Despite the social influence of men, boys are disciplined more severely and more often than girls (Morris & Perry, 2017). Also established by previous researchers (e.g., Noguera, 2003; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008), Black boys, specifically, are disciplined at vastly different proportions compared to other ethnic/racial groups, implying that the intersection of race and gender expose important patterns in school discipline. Although recently reported that some schools have reduced their exclusionary discipline practices, Losen (2015) contended continued evidence exists of ethnic/racial disproportionalities in school discipline.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which differences might be present in the receipt of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements as a function of the ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Hispanic, and Black) of Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys. The degree to which the ethnicity/race of middle school boys was related to Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program assignments was the focus of this study. By analyzing Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements for Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8 White, Hispanic, and Black boys, a comparison of results across grade levels occurred. Four school years (i.e., 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016) of archival data provided by the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System was analyzed. As such, the degree to which trends might be present in the differential assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements by the ethnicity/race of middle school boys was addressed.

### **Significance of the Study**

In this study, the extent to which disparities existed in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement by the ethnicity/race of Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys was determined for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and the 2015-2016 school years. For Grade 6, 7, and 8 White, Hispanic, and Black boys, the degree to which disparities were present in their Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program assignment as a function of their ethnicity/race was revealed. Given the importance placed on student learning, inequitable exclusionary discipline practices of students from their educational setting create concerns of their constitutional rights being violated. Therefore, results of this investigation may yield evidence of inequities in discipline consequences by the ethnicity/race for White, Hispanic, and Black boys. The degree to which ethnicity/race may influence the placement of boys in Grade 6, 7, and 8 in a Juvenile Justice Alternative Educational Program in each of the grade levels, over four consecutive school years, may provide useful information to assist educational leaders and policymakers in establishing fair and equitable discipline policies.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this investigation: (a) What is the difference in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement as a function of the ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Hispanic, and Black) of Grade 6 boys?; (b) What is the difference in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement as a function of the ethnicity/race of Grade 7 boys?; (c) What is the difference in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement as a function of the ethnicity/race for Grade 8 boys?; and (d) What trend is present in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program

placement for Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys by their ethnicity/race? The first three research questions were examined for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years whereas the fourth research question involved all four years of data and all three grade levels.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

In this multiyear investigation, a non-experimental, causal comparative research design was present (Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The data analyzed in this article comprise of previously obtained statewide archival data from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System. Because both the independent variable and the dependent variables had already occurred, extraneous variables were not controlled in this investigation. The data include Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8 boys by their ethnicity/race and whether or not they had received a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. The independent variable of ethnicity/race for boys consisted of three groups: White, Hispanic, and Black. For each school year (i.e., 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016), the dependent variable was receipt or non-receipt of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement.

### **Participants**

Participants for whom data were examined were Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas middle schools in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. This study was comprised of data on boys who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, as well as boys who did not receive this

consequence. The ethnicity/race of three groups of boys was obtained: White, Hispanic, and Black, because these three ethnic/racial groups constitute the majority of the student population in Texas. Data on middle school campuses that are private schools or that are charter schools were not be analyzed in this investigation as they are not considered a traditional public school.

### **Instrumentation and Procedures**

As discussed in the research design section of this article, the data that were analyzed in this article were previously obtained through a submitted and fulfilled Public Information Request form by the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System. These data that were used in this study to answer the research questions had not yet been analyzed. These data were obtained on Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8 boys in a Texas public school in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years respectively. Specifically relevant to this article was whether or not boys had been assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement for each school year, as a function of their ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Hispanic, and Black). Archival data were imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software and then reduced to variables related to this study.

### **Results**

Examined in this study was the extent to which student ethnicity/race was related to the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement for Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys. Data were analyzed for Texas middle school students who had been assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. Because frequency data were

present for both categorical variables: ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Hispanic, and Black) and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement (i.e., received this consequence or did not receive this consequence), Pearson chi-square procedures were calculated. As such, the Pearson chi-square statistical procedure was viewed as the optimal statistical procedure (Field, 2009; Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011) to use when nominal data are present. With the large sample size, the available sample size per cell was more than five; therefore, the assumptions underlying a Pearson chi-square were met for each research question (Field, 2013). Results will now be provided, beginning with Grade 6 boys in the 2012-2013 school year and ending with Grade 8 boys in the 2015-2016 school year.

### **Research Question One Results for Grade 6 Boys**

Concerning the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 52.67, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 boys. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement three times more than Grade 6 White boys, and two times more than Grade 6 Hispanic boys. Grade 6 Hispanic boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than Grade 6 White boys. Table 3.1 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2012-2013 school year.

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 Insert Table 3.1 about here  
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With respect to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 10.73$ ,  $p < .001$ , to Grade 6 boys. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .01 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than Grade 6 White boys. Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates were similar for Grade 6 Black boys and Grade 6 Hispanic boys regardless of their ethnicity/race. Delineated in Table 3.1 are the descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year.

Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.49$ ,  $p = .11$ , to Grade 6 boys. Although not statistically significant, readers should note that Grade 6 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than Grade 6 White boys and Grade 6 Hispanic boys. Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates were similar for Grade 6 Hispanic boys and Grade 6 White boys regardless of their ethnicity/race. Table 3.1 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2014-2015 school year.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 17.02$ ,  $p < .001$ , to Grade 6 boys. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .01 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than Grade 6 White boys. Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates were similar for Grade 6 Black boys and

Grade 6 Hispanic boys regardless of their ethnicity/race. Delineated in Table 3.1 are the descriptive statistics for the 2015-2016 school year.

### **Research Question Two Results for Grade 7 Boys**

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 86.68, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 boys. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement three times more often than Grade 7 White boys and two times more than Grade 7 Hispanic boys. Grade 7 Hispanic boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than Grade 7 White boys. Table 3.2 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2012-2013 school year.

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 Insert Table 3.2 about here  
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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 94.03, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 boys. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement three times more than Grade 7 White boys, and two times more often than Grade 7 Hispanic boys. Grade 7 Hispanic boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than Grade 7

White boys. Delineated in Table 3.2 are the descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 38.95, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 boys. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .01 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.2, Grade 7 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement three times more than Grade 7 White boys and two times more than Grade 7 Hispanic boys. Grade 7 Hispanic boys were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than Grade 7 White boys.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 60.17, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 boys. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement three times more than Grade 7 White boys and two times more than Grade 7 Hispanic boys. Grade 7 Hispanic boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than Grade 7 White boys. Table 3.2 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year.

### **Research Question Three Results for Grade 8 Boys**

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 55.67, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 boys. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice



Alternative Education Program placement four times more than Grade 8 White boys and two times more than Grade 8 Hispanic boys. Grade 8 Hispanic boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement three times more than Grade 8 White boys. Descriptive statistics for this school year are revealed in Table 3.3.

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Insert Table 3.3 about here

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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 55.67, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 boys. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .01 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than Grade 8 White boys. Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates were similar for Grade 8 Black boys and Grade 8 Hispanic boys regardless of their ethnicity/race. Table 3.3 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2013-2014 school year.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 46.21, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 boys. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement three times more than Grade 8 White boys. Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates were similar for Grade 8 Black boys and Grade 8 Hispanic boys regardless of their ethnicity/race. Descriptive statistics for the 2014-2015 school year are revealed in Table 3.3.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement,  $\chi^2(1) = 55.67, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 boys. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.3, Grade 8 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement four times more than Grade 8 White boys and two times more than Grade 8 Hispanic boys. Grade 8 Hispanic boys were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement three times more often than Grade 8 White boys.

