

DIFFERENCES IN EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCES FOR
GRADES 4 AND 5 GIRLS: A TEXAS MULTIYEAR STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family who inspired me to pursue this degree and supported me in the process. To my wife, Katelyn, I want to thank you for weathering the storm, both literally and figuratively, by taking care of the kids every night while I was at class and braving the thunderstorms that seemed to only happen on Wednesdays over that past two years. I cannot thank you enough for all your support. To Kaden and Ryleigh, thank you for understanding on the nights that I wasn't able to tuck you in, and not putting up too much of a fight for your mom. Not only did I pursue this degree to open opportunities to provide a better life for you two in the immediate future, but to also show you the importance of being a lifelong learner. To my grandparents on both sides, thank you for always encouraging me and understanding when we had to miss family vacations and reunions. To my late Mother, you were the first person to inspire me to get into education. The values that you instilled in me guide my practice to this very day. Finally, to the man who asked me when I planned to pursue my doctorate before the ink on my Master's diploma had a chance to dry, I want to thank my Dad. You have always pushed me to reach my full potential in everything I do. Everything from your support, encouragement, and our late-night talks about college football on my way home from class on Wednesday nights kept me going in pursuit of this degree. Each of you has played an integral part in everything I have achieved and specifically in obtaining my final degree. For that I want to say thank you and I love you all!

ABSTRACT

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Purpose

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the degree to which ethnicity/race and economic status are related to the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences and to the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences to Grades 4 and 5 girls. In the first study, the extent to which differences were present in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race were investigated. In the second study, the degree to which differences were present in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race were addressed. In the third study, the extent to which differences were present in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status were determined. As such, the extent to which trends are present in the assignment and number of days students were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence by their ethnicity/race and economic status for Texas Grades 4 and 5 girls for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years were determined.

Method

In this analysis, a causal-comparative research design was used. Archival data were obtained from the Texas Education Agency through a Public Information Request for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

Findings

For Grades 4 and 5 girls, relationships were clearly established between the frequency and number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence and their ethnicity/race and economic status. For both grade levels, Black and Hispanic girls were consistently overrepresented in the assignment and number of days assigned to an in-school suspension and to an out-of-school suspension. Similar trends were present for girls who were economically disadvantaged. Such inequities in the assignment to exclusionary discipline consequences, as well as disparities in the numbers of days assigned, may be interpreted as violations of these girls' civil rights to a free and appropriate education. Action to address such inequities is imperative and long overdue.

Keywords: In-school suspension, Out-of-school suspension, Ethnicity/Race, Black, Hispanic, White, Economic status, Girls, Grades 4 and 5

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, established to decrease the prevalence of violence in schools, ushered in an era of zero tolerance policy with regard to school discipline. Initially developed to target the presence of weapons and drugs in schools, the application of zero tolerance policies transformed into the punishment of behaviors that pose a threat of physical violence (Kodeja, 2019; Robinson, 2001). Zero tolerance policies were originally adopted under the assumption that schools would experience a decline in misbehaviors and an increase in school safety (Irby & Coney, 2021). The adoption of zero tolerance policies, however, has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of students assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences across the United States. Most notably, the overreliance on exclusionary discipline consequences as a means of preventing and addressing student misbehaviors has disproportionately affected students of color (Hines-Datiri & Andrews, 2020; Irby & Coney, 2021; Morris, 2016; Skiba, 2008; Skiba et al., 2002).

Review of the Literature for In-School Suspension by Student Ethnicity/Race

The Children's Defense Fund (1975) published a report in which they documented an increase in the assignment of students to an out-of-suspension across the United States and the resulting negative effects of these suspensions on student academic performance (Skiba et al., 2011). One alternative suggested in the report was the use of in-school centers that would alleviate classroom issues for teachers by removing students from the regular classroom while still providing students with access to the educational environment. Today, the assignment of students to an in-school suspension is the most

common form of exclusionary discipline consequence used to address student misbehaviors in the school setting (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

In the 2017-2018 school year, more than 2.6 million students were assigned to at least one day in an in-school suspension, resulting in their removal from the regular educational environment. Of these 2.6 million students assigned to an in-school suspension, 802,852 of them were girls. Despite Black girls being only 7.4% of the total enrollment of girls in public schools in the 2017-2018 school year, they accounted for 36.6% of all assignments to an in-school suspension. A similar trend was established for Hispanic girls who, though only being 13.3% of the total school enrollment, accounted for 23.9% of in-school suspension assignments. As such, Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate five times higher than their enrollment percentage, whereas Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate over twice their enrollment percentage (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

Texas, the state of interest in this article, accounted for more than 18% of the total number of girls in the United States who were assigned to at least one day in an in-school suspension in the 2017-2018 school year. With regard to ethnicity/race, similar trends were documented in in-school suspension assignments. Despite Black girls being only 6.1% of girls enrolled in Texas public schools, they accounted for 24.9% of assignments to an in-school suspension. A similar trend was present for Hispanic girls who despite being 25.7% of girls enrolled in public schools, accounted for more than half, 52.5%, of assignments to an in-school suspension. Accordingly, Black girls in Texas are assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate nearly four times higher than the enrollment percentage,

whereas Hispanic girls are assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate twice that of their enrollment percentage (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

In a Texas statewide analysis, Slate et al. (2016) investigated the presence of inequities in the assignment of girls to exclusionary disciplinary consequences in the 2013-2014 school year. For Grades 4 and 5 girls, who are of focus in this article, Slate et al. (2016) documented the presence of clear disparities in the rates at which girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. Though Grade 4 Black girls comprised a small percentage of the overall student enrollment, they accounted for more than half, 54%, of assignments to an in-school suspension. The frequency at which Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension increased by a factor of nearly six in Grade 5 as they were assigned to 1,152 in-school suspensions, 955 more assignments than in Grade 4. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a frequency nearly 12 times higher as they were assigned to 848 in-school suspensions, 776 more than in Grade 4.

In addition to the presence of inequities in the assignment of girls to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race, researchers (Harkrider, 2020; Miller, 2021; White, 2019) have also documented the presence of inequities in the number of days that girls are assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. That is, the inequities that are present in being assigned to an exclusionary consequence are further exacerbated by inequities in the number of days assigned to the consequence. The issue of existing disparities in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension is of concern because it contributes to a loss of instructional time in the regular educational environment (Chu & Ready, 2018). In a Texas statewide investigation, White (2019)

established that for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls, Black girls were assigned to a statistically significantly higher number of days in an in-school suspension than were White and Hispanic girls in the 2015-2016 school year. White (2019) documented that Black girls in Grade 6 were assigned to 0.87 days more to an in-school suspension than were White girls. Black girls in Grade 7 were assigned to 0.94 days more to an in-school suspension than were White girls. Black girls in Grade 8 were assigned to 0.72 days more in an in-school suspension than were White girls.

Despite being assigned an average of fewer days to an in-school suspension than Black girls, Hispanic girls were still assigned to a statistically significantly higher number of days than White girls during the 2015-2016 school year. In Grade 6, Hispanic girls were assigned to 0.48 days more in an in-school suspension than were White girls. In Grade 7, Hispanic girls were assigned to 0.40 days more in an in-school suspension than were White girls. In Grade 8, Hispanic girls were assigned to 0.17 days more in an in-school suspension than were White girls.

Previous researchers (Barnes et al., 2017a; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017; White & Slate, 2017) have primarily focused on inequities in exclusionary discipline practices for middle and high school students. In a Texas statewide investigation about Grades 4 and 5 students, Tiger (2016) determined that Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate that was statistically significantly higher than the in-school suspension rates for White or Hispanic girls in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. In both school years, Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate three times higher than were White and Hispanic girls. Readers should note that the findings of Tiger's (2016) study were in contrast to

other studies where Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a lower rate than White girls despite comprising a majority of the enrollment population.

Although in-school suspension is viewed as a way to provide students with a consequence for misbehaviors while limiting the negative effects on their educational performance, researchers (Chu & Ready, 2018; Hilberth, 2010; Skiba et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2020) have determined that the assignment of students to an in-school suspension can lead to an increased likelihood of poor academic outcomes. Smith et al. (2020) conducted a study of 380,826 students enrolled in Texas public schools to explore the effect of assignment to an in-school suspension on their standardized test performance. They established that assignment to just one in-school suspension was a strong predictor of poor performance in both reading and mathematics. Poor academic performance as a function of an in-school suspension has been attributed to the loss of instructional time in the regular educational environment (Chu & Ready, 2018; Skiba et al. 2011).

In a similar Texas statewide investigation, Hilberth (2010) established that assignment to an in-school suspension had statistically significant relationships to performance on standardized tests in reading and mathematics. Black students who were assigned to at least one in-school suspension had reading scores that were statistically significantly lower than the reading test scores of Black students who had not been assigned to an in-school suspension. Similar results were documented for mathematics. Black students who had been assigned to an in-school suspension had mathematics scores that were statistically significantly lower than the mathematics test scores of Black students who had not been assigned to an in-school suspension. The documentation of such inequities in both the assignment to an in-school suspension and in the number of

days assigned to an in-school suspension are of concern because these factors may be contributing to achievement gaps between students of color and White students.

In a recent investigation, Ibrahim et al. (2020) established that for Black girls, assignment to an in-school suspension was associated with lower mathematics course-taking. More specifically, Black girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were statistically significantly less likely to take higher level mathematics courses than Black girls who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Ibrahim et al. (2020) also documented that higher scores on standardized mathematics tests and positive teacher-student relationships were associated with enrollment in higher level mathematics courses for Black girls. Thus, Black girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were less likely to enroll in higher level mathematics courses and to perceive poorer relationships with their teachers. The negative effects on course enrollment associated with assignment to an in-school suspension, and thus student-teacher relationships, are of concerns because they may further contribute to the issue of inequities in the assignment of Black girls to in-school suspensions and other exclusionary consequences, and the resulting effects on their academic achievement.

Review of the Literature for Out-of-School Suspension by Student Ethnicity/Race

The use of exclusionary discipline consequences as a method of managing student misbehaviors has become increasingly more common in the United States over the last several decades (Skiba, 2014). One of the most frequently used exclusionary consequences is the assignment of students to an out-of-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). An out-of-school suspension is a discipline consequence in which students are prohibited from attending school for a period of no longer than three school

days (Texas Education Code, 2021). In 2017-2018, the most recent data available from the United States Department of Education, more than 1.5 million students were assigned to at least one day to an out-of-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). Of these 1.5 million students, 491,784 of them were girls. Of interest is that although Black girls accounted for only 7.4% of the total school enrollment for girls in the 2017-2018 school year, they accounted for 40.1% of assignments to an out-of-school suspension. Hispanic girls comprised 13.3% of school enrollment for girls but accounted for 23.5% of assignments to an out-of-school suspension. Readers should note that both Black and Hispanic girls in the United States were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at rates that were quite disproportionate with their enrollment percentages. Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate more than five times higher their enrollment percentage, whereas Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate twice that of their enrollment percentage (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

Texas, the state of interest for this article, accounted for more than 10% of the total number of girls in the United States who were assigned to at least one day in an out-of-school suspension in the 2017-2018 school year. Similar trends were documented in the assignment of girls to an out-of-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. Although Black girls constituted only 6.1% of the total enrollment of girls in the State of Texas, they accounted for almost a third, 32%, of the assignments to an out-of-school suspension. Similarly, Hispanic girls made up 25.7% of the enrollment of girls, but were assigned to over half, 52.2%, of out-of-school suspensions. As such, Black girls in Texas were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate more than five times higher than

their enrollment percentage, whereas Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate more than twice that of their enrollment percentage (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

In a Texas statewide analysis conducted by Slate et al. (2016), the presence of strong inequities in the assignment of girls to an out-of-school suspension was established. For Grades 4 and 5 girls, who are the focus in this article, Slate et al. (2016) documented the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of girls to an out-of-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. Grade 4 Black girls accounted for nearly 20% of assignments to an out-of-school suspension, a rate almost four times higher than the rate for White girls. Readers should note that no Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in Grade 4 during the 2013-2014 school year. Black girls in Grade 5 were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate (17.4%) three times higher than White girls (5.1%) and nearly twice that of Hispanic girls (9.4%).

In addition to documenting the presence of clear disparities in the assignment of girls by their ethnicity/race to an out-of-school suspension, researchers (Harkrider, 2020; Miller, 2021; White, 2019) have also established that inequities are present in the number of days that girls are assigned to an out-of-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. Inequities in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an out-of-school suspension are further intensified by inequities in the number of days assigned to the consequence. Established in a Texas statewide investigation conducted by White (2019) were the presence of inequities in the number of days Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2015-2016 school year. White (2019) determined that Grade 6 Black girls were assigned 0.65 more days to an out-of-school

suspension than were White girls. Grade 7 Black girls were assigned 1.18 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were White girls. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned 0.87 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were White girls.

White (2019) established the presence of similar inequities in the number of days that Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned 0.15 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were White girls. In Grade 7, Hispanic girls were assigned 0.47 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were White girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned 0.24 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were White girls.

Although the presence of inequities in exclusionary discipline practices has been well documented in middle and high schools (Barnes et al., 2017; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017; White & Slate, 2017), fewer researchers have focused on the use of exclusionary practices at the elementary school level. One such study, however, was conducted by Tiger (2016) to determine the extent to which disparities were present in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 Texas public school students to an out-of-school suspension in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. Tiger (2016) determined that Grades 4 and 5 Black and Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at statistically significantly higher rates than were White girls in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. Readers should note that in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate more than 10 times higher than White girls. Similarly, in the 2013-2014 school year Grade 5 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a

rate more than 10 times that of White girls. In 2014-2015, Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate 11 times higher than White girls.

Despite being assigned to an out-of-school suspension less frequently than Black girls, Tiger (2016) also documented that Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate that was statistically significantly higher than White girls. In the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, Grade 4 Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate nearly seven times higher than White girls. In Grade 5, Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate more than four times higher than White girls during the 2013-2014 school year and more than five times higher than White girls during the 2014-2015 school year.

These documented inequities in the assignment of girls to an out-of-school suspension are of concern as researchers (Chu & Ready, 2018; Hilberth, 2010; Skiba, 2014; Skiba et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2020) have established the presence of an inverse relationship between assignment to an out-of-school suspension and satisfactory academic outcomes. Smith et al. (2020) conducted a statewide analysis of Texas students to investigate the effect of an out-of-school suspension assignment on their reading and mathematics performance. In their investigation, students who had been assigned to even a single out-of-school suspension had statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics test scores than their peers who had not been assigned to an out-of-school suspension.

In an investigation to determine the degree to which assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence was related to student performance on state-mandated reading and mathematics exams, Hilberth (2010) revealed the presence of

statistically significant differences in performance between students who had been assigned to an out-of-school suspension and students who had not been assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Students who had been assigned to an out-of-school suspension had statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics test scores than their peers in their same ethnic/racial group who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Chu and Ready (2018) attributed such performance to the loss of instructional time that occurs when students are removed from their regular educational environment and assigned to an out-of-school suspension.

In addition to the negative effects of exclusionary discipline consequences associated with academic performance, researchers (Butler-Barnes & Inniss-Thompson, 2020; Gregory et al., 2010; Rose, 2017; Skiba et al., 2011) have established that assignment to an out-of-school suspension is associated with poor relationship and mental health outcomes. Gregory et al. (2010) ascertained that students who are assigned to an out-of-school suspension are less likely to form strong bonds within their school environment, which may weaken their academic motivation. Butler-Barnes and Inniss-Thompson (2020) determined that Black girls who perceived strong bonds with their school environment, such as positive relationships with adults, were less likely to be assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence than Black girls who did not perceive themselves as having strong bonds with their school environment. Rose et al. (2017) established that strong school bonding was also positively associated with student mental health. Thus, students who are assigned to an out-of-school suspension are at an increased likelihood of negative effects on their mental well-being. Due to the documented inequities in the assignment of girls to an out-of-school suspension, Black

and Hispanic girls may be at an increased risk of forming weaker bonds within their school environment and, as a result, experience poor mental health outcomes.

Review of the Literature for In-school Suspension and Economic Status

The assignment of students to an exclusionary discipline consequence as a response to misbehaviors has become increasingly more prevalent over the last several decades (Skiba et al., 2014). Currently, the most frequently used exclusionary discipline consequence in the United States is the assignment of students to an in-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). More than 2.6 million students were removed from their regular educational environment and assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2017-2018 school year (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). More than 30% of the students who assigned to an in-school suspension were girls. Of importance is that more than 18% of the total number of in-school suspension assignments in the United States occurred in Texas, the state of interest in this article (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

Over the past two decades, researchers (Barnes et al., 2017a; Harkrider, 2020; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Skiba et al., 2009; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Skiba et al., 2002; Slate et al., 2016; Tiger, 2012; White, 2019) have documented the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of students to an exclusionary discipline consequence with respect to their ethnicity/race. That is, students of color are assigned at statistically significantly higher rates to exclusionary discipline consequences than are White and Asian students. Additional disparities have been documented in the assignment of students to an exclusionary discipline consequence with respect to their economic status. In the 2018-2019 school year, slightly over 60% of students enrolled in Texas public schools were considered to be economically disadvantaged (Texas Education Agency,

2021a). During the same school year, students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a higher number of in-school suspensions, more than 363,000, than were any other group of students as identified by the Texas Education Agency (2021b). As such, the inequities documented by researchers (Barnes et al., 2017b; Coleman & Slate, 2016; Harkrider, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; White, 2019; White & Slate, 2017) are of concern because they indicate that a majority of the student population in the State of Texas may be at risk of being overrepresented in assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence.

In a study of over 340,000 Texas middle school students, Khan and Slate (2016) analyzed the assignment of Grade 6 students to exclusionary discipline consequences. Khan and Slate (2016) revealed the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of students to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status. Students who were economically disadvantaged (i.e., qualified for the reduced price or free lunch federal program) were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence at a statistically significantly higher rate than students who were not economically disadvantaged. With respect to in-school suspension, Khan and Slate (2016) revealed that Black students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned at a rate nearly 14% higher than that of Black students who were not economically disadvantaged. Hispanic students were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate 8.2% higher than Hispanic students who were not economically disadvantaged. White students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate 14.2% higher than White students who were not economically disadvantaged.

In another Texas statewide analysis, Barnes et al. (2017b) investigated the degree to which student level of poverty was related to assignment of middle school students to an exclusionary discipline consequence. With respect to in-school suspension, Barnes et al. (2017b) documented the presence of a relationship between student level of poverty and their assignment to an in-school suspension. That is, students who were extremely poor (i.e., students from families with an income 130% or less of the federal poverty line) were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate 7.6% higher than students who were moderately poor (i.e., students from families with an income of 131% to 185% of the federal poverty line). Students who were moderately poor were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate 4.8% higher than students who were not poor. Furthermore, students who were poor (i.e., moderately poor, extremely poor) accounted for 36.8% of the total assignments to an in-school suspension.

Researchers (Harkrider, 2020; Miller, 2021; Tiger, 2012; White, 2019; White & Slate, 2017) have also documented the presence of disparities in the number of days that students are assigned to an in-school suspension. Of these studies, only White and Slate (2017) and White (2019) addressed inequities in the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences with respect to student economic status. White and Slate (2017) investigated the extent to which the economic status of middle school students was related to the number of days they were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence. White and Slate (2017) determined that middle school students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a statistically significantly higher number of days than were students who were not economically disadvantaged. Students who were economically disadvantaged in Grades 6, 7, and 8 were assigned to 1.05, 1.09,

and 0.87 more days in an in-school suspension than were their peers who were not economically disadvantaged.

In a recent investigation, White (2019) reported similar findings for middle school students in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. For each school year, White (2019) established that students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension for a statistically significantly higher number of days than were students who were not economically disadvantaged. For the four school years of data examined in White's investigation, students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.77 more days to an in-school suspension than students who were not economically disadvantaged. Consistent across all three grade levels for each school year, White (2019) determined that the average number of days that students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension decreased with each subsequent school year. Readers should note that despite this reduction in average days assigned, students who were economically disadvantaged were still assigned to a higher number of days to an in-school suspension than students who were not economically disadvantaged.

