

DIFFERENCES IN DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENTS BY  
ETHNICITY/RACE AND ECONOMIC STATUS FOR TEXAS GRADE 6, 7, AND 8  
GIRLS: A STATEWIDE ANALYSIS

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Doctor of Education

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by

Crystal L. Coleman

December, 2017

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## **DEDICATION**

My Mother, Marva Robinson, has always been my biggest supporter. She has consistently encouraged me to pursue the highest level of education. She believed education was the key to success. Through her mothering, I came to believe “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” as quoted by Nelson Mandela. Although her educational opportunities were limited, her resilience, wisdom, knowledge and understanding urged me to earn an education that no one can take away.

My Father, Fred Young, has taught me the power of hard work and resilience through his life’s work as a military service man, community service, and civil rights activist. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy where he served as the only Black Gun Mount Captain with the Amphibious Assault Team. In 1967 he was awarded the National Defense Medal, in 1968 he was awarded the Medal of Good Conduct and the National Expedition Award, and in 1987 he was awarded the Alexander Graham Bell Award. From 1981-1986 he served as Park and Recreation Soccer Coach and he was appointed Park and Recreation Commissioner in 1986.

In 1988, he was appointed as Alderman of the 4th Ward, in 1990 he was awarded the NAACP Community Service Award, in 1991 he was awarded the Federated Unity Community Service Award, in 1992 he was awarded the Elijah P. Lovejoy Human Rights Award, in 2003 he was awarded the Madison County Urban League Merit Award, and in 2006 he was awarded the Coalition of Concerned Citizens Award and Man of the Year by the 100 Black Men of Alton, Illinois. Later, he retired from Ameritech Telecommunications in 1993 and as Madison County Bailiff in 2006. I stand on the

shoulders of my parents and their accomplishments and I am thankful for their dedication, support, and love throughout my journey to write this body of work and earn my doctoral degree.

## **ABSTRACT**

Coleman, Crystal L., *Differences in discipline consequence assignments by ethnicity/race and economic status for Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls: A statewide analysis*. Doctor of Education (Educational Leadership), December 2017, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to examine the extent to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments by the ethnicity/race and economic status for Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls in Texas. In the first investigation, the degree to which discipline consequence assignments differed by the ethnicity/race of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls was addressed. In the second study, the extent to which discipline consequence assignments differed for Black girls by their economic status was investigated. Finally, in the third investigation, the degree to which discipline consequence assignments were different for Hispanic girls by their economic status was determined. The two discipline consequences of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension were analyzed for four school years and separately for each grade level in each of the three investigations. As such, this multiyear analysis permitted a determination of trends, if present, in the differential assignment of discipline consequences.

### **Method**

In this multiyear investigation, a non-experimental, causal comparative research design was used. Archival data analyzed in this investigation were previously obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. The degree to

which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments by student demographic characteristics (i.e., ethnicity/race and economic status) of girls in Texas middle schools was determined.

### **Findings**

For all four school years, statistically significant differences were present in the assignment of both in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by the ethnicity/race and economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls in Texas. Black girls received the highest rates of these two discipline consequences, followed by Hispanic girls. With respect to economic status, Black and Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor had the highest rates of these two discipline consequences, followed by Black and Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor. In this multiyear investigation, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was clearly present in the assignment of discipline consequences by the ethnicity/race and the economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls in Texas. Results were congruent with the extant literature.

**KEY WORDS:** Student Ethnicity/Race, White, Hispanic, Black, Girls, Economic Status, Not Poor, Moderately Poor, Extremely Poor

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To my children, I am so thankful for my daughter Paris and my son Kennedy inspiring me to complete the doctoral program when I lost my motivation and hardship came into our lives. Kennedy, you inspired me to persevere through difficult situations to reach my goal of obtaining my doctoral degree. Paris, you motivated me to exude resilience and complete my doctorate and become the woman and mother I always strived to be. My love for both of my children is unconditional and I pray that we will continue to press forward and accomplish all of our goals as a family. Kennedy and Paris, I am appreciative of your understanding and endurance through all of the late nights and all of the sacrifices you have patiently withstood. I am proud and blessed to be your mother and I hope you are proud to call me mom.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my Cohort 32 family for strengthening me to run my own race to finish the doctoral program. I am finally here and I am so overjoyed about accomplishing my dream. To all of my professors, I am so profoundly grateful for your dedication to my professional and personal growth. Because of their undying support, I have reached this level of success. I appreciate Dr. George W. Moore and Dr. Cynthia Martinez-Garcia for serving on my dissertation committee and for all of the time they set aside for editing, revising, and providing feedback on my dissertation. I

consider it a great honor and privilege to have Dr. John R. Slate as my dissertation chair. I hold Dr. Slate in high regard and appreciate his high expectations, unfaltering encouragement, and kind prompting to keep me on course to complete my dissertation and ultimately graduation. Words cannot express how much I truly appreciate him.



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## **CHAPTER I**

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

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016a), a higher percentage of Black students have been suspended or expelled than any other major ethnic/racial group. Hispanic students have also been suspended or expelled more than White students. Regarding the data on suspension and expulsion, 36% of Black students, 21% of Hispanic students, and 14% of White students have been suspended or expelled from school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016a).

Student ethnicity/race has been documented to be connected with disparities in school discipline for over 30 years (Skiba & Knesting, 2001; Skiba, Micheal, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997; Skiba et al., 2011; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982). Former U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, emphasized the importance for educators and policymakers to rethink discipline policies and procedures in his statement, “Racial discrimination in school discipline is a real problem today, we must address inequities in discipline and change the reality that our children face everyday” (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, 2014, para 8). Gibson, Wilson, Haight, Kayama, and Marshall (2014) revealed the presence of racial/ethnic inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences. Black students were stereotyped as disciplinary problems and were assigned harsher punishments (e.g., out-of school suspension) than White students as a result of racial/ethnic bias among school staff.

Inequitable practices in schools, such as segregation and disparate discipline practices, negatively influence achievement gaps (Reardon, 2013). Decreasing the



disproportionality of discipline consequence assignments is paramount to provide an equal opportunity for each student's academic success. Inequitable discipline practices not only increase the disproportionality of discipline consequence assignments, but also increase the likelihood of Hispanic and Black students becoming dropouts and increase the funneling of Black students into the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Boneshefski & Runge, 2014).

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

Student ethnicity/race has been documented to be connected with disparities in school discipline for over 30 years (Skiba & Knesting, 2001; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams 1997; Skiba, Micheal, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Skiba et al., 2011; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982). Former U.S Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, emphasized the importance for educators and policymakers to rethink discipline policies and procedures in his statement, "Racial discrimination in school discipline is a real problem today, we must address inequities in discipline and change the reality that our children face everyday" (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, 2014, para 8). Gibson, Wilson, Haight, Kayama, and Marshall (2014) established the presence of racial/ethnic inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences. Black students were stereotyped as disciplinary problems and were assigned harsher punishments (e.g., out-of school suspension) than White students as a result of racial/ethnic bias among school staff.

In response to the Reagan Administration's call to action and the Guns Free School Act of 1994, a zero tolerance movement was implemented in schools across the nation (Wu, 2016). Zero tolerance policies require school administrators to suspend

and/or expel students for both major infractions such as harassment, fighting, or assault and minor infractions such as defiance, truancy, and disrespectful language (Mallet, 2016). Therefore, as a safety measure, prison-like disciplinary practices are enforced in impoverished schools where students of color students attend. Unfortunately, millions of students become mired in this punitive system. The school exclusionary practices established through this system combined with the criminalization of youth is referred to as the School-to-Prison Pipeline (Wilson, 2014).

Discipline inequities among the major ethnic/racial groups are extensively documented in the extant literature (Anfinson, Autumn, Lehr, Riestenberg, & Scullinn, 2010; Skiba et al., 2011; United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016). For more than 40 years. Black and Hispanic students have been assigned a disproportionate amount of disciplinary consequences in comparison to their White peers (Khan & Slate, 2016). Concerning only girls, Black girls have garnered limited attention in school discipline research in comparison to Black boys. Documentation on discipline consequences of Black girls has been used primarily to highlight discipline disparities for Black boys instead of highlighting the ways in which inequitable discipline sanctions might also negatively influence the school experiences of Black girls. More information is needed on the discipline experiences of Black girls to understand how disparities in discipline consequences influence academic achievement and social behavior of Black girls and boys (Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Darensbourg, 2011).

With respect to girls, Blake et al. (2011) determined that Black girls have been stereotyped as exhibiting un-lady like behaviors that do not conform to conventional standards of femininity in which girls are expected to be obedient, timid, and benevolent.

These oppressive characteristics of femininity have been established as the standard for female behavior established by White middle class women. Although racial/ethnic disparities in school discipline have been consistently reported for almost four decades, no consistent causal and confounding factors have been identified to explain the racial/ethnic gap in school discipline (Anyon et al., 2014; Skiba et al., 2002; Wright et al., 2014)

In a very recent investigation conducted in Texas, Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016) documented inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences for Grade 4-11 girls. Disproportionality was evident in the assignment of the three major disciplinary consequences by ethnicity/race. A sharp increase was observed in their study with respect to the discipline consequence assignments for girls in high school. Regarding Grade 9, more than 60,000 in-school suspensions were assigned to girls. Black girls were assigned an in-school suspension almost twice as often (27.1%) as Hispanic girls (14.2%) and almost eight times more often than White girls (2.9%). With respect to Grade 10 girls, in-school suspension assignments decreased to 34,000. Concerning in-school suspensions assigned to Grade 10 girls, Black girls again received the highest percentage, 22.4%, followed by Hispanic girls, 8.4%, and White girls, 2.0% (Slate et al., 2016). Grade 11 girls also experienced a decrease in discipline consequence assignments. Although fewer than 20,000 in-school suspensions were assigned to Grade 11 girls, Black girls consistently received higher percentages of in-school suspensions. Of these in-school suspensions in Grade 11, Black girls were assigned 22.1%, Hispanic girls were assigned 6.8%, and White girls were assigned 2.4% of this discipline consequence (Slate et al., 2016).

Of note was the fact that Black girls were assigned greater percentages of out-of-school suspension than White or Hispanic girls across all grade levels examined in their study (Slate et al., 2016). Grade 4 Black girls were assigned four times as many out-of-school suspensions as White girls; whereas in their investigation, Grade 4 Hispanic girls were not assigned any out-of-school suspensions. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned more than three times as many out-of-school suspensions as White girls and almost twice as many out-of-school suspensions as Hispanic girls. Regarding Grade 6, a substantial increase was documented in disciplinary consequences with 2,050 Black girls and 2,181 Hispanic girls being assigned the discipline consequence of out-of-school suspension in comparison to only 23 White girls. The numbers of Black and Hispanic girls who received an out-of-school suspension was excessively high in comparison to White girls. Grade 7 Black girls continued to receive the highest percentage (25.5%) of out-of-school suspensions, followed by Hispanic girls (17.3%). Of note here is that White girls (0.4%) were assigned almost six times fewer out-of-school suspensions than either Hispanic or Black girls (Slate et al., 2016). Although discipline consequences increased for Grade 7 Black and Hispanic girls, the numbers were comparable to the discipline consequences assigned to Grade 8 Black and Hispanic girls. Black girls received over 20%, Hispanic girls received over 15%, and White girls received less than 3% of the out-of school suspensions, even though Black girls comprised the lowest percentage of the student enrollment.

Discriminatory and exclusionary discipline practices have lead to an increase in the loss of instructional time for Black girls in comparison to White and Hispanic girls (Hilberth & Slate, 2014). With a focus on the education of White girls, “The educational

needs of Black girls have fallen through the cracks” (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010, p. 12). Black girls are often labeled as the “angry Black woman” (p. 12) who embraces loud, aggressive, and masculine personas. In school, Black girls embody these characteristics to avoid marginalization in the classroom (Evan-Winters & Esposito, 2010).

In the 2011-2012 school year 90% of all girls expelled from New York City public schools were Black (Crenshaw, Ocen, and Nanda, 2015). In fact, national statistics further substantiate evidence that Black girls receive more discipline sanctions than White and Hispanic girls. Crenshaw et al. (2015) revealed that “the suspension and expulsion rates for Black girls far outpace the rates for other girls- and in some places, they outpace the rates of most boys” (p. 14)

Regarding girls, egregious racial/ethnic discipline gaps continue to be reinforced in news headlines and online videos (Ford, 2016). In South Carolina, a campus resource officer violently removed a Black girl from her desk for refusing to leave the classroom and remove her cell phone from the classroom. In Texas, another campus resource officer body-slammed a 12-year old Latina girl after an argument ensued with another student (Ford, 2016). Pervasive racial/ethnic disparities in disciplinary policies in schools in the United States continue to persist and negatively influence the lives of Black youth, specifically girls.

Disproportionate discipline consequences have emerged as an extensive issue for Black girls from elementary through high school (Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Darensbourg, 2011; Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Black girls are more likely to be suspended from school in comparison to their White and Hispanic counterparts. Furthermore, Black girls are

almost four times as likely to receive in-school suspension and twice as likely to receive out-of-school suspension as compared to their White and Hispanic female peers (Blake et al., 2011). It is conceivable that Black girls receive more exclusionary discipline consequences because they are considered to be more disruptive in the classroom than White and Hispanic girls.

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

Disparities in the assignment of discipline consequences given to Black students have increased since 1970 (Skiba et al., 2011). In addition, student economic status has become an important predictor in the assignment of school suspension as a behavior consequence. Overrepresentation of students in poverty receiving school suspension as a behavior consequence has been consistently documented (Skiba & Knesting, 2001). Disciplinary consequences have been unfairly assigned to students in poverty as they have been assigned harsher consequences for the same offenses committed by their counterparts who are not in poverty. Researchers (e.g., Gibson, Wilson, Haight, Kayama, and Marshall, 2014; Skiba et al., 2011) have documented poverty, racial stereotyping, and cultural incompetence as possible causation mechanisms to explain discrepancies in suspension rates among Black, White, and Hispanic students.

The educational experience of Black girls has been influenced by race and gender bias in the arbitrary discipline decisions made by administrators. “The existing research, data, and public policy debates often fail to address the degree to which girls face risks that are both similar to and different from those faced by boys” (Crenshaw, 2015, p. 11). The school experiences of Black girls are largely “marginalized, misnamed, maligned,

and made invisible in the academy” (Benjamin, 1997, p. 2). As evidence of these assertions, Black girls are suspended six times more than White girls and in some instances more than boys (George, 2015; Slate, Gray, & Jones, 2016). These suspensions are often for minor offenses, such as defiance or wearing a natural hairstyle, further perpetuating Black girls as confrontational and unacceptable. Bias in disciplinary practices such as suspension or expulsion have become known as “school pushout” (George, 2015, p. 104) and the “school to prison pipeline” (George, 2015, p. 104) maneuvering Black girls into the juvenile justice system faster than any other population (George, 2015; Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002), thus, compromising their potential success. School pushout alludes to:

[N]umerous and systemic factors that prevent or discourage young people from remaining on track to complete their education and has severe and lasting consequences....These factors include...over-reliance on zero-tolerance practices and punitive measures such as suspensions and expulsions, over-reliance on law enforcement tactics and ceding of disciplinary authority to law enforcement personnel, and a history of systemic racism and inequality. (George, 2015, p. 104)

In 2009-2010, Black girls represented 31% of all girls referred to law enforcement and 43% of girls involved in school related arrests, although they comprised less than 17% of the female student population.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2014), 19% of Black girls with disabilities and 12% of Black girls in schools across the country have been assigned out-of-school suspension in comparison to 4% of Hispanic and 2% of White girls (Wun, 2016). As reported in national statistics, Black girls are assigned more disciplinary

consequences than their White and Hispanic counterparts. Black girls are more likely to be suspended than are White girls (Khan & Slate, 2015; Slate et al., 2016).

Economic status is associated with suspension rates. Black students from low socioeconomic backgrounds with less educated parents receive more punitive discipline consequences than White students (Mizel & Ewing, 2016; Skiba et al., 2002; Wu et al., 1982). The National Association of Secondary Schools (2002) documented ethnic/racial inequity in school discipline as a primary result of economic disadvantage. With this in mind, Black students are competing with the stressors of poverty and may not be exposed to appropriate school behavior (Skiba et al., 2011). The U.S. Department of Education (2014) reported that Black and Hispanic students from low-income households are at a greater risk of being influenced by zero-tolerance policies. Black students were almost four times as likely to receive an office discipline referral in middle school (Tiger & Slate, 2015).

Disproportionate discipline consequences have emerged as an extensive issue for Black girls from elementary through high school (Blake et al., 2011; Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Black girls are more likely to be suspended from school in comparison to their White and Hispanic counterparts. Furthermore, Black girls are almost four times as likely to receive in-school suspension and twice as likely to receive out-of-school suspension as compared to their White and Hispanic female peers (Blake et al., 2011). It is conceivable that Black girls receive more exclusionary discipline consequences because they are considered to be more disruptive in the classroom than White and Hispanic girls.



With respect to the state of interest in this investigation, in the 2013-2014 school year, 78, 570 discipline consequences were assigned to Texas elementary school students in Grade 6. Of those documented discipline consequences, more than 71, 000 were assigned to students who were in poverty and only 7,000 were assigned to students who were not in poverty. These statistics further substantiate that discipline disparities exist in discipline consequence assignments in Texas elementary schools (Texas Education Agency, 2014a, 2014b).

The educational experiences of Black students are affected by poverty, inexperienced teachers, culturally unresponsive teachers, lack of parental participation, school funding shortages, and insufficient community resources. Black students in urban school districts confront these obstacles that can potentially have negative effects on their academic success. The challenges encountered by Black students in urban school districts increase their likelihood of academic failure (Gardner & Miranda, 2001).