### **Trends by Ethnicity/Race**

Across the four years of data and the three grade levels that were analyzed, the ethnicity/race of boys was statistically significantly related to whether or not they were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Black boys in all three grade levels were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement at rates that were statistically significantly higher than the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates of White and Hispanic boys. Similarly, Hispanic boys in all three grade levels were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement at rates that were statistically significantly higher than the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates of White boys. These results were commensurate across all four school years and across all three grade levels.

### **Discussion**

Analyzed in this investigation was the degree to which differences were present in the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement as a function of the ethnicity/race of Grade 6, 7, and 8 White, Black, and Hispanic boys.

Following these analyses, the degree to which trends were present was determined. Results will now be summarized.

Four years of statewide data were obtained and analyzed on the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement of all White, Black, and Hispanic boys who were enrolled in traditional public middle schools in Texas. Concerning Grade 6 boys, inferential statistical procedures yielded statistically significant results in every school year except the 2014-2015 school year. Although the 2014-2015 school year did not result in statistically significant differences for Grade 6 boys, readers should note that in all years analyzed the percentage of Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were two to three times higher than for White boys, and two times higher than Hispanic boys. Additionally, readers should note that in all years analyzed, the percentage of Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were two times higher than for White boys. Delineated in Table 3.4 is a summary of the results of the statistical analyses for Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates by the ethnicity/race of Grade 6 boys across the four school years.

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 Insert Table 3.4 about here  
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For Grade 7 boys, statistically significant differences were present in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates in all four school years. Readers should note that in all years analyzed, the percentage of Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were consistently three times

higher than for White boys, and two times higher than Hispanic boys. Additionally, the percentage of Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were consistently two times higher than for White boys in all four years. Table 3.5 contains a summary of the results of the statistical analyses for Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates by the ethnicity/race of Grade 7 boys across the four school years.

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Insert Table 3.5 about here  
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With respect to Grade 8 boys, inferential statistical analysis revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates in the four school years examined. Readers should note that the percentage of Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were two to four times higher than for White boys, and two times higher than Hispanic boys. The percentage of Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were two to three times higher than for White boys in all four years. Revealed in Table 3.6 is a summary of the results of the statistical analyses for Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement rates by the ethnicity/race of Grade 8 boys across the four school years.

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Insert Table 3.6 about here  
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### **Connections with Existing Literature**

Considerable research (e.g., Putnam, Luiselli, Handler, & Jefferson, 2003; Spaulding et al., 2010; Smith & Harper, 2015) regarding ethnicity/race and inequitable school discipline consequence assignments has been conducted. In this multiyear, statewide investigation, results were congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Eckford & Slate, 2016; Khan & Slate, 2016; Lunenburg, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016) who established that the ethnicity/race of boys was a statistically significant factor in the disproportionate assignment of school discipline consequences. In this investigation, in all four school years, Grades 6, 7, and 8 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement at a rate that was two to four times more than White boys. Additionally, Grades 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement at a rate that was two to three times more than White boys in all four school years analyzed.

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

As a result of the findings from this study, several implications for policy and for practice can be made. First, campus administrators are encouraged to conduct a review of their district's discipline manual to identify whether any culturally biased policies might be present that might lead to the disproportionate exclusion of marginalized students from their learning environment. Campus administrators could investigate and adopt school-based discipline programs that are culturally unbiased and less exclusionary, offering discipline alternatives that may help alleviate the inequitable discipline practices of marginalized students, and may promote a change in their behavior.

Second, educational leaders are encouraged to establish campus based mentor programs that help cultivate relationship building with students. Campus based relationship programs help create a partnership of accountability between students and staff, giving students the opportunity to talk to a mentor prior to them behaving in a manner that may warrant consequences that ultimately exclude them from their learning environment. The installation of mentor based programs may be preventative in helping to decrease the ongoing disproportionate assignment of exclusionary consequences of Black and Hispanic boys. Training teachers and staff members how to be mentors can have lasting benefits on the social, emotional, educational, and behavioral outcomes of middle school boys.

A third implication for practice would be for school district leaders to incorporate periodic discipline management trainings for their campus administrators. The importance of administrators being consistent in their assignment of discipline consequences is necessary to ensure that discipline assignments are fairly and equitably distributed regardless of student ethnicity/race. Administrators being able to train together will be afforded the opportunity to determine how and what consequences would be assigned for certain student behavior issues. This training may assist school administrators alleviate making subjective judgments when assigning discipline consequences for common student infractions. In turn, administrators will be able to follow a consistent established discipline management plan that helps decrease the disproportionate assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

Several recommendations for future research can be made, based upon the results of this multiyear, empirical study. First, an investigation is warranted to determine whether differences exist in the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement for middle school girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Such an analysis would determine whether similar results delineated herein on boys would be generalizable to girls. A second recommendation would be for researchers to extend this study to other states. The extent to which the findings of this study would be generalizable to middle school boys by their ethnicity/race in other states is not known. A third recommendation for researchers would be to extend this study to boys who attend public elementary schools. To what extent are elementary school White, Black, and Hispanic boys disproportionately assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement? A fourth recommendation would be for researchers to extend this study to students at the high school level. Are the inequities that were documented herein also present at the high school level? These two studies would be helpful in determining whether the inequities documented herein are also occurring at the elementary and high school levels. A fifth recommendation is for researchers to conduct longitudinal investigations in which they analyze the past history of students who receive a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Results from such studies might provide information that could be used to generate interventions to reduce the numbers of students who receive this consequence. Finally, this investigation on only Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement should be extended to other discipline consequences. The degree to which the inequities documented herein are also present for

in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement is not well documented and warrants additional study.

### **Conclusion**

In this multiyear, statewide investigation, the degree to which differences were present in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements by the ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Black, and Hispanic) of Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys was examined. Texas statewide data were analyzed for the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years. Inferential statistical procedures revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in the assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements by the ethnicity/race of Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys. In all four school years and at all three grade levels, Black boys received statistically significantly more instances of this discipline consequence than Hispanic and White boys. Similarly, in all four school years and at all three grade levels, Hispanic boys received statistically significantly more instances of this discipline consequence than White boys.



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Table 3.1

*Frequencies and Percentages of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program**Placements by the Ethnicity/Race of Grade 6 Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
White	( <i>n</i> = 29) 0.0%	( <i>n</i> = 63,582) 100%
Black	( <i>n</i> = 55) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 27,336) 99.8%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 90) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 106,215) 99.9%
2013-2014		
White	( <i>n</i> = 22) 0.0%	( <i>n</i> = 62,497) 100%
Black	( <i>n</i> = 21) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 27,074) 99.9%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 78) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 105,413) 99.9%
2014-2015		
White	( <i>n</i> = 19) 0.0%	( <i>n</i> = 62,212) 100%
Black	( <i>n</i> = 16) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 27,180) 99.9%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 53) 0.0%	( <i>n</i> = 107,966) 100%
2015-2016		
White	( <i>n</i> = 19) 0.0%	( <i>n</i> = 62,100) 100%
Black	( <i>n</i> = 27) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 27,510) 99.9%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 78) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 110,204) 99.9%

Table 3.2

*Frequencies and Percentages of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program**Placements by the Ethnicity/Race of Grade 7 Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
White	( <i>n</i> = 46) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 64,779) 99.9%
Black	( <i>n</i> = 94) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 27,404) 99.7%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 198) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 103,296) 99.8%
2013-2014		
White	( <i>n</i> = 36) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 64,039) 99.9%
Black	( <i>n</i> = 90) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 27,726) 99.7%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 231) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 108,292) 99.8%
2014-2015		
White	( <i>n</i> = 60) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 62,978) 99.9%
Black	( <i>n</i> = 75) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 27,593) 99.7%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 171) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 107,610) 99.8%
2015-2016		
White	( <i>n</i> = 23) 0.0%	( <i>n</i> = 62,515) 100%
Black	( <i>n</i> = 59) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 27,601) 99.8%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 146) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 109,677) 99.9%