Regarding the assignment of elementary school girls to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status, the published research literature is quite limited. Only one such published study, conducted by Harkrider (2020), could be located. In his Texas statewide analysis, Harkrider (2020) investigated the effect of ethnicity/race and economic status on the number of days Grade 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Black, Hispanic, and White girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a statistically significantly higher number of days to an in-school suspension

than were Black, Hispanic, and White girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Black girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.89 more days to an in-school suspension than were Black girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Hispanic girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.57 more days to an in-school suspension in comparison to Hispanic girls who were not economically disadvantaged. White girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.44 more days to an in-school suspension than were White girls who were not economically disadvantaged.

The presence of such inequities in the assignment of students who are economically disadvantaged to an exclusionary discipline consequence should be of concern because being economically disadvantaged and being assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence have each been associated with an increased likelihood of poor academic outcomes (Chu & Ready, 2018; Davenport, 2021; Hilberth, 2010; McGown, 2016; Skiba et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2020). In a Texas statewide analysis, McGown (2016) investigated the degree to which student performance on state mandated reading assessments was related to student economic status. In her investigation, McGown (2016) examined Grade 3 State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness Reading (STAAR) exam performance with respect to student economic status. Compared in her investigation were three economic status groups: Not Poor (i.e., students from families with an income 186% or more of the federal poverty line), Moderately Poor (i.e., students from families with an income of 131% to 185% of the federal poverty line), and Extremely Poor (i.e., students from families with an income 130% or less of the federal poverty line). Students who were economically disadvantaged

were statistically significantly less likely to meet the passing standard than were students who were not economically disadvantaged. Also established was a relationship between the degree of poverty and student performance. As the degree of poverty increased, average student performance declined, with students who were Extremely Poor exhibiting the poorest overall reading performance (McGown, 2016).

The effects of student economic status on academic performance were also documented by Davenport (2021) in a Texas statewide investigation in which he addressed the degree to which inequities were present in mathematics performance of Grade 3 Black and Hispanic girls. Davenport (2021) established that statistically significantly lower percentages of Black and Hispanic girls who were economically disadvantaged met the passing standard for the Grade 3 STAAR Mathematics exam than their peers who were not economically disadvantaged. In the 2018-2019 school year, Grade 3 Hispanic girls who were economically disadvantaged failed to meet the passing standard for mathematics at a rate 19% higher than Grade 3 Hispanic girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Similarly, Grade 3 Black girls who were economically disadvantaged in the 2018-2019 school year were 15.6% less likely to meet the mathematics passing standard than were Grade 3 Black girls who were not economically disadvantaged.

The negative effects on academic performance associated with assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence have been documented in recent studies (Chu & Ready, 2018; Hilberth, 2010; Ibrahim et al. 2021; Skiba et al, 2011; Smith et al., 2020). In their investigations, Hilberth (2010) and Smith et al. (2020) established that the assignment to just one day to an in-school suspension was a strong predictor of poor

reading and mathematics performance. In addition to poor performance, Ibrahim (2021) revealed the presence of a relationship between assignment to an in-school suspension and enrollment in advanced mathematics courses and mathematics course performance. More specifically, students who were assigned to an in-school suspension were less likely to enroll in higher level mathematics courses and more likely to perform poorly on standardized mathematics exams than students who were not assigned to such a consequence.

Clearly documented have been the presence of inequities in the assignment of students to an exclusionary discipline consequence with respect to their economic status. Absent from the extant literature, however, is any evidence that students who are economically disadvantaged commit misbehaviors more frequently than their peers who are not economically disadvantaged. These inequities should be of concern because the presence of a relationship has been revealed between assignment to an exclusionary consequence and poor academic outcomes. Additionally, negative relationships have been established between student economic status and academic performance. Accordingly, students who are economically disadvantaged who are assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence may be at an increased risk of poor academic performance. Additionally, Black and Hispanic girls who are economically disadvantaged, for whom additional inequities in assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence with respect to their ethnicity/race have been documented, may be at an increased risk to experience poor academic outcomes in comparison to their White peers due to these compounding factors.

Historical Review of Research on Exclusionary Discipline Practices in Texas

A number of research investigations have been conducted regarding exclusionary discipline consequence assignments in the State of Texas. Revealed in Table 1.1 are research articles in which inequities in the assignment of students to an in-school suspension consequence were determined. Each researcher addressed assignment to an in-school suspension with respect to student ethnicity/race. Statistically significant differences in the assignment of students to an in-school suspension with respect to student ethnicity/race were reported in each study. In each study, researchers determined that Black students were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate statistically significantly higher than Hispanic or White students. Moreover, Hispanic students were assigned to an in-school suspension at a statistically significantly higher rate than White students.

Table 1.1

Historical Review of Research Articles on In-School Suspension in Texas With Respect to Student Ethnicity/Race

Author	School Years Analyzed	Inequities Present
Schlitzberger	2003-2004	Yes
Hilberth	2008-2009	Yes
Jones	2008-2009 & 2010-2011	Yes
Slate et al.	2013-2014	Yes
Tiger	2013-2014 & 2014-2015	Yes
Coleman	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
White	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
White et al.	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
Harkrider	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
Miller	2015-2016 & 2016-2017	Yes

A similar trend has been established for the assignment of students to an out-of-school suspension consequence. Contained in Table 1.2 are research articles in which clear inequities in the assignment of students to an out-of-school suspension consequence were established. Reported in each research article were statistically significant differences in assignment to an out-of-school suspension consequence with respect to student ethnicity/race. In each study, researchers determined that Black students were statistically significantly more likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension than

were Hispanic or White students. Furthermore, Hispanic students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a statistically significantly higher rate than White students.

Table 1.2

Historical Review of Research Articles on Out-of-School Suspension in Texas With Respect to Student Ethnicity/Race

Author	School Years Analyzed	Inequities Present
Schlitzberger	2003-2004	Yes
Hilberth	2008-2009	Yes
Henkel et al.	2008-2009 and 2011-2011	Yes
Jones	2008-2009 & 2010-2011	Yes
Slate et al.	2013-2014	Yes
Tiger	2013-2014 & 2014-2015	Yes
Coleman	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
White	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
White et al.	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
Harkrider	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
Miller	2015-2016 & 2016-2017	Yes

Researchers have also documented the presence of inequities in the removal of students from their home campus due to assignment to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement or to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Presented in Table 1.3 are research articles in which clear inequities in the assignment of students to a campus removal consequence with respect to student

ethnicity/race were documented. Established by these researchers were statistically significant differences in the assignment of students to a campus removal consequence with respect to ethnicity/race. Researchers in all studies reported that the rate at which Black students were assigned to a campus removal consequence was statistically significantly higher than the rate at which Hispanic or White students were assigned to such a consequence. Moreover, Hispanic students were assigned to a campus removal consequence at a statistically significantly higher rate than were White students.

Table 1.3

Historical Review of Research Articles on Campus Removal Consequences in Texas With Respect to Student Ethnicity/Race

Author	School Years Analyzed	Discipline Consequence	Inequities Present
Schlitzberger	2003-2004	DAEP	Yes
Hilberth	2008-2009	DAEP	Yes
Jones	2008-2009 & 2010-2011	DAEP	Yes
Slate et al.	2013-2014	DAEP	Yes
Eckford	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	JJAEP	Yes
Eckford et al.	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	JJAEP	Yes
Lopez et al.	2011-2012 through 2015-2016	DAEP	Yes
Lopez	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	DAEP	Yes

In addition to student ethnicity/race, a number of researchers have addressed the presence of inequities in exclusionary discipline consequence assignments with respect to student economic status. Revealed in Table 1.4 are research articles in which clear inequities were present by student economic status and their assignment to an in-school suspension consequence. Statistically significant differences in the assignment of students to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status were determined in each study. In each study, students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a statistically significantly higher rate than were students who were not economically disadvantaged.

Table 1.4

Historical Review of Research Articles on In-School Suspension in Texas With Respect to Student Economic Status

Author	School Years Analyzed	Inequities Present
Schlitzberger	2003-2004	Yes
Tiger	2013-2014, 2014-2015	Yes
Coleman	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
White	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
Harkrider	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
Miller	2015-2016 & 2016-2017	Yes

Researchers have documented a similar trend for the assignment of students to an out-of-school suspension consequence. Contained in Table 1.5 are research articles in which inequities in the assignment of students to an out-of-school suspension

consequence were investigated. Reported in each research article were statistically significant differences in assignment to an out-of-school suspension consequence with respect to student economic status. Students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a statistically significantly higher rate than were students who were not economically disadvantaged.

Table 1.5

Historical Review of Research Articles on Out-of-School Suspension in Texas With Respect to Student Economic Status

Author	School Years Analyzed	Inequities Present
Schlitzberger	2003-2004	Yes
Tiger	2013-2014, 2014-2015	Yes
Coleman	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
White	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
Harkrider	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	Yes
Miller	2015-2016 & 2016-2017	Yes

Also documented in the existing research was the presence of clear inequities in the removal of students from their home campus due to assignment to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement or to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Delineated in Table 1.6 are research articles in which inequities in the assignment of students to a campus removal consequence with respect to student economic status were determined. Established by these researchers were statistically significant differences in the assignment of students to a campus removal consequence

with respect to economic status. Students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a campus removal consequence at a statistically significantly higher rate than their peers who were not economically disadvantaged.

Table 1.6

Historical Review of Research Articles on Campus Removal Consequences in Texas With Respect to Student Economic Status

Author	School Years Analyzed	Discipline	Inequities
		Consequence	Present
Schlitzberger	2003-2004	DAEP	Yes
Eckford	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	JJAEP	Yes
Eckford et al.	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	JJAEP	Yes
Lopez	2012-2013 through 2015-2016	DAEP	Yes

Statement of the Problem

Well established by researchers (Barnes et al., 2017; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017; Skiba et al., 2014; White & Slate, 2017) have been the clear presence of inequities in the assignment of students to an in-school suspension in middle and high school settings. Existing literature on the presence of inequities in the assignment of elementary school students to an in-school suspension, however, is limited. Through a search of available literature, only one such study conducted by Tiger (2016) was located. Documented in her study was the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an in-school suspension. Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate three times higher than White and Hispanic girls.

Clear inequities with respect to ethnicity/race in the assignment of girls to an out-of-school suspension, as well as the number of days assigned, have been documented by researchers (Harkrider, 2020; Miller, 2021; Slate et al., 2016; White, 2019). These clear disparities are of concerns as researchers (Chu & Ready, 2018; Hilberth, 2010; Skiba, 2014; Smith et al., 2020) have established the presence of a relationship between assignment to an out-of-school suspension and poor academic outcomes (Skiba et al., 2011). Students who are assigned to just one out-of-school suspension are statistically significantly less likely perform satisfactorily on standardized reading and mathematics exams (Smith et al., 2020). The negative effects on academic outcomes have been attributed to loss of instructional time that occurs when students are removed from their regular educational environment while assigned to an out-of-school suspension (Chu & Ready, 2018).

With respect to economic status, disparities have been documented in the frequency with which girls who were economically disadvantaged are assigned to an in-school suspension (Barnes et al., 2017b; Coleman & Slate, 2016; Harkrider, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; White, 2019; White & Slate 2017), as have inequities in the number of days girls who were economically disadvantaged are assigned to an in-school suspension (White, 2019; White & Slate, 2017). The presence of such inequities is of concern as researchers (Chu & Ready, Davenport, 2021; 2018; Hilberth, 2010; McGown, 2016; Skiba et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2020) have determined that assignment to an in-school

suspension and being economically disadvantaged are each associated with poor academic and social outcomes.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the degree to which ethnicity/race and economic status were related to the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences and to the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences to Grades 4 and 5 girls. The first purpose was to investigate the extent to which differences existed in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. The second purpose was to determine the degree to which differences were present in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. The final purpose was to ascertain the extent to which differences existed in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status.

Significance of the Study

This study was conducted to fill the void in the existing research literature regarding the presence of inequities in the assignment of elementary girls to in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension consequences with respect to student ethnicity/race. A similar void exists in the existing research literature regarding the presence of inequities in the assignment of elementary girls who are economically disadvantaged to an in-school suspension. Findings of this multiyear investigation can be used by educational leaders to review and to modify existing discipline policies and

practices to lessen the presence of disparities in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an exclusionary discipline consequence with respect to ethnicity/race and economic status. Further determining the presence of inequities in the assignment of elementary girls to exclusionary discipline consequences can justify future research investigations into alternative discipline practices for student misbehavior.

Definition of Terms

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

Black

The Texas Education Agency (2020a) defines a Black student as “a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups in Africa” (p. 4).

Economically Disadvantaged

The Texas Education Agency (2021a) identifies students who are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program as being economically disadvantaged. Students are eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program if the family’s income is at or below 185% of the federal poverty threshold (Benefits.gov, 2021).

Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to person being of Hispanic/Latino Origin or Not (Texas Education Agency, 2020a).

Exclusionary Discipline Consequence

Exclusionary discipline consequences refer to disciplinary actions that result in students being removed from their regular educational setting (American Psychological Association, 2019).

Hispanic

The Texas Education (2020a) Agency defines Hispanic as “A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race” (p. 4).

In-School Suspension

In-school suspension refers to the removal of students from their regular education environment and placement in an alternative setting on campus during the school day (Texas Education Code, 2021).

Not Economically Disadvantaged

The Texas Education Agency (2021a) does not consider students to be economically disadvantaged if they do not meet eligibility requirements for free or reduce-priced lunches through the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program. Students from families that have a household income that is more than 185% of the federal poverty threshold are not eligible for the free or reduce-priced lunch program (Benefits.gov, 2021).

Out-of-School Suspension

Out-of-school suspension refers to a disciplinary action that prohibits a student from attending school for a period not exceeding three consecutive days (Texas Education Code, 2021).

Public Education Information Management System

The Texas Education Agency (2020a) defines the Public Education Information Management System as a system that encompasses data that the Texas Education Agency requests and receives from public schools. These data include information regarding student demographics, academic performance, school personnel, financial, and organizational information.

Race

Five major racial groups are identified by the Texas Education Agency (2020a). These groups include Black, White, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander.

Texas Education Agency

The Texas Education Agency is a state agency that oversees public education in the state of Texas. The Texas Education Agency's (2020b) primary goal is to improve the educational outcomes for students attending Texas public schools through the provision of leadership, guidance, and support for all school systems.

White

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

Literature Review Search Procedures

For this journal-ready dissertation, literature regarding exclusionary discipline consequences (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension), with respect to student demographics of ethnicity/race and economic status was examined. The following phrases were used in the search for relevant literature: Exclusionary discipline,

exclusionary consequence, economic status, economically disadvantaged, Black, White, Hispanic, ethnicity/race, suspension, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and elementary. Searches for scholarly peer reviewed articles were conducted through the following databases: Educational Resource Information Clearinghouse (ERIC), Education Source, and *Journal of Educational Leadership* academic journals.

Delimitations

The three studies contained in this journal-ready dissertation were limited to only quantitative data about Grades 4 and 5 girls enrolled in Texas public schools. Data on students who were enrolled in private or charter schools were not used in this journal-ready dissertation. Data were obtained by submitting a Public Information Request to the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Specific variables on which data were requested were grade level, gender, ethnicity/race, economic status, assignment to an in-school suspension, assignment to an out-of-school suspension, and number of days assigned to either disciplinary consequence.

Limitations

In this journal-ready dissertation, the relationship between student ethnicity/race and economic status with the assignment to in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension was addressed. As a result, limitations are present. Only quantitative data were analyzed. Data analyses were limited to only Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls who were enrolled in Texas public schools for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018,

2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Data for girls enrolled in private or charter schools were not analyzed.

Assumptions

The major assumptions made in this journal-ready dissertation were that the data provided to the Texas Education Agency through the Public Education Information Management System were reported accurately. Errors in the reporting of student ethnicity/race, gender, economic status, assignment to in-school suspension, assignment to out-of-school suspensions, and the number of days assigned to these consequences could negatively affect the results of this study.

Organization of the Study

In this journal-ready dissertation, three manuscripts were generated. In the first journal-ready dissertation article, the extent to which inequities might exist in the rate at which Grades 4 and 5 White, Hispanic, and Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years was examined. Additionally, the degree to which inequities were present in the number of days that Grades 4 and 5 White, Hispanic, and Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years was addressed.

In the second journal-ready dissertation article, the extent to which inequities existed in the rate at which Grades 4 and 5 White, Hispanic, and Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years was determined. Moreover, the degree to which inequities were present in the number of days that Grades 4 and Grade 5 White, Hispanic, and

Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years was examined.

In the third journal-ready dissertation article, the extent to which inequities existed in the rate at which Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years with respect to economic status was addressed. Furthermore, the degree to which inequities were present in the number of days that Grades 4 and Grade 5 White, Hispanic, and Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years with respect to economic status was addressed.

This journal-ready dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter I contains the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, definition of key terms, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the three research investigations. Present in Chapter II is the framework for the first journal-ready investigation into the effect of ethnicity/race on the assignment and number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grades 4 and 5 girls during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Discussed in Chapter III are the second journal-ready dissertation analysis into the effect of ethnicity/race on the assignment and number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension for Grades 4 and 5 girls during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Chapter IV contains the investigation into the effect of economic status on the assignment and number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grades 4 and 5 girls during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. In the final chapter, Chapter V, the results of the three articles are discussed.

CHAPTER II

INEQUITIES IN THE ASSIGNMENT AND NUMBER OF DAYS ASSIGNED TO AN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION AS A FUNCTION OF THE ETHNICITY/RACE OF GRADES 4 AND 5 GIRLS: A STATEWIDE, MULTIYEAR INVESTIGATION

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

Abstract

In this statewide, multiyear investigation, the extent to which student ethnicity/race was related to the rate and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was addressed. Separate analyses were conducted for each grade level and for each of the four school years. Established in this investigation was the clear presence of differences in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 school years. In both grade levels, Black and Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a statistically significantly higher rate than White girls. Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school suspension, followed by White girls, and the Hispanic girls. Implications and recommendations for future research were made.

Keywords: In-school suspension, Ethnicity/Race, Black, Hispanic, White, Girls

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The Children's Defense Fund (1975) published a report in which they documented an increase in the assignment of students to an out-of-suspension across the United States and the resulting negative effects of these suspensions on student academic performance (Skiba et al., 2011). One alternative suggested in the report was the use of in-school centers that would alleviate classroom issues for teachers by removing students from the regular classroom while still providing students with access to the educational environment. Today, the assignment of students to an in-school suspension is the most common form of exclusionary discipline consequence used to address student misbehaviors in the school setting (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

In the 2017-2018 school year, more than 2.6 million students were assigned to at least one day in an in-school suspension, resulting in their removal from the regular educational environment. Of this 2.6 million students assigned to an in-school suspension, 802,852 of them were girls. Despite Black girls being only 7.4% of the total enrollment of girls in public schools in the 2017-2018 school year, they accounted for 36.6% of all assignments to an in-school suspension. A similar trend was established for Hispanic girls who, though only being 13.3% of the total school enrollment, accounted for 23.9% of in-school suspension assignments. As such, Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate five times higher than their enrollment percentage, whereas Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate over twice their enrollment percentage (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

Texas, the state of interest in this article, accounted for more than 18% of the total number of girls in the United States who were assigned to at least one day in an in-school suspension in the 2017-2018 school year. With regard to ethnicity/race, similar trends were documented in in-school suspension assignments. Despite Black girls being only 6.1% of girls enrolled in Texas public schools, they accounted for 24.9% of assignments to an in-school suspension. A similar trend was present for Hispanic girls who despite being 25.7% of girls enrolled in public schools, accounted for more than half, 52.5%, of assignments to an in-school suspension. Accordingly, Black girls in Texas are assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate nearly four times higher than the enrollment percentage, whereas Hispanic girls are assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate twice that of their enrollment percentage (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

In a Texas statewide analysis, Slate et al. (2016) investigated the presence of inequities in the assignment of girls to exclusionary disciplinary consequences in the 2013-2014 school year. For Grades 4 and 5 girls, who are of focus in this article, Slate et al. (2016) documented the presence of clear disparities in the rates at which girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. Though Grade 4 Black girls comprised a small percentage of the overall student enrollment, they accounted for more than half, 54%, of assignments to an in-school suspension. The frequency at which Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension increased by a factor of nearly six in Grade 5 as they were assigned to 1,152 in-school suspensions, 955 more assignments than in Grade 4. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a frequency nearly 12 times higher as they were assigned to 848 in-school suspensions, 776 more than in Grade 4.

