

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE
ASSIGNMENTS AND THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF TEXAS GRADE 3
THROUGH 8 STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION OVER TIME: A STATEWIDE
ANALYSIS

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Jamie Heintz Benson

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by

Jamie Heintz Benson

APPROVED:

Dr. John R. Slate
Dissertation Chair

Dr. Cynthia Martinez-Garcia
Committee Member

Dr. George W. Moore
Committee Member

Approved:

Dr. Stacey L. Edmonson
Dean, College of Education

DEDICATION

This dissertation was written in dedication to my children, for whom, I do all things. To my loving parents, I thank for a lifetime of encouragement, love, and support.

ABSTRACT

Benson, Jamie Heintz. *A descriptive analysis of discipline consequence assignments and the academic achievement of Texas grade 3 through 8 students in special education over time: A state-wide analysis*. Doctor of Education (Educational Leadership), August 2018, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

Purpose

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to examine the relationship of exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to Texas Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education and their academic achievement during the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school year. In addition, the relationship of exclusionary discipline assignments on the reading and mathematics achievement of students enrolled in special education over a 4-year period was examined. In the first investigation, the numbers and percentages of Texas Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who received a discipline consequence was examined. In the second study, the relationship of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement with the reading achievement of students enrolled in special education was investigated over a 4-year time period. Finally, in the third investigation, the relationship of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement with the mathematics achievement of students enrolled in special education was investigated over a 4-year time period.

Method

In this investigation, a descriptive approach (Creswell, 2009) was used in which four years of Texas statewide data across six grade levels were analyzed. Archival data regarding Grade 3 through Grade 8 students who were enrolled in special education were analyzed here.

Findings

Results were fairly consistent across all four school years, across all six grade levels, and across all three articles in this journal-ready dissertation. For each exclusionary discipline assignment investigated, the percentage of students who were in special education and received exclusionary discipline assignments decreased across over the four years investigated, where the number of assignments received by students increased. Students who were in special education and received between 1-30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had better STAAR Reading and Mathematics performance than students who received between 31-60 days and more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Results discussed herein were consistent with the existing literature regarding the frequency and duration of disciplinary assignments received by students in special education and the influence of exclusionary discipline assignments on reading and mathematics performance.

KEY WORDS: Special education, Exclusionary discipline, Reading achievement, Mathematics achievement, STAAR, Grade 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Students who are enrolled in special education receive special services and supports because of their disabilities that preclude them from learning at a typical rate in the classroom. The Texas Education Agency (2017b) described these students with disabilities as individuals who require specialized supports. Students in special education tend to have more difficulty achieving academically than their counterparts who are not in special education. Along with academic difficulties, students with disabilities are more likely to demonstrate non-preferred behavior than their peers who are not disabled (Diamant & Miller, 2006). These non-preferred behaviors may be attributed to academic frustration, social-skill deficits, cognitive impairment, and/or other behavioral disorders (Blair & Scott, 2002). Such non-preferred behaviors may result in exclusionary discipline consequences being assigned. Assignment to discipline consequences that remove students in special education from their classroom setting, unfortunately, has a negative effect on student learning.

Students excluded from the classroom demonstrate lower academic achievement in both reading and mathematics when compared to their peers who are not excluded from the classroom due to behavior (Arcia, 2006). The National Council on Disability (2015) reported that in the 2009-2010 school year students enrolled in special education were suspended from the classroom twice the amount of students who were not enrolled in special education. Students who are enrolled in special education are more likely to be excluded from the classroom when compared to their counterparts without disabilities (Diamant, 2014; Lewis, 2015; Sullivan, Van Norman & Klingbeil, 2014).

As Arcia (2006), Benson and Slate (2018), and Allman (2012, 2013) have indicated, students who are enrolled in special education and were excluded from classroom instruction due to non-preferred behavior demonstrated lower achievement scores than students enrolled in special education who were not excluded from the classroom. The influence of exclusionary discipline assignments on student achievement should be considered for both reading and mathematics achievement. Decreasing the frequency and duration of exclusionary discipline assignments given to students enrolled in special education or exploring alternatives to these assignments could benefit students, families, school districts, and communities across Texas.

Review of the Literature for Discipline Consequence Assignments to Students in Special Education

The issue of student discipline is well documented both on the state and national level. Not only do students in the regular classroom setting receive discipline consequences, students who have disabilities and who are enrolled in special education settings also are assigned discipline consequences. Of importance is that students who are enrolled in special education are more likely to be assigned exclusionary discipline consequences than are their typically developing peers (Leone, Mayer, Malmgren, & Meisel, 2000). In a more recent study (University of California, Center for Civil Rights Remedies, 2015), during the 2011-2012 school year, 4.89% of elementary students with disabilities were suspended from school. In comparison, elementary students without disabilities were suspended at a rate of 1.90%. Elementary students who were enrolled in special education were assigned suspensions more than twice as much as their peers without disabilities. These percentages are even higher at the secondary school level.

The Center for Civil Rights Remedies (2015) documented that 15.86% of secondary students who were enrolled in special education were suspended from school, a statistic that is substantially higher than the 7.86% of students who were not enrolled in special education and who were suspended from school.

In a recent article on students in Texas, Benson and Slate (2017) analyzed the relationship of exclusionary discipline consequences with student gender and ethnicity/race. In particular, they examined the degree to which inequities were present in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to Grade 9 students who had a Learning Disability. In their investigation, Benson and Slate (2017) documented that almost 46% of their Grade 9 boys with a Learning Disability and approximately 36% of their Grade 9 girls with a Learning Disability were assigned to an in-school suspension. In regard to out-of-school suspension, almost 29% of Grade 9 boys and 16% of Grade 9 girls with a Learning Disability were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. With respect to ethnicity/race, Benson and Slate (2017) established that almost half, 49%, of Black students with a Learning Disability were assigned to an in-school suspension assignment and 44% of Hispanic students with a Learning Disability were assigned to this consequence. A much lower percentage, 33%, of White students with a Learning Disability were assigned to an in-school suspension.