Table 3.3

*Frequencies and Percentages of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program**Placements by the Ethnicity/Race of Grade 8 Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive a JJAEP Assignment <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
White	( <i>n</i> = 86) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 63,927) 99.9%
Black	( <i>n</i> = 101) 0.4%	( <i>n</i> = 26,881) 99.6%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 283) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 100,770) 99.7%
2013-2014		
White	( <i>n</i> = 121) 0.2%	( <i>n</i> = 64,605) 99.8%
Black	( <i>n</i> = 94) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 27,676) 99.7%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 273) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 105,734) 99.7%
2014-2015		
White	( <i>n</i> = 82) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 64,178) 99.9%
Black	( <i>n</i> = 94) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 27,878) 99.7%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 275) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 108,996) 99.7%
2015-2016		
White	( <i>n</i> = 51) 0.1%	( <i>n</i> = 63,053) 99.9%
Black	( <i>n</i> = 116) 0.4%	( <i>n</i> = 27,658) 99.6%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 289) 0.3%	( <i>n</i> = 109,292) 99.7%

Table 3.4

*Summary of Results for the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Placement Analyses by the Ethnicity/Race for Grade 6 Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

Grade Level, and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest JJAEP Rate
2012-2013	.02	Below Small	Black
2013-2014	.01	Below Small	Black and Hispanic
2014-2015	.00	Below Small	Black
2015-2016	.01	Below Small	Black and Hispanic

Table 3.5

*Summary of Results for the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Placement Analyses by the Ethnicity/Race for Grade 7 Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

Grade Level, and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest JJAEP Rate
2012-2013	.02	Below Small	Black
2013-2014	.02	Below Small	Black
2014-2015	.01	Below Small	Black
2015-2016	.02	Below Small	Black

Table 3.6

*Summary of Results for the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Placement Analyses by the Ethnicity/Race for Grade 8 Boys in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

Grade Level, and School Year	Cramer's V	Effect Size Range	Highest JJAEP Rate
2012-2013	.02	Below Small	Black
2013-2014	.01	Below Small	Black and Hispanic
2014-2015	.02	Below Small	Black and Hispanic
2015-2016	.02	Below Small	Black

**CHAPTER IV**

DIFFERENCES IN READING AND MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT BY  
JUVENILE JUSTICE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM PLACEMENT FOR  
WHITE, HISPANIC, AND BLACK TEXAS GRADE 6, 7, AND 8 BOYS: A  
STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

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

### **Abstract**

Analyzed in this study was the extent to which differences were present in reading and mathematics achievement as a function of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements for Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys. Inferential statistical procedures, used on data obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System, yielded statistically significant differences in the academic achievement of White, Hispanic, and Black boys as a function of being placed in a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program. White, Hispanic, and Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics performance than their peers who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Implications, suggestions, and recommendations for policy and practice are provided.

**Keywords:** Academic Achievement, TAKS Reading, TAKS Mathematics, Texas Middle schools, boys, Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement

DIFFERENCES IN READING AND MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT BY  
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In conjunction with documented disparities in student discipline, issues of unfairness based on student ethnicity/race continue to exist with respect to the achievement gap. Researchers such as Latimore, Peguero, Popp, Shekarkhar, and Koo (2017) contend that school-based discipline can have negative effects on the academic outcomes of students, specifically for racial/ethnic minorities. Henkel, Slate, and Martinez-Garcia (2015) asserted that students who are removed from the learning environment to serve discipline consequences experience learning deficits in comparison to their peers who are not removed from their regular classroom setting. As such, exclusionary discipline practices may have long-term consequences on student academic achievement.

Increased levels of school suspension are associated with lower student academic achievement (Morris & Perry, 2017). Depending on the length of the suspension, students can be denied access to their regular classroom setting from one class period up to 10 days or more (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). Researchers (e.g., Fieldman & Matjasko, 2005; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002) have clearly established that students who are assigned discipline consequences that exclude them from school are more likely to receive failing grades, drop out, become academically disengaged, experience diminished self-worth, and eventually become incarcerated. Congruent with the negative effects of school based discipline, racial/ethnic inequities in the assignment

of school consequences may continue to marginalize the very group of students who already struggle with other educational barriers (Kozol, 2005; Kupchik, 2010; Lunenburg, 2013; Noguera, 2003; Rios, 2011). In addition to being the most underprivileged, underserved, the most alienated, and the most likely to attend struggling schools (Gordon, Della Piana, & Keleher, 2001), Black and Hispanic male students are also the most socially and academically marginalized in public schools in the United States (Brown, 2007). Messages of civic and social disengagement are conveyed when certain groups of students are singled out or treated different from their peers as a result of their economic status or ethnicity/race. The continuation of removing students from their learning environment not only violates their civil rights (Office for Civil Rights, 2014), but it exacerbates their social, emotional, and academic conditions (Skiba & Noam, 2002).

As mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), all public schools were obligated to exhibit progress regarding reducing the achievement gap among ethnic/racial groups and their White peers (Wenglinsky, 2004). However, the absence of a robust curriculum and ineffective instruction are present in schools embedded in high poverty communities, often consisting of high percentages of Black and Hispanic students (McLoyd & Purtell, 2008), thus increasing the risk for Black and Hispanic students to perform poorly and to be referred for special education placement. The extensive inequitable practices of excluding students from school, particularly Black and Hispanic students, as an initial discipline consequence have contributed to the achievement gap (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006). The negative effects of lost academic instruction due to exclusionary discipline practices in schools



have been well documented in the literature (Gregory et al., 2010; Lo & Cartledge, 2006; Townsend, 2000; Vincent, Swain-Bradway, Tobin, & May, 2011).

Many researchers (e.g., American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Townsend, 2000) contended that suspensions were more likely assigned to boys who were at risk of failing, receiving special education services, economically disadvantaged, and/or involved in the criminal justice system (Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, & Leaf, 2010). After multiple occurrences of being excluded from school, students are eventually assigned to take remedial courses, perceived as a behavior problem, referred to special education; and as a result, they develop a negative outlook about school, eventually become truant and likely drop out (Gregory et al., 2010; Noguera, 2003; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Townsend, 2000).

Historically, Black boys receive exclusionary consequences that lead to them missing school. If repeatedly exposed to exclusionary consequences, Black boys may establish a pattern of academic failure and become a constant behavior problem (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). The National Center for Education Statistics (2014) identified gaps in reading and mathematics achievement for Black students, with the greatest disproportion for Black males. Taken from the National Center for Education Statistics (2014) report, less than 10% of Grade 8 Black boys scored at or above proficient levels in reading compared to 33% of Grade 8 White boys who scored at or above proficient levels in reading. Moreover, 17% of Grade 4 Black students scored at or above proficient levels in reading compared to 34% of Grade 4 white students who scored at or above proficient levels in reading.

In a study in the state of interest for this article, Texas, Hilberth (2010) conducted a statewide 1-year investigation to determine the degree to which the assignment of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement influenced the academic achievement of Black and White students enrolled in Texas middle schools during the 2008-2009 school year. Hilberth (2010) documented the presence of statistically significant lower Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Reading and Mathematics scores for Grades 6, 7, and 8 Black and White students who were assigned any of the three discipline consequences listed. Of particular relevance to this article were the lower reading and mathematics test scores of Grades 6, 7, and 8 Black and White students who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement in comparison to their peers who were not assigned such a discipline consequence.