In addition to the presence of inequities in the assignment of girls to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race, researchers (Harkrider, 2020; Miller, 2021; White, 2019) have also documented the presence of inequities in the number of days that girls are assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. That is, the inequities that are present in being assigned to an exclusionary consequence are further exacerbated by inequities in the number of days assigned to the consequence. The issue of existing disparities in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension is of concern because it contributes to a loss of instructional time in the regular educational environment (Chu & Ready, 2018). In a Texas statewide investigation, White (2019) established that for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls, Black girls were assigned to a statistically significantly higher number of days in an in-school suspension than were White and Hispanic girls in the 2015-2016 school year. White (2019) documented that Black girls in Grade 6 were assigned to 0.87 days more to an in-school suspension than were White girls. Black girls in Grade 7 were assigned to 0.94 days more to an in-school suspension than were White girls. Black girls in Grade 8 were assigned to 0.72 days more in an in-school suspension than were White girls.

Despite being assigned an average of fewer days to an in-school suspension than Black girls, Hispanic girls were still assigned to a statistically significantly higher number of days than White girls during the 2015-2016 school year. In Grade 6, Hispanic girls were assigned to 0.48 days more in an in-school suspension than were White girls. In Grade 7, Hispanic girls were assigned to 0.40 days more in an in-school suspension than were White girls. In Grade 8, Hispanic girls were assigned to 0.17 days more in an in-school suspension than were White girls.

Previous researchers (Barnes et al., 2017; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017; White & Slate, 2017) have primarily focused on inequities in exclusionary discipline practices for middle and high school students. In a Texas statewide investigation about Grades 4 and 5 students, Tiger (2016) determined that Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate that was statistically significantly higher than the in-school suspension rates for White or Hispanic girls in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. In both school years, Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate three times higher than were White and Hispanic girls. Readers should note that the findings of Tiger's (2016) study were in contrast to other studies where Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a lower rate than White girls despite comprising a majority of the enrollment population.

Although in-school suspension is viewed as a way to provide students with a consequence for misbehaviors while limiting the negative effects on their educational performance, researchers (Chu & Ready, 2018; Hilberth, 2010; Skiba et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2020) have determined that the assignment of students to an in-school suspension can lead to an increased likelihood of poor academic outcomes. Smith et al. (2020) conducted a study of 380,826 students enrolled in Texas public schools to explore the effect of assignment to an in-school suspension on their standardized test performance. They established that assignment to just one in-school suspension was a strong predictor of poor performance in both reading and mathematics. Poor academic performance as a function of an in-school suspension has been attributed to the loss of instructional time in the regular educational environment (Chu & Ready, 2018; Skiba et al. 2011).

In a similar Texas statewide investigation, Hilberth (2010) established that assignment to an in-school suspension had statistically significant relationships to performance on standardized tests in reading and mathematics. Black students who were assigned to at least one in-school suspension had reading scores that were statistically significantly lower than the reading test scores of Black students who had not been assigned to an in-school suspension. Similar results were documented for mathematics. Black students who had been assigned to an in-school suspension had mathematics scores that were statistically significantly lower than the mathematics test scores of Black students who had not been assigned to an in-school suspension. The documentation of such inequities in both the assignment to an in-school suspension and in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension are of concern because these factors may be contributing to achievement gaps between students of color and White students.

In a recent investigation, Ibrahim et al. (2020) established that for Black girls, assignment to an in-school suspension was associated with lower mathematics course-taking. More specifically, Black girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were statistically significantly less likely to take higher level mathematics courses than Black girls who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Ibrahim et al. (2020) also documented that higher scores on standardized mathematics tests and positive teacher-student relationships were associated with enrollment in higher level mathematics courses for Black girls. Thus, Black girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were less likely to enroll in higher level mathematics courses and to perceive poorer relationships with their teachers. The negative effects on course enrollment associated with assignment to an in-school suspension, and thus student-teacher relationships, are of concerns

because they may further contribute to the issue of inequities in the assignment of Black girls to in-school suspensions and other exclusionary consequences, and the resulting effects on their academic achievement.

Statement of the Problem

The prevalence of school administrators using exclusionary discipline practices as a management technique to address student misbehaviors has been on the increase since the 1970's (Children's Defense Fund, 1975). Today, the assignment of students to an in-school suspension remains the most common exclusionary discipline consequence. In the 2017-2018 school year, more than 2.6 million students were assigned to at least one day in an in-school suspension. Girls comprised more than 800,000 of these assignments to an in-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). With respect to ethnicity/race, clear inequities have been established in the frequency with which girls are assigned to an in-school suspension (Slate et al., 2016), as have inequities in the number of days girls are assigned to an in-school suspension (Harkrider, 2020; Miller, 2021; White, 2019).

These documented inequities are of concern because researchers (Chu & Ready, 2018; Hilberth, 2010; Skiba et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2020) have established the assignment of girls to an in-school suspension is related to poor academic and social outcomes. Hilberth (2010) and Smith et al. (2020) determined that girls who had been assigned to at least one day in an in-school suspension were statistically significantly more likely to have poorer standardized reading and mathematics test scores than girls who had not been assigned to an in-school suspension. Ibrahim et al. (2020) documented that Black girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension were statistically significantly less likely to enroll in higher level mathematics courses than Black girls

who had not been assigned to such a consequence. Ibrahim et al. (2020) suggested that enrollment in higher level mathematics courses contributed to stronger school bonding, such as positive relationships with adults on campus. Accordingly, Black girls who are assigned to an in-school suspension may be less likely to form strong student-teacher relationships, further exacerbating both their overrepresentation in exclusionary discipline consequences and to their poor academic outcomes.

Well established by researchers (Barnes et al., 2017; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017; White & Slate, 2017) have been the clear presence of inequities in the assignment of students to an in-school suspension in middle and high school settings. Existing literature on the presence of inequities in the assignment of elementary school students to an in-school suspension, however, is limited. Through a search of available literature, only one such study conducted by Tiger (2016) was located. Documented in her study was the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an in-school suspension. In her investigation, Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate three times higher than the rate for White and Hispanic girls.

Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which ethnicity/race was related to the assignment of girls to an in-school suspension. Additionally, the extent to which ethnicity/race was related to the number of days that girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was investigated. Specifically examined were discipline data for Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Accordingly, the extent to which trends were present

in the assignment to an in-school suspension, as well as in the number of days assigned, was addressed.

Significance of the Study

This study was conducted to fill the void in the existing research literature regarding the presence of inequities in the assignment of elementary girls to an in-school suspension. Findings of this multiyear investigation can be used by educational leaders to review and to modify existing discipline policies and practices to lessen the presence of disparities in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to in-school suspension consequences. Further determining the presence of inequities in the assignment of elementary girls to exclusionary discipline consequences can justify future research investigations into alternative discipline practices for student misbehavior.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) For Grade 4 girls, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on assignment to an in-school suspension?; (b) For Grade 4 girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension?; (c) For Grade 5 girls, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on assignment to an in-school suspension?; (d) For Grade 5 girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension?; (e) For Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls, to what extent are trends present in assignment to an in-school suspension?; and (f) For Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls, to what extent are trends present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension? The first four research questions were answered

separately for each school year of data present, whereas the last two research questions involved all four school years. Accordingly, a total of 14 research questions were present in this article.

Method

Research Design

Present in this article was a causal-comparative research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Student ethnicity/race was the independent variable. Three racial/ethnic groups were present: (a) White, (b) Black, and (c) Hispanic. Two dependent variables were present in this study. The first dependent variable was the rate at which Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. The second dependent variable was the number of days Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

Readers should note the presence of limitations in the use of a causal-comparative research design. Definitive cause and effect relationships cannot be determined through the use of such a research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). When using archival data, data cannot be manipulated or changed because these events have already occurred. As such, the degree to which generalizations can be made is limited.

Participants and Instrumentation

Participants in this study were Grades 4 and 5 girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and/or 2019-2020 school years. In-school suspension is a disciplinary consequence in which students are assigned to an alternative educational setting on their assigned campus (Texas Education Code,

2021). A Public Information Request was submitted to the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System to obtain the disciplinary data for this study. Specifically requested were data about Black, Hispanic, and White Grades 4 and 5 girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension and the number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020 school years. Data for Asian girls were not included in this study due to their very low numbers who are assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence. Once received, the data were imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software program for statistical analyses.

Results

To ascertain whether differences were present in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an in-school suspension as a function of their ethnicity/race, Pearson chi-square analyses were conducted. The Pearson chi-square was the statistical procedure used because frequency data were present for the in-school suspension (i.e., assigned or not assigned). Accordingly, chi-squares are an optimal procedure when the independent and dependent variables are both categorical. (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). With a large state-wide sample size, the available sample size per cell was met. Therefore, the assumptions for using Pearson chi-square procedures were met.

Results for In-School Suspension and Grade 4 Girls

In this section, results will first be presented for the first research question by school year. Also presented in this section will be results for the second research question by school year. Regarding the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 125.02$,

$p < .001$, with respect to their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V , was small, .17 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 4 Black girls were assigned most often to an in-school suspension of the three groups of girls; followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Of these three ethnic/racial groups of girls, Black girls had the lowest percent of student enrollment but the highest percentages of being assigned to an in-school suspension. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 2.1

 Insert Table 2.1 about here

With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 132.79$, $p < .001$, with respect to their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .17 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 4 Black girls were assigned most often to an in-school suspension of the three groups of girls; followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Despite accounting for a small percentage of the total enrollment, Black girls had the highest percentages of being assigned to an in-school suspension. Table 2.1 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

Concerning the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 133.15$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .17 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 4 Black girls were assigned most often to an in-school suspension of the three groups of girls; followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Although Black girls constituted a smaller portion of the total enrollment in comparison to White and Hispanic girls, they

were assigned to the highest percentage of in-school suspensions. Presented in Table 2.1 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

For the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 68.84$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .15 (Cohen, 1988). Despite comprising a smaller percentage of the total enrollment, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate 10% higher than Hispanic girls and nearly 13% higher than White girls. Revealed in Table 2.1 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Results for In-School Suspension and Grade 5 Girls

Regarding the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 232070$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .17 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension most often; followed by Black girls, and then White girls. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate nearly 10% higher than were Black girls and 20% higher than White girls. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate nearly 10% higher than White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 2.2.

Insert Table 2.2 about here

In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 173.92, p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .15 (Cohen, 1988). Of the three groups, Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension most frequently; followed by Black girls, and then White girls. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a higher rate than were Black or Hispanic girls, 8.9% and 18.9%, respectively. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension 10% more frequently than were White girls. Table 2.2 contains descriptive statistics for this school year.

For the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 165.40, p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .14 (Cohen, 1988). Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension most frequently, followed by Black girls and then White girls. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate more than 10% higher than were Black girls. The rate at which Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to such a consequence was nearly 20% higher than Grade 5 White girls. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned to such a consequence at a rate 8% higher than White girls. Delineated in Table 2.2 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Concerning the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 107.10, p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate nearly 10% more frequently than Black Girls and more than 18% more frequently than White girls. Grade 5

Black girls were more than 8% more likely to be assigned to in-school suspension than were White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are present in Table 2.2.

Results for Number of Days Grade 4 Girls Were Assigned to an In-school Suspension

Regarding the number of days Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 3377) = 10.39, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .006$. The effect size for this finding was below small (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that all but one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension: Grade 4 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Grade 4 Black girls were assigned a statistically significant higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic and White girls, 0.36 and 0.25 more days, respectively. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are revealed in Table 2.3.

 Insert Table 2.3 about here

Concerning the 2017-2018 school year and the number of days Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 3564) = 5.03, p = .007$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension: Grade 4 White and Hispanic girls were assigned to a similar number of days

to an in-school suspension as were Grade 4 White girls and Black girls. Grade 4 Black girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days, 0.38 more days, to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic girls. Table 2.3 contains descriptive statistics for this school year.

With respect to the 2018-2019 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 3564) = 8.25, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .004$, below small effect size, in the number of days Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that two pairwise comparisons were statistically significant. Grade 4 Black and White girls were assigned to a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Both Grade 4 Black and White girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic girls, 0.37 and 0.29 more days, respectively. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 2.3.

For the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 2477) = 10.13, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .008$, below small effect size. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed two statistically significant pairwise comparisons. Grade 4 Black and White girls were assigned to a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Both Grade 4 Black and White girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic girls, 0.39 and 0.29 more days, respectively. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 2.3.

Results for Number of Days Grade 5 Girls Were Assigned to an In-school Suspension

Regarding the number of days Grade 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant

difference, $F(2, 6141) = 26.88, p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .009$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that all but one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned a statistically significant higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic and White girls, 0.59 and 0.43 more days, respectively. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are revealed in Table 2.4.

Insert Table 2.4 about here

With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 6259) = 17.04, p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .005$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that all but one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned a statistically significant higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic and White girls, 0.40 and 0.44 more days, respectively. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 2.4.

Concerning the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 6468) = 21.42, p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .007$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that all but one pairwise comparison was

statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned a statistically significant higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic and White girls, 0.58 and 0.42 more days, respectively. Table 2.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With respect to the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 4654) = 12.44, p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .005$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that all but one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned a statistically significant higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic and White girls, 0.41 and 0.42 more days, respectively. Delineated in Table 2.4 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Discussion

In this multiyear, Texas statewide analysis, the extent to which differences were present in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school year was addressed. For all four school years and for both grade levels, the rates at which Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension were determined. Moreover, the average number of days Black,

Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was calculated for each school year.

In each school year, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned the highest total number of days to an in-school suspension followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. In the 2016-2017 school year through the 2019-2020 school year, Black girls were assigned an average of 2,956 days to an in-school suspension. Hispanic and White girls were assigned to an average of 2,193 days and 1,963 days, respectively. Therefore, during the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 school years, Black girls were assigned an average of more than 750 more days to an in-school suspension each year than were Hispanic girls and nearly 1,000 more days than White girls. Presented in Table 2.5 are summary statistics for the total number of days assigned to Grades 4 Black, Hispanic, and White girls for each school year.

Insert Table 2.5 about here

In each school year present, Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned the highest total number of days to an in-school suspension followed by Black girls, and then White girls. During the four school years present, Hispanic girls were assigned an average of 5,760 days to an in-school suspension. In comparison, Black and White girls were assigned to an average of 5,445 days and 3,371 days, respectively. Therefore, during the 2016-2017 through 2019-2020 school years, Hispanic and Black girls were assigned an average of more than 2,000 more days to an in-school suspension each year than were White girls.

Presented in Table 2.5 are summary statistics for the total number of days assigned to Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls for each school year.

With respect to differences between grade levels during the 2016-2017 through 2019-2020 school years, Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned a higher average number of days to an in-school suspension in Grade 5 than were Black, Hispanic, and White girls in Grade 4. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned an average of 2,489 more days to an in-school suspension than were Black girls in Grade 4. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an average of 3,567 more days than were Hispanic girls in Grade 4. Grade 5 White girls were assigned an average of 1,408 more days than were White girls in Grade 4.

Regarding the rates of in-school suspension assignment for Grade 4 girls, ethnic/racial inequities were clearly evident. In all four school years, Grade 4 Black girls had the highest rates of being assigned to an in-school suspension. Not only were Grade 4 Black girls overrepresented based on their enrollment percentage, they were also disproportionately assigned to such a consequence when compared to Hispanic and White girls. Depicted in Figure 2.1 are the rates of in-school suspension assignment for Grade 4 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

Insert Figure 2.1 about here

A similar trend was present for Hispanic girls in Grade 5. In all four school years, Grade 5 Hispanic girls had the highest rates of assignment to an in-school suspension,

followed by Black girls and then White girls. Despite being assigned to an in-school suspension less frequently than Hispanic girls, Grade 5 Black girls were the most overrepresented group based on their enrollment percentages. In-school suspension assignment frequencies for Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in all four school years are displayed in Figure 2.2.

Insert Figure 2.2 about here

Concerning the number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, clear inequities were present by ethnicity/race. In each school year, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school suspension, followed by White girls, and then Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned the lowest average number of days to an in-school suspension, despite accounting for the highest percentage of the total student enrollment. Illustrated in Figure 2.3 are the average number of days that Grade 4 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in each school year.

Insert Figure 2.3 about here

Disparities in the average number of days that Grade 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension were also determined. In all four school years, Grade 5 Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school suspension, followed by White girls, and then by Hispanic girls. Despite comprising the highest percentage of

the total enrollment, Hispanic girls were assigned the lowest average number of days to an in-school suspension. Depicted in Figure 2.4 are the average number of days that Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in each school year.

Insert Figure 2.4 about here

Connections to Existing Literature

Established in this multiyear, statewide investigation was the presence of differences in the rates and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race. Though disparities have been well documented by researchers (e.g., Barnes et al., 2017a; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017; White & Slate, 2017) at the middle and high school level, few researchers have established the presence of such differences at the elementary school level. In a previous Texas investigation, Tiger (2016) documented the presence of differences in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 students to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race. In both Grades 4 and 5, Black students were assigned to an in-school suspension at statistically significantly higher rates than were White students. In her study, Tiger (2016) determined that Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension less frequently than were Black girls or White girls. For this article, Hispanic girls, along with Black girls in both Grades 4 and 5, were assigned to an in-school suspension at higher rates than were White girls. Of note in this investigation is that

Grades 4 and 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to a lower average number of days in an in-school suspension.

Implications for Practice and for Policy

As a result of the findings of this study, implications for practice can be made. School district and campus administrators are encouraged to analyze discipline data for their school district or campus. They are specifically encouraged to focus on the rate and number of days that girls in elementary schools are being assigned to an in-school suspension as a method of managing behavior. These administrators should evaluate their behavior management practices in an effort to minimize the use of exclusionary discipline techniques. Campus level administrators should also consider the well documented effects that assignment to an in-school suspension has on students' academic achievement as a result of lost instructional time. Campus leaders should analyze student achievement data to determine if exclusionary consequence use is negatively influencing student academic performance.

The results of this study could also be used as evidence to support policy changes. School districts and school boards should examine existing policy to determine if changes can be made to lessen the frequency at which exclusionary discipline measures are utilized. More specifically, the development of a district wide behavioral management plan that includes clear goals and action steps for the reduction of such disparities may be effective in reducing the differences in exclusionary discipline assignment. This plan may include a focus on the use of discipline management techniques that better preserve instructional time while effectively managing behavior.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this multiyear, statewide study, a relationship between assignment to an in-school suspension by ethnicity/race was established for elementary school girls. Based on the results of this study, several recommendations for future research studies can be made. First, an investigation to determine the extent to which assignment to an in-school suspension in Grades 4 and 5 is related to student ethnicity/race is warranted. Secondly, researchers should examine the relationship between assignment to an in-school suspension and student economic status. Additionally, these studies should be replicated for boys enrolled in elementary schools. Finally, researchers are encouraged to replicate this investigation in other states to determine the extent to which the results discussed herein are generalizable to other states.

Conclusion

In this Texas multiyear investigation, the extent to which student ethnicity/race was related to the rate and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was addressed. Separate analyses were conducted for each grade level and for each of the four school years. In all four school years, Grades 4 and 5 Black and Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a statistically significantly higher rate than White girls. Black girls in both Grades 4 and 5 were assigned to an in-school suspension at the highest rate, despite comprising the small percentage of the total enrollment. In each of the four school years, Grades 4 and 5 Black and White girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher number of days in an in-school suspension than Hispanic girls. In each of the of the four

school years, and for both grade levels, Black girls were assigned to the highest number days in an in-school suspension.