Concerning out-of-school suspension, the statistics were similar in nature. More than a third, 34%, of Black students with a Learning Disability were assigned to an out-of-school suspension and approximately 24% of Hispanic students with a Learning Disability were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Again, a much lower percentage, 13.5%, of White students were assigned to this consequence. As such,

Benson and Slate (2017) documented the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to students with a Learning Disability.

Having a diagnosed disability and even the specific type of disability has been established to be related to being suspended from school (Sullivan et al., 2014). In their investigation, Sullivan et al. (2014) analyzed suspension data on students with disabilities in 39 mid-western school districts. Similar to the Center for Civil Rights Remedies report, 19% of the students enrolled in special education were assigned suspensions. Also addressed by Sullivan et al. (2014) were the suspensions assigned to each special education disability category. Students who were emotionally disturbed were suspended at a rate of 47%. As such, students who were emotionally disturbed were nine times more likely to be suspended than either students with a speech and language impairment or students with a learning disability. Of note in their investigation was that one-third of these students with a disability were suspended multiple times.

As support for the Sullivan et al. (2014) study, Leone et al. (2000) in an analysis of data on 465 students in Eastern Kentucky, documented that students who were enrolled in special education were more likely to be assigned exclusionary discipline or suspensions than their peers who were not enrolled in special education. Almost 11% of the students in their study were students with disabilities. Of all of the students who were suspended, 20% of those students were students with disabilities. They attributed these inequities in discipline consequence assignment to deficits in social skills and the low functional ability of the students who were enrolled in special education.

The issue of exclusionary discipline practices is quite relevant for students who are enrolled in special education. Allman and Slate (2012) provided extensive evidence

that students with disabilities who are removed from the classroom due to discipline assignments have lower academic performance than their peers with disabilities who were not excluded from the classroom. In an analysis of data from Texas, the state of interest for this article, Allman and Slate (2012) analyzed statewide data ($n = 33,389$) of Grade 9 students who were enrolled in special education. They specifically examined the reading and mathematics achievement of these students as a function of their assignment or non-assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence. Allman and Slate (2012) established that almost half of their sample of Grade 9 students who were enrolled in special education received an exclusionary discipline assignment. Students who were enrolled in special education who were assigned in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Educational Program placement demonstrated statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics test scores than their peers who were enrolled in special education and who did not receive in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Allman and Slate (2012) determined that the mathematics performance of these students was more adversely influenced by the discipline assignment than was their reading performance.

In a follow-up study, Allman and Slate (2013) examined the influence of exclusionary discipline assignments on the reading and mathematics performance for students in three disability categories: (a) emotional disturbance, (b) learning disability, and (c) other health impairment. Students in all three disability categories who had been assigned exclusionary discipline assignments had statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics test scores than their peers in the same disability category who had not

been assigned exclusionary discipline assignments. Exclusionary discipline assignments clearly influence student achievement in an adverse manner.

In another study, Blair and Scott (2002) provided evidence of the association between low socioeconomic status and identification of learning disabilities. They analyzed Florida birth and public school records for low socioeconomic indicators including low parent education, late care, unmarried mother at birth, and low birth weight. The data provided by birth records were compared to public school records of eligibility for learning disability. Blair and Scott (2002) determined 30% of boys who had low socioeconomic indicators at birth later qualified for special education services, and 39% of girls with low socioeconomic indicators at birth later qualified for special education services. Students who are learning disabled comprise the highest percentage of students when compared to other special education eligibility categories. Evidence was provided by Blair and Scott (2002) and by Tiger and Slate (2017) that students who are economically disadvantaged are more likely to be identified as learning disabled and more likely to be excluded from the classroom due to a disciplinary assignment. Therefore, student demographics are contributing to the classroom exclusion and identification of students with disabilities.

Review of the Literature for Exclusionary Discipline Consequences and Reading Achievement

Students who receive special education services constitute 12% of the student enrollment in public schools in the United States (Diamant, 2014). Of the students who were enrolled in special education during the 2011-2012 school year, they accounted for 25% of all the students who were enrolled in public schools and who were arrested and

referred to law enforcement. Also documented by Diament (2014) was that students who were enrolled in special education represented 75% of the students who were physically restrained and 58% of the students who were placed in seclusion. Students who were enrolled in special education were twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension than their peers who were not enrolled in special education.

Lewis (2015) provided data regarding the suspension of students who were enrolled in special education during the 2011-2012 school year. More than 5% of elementary students in the United States who were enrolled in special education were suspended, more than double the overall suspension rate. More than 18% of secondary students who were enrolled in special education were suspended, compared to 10% of secondary school students. Students with emotional disorders were suspended at a high rate in the 2011-2012 school year. One-third of students with emotional disorders were suspended at least once during the school year. These numbers are concerning because as Lewis (2015) reported, one suspension can make students enrolled in special education three times more likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system and twice as likely to drop out of school than their peers who are not in special education.

Exclusionary discipline consequences can have severe and long-term implications for students with disabilities. Students enrolled in special education may demonstrate inappropriate classroom behaviors, which make learning more difficult for them than for their typically developing peers. The frustration caused by inadequate academic skills can result in exclusionary discipline assignments. Exclusion from instruction and lack of exposure to typically developing peers will influence the academic achievement and functional skills of students enrolled in special education.