“Children growing up in poverty have a higher likelihood of exposure to multiple forms of adversity that jeopardize their chances of academic success” (Friedman-Krauss & Raver, 2015, p. 1). Children with higher levels of poverty experience lower academic, psychological, and intellectual success. In addition, children in poverty are more likely to attend lower performing schools with limited access to academic enriching resources and experience interruptions in their homes (Tiger & Slate, 2017).

In 2016, The National Assessment of Educational Progress reported, “Large and persistent poverty-based disparities continue to characterize the nation’s academic achievement” (p. 10). In addition, The National Assessment of Educational Progress has noted that the percentage of students who were enrolled in the free and reduced lunch

program increased from 39.7% in 2003 to 51.5% in 2015, denoting a four point increase in the existing gap in proficiency between low income and high income students.

According to the United States Census Bureau (2010), 22% of all children in the United States were living under the federal poverty line. Hence, as the poverty population continues to grow in the United States, the poverty-based disproportion in academic achievement also continues to expand.

Recently, Khan and Slate (2016) documented disparate discipline consequences based on the economic status of Grade 6 Black, White, and Hispanic students in Texas. Black students were assigned in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions statistically significantly more often than White students. With regard to Black students, 13,899 in-school suspensions were assigned with 82% given to Black students in poverty (Khan & Slate, 2016). Concerning White students, 51% of the 14,902 in-school suspensions they received were assigned to White students in poverty. A similar trend was evident for Grade 6 out-of-school suspension assignments. Regarding Black students, 86% of the 8,458 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Black students in poverty. With respect to White students, 57% of 3,658 out of school suspensions were assigned to White students in poverty. Of note here is that although White students comprised a larger percentage of the student enrollment, Black students received more than twice the number of out-of-school suspensions. Of the 25,493 out-of-school suspensions assigned, 22,193 were assigned to students living in poverty; whereas, only 3,300 were assigned to students who were not living in poverty. As documented by these statistics, out- of- school suspensions were assigned to students who were in poverty

more than 7 times as often as they were assigned to students who were not in poverty (Khan & Slate, 2016).

Additionally, inequities in the assignment of Discipline Alternative Education Program placements were noted. Of the 6,104 assigned disciplinary placements, 5,256 were assigned to students who were in poverty in comparison to less than a thousand (i.e. 948) assigned to students who were not in poverty. Students who were in poverty received Disciplinary Alternative Education Placements nearly 6 times as often as students who were not in poverty. These disparate discipline consequence assignments of the three major disciplinary sanctions utilized in U.S. public schools may reveal inequities as a function of economic status (Khan & Slate, 2016).

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

In a recent investigation conducted in the state of interest for this article, Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016) analyzed inequities in discipline consequences for Hispanic, Black, and White girls in Grades 4-11. A persistent cycle of disparities in exclusionary discipline sanctions was established for Grade 4 through Grade 11 Hispanic girls who received more in-school suspensions, more out-of-school suspensions, and more Discipline Alternative Education Program placements respectively across each grade level than did White girls. For each grade level, disproportionality existed in the assignment of these disciplinary consequences to Hispanic girls (Slate et al., 2016).

Regarding Grade 5, Hispanic girls were assigned (9.4%) almost twice as many out-of-school suspensions as White girls (5.1%). Grade 5 Hispanic girls received all five of the Discipline Alternative Education Program placements at that grade level.

Concerning Grade 6, a substantial increase was documented in disciplinary consequences, with 2,181 Hispanic girls being assigned an out-of-school suspension in comparison to only 23 White girls. The number of Hispanic girls who received an out-of-school suspension was extremely high in comparison to White girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls continued to receive a higher percentage (17.3%) of out-of-school suspensions than did White Grade 7 girls (Slate et al, 2016). Of note here is that White girls (0.4%) were assigned almost six times fewer out-of-school suspensions than Hispanic girls (Slate et al., 2016). Although discipline consequences increased for Grade 7 Hispanic girls, the numbers were comparable to the discipline consequences assigned to Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls received over 15%, and White girls received less than 3% of the out-of school suspensions.

A noticeable increase was observed in their study with respect to the discipline consequence assignments for girls in high school (Slate et al, 2016). With respect to Grade 9, more than 60,000 in-school suspensions were assigned to girls. Hispanic girls were assigned (14.2%), almost five times more often than White girls (2.9%). Concerning Grade 10 girls, Hispanic girls received four times the in-school suspension rate than did White girls. Of the in-school suspensions in Grade 11, Hispanic girls were assigned this consequence almost three times more than did White girls (Slate et al., 2016).

Hispanic girls are being exposed to disproportionate discipline consequences in comparison to White girls. It has been documented that Hispanic students have a higher risk of being assigned a discipline consequence at school; however, limited research exists to explain the reasons for their disproportionate punishment (Peguero, Popp, &

Shekarkhar, 2015). As the Hispanic population grows in the United States, the risk of negative outcomes and disproportionate discipline consequences among Hispanic adolescents will also increase (Peguero et al., 2015). In the school setting, stereotypes of Hispanic students emphasize migrant manual labor, low economic status, and poor academic performance (Phelan & Rudman, 2010).

Inequitable discipline consequences have also been documented as being based on student economic status. Recently, Khan and Slate (2016) documented that Grade 6 Hispanic students in Texas were assigned in-school suspension more often than White students. Of the 33,233 in-school suspensions assigned to Hispanic students, 86% were assigned to Hispanic students in poverty (Khan & Slate, 2016). Concerning White students, 51% of the 14,902 in-school suspensions they received were assigned to White students in poverty. A similar trend was evident for Grade 6 out-of-school suspension assignments. For Hispanic students, 86% of 14,377 out-of-school suspensions assigned were assigned to Hispanic students in poverty. With respect to White students, 57% of 3,658 out of school suspensions were assigned to White students in poverty. Additionally, inequities in the assignment of Discipline Alternative Education Program placements were noted, with 5,256 of these 6,104 consequences assigned to students who were in poverty and less than a thousand assigned to students who were not in poverty (Khan & Slate, 2016). For Grade 6 Hispanic students who were in poverty, 3,192 (2.2%) received a Discipline Alternative Education Placement in comparison to 309 (0.8%) of Hispanic students who were not in poverty. Similarly, Grade 6 White students who were in poverty received more Discipline Alternative Education Placement assignments than did White students who were not in poverty. Of the 1,025 Discipline Alternative

Education Program placements, White students who were in poverty were assigned 691 (2.1%) and White students who were not in poverty were assigned 334 (0.4%). These disparate discipline consequence assignments may reveal inequities by economic status (Khan & Slate, 2016).

In another recent study conducted in Texas, Barnes and Slate (2016) established the presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences assigned to Hispanic Grade 4 and 5 students. , Grade 4 students in Texas were assigned 480 out-of-school suspensions. Of those 480 suspensions, 38% were assigned to Hispanic students, and only 1% was assigned to White students. Furthermore, Barnes and Slate (2016) documented the presence of discipline inequities in the consequence assignment of Grade 5 students in Texas schools. For example, of the 9,862 in-school suspensions assigned to Texas Grade 5 students, 40% were assigned to Hispanic students, and 22% were assigned to White students. Texas Grade 5 student out-of-school suspension rates were similar to Texas Grade 4 student out-of-school suspension rates. Hispanic students were assigned a higher percentage of out-of-school suspensions. Hispanic students were assigned 31%, and Whites students were assigned 6% of all out-of-school suspensions.

Historically, students from lower income homes have experienced lower rates of academic success in comparison to their more advantaged peers. Reardon (2013) noted that over the past 40 years American families have changed, with children in high-income families being raised by two college-educated parents and low-income students being raised by a single uneducated parent. Thus, family income has been linked to family dynamics and accessible resources that influence student overall success. “Family income is now a better predictor of children’s success in school than race” (Reardon,

2013, p.1). Noticeably, students who are not in poverty outperform their peers who are in poverty. Disparities in discipline practices may not only continue to limit equality in educational opportunities for every student but also to influence the ever-widening achievement gap negatively (Reardon, 2013). Students who are in poverty receive more inequitable discipline consequence assignments in comparison to students who are not in poverty. Clear evidence exists that Hispanic students who are in poverty experience disproportionate discipline consequences, both for their ethnicity/race and for their economic status.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Student ethnicity/race and economic status have been established as directly related to disparities in school discipline for over 30 years (Skiba et al., 2011). Former U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, emphasized the importance for educators and policymakers to rethink discipline policies and procedures in his statement, “Racial discrimination in school discipline is a real problem today, we must address inequities in discipline and change the reality that our children face everyday” (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice, 2014, para 8). Inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black students have increased since 1970, with economic status being an important predictor in the assignment of school suspension (Skiba et al., 2011). Consistently documented in the literature (Brantlinger, 1997; Skiba & Knesting, 2001; Skiba et al., 1997; Skiba et al., 2014) is the overrepresentation of students in poverty who are suspended from school. Students in poverty tend to be assigned harsher consequences for the same offenses committed by their counterparts who are not in poverty. Researchers (e.g., Skiba et al., 2011) have documented poverty, racial

stereotyping, and cultural incompetence as possible causation mechanisms to explain discrepancies in office discipline referral and suspension rates among Black, White, and Hispanic students.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to examine the extent to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments by the ethnicity/race and economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls in Texas. In the first investigation, the degree to which discipline consequence assignments differed by the ethnicity/race of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls was addressed. In the second study, the extent to which discipline consequence assignments differed for Black girls by their economic status was investigated. Finally, in the third investigation, the degree to which discipline consequence assignments were different for Hispanic girls by their economic status was determined. The two discipline consequences of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension were analyzed for four school years and separately for each grade level in each of the three investigations. As such, this multiyear analysis permitted a determination of trends, if present, in the differential assignment of discipline consequences.

### **Significance of the Study**

For decades, ethnic/racial disparities have been documented in the discipline consequences assigned to Black students in schools in the United States (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014; Costenbader & Markson, 1994, 1998; Glackman et al., 1978; Lietz & Gregory, 1978; McFadden et al., 1992; Skiba, 1997, 2002). Former Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, emphasized the presence of civil rights violations as Black and



Hispanic students experience inequitable educational experiences when he stated, “Education is the civil rights of our generation” (Lewin, 2012, para, 5). Schools with higher percentages of student suspensions and expulsions typically have lower levels of academic achievement (Barton & Nishioka, 2014). In this journal-ready dissertation, valuable information was obtained on the relationship of ethnicity/race and student economic status to discipline consequence assignments for Black, White, and Hispanic girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8. This information may serve as a catalyst for policymakers and educational leaders to make needed changes in disciplinary practices to provide equitable disciplinary consequences for all students regardless of their ethnicity/race and/or economic status.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms, used in this proposed journal-ready dissertation, are defined below to assist the reader in understanding the context of this investigation.

#### **Black**

The Texas Education Agency (2013) defined Black as “students having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa” (p. 2).

#### **Discipline Alternative Education Program**

The Texas Education Agency (2010) described disciplinary alternative education programs as the third method of disciplinary consequence, following in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. Disciplinary alternative education program consequence is a removal of a student from their regular classes and placing them in an alternative classroom setting for an extended period time. Discipline Alternative Education Program are designed for students in elementary through high school and may

be located on or off campus. Most programs have written procedures and expectations for the program, as well as written contracts between parents/guardians and students (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

### **Discipline Consequence**

School districts establish a student code of conduct with the purpose of achieving and maintaining order in public schools. The code of conduct defines standards for acceptable behavior and prohibits certain behaviors (Texas Education Agency, 2016). Discipline consequences are consequences assigned to students for violations of standards established in the student code of conduct. Major discipline consequences are: In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, Discipline Alternative Education Program, Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program, and Expulsion.

### **Economically Disadvantaged**

The Texas Education Agency (2013) defined 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.

### **Ethnicity**

The Texas Education Agency (2014) defined ethnicity as students in Texas being classified of or not of Hispanic or Latin descent.

### **Expulsion**

Expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from the traditional school setting as a disciplinary consequence. Texas law requires that students who have been

expelled to be placed in an alternative school setting, the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (Texas Education Agency, 2016).

**Extremely Poor**

This phrase will be used to refer to a group of students who were determined to be economically disadvantaged by the Texas Education Agency (2013). With respect to students who are Extremely Poor, they will be from families with an income of 130% or less of the federal poverty line (Burney & Beilke, 2008) and, as a result, are eligible for the federal free lunch program.

**Hispanic**

The Texas Education Agency (2014) defined Hispanic/Latino as “students of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race” (p. 2).

**In-School Suspension**

The Texas Education Agency (2010) described in-school suspension as the first method of disciplinary consequence for students. An in-school suspension consequence is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence by placing the student into a separate classroom.

**Moderately Poor**

This phrase will be used to refer to a group of students who were determined to be economically disadvantaged by the Texas Education Agency (2013). With respect to students who are Moderately Poor, they will be from families with an income of 131% to 185% of the federal poverty line (Burney & Beilke, 2008) and, as a result, are eligible for the federal reduced lunch program.

**Not Economically Disadvantaged**

This phrase will be used to refer to students in Texas who were not eligible for the federal free and reduced lunch program. Students who are eligible for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program are regarded as being economically disadvantaged by the Texas Education Agency (2013). Eligibility for the federal free- and reduced-lunch program is determined by family income.

**Out-of-School Suspension**

The Texas Education Agency (2010) described out-of-school suspension as the second method of disciplinary consequence, following in-school suspension. An out-of-school suspension consequence is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence that does not allow the student to attend school for a day and to not exceed three days in a row.

**Public Education Information Management System**

The Public Education Information Management System is a database for the state of Texas that encompasses all data requested and received by Texas Education Agency about public education, including student demographic and academic performance, personnel, financial, and organizational information (Texas Education Agency, 2016b).

**Race**

The Texas Education Agency (2014) 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.

**Texas Education Agency**

The Texas Education Agency (2016a) is the state agency responsible for overseeing primary and secondary public education in state of Texas. The mission of the agency is to provide leadership, guidance and resources to help schools meet the educational needs of all students and prepare them for success in the global economy.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations for this study involved examining discipline consequence assignments only for Texas middle school girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Only discipline consequence assignments that were present in the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System were analyzed in this journal-ready dissertation. Two student demographic characteristics (i.e., ethnicity/race and economic status) and their relationship to discipline consequence assignments were examined. With respect to ethnicity/race, data on only the three major ethnic/racial groups (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and White) in Texas were analyzed. Economic status was defined solely by whether or not girls were eligible for the reduced price lunch or free lunch programs. Finally, data were analyzed for only four school years (i.e., 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016).

**Limitations**

For the purpose of this journal-ready dissertation, only quantitative data on discipline consequences assigned to Texas middle school girls in Grade 6, 7, and 8 were analyzed. The Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System provided the archival data that were analyzed herein only for girls enrolled in Texas middle schools. In addition, no attempts were made to determine the reasons why

the discipline consequences were assigned. Data analyses were restricted to only girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8; thereby, restricting generalizability of these results to boys and students at other grade levels.

### **Assumptions**

For the purpose of this journal-ready dissertation, an assumption was made that the discipline data on incidences of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension in the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System were accurately reported by each school campus, grade level, ethnicity/race, and school district. Another assumption was that student demographic data (i.e., ethnicity/race and economic status) were accurately reported and recorded in the Public Education Information Management System. To the degree that errors were present in this archival dataset, results from this journal-ready dissertation may be adversely influenced.

### **Organization of the Study**

In this journal-ready dissertation, three research investigations were conducted. The focus of the first article was on the extent to which disciplinary consequence assignments were differentially assigned by the ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Hispanic, and Black) of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls. The focus of the second article was on the degree to which disciplinary consequence assignments were differentially assigned by the economic status (i.e., Not Economically Disadvantaged, Moderately Poor, or Extremely Poor) of Black girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8. The focus of the third article was on the extent to which disciplinary consequences were assigned differentially by the economic status (i.e., Not Economically Disadvantaged, Moderately Poor, or Extremely Poor) of Hispanic girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8.

Five chapters are present in this journal-ready dissertation. Chapter I encompassed the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, definition of terms, delimitations, limitations, assumptions, and organization of this journal-ready dissertation. Chapter II was the first article on the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment of in-school suspension and/or out-of school suspension as a function of the ethnicity/race of Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls. Chapter III was the second article on the degree to which inequities were present in the assignment of in-school suspension and/or out of school suspension as a function of the economic status of Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 Black girls. Chapter IV was the third article on the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment of in-school suspension and/or out of school suspension as a function of the economic status of Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic girls. The final chapter, Chapter V contains a summary of the three article's research results, implications for educational policy and practice, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENT DIFFERENCES BY THE ETHNICITY/RACE OF GRADE 6, 7, AND 8 GIRLS: A TEXAS STATEWIDE MULTIYEAR 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 degree to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments as a function of ethnicity/race (i.e., White, Hispanic, and Black). Statewide data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System on all middle school girls for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. For each school year, inferential statistical procedures yielded statistically significant differences. A stair-step effect was clearly present each school year in each grade level. Black girls received statistically significantly higher rates of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension than did Hispanic and White girls. Hispanic girls had statistically significantly higher rates of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension than White girls. Implications are discussed and suggestions for policy and practice are made.

**Keywords:** Ethnicity/Race, White, Hispanic, Black, Middle School Girls, In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENT DIFFERENCES BY THE  
ETHNICITY/RACE OF GRADE 6, 7, AND 8 GIRLS: A TEXAS STATEWIDE  
MULTIYEAR INVESTIGATION

Discipline inequities among the major ethnic/racial groups are extensively documented in the extant literature (Anfinson, Autumn, Lehr, Riestenberg, & Scullinn, 2010; Skiba et al., 2011; United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016). For more than 40 years, Black and Hispanic students have been assigned a disproportionate amount of disciplinary consequences in comparison to their White peers (Khan & Slate, 2016). Concerning only girls, Black girls have garnered limited attention in school discipline research in comparison to Black boys. Documentation on discipline consequences of Black girls has been used primarily to highlight discipline disparities for Black boys instead of highlighting the ways in which inequitable discipline sanctions might also negatively influence the school experiences of Black girls. More information is needed on the discipline experiences of Black girls to understand how disparities in discipline consequences influence academic achievement and social behavior of Black girls and boys (Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Darensbourg, 2011).