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Table 2.1

Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an In-School Suspension to Grade 4 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
2016-2017			
Black	1,313	10.5	38.9
Hispanic	1,165	36.0	34.5
White	899	53.5	26.6
2017-2018			
Black	1,343	10.3	37.7
Hispanic	1,242	36.7	34.8
White	979	52.9	27.5
2018-2019			
Black	1,383	10.5	37.8
Hispanic	1,253	38.4	34.2
White	1,025	51.1	28.0
2019-2020			
Black	1,009	55.4	40.7
Hispanic	787	31.9	31.8
White	681	12.6	27.5

Table 2.2

Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an In-School Suspension to Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
2016-2017			
Black	2,052	47.8	33.4
Hispanic	2,587	43.2	42.1
White	1,502	9.0	24.5
2017-2018			
Black	2,108	9.4	33.7
Hispanic	2,666	47.2	42.6
White	1,485	52.9	23.7
2018-2019			
Black	2,073	40.7	32.1
Hispanic	2,806	48.9	43.4
White	1,589	10.4	24.6
2019-2020			
Black	1,560	45.7	33.5
Hispanic	1,979	43.3	42.5
White	1,115	11.0	24.0

Table 2.3

Descriptive Statistics for In-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grade 4 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Black	1,313	2.27	1.79
Hispanic	1,165	1.91	1.79
White	899	2.02	26.6
2017-2018			
Black	1,343	2.43	2.65
Hispanic	1,242	2.05	3.96
White	979	2.25	2.29
2018-2019			
Black	1,383	2.40	2.74
Hispanic	1,253	2.03	2.10
White	1,025	2.32	2.74
2019-2020			
Black	1,009	2.24	1.98
Hispanic	787	1.85	1.56
White	681	2.14	1.95

Table 2.4

Descriptive Statistics for In-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Black	2,052	2.89	3.26
Hispanic	2,587	2.30	2.36
White	1,502	2.46	2.55
2017-2018			
Black	2,108	2.72	3.11
Hispanic	2,666	2.32	2.53
White	1,485	2.28	2.10
2018-2019			
Black	2,073	2.90	3.89
Hispanic	2,806	2.32	2.40
White	1,589	2.48	2.95
2019-2020			
Black	1,560	2.63	2.93
Hispanic	1,979	2.22	2.56
White	1,115	2.21	2.29

Table 2.5

Summary of Total Number of In-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grades 4 and 5

Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Grade 4	Grade 5
2016-2017		
Black	2,981	5,930
Hispanic	2,225	5,950
White	1,815	3,695
2017-2018		
Black	3,263	5,734
Hispanic	2,546	6,185
White	2,202	3,386
2018-2019		
Black	3,319	6,012
Hispanic	2,544	6,510
White	2,378	3,940
2019-2020		
Black	2,260	4,103
Hispanic	1,455	4,393
White	1,457	2,464

Figure 2.1.

Rate of In-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 4 Girls by Ethnicity/Race for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

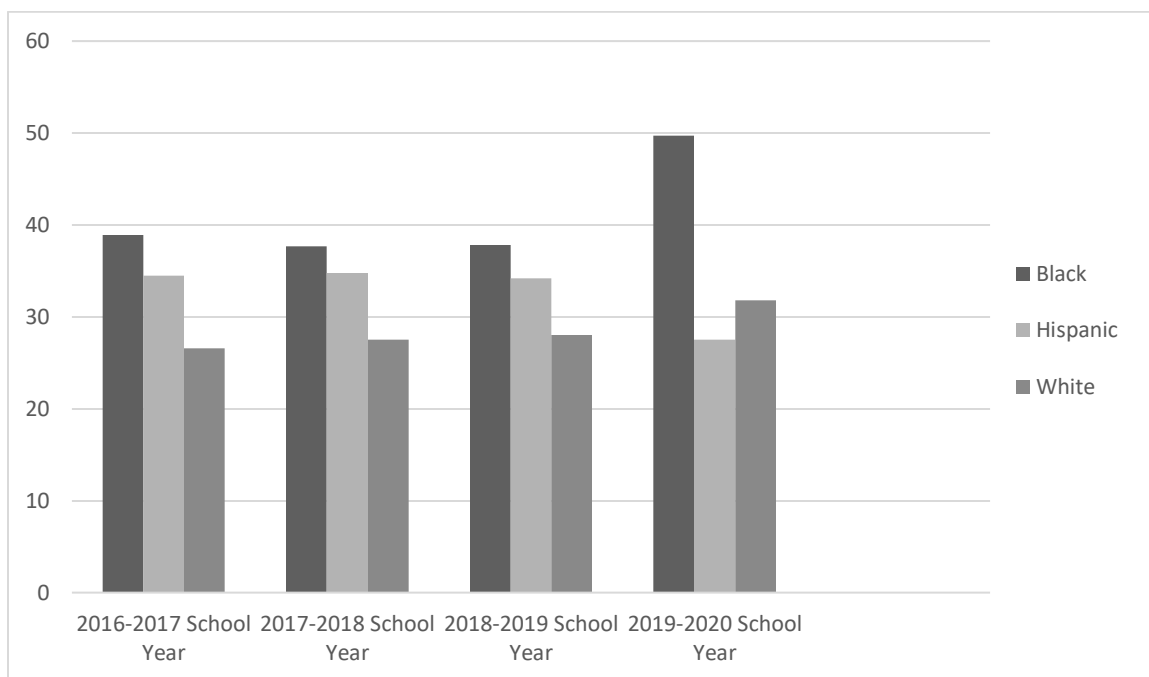


Figure 2.2

Rate of In-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 5 Girls by Ethnicity/Race for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

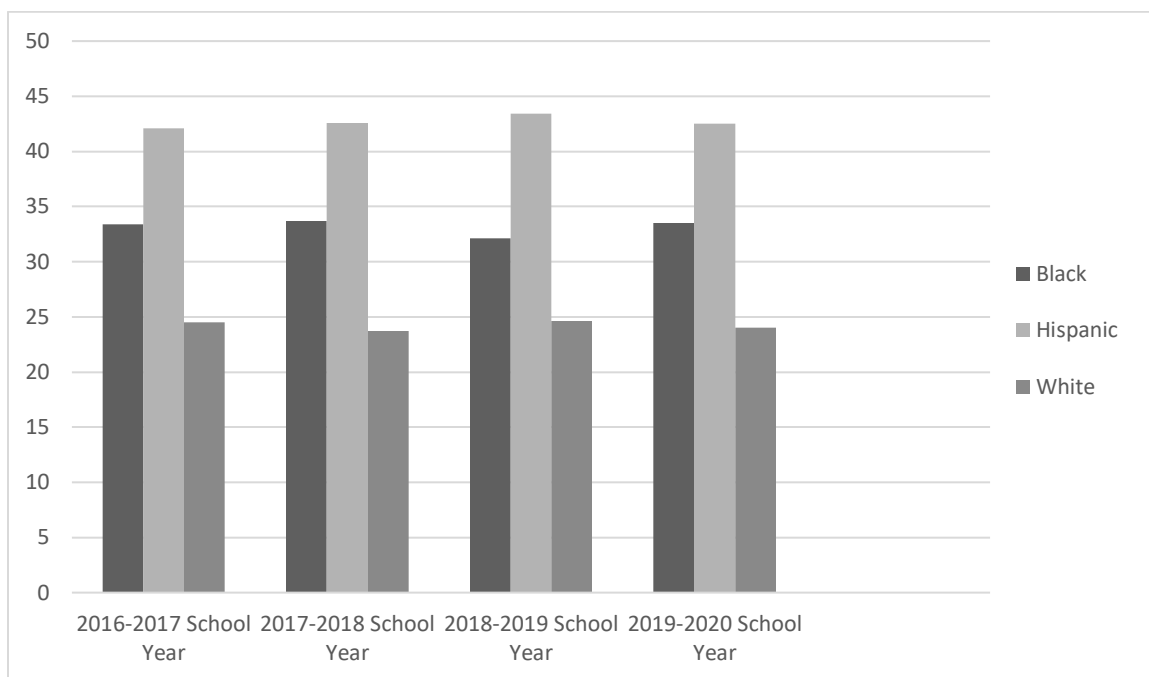


Figure 2.3

Average Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 4 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

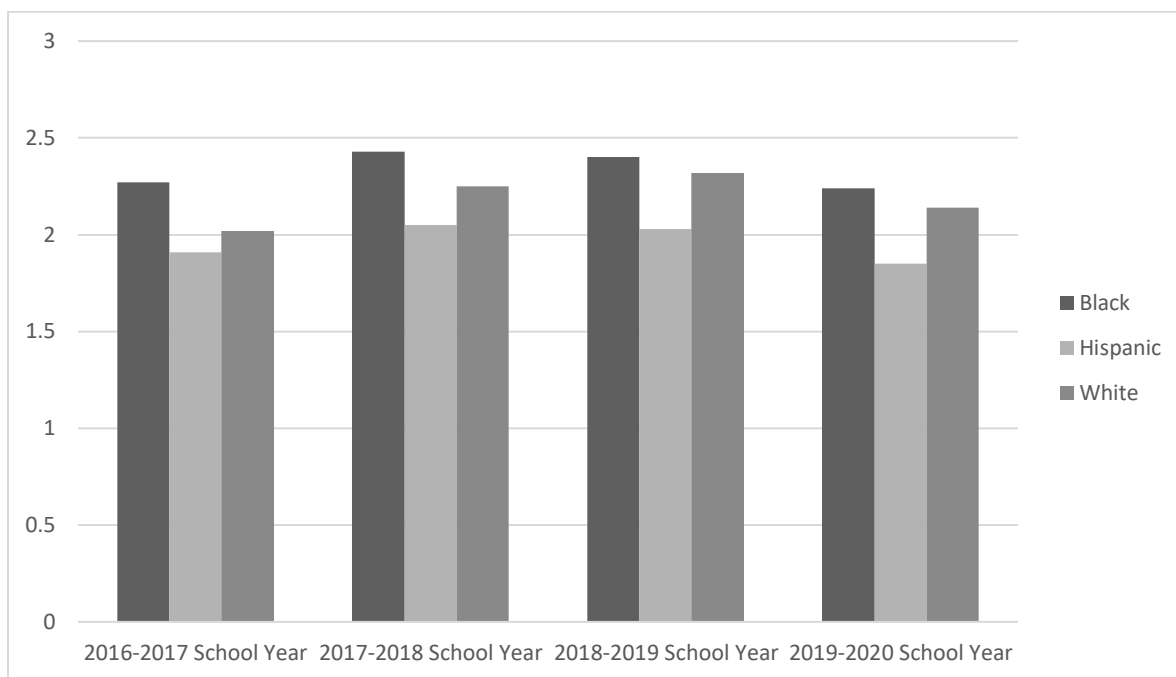
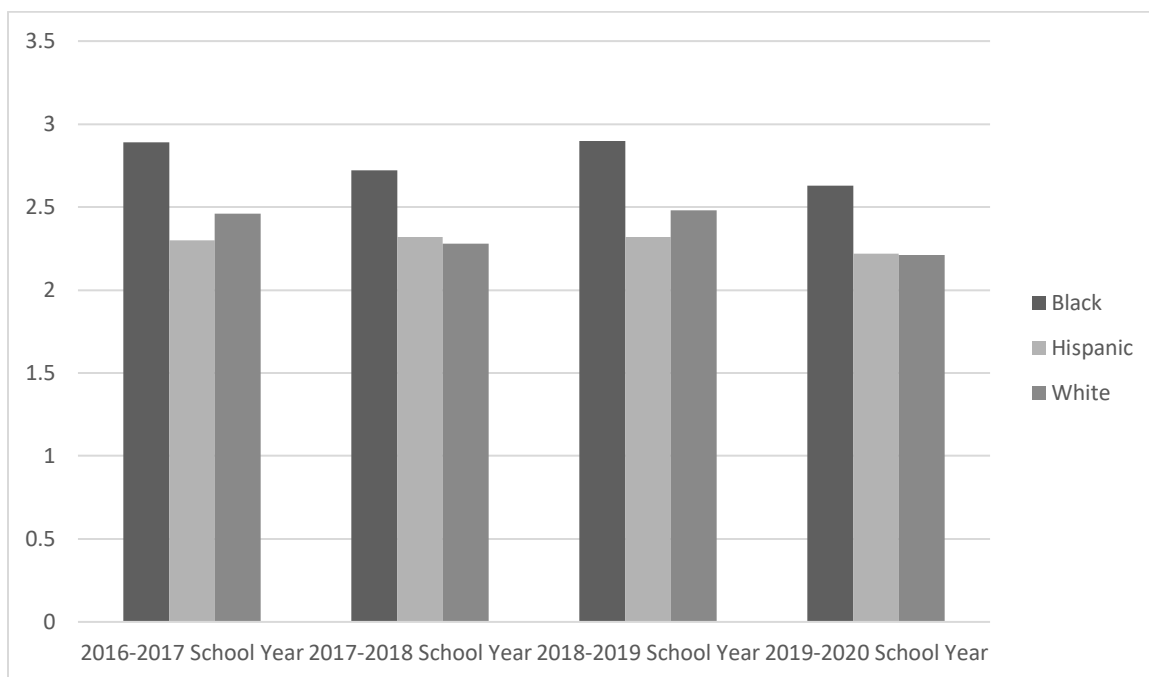


Figure 2.4

Average Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years



CHAPTER III

INEQUITIES IN THE ASSIGNMENT AND NUMBER OF DAYS ASSIGNED TO AN OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION AS A FUNCTION OF THE ETHNICITY/RACE OF GRADES 4 AND 5 GIRLS: A STATEWIDE, MULTIYEAR STUDY

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

Abstract

In this statewide, multiyear investigation, the extent to which student ethnicity/race was related to the rate and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension was addressed. Separate analyses were conducted for each grade level and for each of the four school years. Revealed in this investigation was the presence of clear disparities in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 school years. In each school year, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at the highest rate, followed by Hispanic girls and then by White girls. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned to such a consequence at the highest rate in three of the four school years present. In Grade 4, Black girls were assigned to the highest average number of days in an out-of-school suspension followed by White girls, and then Hispanic girls. Similar statistically significant results were revealed in Grade 5 for three school years. Implications and recommendations for future research were made.

Keywords: Out-of-school suspension, Ethnicity/Race, Black, Hispanic, White, Girls

INEQUITIES IN THE ASSIGNMENT AND NUMBER OF DAYS ASSIGNED TO AN
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The use of exclusionary discipline consequences as a method of managing student misbehaviors has become increasingly more common in the United States over the last several decades (Skiba, 2014). One of the most frequently used exclusionary consequences is the assignment of students to an out-of-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). An out-of-school suspension is a discipline consequence in which students are prohibited from attending school for a period of no longer than three school days (Texas Education Code, 2021). In 2017-2018, the most recent data available from the United States Department of Education, more than 1.5 million students were assigned to at least one day to an out-of-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). Of these 1.5 million students, 491,784 of them were girls. Of interest is that although Black girls accounted for only 7.4% of the total school enrollment for girls in the 2017-2018 school year, they accounted for 40.1% of assignments to an out-of-school suspension. Hispanic girls comprised 13.3% of school enrollment for girls, but accounted for 23.5% of assignments to an out-of-school suspension. Readers should note that both Black and Hispanic girls in the United States were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at rates that were quite disproportionate with their enrollment percentages. Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate more than five times higher their enrollment percentage, whereas Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate twice that of their enrollment percentage (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

Texas, the state of interest for this article, accounted for more than 10% of the total number of girls in the United States who were assigned to at least one day in an out-of-school suspension in the 2017-2018 school year. Similar trends were documented in the assignment of girls to an out-of-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. Although Black girls constituted only 6.1% of the total enrollment of girls in the State of Texas, they accounted for almost a third, 32%, of the assignments to an out-of-school suspension. Similarly, Hispanic girls made up 25.7% of the enrollment of girls, but were assigned to over half, 52.2%, of out-of-school suspensions. As such, Black girls in Texas were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate more than five times higher than their enrollment percentage, whereas Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate more than twice that of their enrollment percentage (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

In a Texas statewide analysis conducted by Slate et al. (2016), the presence of strong inequities in the assignment of girls to an out-of-school suspension was established. For Grades 4 and 5 girls, who are the focus in this article, Slate et al. (2016) documented the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of girls to an out-of-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. Grade 4 Black girls accounted for nearly 20% of assignments to an out-of-school suspension, a rate almost four times higher than the rate for White girls. Readers should note that no Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in Grade 4 during the 2013-2014 school year. Black girls in Grade 5 were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate (17.4%) three times higher than White girls (5.1%) and nearly twice that of Hispanic girls (9.4%).

In addition to documenting the presence of clear disparities in the assignment of girls by their ethnicity/race to an out-of-school suspension, researchers (Harkrider, 2020; Miller, 2021; White, 2019) have also established that inequities are present in the number of days that girls are assigned to an out-of-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. Inequities in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an out-of-school suspension are further intensified by inequities in the number of days assigned to the consequence. Established in a Texas statewide investigation conducted by White (2019) were the presence of inequities in the number of days Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2015-2016 school year. White (2019) determined that Grade 6 Black girls were assigned 0.65 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were White girls. Grade 7 Black girls were assigned 1.18 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were White girls. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned 0.87 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were White girls.

White (2019) established the presence of similar inequities in the number of days that Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned 0.15 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were White girls. In Grade 7, Hispanic girls were assigned 0.47 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were White girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned 0.24 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were White girls.

Although the presence of inequities in exclusionary discipline practices has been well documented in middle and high schools (Barnes et al., 2017; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017; White & Slate, 2017), fewer researchers have focused on the use of exclusionary practices at the elementary school level. One such

study, however, was conducted by Tiger (2016) to determine the extent to which disparities were present in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 Texas public school students to an out-of-school suspension in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. Tiger (2016) determined that Grades 4 and 5 Black and Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at statistically significantly higher rates than were White girls in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. Readers should note that in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate more than 10 times higher than White girls. Similarly, in the 2013-2014 school year Grade 5 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate more than 10 times that of White girls. In 2014-2015, Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate 11 times higher than White girls.

Despite being assigned to an out-of-school suspension less frequently than Black girls, Tiger (2016) also documented that Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate that was statistically significantly higher than White girls. In the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, Grade 4 Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate nearly seven times higher than White girls. In Grade 5, Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate more than four times higher than White girls during the 2013-2014 school year and more than five times higher than White girls during the 2014-2015 school year.

These documented inequities in the assignment of girls to an out-of-school suspension are of concern as researchers (Chu & Ready, 2018; Hilberth, 2010; Skiba, 2014; Skiba et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2020) have established the presence of an inverse relationship between assignment to an out-of-school suspension and satisfactory

academic outcomes. Smith et al. (2020) conducted a statewide analysis of Texas students to investigate the effect of an out-of-school suspension assignment on their reading and mathematics performance. In their investigation, students who had been assigned to even a single out-of-school suspension had statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics test scores than their peers who had not been assigned to an out-of-school suspension.

In an investigation to determine the degree to which assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence was related to student performance on state-mandated reading and mathematics exams, Hilberth (2010) revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in performance between students who had been assigned to an out-of-school suspension and students who had not been assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Students who had been assigned to an out-of-school suspension had statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics test scores than their peers in their same ethnic/racial group who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Chu and Ready (2018) attributed such performance to the loss of instructional time that occurs when students are removed from their regular educational environment and assigned to an out-of-school suspension.

In addition to the negative effects of exclusionary discipline consequences associated with academic performance, researchers (Butler-Barnes & Inniss-Thompson, 2020; Gregory et al., 2010; Rose, 2017; Skiba et al., 2011) have established that assignment to an out-of-school suspension is associated with poor relationship and mental health outcomes. Gregory et al. (2010) ascertained that students who are assigned to an out-of-school suspension are less likely to form strong bonds within their school

environment, which may weaken their academic motivation. Butler-Barnes and Inniss-Thompson (2020) determined that Black girls who perceived strong bonds with their school environment, such as positive relationships with adults, were less likely to be assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence than Black girls who did not perceive themselves as having strong bonds with their school environment. Rose et al. (2017) established that strong school bonding was also positively associated with student mental health. Thus, students who are assigned to an out-of-school suspension are at an increased likelihood of negative effects on their mental well-being. Due to the documented inequities in the assignment of girls to an out-of-school suspension, Black and Hispanic girls may be at an increased risk of forming weaker bonds within their school environment and, as a result, experience poor mental health outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

The assignment of students to an exclusionary discipline consequence as a means of addressing student misbehaviors in the school setting is a practice that has become more common since the 1970's (Children's Defense Fund, 1975). According to the Office of Civil Rights (2021), the assignment of students to an out-of-school suspension is the second most commonly used exclusionary discipline consequence in the United States. In 2017-2018, more than 1.5 million students were removed from the school environment for at least one day due to assignment to an out-of-school suspension. Girls constituted nearly 500,000 of the total number of students assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Clear inequities with respect to ethnicity/race in the assignment of girls to an out-of-school suspension, as well as the number of days assigned, have been documented by researchers (Harkrider, 2020; Miller, 2021; Slate et al., 2016; White, 2019).