With respect to the state of interest for this article, Texas, Allman and Slate (2012) analyzed the effect of exclusionary discipline assignments on the academic achievement of students with disabilities. In their investigation, they examined the reading test scores of Grade 9 students with disabilities in Texas. Specifically, they compared scores on the Texas state-mandated assessments for students with disabilities who had been assigned an exclusionary discipline assignment with the test scores of their counterparts with disabilities who had not been assigned exclusionary discipline assignments in the 2008-2009 school year. In their statistical analyses, they established the presence of statistically significant differences in the reading test scores between students with disabilities who were assigned to in-school suspension, to out-of-school suspension, or to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and their counterparts in special education who had not been assigned such a consequence. Allman and Slate (2012) documented that students with disabilities who were not assigned exclusionary discipline consequences had statistically significantly higher average reading test scores than their peers who were not assigned exclusionary discipline assignments.

In a similar study, Allman and Slate (2013) analyzed the relationship of exclusionary discipline assignments on reading performance by student disability category. In their investigation, they compared reading test scores on the Texas state-mandated assessment for students who had a learning disability, other health impairment, or emotional disturbance. They specifically compared the reading performance of these three groups of students in special education as a function of whether or not they had been assigned an exclusionary discipline consequence. In their Texas statewide analysis,

Allman and Slate (2013) established that students regardless of their specific disability who received an exclusionary discipline consequence had statistically significantly lower reading scores than their peers who were not assigned an exclusionary discipline consequence. As such, they determined the presence of a clear relationship between exclusionary discipline consequence assignment and reading test performance of students in special education. Of note for this article is that Allman and Slate (2013) did not examine the duration of exclusionary assignments and the influence of extended periods of exclusion from the classroom on the academic achievement of students with disabilities.

In an article directly related to the research questions in this study, Arcia (2006) examined the influence of suspension assignments on reading achievement. Arcia (2006) analyzed data on reading for over three school years and by the number of suspensions received by students. The number of suspensions were grouped by 1 to 10 days, 11-20 days, and 21 or more days of suspension over three years. Students who had not been suspended gained 198 points. In comparison, students who had been suspended in 1 of the 3 years gained 176 points, students who had been suspended in 2 of the 3 years gained 168 points, and students who had been suspended in all three years gained only 159 points in their reading test scores. Of note in the Arcia (2006) investigation was that Grade 6 students who had been suspended 21 more school days had almost the same reading ability as Grade 4 students who had never been suspended. Based on the results on his investigation, Arcia (2006) concluded student suspension was negatively related to student reading. As student suspensions increased, reading achievement decreased.

Accordingly, Arcia (2006) clearly established the presence of a relationship between reading achievement and suspension.

Review of the Literature for Exclusionary Discipline Consequences and Mathematics Achievement

Students with disabilities were more than twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension than were their counterparts who did not have a disability (National Council on Disability, 2015). For instance, in the 2011-2012 school year, students who were enrolled in special education represented a quarter of school-related arrests. Moreover, only 61% of students in special education graduated high school, a much lower rate than the 80% graduation rate of their peers without a disability. As exclusionary discipline assignments increased, graduation rates decreased. The National Council on Disability (2015) reported that in the 2009-2010 school year, 13% of students who were enrolled in special education in the United States were assigned an out-of-school suspension, almost double the percentage of students who were not enrolled in special education and who were assigned an out-of-school suspension.

Federal legislation was established to protect students enrolled in special education from lengthy exclusionary discipline assignments. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was reauthorized in 1997 providing school districts with the ability to exclude students with disabilities from the classroom as a discipline consequence for up to 10 days without requiring a meeting to review and possibly revise the student's individual education plan. According to the National Council on Disability (2015), included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is the statement that school districts should "provide an education that is specially designed to meet a

student's unique needs supported by services that will permit him or her to benefit instruction" (p. 17). The National Council on Disability (2015) argued allowing students to be excluded from the regular classroom setting for up to 10 days is a failure to provide students with a free and appropriate public education. During the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1997, Senator Edward Kennedy stated, "Discipline should never be used as an excuse to exclude or segregate students with disabilities because of failure to design behavioral management plans, or the failure to provide support services and staff training" (National Council on Disability, 2015, p. 18). Following the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, students enrolled in special education continued to receive exclusionary discipline assignments.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was established to ensure students with disabilities receive the same educational opportunities as their non-disabled peers. This federal legislation was implemented to ensure students enrolled in special education have opportunities within the classroom along-side their non-disabled peers (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004). Exclusion from the classroom due to discipline assignments would make it difficult for students enrolled in special education to perform academically.

In a recent analysis of the relationship of discipline consequence assignment and academic achievement for students in special education, Benson and Slate (2018) examined data on Grade 9 White, Black, and Hispanic students with a Learning Disability in the 2008-2009 school year. In their investigation, Benson and Slate (2018) analyzed the mathematics test scores for these three groups of Grade 9 students with a Learning Disability based on whether or not they had been assigned to an in-school

suspension or to an out-of-school suspension. White, Black, and Hispanic students with a Learning Disability who were assigned to an in-school suspension had statistically significantly lower mathematics test scores than their counterparts with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. In particular, White students who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 77 points lower than White students who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Hispanic students who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 49 points lower than Hispanic students who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Black students who were assigned in-school suspension had an average mathematics score almost 36 points lower than their counterparts who were assigned in-school suspension.

When examining the effects of out-of-school suspension, Benson and Slate (2018) established that White, Black, and Hispanic students who had a Learning Disability and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had statistically significantly lower average mathematics test scores than White, Black, and Hispanic students who had a Learning Disability and who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Specifically, White students who had a Learning Disability and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 107 points lower than White students with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Hispanic students who had a Learning Disability and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was almost 88 points lower than Hispanic students with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Finally, Black students with a Learning Disability who were

assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 81 points lower than Black students with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. As such, Benson and Slate (2018) determined that the mathematics achievement of Grade 9 students with a Learning Disability was influenced by the receipt of in-school suspension and the receipt of out-of-school suspension.