With respect to girls, Blake et al. (2011) determined that Black girls have been stereotyped as exhibiting un-lady like behaviors that do not conform to conventional standards of femininity in which girls are expected to be obedient, timid, and benevolent. These oppressive characteristics of femininity have been established as the standard for female behavior established by White middle class women. Although racial/ethnic disparities in school discipline have been consistently reported for almost four decades,

no consistent causal and confounding factors have been identified to explain the racial/ethnic gap in school discipline (Anyon et al., 2014; Skiba et al., 2002)

In a very recent investigation conducted in Texas, Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016) documented inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences for Grade 4-11 girls. Disproportionality was evident in the assignment of the three major disciplinary consequences by ethnicity/race. A sharp increase was observed in their study with respect to the discipline consequence assignments for girls in high school. Regarding Grade 9, more than 60,000 in-school suspensions were assigned to girls. Black girls were assigned an in-school suspension almost twice as often (27.1%) as Hispanic girls (14.2%) and almost eight times more often than White girls (2.9%). With respect to Grade 10 girls, in-school suspension assignments decreased to 34,000. Concerning in-school suspensions assigned to Grade 10 girls, Black girls again received the highest percentage, 22.4%, followed by Hispanic girls, 8.4%, and White girls, 2.0% (Slate et al., 2016). Grade 11 girls also experienced a decrease in discipline consequence assignments. Although fewer than 20,000 in-school suspensions were assigned to Grade 11 girls, Black girls consistently received higher percentages of in-school suspensions. Of these in-school suspensions in Grade 11, Black girls were assigned 22.1%, Hispanic girls were assigned 6.8%, and White girls were assigned 2.4% of this discipline consequence (Slate et al., 2016).

Of note was the fact that Black girls were assigned greater percentages of out-of-school suspension than White or Hispanic girls across all grade levels examined in their study (Slate et al., 2016). Grade 4 Black girls were assigned four times as many out-of-school suspensions as White girls; whereas in their investigation, Grade 4 Hispanic girls

were not assigned any out-of-school suspensions. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned more than three times as many out-of-school suspensions as White girls and almost twice as many out-of-school suspensions as Hispanic girls. Regarding Grade 6, a substantial increase was documented in disciplinary consequences with 2,050 Black girls and 2,181 Hispanic girls being assigned the discipline consequence of out-of-school suspension in comparison to only 23 White girls. The numbers of Black and Hispanic girls who received an out-of-school suspension was excessively high in comparison to White girls. Grade 7 Black girls continued to receive the highest percentage (25.5%) of out-of-school suspensions, followed by Hispanic girls (17.3%). Of note here is that White girls (0.4%) were assigned almost six times fewer out-of-school suspensions than either Hispanic or Black girls (Slate et al., 2016). Although discipline consequences increased for Grade 7 Black and Hispanic girls, the numbers were comparable to the discipline consequences assigned to Grade 8 Black and Hispanic girls. Black girls received over 20%, Hispanic girls received over 15%, and White girls received less than 3% of the out-of school suspensions, even though Black girls comprised the lowest percentage of the student enrollment.

Discriminatory and exclusionary discipline practices have lead to an increase in the loss of instructional time for Black girls in comparison to White and Hispanic girls (Hilberth & Slate, 2014). With a focus on the education of White girls, “The educational needs of Black girls have fallen through the cracks” (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010, p. 12). Black girls are often labeled as the “angry Black woman” (p. 12) who embraces loud, aggressive, and masculine personas. In school, Black girls embody these

characteristics to avoid marginalization in the classroom (Evan-Winters & Esposito, 2010).

In the 2011-2012 school year 90% of all girls expelled from New York City public schools were Black (Crenshaw, Ocen, and Nanda, 2015). In fact, national statistics further substantiate evidence that Black girls received more discipline sanctions than White and Hispanic girls. Crenshaw et al. (2015) revealed that “the suspension and expulsion rates for Black girls far outpace the rates for other girls- and in some places, they outpace the rates of most boys” (p. 14).

Regarding girls, egregious racial/ethnic discipline gaps continue to be reinforced in news headlines and online videos (Ford, 2016). In South Carolina, a campus resource officer violently removed a Black girl from her desk for refusing to leave the classroom and remove her cell phone from the classroom. In Texas, another campus resource officer body-slammed a 12-year old Latina girl after an argument ensued with another student (Ford, 2016). Pervasive racial/ethnic disparities in disciplinary policies in schools in the United States continue to persist and negatively influence the lives of Black youth, specifically girls.

Disproportionate discipline consequences have emerged as an extensive issue for Black girls from elementary through high school (Blake et al., 2011; Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Black girls are more likely to be suspended from school in comparison to their White and Hispanic counterparts. Furthermore, Black girls are almost four times as likely to receive in-school suspension and twice as likely to receive out-of-school suspension as compared to their White and Hispanic female peers (Blake et al., 2011). It is conceivable that Black girls receive more exclusionary discipline consequences

because they are considered to be more disruptive in the classroom than White and Hispanic girls.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Public education has been and remains the gateway to attaining the American dream (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Reardon, 2013). Students are enrolled in the public school system in the United States with hopes of obtaining an education that will lead to success (Jones, Slate, & Martinez-Garcia, 2014). With this in mind, educators are not only tasked with the responsibility of teaching students to their full potential but also with recognizing and addressing inequities in discipline practices that undermine student academic success (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Skiba et al., 2011). To the degree that inequities are present in the assignment of discipline consequences to girls on the basis of their ethnicity/race, then girls are being denied the same opportunities to learn as their peers who are not assigned discipline consequences.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this empirical investigation was to determine the extent to which discipline consequence assignments were assigned differentially as a function of student ethnicity/race. The specific focus in this investigation was two discipline consequences (i.e., in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension) and whether they were administered differentially to girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8 by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and White). These discipline consequence assignments were analyzed for four school years (i.e., 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015) separately for girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Subsequently, results from this multiyear analysis

permitted a determination of trends, if present, in the differential assignment of discipline consequences by the ethnicity/race of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls.

### **Significance of the Study**

Federal mandates, such as, The No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law 107-110,2001) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (Bill Number S.1177, 2015), have reiterated the importance of providing equal educational opportunities to all public school students, regardless of their ethnicity/race or gender. Inequitable disciplinary consequence assignments and reasons based on ethnicity/race may further exasperate already existing data on use of exclusionary discipline policies and negative effects on student academic achievement. To provide equal learning opportunities for all students, the State of Texas has implemented several education initiatives.

The focus of this study was different from previous researchers who have addressed inequities in discipline consequence assignment. In particular, the focus was placed on girls, rather than on either students in general or on boys in particular. The research on girls, particularly middle school girls, and discipline consequences assigned by their ethnicity/race is limited. The findings from the approach in this article will add substantially to the extant research literature in this area. It is critical that educators identify and respond to these discrepancies in discipline practices (Skiba et al., 2011). Comprehensive analysis of school discipline data may provide educators and policymakers with guidance and evidence to inform policy and decision making to create more appropriate and effective responses to inequitable discipline practices. Educators and legislators can be informed and influenced to consider education reform by findings from this study.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) What was the difference in the assignment of in-school suspension by the ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and White) of Grade 6 girls?; (b) What was the difference in the assignment of in-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of Grade 7 girls?; (c) What was the difference in the assignment of in-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of Grade 8 girls?; (d) What was the difference in the assignment of out-of-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of Grade 6 girls?; (e) What was the difference in the assignment of out-of-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of Grade 7 girls?; (f) What was the difference in the assignment of out-of-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of Grade 8 girls?; (g) What trends were present in the assignment of in-school suspension for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls by their ethnicity/race?; and (h) What trends were present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension to Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls by their ethnicity/race? The first six research questions were repeated for each of the four years of data whereas the last two research questions involved comparisons across all four years of data.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

In this multiyear investigation, a non-experimental, causal comparative research design was utilized (Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The data that were analyzed herein constitute archival data that had already occurred (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Furthermore, the independent variable of student ethnicity/race cannot be manipulated. The dependent variables in this article were two discipline consequence assignments (i.e., in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension) that



were previously assigned to girls who were enrolled in Grades 6, 7, or 8 in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years in the State of Texas. Because both the independent variable and the dependent variables had already occurred, extraneous variables could not be controlled in this study.

### **Participants and Instrumentation**

Data for this study were requested and obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System through a Public Information Request form. The Public Information Request form was submitted to obtain data for a Basic Statistics course at Sam Houston State University. The data used in this study to answer the research questions had not been analyzed. The discipline consequence assignments of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension were analyzed separately for each school year by the ethnicity/race of girls. All Texas girls who were enrolled in Grades 6, 7, and 8 who received a disciplinary consequence of in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and/or 2015-2016 school years were participants in this study. Specific data analyzed were (a) student ethnicity/race, (b) grade level, (c) and discipline consequence assigned. Because the data had been audited by the Texas Education Agency, an assumption of minimal errors was made.

Major discipline consequences in this article were in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. In-school suspension is an initial disciplinary consequence that results in the removal of a student from the regular classroom by placing the student into a separate classroom (Texas Education Agency, 2010). Out-of-school suspension consequence is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary

consequence that does not allow the student to attend school for a day and to not exceed three days in a row (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

## **Results**

To ascertain the extent to which differences were present in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school assignment by the ethnicity/race of girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8 in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years in Texas, Pearson chi-square procedures were performed. Because ethnicity/race constituted a categorical independent variable (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White) and discipline consequence assignments comprised dichotomous dependent variables (i.e., assignment or non-assignment), Pearson chi-square analyses were the ideal statistical procedure (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). All data were independent of each other. In addition, with the large sample size, the available sample size was greater than 5. Therefore, the assumptions for utilizing a Pearson chi-square were met for the inferential research questions (Field, 2009).

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

In regard to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 4585.44, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.1, Grade 6 Black girls were assigned almost four times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls and almost twice as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. In addition, Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned almost two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls.

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Insert Table 2.1 about here

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Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 4500.00, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls were assigned more than four times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls and more than twice as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls received almost two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls. Revealed in Table 2.1 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With respect to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 3955.96, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 2.1, Grade 6 Black girls were assigned almost four times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White and Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned nearly two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls.

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 3760.44, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls were assigned almost four times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls and nearly two times as many as Grade 6 Hispanic

girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned almost two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls. Table 2.1 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

### **Results for Grade 7 Girls and In-School Suspension**

Concerning the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 5,005.20, p < .001$ , by the ethnicity/race of Grade 7 girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls were assigned more than three times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls and almost two times as many as Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned almost two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls. Table 2.2 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

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 Insert Table 2.2 about here  
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With respect to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 4,771.88, p < .001$ , by the ethnicity/race of Grade 7 girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.2, Grade 7 Black girls were assigned more than three times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls and almost two times as many as Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned nearly two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls.

Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 4448.03, p < .001$ , by the ethnicity/race of Grade 7 girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls were assigned almost four times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls and almost two times as many as Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned almost two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls. Delineated in Table 2.2 are the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 4006.72, p < .001$ , by the ethnicity/race of Grade 7 girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls were assigned more than three times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls and almost two times as many as Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned almost two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls. Presented in Table 2.2 are the frequencies and percentages for this analysis.

### **Results for Grade 8 Girls and In-School Suspension**

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 4,641.73, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 girls by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls were assigned more than three times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls and almost two times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned almost two times as many

in-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls. Table 2.3 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

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 Insert Table 2.3 about here  
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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 4281.25, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 girls by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 2.3, Grade 8 Black girls were assigned more than three times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls and almost two times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned nearly two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 3,496.12, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 girls by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls were assigned more three times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls and almost two times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned more than one and a half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls. Table 2.3 contains the frequencies and percentages of in-school suspensions for this school year.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 3,569.28, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 girls by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was

small, .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls were assigned almost three times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls and almost two times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned almost two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls. Delineated in Table 2.3 are the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

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

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 4906.92, p < .001$ , by the ethnicity/race of Grade 6 girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls and almost 10 times more than Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension almost four times more than Grade 6 White girls. Table 2.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

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 Insert Table 2.4 about here  
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Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 5271.19, p < .001$ , by the ethnicity/race of Grade 6 girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .17 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 2.4, Grade 6 Black girls were assigned almost 10 times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls and almost three

times as many as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned almost four times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls.

Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 4753.40$ ,  $p < .001$ , by the ethnicity/race of Grade 6 girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls were assigned almost 10 times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls and almost three times as many as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned almost four times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls. Delineated in Table 2.4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 4804.89$ ,  $p < .001$ , by the ethnicity/race of Grade 6 girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls were assigned 10 times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls and more than two times as many as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned almost four times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls. Revealed in Table 2.4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Results for Grade 7 Girls and Out-of-School Suspension**

Concerning the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 5,363.65$ ,  $p < .001$ , to Grade 7 girls by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .17 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 2.5, Grade 7 Black girls were assigned



almost seven times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls and more than two times as many as Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls.

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Insert Table 2.5 about here

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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 5,884.02, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 girls by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .18 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls were assigned almost 10 times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls and more than two times as many as Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned more than three times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls. Table 2.5 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

With respect to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 4950.97, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 girls by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls were assigned seven times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls and more than two times as many as Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned more than three times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls. Revealed in Table 2.5 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 4,900.83$ ,  $p < .001$ , to Grade 7 girls by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls were assigned seven times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls and more than two times as many as Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned more than three times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 White girls. Delineated in Table 2.5 are the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

### **Results for Grade 8 Girls and Out-of-School Suspension**

Regarding the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 5,601.53$ ,  $p < .001$ , by the ethnicity/race of Grade 8 girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .18 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls were assigned more than six times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls and more than two times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls. Table 2.6 contains the frequencies and percentages 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 yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 5289.06$ ,  $p < .001$ , by the ethnicity/race of Grade 8 girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was

small, .17 (Cohen, 1988). As delineated in Table 2.6, Grade 8 Black girls were assigned six times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls and more than two times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 4,826.13$ ,  $p < .001$ , by the ethnicity/race of Grade 8 girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls were assigned six times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls and more than two times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls. Table 2.6 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 5,079.66$ ,  $p < .001$ , by the ethnicity/race of Grade 8 girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls were assigned six times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls and more than two times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls. Delineated in Table 2.6 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

## **Discussion**

In this study, the degree to which differences were present in the assignment of two discipline consequences was examined for Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls as a function of

their ethnicity/race. Data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. Over this 4-year time period, statistically significant differences were revealed in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension as a function of the ethnicity/race of Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls. The presence of trends in the assignment of discipline consequences in-school and out-of-school suspension by ethnicity/race was determined, subsequent to the statistical analyses. Results will now be summarized.

In all four school years and across all three grade levels, Black girls received statistically significantly higher rates of in-school and out-of school suspension than either White girls or Hispanic girls. The in-school suspension rates for Black girls ranged from 18.6% to 22.2% for Grade 6 girls, from 22.2% to 26.2% for Grade 7 girls, and from 22.1% to 27.1% for Grade 8 girls in these four school years. In comparison, the in-school suspension rates for Grade 6 Hispanic girls ranged from 5.3% to 11.6%, from 12.4% to 15.8% for Grade 7 Hispanic girls, and from 12.7% to 16.1% for Grade 8 Hispanic girls. In school suspension rates ranged from 5.3% to 6.2% for Grade 6 White girls, from 6.9% to 8.0% for Grade 7 White girls, and 7.5% to 9.0% for Grade 8 White girls. Readers are directed to Table 2.7 for a summary of the results for the in-school suspension rates by the ethnicity/race for Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls across the four school years.

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Insert Table 2.7 about here

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With respect to out-of-school suspension, Black girls in all three grade levels and in all four school years received statistically significantly higher rates than either White girls or Hispanic girls. The out- of-school suspension rates for Black girls ranged from 12.0% to 13.5% for Grade 6 girls, from 14.6% to 16.2% for Grade 7 girls, and from 14.7% to 17.2% for Grade 8 girls in these four school years. In comparison, the out-of-school suspension rates for Grade 6 Hispanic girls ranged from 4.5% to 5.5%, from 6.5% to 7.4% for Grade 7 Hispanic girls, and from 6.6% to 7.7% for Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 1.2% to 1.4% for Grade 6 White girls, from 2.0% to 2.3% for Grade 7 White girls, and 2.1% to 2.7% for Grade 8 White girls. Table 2.8 contains a summary of the results of out-of-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls across the four school years.

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 Insert Table 2.8 about here  
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### **Connections with Existing Literature**

The presence of disparities in the assignment of discipline consequences to students by their ethnicity/race have been well documented in the extant literature (e.g., Anfinson et al., 2010; Skiba & Knesting, 2001; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997; Skiba et al., 2011; United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982). For over four decades, Black students have been assigned disciplinary consequences in an inequitable manner in comparison to their White peers (Khan & Slate, 2016). As revealed in this study and by previous researchers (e.g., Blake et al., 2011; Crenshaw et al., 2015; Khan & Slate, 2016;

Slate et al., 2016), inequities continue to exist in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black girls. The presence of a consistent stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present in discipline consequence assignment to Black girls.

Results of this research investigation were also congruent with previous researchers (Blake et al., 2011; Crenshaw et al., 2015; Khan & Slate, 2016; Slate et al., 2016) who have documented that Black girls were assigned statistically significantly more often to in-school suspension than White and Hispanic girls and that Hispanic girls were assigned statistically significantly more in-school suspensions than White girls. Moreover, Black girls were assigned statistically significantly more often to out-of-school suspension than White and Hispanic girls and that Hispanic girls were assigned statistically significantly more often to out-of-school suspensions than White girls. The suspension rates of Black girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8 Grades far exceeded the suspension rates of White and Hispanic girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8.