These clear disparities are of concerns as researchers (Chu & Ready, 2018; Hilberth, 2010; Skiba, 2014; Smith et al., 2020) have established the presence of a relationship between assignment to an out-of-school suspension and poor academic outcomes. Students who are assigned to just one out-of-school suspension are statistically significantly less likely perform satisfactorily on standardized reading and mathematics exams (Smith et al., 2020). The negative effects on academic outcomes have been attributed to loss of instructional time that occurs when students are removed from their regular educational environment while assigned to an out-of-school suspension (Chu & Ready, 2018).

Researchers (Butler-Barnes & Inniss-Thompson, 2020; Gregory et al., 2010, 2020; Rose, 2017; Skiba et al., 2011) also have asserted that assignment to an out-of-school suspension is related to poor relationship and mental health outcomes. Strong school bonding, such as formation of positive relationships with adults, is associated with improved academic performance and a decreased likelihood of being assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence (Butler-Barnes & Inniss-Thompson, 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2020). Assignment to an out-of-school suspension has been determined to be detrimental to student ability to form strong bonds within the school environment (Gregory et al., 2010). Poor school bonds are correlated with poor mental health outcomes (Rose et al., 2017). Accordingly, students are at an increased likelihood of experiencing negative effects on their mental well-being when assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Black and Hispanic girls, for whom inequities in assignment to an out-of-school suspension have been established, may be at an increased risk to experience poor mental health outcomes in comparison to White girls.

Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which ethnicity/race was related to the assignment of girls to an out-of-school suspension. Additionally, the degree to which the ethnicity/race of Grades 4 and 5 girls was related to the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension was ascertained. Specifically examined were discipline data for Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

Significance of the Study

Findings from this multiyear, statewide investigation will assist in filling the void in the literature on the presence of disparities in the assignment of elementary school girls to an out-of-school suspension. School district and campus leaders may use the findings of this multiyear analysis to review and to amend current policies and practices with the intent to reduce the presence of inequities in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an out-of-school suspension and in the number of days assigned. Additionally, findings of this study may be used to generate future research investigations regarding development of alternative discipline management techniques to address student behaviors in a more equitable manner than has currently been documented to exist.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) For Grade 4 girls, what is the effect of their race/ethnicity on assignment to an out-of-school suspension?; (b) For Grade 4 girls who had been assigned to an out-of-school suspension, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension?; (c) For Grade 5 girls, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on

assignment to an out-of-school suspension?; (d) For Grade 5 girls who had been assigned to an out-of-school suspension, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension?; (e) For Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls, to what extent are trends present in assignment to an out-of-school suspension?; and (f) For Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls, to what extent are trends present in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension? The first four research questions were answered separately for each school year of data present, whereas the last two research questions involved all four school years. Accordingly, a total of 14 research questions were present in this article.

Method

Research Design

Present in this investigation was a causal-comparative research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). A single independent variable, that of student ethnicity/race, was present. The three largest racial/ethnic groups of students in the State of Texas were present: (a) White, (b) Black, and (c) Hispanic. The first dependent variable was the rate at which Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. The second dependent variable was the number of days Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

Limitations in the use of a causal-comparative research design should be noted by readers. The determination of definitive cause and effect relationships cannot be established through the use of a causal-comparative research design (Johnson &

Christensen, 2020). The use of archival data ensures that data cannot be altered as events have already occurred.

Participants and Instrumentation

Participants in this study were Grades 4 and 5 girls who had been assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Out-of-school suspension is a disciplinary consequence in which students are prohibited from attending school. Assignment to out of school suspension is limited to three consecutive school days (Texas Education Code, 2021). A Public Information Request were made to the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System to obtain the disciplinary data for this study. Specifically requested were data about Grades 4 and 5 girls who had been assigned to an out-of-school suspension and the number of days they were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Due to their very low representation in being assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence, data for Asian girls were not included in this study. Once received, the data were imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software program for statistical analysis.

Results

To ascertain whether inequities were present in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race, Pearson chi-square analyses were conducted. This statistical procedure was used because frequency data were present for out-of-school suspension (i.e., assigned or not assigned). Accordingly, chi-squares are an optimal procedure when the independent and dependent variables are both categorical. (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). With a large statewide sample size, the available sample

size per cell was met. Therefore, the assumptions for using Pearson chi-square procedures were met.

Results for Out-of-School Suspension and Grade 4 Girls

Regarding the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 167.97$, $p < .001$, with respect to their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .20 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at the highest rate; followed by Hispanic girls, and then by White girls. Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at the highest rate, despite comprising the smallest percentage of the total student population. Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an out-school suspension at a rate 22% higher than Hispanic girls and more than 41% higher than White girls. Grade 4 Hispanic girls were assigned at a rate nearly 20% higher than White girls. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 3.1.

 Insert Table 3.1 about here

With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 185.24$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .20 (Cohen, 1988). Of the three groups present, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned most often to an out-of-school suspension; followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Grade 4 Black girls were nearly 22% more likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension

than Hispanic girls and more than 40% more likely than White girls. Grade 4 Hispanic girls were assigned at a rate more than 18% higher than White girls. Table 3.1 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

For the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 184.08$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .20 (Cohen, 1988). Although they comprise the smallest percentage of the overall student enrollment, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at the highest rate, followed by Hispanic girls and then White girls. Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate more than 22% higher than were Hispanic girls. The rate at which Grade 4 Black girls were assigned was nearly 40% higher than Grade 4 White girls. Grade 4 Hispanic girls were more than 22% more likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension than were White girls. Delineated in Table 3.1 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Concerning the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 114.93$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .19 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension most frequently, followed by Hispanic girls and then White girls. Grade 4 Black girls were assigned at a rate nearly 30% higher than Hispanic girls and nearly 43% higher than White girls. Hispanic girls were more than twice as likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension than were White girls. Presented in Table 3.1 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Results for Out-of-School Suspension and Grade 5 Girls

Concerning the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 378.02$, $p < .001$, with respect to their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small, .21 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at the highest rate; followed by Hispanic girls, and then by White girls. Despite comprising the smallest percentage of the total student population, Grade 5 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at the highest rate. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned at a rate 8% higher than Hispanic girls and more than 37% higher than White girls. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned at a rate more than 30% higher than White girls. Descriptive statistics for this school year are presented in Table 3.2.

Insert Table 3.2 about here

For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 297.45$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .19 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 Black girls were assigned most often to an out-of-school suspension; followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Grade 5 Black girls were 4% more likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension than Hispanic girls and more than 36% more likely than White girls. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned at a rate nearly 32% higher than White girls. Table 3.2 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

Regarding the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 249.73$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .18 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at the highest rate, followed by Black girls and then White girls. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension less than 1% more frequently than Black girls. The rate at which Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned was more than 30% higher than Grade 4 White girls. Black girls in Grade 5 were also assigned at a rate more than 30% higher than White girls. Contained in Table 3.2 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With respect to the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an out-of-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 167.97$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .17 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension most frequently, followed by Hispanic girls and then White girls. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned at a rate 6% higher than Hispanic girls and nearly 34% higher than White girls. Hispanic girls were assigned at a rate nearly 38% higher than were White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are delineated in Table 3.2.

Results for Number of Days Grade 4 Girls Were Assigned to an Out-of-school Suspension

Regarding the number of days Grade 4 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension during the 2016-2017 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 1397) = 6.89$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. The effect size for this finding was small (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that only one

pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an out-school suspension: Grade 4 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an out-of-school suspension. Grade 4 White girls were also assigned to a similar number of days as Black girls. Grade 4 Black girls were assigned a statistically significant higher average number of days, 0.45 more days, to an out-of-school suspension than were Hispanic girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 3.3.

Insert Table 3.3 about here

Concerning the 2017-2018 school year and the number of days Grade 4 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 1369) = 12.94, p = .007$, partial $\eta^2 = .019$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that all but one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension: Grade 4 Hispanic and White girls were assigned to a similar number of days to an out-of-school suspension. Grade 4 Black girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days than Hispanic and White girls, 0.66 and 0.57 more days respectively. Contained in Table 3.3 are descriptive statistics for this school year.

For the 2018-2019 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 1403) = 5.01, p = .007$, partial $\eta^2 = .007$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988), in the number of days Grade 4 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension.

Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that only one pairwise comparison was statistically significant. Grade 4 Black and White girls were assigned to a similar number of days to an out-of-school suspension, as were Hispanic and White girls. Grade 4 Black girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days, 0.37 more days, to an out-of-school suspension than were Hispanic girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are delineated in Table 3.3.

For the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 925) = 7.02, p = .001$, partial $n^2 = .015$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed one statistically significant pairwise comparison. Grade 4 Black and White girls were assigned to a similar number of days to an out-of-school suspension, as were White and Hispanic girls. Grade 4 Black girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days, 0.52 more days, to an out-of-school suspension than were Hispanic girls. Descriptive statistics for this school year are revealed in Table 3.3

Results for Number of Days Grade 5 Girls Were Assigned to an Out-of-school Suspension

Concerning the number of days Grade 5 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension during the 2016-2017 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 1397) = 7.78, p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .01$. The effect size for this finding was small (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that only one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an out-school suspension: Grade 5 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an out-of-school suspension, as were Black and White girls. Grade 5

Black girls were assigned a statistically significant higher average number of days, 0.34 more days, to an out-of-school suspension than were Hispanic girls. Contained in Table 3.4 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Insert Table 3.4 about here

With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 2671) = 16.37, p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .013$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension: Grade 5 Hispanic and White girls were assigned to a similar number of days to an out-of-school suspension, as were White and Black girls. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days, 0.51 more days, than Hispanic girls. Presented in Table 3.4 are descriptive statistics for this school year.

Regarding the 2018-2019 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 1403) = 15.66, p < .007$, partial $n^2 = .012$, small effect size (Cohen, 1988), in the number of days Grade 5 girls were assigned to an out-school suspension. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that all but on pairwise comparison was statistically significant. Grade 5 Hispanic and White girls were assigned to a similar number of days to an out-of-school suspension. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days to an out-of-school suspension, 0.44 more days, than were Hispanic girls and White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are delineated in Table 3.4.

For the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was not revealed, $F(2, 925) = 7.63, p = .10$. Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to a similar number of days to an out-of-school suspension. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are delineated in Table 3.4.

Discussion

In this multiyear, Texas statewide investigation, the extent to which differences were present in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school year was addressed. For all four school years and for both grade levels, the rates at which Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension were determined. Moreover, the average number of days Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension was calculated for each school year.

In each school year, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned the highest total number of days to an out-school suspension followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. In the 2016-2017 school year through the 2019-2020 school year, Black girls were assigned an average of 1,973 days to an out-of-school suspension whereas Hispanic and White girls were assigned to an average of 861 days and 394 days, respectively. Therefore, during the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 school years, Black girls were assigned an average of more than 1,100 more days to an out-of-school suspension each year than were Hispanic girls and more than 1,500 more days than White girls. Presented in Table 3.5

are summary statistics for the total number of days assigned to Grades 4 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in each school year.

 Insert Table 3.5 about here

In each school year present, Grade 5 Black girls were assigned the highest total number of days to an out-of-school suspension followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. During the four school years present, Black girls were assigned an average of 3,005 days to an out-school suspension. In comparison, Black and White girls were assigned to an average of 2,351 days and 693 days, respectively. As such, during the 2016-2017 through 2019-2020 school years, Black girls were assigned an average of more than 650 more days to an out-school suspension each year than were Hispanic girls and. Black girls were assigned to more than 2,300 more days to such a consequence than were White girls. Presented in Table 3.5 are summary statistics for the total number of days assigned to Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls for each school year. Readers should note that although a statistically significant difference was not yielded for the 2019-2020 school year, Black girls were still assigned the highest number of total days to an out-of-school suspension.

Regarding the rate at which Grade 4 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, ethnic/racial disparities were clearly evident. In all four school years, Grade 4 Black girls had the highest rates of being assigned to an out-of-school suspension. In addition to being overrepresented based on their enrollment percentage, Grade 4 Black girls were also disproportionately assigned to such a consequence when compared to

Hispanic and White girls. Presented in Figure 3.1 are the rates of out-of-school suspension assignment for Grade 4 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

Insert Figure 3.1 about here

A similar trend was present for Black girls in Grade 5. In three of the school years present, Grade 5 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at the highest rate, followed by Hispanic girls and then White girls. During the 2018-2019 school year, Hispanic girls were assigned to such a consequence at the highest rate. Grade 5 Black girls were the most overrepresented group based on their enrollment percentages. Depicted in Figure 3.2 are the out-of-school suspension assignment frequencies for Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in all four school years.

Insert Figure 3.2 about here

Regarding the number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, clear inequities were present by ethnicity/race. In each school year, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an out-of-school suspension, followed by White girls, and then Hispanic girls. Although they constituted the highest percentage of the total student enrollment, Grade 4 Hispanic girls were assigned the lowest average number of days to an out-of-school suspension. Illustrated in

Figure 3.3 are the average number of days that Grade 4 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in each school year.

Insert Figure 3.3 about here

Also determined was the presence of inequities in the number of days that Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. In all four school years, Grade 5 Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an out-of-school suspension, followed by White girls, and then by Hispanic girls. Similar to Grade 4 girls, Grade Hispanic girls were assigned the lowest average number of days to an out-of-school suspension, despite accounting for the highest percentage of the total student enrollment. Depicted in Figure 3.4 are the average number of days that Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in each school year.

Insert Figure 3.4 about here

Connections to Existing Literature

Established in this multiyear, statewide investigation was the presence of differences in the rates and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race. Such disparities have been well established by researchers (Barnes et al., 2017; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017; White & Slate, 2017), at the middle and high school level,

however, few researchers have documented the presence of such disparities at the elementary level. Documented by Tiger (2016) was the presence of clear differences in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 students to an out-of-school suspension with respect to student ethnicity/race. Tiger (2016) established that Grades 4 and 5 Black and Hispanic girls were assigned to such a consequence at a statistically significantly higher rate than were White girls in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. In this article, similar disparities were revealed. In Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at the highest rate in each school year. In Grade 5, Black girls were assigned to such a consequence at the highest rate in three of the four school years present. During the 2018-2019 school year, Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to such an out-of-school suspension at a rate 0.7% higher than were Black girls.

Implications for Practice and for Policy

As a result of the findings of this study, recommendations for practice are possible. First, school district and campus administrators should engage in efforts to review discipline data with the goal of identifying student groups who may be disproportionately affected by the use of exclusionary discipline techniques. These administrators should specifically focus on the rate and number of days that girls in elementary schools are being assigned to an out-of-school suspension as a method of managing behavior. District and campus disciplinary policies should be thoroughly reviewed to ensure these policies are not contributing to the overrepresentation of student groups in exclusionary discipline assignment. Also taken into consideration by campus leaders should be the well documented relationship between assignment to an out-of-school suspension and students' academic and social outcomes. Campus leaders are

encouraged to consider restorative reintegration practices to limit the potential negative academic and social effects to students who are assigned to an out-of-school suspension.

Changes to existing policy could also be supported by the results of this study. School districts and school boards should examine existing policy to determine if changes can be made to existing policy to better ensure that no student groups are overrepresented in out-of-school suspension assignment. More specifically, efforts should be made to identify alternative behavioral management techniques to lessen the frequency at which exclusionary consequences are used. School districts and school boards should also consider restorative measures for students who have already been negatively affected by assignment to an out-of-school suspension.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this multiyear, statewide investigation, a relationship between assignment to an out-of-school suspension by ethnicity/race was established for elementary school girls. Based on the results of this study, several recommendations for future research studies can be made. First, researchers should examine the relationship between assignment to an out-of-school and student economic status Grades 4 and 5 girls. Secondly, this study should be replicated in Grade 3 because Grade 3 is the first grade in which students can be legally assigned to an out-of-school suspension. A replication of this study with a focus on elementary school boys is also warranted. Finally, to determine the extent to

which the results discussed herein are generalizable to other states, researchers are encouraged to replicate this investigation outside of the state of Texas.

Conclusion

In this Texas multiyear investigation, the extent to which student ethnicity/race was related to the rate and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension was addressed. Separate analyses were conducted for each grade level and for each of the four school years. In all four school years, Grades 4 and 5 Black and Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a statistically significantly higher rate than White girls. Despite comprising the smallest percentage of the total enrollment, Black girls in Grade 4 were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at the highest rate in all four school years. In Grade 5, Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at the highest rate in three of the four school years. In the 2018-2019 school year, Hispanic girls were assigned to such a consequence at a rate 0.7% higher than Black girls. Also established in this study was the presence of differences in the number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls are assigned to an out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race. In each of the four school years, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an out-of-school suspension, followed by White girls, and then by Hispanic girls. Statistically significant differences were present in three of the four school years for Grade 5 girls in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years. In each of these three school years, Grade 5 Black girls were assigned the highest number of days to an out-of-school

suspension, followed by White girls and then Hispanic girls. A statistically significant result was not yielded for the 2019-2020 school year.

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Table 3.1

Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an Out-of-School Suspension to Grade 4 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
2016-2017			
Black	762	36.3	54.5
Hispanic	454	36.0	32.5
White	181	27.7	13.0
2017-2018			
Black	746	34.8	54.5
Hispanic	438	36.7	32.0
White	185	28.5	13.5
2018-2019			
Black	734	35.4	52.3
Hispanic	493	35.1	35.1
White	176	29.5	12.5
2019-2020			
Black	527	38.0	57.0
Hispanic	267	33.1	28.9
White	131	29.0	14.2

Table 3.2

Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an Out-of-School Suspension to Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
2016-2017			
Black	1,322	30.3	48.5
Hispanic	1,113	43.1	40.9
White	289	26.5	10.6
2017-2018			
Black	1,192	30.7	46.4
Hispanic	1,099	44.0	42.8
White	179	25.4	10.9
2018-2019			
Black	1,157	29.3	43.3
Hispanic	1,174	44.8	44.0
White	340	25.9	12.7
2019-2020			
Black	793	31.3	46.8
Hispanic	686	43.6	40.5
White	216	25.1	12.7

Table 3.3

Descriptive Statistics for Out-of-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grade 4 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Black	762	2.60	2.17
Hispanic	454	2.15	1.83
White	181	2.40	2.23
2017-2018			
Black	746	2.72	1.48
Hispanic	438	2.06	1.98
White	185	2.15	2.63
2018-2019			
Black	734	2.46	2.10
Hispanic	493	2.08	1.72
White	176	2.35	2.68
2019-2020			
Black	527	2.54	1.89
Hispanic	267	2.02	1.47
White	131	2.36	1.95

Table 3.4

Descriptive Statistics for Out-of-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Black	1,322	2.72	2.38
Hispanic	1,113	2.38	1.99
White	289	2.48	2.72
2017-2018			
Black	1,192	2.75	2.43
Hispanic	1,099	2.24	1.77
White	279	2.59	2.20
2018-2019			
Black	1,157	2.74	1.89
Hispanic	1,174	2.30	1.78
White	340	2.30	1.89
2019-2020			
Black	793	2.49	1.89
Hispanic	686	2.32	1.79
White	216	2.56	1.80

Table 3.5

*Summary of Total Number of Out-of-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grades 4 and 5
Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Grade 4	Grade 5
2016-2017		
Black	2,981	3,596
Hispanic	976	2,649
White	434	716
2017-2018		
Black	2,029	3,278
Hispanic	902	2,461
White	398	723
2018-2019		
Black	1,541	3,170
Hispanic	1,025	2,700
White	433	782
2019-2020		
Black	1,339	1,975
Hispanic	539	1,592
White	309	552

Figure 3.1

Rate of Out-of-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 4 Girls by Ethnicity/Race for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