In a more recent Texas investigation, Jones (2013) conducted a statewide 2-year study to determine the degree to which the assignment of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement affected the academic achievement of Hispanic and White students enrolled in Texas middle schools during the 2008-2009 and 2010-2011 school years. Jones (2013) established the presence of statistically significant lower Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Reading and Mathematics scores for Grades 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic and White students who were assigned any of the three discipline consequences mentioned. Of specific relevance to this article were the poorer reading and mathematics test scores of Grades 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic and White students who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education

Program placement in comparison to their peers who were not assigned such a consequence.

In both the Hilberth (2010) and the Jones (2013) investigations, the assignment to any of the three discipline consequences had a negative effect on student reading and mathematics achievement. Mathematics test scores were more adversely influenced than were student reading test scores. Of note for this article was that assignment to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had a negative effect on student mathematics test scores than on reading test scores.

In an even more recent empirical analysis, Henkel, Slate, and Martinez-Garcia (2015) conducted a Texas statewide 2-year study to ascertain the extent to which a relationship existed between a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and the reading and mathematics achievement of Grades 6, 7 and 8 White, Black, and Hispanic students. Henkel et al. (2015) documented the presence of statistically significantly lower Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Reading and Mathematics scores of Grades 6, 7, and 8 White, Hispanic, and Black boys who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement than their peers who did not receive such a consequence. Their results were commensurate for both school years of data they analyzed. Of interest in their investigation, Henkel et al. (2015) contended that ethnicity/race and grade level were not as influential on the mathematics performance of boys as was the assignment of a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement.

The Texas Education Agency (2015) reported Texas statewide school enrollment of almost 5.5 million students for the 2015-2016 school year. With respect to the numbers of students who were assigned a discipline consequence, out of 2,491 students

in Texas who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program in the 2015-2016 school year, 2,013 of the students were students who were at risk, whereas only 310 of the students were students who were not at risk. Additionally, of the 3,824 students who were expelled from their school district, 2,972 of the students expelled were students who were at risk, whereas only 554 of the students expelled were not at risk (Texas Education Agency, 2015).

### **Statement of the Problem**

As documented in the empirical research literature (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2010; Dickinson & Miller, 2006; Hilberth, 2010; Jones, 2013; Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005; Lunenburg, 2013; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008; Witt, 2007), extensive evidence exist regarding the relationship between school disciplinary consequences and academic achievement, specifically by student ethnicity/race. Vincent, Frank, Hawk, and Tobin (2012) contended the academic performance of Black and Hispanic students is directly influenced by the exclusionary discipline consequences they receive. However, Henkel et al. (2015) argued limited evidence exists regarding student gender within ethnic/racial groupings, regarding school discipline consequences and their relationships to student academic achievement. In none of the studies that were examined for this article was the discipline consequence of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement addressed. In all of the investigations that were analyzed, only the major school consequences of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement were examined. As such, the results of this proposed empirical investigation will add to the literature concerning the extent to which an assignment to a Juvenile

Justice Alternative Education Program influences the reading and mathematics achievement of White, Black, and Hispanic boys. Findings from this study may provide useful information to educational leaders and policymakers.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the degree to which differences might be present in the reading and mathematics achievement of Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement from their counterparts who were not assigned this discipline consequence. This determination was conducted separately for Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys. Moreover, the relationship of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement with reading and mathematics achievement were ascertained separately for White, Hispanic, and Black boys. As such, the extent to which consistencies were present with respect to the effect of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement on boys reading and mathematics achievement were addressed.

### **Significance of the Study**

In this study, the degree to which assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement was related to the academic achievement (i.e., reading and mathematics) of Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys were analyzed for the 2010-2011 school year. For Grades 6, 7, and 8 White, Hispanic, and Black boys, the extent to which their reading and mathematics performance might be influenced by their assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement was determined. Given the importance of education, discipline practices that remove students from school create concerns of their civil liberties being violated. Therefore, results of this study may yield

evidence of the effects of a particular discipline consequence assignment on the reading and mathematics achievement of White, Hispanic, and Black boys. Information obtained from the inferential statistical analyses conducted herein may assist educational leaders and policymakers in reviewing the efficacy of their discipline policies.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions was addressed in this investigation: (a) What is the effect of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement on the academic achievement (i.e., reading and mathematics) of Grade 6 boys?; (b) What is the effect of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement on the academic achievement (i.e., reading and mathematics) of Grade 7 boys?; and (c) What is the effect of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement on the academic achievement (i.e., reading and mathematics) of Grade 8 boys? These three questions were examined for the 2010-2011 school year and were conducted separately for the three major ethnic/racial groups (i.e., White, Hispanic, and Black) of boys in Texas.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

In this investigation, a non-experimental, causal comparative research design was employed (Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The data that were analyzed herein constitute, previously obtained statewide archival data from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System. Because both the independent variable and the dependent variables had already occurred, extraneous variables were not controlled in this investigation. The data include reading and mathematics achievement test scores and whether or not Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys had

received a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Therefore, the independent variable of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement was comprised of two groups: boys who received such a placement and boys who did not receive this consequence. The dependent variables consisted of reading and mathematics test scores for the 2010-2011 school year.

### **Participants**

Students for whom data were analyzed were all Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas middle schools in the 2010-2011 school year. In the sample whose data were analyzed herein were boys who were assigned a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, as well as boys who did not receive this consequence. The ethnicity/race of three groups of boys was obtained: White, Hispanic, and Black, because these three ethnic/racial groups constitute the majority of the student population in Texas.

### **Instrumentation**

Specific information that was analyzed was test scores on the state-mandated assessments at that time in reading and mathematics. Only one year of available Texas statewide assessment data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency for the 2010-2011 school year. The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) is a comprehensive public school testing program that is designed to measure the ability to which a student has learned, understand, and is able to apply the concepts and skills expected of them at each tested grade level (Texas Education Agency, 2011a, para. 87). Data on middle school campuses that were private schools or charter schools were not analyzed in this investigation because they are not traditional public schools.

For this study, the following variables were of interest: Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements and reading and mathematics test scores. Traditional reliability and validity concepts are not applicable for Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements because such assignments are reported to the Texas Education Agency by each school campus. Readers are directed to the Texas Education Agency website for detailed score reliabilities and score validities on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills assessments.

### **Results**

Prior to conducting inferential statistics to determine whether a statistically significant difference was present in the TAKS Reading and Mathematics performance of boys who had been assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, checks were conducted to determine the extent to which the data were normally distributed. Of the standardized skewness coefficients (i.e., the skewness value divided by its standard error) and the standardized kurtosis coefficients (i.e., the kurtosis value divided by its standard error), all were within the limits of normality,  $\pm 3$  (Onwuegbuzie & Daniel, 2002). Accordingly, parametric independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to answer the three research questions. Independent samples *t*-tests are an appropriate inferential statistical procedure to calculate when the independent variable (i.e., received or did not receive a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement) is dichotomous and the dependent variables (i.e., TAKS Reading and Mathematics test scores) are at the interval/ratio level of measurement (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011).



### Research Question One Results for Grade 6 White Boys

The first analyses were conducted for Grade 6 White boys. For the first research question, a statistically significant difference was present in the TAKS Reading raw scores of Grade 6 White boys,  $t(23.01) = -4.22, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.46 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 White boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average score that was almost nine points lower than the average raw score of Grade 6 White boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Table 4.1 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

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Insert Table 4.1 about here

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With respect to the TAKS Mathematics raw scores, a statistically significant difference was present,  $t(23.01) = -5.34, p < .001$ . This difference represented a moderate effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.53 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 White boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was almost 12 points lower than the average raw score of Grade 6 White boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are contained in Table 4.2.