In a similar study, Allman and Slate (2012) investigated the relationship of exclusionary discipline assignments of Grade 9 students with disabilities with their mathematics achievement. The discipline consequences they focused on were in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Allman and Slate (2012) analyzed the effect of each disciplinary consequence separately on student mathematics achievement. Students with disabilities who received an in-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was almost 60 points lower than their counterparts who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Students with disabilities who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was almost 100 points lower than their counterparts with disabilities who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Finally, students with disabilities who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had an average mathematics score that was almost 118 points lower than their counterparts with disabilities who were not assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. As such, clear evidence was present that students with a disability and who were assigned to an in-school suspension, to an out-of-school suspension, or to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had

statistically significantly lower mathematics performance than their counterparts with a disability who was not assigned any of these three discipline consequences.

In a follow up study, Allman and Slate (2013) investigated the relationship of three discipline consequences (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement) with the mathematics achievement of Texas Grade 9 students who qualified as having a Learning Disability, Emotional Disorder, or Other Health Impairment. When examining the effect of exclusionary discipline assignments on students enrolled in special education as a function of disability type, Allman and Slate (2013) established that all three groups of students with a disability had statistically significantly lower mathematics test performance than their peers with disabilities who were not assigned to any of these discipline consequences.

In regard to the influence of exclusionary discipline assignments on mathematics achievement, students who had a Learning Disability and who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 59 points lower than their counterparts with a Learning Disability and who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Students who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 52 points lower than their counterparts who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Students who were Other Health Impaired and who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 62 points lower than their counterparts with an Other Health Impairment who were not assigned to an in-school suspension.

Concerning out-of-school suspension and mathematics achievement, students who had a Learning Disability and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was almost 98 points lower than their counterparts with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Students who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was almost 105 points lower than their counterparts who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were not assigned out-of-school suspension. Students who were Other Health Impaired and were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was almost 100 points lower than their counterparts who were Other Health Impaired and who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension.

In regard to Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and mathematics achievement, students who were Learning Disabled and were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was almost 117 points lower than their counterparts with a Learning Disability and who were not assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Students who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had an average mathematics score that was 103 points lower than their counterparts who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were not assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Students who were Other Health Impaired and were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had an average mathematics score that was 132 points lower than their counterparts who were Other Health Impaired and who were not assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative

Education Program placement. In their statewide analysis, Allman and Slate (2013) established that exclusionary discipline assignments were clearly related to the mathematics achievement of students with disabilities.

Statement of the Problem

Students who are enrolled in special education are less likely to acquire academic and functional skills at the same rate as their peers who are not disabled. Researchers (e.g., Allman & Slate, 2013; Sullivan et al., 2014) have established that students who were enrolled in special education are more likely to receive exclusionary discipline assignments than their peers without disabilities. Students who are enrolled in special education typically struggle both academically and functionally. Exclusion from the classroom will only decrease their exposure to typically developing peers and make academic tasks even more difficult. Allman and Slate (2012) documented that exclusionary discipline assignments influence the academic achievement of students enrolled in special education in the 2008-2009 school year. Updated and extended research is needed to investigate the effect of exclusionary discipline assignments on the academic achievement of students enrolled in special education. Updated information is needed to determine the degree to which progress has been made in using alternatives to exclusionary discipline and decreasing the effect of exclusionary discipline on the achievement of students enrolled in special education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to examine the relationship of exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to Texas Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education and their academic achievement during the 2012-2013

through the 2015-2016 school year. In addition, the relationship of exclusionary discipline assignments on the reading and mathematics achievement of students enrolled in special education over a 4-year period was examined. In the first investigation, the numbers and percentages of Texas Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who received a discipline consequence was examined. In the second study, the relationship of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement with the reading achievement of students enrolled in special education was investigated over a 4-year time period. Finally, in the third investigation, the relationship of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement with the mathematics achievement of students enrolled in special education was investigated over a 4-year time period. The discipline consequences of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, Disciplinary Alternative Program placement, and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were analyzed separately for each grade level in the first investigation.

Significance of the Study

Research regarding the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to students with disabilities is sparse. Very few empirical research investigations are in the extant literature regarding the number and percentage of students with disabilities assigned to alternative placements and suspensions. Current evidence on the exclusionary discipline assignments of students enrolled in special education is needed, particularly for the State of Texas to determine if a trend exists over time.

In a literature review of the disciplinary practices commonly used in American schools, Allman and Slate (2011) reported suspension and out-of-school suspension were the most commonly assigned disciplinary assignments. Students who frequently receive

these assignments are likely to struggle academically. These students are excluded from classroom instruction and fall behind academically. If a student is identified as having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, that student had an academic or functional need for specialized instruction and services. Therefore, students with a disability do not perform as well as their non-disabled peers in the classroom before being excluded due to behavioral consequences. Missing instruction and exposure to their peers will only result in an increase in the academic challenges students with disabilities already face (Curtiss & Slate 2013). The deficits created by absence from classroom instruction and peer interaction can influence behavior, diminish social skills and language development. Students enrolled in special education often struggle with acquiring these skills at a typical rate prior to removal from the classroom.

Definition of Terms

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

Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement

The Texas Education Agency (2010) described Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement as the third method of disciplinary consequence, following in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. A Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement is the removal of students from their regular classes and placing them in an alternative classroom setting for an extended period time. Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements are designed for students in elementary through high school and may be located on or off campus (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

Discipline Consequence Assignments

School districts establish a student code of conduct with the purpose of achieving and maintaining order in public schools. Defined in the code of conduct are standards for acceptable behavior and prohibits certain behaviors (Texas Education Agency, 2016a).