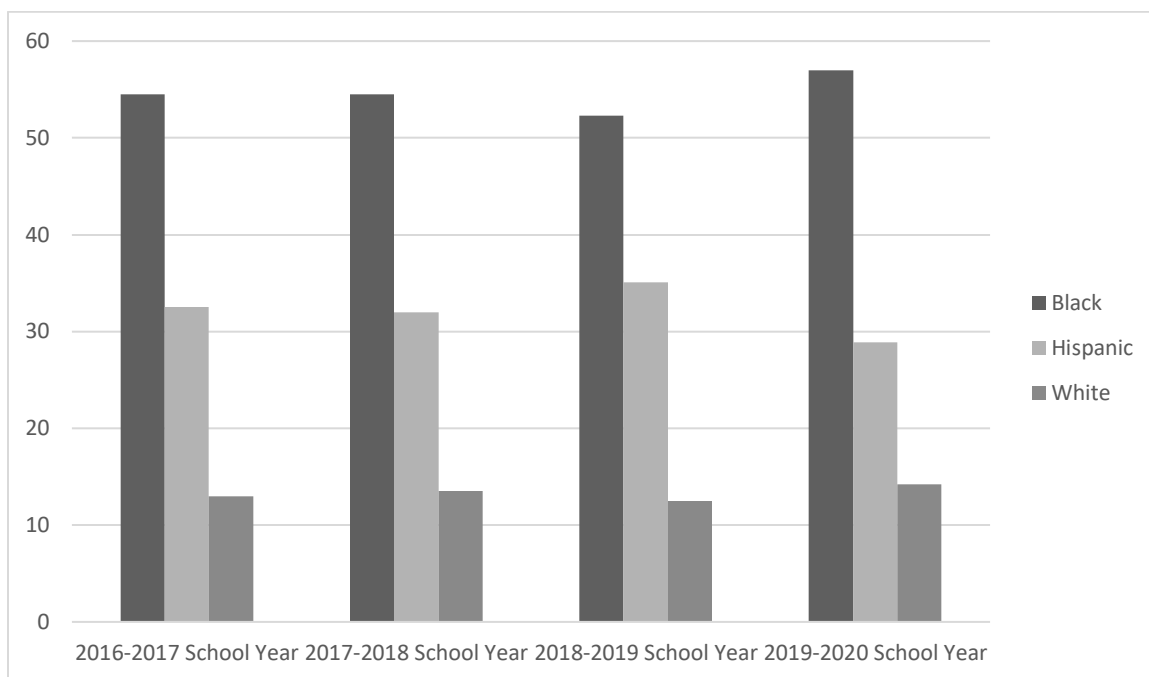


Figure 3.2

Rate of Out-of-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 5 Girls by Ethnicity/Race for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

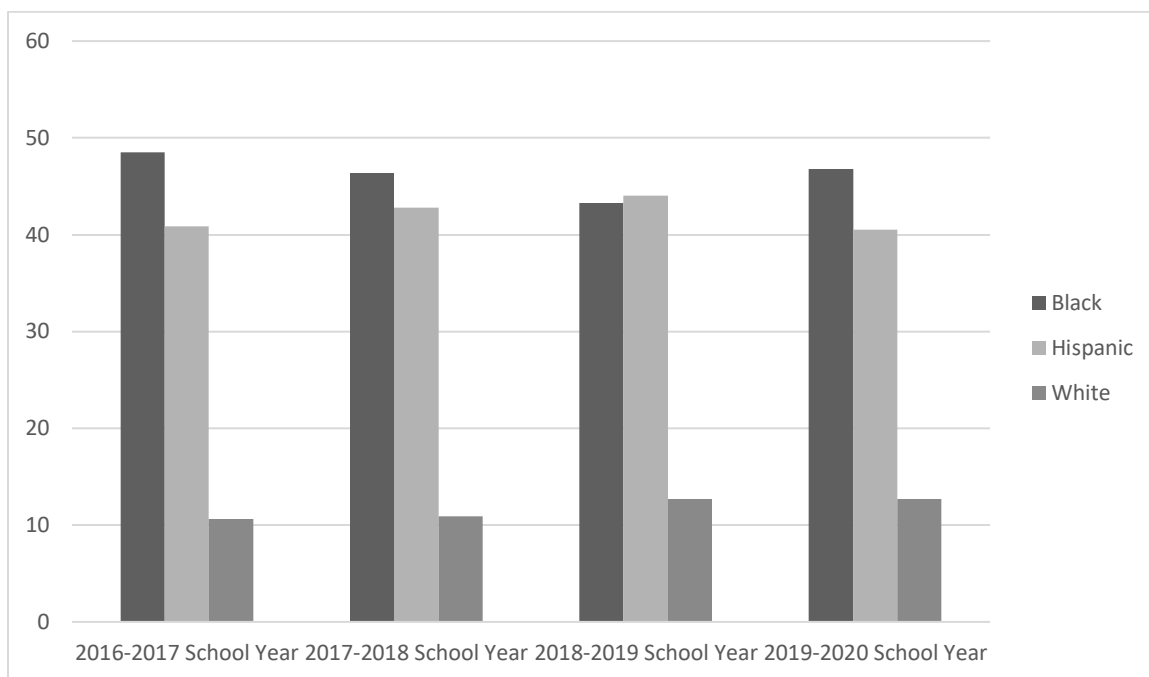


Figure 3.3

Average Number of Days Assigned to an Out-of-School Suspension for Grades 4 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

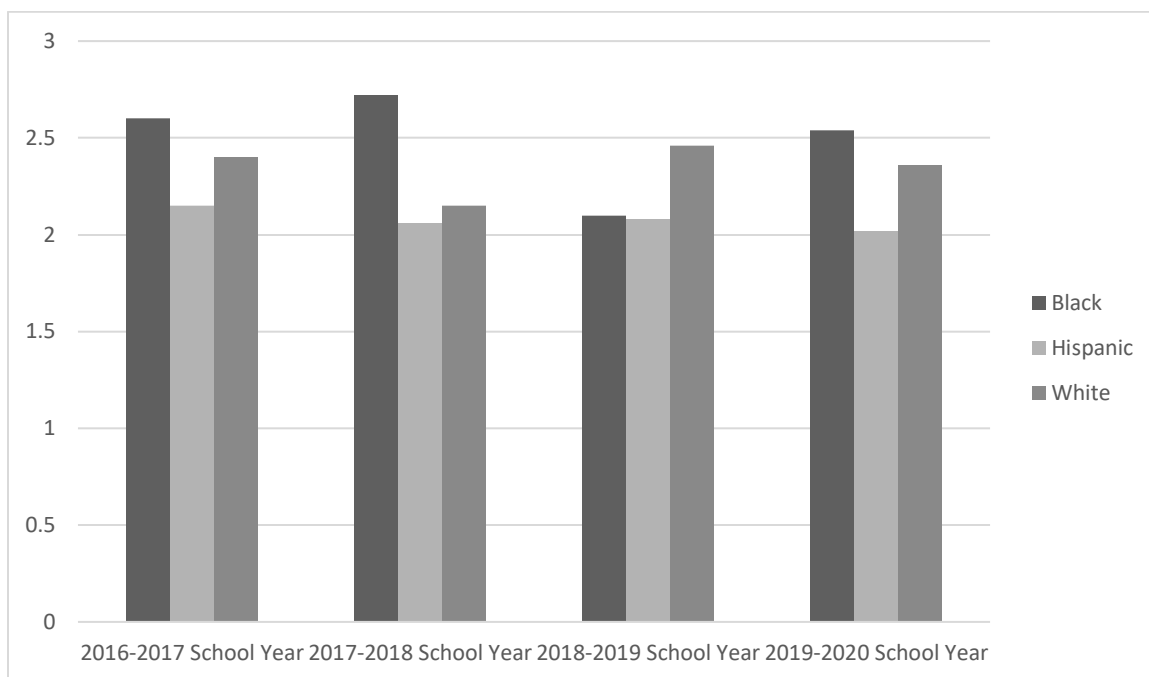
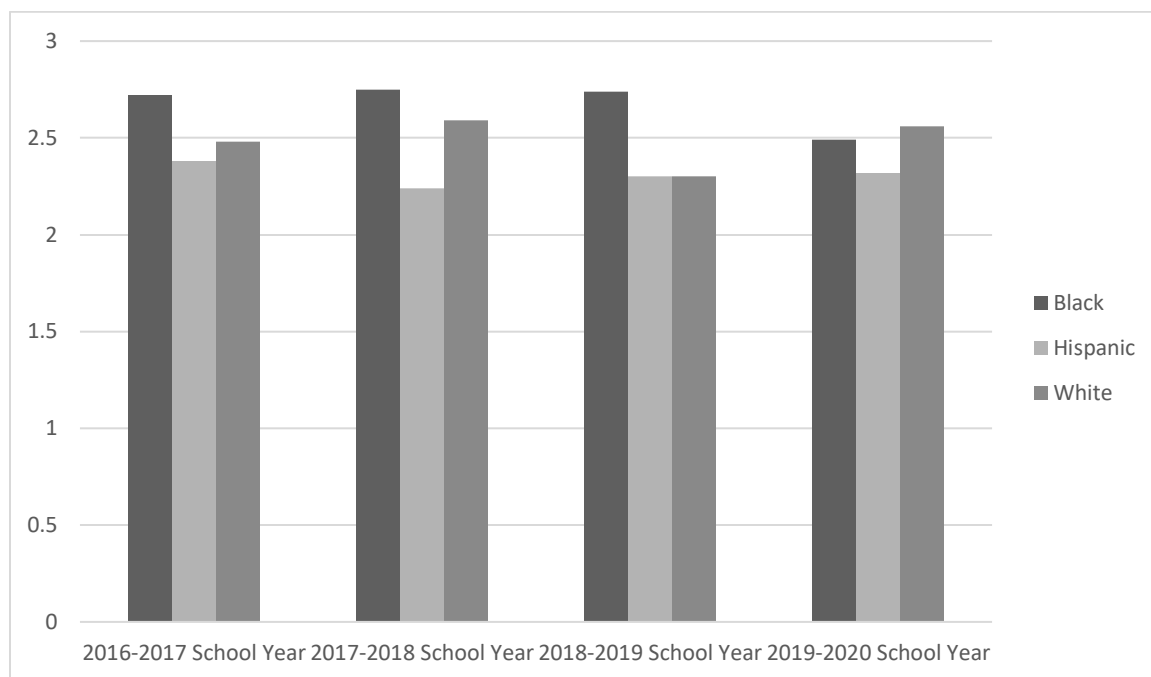


Figure 3.4

Average Number of Days Assigned to an Out-of-School Suspension for Grades 5 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years



CHAPTER IV

INEQUITIES IN THE ASSIGNMENT AND NUMBER OF DAYS ASSIGNED TO AN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION AS A FUNCTION OF THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF GRADES 4 AND 5 GIRLS: A STATEWIDE, MULTIYEAR ANALYSIS

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

Abstract

In this statewide, multiyear investigation, the extent to which student economic status was related to the rate and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was addressed. Separate analyses were conducted for each grade level and for each of the four school years. Revealed in this investigation was the presence of clear disparities in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 school years. In three of the four school years, Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at statistically significantly higher rates than girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to such a consequence at the highest rate in each of the four school years present. In Grade 4, girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a statistically significantly higher average number of days in an in-school suspension in three of the four school years. Similar statistically significant results were revealed in Grade 5 for all four school years. Implications and recommendations for future research were made.

Keywords: In-school suspension, Economic Status, Economically Disadvantaged, Girls, Grades 4 and 5

INEQUITIES IN THE ASSIGNMENT AND NUMBER OF DAYS ASSIGNED TO AN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION AS A FUNCTION OF THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF GRADES 4 AND 5 GIRLS: A STATEWIDE, MULTIYEAR ANALYSIS

The assignment of students to an exclusionary discipline consequence as a response to misbehaviors has become increasingly more prevalent over the last several decades (Skiba et al., 2014). Currently, the most frequently used exclusionary discipline consequence in the United States is the assignment of students to an in-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). More than 2.6 million students were removed from their regular educational environment and assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2017-2018 school year (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). More than 30% of the students who assigned to an in-school suspension were girls. Of importance is that more than 18% of the total number of in-school suspension assignments in the United States occurred in Texas, the state of interest in this article (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

Over the past two decades, researchers (Barnes et al., 2017a; Harkrider, 2020; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Skiba et al., 2009; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Skiba et al., 2002; Slate et al., 2016; Tiger, 2012; White, 2019) have documented the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of students to an exclusionary discipline consequence with respect to their ethnicity/race. That is, students of color are assigned at statistically significantly higher rates to exclusionary discipline consequences than are White and Asian students. Additional disparities have been documented in the assignment of students to an exclusionary discipline consequence with respect to their economic status. In the 2018-2019 school year, slightly over 60% of students enrolled in Texas public schools were considered to be economically disadvantaged (Texas Education Agency,

2021a). During the same school year, students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a higher number of in-school suspensions, more than 363,000, than were any other group of students as identified by the Texas Education Agency (2021b). As such, the inequities documented by researchers (Barnes et al., 2017b; Coleman & Slate, 2016; Harkrider, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; White, 2019; White & Slate, 2017) are of concern because they indicate that a majority of the student population in the State of Texas may be at risk of being overrepresented in assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence.

In a study of over 340,000 Texas middle school students, Khan and Slate (2016) analyzed the assignment of Grade 6 students to exclusionary discipline consequences. Khan and Slate (2016) revealed the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of students to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status. Students who were economically disadvantaged (i.e., qualified for the reduced price or free lunch federal program) were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence at a statistically significantly higher rate than students who were not economically disadvantaged. With respect to in-school suspension, Khan and Slate (2016) revealed that Black students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned at a rate nearly 14% higher than that of Black students who were not economically disadvantaged. Hispanic students were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate 8.2% higher than Hispanic students who were not economically disadvantaged. White students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate 14.2% higher than White students who were not economically disadvantaged.

In another Texas statewide analysis, Barnes et al. (2017b) investigated the degree to which student level of poverty was related to assignment of middle school students to an exclusionary discipline consequence. With respect to in-school suspension, Barnes et al. (2017b) documented the presence of a relationship between student level of poverty and their assignment to an in-school suspension. That is, students who were extremely poor (i.e., students from families with an income 130% or less of the federal poverty line) were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate 7.6% higher than students who were moderately poor (i.e., students from families with an income of 131% to 185% of the federal poverty line). Students who were moderately poor were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate 4.8% higher than students who were not poor. Furthermore, students who were poor (i.e., moderately poor, extremely poor) accounted for 36.8% of the total assignments to an in-school suspension.

Researchers (Harkrider, 2020; Miller, 2021; Tiger, 2012; White, 2019; White & Slate, 2017) have also documented the presence of disparities in the number of days that students are assigned to an in-school suspension. Of these studies, only White and Slate (2017) and White (2019) addressed inequities in the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences with respect to student economic status. White and Slate (2017) investigated the extent to which the economic status of middle school students was related to the number of days they were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence. White and Slate (2017) determined that middle school students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a statistically significantly higher number of days than were students who were not economically disadvantaged. Students who were economically disadvantaged in Grades 6, 7, and 8 were assigned to 1.05, 1.09,

and 0.87 more days in an in-school suspension than were their peers who were not economically disadvantaged.

In a recent investigation, White (2019) reported similar findings for middle school students in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. For each school year, White (2019) established that students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension for a statistically significantly higher number of days than were students who were not economically disadvantaged. For the four school years of data examined in White's investigation, students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.77 more days to an in-school suspension than students who were not economically disadvantaged. Consistent across all three grade levels for each school year, White (2019) determined that the average number of days that students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension decreased with each subsequent school year. Readers should note that despite this reduction in average days assigned, students who were economically disadvantaged were still assigned to a higher number of days to an in-school suspension than students who were not economically disadvantaged.

Regarding the assignment of elementary school girls to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status, the published research literature is quite limited. Only one such published study, conducted by Harkrider (2020), could be located. In his Texas statewide analysis, Harkrider (2020) investigated the effect of ethnicity/race and economic status on the number of days Grade 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Black, Hispanic, and White girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a statistically significantly higher number of days to an in-school suspension

than were Black, Hispanic, and White girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Black girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.89 more days to an in-school suspension than were Black girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Hispanic girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.57 more days to an in-school suspension in comparison to Hispanic girls who were not economically disadvantaged. White girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.44 more days to an in-school suspension than were White girls who were not economically disadvantaged.

The presence of such inequities in the assignment of students who are economically disadvantaged to an exclusionary discipline consequence should be of concern because being economically disadvantaged and being assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence have each been associated with an increased likelihood of poor academic outcomes (Chu & Ready, 2018; Davenport, 2021; Hilberth, 2010; McGown, 2016; Skiba, et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2020). In a Texas statewide analysis, McGown (2016) investigated the degree to which student performance on state mandated reading assessments was related to student economic status. In her investigation, McGown (2016) examined Grade 3 State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness Reading (STAAR) exam performance with respect to student economic status. Compared in her investigation were three economic status groups: Not Poor (i.e., students from families with an income 186% or more of the federal poverty line), Moderately Poor (i.e., students from families with an income of 131% to 185% of the federal poverty line), and Extremely Poor (i.e., students from families with an income 130% or less of the federal poverty line). Students who were economically disadvantaged

were statistically significantly less likely to meet the passing standard than were students who were not economically disadvantaged. Also established was a relationship between the degree of poverty and student performance. As the degree of poverty increased, average student performance declined, with students who were Extremely Poor exhibiting the poorest overall reading performance (McGown, 2016).

The effects of student economic status on academic performance were also documented by Davenport (2021) in a Texas statewide investigation in which he addressed the degree to which inequities were present in mathematics performance of Grade 3 Black and Hispanic girls. Davenport (2021) established that statistically significantly lower percentages of Black and Hispanic girls who were economically disadvantaged met the passing standard for the Grade 3 STAAR Mathematics exam than their peers who were not economically disadvantaged. In the 2018-2019 school year, Grade 3 Hispanic girls who were economically disadvantaged failed to meet the passing standard for mathematics at a rate 19% higher than Grade 3 Hispanic girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Similarly, Grade 3 Black girls who were economically disadvantaged in the 2018-2019 school year were 15.6% less likely to meet the mathematics passing standard than were Grade 3 Black girls who were not economically disadvantaged.

The negative effects on academic performance associated with assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence have been documented in recent studies (Chu & Ready, 2018; Hilberth, 2010; Ibrahim et al. 2021; Skiba et al, 2011; Smith et al., 2020). In their investigations, Hilberth (2010) and Smith et al. (2020) established that the assignment to just one day to an in-school suspension was a strong predictor of poor

reading and mathematics performance. In addition to poor performance, Ibrahim (2021) revealed the presence of a relationship between assignment to an in-school suspension and enrollment in advanced mathematics courses and mathematics course performance. More specifically, students who were assigned to an in-school suspension were less likely to enroll in higher level mathematics courses and more likely to perform poorly on standardized mathematics exams than students who were not assigned to such a consequence.

Clearly documented have been the presence of inequities in the assignment of students to an exclusionary discipline consequence with respect to their economic status. Absent from the extant literature, however, is any evidence that students who are economically disadvantaged commit misbehaviors more frequently than their peers who are not economically disadvantaged. These inequities should be of concern because the presence of a relationship has been revealed between assignment to an exclusionary consequence and poor academic outcomes. Additionally, negative relationships have been established between student economic status and academic performance. Accordingly, students who are economically disadvantaged who are assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence may be at an increased risk of poor academic performance. Additionally, Black and Hispanic girls who are economically disadvantaged, for whom additional inequities in assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence with respect to their ethnicity/race have been documented, may be at an increased risk to experience poor academic outcomes in comparison to their White peers due to these compounding factors.

Statement of the Problem

Of the exclusionary discipline consequences used by school leaders, assignment of students to an in-school suspension is the most commonly used consequence. More than 2.6 million students were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2017-2018 school year. Of the students assigned to such a consequence, more than 800,000 were girls (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). With respect to economic status, disparities have been documented in the frequency with which girls who were economically disadvantaged are assigned to an in-school suspension (Barnes et al., 2017b; Coleman & Slate, 2016; Harkrider, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; White, 2019; White & Slate, 2017), as have inequities in the number of days girls who were economically disadvantaged are assigned to an in-school suspension (White, 2019; White & Slate, 2017). The presence of such inequities is of concern because researchers (Chu & Ready, Davenport, 2021; 2018; Hilberth, 2010; McGown, 2016; Smith et al., 2020) have established that assignment to an in-school suspension and being economically disadvantaged are each associated with poor academic and social outcomes.