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Insert Table 4.2 about here

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**Research Question One Results for Grade 6 Hispanic Boys**

For Grade 6 Hispanic boys, a statistically significant difference was present in the their TAKS Reading raw scores,  $t(99.13) = -6.80, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.36 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was almost eight points lower than the average raw scores of Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Delineated in Table 4.1 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the TAKS Mathematics raw scores, a statistically significant difference was yielded,  $t(99.19) = -11.46, p < .001$ . This difference represented a moderate effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.51 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was more than 11 points lower than the average raw score of Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Contained in Table 4.2 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

**Research Question One Results for Grade 6 Black Boys**

In reference to Grade 6 Black boys, a statistically significant difference was present in their TAKS Reading raw scores,  $t(45.09) = -6.14, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.46 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was almost 10 points lower than the average raw score of Grade 6

Black boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 4.1.

With respect to the TAKS Mathematics raw scores, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(45.16) = -7.21, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.48 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was almost 11 points lower than the average raw score of Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Contained in Table 4.2 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Research Question Two Results for Grade 7 White Boys**

Regarding Grade 7 White boys, a statistically significant difference was present in their TAKS Reading raw scores,  $t(62.05) = -5.55, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.38 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 White boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was more than nine points lower than the average raw score of Grade 7 White boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Revealed in Table 4.3 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

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 Insert Table 4.3 about here  
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With respect to the TAKS Mathematics raw scores, a statistically significant difference was yielded,  $t(62.09) = -8.57, p < .001$ . This difference represented a moderate effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.51 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 White boys who were

assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was more than 12 points lower than the average raw score of Grade 7 White boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Presented in Table 4.4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

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Insert Table 4.4 about here

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### **Research Question Two Results for Grade 7 Hispanic Boys**

For Grade 7 Hispanic boys, a statistically significant difference was present in their TAKS Reading raw scores,  $t(223.60) = -10.74, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.38 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was almost 10 points lower than the average raw score of Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Delineated in Table 4.3 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Concerning the TAKS Mathematics raw scores, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(223.79) = -14.64, p < .001$ . This difference represented a moderate effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.47 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was almost 12 points lower than the average raw score of Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Table 4.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

**Research Question Two Results for Grade 7 Black Boys**

With regard to Grade 7 Black boys, a statistically significant difference was present in their TAKS Reading raw scores,  $t(79.32) = -8.56, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.47 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was more than 12 points lower than the average raw score of Grade 7 Black boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are contained in Table 4.3.

In reference to the TAKS Mathematics raw scores,, a statistically significant difference was yielded,  $t(79.46) = -9.01, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.46 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was more than 11 points lower than the average raw score of Grade 7 Black boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Revealed in Table 4.4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

**Research Question Three Results for Grade 8 White Boys**

Regarding Grade 8 White boys, a statistically significant difference was present in their TAKS Reading raw scores,  $t(73.08) = -4.01, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.27 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 White boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was almost five points lower than the average raw score of Grade 8 White boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 4.5.

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Insert Table 4.5 about here

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With respect to the TAKS Mathematics raw scores, a statistically significant difference was yielded,  $t(73.12) = -5.92, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.35 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 White boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was almost eight points lower than the average raw score of Grade 8 White boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Table 4.6 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

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Insert Table 4.6 about here

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### **Research Question Three Results for Grade 8 Hispanic Boys**

For Grade 8 Hispanic boys, a statistically significant difference was present in their TAKS Reading raw scores,  $t(322.24) = -11.60, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.35 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was almost nine points lower than the average raw score of Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 4.5.

Regarding the TAKS Mathematics raw scores, a statistically significant difference was yielded,  $t(323.71) = -19.89, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size

(Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.47 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was almost 12 points lower than the average raw score of Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Delineated in Table 4.6 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Research Question Three Results for Grade 8 Black Boys**

With regard to Grade 8 Black boys, a statistically significant difference was present in their TAKS Reading raw scores,  $t(95.32) = -6.48, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.37 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was more than nine points lower than the average raw score of Grade 8 Black boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are delineated in Table 4.5

In reference to the TAKS Mathematics raw scores, a statistically significant difference was yielded,  $t(95.72) = -9.87, p < .001$ . This difference represented a small effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) of 0.46 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score that was almost 11 points lower than the average raw score of Grade 8 Black boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement.

Contained in Table 4.6 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Summary of Results Across Grade Levels and Ethnic/Racial Groups**

Across the three grade levels that were analyzed and across the three ethnic/racial groups of boys, the academic achievement of boys was statistically significantly related

to whether or not they were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program. In all analyses, White, Hispanic, and Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had statistically significantly lower average TAKS Reading and Mathematics raw scores than White, Hispanic, and Black boys who were not assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. In almost all of the analyses, the TAKS Mathematics raw scores were more adversely affected than were the TAKS Reading raw scores.

### **Discussion**

Analyzed in this investigation was the extent to which differences were present in the reading and mathematics performance of Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys as a function of whether or not they were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. One year of Texas statewide TAKS Reading and Mathematics data for Grades 6, 7, and 8 White, Hispanic, and Black boys who received or did not receive a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were analyzed. Statistically significant results were yielded in all grade levels. Results will now be summarized.

#### **Summary of Results on the Grade 6 TAKS Reading and Mathematics Test Scores**

In the 2010-2011 school year, Grade 6 White boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had a statistically significantly lower average raw score on their TAKS Reading and Mathematics exams than Grade 6 White boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 6 White boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of nine points lower on their TAKS Reading exam than Grade 6 White boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Additionally, Grade 6 White



boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of 12 points lower on their TAKS Mathematics exam than Grade 6 White boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence.

In the 2010-2011 school year, Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had a statistically significantly lower average raw score on their TAKS Reading and Mathematics exams than Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of eight points lower on their TAKS Reading exam than Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Additionally, Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of 11 points lower on their TAKS Mathematics exam than Grade 6 Hispanic boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence.

In the 2010-2011 school year, Grade 6 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had a statistically significantly lower average raw score on their TAKS Reading and Mathematics exams than Grade 6 Black boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 6 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of 10 points lower on their TAKS Reading exam than Grade 6 Black boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Additionally, Grade 6 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of 11 points lower on their TAKS Mathematics exam than Grade 6 Black boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence.

**Summary of Results on the Grade 7 TAKS Reading and Mathematics Raw Scores**

In the 2010-2011 school year, Grade 7 White boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had a statistically significantly lower average raw score on their TAKS Reading and Mathematics exams than Grade 7 White boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 7 White boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of nine points lower on their TAKS Reading exam than Grade 7 White boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Additionally, Grade 7 White boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of 12 points lower on their TAKS Mathematics exam than Grade 7 White boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence.

In the 2010-2011 school year, Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had a statistically significantly lower average raw score on their TAKS Reading and Mathematics exams than Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of 10 points lower on their TAKS Reading exam than Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Additionally, Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of 12 points lower on their TAKS Mathematics exam than Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence.

In the 2010-2011 school year, Grade 7 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had a statistically significantly

lower average raw score on their TAKS Reading and Mathematics exams than Grade 7 Black boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 7 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of 12 points lower on their TAKS Reading exam than Grade 7 Black boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Additionally, Grade 7 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of 11 points lower on their TAKS Mathematics exam than Grade 7 Black boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence.

### **Summary of Results on the Grade 8 TAKS Reading and Mathematics Raw Scores**

In the 2010-2011 school year, Grade 8 White boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had a statistically significantly lower average raw score on their TAKS Reading and Mathematics exams than Grade 8 White boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 8 White boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of five points lower on their TAKS Reading exam than Grade 8 White boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Additionally, Grade 8 White boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of eight points lower on their TAKS Mathematics exam than Grade 8 White boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence.