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

Based upon the results of this multiyear investigation, several implications for policy and practice can be made. First, readers should note that empirical evidence does not exist revealing that Black girls in middle school commit more misbehaviors than Hispanic and White girls. Accordingly, educators are encouraged to examine their disciplinary sanctions and behavior management strategies to determine whether results of this study are also occurring in their school districts. Should school administrators identify disproportionate suspension rates among Black, White, and Hispanic girls in their schools, they are urged to discover the reasons for the overrepresentation of Black girls in the assignment of both in-school and out-of-school suspensions. Comprehensive

analysis of discipline data of specific school districts and school campuses may reveal that Black girls are committing more behavior infractions, lack of social and cultural capital, lack of teacher/administrator training, lack of positive school climate, or the presence of discrimination. Becoming knowledgeable about the disciplinary practices of school campuses and school districts could serve as opportunity to evaluate the efficacy of their discipline programs. If inequities are occurring with the use of zero-tolerance disciplinary strategies, school leaders may need to develop new programs that continue to develop the cultural and social capital of Black girls, educators, and administrators (Mendez & Knoff, 2003).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based upon the results of this multiyear, empirical study, several recommendations for future research can be made. First, because data on only middle school girls were analyzed in this investigation, future researchers could extend this study to girls in elementary schools and high schools. The extent to which the results of this study would be generalizable to girls in elementary schools and in high schools is not known. Second, data on only girls in Texas were analyzed here. As such, researchers are encouraged to extend this study to other states. The degree to which the discipline inequities depicted in this study are generalizable to girls in other states is not known. Third, researchers are urged to examine discipline consequences of Discipline Alternative Education Placements and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Placements to determine whether inequities are also present in their assignment. Researchers are encouraged to examine the referral reasons for discipline consequences assigned and whether discipline consequences were assigned differentially as function of

ethnicity/race, gender or grade-level. More detailed documentation of the presence of disparities in the assignment of in-school and out-of-school suspensions could add to the extant body of literature on discipline. A final recommendation would be to conduct the above-mentioned studies with data on boys.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which two discipline consequences were assigned differentially to Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls as a function of their ethnicity/race. Inferential statistical analyses revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls. In all four school years and in all three grade levels, Black girls received statistically significantly more in-school suspensions and more out-of-school suspensions than either White or Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were also assigned statistically significantly more in-school suspensions and more out-of-school suspensions than White girls. The results of this multiyear analysis were congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Blake et al., 2011; Bonesheski & Runge, 2014; Crenshaw et al., 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Slate et al., 2016) that clear inequities exist in the assignment of discipline consequences.



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Table 2.1

*Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspensions by the Ethnicity/Race of Grade 6 Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 5,696) 22.2%	( <i>n</i> = 19,988) 77.8%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 11,738) 11.6%	( <i>n</i> = 89,334) 88.4%
White	( <i>n</i> = 3,700) 6.2%	( <i>n</i> = 56,050) 93.8%
2013-2014		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 5,371) 21.2%	( <i>n</i> = 20,006) 78.8%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 10,710) 10.7%	( <i>n</i> = 89,375) 89.3%
White	( <i>n</i> = 3,330) 5.7%	( <i>n</i> = 55,222) 94.3%
2014-2015		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 4,944) 19.2%	( <i>n</i> = 20,801) 80.8%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 9,926) 5.3%	( <i>n</i> = 93,039) 90.4%
White	( <i>n</i> = 3,126) 5.3%	( <i>n</i> = 55,408) 94.7%
2015-2016		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 4,901) 18.6%	( <i>n</i> = 21,433) 81.4%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 9,991) 9.5%	( <i>n</i> = 95,621) 90.5%
White	( <i>n</i> = 3,067) 5.3%	( <i>n</i> = 54,992) 94.7%

Table 2.2

*Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspensions by the Ethnicity/Race of Grade 7**Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 6,763) 26.2%	( <i>n</i> = 19,024) 73.8%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 15,745) 15.8%	( <i>n</i> = 83,873) 84.2%
White	( <i>n</i> = 4,841) 8.0%	( <i>n</i> = 55,758) 92.0%
2013-2014		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 6,503) 24.9%	( <i>n</i> = 19,596) 75.1%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 14,799) 14.3%	( <i>n</i> = 88,391) 85.7%
White	( <i>n</i> = 4,524) 7.5%	( <i>n</i> = 55,609) 92.5%
2014-2015		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 6,051) 23.4%	( <i>n</i> = 19,771) 76.6%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 13,496) 13.2%	( <i>n</i> = 89,058) 86.8%
White	( <i>n</i> = 4,150) 7.0%	( <i>n</i> = 55,028) 93.0%
2015-2016		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 5,761) 22.2%	( <i>n</i> = 20,233) 77.8%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 13,012) 12.4%	( <i>n</i> = 91,826) 87.6%
White	( <i>n</i> = 4,041) 6.9%	( <i>n</i> = 54,692) 93.1%

Table 2.3

*Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspensions by the Ethnicity/Race of Grade 8 Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 6,944) 27.1%	( <i>n</i> = 18,274) 72.9%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 15,398) 16.1%	( <i>n</i> = 80,307) 83.9%
White	( <i>n</i> = 5,507) 9.0%	( <i>n</i> = 55,498) 91.0%
2013-2014		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 6,520) 25.0%	( <i>n</i> = 19,603) 75.0%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 14,914) 14.8%	( <i>n</i> = 85,933) 85.2%
White	( <i>n</i> = 5,073) 8.3%	( <i>n</i> = 56,038) 91.7%
2014-2015		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 5,995) 22.7%	( <i>n</i> = 20,419) 77.3%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 14,318) 13.7%	( <i>n</i> = 90,396) 86.3%
White	( <i>n</i> = 4,909) 8.1%	( <i>n</i> = 55,797) 91.9%
2015-2016		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 5,744) 22.1%	( <i>n</i> = 20,299) 77.9%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 13,206) 12.7%	( <i>n</i> = 91,020) 87.3%
White	( <i>n</i> = 4,443) 7.5%	( <i>n</i> = 54,837) 92.5%

Table 2.4

*Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspensions by the Ethnicity/Race of Grade 6 Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 3,317) 12.9%	( <i>n</i> = 22,367) 87.1%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 5,546) 5.5%	( <i>n</i> = 95,526) 94.5%
White	( <i>n</i> = 817) 1.4%	( <i>n</i> = 58,933) 98.6%
2013-2014		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 3,428) 13.5%	( <i>n</i> = 21,949) 86.5%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 5,211) 5.2%	( <i>n</i> = 94,874) 94.8%
White	( <i>n</i> = 846) 1.4%	( <i>n</i> = 57,706) 5.7%
2014-2015		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 3,059) 11.9%	( <i>n</i> = 22,686) 88.1%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 4,548) 4.5%	( <i>n</i> = 98,317) 95.5%
White	( <i>n</i> = 704) 1.2%	( <i>n</i> = 57,830) 98.8%
2015-2016		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 3,161) 12.0%	( <i>n</i> = 23,173) 88.0%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 4,864) 4.6%	( <i>n</i> = 100,748) 95.4%
White	( <i>n</i> = 708) 1.2%	( <i>n</i> = 57,351) 98.8%



Table 2.5

*Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspensions by the Ethnicity/Race of Grade 7 Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 4,131) 16.0%	( <i>n</i> = 21,656) 84.0%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 7,409) 7.4%	( <i>n</i> = 92,209) 92.6%
White	( <i>n</i> = 1,381) 2.3%	( <i>n</i> = 59,218) 97.7%
2013-2014		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 4,225) 16.2%	( <i>n</i> = 21,875) 83.8%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 7,497) 7.3%	( <i>n</i> = 95,693) 92.7%
White	( <i>n</i> = 1,176) 2.0%	( <i>n</i> = 58,957) 98.0%
2014-2015		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 3,756) 14.6%	( <i>n</i> = 22,056) 85.4%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 6,699) 6.5%	( <i>n</i> = 95,855) 93.5%
White	( <i>n</i> = 1,171) 2.0%	( <i>n</i> = 58,007) 98.0%
2015-2016		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 3,830) 14.7%	( <i>n</i> = 22,164) 85.3%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 6,890) 6.6%	( <i>n</i> = 97,948) 93.4%
White	( <i>n</i> = 1,231) 2.1%	( <i>n</i> = 57,502) 97.9%

Table 2.6

*Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspensions by the Ethnicity/Race of Grade 8 Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 4,419) 17.2%	( <i>n</i> = 21,249) 82.8%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 7,386) 7.7%	( <i>n</i> = 88,319) 92.3%
White	( <i>n</i> = 1,650) 2.7%	( <i>n</i> = 59,355) 97.3%
2013-2014		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 4,310) 16.5%	( <i>n</i> = 21,812) 83.5%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 7,630) 7.6%	( <i>n</i> = 93,217) 92.4%
White	( <i>n</i> = 1,619) 2.6%	( <i>n</i> = 59,492) 97.4%
2014-2015		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 4,015) 15.2%	( <i>n</i> = 22,399) 84.8%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 7,318) 7.0%	( <i>n</i> = 97,396) 93.0%
White	( <i>n</i> = 1,491) 2.5%	( <i>n</i> = 59,215) 97.5%
2015-2016		
Black	( <i>n</i> = 3,830) 14.7%	( <i>n</i> = 22,164) 85.3%
Hispanic	( <i>n</i> = 6,890) 6.6%	( <i>n</i> = 97,948) 93.4%
White	( <i>n</i> = 1,231) 2.1%	( <i>n</i> = 57,502) 97.9%

Table 2.7

*Summary of Results for the In-School Suspension Analyses by the Ethnicity/Race of  
Grade 6-8 Girls 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	.16	Small	Black
2013-2014	.16	Small	Black
2014-2015	.15	Small	Black
2015-2016	.14	Small	Black
Grade 7			
2012-2013	.16	Small	Black
2013-2014	.16	Small	Black
2014-2015	.15	Small	Black
2015-2016	.15	Small	Black
Grade 8			
2012-2013	.16	Small	Black
2013-2014	.15	Small	Black
2014-2015	.14	Small	Black
2015-2016	.14	Small	Black

Table 2.8

*Summary of Results for Out-of-School Suspension Analyses by the Ethnicity/Race of  
Grade 6-8 Girls 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	.16	Small	Black
2013-2014	.17	Small	Black
2014-2015	.16	Small	Black
2015-2016	.16	Small	Black
Grade 7			
2012-2013	.17	Small	Black
2013-2014	.18	Small	Black
2014-2015	.16	Small	Black
2015-2016	.16	Small	Black
Grade 8			
2012-2013	.18	Small	Black
2013-2014	.17	Small	Black
2014-2015	.16	Small	Black
2015-2016	.16	Small	Black

### CHAPTER III

#### DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENT DIFFERENCES BY THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF GRADE 6, 7, AND 8 BLACK GIRLS: A TEXAS STATEWIDE MULTIYEAR INVESTIGATION

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

### **Abstract**

Investigated in this study was the extent to which discipline consequence assignments differed by the economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, or Extremely Poor) of Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls. Statewide data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System on Black girls for the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years. Inferential statistical procedures yielded statistically significant differences in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by the economic status of Grade 6, 7, 8 Black girls. In all four school years and in all three grade levels, Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned statistically significantly more in-school suspensions and more out-of-school suspensions than Black girls who were Moderately Poor and Black girls who were Not Poor. Black girls who were Moderately Poor received statistically significantly higher rates of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension than Black girls who were Not Poor. As such, a clear stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension by the economic status of Black girls. Implications are discussed and suggestions for policy and practice are made.

**Keywords:** Black girls, Not Poor, Moderately Poor, Extremely Poor, Middle School Girls, In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENT DIFFERENCES BY THE  
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Disparities in the assignment of discipline consequences given to Black students have increased since 1970 (Skiba et al., 2011). In addition, student economic status has become an important predictor in the assignment of school suspension as a behavior consequence. Overrepresentation of students in poverty receiving school suspension as a behavior consequence has been consistently documented (Skiba & Knesting, 2001). Disciplinary consequences have been unfairly assigned to students in poverty as they have been assigned harsher consequences for the same offenses committed by their counterparts who are not in poverty. Researchers (e.g., Skiba et al., 2011) have documented poverty, racial stereotyping, and cultural incompetence as possible causation mechanisms to explain discrepancies in suspension rates among Black, White, and Hispanic students.

The educational experience of Black girls has been influenced by race and gender bias in the arbitrary discipline decisions made by administrators. “The existing research, data, and public policy debates often fail to address the degree to which girls face risks that are both similar to and different from those faced by boys” (Crenshaw, 2015, p. 11). The school experiences of Black girls are largely “marginalized, misnamed, maligned, and made invisible in the academy” (Benjamin, 1997, p. 2). As evidence of these assertions, Black girls are suspended six times more than White girls and in some instances more than boys (George, 2015; Slate, Gray, & Jones, 2016). These suspensions are often for minor offenses, such as defiance or wearing a natural hairstyle, further

perpetuating Black girls as confrontational and unacceptable. Bias in disciplinary practices such as suspension or expulsion have become known as “school pushout” (George, 2015, p. 104) and the “school to prison pipeline” (George, 2015, p. 104) maneuvering Black girls into the juvenile justice system faster than any other population (George, 2015; Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002), thus, compromising their potential success. School pushout alludes to:

[N]umerous and systemic factors that prevent or discourage young people from remaining on track to complete their education and has severe and lasting consequences....These factors include...over-reliance on zero-tolerance practices and punitive measures such as suspensions and expulsions, over-reliance on law enforcement tactics and ceding of disciplinary authority to law enforcement personnel, and a history of systemic racism and inequality. (George, 2015, p. 104)

In 2009-2010, Black girls represented 31% of all girls referred to law enforcement and 43% of girls involved in school related arrests, although they comprised less than 17% of the female student population.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2014), 19% of Black girls with disabilities and 12% of Black girls in schools across the country have been assigned out-of-school suspension in comparison to 4% of Hispanic and 2% of White girls (Wun, 2016). As reported in national statistics, Black girls are assigned more disciplinary consequences than their White and Hispanic counterparts. Black girls are more likely to be suspended than are White girls (Khan & Slate, 2015; Slate et al., 2016).

Economic status is associated with suspension rates. Black students from low socioeconomic backgrounds with less educated parents receive more punitive discipline



consequences than White students (Mizel & Ewing, 2016; Skiba et al., 2002; Wu et al., 1982). The National Association of Secondary Schools (2002) documented ethnic/racial inequity in school discipline as a primary result of economic disadvantage. With this in mind, Black students are competing with the stressors of poverty and may not be exposed to appropriate school behavior (Skiba et al., 2011). The U.S. Department of Education (2014) reported that low-income Black and Hispanic students are at a greater risk of being influenced by zero-tolerance policies. Black students were almost four times as likely to receive an office discipline referral in middle school (Tiger & Slate, 2015).

Disproportionate discipline consequences have emerged as an extensive issue for Black girls from elementary through high school (Blake, Butler, Lewis, & Darensbourg, 2011; Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Black girls are more likely to be suspended from school in comparison to their White and Hispanic counterparts. Furthermore, Black girls are almost four times as likely to receive in-school suspension and twice as likely to receive out-of-school suspension as compared to their White and Hispanic female peers (Blake et al., 2011). It is conceivable that Black girls receive more exclusionary discipline consequences because they are considered to be more disruptive in the classroom than White and Hispanic girls.

With respect to the state of interest in this investigation, in the 2013-2014 school year, 78,570 discipline consequences were assigned to Texas elementary school students in Grade 6. Of those documented discipline consequences, more than 71,000 were assigned to students who were in poverty and only 7,000 were assigned to students who were not in poverty. These statistics further substantiate that discipline disparities exist in

discipline consequence assignments in Texas elementary schools (Texas Education Agency, 2014a, 2014b).

The educational experiences of Black students are affected by poverty, inexperienced teachers, culturally unresponsive teachers, lack of parental participation, school funding shortages, and insufficient community resources. Black students in urban school districts confront these obstacles that can potentially have negative effects on their academic success. The challenges encountered by Black students in urban school districts increase their likelihood of academic failure (Gardner & Miranda, 2001).

“Children growing up in poverty have a higher likelihood of exposure to multiple forms of adversity that jeopardize their chances of academic success” (Friedman-Krauss & Raver, 2015, p. 1). Children with higher levels of poverty experience lower academic, psychological, and intellectual success. In addition, children in poverty are more likely to attend lower performing schools with limited access to academic enriching resources and experience interruptions in their homes (Tiger & Slate, 2017).

In 2016, The National Assessment of Educational Progress reported, “Large and persistent poverty-based disparities continue to characterize the nation’s academic achievement” (p. 10). In addition, The National Assessment of Educational Progress has noted that the percentage of students who were enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program increased from 39.7% in 2003 to 51.5% in 2015, denoting a four point increase in the existing gap in proficiency between low income and high income students. According to the United States Census Bureau (2010), 22% of all children in the United States were living under the federal poverty line. Hence, as the poverty population

continues to grow in the United States, the poverty-based disproportion in academic achievement also continues to expand.

Recently, Khan and Slate (2016) documented disparate discipline consequences based on the economic status of Grade 6 Black, White, and Hispanic students in Texas. Black students were assigned in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions statistically significantly more often than White students. With regard to Black students, 13,899 in-school suspensions were assigned with 82% given to Black students in poverty (Khan & Slate, 2016). Concerning White students, 51% of the 14,902 in-school suspensions they received were assigned to White students in poverty. A similar trend was evident for Grade 6 out-of-school suspension assignments. Regarding Black students, 86% of the 8,458 out-of-school suspensions were assigned to Black students in poverty. With respect to White students, 57% of 3,658 out of school suspensions were assigned to White students in poverty. Of note here is that although White students comprised a larger percentage of the student enrollment, Black students received more than twice the number of out-of-school suspensions. Of the 25,493 out-of-school suspensions assigned, 22,193 were assigned to students living in poverty; whereas, only 3,300 were assigned to students who were not living in poverty. As documented by these statistics, out- of- school suspensions were assigned to students who were in poverty more than 7 times as often as they were assigned to students who were not in poverty (Khan & Slate, 2016).