Discipline consequences are consequences assigned to students for violations of standards established in the student code of conduct. Major discipline consequences are: In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program, and Expulsion.

Expulsion

The Texas Education Agency defined expulsion as a disciplinary consequence for serious offenses. Expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from the traditional school setting as a disciplinary consequence. Texas law requires that students who have been expelled to be placed in an alternative school setting, the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (Texas Education Agency, 2016a).

In-School Suspension

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

Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program

The Texas Education Agency (2010) defined a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education programs as an alternative educational setting for students who have been expelled from school due to serious infractions that would be considered criminal if the student were an adult. Juvenile justice differs from the adult system because of the age of the student and the consequences assigned for offenses like curfew violation or truancy that would not be considered criminal if the student where an adult. The Texas Juvenile Justice Department can approve the establishment of a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program in counties with a population that exceeds 125,000. Counties with a population lower than 125,000 may develop a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program and include the students attending in the district's average daily attendance for the purpose of receiving state funds.

Manifestation Determination Review

A manifestation determination review is defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2002) as a meeting to determine if a student's conduct had a direct or substantial relationship to the child's disability or if the conduct is a direct result of the local education agency's failure to implement the child's Individual Education Plan.

Out-Of-School Suspension

The Texas Education Agency (2010) described out-of-school suspension as the second method of disciplinary consequence, following in-school suspension. An out-of-school suspension consequence is the removal of a student from the regular classroom as

a disciplinary consequence that does not allow the student to attend school for a day and to not exceed three days in a row.

Public Education Information Management System

The Public Education Information Management System is an application, which manages all data requested by the Texas Education Agency about public education, including academic performance, organizational information and student demographic information (Texas Education Agency, Glossary of Acronyms, 2017b).

Special Education

The Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process provided by Texas Education Agency (2016b) defines special education in Texas to be a student between the ages of 3 and 21 who has met the criteria established for one or more of the 13 eligibility categories defined by the state of Texas. The student must have a disability and as a result of that disability, the student must demonstrate a need for specialized services and supports to benefit from education.

State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness

The State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) is a state readiness program that was implemented by Texas Education Agency in the 2011-2012 school year. This assessment was designed to measure the extent to which students have learned and are able to apply knowledge and skills defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Students in Grades 3 through 12 are required to participate (Texas Education Agency, Glossary of Acronyms, 2017b, p. 10).

STAAR Level I Unsatisfactory Academic Performance

On the STAAR exam, Level I Unsatisfactory Academic Performance refers to the label given to students who are inadequately prepared and who are unlikely to succeed in the next grade level. These students will require extensive intervention to succeed academically (Texas Education Agency, 2016a, chapter 4, p. 26).

STAAR Level II Satisfactory Academic Performance

On the STAAR test, Level II Satisfactory Academic Performance refers to the label given to students who are prepared for the next grade level. These students may require little or no academic interventions (Texas Education Agency, 2016a, chapter 4, p. 26).

STAAR Level II Phase-In Satisfactory Academic Performance

On the STAAR test, Level II Phase-In Satisfactory Academic Performance refers to the label given to students who are prepared for the next grade level, by Phase-In standards. The Phase-In Standard is 1.0 standard deviations below the Level II Recommended performance standard reported to be established in the 2021-2022 school year. The Phase-In Standard was implemented by the Commissioner of Education in 2012 to provide school districts time to make adjustments which would result in their students meeting the Recommended Standard (Texas Education Agency, 2015).

STAAR Level III Advanced Performance

On the STAAR assessment, Level III Advanced Academic Performance refers to the label given to students who are well-prepared for the next grade level and who have a high likelihood of success with little intervention (Texas Education Agency, 2016a, chapter 4, p. 26).

Texas Education Agency

The Texas Education Agency is a state organization that provides leadership, guidance, and resources to help schools meet student needs. Under the direction of the Commissioner of Education, the agency manages statewide curriculum, the statewide assessment program, the data collection system for public school students, state accountability, monitors compliance, and state and federal funds (Texas Education Agency, 2017b).

Delimitations

Delimitations for this journal-ready dissertation involved the analysis of discipline consequence assignments for Texas students enrolled in special education in Grades 3 through 8 during the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school year. Only discipline consequence assignments present in the Texas Education Agency website were analyzed in this journal-ready dissertation. The duration of student placement in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs was categorized by 1 to 30 days, 11 to 60 days, and more than 60 days placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program. The measure of student achievement was limited to student performance on the state-mandated assessment, the STAAR Reading and Mathematics tests. Student performance was categorized by level of performance in these academic areas. Student levels of performance addressed herein were: Level I Unsatisfactory Academic Performance, Level II Satisfactory Academic Performance, Level II Phase-In Satisfactory Performance, and Level III Advanced Academic Performance.

Limitations

For the purpose of this journal-ready dissertation, only quantitative data on discipline consequences assigned to Texas students enrolled in special education in Grades 3 through 8 during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years were analyzed. The Texas Education Agency online database provided the archival data that were analyzed herein only for students enrolled in special education. In addition, no attempts were made to determine the reasons why the discipline consequences were assigned. Data analyses were restricted to only students enrolled in special education in Grades 3-8; thereby, restricting generalizability of these results to Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years.