In the 2010-2011 school year, Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had a statistically significantly lower average raw score on their TAKS Reading and Mathematics exams than Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 8 Hispanic

boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of nine points lower on their TAKS Reading exam than Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Additionally, Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of 11 points lower on their TAKS Mathematics exam than Grade 8 Hispanic boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence.

In the 2010-2011 school year, Grade 8 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had a statistically significantly lower average raw score on their TAKS Reading and Mathematics exams than Grade 8 Black boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 8 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of nine points lower on their TAKS Reading exam than Grade 8 Black boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Additionally, Grade 8 Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average raw score of 11 points lower on their TAKS Mathematics exam than Grade 8 Black boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence.

### **Connections with Existing Literature**

In this statewide investigation, the reading and mathematics achievement of boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were examined. Results were congruent with other researchers (e.g., Hilberth, 2010; Hilberth & Slate, 2012, 2014; Latimore, Peguero, Popp, Shekarkhar, & Koo, 2017) who documented that the assignment of school based discipline consequences can negatively influence the academic achievement of students. Results of this investigation were also

in agreement with Henkel, Slate, and Martinez-Garcia (2015) who established that students who are removed from school as a discipline consequences experience learning deficits compared to students who are not removed from school. Finally, findings established herein were commensurate with Hilberth (2010), Hilberth and Slate (2012, 2014) who documented in Texas that mathematics test scores were more adversely influenced by receipt of a discipline consequence than were reading test scores.

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

Based on the results of this investigation, school leaders are encouraged to analyze their school discipline data to determine if a relationship exists between their exclusionary discipline consequences and their student academic achievement. If their school discipline data reveal that certain discipline policies and practices are negatively related to student academic performance, then the revision of those discipline policies would merit consideration. A second implication for school leaders is to examine the influence of instruction on student academic performance at an alternative school setting. As a result of teachers teaching multiple grade levels and subject areas, some of which they are not certified to teach, the Texas Education Agency (2007) indicated the need for more qualified teachers in content areas at alternative school programs. A final implication would be for teachers in alternative school settings and teachers in traditional school settings to have the opportunity to collaborate and plan together to promote well-aligned academic instruction for instructing at-risk students. In a statewide study of the Tennessee state system of alternative schools, Moore and King (2005) indicated the need for common training opportunities for teachers in alternative schools and teacher in regular schools.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In this study, the relationship of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement to student reading and mathematics achievement for Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 White, Hispanic, and Black boys for the 2010-2011 school year was examined. Based upon the results of this study, several recommendations for future research can be made. First, researchers are encouraged to extend this study to other states. The extent of the generalizability of the findings of this study to other states is not known. Second, more years of data need to be analyzed to ascertain whether the results delineated herein on a single school year of data would be generalizable over time. As such, the new Texas state assessment (e.g., the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness) should be analyzed to ascertain whether inequities in achievement are similar on the new state assessment.

A third recommendation for researchers is to replicate this investigation for girls. Results obtained from repeating this study with middle school girls will reveal whether the results are similar across gender groups. Researchers are also encouraged to conduct a similar, but more extensive study using multiple years of data from the new state assessment. Finally, given that this article encompassed test data only on middle school boys, researchers are encouraged to extend this study on data for elementary school students, as well as high school students. Results derived from extending this study to students enrolled in elementary and in high schools will reveal whether academic results are similar across grade levels.

### **Conclusion**

In this statewide analysis, the extent to which inequities were present in the, reading and mathematics achievement of Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys as a function of whether or not they had received a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement was ascertained. Texas statewide data on all Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys for the 2010-2011 school year were analyzed. Inferential statistical analyses yielded statistically significant differences in reading and mathematics performance of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys as a function of whether or not they had received a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. At all three grade levels, White, Hispanic, and Black boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had lower average reading and mathematics tests scores than their peers who were not assigned this discipline consequence.

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Table 4.1

*Descriptive Statistics for the TAKS Reading Test Scores by Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Placement of Grade 6 White, Hispanic, and Black Boys*

Ethnicity/Race	Received Assignment		Did Not Receive Assignment	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
White	26.67	10.32	35.57	6.60
Hispanic	25.04	10.41	32.12	8.06
Black	22.13	10.84	31.96	7.86

Table 4.2

*Descriptive Statistics for the TAKS Mathematics Test Scores by Juvenile Justice*

*Alternative Education Program Placement of Grade 6 White, Hispanic, and Black Boys*

Ethnicity/Race	Received Assignment		Did Not Receive Assignment	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
White	25.42	10.62	37.11	8.08
Hispanic	22.47	9.73	33.64	9.09
Black	20.57	9.99	31.20	9.46

Table 4.3

*Descriptive Statistics for the TAKS Reading Test Scores by Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Placement of Grade 7 White, Hispanic, and Black Boys*

Ethnicity/Race	Received Assignment		Did Not Receive Assignment	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
White	30.43	13.19	39.66	8.34
Hispanic	25.31	13.49	35.01	9.93
Black	22.10	12.56	34.13	9.73



Table 4.4

*Descriptive Statistics for the TAKS Mathematics Test Scores by Juvenile Justice*

*Alternative Education Program Placement of Grade 7 White, Hispanic, and Black Boys*

Ethnicity/Race	Received Assignment		Did Not Receive Assignment	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
White	24.08	11.36	36.35	9.25
Hispanic	20.55	11.94	32.24	10.06
Black	18.13	10.98	29.21	10.21

Table 4.5

*Descriptive Statistics for the TAKS Reading Test Scores by Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Placement of Grade 8 White, Hispanic, and Black Boys*

Ethnicity/Race	Received Assignment		Did Not Receive Assignment	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
White	37.45	10.65	42.41	6.89
Hispanic	29.61	13.76	38.52	9.92
Black	29.20	13.92	38.41	8.82

Table 4.6

*Descriptive Statistics for the TAKS Mathematics Test Scores by Juvenile Justice*

*Alternative Education Program Placement of Grade 8 White, Hispanic, and Black Boys*

Ethnicity/Race	Received Assignment		Did Not Receive Assignment	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
White	30.46	11.04	38.06	9.12
Hispanic	22.00	10.23	33.36	10.89
Black	20.46	10.46	31.01	10.03

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this proposed journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which differences were present in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements by student demographic characteristics for Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas middle schools. In the first investigation, the degree to which Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements differed by the economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Extremely Poor) of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys was examined. In the second investigation, the degree to which Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements differed by the ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Hispanic, and Black) of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys was determined. Finally, in the third study, the extent to which Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements were related to the reading and mathematics achievement of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys was addressed.

In the first two articles, four years of Texas statewide data was analyzed, whereas in the last article, only one school year of data were present. As such, this multiyear analysis permitted a determination of trends in the differential assignment of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements to Grade 6, 7, and 8 Texas boys by their demographic characteristics. In the first investigation, the degree to which Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements was assigned inequitably to Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys on the basis of their economic status (i.e., Poor, Not Poor) was examined. In the second study, the degree to which differences were present in the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement by student ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Black, and Hispanic) was addressed. In the third and final

investigation, the degree to which differences were present in the reading and mathematics achievement of Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement was determined. With the exception of the third study in which only one year of data were analyzed, the first two empirical studies included four years of statewide public school data. Herein this chapter, the results of each of the three articles will be discussed and summarized. Implications for policy and practice are provided, and recommendations for future research are discussed.