Additionally, inequities in the assignment of Discipline Alternative Education Program placements were noted. Of the 6,104 assigned disciplinary placements, 5,256 were assigned to students who were in poverty in comparison to less than a thousand (i.e.,

948) assigned to students who were not in poverty. Students who were in poverty received Disciplinary Alternative Education Placements nearly 6 times as often as students who were not in poverty. These disparate discipline consequence assignments of the three major disciplinary sanctions utilized in U.S. public schools may reveal inequities as a function of economic status (Khan & Slate, 2016).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law 107-110, 2001) brought about the implementation of numerous initiatives, focused on providing equal education opportunities to public school students, regardless of their ethnicity/race. Nonetheless, with the implementation of current policy, the Every Student Succeeds Act (Bill Number S.1177, 2015), discipline consequences are inequitably assigned to students by ethnicity/race in Texas public schools (Barnes & Slate, 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014). In Texas, the state of interest for this investigation, Slate et al. (2016) focused on discriminatory discipline practices of Black girls and discovered that Black girls are extremely and disproportionately affected by school disciplinary sanctions. As zero tolerance discipline policies have garnered national attention, inequities in discipline toward Black girls have become a relevant concern for educators.

When compared to disciplinary actions toward White and Hispanic girls, Black girls receive more punitive responses to their behavior (Slate et al., 2016). According to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2014), Black girls represent a small percentage of K-12 school student enrolment, yet they are overrepresented among students who are assigned exclusionary discipline consequences or criminalization. Black girls are the only group of girls who are overrepresented in suspensions. In fact,

14% of Black girls have received one or more out of school suspensions. For the 2011-2012 school year, 31% of Black girls in public school were referred to law enforcement as a discipline consequence and 34% of all girls who experienced a school-based arrest (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2014). Discrimination in disciplinary decisions has been attributed to the implicit and explicit racial bias of school leaders who are assigning consequences to Black girls (Blake et al., 2011). To the degree that inequities are present in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black girls on the basis of their economic status, then Black girls are being denied the same opportunities to learn as their peers who are not assigned discipline consequences. Developing safe learning environments through empathy, equity, and communication may be difficult, but it is crucial in creating proportionate discipline management policies that do not result in expulsion of Black girls (Morris, 2016).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments as a function of the economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Extremely Poor) of Black girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8 in Texas public schools. The two discipline consequences that were examined were the two primary discipline consequences assigned in Texas schools: in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. These two discipline consequences were analyzed separately for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years and separately by grade level. The specific focus in this investigation was the degree to which differential assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension had occurred to Black girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8 by their economic status.

## **Significance of the Study**

To date, numerous researchers (e.g., Barnes & Slate, 2016; Boneshefski & Runge, 2014; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Slate et al., 2016) have established the presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black boys and girls. Other researchers (e.g., Friedman-Krauss & Raver, 2015; Khan & Slate, 2016; Knesting & Skiba, 2001; Reardon, 2013; Skiba et al., 2011) have documented the presence of inequities to students as a function of their economic status. To date, however, the intersection of race and economic status have not been well addressed. Accordingly, results from this multiyear analysis will provide educational leaders, policymakers, and education practitioners with valuable information regarding the presence, or absence, of inequities in the assignment of the two major discipline consequences in Texas to Black middle school girls. Findings from this study may be used to inform, influence, and improve classroom practices, with respect to discipline.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this investigation: (a) What was the difference in the assignment of in-school suspension as a function of the economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Extremely Poor) of Grade 6 Black girls?; (b) What was the difference in the assignment of in-school suspension as a function of the economic status of Grade 7 Black girls?; (c) What was the difference in the assignment of in-school suspension as a function of the economic status of Grade 8 Black girls?; (d) What was the difference in the assignment of out-of-school suspension as a function of the economic status of Grade 6 Black girls?; (e) What was the difference in the assignment of out-of-school suspension as a function of the economic status of

Grade 7 Black girls?; (f) What was the difference in the assignment of out-of-school suspension as a function of the economic status of Grade 8 Black girls?; (g) What trends were present in the assignment of in-school suspension by the economic status of Black girls?; and (h) What trends were present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension by the economic status of Black girls? The first six research questions were repeated for each of the four years of data whereas the last two research questions involved results from all four school years and for all three grade levels.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

The data used in this study constituted archival data from past events (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). For this reason, the independent variable involved in this research study cannot be manipulated. As such, a non-experimental, causal comparative research design was used in this investigation (Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Because both the independent variable and the dependent variables had already occurred, extraneous variables were not controlled in this study. The independent variable for this study was the economic status of Black girls and the dependent variables were the discipline consequence assignments of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension of Black girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years in the State of Texas.

### **Participants and Instrumentation**

Data for this study were requested and obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System through a Public Information Request form. The Public Information Request form was submitted to obtain data for a

Basic Statistics course at Sam Houston State University. The data used in this study to answer the research questions had not yet been analyzed. Inequities in discipline consequence assignments were analyzed separately for each school year by the economic status of Black girls. All Texas middle school Black girls who received a disciplinary consequence in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014 2014-2015, or the 2015-2016 school years participated in this study. Specific data that were analyzed were: (a) economic status, (b) grade level, and (c) discipline consequence assigned. Because the data have been audited by the Texas Education Agency, an assumption of minimal errors exists. Archival data was imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, then labeled and reduced to only the variables relevant to this investigation. For this study, only the two major discipline consequences were analyzed.

Major discipline consequences were in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. In-school suspension is an initial disciplinary consequence that results in the removal of a student from the regular classroom by placing the student into a separate classroom (Texas Education Agency, 2010). Out-of-school suspension consequence is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence that does not allow the student to attend school for a day and to not exceed three days in a row (Texas Education Agency, 2010). These two discipline consequences were selected because they are the two most common discipline assignments in Texas.

Economic status was defined as not economically disadvantaged (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Extremely Poor). The label of Not Poor was used to refer to students in Texas who were not eligible for the federal free and reduced lunch program. The category of Moderately Poor was used to refer to students who were determined to



be eligible for the federal reduced price lunch program. As such, they were from families with an income of 131% to 185% of the federal poverty line (Burney & Beilke, 2008).

The category of Extremely Poor referred to students who were eligible for the federal free lunch program and were from families with an income of 130% or less of the federal poverty line (Burney & Beilke, 2008). The specific economic status of students was provided by the Texas Education Agency.

### **Results**

To ascertain the extent to which differences were present in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension assignment by the economic status of Black girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8 in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years in Texas, Pearson chi-square procedures were performed. Because economic status constituted a categorical independent variable (i.e., Extremely Poor, Moderately Poor, and Not Poor) and discipline consequence assignments comprised dichotomous dependent variables (i.e., assignment or non-assignment), Pearson chi-square analyses were the ideal statistical procedure (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). All data were independent of each other. In addition, with the large sample size, the available sample size was greater than 5. Therefore, the assumptions for utilizing a Pearson chi-square were met for the inferential research questions (Field, 2009).

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

With regard to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 582.58, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 Black girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 3.1, Grade 6 Black girls who were

Extremely Poor were assigned two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor and more than one and half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly the same number of in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor.

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Insert Table 3.1 about here

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Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 503.00, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 Black girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor and more than one and a half times as many as Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly the same number of in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 3.1 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With respect to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 576.89, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 Black girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.1, Grade 6 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor and more than one and a half times as many as

Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor.

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 501.37, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 Black girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor and more than one and a half times as many as Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned almost as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.1 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

### **Results for Grade 7 Black Girls and In-School Suspension**

Concerning the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 495.76, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 7 Black girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned almost two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor and one and a half times as many as Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 3.2 are the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

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Insert Table 3.2 about here

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With respect to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 577.38, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 7 Black girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 3.2, Grade 7 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor and one and a half times as many as Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspension as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor

Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 576.89, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 7 Black girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor and more than one and a half times as many as Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned almost as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.2 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 648.43, p < .001$ , by the economic status

of Grade 7 Black girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .16 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls and more than one and a half times as many as Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 3.2 are the frequencies and percentages for this analysis.

### **Results for Grade 8 Black Girls and In-School Suspension**

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 500.51, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 Black girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned almost two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor and one and a half times as many as Grade 8 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.3 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

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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 in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 418.60, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 Black girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was

small, .13 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.3, Grade 8 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than one and a half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor and almost one and a half times as many as Grade 8 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 563.24, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 Black girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned almost two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor and more than one and a half times as many as Grade 8 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.3 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 469.16, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 Black girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned almost two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor and more than one and a half times as many as Grade 8 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly

as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 3.3 are the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

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

With respect to the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 453.37, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 6 Black girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned almost three times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were not poor and Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned to an out-of-school suspension nearly as many times as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

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 Insert Table 3.4 about here  
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Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 422.19, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 6 Black girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .13 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.4, Grade 6 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor and Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor.

Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 575.51, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 6 Black girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor and Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 3.4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 395.00, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 6 Black girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .13 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were not poor and Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 6 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Results for Grade 7 Black Girls and Out-of-School Suspension**

Concerning the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 409.46, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 Black girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .13 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 3.5, Grade 7 Black girls who were



Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor and Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor.

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Insert Table 3.5 about here

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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 507.05, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 Black girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor and Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.5 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

With respect to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 576.89, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 Black girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor and almost two times as many as Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly

as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor. Presented in Table 3.5 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 469.02, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 Black girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor and who were Moderately Poor. Grade 7 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 3.5 are the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

### **Results for Grade 8 Black Girls and Out-of-School Suspension**

Regarding the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 450.31, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 8 Black girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor and almost two times as many as Grade 8 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.6 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

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With respect to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 404.84, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 8 Black girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .13 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 3.6, Grade 8 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor and almost two times as many as Grade 8 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 563.24, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 8 Black girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .15 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor and almost than two times as many as Grade 8 Black girls who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 White girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.6 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 373.59, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 8 Black girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .13 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned almost two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor and

who were Moderately Poor. Grade 8 Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Black girls. Delineated in Table 3.6 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Discussion**

In this study, the degree to which differences were present in the assignment of discipline consequences as a function of the economic status of Black girls was examined for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. Over this 4-year time period and across the three grade levels, statistically significant differences were revealed in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by the economic status of Black girls. The presence of trends in the assignment of discipline consequences in-school and out-of-school suspension by the economic status of Black girls was then determined. Results will now be summarized.

In all four school years and in all three grade levels, Black girls who were Extremely Poor had the highest rates of in-school suspension and out-of school suspension. In-school suspension rates for Black girls who were Extremely Poor ranged from 22.8% to 26.2% in Grade 6, from 27.4% to 30.4% in Grade 7, and from 26.5% to 31.5% in Grade 8. In school suspension rates for Black girls who were Moderately Poor ranged from 13.5% to 16.3% in Grade 6, from 16.0% to 20.6% in Grade 7, and from 17.3% to 21.2% in Grade 8. In school suspension rates ranged from 10.5% to 11.9% for Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor, from 12.7% to 20.6% for Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor, and 13.9% to 17.8% for Grade 8 Black girls who were Not Poor. Readers are directed to Table 3.7 for a summary of the results for the in-school

suspension analyses by the economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls across the four school years.

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Insert Table 3.7 about here  
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With respect to out-of-school suspension, in all four school years and across all three grade levels, Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned statistically significantly higher rates of out-of-school suspension than Black girls who were Moderately Poor or who were Not Poor. The out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 14.4% to 16.0% in Grade 6, from 17.1% to 19.2% in Grade 7, and from 18.3% to 20.5% in Grade 8 for Black girls who were Extremely Poor. For Black girls who were Moderately Poor, the out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 6.3% to 6.9% in Grade 6, from 8.6% to 9.1% in Grade 7, and from 9.5% to 10.4% in Grade 8. Concerning Black girls who were Not Poor, the out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 5.6% to 5.9% in Grade 6, from 7.6% to 9.0% in Grade 7, and from 8.2% to 9.9% in Grade 8. Clearly, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was evident in the assignment of out-of-school suspension by economic status. Table 3.8 contains a summary of the results of the out-of-school analyses by the economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls.

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Insert Table 3.8 about here  
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### **Connections with the Existing Literature**

Disparities in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black students by their economic status have been well documented in the extant literature (e.g., Anfinson, Autumn, Lehr, Riestenberg, & Scullinn, 2010; Skiba et al., 2011; Skiba & Knesting, 2001). Inequities continue to exist in the assignment of discipline consequences by the ethnicity/race and economic status of students (e.g., Barnes & Slate, 2016; Boneshefski & Runge, 2014; Friedman-Krauss & Raver, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Khan & Slate, 2016; Reardon, 2013; Skiba et al., 2011; Slate et al., 2016). In this study, a consistent stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present in discipline consequence assignment by the degree of poverty of Black girls. Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned statistically significantly more often to in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension than Black girls who were Moderately Poor and to Black girls who were Not Poor. Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned to an in-school suspension and to an out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than Black girls who were Not Poor.

Results of this research investigation were also consistent with previous researchers (Blake et al., 2011; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Slate et al., 2016) who have documented the presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences assigned to Black girls. The National Association of Secondary Schools (2002) noted that ethnic/racial disparities in school discipline were directly related to economic status. As established by previous researchers (Blake et al., 2011; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Slate et al., 2016), Black girls are more likely to be suspended than White or Hispanic girls. Moreover, Black girls were nearly four times as likely to receive an in-school suspension

and twice as likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension than were White or Hispanic girls. Findings from this investigation, as from previous researchers (e.g., Anfinson et al., 2010; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Mizel & Ewing, 2016; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2011; Slate et al., 2016; Tiger & Slate, 2017), reveal a clear lack of equity in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black girls by their economic status.

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

Based upon the results of this multiyear investigation, several implications for policy and practice can be made. First, educators are encouraged to examine the reasons for suspensions of Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls to identify patterns of misbehavior infractions. If patterns of misbehavior are present, educators are urged to identify school-wide behavioral supports for improvement in classroom behavior management strategies for all students. Second, school leaders are encouraged to shift their attention toward the implementation of positive behavior supports versus punitive behavior systems. School leaders are encouraged to examine their discipline data and discipline programs to address inequities in discipline consequence assignments in relation to girls and their degree of economic status. Due to a lack of cultural or social capital, Khan and Slate (2016) suggested that students living in poverty lack the social and cultural capital to follow school rules and norms. As such, educational leaders may need to develop programs and methods to identify the lack of cultural capital and improve it. Developing the cultural competence of teachers and staff through teacher preparation programs and ongoing professional development could improve their understanding of student diversity. In addition, educational leaders are urged to consistently report and evaluate

disaggregated discipline data to discover patterns in discipline practices in school districts and campuses to ensure equity irrespective of economic status.

When comparing Black girls of different grades and levels of economic status, the findings of this study were that Black girls who were Extremely Poor were at much greater risk of experiencing suspension than Black girls who were Moderately Poor and Not Poor. If disproportionate suspension rates are determined to be present for Black girls in middle school, school leaders are urged to discover the reasons for the over-representation of Black girls in the discipline consequence assignment of both in-school and out-of-school suspensions. Thorough analysis of discipline data of specific school districts and school campuses may reveal that Black girls in poverty are assigned a great number of suspensions due to educator bias, lack of teacher cultural competence in behavior management, or the presence of discrimination. Cognizance of trends in campus and school district discipline data could provide the opportunity for the development of preventive school-wide behavior strategies that cultivate positive and effective discipline practices to decrease the number of suspensions of Black girls (Mendez & Knoff, 2003).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based upon the results of this multiyear, empirical study, several recommendations for future research can be made. First, because data on only middle school girls were analyzed in this investigation, future researchers are encouraged to extend this study to girls in elementary schools and high schools. The extent to which the results of this study would be generalizable to girls in elementary schools and in high schools is not known. Second, data on only Texas girls were analyzed here.



Accordingly, extending this investigation to girls in other states is recommended. The degree to which the discipline inequities depicted in this study are generalizable to girls in other states is not known. Third, researchers are urged to examine discipline consequences using equity auditing as a tool to identify and decrease disparities in the assignment of discipline consequences (Skrla, Mckenzie, & Scheurich, 2008). Researchers are encouraged to collect and examine disaggregated data on the reasons why students are assigned discipline consequences. Based on the results of that data, classroom interventions could be developed to address discipline-related issues. Fourth, school leaders are urged to locate and focus on the disciplinary practices of schools with lower discipline referral rates to outline the strategies that are in place to keep students in the academic setting (Hilberth & Slate, 2014). Lastly, because this investigation was conducted on only girls, researchers are encouraged to replicate this investigation on boys.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension were assigned in an inequitable manner to Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls as a function of their economic status. Inferential statistical analyses yielded statistically significant differences in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by the economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls. In all four school years and in all three grade levels, Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned statistically significantly more in-school suspensions and more out-of-school suspensions than Black girls who were Moderately Poor and to Black girls who were Not Poor. Moreover, Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls who were Moderately

Poor were assigned more in-school suspensions and more out-of-school suspensions than Black girls who were Not Poor. The results of this multiyear analysis were congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Friedman-Krauss & Raver, 2015; Khan & Slate, 2016; Knesting & Skiba, 2001; Reardon, 2013; Skiba et al., 2011) who have documented the presence of inequities to students as a function of their economic status.