Assignment to just one day in an in-school suspension has been documented to be a strong predictor of poor performance on reading and mathematics tests (Hilberth, 2010; Smith et al., 2021). Ibrahim (2020) revealed the negative effects of assignment to an in-school suspension on course enrollment, suggesting that Black girls who are assigned to an in-school suspension are statistically significantly less likely to enroll in higher level mathematics courses than Black girls who had not been assigned to such a consequence. Enrollment in higher level mathematics courses is associated with an increased likelihood that Black girls will achieve satisfactory academic performance in mathematics and form

strong school bonds, such as positive relationships with campus staff. As such, girls who are assigned to an in-school suspension may be less likely to form positive relationships with their teachers, further increasing their risk of being overrepresented in exclusionary discipline consequences and in poor academic performance.

Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which economic status was related to the assignment of girls to an in-school suspension. The second purpose was to ascertain the extent to which economic status was related to the number of days that girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Specifically examined were discipline data for Grades 4 and 5 girls for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

Significance of the Study

This study was conducted to add to the limited literature pertaining to the presence of inequities in the assignment of elementary girls who are economically disadvantaged to an exclusionary discipline consequence. Findings of this multiyear analysis can be used by school campus and school district leaders to review and to modify existing policies and practices to lessen the presence of inequities in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to exclusionary discipline consequences.

Documenting the presence of inequities in the assignment of elementary girls who are economically disadvantaged to exclusionary discipline consequences can justify future research into more equitable behavior management practices.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) For Grade 4 girls, what is the effect of their economic status on assignment to an in-school suspension?, (b) For Grade 4 girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension, what is the effect of their economic status on the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension?; (c) For Grade 5 girls, what is the effect of their economic status on assignment to an in-school suspension?; and (d) For Grade 5 girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension, what is the effect of their economic status on the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension?; (e) For Grades 4 and 5 girls, to what extent are trends present in assignment to an in-school suspension with respect to student economic status?; and (f) For Grades 4 and 5 girls, to what extent are trends present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to student economic status? The first four research questions were answered separately for each school year of data present, whereas the last two research questions involved all four school years. Accordingly, a total of 14 research questions were present in this article.

Method

Research Design

A causal-comparative research design was present in this article (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). A single independent variable, student economic status, were present. Two economic status groups were present: (a) Economically Disadvantaged and (b) Not Economically Disadvantaged. The first dependent variable was the rate at which Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. The second dependent variable was the number

of days Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

Limitations are present in the use of a causal-comparative research design. When using a causal-comparative research design, definitive cases and effect relationships cannot be ascertained (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Data used in this study were archival and could not be manipulated as the events have already occurred.

Participants and Instrumentation

Participants in this study were Grades 4 and 5 girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, or 2019-2020 school years. A Public Information Request was made to the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System to obtain the disciplinary data for this study. Specifically requested were data to include Grades 4 and 5 girls assigned to an in-school suspension and the number of days assigned in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years with respect to their economic status. An in-school suspension refers to the removal of students from their regular education environment and placement in an alternative setting on campus during the school day (Texas Education Code, 2021). Students who were considered are to be economically disadvantaged were students who were eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program due to their family's income being at or below 185% of the federal poverty threshold (Benefits.gov, 2021). Data for Asian girls were not included as they are not the focus in this study due to their very low numbers who are assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences. Once received, data were imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software program for statistical analyses.

Results

To ascertain whether inequities were present in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an in-school suspension by their economic status, Pearson chi-square analyses were conducted. This statistical procedure was used because frequency data were present for in-school suspension (i.e., assigned or not assigned) and for economic status (i.e. economically disadvantaged or not economically disadvantaged). As such, chi-squares are appropriate to use when the independent and dependent variables are both categorical (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). With a large statewide sample size, the available sample size per cell was met. Therefore, the assumptions for using Pearson chi-square procedures were met.

Results for In-School Suspension and Grade 4 Girls

Concerning the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 8.63$, $p = .003$, with respect to their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V , was below small, .05 (Cohen, 1988). The rate at which Grade 4 girls who economically disadvantaged were assigned to such a consequence was nearly 60% higher than were girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Presented in Table 4.1 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

 Insert Table 4.1 about here

For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was not revealed, $\chi^2(2) = 1.96$, $p = .16$. Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were

assigned to an in-school suspension at a similar rate as Grade 4 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are delineated in Table 4.1.

Regarding the frequency at which Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present, $\chi^2(2) = 8.67, p = .003$, with respect to their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V , was below small, .05 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to such a consequence at a rate more than four times higher than were Grade 4 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Contained in Table 4.1 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

For the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 9.21, p = .002$, with respect to their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V , was below small, .06 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate more than 60% higher than girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 4.1.

Results for In-School Suspension and Grade 5 Girls

Regarding the frequency at which Grade 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present, $\chi^2(2) = 25.39, p < .001$, with respect to their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V , was below small, .06 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate more than

four times higher than Grade 5 girls who were not economically disadvantaged.

Delineated in Table 4.2 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Insert Table 4.2 about here

For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 10.35, p < .001$, with respect to their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .04 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate nearly 62% higher than Grade 5 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Presented in Table 4.2 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Concerning the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 35.96, p < .001$, with respect to their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .05 (Cohen, 1988). Girls in Grade 5 who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate nearly 60% higher than Grade 5 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are contained in Table 4.2.

Concerning the frequency at which Grade 5 girls were assignment to an in-school suspension during the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $\chi^2(2) = 5.71, p = .017$. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .03 (Cohen, 1988). During this school year, Grade 5 girls who were economically

disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate more than four times higher than Grade 5 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 4.2.

Results for Number of Days Grade 4 Girls Were Assigned to an In-school Suspension

With respect to the number of days that Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status during the 2016-2017 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 3322) = 13.02$, $p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .004$. The effect size for this finding was below small (Cohen, 1988). Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.31 more days to an in-school suspension than Grade 4 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are delineated in Table 4.3.

 Insert Table 4.3 about here

Concerning the 2017-2018 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 3495) = 8.54$, $p = .004$, partial $n^2 = .001$. The effect size for this finding was below small (Cohen, 1988). Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.39 days more to an in-school suspension than Grade 4 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Contained in Table 4.3 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the 2018-2019 school year, the ANOVA did not yield a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 3542) = 0.99$, $p = .32$. Regardless of their economic status,

Grade 4 girls were assigned a similar number of days to an in-school suspension.

Descriptive statistics for this analysis are revealed in Table 4.3.

For the 2019-2020 school year, the ANOVA did reveal the presence of a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 2808) = 10.93, p = .001$, partial $n^2 = .004$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a higher average number of days to an in-school suspension, 0.30 more days, than Grade 4 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 4.3

Results for Number of Days Grade 5 Girls Were Assigned to an In-school Suspension

Concerning the number of days that Grade 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status during the 2016-2017 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 5959) = 27.09, p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .005$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a statistically significantly higher average number of days to an in-school suspension, 0.47 more days, than Grade 5 girls who were no economically disadvantaged. Table 4.4 contains descriptive statistics for this analysis.

 Insert Table 4.4 about here

For the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 6175) = 53.70, p < .001$, partial $n^2 = .009$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a statistically

significantly higher average number of days to an in-school suspension, 0.64 more days, than Grade 5 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Delineated in Table 4.4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present, $F(2, 6186) = 8.38, p = .003$, partial $n^2 = .007$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a higher average number of days, 0.61 more days, to an in-school suspension than Grade 5 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Presented in Table 4.4 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With respect to the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 6186) = 40.66, p < .004$, partial $n^2 = .002$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.25 more days to an in-school suspension than Grade 5 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are delineated in Table 4.4.

Discussion

Ascertained in this multiyear, Texas statewide investigation was the extent to which inequities were present in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years with respect to their economic status. For all four school years and for both grade levels, the rates at which girls who were economically disadvantaged and girls who were not economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension were determined. Moreover, the average number of days which

girls who were economically disadvantaged and girls who were not economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension was calculated for each school year.

In each school year, Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a higher total number of days to an in-school suspension than were girls who were not economically disadvantaged. In the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 school years, Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a total of 5,689 days to an in-school suspension, whereas Grade 4 girls who were not economically disadvantaged were assigned a total of 1,429 days. Therefore, during the 2016-2017 through 2019-2020 school years, Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a total of 4,260 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 4 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Summary statistics for the total number of days Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status for each school year are contained in Table 4.5.

 Insert Table 4.5 about here

A similar trend was present for the total number of days assigned to Grade 5 girls with respect to their economic status. In the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 school years, Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a total of 11,832 total days to an in-school suspension, whereas Grade 4 girls who were not economically disadvantaged were assigned a total of 2,285 days. As such, during the 2016-2017 through 2019-2020 school years, Grade 5 girls who were economically

disadvantaged were assigned a total of 9,500 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Presented in Table 4.5 are summary statistics for the total number of days Grade 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status for each school year.

Concerning the rate at which Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, disparities with respect to their economic status were clearly evident. In three of the four school years, Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged had the highest rates of being assigned to an in-school suspension. In addition to being overrepresented based on their enrollment percentage, Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were also disproportionately assigned to such a consequence when compared to girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Illustrated in Figure 4.1 are the rates of in-school suspension assignment for Grade 4 girls in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years with respect to their economic status.

Insert Figure 4.1 about here

For Grade 5 girls, a similar trend was revealed. In all four school years, Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged had the highest rates of being assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were disproportionately assigned to such a consequence with respect to their enrollment percentage and when compared to Grade 5 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Depicted in Figure 4.1 are the rates of in-school suspension assignment

for Grade 5 girls in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years with respect to their economic status.

Insert Figure 4.2 about here

Clear inequities were also present in the number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status. In three of the four school years, Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 4 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Illustrated in Figure 4.3 are the average number of days that Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in each school year with respect to their economic status.

Insert Figure 4.3 about here

Similar disparities were revealed for the number of days that Grade 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status. In each school year, Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 5 girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Depicted in Figure 4.4 are the average number of days that

Grade 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in each school year with respect to their economic status.

Insert Figure 4.4 about here

Connections with Existing Literature

Revealed in this multiyear, statewide investigation was the presence of differences in the rates and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status. Well documented by previous researchers (Barnes et al., 2017b; Coleman & Slate, 2016; Harkrider, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; White, 2019; White & Slate, 2017) has been the presence of such disparities in the frequency and number of days that students have been assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status. Khan and Slate (2016) determined that students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a statistically significantly higher rate than were students who were not economically disadvantaged. Similar results were generated in this study, as Grades 4 and 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a higher rate than were Grades 4 and 5 girls who were not economically disadvantaged in three school years and all four school years, respectively.

With respect to the relationship between student economic status and the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension, Harkrider (2020) established that Grades 4 and 5 Black, White, and Hispanic students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a statistically significant higher average number of days to an in-school

suspension than were their same race/ethnicity peers who were not economically disadvantaged. In this study, Grades 4 and 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school suspension in three school years and all four school years, respectively.

Implications for Practice and for Policy

Recommendations for practice can be made based on the findings of this study. First, school administrators at the district and campus level are encouraged to conduct a thorough review of discipline data for Grades 4 and 5 girls with respect to student economic status. Specifically, these efforts should be focused on the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls are being assigned to an in-school suspension as a result of behavioral infractions. Considering the well documented relationship between economic status and student performance, campus leaders should also consider the exacerbating effects that may be present when students who are economically disadvantaged are assigned to an in-school suspension. School leaders are encouraged to consider alternative methods of discipline management to lessen these effects.

Considering that students who are economically disadvantaged comprise a large portion of the total school enrollment, results of this study could be used to warrant changes to policy. School boards and superintendents are encouraged to analyze existing policy regarding student discipline in an effort to determine if changes could be made to better prevent the overrepresentation of students who are economically disadvantaged in exclusionary discipline assignment. More specifically, these school leaders are encouraged to identify and incorporate alternative methods for addressing student discipline into their district and campus behavioral management plans. In addition,

restorative practice plans should be developed to mitigate the negative effects that may impact students who have been or will be assigned to an in-school suspension.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this multiyear, statewide study, a relationship between assignment to an in-school suspension by economic status was determined for elementary school girls. Several recommendations for future research can be made based on the results of this study. First, a study to determine the relationship between assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an out-of-school suspension and student economic status should be conducted. Secondly, this study should be replicated with the inclusion of Grade 6 girls to determine if the staircase pattern in the frequency and number of days observed between Grades 4 and 5 continues in Grade 6. This study should also be replicated with Grades 4 and 5 boys. Finally, this study should be replicated in other states to determine the extent to which the results discussed herein are generalizable at a national level.

Conclusion

In this Texas multiyear investigation, the extent to which economic status was related to the rate and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was addressed. Separate analyses were conducted for each grade level and for each of the four school years. Grades 4 and 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were overrepresented in the rate at which they were assigned to an in-school suspension, despite comprising the majority of the total student population. Regarding the rate at which Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension, girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned at statistically significantly higher rate in the 2016-2017, 2018-2019, and 2019-

2020 school years. Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a statistically significantly higher rate in all four school years. Also revealed in this study was the presence of inequities in the number of days Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status. Grades 4 and 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a higher average number of days in an in-school suspension in three school years and four school years, respectfully.

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Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an In-School Suspension to Grade 4 Girls for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years with Respect to Their Economic Status

School Year and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
2016-2017			
Economically Disadvantaged	2,611	83.2	78.5
Not Economically Disadvantaged	713	16.8	21.5
2017-2018			
Economically Disadvantaged	2,841	84.7	80.2
Not Economically Disadvantaged	702	15.3	19.8
2018-2019			
Economically Disadvantaged	2,832	83.2	81.0
Not Economically Disadvantaged	663	16.8	19.0
2019-2020			
Economically Disadvantaged	1,884	86.2	80.1
Not Economically Disadvantaged	468	13.8	19.9

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an In-School Suspension to Grade 5 Girls for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years with Respect to Their Economic Status

School Year and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
2016-2017			
Economically Disadvantaged	4,778	85.8	80.2
Not Economically Disadvantaged	1,181	14.2	19.8
2017-2018			
Economically Disadvantaged	5,062	85.0	81.4
Not Economically Disadvantaged	1,151	18.6	15.0
2018-2019			
Economically Disadvantaged	6,188	86.6	79.7
Not Economically Disadvantaged	1,254	13.4	20.3
2019-2020			
Economically Disadvantaged	3,535	83.8	80.4
Not Economically Disadvantaged	863	16.2	19.6

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension to Grade 4 Girls for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years with Respect to Their Economic Status

School Year and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Economically Disadvantaged	2,611	2.15	2.11
Not Economically Disadvantaged	713	1.84	1.76
2017-2018			
Economically Disadvantaged	2,832	2.32	3.31
Not Economically Disadvantaged	663	1.93	1.77
2018-2019			
Economically Disadvantaged	2,841	2.27	2.42
Not Economically Disadvantaged	702	2.17	2.59
2019-2020			
Economically Disadvantaged	2,277	1.81	1.97
Not Economically Disadvantaged	531	1.51	1.37

Table 4.4

Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension to Grade 5 Girls for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years with Respect to Their Economic Status

School Year and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Economically Disadvantaged	4,778	2.65	2.15
Not Economically Disadvantaged	1,181	2.18	2.91
2017-2018			
Economically Disadvantaged	5,026	2.59	2.83
Not Economically Disadvantaged	1,151	1.95	1.83
2018-2019			
Economically Disadvantaged	4,935	2.65	3.20
Not Economically Disadvantaged	1,254	2.04	2.06
2019-2020			
Economically Disadvantaged	4,286	2.00	2.57
Not Economically Disadvantaged	1,008	1.75	12.23

Table 4.5

Summary of Total Number of In-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grades 4 and 5

Girl by Their Economic Status for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

School Year and Economic Status	Grade 4	Grade 5
2016-2017		
Economically Disadvantaged	5,614	12,661
Not Economically Disadvantaged	1,312	2,575
2017-2018		
Economically Disadvantaged	6,570	13,017
Not Economically Disadvantaged	1,280	2,244
2018-2019		
Economically Disadvantaged	6,449	13,077
Not Economically Disadvantaged	1,523	2,558
2019-2020		
Economically Disadvantaged	4,121	8,572
Not Economically Disadvantaged	802	1,764

Figure 4.1

Rate of In-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 4 girls by Their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

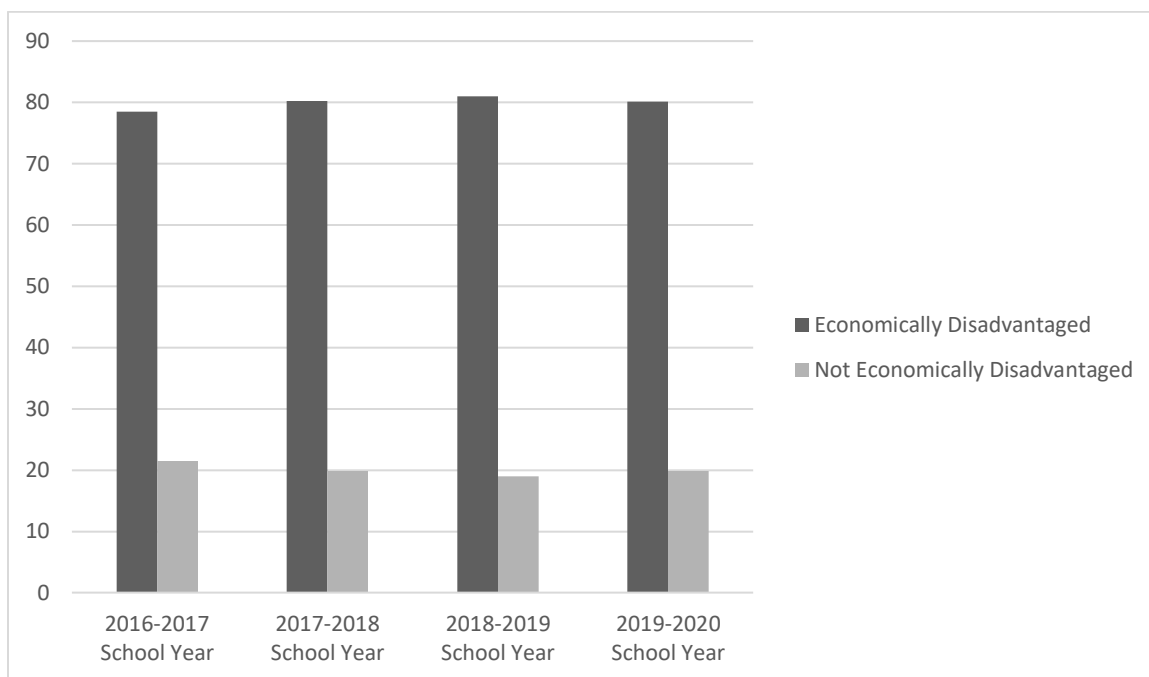


Figure 4.2

Rate of In-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 5 girls by Their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years

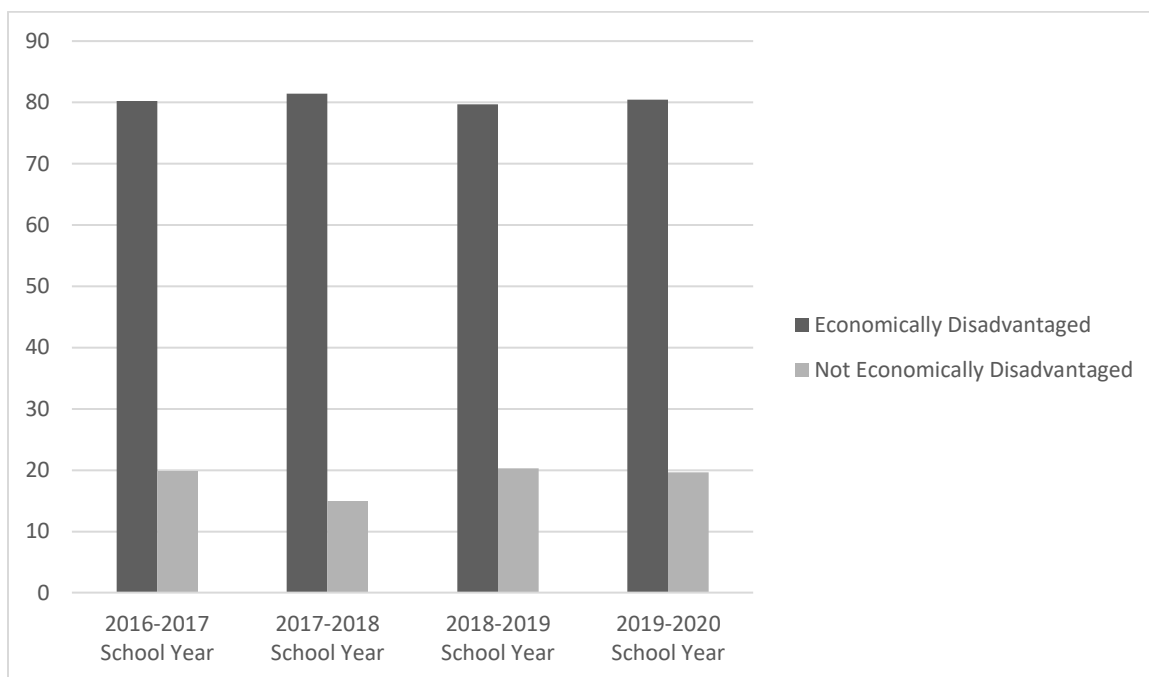


Figure 4.3

*Average Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 4 Girls by
Their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