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

In this first study, statistically significant differences were revealed in the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement as a function of student economic status (i.e., Poor, Not Poor). In all analyses, Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys who were Poor were assigned statistically significantly more often to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement than Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys who were Not Poor. Although the effect sizes were small, readers should note that hundreds of Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas public schools were affected by this consequence.

For Grade 6 boys in all four school years, Grade 6 boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement statistically significantly more often than Grade 6 boys who were Not Poor. Across each of the grade levels, in every school year, Grade 6 boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two to five times more than for Grade 6 boys who were Not Poor. Grade 6 Black boys comprised the smallest group of all ethnics/racial groups enrolled but had the highest rate of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement.

Concerning Grade 7 boys in all four school years, Grade 7 boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement statistically significantly more often than Grade 7 boys who were Not Poor. In each grade level, in every school year, Grade 7 boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two to seven times more than for Grade 7 boys who were Not Poor. Grade 7 Hispanic boys who were the largest group of the three ethnic/racial groups of boys and had the highest rate of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements.

With respect to Grade 8 boys in all four school years, Grade 8 boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement statistically significantly more often than Grade 8 boys who were Not Poor. Across each of the grade levels, in every school year, Grade 8 boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two to three times more than for Grade 8 boys who were Not Poor. Grade 8 Hispanic boys, the largest ethnic/racial group in terms of student enrollment, had the highest rate of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. In contrast, one school year analyzed revealed statistically significantly higher rates of assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement for Grade 8 White boys who were Not Poor than Grade 8 White boys who were Poor. Grade 8 White boys who were Not Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement almost two times more than for Grade 8 White boys who were Poor.

## **Summary of Study Two Results**

Analyzed in this second study was the degree to which differences were present in the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement as a function of the ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Black, Hispanic) of Texas middle school boys. Four years of Texas statewide data on middle school boys were obtained from the Texas Education Agency. Inferential statistical analyses yielded statistically significant differences in the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement for Grades 6, 7, and 8 White, Black, and Hispanic boys.

Concerning Grade 6 White, Black, and Hispanic boys in all four school years, Grade 6 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement statistically significantly more often than Grade 6 White and Hispanic boys. In every school year, Grade 6 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two to three times more than for Grade 6 White boys. Additionally, Grade 6 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than for Grade 6 White boys. Statistically significant differences were also present in the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement for Grade 6 Hispanic boys compared to Grade 6 White boys. Grade 6 Hispanic boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than for Grade 6 White boys. Grade 6 Black boys who were the smallest group of the three ethnic/racial groups in this investigation had the highest rate of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements for all Grade 6 boys who received this consequence.

With respect to Grade 7 White, Black, and Hispanic boys in all four school years, Grade 7 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement statistically significantly more often than Grade 6 White and Hispanic boys. Across each grade level, in all four school years, Grade 7 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement three times more than for Grade 7 White boys. Moreover, Grade 7 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than for Grade 7 White boys. In regard to Grade 7 Hispanic boys, statistically significant differences were present in the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement for Grade 7 Hispanic boys compared to Grade 7 White boys. Grade 7 Hispanic boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than for Grade 7 White boys. Grade 7 Black boys who were the smallest group of the three ethnic/racial groups herein had the highest rate of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement for all Grade 7 boys who received this consequence.

Concerning Grade 8 White, Black, and Hispanic boys in all four school years, Grade 8 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement statistically significantly more often than Grade 8 White and Hispanic boys. In all four school years, Grade 8 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two to four times more than for Grade 8 White boys. Furthermore, Grade 8 Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two times more than for Grade 8 Hispanic boys. With respect to Grade 8 Hispanic boys, statistically significant differences were present in the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement for Grade 8



Hispanic boys compared to Grade 8 White boys. Grade 8 Hispanic boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement two to three times more than for Grade 8 White boys. Grade 8 Black boys who were the smallest group of the three ethnic/racial groups in this study had the highest rate of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements for all Grade 8 boys who received this consequence.

### **Summary of Study Three Results**

Examined in this third study was the extent to which assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement influenced the reading and mathematics achievement of Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys. In this statewide study, inferential statistical analyses yielded statistically significant differences in the reading and mathematics test performance of middle school boys. Although the effect sizes were small, readers should note that Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements constituted the most punitive and extensive exclusionary consequence assigned to Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys in Texas public schools whose state test scores were affected by this consequence.

With respect to Grade 6 boys in the 2010-2011 school year, boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had statistically significantly lower average reading raw scores than did Grade 6 boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 6 boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average reading raw score that was eight to 10 points lower than Grade 6 boys who were not assigned this consequence. Similarly, for Grade 6 boys, boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had statistically significantly lower average mathematics

raw scores than did Grade 6 boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 6 boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average mathematics raw score that was 11 to 12 points lower than Grade 6 boys who were not assigned this consequence.

Regarding Grade 7 boys, boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had statistically significantly lower average reading raw scores than did Grade 7 boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 7 boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average reading raw score that was nine to 12 points lower than Grade 7 boys who were not assigned this consequence. Similarly, for Grade 7 boys, boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had statistically significantly lower average mathematics raw scores than did Grade 7 boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 7 boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average mathematics raw score that was 11 to 12 points lower than Grade 7 boys who were not assigned this consequence.

With respect to Grade 8 boys, boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had statistically significantly lower average reading raw scores than did Grade 8 boys who were not assigned this consequence. Grade 8 boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average reading raw score that was five to nine points lower than Grade 8 boys who were not assigned this consequence. Similarly, Grade 8 boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had statistically

significantly lower average mathematics raw scores than did Grade 8 boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Grade 8 boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had an average mathematics raw score that was eight to 11 points lower than Grade 8 boys who were not assigned this consequence

In all three grade levels analyzed, the average reading test scores of boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were statistically significantly lower than the average reading test scores of boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence. Similarly, in all three grade levels analyzed, the average mathematics test scores of boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were statistically significantly lower than the average mathematics test scores of boys who were not assigned this discipline consequence.

### **Connections with the Existing Literature**

The results of this study were congruent with previous researchers (Fenning & Rose, 2007; Gregory et al., 2010; Hilberth, 2010; Hilberth & Slate, 2012, 2014; Jones et al., 2014, 2015; Lopez & Slate, 2016; Skiba et al., 2011) who established that the economic status of boys was a statistically significant factor in inequitable exclusionary discipline assignments. Revealed in the first study was the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement by student poverty. Previous researchers (e.g., Jordan & Anil, 2009) documented that being poor was the most statistically significant indicator of exclusionary discipline practices. Boys who were poor, regardless of their race/ethnicity, had the highest percentage of

assignments to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Results from this study are consistent with Jordan and Anil (2009) who indicated students who were from economically disadvantaged backgrounds were five times more represented in the categories where one or more discipline referrals were generated compared to their peers who were not economically disadvantaged.

With respect to ethnicity/race, statistically significant differences were present in the percentage of boys assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. These results were congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Eckford & Slate, 2016; Khan & Slate, 2016; Lunenburg, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016) who established that the ethnicity/race of boys was a statistically significant factor in the disproportionate assignment of school discipline consequences. In all four school years and at all three grade levels, Black boys received statistically significantly more assignments to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement than Hispanic and White boys. Similarly, in all four school years and at all three grade levels, Hispanic boys received statistically significantly more Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements than White boys. These results were commensurate with the results of researchers (Gregory et al., 2010; Hilberth & Slate, 2012, 2014) who established the presence of clear inequities in exclusionary discipline assignments among ethnic/racial groups.