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Table 3.1

*Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspensions by the Economic Status of Grade 6 Black Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 751) 11.9%	( <i>n</i> = 5,570) 88.1%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 300) 16.3%	( <i>n</i> = 300) 83.7%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,237) 26.2%	( <i>n</i> = 11,936 ) 73.8%
2013-2014		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 746) 11.9%	( <i>n</i> = 5,509) 88.1%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 282) 15.8%	( <i>n</i> = 1,501 ) 84.2%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,031) 25.1%	( <i>n</i> = 12,020) 74.9%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 694) 10.2%	( <i>n</i> = 6,128) 89.8%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 248) 14.1%	( <i>n</i> = 1,505) 85.9%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 3,602) 23.5%	( <i>n</i> = 11,708) 76.5%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 722) 10.5%	( <i>n</i> = 6,127) 89.5%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 224) 13.5%	( <i>n</i> = 1,430) 86.5%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 3,590) 22.8%	( <i>n</i> = 12,170) 77.2%



Table 3.2

*Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspensions by the Economic Status of Grade**7 Black Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an In- School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In- School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,121) 16.7%	( <i>n</i> = 5,600) 83.3%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 367) 20.6%	( <i>n</i> = 1,493) 79.4%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,850) 30.4%	( <i>n</i> = 11,088) 69.6%
2013-2014		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,003) 14.8%	( <i>n</i> = 5,730) 85.2%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 369) 19.6%	( <i>n</i> = 1,511) 80.4%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,753) 29.5%	( <i>n</i> = 11,307) 70.5%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 985) 14.1%	( <i>n</i> = 6014) 85.9%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 303) 17.6%	( <i>n</i> = 1,417) 82.4%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,353) 28.3%	( <i>n</i> = 11,035) 71.7%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 924) 12.7%	( <i>n</i> = 6,336) 87.3%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 271) 16.0%	( <i>n</i> = 1,422) 84.0%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,113) 27.4%	( <i>n</i> = 10,915) 72.6%

Table 3.3

*Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspensions by the Economic Status of Grade 8 Black Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an In- School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In- School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,270) 17.8%	( <i>n</i> = 5,883) 82.2%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 382) 21.2%	( <i>n</i> = 1,423) 78.8%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,871) 31.5%	( <i>n</i> = 10,609) 68.5%
2013-2014		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,187) 14.8%	( <i>n</i> = 5,730) 85.2%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 369) 19.6%	( <i>n</i> = 1,511) 80.4%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,753) 29.5%	( <i>n</i> = 11,307) 70.5%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 985) 14.1%	( <i>n</i> = 6014) 85.9%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 303) 17.6%	( <i>n</i> = 1,417) 82.4%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,353) 28.3%	( <i>n</i> = 11,035) 71.7%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 924) 12.7%	( <i>n</i> = 6,336) 87.3%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 271) 16.0%	( <i>n</i> = 1,422) 84.0%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,113) 27.4%	( <i>n</i> = 10,915) 72.6%

Table 3.4

*Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspensions by the Economic Status of Grade 6 Black Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 376) 5.9%	( <i>n</i> = 5,945) 94.1%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 117) 6.3%	( <i>n</i> = 1,726) 93.7%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,515) 15.6%	( <i>n</i> = 13,658) 84.4%
2013-2014		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 419) 6.7%	( <i>n</i> = 5,836) 93.3%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 112) 6.3%	( <i>n</i> = 1,671) 93.7%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,569) 16.0%	( <i>n</i> = 13,482) 84.0%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 383) 5.6%	( <i>n</i> = 6,493) 94.4%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 120) 6.8%	( <i>n</i> = 1,633) 93.2%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,210) 14.4%	( <i>n</i> = 13,100) 85.6%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 399) 5.8%	( <i>n</i> = 6,450) 94.2%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 114) 6.9.0%	( <i>n</i> = 1,540) 93.1%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,297) 14.6%	( <i>n</i> = 13,463) 85.4%

Table 3.5

*Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspensions by the Economic Status of Grade 7 Black Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 603) 9.0%	( <i>n</i> = 6,118) 91.0%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 171) 9.1%	( <i>n</i> = 1,709) 90.9%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,989) 18.8%	( <i>n</i> = 12,949) 81.2%
2013-2014		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 551) 8.2%	( <i>n</i> = 6,205) 91.8%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 169) 9.0%	( <i>n</i> = 1,711) 91.0%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 3,075) 19.2%	( <i>n</i> = 12,965) 80.8%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 550) 7.9%	( <i>n</i> = 6,449) 92.1%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 149) 8.7%	( <i>n</i> = 1,571) 91.3%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,628) 17.1%	( <i>n</i> = 12,760) 82.9%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 550) 7.6%	( <i>n</i> = 6,710) 92.4%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 146) 8.6%	( <i>n</i> = 1,547) 91.4%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,677) 17.8%	( <i>n</i> = 12,352) 82.2%

Table 3.6

*Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspensions by the Economic Status of Grade 8 Black Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 707) 9.9%	( <i>n</i> = 6,446) 90.1%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 188) 10.4%	( <i>n</i> = 1,617) 89.6%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 3,170) 20.5%	( <i>n</i> = 12,310) 68.5%
2013-2014		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 677) 9.5%	( <i>n</i> = 6,429) 90.5%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 199) 10.3%	( <i>n</i> = 1,733) 89.7%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 3,058) 19.4%	( <i>n</i> = 12,723) 80.6%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 622) 8.2%	( <i>n</i> = 6,966) 91.8%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 174) 9.8%	( <i>n</i> = 1,609) 90.2%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,784) 18.3%	( <i>n</i> = 12,433) 81.7%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 675) 9.1%	( <i>n</i> = 6,717) 90.9%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 162) 9.5%	( <i>n</i> = 1,539) 90.5%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,753) 18.3%	( <i>n</i> = 12,250) 81.7%

Table 3.7

*Summary of Results of the In-School Suspension Analyses by the Economic Status of Grade 6-8 Black Girls 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	.16	Small	Extremely Poor
2013-2014	.15	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.16	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.14	Small	Extremely Poor
Grade 7			
2012-2013	.14	Small	Extremely Poor
2013-2014	.15	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.16	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.16	Small	Extremely Poor
Grade 8			
2012-2013	.14	Small	Extremely Poor
2013-2014	.13	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.15	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.14	Small	Extremely Poor

Table 3.8

*Summary of Results of Out-of-School Suspension Analyses by the Economic Status of Grade 6-8 Black Girls 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	.14	Small	Extremely Poor
2013-2014	.13	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.16	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.13	Small	Extremely Poor
Grade 7			
2012-2013	.13	Small	Extremely Poor
2013-2014	.14	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.16	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.14	Small	Extremely Poor
Grade 8			
2012-2013	.14	Small	Extremely Poor
2013-2014	.13	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.16	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.13	Small	Extremely Poor

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENT DIFFERENCES BY THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF GRADE 6, 7, AND 8 HISPANIC GIRLS: A TEXAS STATEWIDE MULTIYEAR ANALYSIS

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



### **Abstract**

Addressed in this multiyear investigation was the degree to which discipline consequence assignments differed by the economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, or Extremely Poor) of Hispanic middle school girls. Statewide data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency for the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years.

Inferential statistical procedures yielded statistically significant differences for all school years examined. For all 4 school years and across the three grade levels, a clear stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was present in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by economic status of Hispanic girls. In all four years and in all three grade levels, Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor had statistically significantly higher rates of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension than Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor had statistically significantly higher rates of both discipline consequences than Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Implications are discussed and suggestions for policy and practice are made.

**Keywords:** Not Poor, Moderately Poor, Extremely Poor, Middle School Hispanic Girls, In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENT DIFFERENCES BY THE  
ECONOMIC STATUS OF GRADE 6, 7, AND 8 HISPANIC GIRLS: A TEXAS  
STATEWIDE MULTIYEAR ANALYSIS

In a recent investigation conducted in the state of interest for this article, Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016) analyzed inequities in discipline consequences for Hispanic, Black, and White girls in Grades 4-11. A persistent cycle of disparities in exclusionary discipline sanctions was established for Grade 4 through Grade 11 Hispanic girls who received more in-school suspensions, more out-of-school suspensions, and more Discipline Alternative Education Program placements respectively across each grade level than did White girls. For each grade level, disproportionality existed in the assignment of these disciplinary consequences to Hispanic girls (Slate et al., 2016).

Regarding Grade 5, Hispanic girls were assigned (9.4%) almost twice as many out-of-school suspensions as White girls (5.1%). Grade 5 Hispanic girls received all five of the Discipline Alternative Education Program placements at that grade level. Concerning Grade 6, a substantial increase was documented in disciplinary consequences, with 2,181 Hispanic girls being assigned an out-of-school suspension in comparison to only 23 White girls. The number of Hispanic girls who received an out-of-school suspension was extremely high in comparison to White girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls continued to receive a higher percentage (17.3%) of out-of-school suspensions than did White Grade 7 girls (Slate et al, 2016). Of note here is that White girls (0.4%) were assigned almost six times fewer out-of-school suspensions than Hispanic girls (Slate et al., 2016). Although discipline consequences increased for Grade 7 Hispanic girls, the numbers were comparable to the discipline consequences assigned to Grade 8 Hispanic

girls. Hispanic girls received over 15%, and White girls received less than 3% of the out-of school suspensions.

A noticeable increase was observed in their study with respect to the discipline consequence assignments for girls in high school (Slate et al, 2016). With respect to Grade 9, more than 60,000 in-school suspensions were assigned to girls. Hispanic girls were assigned (14.2%), almost five times more often than White girls (2.9%). Concerning Grade 10 girls, Hispanic girls received four times the in-school suspension rate than did White girls. Of the in-school suspensions in Grade 11, Hispanic girls were assigned this consequence almost three times more than White girls (Slate et al., 2016).

Hispanic girls are being exposed to disproportionate discipline consequences in comparison to White girls. In previous studies, it has been documented that Hispanic students have a higher risk of being assigned a discipline consequence at school; however, limited research exists to explain the reasons for their disproportionate punishment (Peguero, Popp, & Shekarkhar, 2015). As the Hispanic population grows in the United States, the risk of negative outcomes and disproportionate discipline consequences among Hispanic adolescents will also increase (Peguero et al., 2015). In the school setting, stereotypes of Hispanic students emphasize migrant manual labor, low economic status, and poor academic performance (Phelan & Rudman, 2010).

Inequitable discipline consequences have also been documented as being based on student economic status. Recently, Khan and Slate (2016) established that Grade 6 Hispanic students in Texas were assigned in-school suspension more often than White students. Of the 33,233 in-school suspensions assigned to Hispanic students, 86% were assigned to Hispanic students in poverty (Khan & Slate, 2016). Concerning White

students, 51% of the 14,902 in-school suspensions they received were assigned to White students in poverty. A similar trend was evident for Grade 6 out-of-school suspension assignments. For Hispanic students, 86% of 14,377 out-of-school suspensions assigned were assigned to Hispanic students in poverty. With respect to White students, 57% of 3,658 out of school suspensions were assigned to White students in poverty.

Additionally, inequities in the assignment of Discipline Alternative Education Program placements were noted, with 5,256 of these 6,104 consequences assigned to students who were in poverty and less than a thousand assigned to students who were not in poverty (Khan & Slate, 2016). For Grade 6 Hispanic students who were in poverty, 3,192 (2.2%) received a Discipline Alternative Education Placement in comparison to 309 (0.8%) of Hispanic students who were not in poverty. Similarly, Grade 6 White students who were in poverty received more Discipline Alternative Education Placement assignments than did White students who were not in poverty. Of the 1,025 Discipline Alternative Education Program placements, White students who were in poverty were assigned 691 (2.1%) and White students who were not in poverty were assigned 334 (0.4%). These disparate discipline consequence assignments may reveal inequities by economic status (Khan & Slate, 2016).

In another recent study conducted in Texas, Barnes and Slate (2016) established the presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences assigned to Hispanic Grade 4 and 5 students, Grade 4 students in Texas were assigned 480 out-of-school suspensions. Of those 480 suspensions, 38% were assigned to Hispanic students, and only 1% was assigned to White students. Furthermore, Barnes and Slate (2016) documented the presence of discipline inequities in the consequence assignment of Grade

5 students in Texas schools. For example, of the 9,862 in-school suspensions assigned to Texas Grade 5 students, 40% were assigned to Hispanic students, and 22% were assigned to White students. Texas Grade 5 student out-of-school suspension rates were similar to Texas Grade 4 student out-of-school suspension rates. Hispanic students were assigned a higher percentage of out-of-school suspensions. Hispanic students were assigned 31%, and Whites students were assigned 6% of all out-of-school suspensions.

Historically, students from lower income homes have experienced lower rates of academic success in comparison to their more advantaged peers. Reardon (2013) noted that over the past 40 years American families have changed, with children in high-income families being raised by two college-educated parents and low-income students being raised by a single uneducated parent. Thus, family income has been linked to family dynamics and accessible resources that influence student overall success. “Family income is now a better predictor of children’s success in school than race” (Reardon, 2013, p.1). Noticeably, students who are not in poverty outperform their peers who are in poverty. Disparities in discipline practices may not only continue to limit equality in educational opportunities for every student but also to influence the ever-widening achievement gap negatively (Reardon, 2013). Students who are in poverty receive more inequitable discipline consequence assignments in comparison to students who are not in poverty. Clear evidence exists that Hispanic students’ who are in poverty experience disproportionate discipline consequences, both for their ethnicity/race and for their economic status.

**Statement of the Problem**

Hispanic boys and girls, the population of interest in this investigation, have been assigned exclusionary discipline consequences, such as suspension and expulsion, considerably more often than their White counterparts. Documented disparities in the assignment of discipline consequences by ethnicity/race negatively affect the academic performance of Black and Hispanic students (Vincent, Frank, Hawken, & Tobin, 2012). Unfortunately, suspension has become a common disciplinary sanction in U.S. public schools (Wilson, 2014). Although a common discipline assignment, numerous researchers (e.g., Chin et al., 2012; U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education, 2014) have indicated that suspensions are counterproductive for students with behavioral issues and result in lost time for academic instruction. Exclusionary discipline consequences, such as suspension, have been linked to poor student performance, thereby; widening the achievement gaps between Hispanic students and their White peers. To the degree that inequities were present in the assignment of discipline consequences to Hispanic girls on the basis of their economic status, then Hispanic girls are being denied the same opportunities to learn as their peers who are not assigned discipline consequences. Establishing accountability in discipline practices could ensure that discipline consequences are assigned in a more equitable and unbiased manner; thereby, providing more equitable learning opportunities to all students (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments assigned to Hispanic girls by their

economic status. The two discipline consequences of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension were analyzed separately for the 2011-2012 through the 2014-2015 school years. Analyses conducted in this article were conducted separately for Hispanic girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Following these inferential statistical analyses, results were examined for trends in the differential assignment of discipline consequences by the economic status of Hispanic girls.

### **Significance of the Study**

Numerous legislation, such as *Brown v. Board Education* (1955), the Civil Rights Act (Public Law 88-352, 1964), Title IX of the Education Amendment (Public Law 92-318, 1972), No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law 107-110, 2001), and the Every Student Succeeds Act (Bill Number S.1177, 2015), have each been developed to create equal educational opportunities for all public school students. In addition, the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama each recognized this need and implemented policies/initiatives to provide equality in educational opportunities for public school students, regardless of their economic status and ethnicity/race. Currently, public school educators and administrators continue to struggle with establishing equitable discipline policies for all students.

Not clear in the empirical literature is the interaction between student economic status for Hispanic middle school girls with respect to their receipt of either an in-school suspension or an out-of-school suspension. As such, results from the four years of data analyses will add to the extant body of literature regarding the presence of inequities in

discipline consequences. Moreover, findings from this multiyear investigation may be used to support the need for major changes in the discipline policies utilized in Texas.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this investigation: (a) What was the difference in the assignment of in-school suspension as a function of the economic status (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Extremely Poor) of Grade 6 Hispanic girls?; (b) What was the difference in the assignment of in-school suspension as a function of the economic status of Grade 7 Hispanic girls?; (c) What was the difference in the assignment of in-school suspension as a function of the economic status of Grade 8 Hispanic girls?; (d) What was the difference in the assignment of out-of-school suspension as a function of the economic status of Grade 6 Hispanic girls?; (e) What was the difference in the assignment of out-of-school suspension as a function of the economic status of Grade 7 Hispanic girls?; (f) What was the difference in the assignment of out-of-school suspension as a function of the economic status of Grade 8 Hispanic girls?; (g) What trends were present in the assignment of in-school suspension by the economic status of Hispanic girls?; and (h) What trends were present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension by the economic status of Hispanic girls? The first six research questions were repeated for each of the four years of data whereas the last two research questions involved comparisons across all four years of data.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

A non-experimental, causal comparative research design was used in this study (Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Outcomes have already occurred in



causal-comparative research, therefore independent variables cannot be manipulated (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The data used in this study constituted archival data from past events (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). As such, the independent variable in this study was the economic status of Hispanic girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Discipline consequence assignments, specifically in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension, for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 school years in the State of Texas constituted the dependent variables. Both the independent variable and the dependent variables had already occurred.

### **Participants and Instrumentation**

During a Basic Statistics course at Sam Houston State University, a Public Information Request form was submitted to the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System to obtain the data required to answer the research questions in this article. The archival data that were requested and obtained to answer the research questions had not yet been analyzed. The data included all Texas Hispanic middle school girls who received either the discipline consequence of in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension in the 2011-2012 through the 2013-2014 school years. Specific data analyzed were: (a) grade level, (b) economic status, and (c) discipline consequence assigned. Because the data have been audited by the Texas Education Agency, an assumption of minimal errors exists.

Economic status was defined as consisting of three categories (i.e., Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Extremely Poor). The label of Not Poor was used to refer to students in Texas who were not eligible for the federal free and reduced lunch program. The category of Moderately Poor referred to students who were determined to be eligible

for the federal reduced price lunch program. Accordingly, students were from families with an income of 131% to 185% of the federal poverty line (Burney & Beilke, 2008). The category of Extremely Poor referred to students who were eligible for the federal free lunch program and were from families with an income of 130% or less of the federal poverty line (Burney & Beilke, 2008). The specific economic status of Hispanic girls whose data were analyzed herein was provided by the Texas Education Agency.