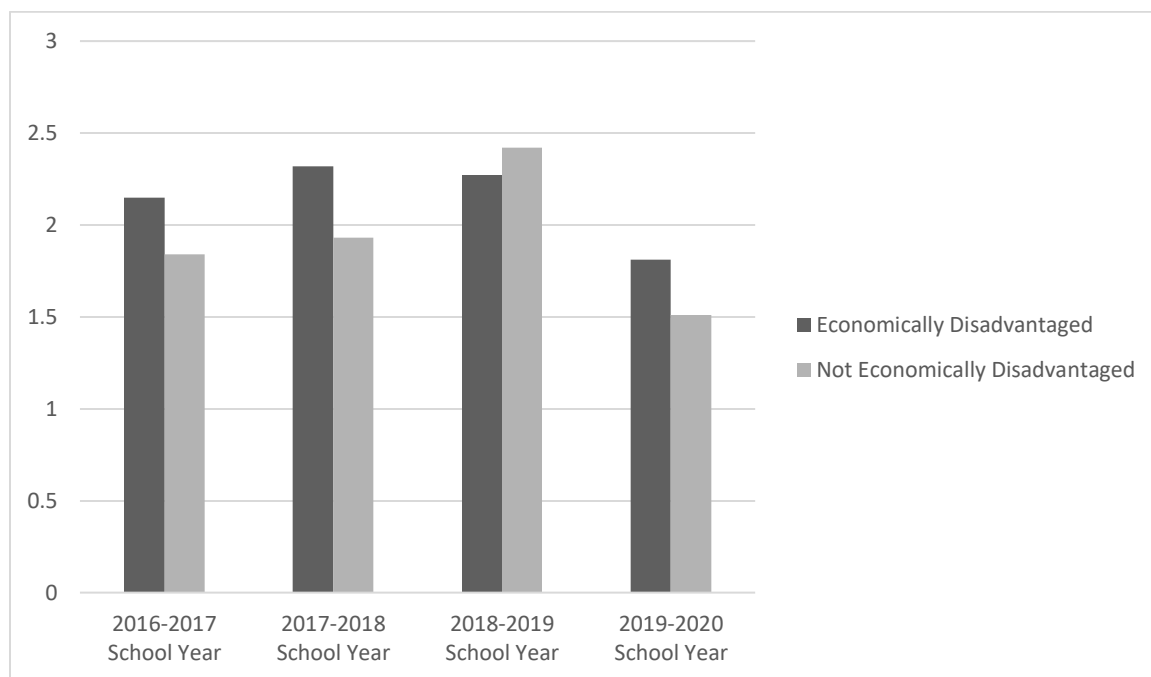
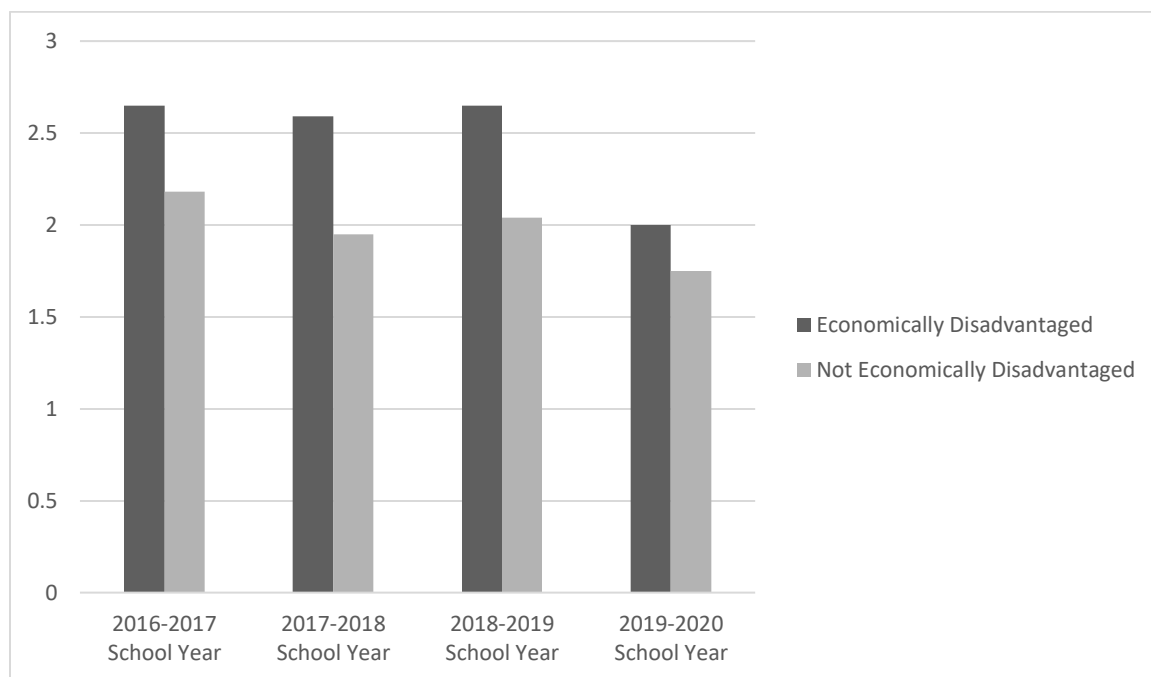


Figure 4.4

*Average Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 5 Girls by
Their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the degree to which the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence was related to student ethnicity/race and economic status, respectively. In the first study, the degree to which the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was related to their ethnicity/race was determined. In the second study, the degree to which the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension was related to their ethnicity/race was determined. In the third study, the degree to which the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was related to their economic status was determined. Accordingly, the extent to which trends were present in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence with respect to their ethnicity/race and economic status in the 2016-2017 through 2019-2020 school years was determined. In this chapter, the results of each study are discussed and a summary for each article provided. Implications for practice and for policy are provided along with recommendations for future research.

Summary of Results for Study One

In the first article, the extent to which the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was related to their ethnicity/race was addressed. Archival data for four school years, obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System, were

analyzed to determine the effect of ethnicity/race on the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an in-school suspension. In each school year present, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a the statistically significantly highest rate, followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. In Grade 5, a similar trend was present for Hispanic girls. In each of the four school years present, Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at the highest rate, followed by Black girls, and then White girls. Presented in Table 5.1 are summary statistics for the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an in-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race.

Table 5.1

Summary of the Frequency of Assignment of Grades 4 and 5 Girls to an In-school Suspension by Their Ethnicity/Race

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	Cramer's V	Most Frequently Assigned
Grade 4			
2016-2017	Yes	.17	Black
2017-2018	Yes	.17	Black
2018-2019	Yes	.17	Black
2019-2020	Yes	.15	Black
Grade 5			
2016-2017	Yes	.17	Hispanic
2017-2018	Yes	.15	Hispanic
2018-2019	Yes	.14	Hispanic
2019-2020	Yes	.14	Hispanic

With respect to the number of days that Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, statistically significant differences were present. In each school year present, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school school suspension, followed by White girls, and then by Hispanic girls. Similar differences were present in Grade 5. In all four school years, Grade 5 Black girls were

assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school suspension. Summary statistics for the number of days Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race are delineated in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to an In-school Suspension for Grades 4 and 5 Girls by Their Ethnicity/Race

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	Most Days Assigned	Average Number of Days
Grade 4			
2016-2017	Yes	Black	2.27
2017-2018	Yes	Black	2.43
2018-2019	Yes	Black	2.40
2019-2020	Yes	Black	2.24
Grade 5			
2016-2017	Yes	Black	2.89
2017-2018	Yes	Black	2.72
2018-2019	Yes	Black	2.90
2019-2020	Yes	Black	2.63

Summary of Results for Study Two

In the second article, the extent to which the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension was related to their ethnicity/race was addressed. Archival data for four school years, obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System, were analyzed to determine the effect of ethnicity/race on the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an in-school suspension. In each school year present, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at the statistically significantly highest rate, followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. For Grade 5, a similar trend was present for three school years. In the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2019-2020 school years, Grade

5 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at the highest rate, followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. During the 2018-2019 school year, Hispanic girls were assigned to such a consequence at the highest rate. Table 5.2 contains summary statistics for the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an out-of-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. Summary statistics for the number of days Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3

Summary of the Frequency of Assignment of Grades 4 and 5 Girls to an Out-of-school Suspension by Their Ethnicity/Race

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	Cramer's V	Most Frequently Assigned
Grade 4			
2016-2017	Yes	.20	Black
2017-2018	Yes	.20	Black
2018-2019	Yes	.20	Black
2019-2020	Yes	.19	Black
Grade 5			
2016-2017	Yes	.21	Black
2017-2018	Yes	.19	Black
2018-2019	Yes	.18	Hispanic
2019-2020	Yes	.17	Black

With respect to the number of days that Grade 4 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, statistically significant differences were present. In each school year present, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an out-of-school school suspension, followed by White girls, and then by Hispanic girls. Similar differences were present in three school years for Grade 5. In the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years, Grade 5 Black girls were assigned the highest average

number of days to an out-of-school suspension. A statistically significant difference was not yielded for the 2019-2020 school year. Revealed in Table 5.4 are summary statistics for the number of days Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race

Table 5.4

Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to an Out-of-school Suspension for Grades 4 and 5 Girls by Their Ethnicity/Race

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	Most Days Assigned	Average Number of Days
Grade 4			
2016-2017	Yes	Black	2.60
2017-2018	Yes	Black	2.43
2018-2019	Yes	Black	2.40
2019-2020	Yes	Black	2.24
Grade 5			
2016-2017	Yes	Black	2.89
2017-2018	Yes	Black	2.72
2018-2019	Yes	Black	2.90
2019-2020	No	N/A	N/A

Summary of Results for Study Three

In the third article, the extent to which the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was related to their economic status was addressed. Archival data for four school years, obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System, were analyzed to determine the effect of ethnicity/race on the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an in-school suspension. In each school year present, Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate statistically significantly higher than were girls who were not economically

disadvantaged. In Grade 5, a similar trend was revealed. In each of the four school years present, Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at the higher rate than were Girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Delineated in Table 5.5 are summary statistics for the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status.

Table 5.5

Summary of the Frequency of Assignment of Grades 4 and 5 Girls to an In-school Suspension by Their Economic Status

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	Cramer's V	Most Frequently Assigned
Grade 4			
2016-2017	Yes	.05	Poor
2017-2018	N/A	N/A	N/A
2018-2019	Yes	.05	Poor
2019-2020	Yes	.06	Poor
Grade 5			
2016-2017	Yes	.06	Poor
2017-2018	Yes	.04	Poor
2018-2019	Yes	.05	Poor
2019-2020	Yes	.13	Poor

With respect to the number of days that Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, statistically significant differences were also present. In the 2016-2017, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years, Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to a higher average number of days to an in-school school suspension than were girls who were not economically disadvantaged. A statistically significant result was not produced for the 2017-2018 school year. Similar differences were present in Grade 5. In all four school years, Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school

suspension. Presented in Table 5.6 are summary statistics for the number of days Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status.

Table 5.6

Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to an In-school Suspension for Grades 4 and 5 Girls by Their Economic Status

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	Most Days Assigned	Average Number of Days
Grade 4			
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	2.11
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	2.32
2018-2019	No	Poor	2.42
2019-2020	Yes	Poor	1.97
Grade 5			
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	2.15
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	2.83
2018-2019	Yes	Poor	3.20
2019-2020	Yes	Poor	2.57

Connections with Existing Literature

In the first article of this statewide, multiyear investigation, inequities in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race were revealed. Such disparities have been well documented by researchers (e.g., Barnes et al., 2017a; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017; White & Slate, 2017), however, most of these studies have been limited to students at the middle and high school level. Tiger (2016) documented the presence of differences in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 students to an in-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. In her study, Tiger (2016) revealed that Grades 4 and 5 Black students were assigned to an in-school suspension at

the statistically significantly highest rate. Also determined was that Hispanic students were assigned to such a consequence at a lower rate than were White girls. In each school year and in both grades, Black and Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a higher rate than were White girls. Of note in this investigation, is that although Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension more frequently than White girls, Hispanic girls were assigned a lower average number of days in all four school years for Grades 4 and in two school years in Grade 5.

Established in the second article, was the presence of differences in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. Researchers (Barnes et al., 2017; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017; White & Slate, 2017) have established the presence of such inequities at the middle and high school level. Few researchers have focused on students at the elementary level. In one such study, Tiger (2016) documented that Black and Hispanic girls in Grades 4 and 5 were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a statistically significantly higher rate than were White girls in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. Similar differences were revealed in this study. For Grade 4 girls, Black girls were assigned to such an out-of-school suspension at the highest rate in each school year, followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. In Grade 5, Black girls were assigned to such a consequence at the highest rate in three of the school years present. Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate 0.7% higher than Black girls in the 2018-2019 school year.

Finally, in the third article, differences in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their

economic status were established. Inequities in the assignment and number of days that students have been assigned to an in-school suspension have been well documented by researchers (Barnes et al., 2017b; Coleman & Slate, 2016; Harkrider, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; White, 2019; White & Slate, 2017). Regarding the frequency at which students are assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status, Khan and Slate (2016) revealed that students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to such a consequence at statistically significantly higher rates than were students who were not economically disadvantaged. In this study, similar results were present for girls who were economically disadvantaged in both grade levels. Grade 4 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a statistically significantly higher rate than were girls who were not economically disadvantaged in three of the school years present. Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned at higher rate than were girls who were not economically disadvantaged in all four school years.

Concerning the number of days that students were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status, Harkrider (2020) revealed that in Grades 4 and 5, Black, White, and Hispanic students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were their peers who were not economically disadvantaged. In this study Grades 4 and 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school suspension in three school years and all four school years, respectively.

Implications for Practice and for Policy

Important implications for practice and for policy can be supported based on the results of the three investigations conducted in this journal-ready dissertation. First, school leaders at the district and campus level are encouraged to engage in a thorough analysis of the discipline data for their district or campus. Specifically suggested is that these school leaders seek to identify groups that may be overrepresented in the assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence. Secondly, school leaders should seek to identify and incorporate alternative methods of addressing student behavioral infractions in order to lessen the reliance on assignment of students to an exclusionary consequence. Finally, given the well documented negative effects on student academic achievement and social outcomes, consideration should be given the integration of restorative practices to lessen these effects for students who have been or will be assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence in the future.

Based on the results of this study, changes to existing policy regarding student discipline may also warranted. State, district, and campus leaders should examine existing policy governing student behavior management while seeking to identify any policy that may contribute to the overrepresentation of any student groups in the assignment to an exclusionary consequence. Present in this study was the presence of inequities at the statewide level for multiple school years. Such trends may justify

changes to the Texas Education Code with regard to the use of exclusionary discipline techniques.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this journal-ready dissertation, the clear presence of inequities in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls was established. Statistically significant differences were present in the frequency and number of days that girls were assigned to such a consequence with respect to their ethnicity/race and economic status. First, given the inequities in in-school suspension revealed in this investigation, a qualitative study to determine the causes of the documented relationship between exclusionary discipline assignment and student ethnicity/race and economic is clearly warranted. Secondly, the extent to which economic status is related to the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an out-of-school suspension should be investigated. Additionally, a study should be conducted that includes Grade 3 and Grade 6 girls to further examine the staircase trend that was present between Grades 4 and 5. Finally, this investigation should be replicated outside of the state of Texas to determine if the results discussed herein are generalizable at the national level.

Conclusion

In this multiyear, journal-ready dissertation, the extent to which student ethnicity/race and economic status was related to the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence was determined. Grades 4 and 5 girls who were Black, Hispanic, or economically disadvantaged were assigned to such consequences at a rate and number of days that were statistically significantly higher than White girls and girls who were not economically

disadvantaged. Black girls, Hispanic girls, and girls who were economically disadvantaged were consistently overrepresented in the assignment to such consequences with respect to their enrollment percentage. The frequency with which exclusionary discipline practices are being used to address student behavioral infractions in the State of Texas is an issue that must be addressed. Another area of concern was the number of total days that each student group was assigned to such a consequence. Black and Hispanic girls were consistently assigned the highest total number of days to an exclusionary discipline consequence. Most alarming was the difference in total number of days assigned to girls who were economically disadvantaged. In the 2016-2017 through 2019-2020 school years, girls in Grades 4 who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an average total number of total days that was 4,620 higher than were girls who were not economically disadvantaged each year. Grade 5 girls who were economically disadvantaged in the 2016-2017 through 2019-2020 school years were assigned to an average of more than 9,500 days each year, the equivalent of nearly 56 full school years, than were girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Considering the well documented negative effects that assignment to such a consequence may have on student achievement and social outcomes, policy changes at the state, district, and campus level are well warranted.

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APPENDIX



Date: Jul 21, 2022 12:39:23 PM CDT

TO: Matthew Griffin John Slate

FROM: SHSU IRB

PROJECT TITLE: Differences in Exclusionary Discipline Consequences for Grades 4 and 5 Girls: A Texas Multiyear Statewide Investigation

PROTOCOL #: IRB-2022-142

SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial

ACTION: No Human Subjects Research

DECISION DATE: July 21, 2022

OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK: To access the survey, click [here](#). It only takes 10 minutes of your time and is voluntary. The results will be used internally to make improvements to the IRB application and/or process. Your feedback will be most appreciated.

Greetings,

In accordance with applicable federal law governing the use of human subjects in research the SHSU Institutional Review Board ("IRB") has reviewed your proposed project entitled "Differences in Exclusionary Discipline Consequences for Grades 4 and 5 Girls: A Texas Multiyear Statewide Investigation" and determined that this project does not meet the definition of human subjects research as defined in Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46 et al (also known as the "Common Rule") - specifically, secondary data analysis of a public dataset. Therefore, this project is not subject to further SHSU IRB oversight. Even so, please remember that you are responsible for ensuring that your study is conducted in an ethical manner and in accordance with applicable law and SHSU policies and procedures. You may initiate your project. Please contact the IRB office at irb@shsu.edu or (936)294-4875 if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

SHSU Institutional Review Board

VITA
Matthew D. Griffin

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

Doctorate of Education – Educational Leadership, December 2022

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas

Dissertation: Differences in Exclusionary Discipline Consequences for Grades 4 and 5
Girls: A Texas Multiyear Statewide Investigation

Master of Education, Education Leadership and Policy Studies, August 2018

University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas

Bachelor of Science, May 2013

Fairmont State University, Fairmont, West Virginia

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Principal, Timbers Elementary, Humble Independent School District, July 2022-Present

Assistant Principal, Fall Creek elementary, Humble Independent School District, June
2021- June 2022

Assistant Principal, Woodcreek Middle School, Humble Independent School District
January 2019-June 2021

Teacher, Summer Creek High School, Humble Independent School District, March 2014-
December 2019

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Griffin, M. (2022, February). *Inequities in Exclusionary Discipline Assignment to
Elementary Girls*. Presentation given at the Southwest Educational Research
Association Conference. New Orleans, LA.

Griffin, M., & Argueta, S. (2022, February). *Positive Behavioral Interventions and
Supports Program Evaluation*. Presentation given at the Southwest Educational
Research Association Conference. New Orleans, LA.