Assumptions

For the purpose of this journal-ready dissertation, the assumption was made that the discipline data on incidences of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement in the Texas Education Agency database were accurately reported by each school campus, grade level, and school district. Another assumption was that student eligibility for special education was accurately reported to The Texas Education Agency. A final assumption was that student performance on the STAAR Reading and Mathematics tests was accurately administered, scored, and reported to the Texas Education Agency. To the degree that errors were present in this archival dataset, results from this journal-ready dissertation may be adversely influenced.

Literature Review Procedures

The literature reviewed in this article was accessed through Ebsco Host where databases such as Education Source and the Education Resource Information Clearinghouse (ERIC) provide scholarly journals accessed online. All research articles that were included in this study were narrowed to articles provided in full text, included references, and were peer reviewed to ensure quality. Boolean phrases that were used to search for articles included in isolation and a combination of special education, students with disabilities, exclusionary discipline consequence, exclusionary assignments, exclusionary discipline placement, reading, and mathematics achievement. Research dating back to earlier than 2000 were not included.

Organization of the Study

In this journal-ready dissertation, three research investigations were conducted. The focus of the first article was on the number and percentage of students enrolled in special education who received exclusionary discipline assignments (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement) in Grades 3 through 8 during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years. The focus of the second article was on the reading achievement (i.e., Level I Unsatisfactory Academic Performance, Level II Satisfactory Academic Performance, Level II Phase-In Satisfactory Performance, and Level III Advanced Academic Performance) of students enrolled in special education in Grades 3 through 8 who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years. The focus of the third article was on the mathematics achievement (i.e., Level I

Unsatisfactory Academic Performance, Level II Satisfactory Academic Performance, Level II Phase-In Satisfactory Performance, and Level III Advanced Academic Performance) of students enrolled in special education in Grades 3 through 8 who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years.

In this journal-ready dissertation, five chapters are included. Chapter I contains an introduction, reviews of the literature, and background information regarding the three investigations. Chapter II included a descriptive analysis of disciplinary consequences assigned to Texas Grade 3 through 8 students with disabilities from the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years. Chapter III contains a descriptive analysis of exclusionary discipline assignments and reading achievement of Texas Grade 3 through 8 students with disabilities from the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years. Chapter IV includes a descriptive analysis of exclusionary discipline assignments and mathematics achievement of Texas Grade 3 through 8 students with disabilities from the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years. Chapter V includes a discussion of research results of the three statewide investigations, implications for policy and practice, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE ASSIGNMENTS OF GRADES 3 THROUGH 8 STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION OVER TIME: A TEXAS STATEWIDE ANALYSIS

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

Abstract

In this investigation, the numbers and percentages of students who were enrolled in special education and who received a discipline consequence (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, and Juvenile Justice Education Program placement) during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years were determined. In each of these four school years, the number of students in special education who were assigned an exclusionary discipline assignment steadily decreased. The percentages of the total exclusionary assignments given to students in special education, however, did not decrease but rather remained stable across the four school years. Recommendations for research and implications are discussed along with suggestions for policy and practice.

Keywords: Special education, Discipline assignments, Grade 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 School Years

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCE
ASSIGNMENTS OF GRADES 3 THROUGH 8 STUDENTS IN SPECIAL
EDUCATION OVER TIME: A TEXAS STATEWIDE ANALYSIS

The issue of student discipline is well documented both on the state and national level. Not only do students in the regular classroom setting receive discipline consequences, students who have disabilities and who are enrolled in special education settings also are assigned discipline consequences. Of importance is that students who are enrolled in special education are more likely to be assigned exclusionary discipline consequences than are their typically developing peers (Leone, Mayer, Malmgren, & Meisel, 2000). In a more recent study (University of California, Center for Civil Rights Remedies, 2015), during the 2011-2012 school year, 4.89% of elementary students with disabilities were suspended from school. In comparison, elementary students without disabilities were suspended at a rate of 1.90%. Elementary students who were enrolled in special education were assigned suspensions more than twice as much as their peers without disabilities. These percentages are even higher at the secondary school level. The Center for Civil Rights Remedies (2015) documented that 15.86% of students who were enrolled in special education were suspended from school, a statistic that is substantially higher than the 7.86% of students who were not enrolled in special education and who were suspended from school.

In a recent article on students in Texas, Benson and Slate (2017) analyzed the relationship of exclusionary discipline consequences with student gender and ethnicity/race. In particular, they examined the degree to which inequities were present in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to Grade 9 students who had a

Learning Disability. In their investigation, Benson and Slate (2017) documented that almost 46% of their Grade 9 boys with a Learning Disability and approximately 36% of their Grade 9 girls with a Learning Disability were assigned to an in-school suspension. In regard to out-of-school suspension, almost 29% of Grade 9 boys and 16% of Grade 9 girls with a Learning Disability were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. With respect to ethnicity/race, Benson and Slate (2017) established that almost half, 49%, of Black students with a Learning Disability were assigned to an in-school suspension assignment and 44% of Hispanic students with a Learning Disability were assigned to this consequence. A much lower percentage, 33%, of White students with a Learning Disability were assigned to an in-school suspension.

Concerning out-of-school suspension, the statistics were similar in nature. More than a third, 34%, of Black students with a Learning Disability were assigned to an out-of-school suspension and approximately 24% of Hispanic students with a Learning Disability were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Again, a much lower percentage, 13.5%, of White students were assigned to this consequence. As such, Benson and Slate (2017) documented the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to students with a Learning Disability.

Having a diagnosed disability and even the specific type of disability has been established to be related to being suspended from school (Sullivan, Van Norman, & Klingbeil, 2014). In their investigation, Sullivan et al. (2014) analyzed suspension data on students with disabilities in 39 mid-western school districts. Similar to the Center for Civil Rights Remedies report, 19% of the students enrolled in special education were assigned suspensions. Also addressed by Sullivan et al. (2014) were the suspensions

assigned to each special education disability category. Students who were emotionally disturbed were suspended at a rate of 47%. As such, students who were emotionally disturbed were nine times more likely to be suspended than either students with a speech and language impairment or students with a learning disability. Of note in their investigation was that one-third of these students with a disability were suspended multiple times.