Major discipline consequences were in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. In-school suspension is an initial disciplinary consequence that results in the removal of a student from the regular classroom by placing the student into a separate classroom (Texas Education Agency, 2010). Out-of-school suspension consequence is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence that does not allow the student to attend school for a day and to not exceed three days in a row (Texas Education Agency, 2010). These two discipline consequences were selected because they are the two most common discipline assignments in Texas.

### **Results**

To ascertain the extent to which differences were present in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school assignment by the economic status of Hispanic girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8 in the, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years in Texas, Pearson chi-square procedures were performed. Because economic status constituted a categorical independent variable (i.e., Extremely Poor, Moderately Poor, and Not Poor) and discipline consequence assignments comprised dichotomous dependent variables (i.e., assignment or non-assignment), Pearson chi-square analyses were the ideal statistical procedure (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). All data were

independent of each other. In addition, with the large sample size, the available sample size was greater than 5. Therefore, the assumptions for utilizing a Pearson chi-square were met for the inferential research questions (Field, 2009).

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

In the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 668.62, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 Hispanic girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 4.1, Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than one and half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and almost two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned slightly more in-school suspensions than as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor.

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 Insert Table 4.1 about here  
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Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 644.88, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 Hispanic girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than one and a half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and more than two times as many as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor

were assigned nearly the same number of in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Black girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 4.1 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With respect to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 683.72, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 Hispanic girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's  $V$ , was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.1, Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than one and a half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and more than two times as many as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor.

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 762.17, p < .001$ , to Grade 6 Hispanic girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's  $V$ , was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned almost two times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and more than two times as many as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned almost as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Table 4.1 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

### **Results for Grade 7 Hispanic Girls and In-School Suspension**

Concerning the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 859.06, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 7 Hispanic girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's  $V$ , was small, .10 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than one and a half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and almost two times as many as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 4.2 are the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

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 Insert Table 4.2 about here  
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With respect to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 814.31, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 7 Hispanic girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's  $V$ , was small, .10 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.2, Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than one and a half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and one almost two times as many as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor.

Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 778.49, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 7 Hispanic girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than one and a half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and more than one and a half times as many as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned almost as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Table 4.2 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 880.09, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 7 Hispanic girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .10 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than one and a half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and almost two times as many as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 4.2 are the frequencies and percentages for this analysis.

### **Results for Grade 8 Hispanic Girls and In-School Suspension**

In the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 720.90, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 Hispanic girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were

assigned almost one and a half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and more than one and a half times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Table 4.3 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

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 Insert Table 4.3 about here  
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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 666.03, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 Hispanic girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). As revealed in Table 4.3, Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than one and a half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and more than one and a half times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 711.37, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 Hispanic girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than one and a half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and more than one and a half times as many as

Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Table 4.3 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 662.00, p < .001$ , to Grade 8 Hispanic girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than one and a half times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and more than one and a half times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many in-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 4.3 are the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

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

In the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 513.38, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 6 Hispanic girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned to an out-of-school suspension nearly as many times as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Table 4.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.



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Concerning the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 505.59, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 6 Hispanic girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.4, Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and more than two times as many as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor.

Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 514.75, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 6 Hispanic girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two and a half times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and almost three times as many as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Presented in Table 4.4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 539.84, p < .001$ , by

the economic status of Grade 6 Hispanic girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's  $V$ , was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned almost two and a half times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and more than two and a half times as many as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 4.4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Results for Grade 7 Hispanic Girls and Out-of-School Suspension**

Concerning the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 530.39, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 Hispanic girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's  $V$ , was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.5, Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and who were Not Poor. Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor.

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 Insert Table 4.5 about here  
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Regarding the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 646.60, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 Hispanic girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's  $V$ ,

was below small, .09 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned almost two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and more than two times as many as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Black girls who were Not Poor. Table 4.5 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

With respect to the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 552.17, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 Hispanic girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Presented in Table 4.5 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 605.87, p < .001$ , to Grade 7 Hispanic girls by their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions

as Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 4.5 are the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

### **Results for Grade 8 Hispanic Girls and Out-of-School Suspension**

Regarding the 2012-2013 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 452.15, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 8 Hispanic girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than one and a half times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Table 4.6 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

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With respect to the 2013-2014 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 474.27, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 8 Hispanic girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). As presented in Table 4.6, Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than one and a half times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and almost two times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 8

Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor.

Concerning the 2014-2015 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 523.17, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 8 Hispanic girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and almost two times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Table 4.6 contains the frequencies and percentages for this school year.

In the 2015-2016 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of out-of-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 505.49, p < .001$ , by the economic status of Grade 8 Hispanic girls. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned more than two times as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and almost two times as many as Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned nearly as many out-of-school suspensions as Grade 8 Hispanic girls. Delineated in Table 4.6 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Discussion**

In this empirical multiyear investigation, the degree to which differences were present in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by the

economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic girls was addressed. Texas statewide data for the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years were analyzed. Inferential statistical procedures revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension in all four school years and at all three grade levels. Following the statistical analyses, the presence of trends was determined. A summary of the results will now be provided.

With respect to in-school suspension rates, Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor had statistically significantly higher in-school suspension rates than either Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor or Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. In all four school years and in all three grade levels, Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor received the highest rates of in-school and out-of school suspension. In-school suspension rates for Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor ranged from 11.0% to 12.9% in Grade 6, from 14.5% to 17.8% in Grade 7, and from 14.8% to 18.2% in Grade 8. In school suspension rates for Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor ranged from 6.3% to 8.1% in Grade 6, from 8.7% to 11.4% in Grade 7, and from 9.6% to 12.3% in Grade 8. In school suspension rates ranged from 5.2% to 6.6% for Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor, from 7.5% to 9.8% for Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor, and 8.6% to 10.7% for Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Readers are directed to Table 4.7 for a summary of the results for the in-school suspension analyses by the economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic girls across the four school years.

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Regarding out-of-school suspension in all four years and across all three grade levels, Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned statistically significantly higher rates of out-of-school suspension than Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. The out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 5.4% to 6.2% in Grade 6, from 7.6% to 8.4% in Grade 7, and from 8.0% to 8.6% in Grade 8 for Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor. For Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor, the out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 2.4% to 3.0% in Grade 6, from 3.4% to 4.2% in Grade 7, and from 3.9% to 4.7% in Grade 8. Concerning Hispanic girls who were Not Poor, the out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 2.0% to 2.5% in Grade 6, from 3.5% to 4.1% in Grade 7, and from 4.2% to 4.6% in Grade 8. A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was clearly evident in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by the economic status of Hispanic girls. Readers are directed to Table 4.8 for a summary of the results of the out-of-school analyses by economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic girls.

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### **Connections with the Extant Literature**

Researchers (e.g., Barnes & Slate, 2016; Khan & Slate, 2016; Slate et al., 2016) have documented inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences to Hispanic students by their economic status. The discipline disparities in this multiyear investigation were commensurate with the disparities in discipline documented in those studies. Moreover, a clear and consistent stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was

present in the discipline consequence assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by the degree of poverty of Hispanic girls in this study. Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned statistically significantly more often to in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension than Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Moreover, Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned to an in-school suspension and to an out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than Hispanic girls who were Not Poor.

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

Based upon the results of this multiyear investigation, several implications for policy and practice can be made. Educational leaders are encouraged to review their discipline data and discipline programs to address whether students are overrepresented based upon characteristics such as poverty, special education identification, and mobility. As more extensive data become available to school districts and to school campuses, school leaders are encouraged to analyze the data and implement programming to address any behavior related inequities that they discover. As such, educational programming that could be developed to address behavior issues might include social-emotional learning, positive behavior programs, classroom management programs, and school climate programs. A final recommendation for educational leaders would be to build the capacity of their staff through professional development in competency in teacher-student interaction, discipline, and classroom instruction.

As school administrators identify disproportionate suspension rates among Hispanic girls in middle school, they are urged to discover the reasons for the overrepresentation of Hispanic girls in the discipline consequence assignment of both in-



school and out-of-school suspensions. Extensive analysis of discipline data of specific districts and campuses may reveal that Hispanic girls in poverty are/are not committing more behavior infractions, experience lack of social and cultural capital, lack of teacher/administrator training and cultural competence, lack of positive school climate, and lack of parental involvement. The presence of trends in campus and school district discipline data could provide the evidence to support the development of multi-tiered discipline programs with a race-based approach to address the specific needs of Hispanic girls (Ganao, Silvestre, & Glenn, 2013). Thereby, school leaders could identify bias in consequence assignments and eliminate the funneling of Hispanic girls into the school to prison pipeline.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based upon the results of this multiyear, empirical study, several recommendations for future research can be made. First, because data for this study only included Hispanic girls in middle schools in the state of Texas, researchers could extend the study to Hispanic girls at the elementary school level. Researchers are also encouraged to extend this investigation to Hispanic girls at the secondary school level. The extent to which the results of this study would be generalizable to Hispanic girls at other grade levels is not known. Second, data on only Hispanic girls were analyzed here. Researchers are encouraged to extend this investigation to girls of other ethnic/racial backgrounds. Are the same inequities that were established herein also occurring for other girls of different ethnic/racial backgrounds? Third, data on only girls were examined in this study. Whether these results would be generalizable to boys is not clear. A fourth recommendation would be for researchers to replicate this investigation in other

states. Not known is whether the results described herein are generalizable to Hispanic girls in other states.

A fifth recommendation would be for researchers to analyze discipline data based on other student characteristics such as their ethnicity/race, their gender; whether they are enrolled in special education, and whether they are English Language Learners. Sixth, only two discipline consequences were examined in this investigation. Researchers are encouraged to analyze discipline data on expulsion, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Whether or not the inequities that were documented here are also occurring with the other types of discipline consequences is not known. A final recommendation would be for researchers to analyze discipline data in a longitudinal manner. That is, what happens to students when they receive an initial disciplinary consequence for a misbehavior? Are they then more or less likely to continue misbehaving?

### **Conclusion**

In this multiyear, statewide analysis, the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension to Grades 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic girls by their economic status was addressed. Through analyzing four years of Texas statewide data, statistically significant differences were revealed in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by the economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic girls. In all four school years and in all three grade levels, Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor received statistically significantly more in-school suspensions and more out-of-school suspensions than Hispanic girls who were Not Poor and Hispanic Girls who were Moderately Poor. Similarly, Hispanic girls who

were Moderately Poor were assigned statistically significantly more in-school suspensions and more out-of-school suspensions than Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. The research findings of this statewide analysis were consistent with previous researchers (e.g., Barnes & Slate, 2016; Khan & Slate, 2016; Slate et al., 2016) who documented disparities in discipline consequence assignments to Hispanic students by their economic status.

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Table 4.1

*Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspensions by the Economic Status of Grade 6 Hispanic Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an In- School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In- School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,339) 6.6%	( <i>n</i> = 18,813) 93.4%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 610) 8.1%	( <i>n</i> = 6,926) 91.9%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 7,362) 12.9%	( <i>n</i> = 49,659) 87.1%
2013-2014		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,216) 5.9%	( <i>n</i> = 19,345) 94.1%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 552) 7.4%	( <i>n</i> = 6,954) 92.6%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 6,627) 11.8%	( <i>n</i> = 49,504) 88.2%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,259) 5.5%	( <i>n</i> = 21,451) 94.5%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 483) 6.6%	( <i>n</i> = 6,791) 93.4%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 6,492) 11.2%	( <i>n</i> = 51,491) 88.8%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,211) 5.2%	( <i>n</i> = 22,300) 94.8%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 428) 6.3%	( <i>n</i> = 6,418) 93.7%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 6,581) 11.0%	( <i>n</i> = 53,463) 89.0%

Table 4.2

*Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspensions by the Economic Status of Grade 7 Hispanic Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an In- School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In- School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,125) 9.8%	( <i>n</i> = 19,501) 90.2%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 831) 11.4%	( <i>n</i> = 6,490) 88.6%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 9,763) 17.8%	( <i>n</i> = 45,055) 82.2%
2013-2014		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,883) 8.6%	( <i>n</i> = 20,034) 91.4%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 816) 10.6%	( <i>n</i> = 6,875) 89.4%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 9,186) 16.1%	( <i>n</i> = 48,040) 83.9%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,012) 8.5%	( <i>n</i> = 21,788) 91.5%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 644) 9.0%	( <i>n</i> = 6,487) 91.0%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 8,568) 15.2%	( <i>n</i> = 47,854) 84.8%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,813) 7.5%	( <i>n</i> = 22,472) 92.5%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 589) 8.7%	( <i>n</i> = 6,201) 91.3%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 8,490) 14.5%	( <i>n</i> = 50,038) 85.5%



Table 4.3

*Frequencies and Percentages of In-School Suspensions by the Economic Status of Grade 8 Hispanic Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an In- School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an In- School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,363) 10.7%	( <i>n</i> = 19,631) 89.3%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 893) 12.3%	( <i>n</i> = 6,340) 87.7%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 9,422) 18.2%	( <i>n</i> = 42,259) 81.8%
2013-2014		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,311) 10.1%	( <i>n</i> = 20,684) 89.9%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 836) 11.0%	( <i>n</i> = 6,755) 89.0%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 9,110) 16.7%	( <i>n</i> = 45,284) 83.3%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,349) 9.3%	( <i>n</i> = 22,801) 90.7%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 745) 10.3%	( <i>n</i> = 6,500) 89.7%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 8,982,) 15.9%	( <i>n</i> = 47,505) 84.1%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 2,150) 8.6%	( <i>n</i> = 22,947) 91.4%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 641) 9.6%	( <i>n</i> = 6,021) 90.4%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 8,305) 14.8%	( <i>n</i> = 47,973) 85.2%

Table 4.4

*Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspensions by the Economic Status of Grade 6 Hispanic Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 505) 2.5%	( <i>n</i> = 19,647) 97.5%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 210) 2.8%	( <i>n</i> = 7,326) 97.2%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 3,537) 6.2%	( <i>n</i> = 53,484) 93.8%
2013-2014		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 468) 2.3%	( <i>n</i> = 20,093) 97.7%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 224) 3.0%	( <i>n</i> = 7,282) 97.0%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 3,343) 6.0%	( <i>n</i> = 52,788) 94.0%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 463) 2.0%	( <i>n</i> = 22,247) 98.0%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 172) 2.4%	( <i>n</i> = 7,102) 97.6%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 3,116) 5.4%	( <i>n</i> = 54,867) 94.6%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 469) 2.0%	( <i>n</i> = 23,042) 98.0%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 164) 2.4%	( <i>n</i> = 6,682) 97.6%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 3,237) 5.4%	( <i>n</i> = 56,807) 94.6%

Table 4.5

*Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspensions by the Economic Status of Grade 7 Hispanic Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 890) 4.1%	( <i>n</i> = 20,736) 95.9%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 308) 4.2%	( <i>n</i> = 7,013) 95.8%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,596) 8.4%	( <i>n</i> = 50,222) 91.6%
2013-2014		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 783) 3.6%	( <i>n</i> = 21,134) 96.4%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 326) 4.2%	( <i>n</i> = 7,365) 95.8%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,748) 8.3%	( <i>n</i> = 52,478) 91.7%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 859) 3.6%	( <i>n</i> = 22,941) 96.4%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 251) 3.5%	( <i>n</i> = 6,880) 96.5%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,282) 7.6%	( <i>n</i> = 52,140) 92.4%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 853) 3.5%	( <i>n</i> = 23,432 ) 96.5%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 228) 3.4%	( <i>n</i> = 6,562,) 96.6%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,474) 7.6%	( <i>n</i> = 54,054) 92.4%

Table 4.6

*Frequencies and Percentages of Out-of-School Suspensions by the Economic Status of Grade 8 Hispanic Girls in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	Received an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total	Did Not Receive an Out-of-School Suspension <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,007) 4.6%	( <i>n</i> = 20,987) 95.4%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 336) 4.6%	( <i>n</i> = 6,897) 95.4%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,448) 8.6%	( <i>n</i> = 47,233) 91.4%
2013-2014		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,036) 4.5%	( <i>n</i> = 21,959) 95.5%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 353) 4.7%	( <i>n</i> = 7,238) 95.3%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,644) 8.5%	( <i>n</i> = 49,750) 91.5%
2014-2015		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,054) 4.2%	( <i>n</i> = 24,096) 95.8%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 296) 4.1%	( <i>n</i> = 6,949) 95.9%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,605) 8.2%	( <i>n</i> = 51,882) 91.8%
2015-2016		
Not Poor	( <i>n</i> = 1,049) 4.2%	( <i>n</i> = 24,048) 95.8%
Moderately Poor	( <i>n</i> = 259) 3.9%	( <i>n</i> = 6,403) 96.1%
Extremely Poor	( <i>n</i> = 4,525) 8.0%	( <i>n</i> = 51,753) 92.0%

Table 4.7

*Summary of Results of the In-School Suspension Analyses by the Economic Status of Grade 6-8 Hispanic Girls 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	.09	Small	Extremely Poor
2013-2014	.09	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.09	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.09	Small	Extremely Poor
Grade 7			
2012-2013	.10	Small	Extremely Poor
2013-2014	.10	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.09	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.10	Small	Extremely Poor
Grade 8			
2012-2013	.09	Small	Extremely Poor
2013-2014	.09	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.09	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.09	Small	Extremely Poor

Table 4.8

*Summary of Results of the Out-of-School Suspension Analyses by the Economic Status of Grade 6-8 Hispanic Girls 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	.08	Small	Extremely Poor
2013-2014	.08	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.08	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.08	Small	Extremely Poor
Grade 7			
2012-2013	.08	Small	Extremely Poor
2013-2014	.09	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.08	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.08	Small	Extremely Poor
Grade 8			
2012-2013	.08	Small	Extremely Poor
2013-2014	.08	Small	Extremely Poor
2014-2015	.08	Small	Extremely Poor
2015-2016	.08	Small	Extremely Poor

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to examine the extent to which differences were present in discipline consequence assignments by student ethnicity/race and economic status for Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls in Texas. In the first investigation, the degree to which discipline consequence assignments differed by the ethnicity/race of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls was addressed. In the second study, the extent to which discipline consequence assignments differed for Black girls by their economic status was investigated. Finally, in the third investigation, the degree to which discipline consequence assignments were different for Hispanic girls by their economic status was determined. The two discipline consequences of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension were analyzed for four school years and separately for each grade level in each of the three investigations. As such, this multiyear analysis permitted a determination of trends, if present, in the differential assignment of discipline consequences. Results will now be summarized.