With respect to the academic performance of boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, findings herein were congruent with the results of previous researchers (Gregory et al., 2010; Henkel et al., 2015; Hilberth, 2010; Hilberth & Slate, 2012, 2014; Jones, 2013; Jones et al., 2014, 2015;

Skiba et al., 2011). As documented by other researchers (Kozol, 2005; Kupchik, 2010; Lunenburg, 2013; Noguera, 2003; Rios, 2011), the negative effects of the assignment of exclusionary school discipline consequences continue to marginalize the very students who struggle academically and it continues to contribute to the achievement gap (Gregory et al., 2010; Krezmien et al., 2006). Furthermore, these results were congruent with other researchers (e.g., Latimore, Peguero, Popp, Shekarkhar, & Koo, 2017) who documented that the assignment of school based discipline consequences can negatively influence the academic achievement of students. Results were also in agreement with Henkel et al. (2015) who established that students who are removed from school as a discipline consequences experience learning deficits compared to students who are not removed from school.

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

In all three studies of this journal-ready dissertation, statistically significant inequities were present in the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement for Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys by their economic status and ethnicity/race. Moreover, their reading and mathematics achievement were both adversely affected by placement into this discipline consequence. Accordingly, several implications for policy and for practice can be made. First, school leaders are encouraged to analyze their school discipline data to determine if inequities are present in their discipline assignments. If their data reveal inequities in their discipline assignments, then school leaders are encouraged to analyze their school discipline policies. If their school discipline policies reveal that certain policies are disproportionately more exclusionary toward certain student groups, then the revision of those policies would merit

consideration. Second, campus administrators should investigate and adopt school based discipline programs that are culturally unbiased and less exclusionary, offering discipline alternatives that may help alleviate the inequitable discipline practices of marginalized students, and rather promote a change in their behavior. Programs that encourage mentorship and that cultivate relationship building with students who exhibit behavior problems are needed.

Third, school district leaders should consider incorporating vertical discipline management trainings for all campus level administrators. The importance of all campus level administrators being consistent in their assignment of discipline consequences is necessary to ensure consistent and equitable discipline assignments across all grade levels, regardless of student economic status, ethnicity/race, or academic performance. This training may help alleviate campus administrators making subjective judgments when assigning discipline consequences for common student infractions. In turn, administrators will be able to follow a consistent established discipline management plan that helps decrease disproportionate exclusionary discipline consequences with certain student groups.

Fourth, considering the estimated increase of students of color in public schools nationwide by 2024 (U.S. Department of Education, 2007), school leaders are encouraged to diversify their workforce of teachers and administrators, and to provide cultural awareness and diversity training opportunities to equip teachers to serve the academic, social, and behavioral needs of challenging students from all cultures. Finally, the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had a negative influence on student reading and mathematics achievement. For this reason,

school leaders are encouraged to examine the relationship between their own exclusionary discipline policies and the influence of those policies on student academic performance. From their analysis, school discipline policies that are more corrective in nature rather than punitive and exclusionary may need to be implemented.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based upon the results of the three articles in this journal-ready dissertation, several recommendations for future research can be made. Considering the student demographic characteristics (e.g. economic status, ethnicity/race, and academic achievement) analyzed in this journal-ready dissertation for Grades 6, 7, and 8 boys, the first recommendation for researchers is to replicate these examinations for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls. Results obtained from repeating this study with middle school girls could reveal whether results are similar for girls. A second recommendation would be for researchers to extend this study to other states. The extent to which assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement analyzed herein are generalizable to boys in other states is not known.

A third recommendation is for researchers to extend this study to boys enrolled in elementary schools who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Results derived from extending this study to boys enrolled in elementary schools might reveal whether differences are similar across grade levels. Equally, researchers are recommended to extend this study boys enrolled in high schools who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Results derived from extending this study to boys enrolled in high schools could reveal whether differences are similar across grade levels.

A fourth recommendation would be for researchers to examine Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement as a function of student status (e.g., at-risk, special education, and English Language Learners). Results garnered from such studies would add to the existing literature of the influences of exclusionary practices on students who receive school support services. A fifth recommendation would be for researchers to examine more years of data to ascertain whether the results delineated herein on a single school year of data would be generalizable over time. As such, the new Texas state assessment (e.g., the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness) should be analyzed to ascertain whether inequities in achievement are similar on the new state assessment. Results delineated from such an investigation might reveal whether differences are similar in the results of the two state assessment exams for students who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement.

As a final recommendation, researchers are encouraged to examine the graduation rate of high school boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Reasons why high school boys who were assigned Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement, that did not complete their placement or return to a traditional school setting, may warrant researchers to conduct a qualitative study. Answers to these questions could inform and influence dropout prevention methods and strategies at the campus, district, and state level.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements differed by student demographic characteristics (i.e., economic status, ethnicity/race) for Texas middle



school boys and whether the academic performance of boys who received this consequence was influenced. Statewide data were analyzed on all middle school boys in Grades 6, 7, and 8 who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. Inferential statistical procedures revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in all three studies. For each study and across four school years, statistically significant differences in the assignment to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were revealed. Boys who were Poor were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement at statistically significant higher rates than boys who were Not Poor. Furthermore, Black boys were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement at statistically significant higher rates than White and Hispanic boys. Lastly, boys who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement had statistically significantly lower average reading and mathematics test scores than boys who were not assigned to this consequence.

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## APPENDIX



**Institutional Review Board**  
**Office of Research and Sponsored Programs**  
 903 Bowers Blvd, Huntsville, TX 77341-2448  
 Phone: 936.294.4875  
 Fax: 936.294.3622  
[irb@shsu.edu](mailto:irb@shsu.edu)  
[www.shsu.edu/~rgs\\_www/irb/](http://www.shsu.edu/~rgs_www/irb/)

DATE: August 31, 2017

TO: Christopher Eckford [Faculty Sponsor: Dr. John Slate]

FROM: Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: *Inequities in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Receipt by Economic Status, Ethnicity/Race, and Academic Achievement for Texas Middle School Boys: A Multiyear, Statewide Study [T/D]*

PROTOCOL #: 2017-08-30243

SUBMISSION TYPE: INITIAL REVIEW

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: August 31, 2017

REVIEW CATEGORY: Category 4—research involving existing, publicly available data usually has little, if any, associated risk, particularly if subject identifiers are removed from the data or specimens.

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.

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,

Donna Desforgas  
 IRB Chair, PHSC

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Sam Houston State University IRB's records

## VITA

**Christopher A. Eckford**

### ***Educational History***

Doctorate of Education – Educational Leadership, December 2017

*Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX*

Dissertation: Inequities in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Assignments by the Economic Status and Ethnicity/Race of Texas Middle School Boys and Their Effects on Academic Achievement: A Multiyear, Statewide Investigation

Master of Arts in Organizational Management, March 2003

*University of Phoenix-Houston Campus, Houston, TX*

Bachelor of Arts – Communications, May, 1999

*Texas Southern University, Houston, TX*

### ***Professional Experience***

Education –

Teacher, Galena Park Independent School District – Houston, 2004-2008

Assistant Principal, Galena Park Independent School District – Houston, 2008-present

### ***Recognitions***

North Shore Middle School's Rookie Teacher of the Year 2004

### ***Scholarly Research Activity***

Eckford, C. E., & Slate, J. R. (2016). Differences in disciplinary consequence for Texas middle school boys as a function of ethnicity/race and economic status. *Global Journal of Human Social Science*, 16(8). Retrieved from <http://socialscienceresearch.org/index.php/GJHSS/article/view/1919>

### ***Presentations***

Eckford, C., & Slate, J. R. (2017, January). *Differences in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education placements as a function of race/ethnicity and economic status for Texas middle school boys*. Poster presented at the Conference on Academic Research in Education, Las Vegas, NV.