As support for the Sullivan et al. (2014) study, Leone et al. (2000) in an analysis of data on 465 students in Eastern Kentucky, documented that students who were enrolled in special education were more likely to be assigned exclusionary discipline or suspensions than their peers who were not enrolled in special education. Almost 11% of the students in their study were students with disabilities. Of all of the students who were suspended, 20% of those students were students with disabilities. They attributed these inequities in discipline consequence assignment to deficits in social skills and the low functional ability of the students who were enrolled in special education.

The issue of exclusionary discipline practices is quite relevant for students who are enrolled in special education. Allman and Slate (2012) provided extensive evidence that students with disabilities who are removed from the classroom due to discipline assignments have lower academic performance than their peers with disabilities who were not excluded from the classroom. In an analysis of data from Texas, the state of interest for this article, Allman and Slate (2012) analyzed statewide data ($n = 33,389$) of Grade 9 students who were enrolled in special education. They specifically examined the reading and mathematics achievement of these students as a function of their assignment or non-assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence. Allman and Slate (2012)

established that almost half of their sample of Grade 9 students who were enrolled in special education received an exclusionary discipline assignment. Students who were enrolled in special education who were assigned in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Educational Program placement demonstrated statistically significantly lower score reading and mathematics test scores than their peers who were enrolled in special education and who did not receive in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Allman and Slate (2012) determined that the mathematics performance of these students was more adversely influenced by the discipline assignment than was their reading performance.

In a follow-up study, Allman and Slate (2013) examined the influence of exclusionary discipline assignments on the reading and mathematics performance for students in three disability categories: (a) Emotional Disturbance, (b) Learning Disability, and (c) Other Health Impairment. Students in all three disability categories who had been assigned exclusionary discipline assignments had statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics test scores than their peers in the same disability category who had not been assigned exclusionary discipline assignments. Exclusionary discipline assignments clearly influence student achievement in an adverse manner.

In another study, Blair and Scott (2002) provided evidence of the association between low socioeconomic status and identification of learning disabilities. They analyzed Florida birth and public school records for low socioeconomic indicators including low parent education, late care, unmarried mother at birth, and low birth weight. The data provided by birth records were compared to public school records of

eligibility for learning disability. Blair and Scott (2002) determined 30% of boys who had low socioeconomic indicators at birth later qualified for special education services, and 39% of girls with low socioeconomic indicators at birth later qualified for special education services. Students who are learning disabled comprise the highest percentage of students when compared to other special education eligibility categories. Evidence was provided by Blair and Scott (2002) and by Tiger and Slate (2017) that students with low economic status are more likely to be identified as learning disabled and more likely to be excluded from the classroom due to a disciplinary assignment. Therefore, student demographics are contributing to the classroom exclusion and identification of students with disabilities.

Statement of the Problem

Students who are enrolled in special education are less likely to acquire academic and functional skills at the same rate as their peers who are not disabled. Researchers (e.g., Allman & Slate, 2013; Sullivan et al., 2014) have established that students who were enrolled in special education are more likely to receive exclusionary discipline assignments than their peers without. Students who are enrolled in special education typically struggle both academically and functionally. Exclusion from the classroom will only decrease their exposure to typically developing peers and make academic tasks even more difficult. Allman and Slate (2012) documented that exclusionary discipline assignments influence the academic achievement of students enrolled in special education in the 2008-2009 school year. Updated and extended research is needed to investigate the effect of exclusionary discipline assignments on the academic achievement of students enrolled in special education. Updated information is needed to determine the

degree to which progress has been made in using alternatives to exclusionary discipline and decreasing exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to students enrolled in special education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the numbers of students who were enrolled in special education and who received a discipline consequence during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years. A second purpose was to ascertain the percentage out of the total disciplinary placements that were assigned to students who were enrolled in special education during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years. The specific discipline consequences on which data were had and analyzed were: (a) in-school suspension, (b) out-of-school suspension, (c) expulsion, (d), Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, and (e) Juvenile Justice Education Program placement.

Significance of the Study

Research regarding the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to students with disabilities is sparse. Very few empirical research investigations are in the extant literature regarding the number and percentage of students with disabilities assigned to alternative placements and suspensions. Current evidence on the exclusionary discipline assignments of students enrolled in special education was needed, particularly for the State of Texas to determine if a trend exists over time.

In a literature review of the disciplinary practices commonly used in American schools, Allman and Slate (2011) discussed that in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension were the most commonly assigned disciplinary assignments. Students who frequently receive these assignments are likely to struggle academically because these

students are excluded from classroom instruction. If a student is identified as having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004), that student had an academic or functional need for specialized instruction and services. Therefore, students with a disability do not perform as well as their non-disabled peers in the classroom before being excluded due to behavioral consequences. Missing instruction and exposure to their peers will only result in an increase in the academic challenges students with disabilities already face (Curtiss & Slate, 2013).

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) What are the numbers of students in special education who were assigned to an in-school suspension?; (b) What percentage of the total number of in-school suspensions were assigned to students in special education?; (c) What are the numbers of students in special education who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension?; (d) What percentage of the total number of out-of-school suspensions were assigned to students in special education?; (e) What are the numbers of students in special education who were expelled from school?; (f) What percentage of the total number of expulsions were assigned to students in special education?; (g) What are the numbers of students in special education who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (h) What percentage of the total number of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements were assigned students in special education?; (i) What are the numbers of students in special education who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement?; and (j) What percentage of the total number Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements were assigned to students in special education? Each of these research

questions was addressed for the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years. .