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

Documented in this 4-year statewide data analysis was the presence of statistically significant differences in the assignment of discipline consequences as a function of the ethnicity/race (i.e. White, Hispanic, and Black) of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls. In all four school years, Black girls were assigned statistically significantly more often to in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension than either Hispanic girls or White girls. Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension and to an out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than White girls. Both Black girls and

Hispanic girls received the highest rates of in-school suspension across each of the four grade levels for all three school years. In-school suspension rates for Black girls ranged from 18.6% to 22.2% for Grade 6 girls, from 22.2% to 26.2% for Grade 7 girls, and from 22.1% to 27.1% for Grade 8 girls in these four school years. In comparison, the in-school suspension rates for Grade 6 Hispanic girls ranged from 5.3% to 11.6%, from 12.4% to 15.8% for Grade 7 Hispanic girls, and from 12.7% to 16.1% for Grade 8 Hispanic girls. In comparison to these in-school suspension rates, the in-school suspension rates for White girls ranged from 5.3% to 6.2% in Grade 6, from 6.9% to 8.0% in Grade 7, and from 7.5% to 9.0% in Grade 8. Findings were in strong agreement with Carpenter et al. (2006) of the presence of a stair-step effect in the assignment of in-school suspension to girls by their ethnicity/race. Table 2.7 contains for a summary of the results for the in-school suspension rates by the ethnicity/race for Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls across the four school years.

Similarly, Black girls also received the highest rates of out-of-school suspension across each of the four school years and three grade levels. Out-of-school suspension rates for Black girls ranged from 12.0% to 13.5% for Grade 6 girls, from 14.6% to 16.2% for Grade 7 girls, and from 14.7% to 17.2% for Grade 8 girls in these four school years. In comparison, the out-of-school suspension rates for Grade 6 Hispanic girls ranged from 4.5% to 5.5%, from 6.5% to 7.4% for Grade 7 Hispanic girls, and from 6.6% to 7.7% for Grade 8 Hispanic girls. For White girls, out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 1.2% to 1.4% for Grade 6, from 2.0% to 2.3% for Grade 7, and 2.1% to 2.7% for Grade 8. The presence of a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) in the assignment of out-of-school suspension to girls by their ethnicity/race was clearly established. Summarized in



Table 2.8 is a summary of the results of out-of-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls across the four school years.

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

Inferential statistical analyses yielded statistically significant differences in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by the economic status (i.e. Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Extremely Poor) of Black girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8. For the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and the 2015-2016 school years, Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned to both in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than Black girls who were Moderately Poor and Black girls who were Not Poor. Black girls who were Moderately Poor were also assigned to both in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more often than Black girls who were Not Poor. Results were consistent for Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls. In all instances, the ordering from the highest to the lowest rates of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension assignments was Black, Hispanic, and White.

For Black girls who were Extremely Poor, their in-school suspension rates ranged from 22.8% to 26.2% in Grade 6, from 27.4% to 30.4% in Grade 7, and from 26.5% to 31.5% in Grade 8. For Black girls who were Moderately Poor, their in-school suspension rates ranged from 13.5% to 16.3% in Grade 6, from 16.0% to 20.6% in Grade 7, and from 17.3% to 21.2% in Grade 8. In contrast to these in-school suspension rates, in-school suspension rates for Black girls who were Not Poor ranged from 10.5% to 11.9% for Grade 6, from 12.7% to 20.6% for Grade 7, and 13.9% to 17.8% for Grade 8. A

summary of the results for the in-school suspension analyses by the economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls across the four school years is present in Table 3.7.

In all four school years and across all three grade levels, Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned statistically significantly higher rates of out-of-school suspension than Black girls who were Moderately Poor and Black girls who were Not Poor. For Black girls who were Extremely Poor, their out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 14.4% to 16.0% in Grade 6, from 17.1% to 19.2% in Grade 7, and from 18.3% to 20.5% in Grade 8. Concerning Black girls who were Moderately Poor, their out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 6.3% to 6.9% in Grade 6, from 8.6% to 9.1% in Grade 7, and from 9.5% to 10.4% in Grade 8. Regarding Black girls who were Not Poor, their out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 5.6% to 5.9% in Grade 6, from 7.6% to 9.0% in Grade 7, and from 8.2% to 9.9% in Grade 8. Clearly, a stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was evident in the assignment of out-of-school suspension by economic status. Revealed in Table 3.8 is a summary of the results of the out-of-school analyses by the economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls.

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

Across each of the four grade levels and for the three school years, Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor had the highest rates of in-school suspension and out-of school suspension. In-school suspension rates for Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor ranged from 11.0% to 12.9% in Grade 6, from 14.5% to 17.8% in Grade 7, and from 14.8% to 18.2% in Grade 8. In school suspension rates for Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor ranged from 6.3% to 8.1% in Grade 6, from 8.7% to 11.4% in Grade 7, and from 9.6% to 12.3% in Grade 8. Poor. In contrast, the in school suspension rates

ranged from 5.2% to 6.6% for Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor, from 7.5 to 9.8% for Grade 7 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor, and 8.6% to 10.7% for Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. These findings were in agreement with Carpenter et al. (2006) of the presence of a stair-step effect in the assignment of in-school suspension. Delineated in Table 4.7 is a summary of the results for the in-school suspension analyses by the economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic girls across the four school years.

Similar to Black girls who were Extremely Poor, Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor also had the highest rates of out-of-school suspension across each of the four school years and three grade levels. For Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor, their out-of school suspension rates ranged from 5.4% to 6.2% in Grade 6, from 7.6% to 8.4 in Grade 7, and from 8.0% to 8.6% in Grade 8. Concerning Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor, their out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 2.4% to 3.0% in Grade 6, from 3.4% to 4.2% in Grade 7, and from 3.9% to 4.7% in Grade 8. Regarding Hispanic girls who were Not Poor, their out-of-school suspension rates ranged from 2.0% to 2.5% in Grade 6, from 3.5% to 4.1%, in Grade 7, and from 4.2% to 4.6% in Grade 8. A stair-step effect (Carpenter et al., 2006) was evident in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by economic status. Table 4.8 contains a summary of the results of the out-of-school analyses by economic status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic girls.

### **Connections with Existing Literature**

Evidence of disparities in the assignment of discipline consequences by ethnicity/race has been well documented in the extant literature (e.g., Anfinson et al., 2010; Skiba & Knesting, 2001; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1997; Skiba et al., 2011;

United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016; Wu et al., 1982). For over 40 years, Black and Hispanic students have been assigned a disproportionate amount of disciplinary consequences in comparison to their White peers (Khan & Slate, 2016). Inequities continue to exist in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black girls. Findings established in this journal-ready dissertation were congruent with the results of previous researchers (Blake et al., 2011; Crenshaw et al., 2015; Khan & Slate, 2016; Slate et al., 2016) who have documented that Black girls were assigned statistically significantly more often to in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension than White and Hispanic girls. Noticeably, the suspension rates of Black girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8 far exceeded the suspension rates of White and Hispanic girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8.

The results of this research investigation were also congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Anfinson et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2011; Skiba & Knesting, 2001) who have established the presence of inequities in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black and Hispanic girls by their economic status. Disparities continue to exist in the assignment of discipline consequences by the ethnicity/race and economic status of students (e.g., Barnes & Slate, 2016; Boneshefski & Runge, 2014; Friedman-Krauss & Raver, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Khan & Slate, 2016; Reardon, 2013; Skiba et al., 2011; Slate et al., 2016). Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned statistically significantly more often to in-school suspension and to out-of-school suspension than White and Hispanic girls who were Moderately Poor and than White and Hispanic girls who were Not Poor. Black girls who were Moderately Poor were assigned to an in-school suspension and to an out-of-school

suspension statistically significantly more often than White girls and Hispanic girls who were Not Poor.

Results of this research investigation were also congruent with previous researchers (Blake et al., 2011; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Slate et al., 2016) who have documented the presence of disparities in the assignment of discipline consequences assigned to Black girls. The National Association of Secondary Schools (2002) noted that ethnic/racial disparities in school discipline were directly related to economic status. As established by previous researchers (Blake et al., 2011; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Slate et al., 2016), Black girls are more likely to be suspended than White or Hispanic girls. Black girls were nearly four times as likely to receive an in-school suspension and twice as likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension than were White or Hispanic girls. Results from this investigation, along with the findings of previous researchers (e.g., Anfinson et al., 2010; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Mizel & Ewing, 2016; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2011; Slate et al., 2016; Tiger & Slate, 2017), have revealed a clear lack of equity in the assignment of discipline consequences to Black girls in comparison to White and Hispanic girls.

Concerning discipline consequence assignments to girls by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White,) and economic status (i.e. Not Poor, Moderately Poor, and Extremely Poor), results were similar in that Black girls and Black girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned the highest percentages of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension and Hispanic girls and Hispanic girls who were Extremely Poor were assigned the second highest percentages of these discipline consequences. In this 4-year statewide analysis, the disparities documented in the assignment of in-school

suspension and out-of-school suspension were congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Anfinson et al., 2010; Barnes & Slate, 2016; Blake et al., 2011, 2014; Crenshaw et al., 2015; Friedman-Krauss & Raver, 2015; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003; Khan & Slate, 2016; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Mizel & Ewing, 2016; Reardon, 2013; Skiba & Knesting, 2001; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997; Skiba et al., 2011; Slate et al., 2016; Tiger & Slate, 2017) who documented perceivable discriminatory practices in the assignment of exclusionary discipline assignments to Black and Hispanic girls.

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

Based upon the results of the three articles previously discussed in this journal-ready dissertation, school administrators are encouraged to examine their disciplinary sanctions and behavior management strategies to determine whether or not disproportionate suspension rates exist among Black, White, and Hispanic girls in their schools. If these disparities exist, educators are urged to investigate the reasons for the overrepresentation of Black and Hispanic girls in the assignment of both in-school and out-of-school suspensions when compared to White girls. An extensive analysis of discipline data could reveal that Black and Hispanic girls are committing more behavior infractions, a lack of social and cultural capital, a lack of teacher/administrator training, a lack of positive school climate, and/or discrimination. Knowledge of trends in school district discipline data could provide the opportunity to evaluate the equity of their discipline programs. If inequities are occurring with the use of exclusionary disciplinary policies, school leaders may need to conduct equity audits, develop more equitable

discipline programs to enhance the cultural responsiveness and social capital of Black girls and school leaders.

Considering such findings, equity audits could be utilized to foster changes in discipline programs that could garner the creation of new and more proportionate discipline policies. A comprehensive examination of disaggregated data on the discipline referral reasons to identify patterns in student behavior and staff consequence assignments. Based on the implications of that data, behavior interventions could be implemented in which student discipline infractions could be addressed in relation to administrator responsiveness to those discipline infractions. As such, school leaders could implement positive behavior interventions and supports as a proactive measure to promote preventative and positive student and staff interactions along with consistent classroom management practices. As a final recommendation, school leaders are encouraged to determine and concentrate on the discipline systems of schools with lower discipline referral rates and less exclusionary discipline consequence assignments to cultivate more effective behavior practices to minimize lost instructional time.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In this journal-ready dissertation, disciplinary consequence assignment differences by the ethnicity/race and the economic status of Grades 6, 7, and 8 Black and Hispanic girls were analyzed over four school years. Based upon the results of the three journal articles previously discussed, the following recommendations for future research are made. Because data on only middle school girls were analyzed in this study, future researchers could extend this study to girls in elementary schools and high schools. The extent to which the results of this study would be generalizable to girls in elementary

schools and in high schools is not known. Second, data on only girls in Texas were analyzed here. Thus, researchers are urged to extend this study to girls in other states and grade levels. The degree to which the discipline disparities depicted in this study are generalizable to girls in other states is not known. Third, researchers are urged to examine discipline data based on other student characteristics such as their ethnicity/race, their gender; whether they were enrolled in special education, and whether they were English Language Learners. Sixth, only two discipline consequences were examined in this investigation. Researchers are encouraged to analyze discipline data on expulsion, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Whether or not the disparities that were documented here are also occurring with the other types of discipline consequences is not known.

Fourth, researchers are encouraged to examine the discipline referral reasons respective to the assigned consequences and whether or not discipline consequences were assigned differentially as function of student ethnicity/race or economic status. Fifth, in this journal-ready dissertation, data on only girls were analyzed. Accordingly, researchers are encouraged to replicate this study on data on discipline consequences assigned to boys. A final recommendation would be for researchers to analyze discipline data in a longitudinal manner. That is, what happens to students when they receive an initial disciplinary consequence for a misbehavior? Are they then more or less likely to continue misbehaving? Based on the results from this investigation, research should be conducted to determine the most equitable discipline practices to implement in schools to curtail bias based on ethnicity/race and economic status.



## **Conclusion**

In this journal-ready dissertation, four school years of Texas statewide data were analyzed. Specifically addressed was the degree to which inequities were present in the assignment of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension to girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8 as a function of their ethnicity/race and the economic status of Black and Hispanic girls. Inferential statistical analyses revealed the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of both discipline consequences to Black girls and to Hispanic girls, in comparison to White girls. Results were consistent across all three grade levels and across all four school years. With respect to economic status, for both Black girls and for Hispanic girls, a clear stair-step effect was established, with Extremely Poor girls being assigned the highest rates of both discipline consequences, followed by Moderately Poor girls. Given the lack of empirical data that Black and Hispanic girls misbehave more often than White girls and the lack of empirical data that students in poverty misbehave more than students who are not poor, results may be interpreted to mean that inequities based upon these two demographic characteristics were present. As such, these students' civil rights to a free and appropriate public education may have been violated.

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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: July 7, 2017

TO: Crystal Coleman [Faculty Sponsor: Dr. John Slate]

FROM: Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: *Differences in Discipline Consequence Assignments by Ethnicity/Race and Economic Status for Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 Girls: A statewide analysis [T/D]*

PROTOCOL #: 2017-06-35412

SUBMISSION TYPE: INITIAL REVIEW

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: July 7, 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 Desforges  
 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

### Crystal Coleman

#### **Educational History**

Doctorate of Education – Educational Leadership, December 2017

*Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX*

Dissertation: Differences in Discipline Consequence Assignment by Ethnicity/Race and Economic Status for Texas Grade 6, 7, and 8 Girls: A Statewide Analysis

Master of Education, Lamar University, Education Administration

Bachelor of Arts, Tougaloo College, Political Science, Magna Cum Laude graduate

Diploma, Irving High School, Irving, TX

#### **Professional Licensure or Certifications**

Principal Certificate     Texas

Teacher Certificate     K-12 Generic Special Education, EC-4 Generalist, Texas

ESL Education             K-12 Endorsement, Texas

Alternative Certification Region X Teacher Preparation and Certification Program, Texas

Neuhaus Dyslexia Training

Crisis Prevention and Intervention Certified Trainer

#### **Professional Experience**

2017- Crisis Prevention and Intervention/ Nonviolent Crisis Intervention District Trainer

2015-2017   Conroe Independent School District, Special Education District Instructional and Behavioral Coach.

Summer 2015-2017   Conroe Independent School District, Extended School Year Services (ESY) Secondary Summer School Principal for grades 5-12.

2013-2015 Conroe Independent School District, Special Education Transition Team  
South County Vocational Instructor

#### **Teaching Experience**

ESY Teacher, Conroe Independent School District, 2011; 2014

Special Education Resource, Inclusion, Dyslexia Teacher, and Team Leader (K-4)

Kaufman Elementary, Spring, TX 77386, 2009-2013

Special Education Inclusion/Co-teach Teacher (K-2)

B.B. Rice Elementary, Conroe, TX, 77304 2008-2009

Special Education Resource/Inclusion Teacher (K-6) Springridge Elementary,  
Richardson, TX, 75081, 2004-2008

#### **Publications**

Coleman, C. L., & Slate, J. R. (2016). Inequities in disciplinary reasons and consequences by ethnicity/race and economic status for Grade 6 students in Texas. *Journal of Global Research in Education and Social Science*, 9(1).

### **Presentations at Professional Meetings**

Coleman, C. (September, 2013). *Principal Stress and Burnout: A Roundtable Discussion*. Presented at the Annual Texas Council of Educators Association (TCPEA) Conference, Dallas, TX

Jones, B. E., McAlister-Shields, L., & Coleman, C. (2015, February). *Pursuing the Doctoral Degree: A Panel Discussion on Navigating the Written and Unwritten Rules of Higher Education*. Panel discussion presented at the 30th Annual Texas Alliance of Black School Educators' (TABSE) Conference, Houston, TX.

Coleman, C. L. & Slate, J. R. (2017, January). *Inequities in disciplinary reasons and consequences by ethnicity and economic status for Grade 6 students in Texas*. Presented at the Conference on Academic Research in Education, Las Vegas, NV.

### **Academic Awards**

Graduate Studies Scholarship, Sam Houston State University, January 2017  
 Conroe ISD Education Foundation Scholarship Award, Conroe ISD, 2014, 2015  
 Allie Wilson Horne Endowment Award, Department of Educational Leadership, Sam Houston State University, May 2015.

### **Professional Affiliations**

Texas State Teachers Association, 2009-present  
 Texas Council of Professional Educators Association (TCPEA), 2013-2014  
 Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.,