Following these analyses, the degree to which trends might be present in the numbers and percentages of students in special education who received these discipline consequences over time were determined.

Method

Research Design

In this investigation, a descriptive approach (Creswell, 2009) was used to answer the previously discussed research questions. In that approach, the number and percentage of students who were enrolled in special education and who were assigned an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, or a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years were calculated.

Limitations are clearly present in a descriptive research design (Creswell, 2009). The data that were analyzed can only be described and cannot be used to establish any relationships or any cause-and-effect relationships (Creswell, 2009). Although the information provided in a descriptive research design can be easily interpreted, generalizations are limited.

Participants

Participants in this study were Texas students in Grades 3 through Grade 8 who were enrolled in special education and who were assigned a discipline consequence in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years. The Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process provided by Texas Education Agency (2016) defines special education in Texas to be a student between the ages of 3 and 21

who has met the criteria established for one or more of the 13 eligibility categories defined by the state of Texas. The student must have a disability and as a result of that disability, the student must demonstrate a need for specialized services and supports in order to benefit from education (Texas Education Agency, 2016).

Instrumentation and Procedures

The discipline consequence assignments of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement, and Juvenile Justice Alternative Program Placement were analyzed separately for students in Grades 3 through 8. In-school suspension is the first method of disciplinary action where students are removed from the regular classroom and placed in a separate classroom (Texas Education Agency, 2010). Out-of-school suspension is the second method of disciplinary action where students are removed from the regular classroom and not provided with any educational setting for no more than 3 days (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement is the third method of disciplinary action. Students are removed from the regular classroom and placed in an alternative classroom setting for an extended period of time, not to exceed 45 school days. Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement may be located on or off campus, but students are educated away from the regular classroom (Texas Education Agency, 2010). Expulsion is a disciplinary consequence for serious offenses. Expulsion is a permanent removal from the traditional classroom setting. An alternative educational setting is provided for students who have been expelled (Texas Education Agency, 2010). Juvenile Justice Alternative Education is an alternate educational setting for students who

have been expelled for serious infractions that would be considered criminal if the students were adults (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

For this investigation, the data that were analyzed were accessed from the Texas Education Agency discipline reports, Annual State Summary, which can be located on the Texas Education Agency website. The data provided through the URL, are readily available to the public. The Annual State Summary provided disciplinary data for the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years.

Results

To address the research question regarding Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years, descriptive statistics were calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As revealed in Table 2.1, the highest number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to an in-school suspension occurred in the 2012-2013 school year. In comparison to the 2013-2014 school year, the number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to an in-school suspension decreased by 4,080 students. Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, the number of students enrolled in special education who received an in-school suspension decreased by 3,288 students in comparison to the 2013-2014 school year. In the 2015-2016 school year, another decrease occurred, this time 1,526 fewer students enrolled in special education were assigned to an in-school suspension in comparison to the 2014-2015 school year.

Insert Table 2.1 about here

A trend was clearly established with respect to the number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to an in-school suspension from the 2012-2013 school year through the 2015-2016 school year. A steady and consistent decrease was observed in the number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to an in-school suspension. Across the four school years, the total number of students in special education who were assigned to an in-school suspension decreased from 213,468 students to 178,416 students.

To address the second research question on the percentage of the total in-school suspensions that were assigned to students in special education in the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years, descriptive statistics were again calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As delineated in Table 2.2, the highest percent of in-school suspensions assigned to students who were enrolled in special education occurred in the 2015-2016 school year. Although the number of total in-school suspensions assigned to students in special education from the 2012-2013 school year through the 2015-2016 school year consistently decreased, the percent of in-school suspensions assigned to students enrolled in special education remained stable across the four school years investigated. The percentages across the four school years only varied about one tenth of a percent.

Insert Table 2.2 about here

In regard to the third research question regarding Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension during the 2012-2013 school year through the 2015-2016 school year, descriptive statistics were calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As revealed in Table 2.3, the highest number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension occurred in the 2012-2013 school year. In comparison to the 2013-2014 school year, the number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension decreased by 1,931 students. Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, the number of students enrolled in special education who received an out-of-school suspension decreased by 1,473 students in comparison to the previous school year. In the 2015-2016 school year, another decrease occurred, this time 120 fewer students enrolled in special education were assigned to an out-of-school suspension in comparison to the 2014-2015 school year.

Insert Table 2.3 about here

With respect to the assignment of out-of-school suspension, a trend was clearly established with respect to the number of students enrolled in special education who received this disciplinary consequence from the 2012-2013 school year through the 2015-

2016 school year. A steady decrease was observed in the number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Across the four school years, the total number of students in special education who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension decreased from 99,836 students to 90,921 students.

In the fourth research question, the percentages of the total out-of-school suspensions that were assigned to students in special education in the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years were again calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As delineated in Table 2.4, the highest percentage of out-of-school suspensions assigned to students who were enrolled in special education occurred in the 2015-2016 school year. Although the number of total of out-of-school suspensions assigned to students in special education from the 2012-2013 school year through the 2015-2016 school year consistently decreased, the percentage of out-of-school suspensions assigned to students enrolled in special education remained stable across the four school years investigated. The percentages across the four school years varied less than 1%.

 Insert Table 2.4 about here

For the fifth research question, the numbers of Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who were assigned an expulsion during the 2012-2013 school year through the 2015-2016 school year were calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As revealed in Table 2.5, the highest number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned an

expulsion occurred in the 2012-2013 school year. In comparison to the 2013-2014 school year, the number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned an expulsion decreased by 72 students. Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, the number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned an expulsion decreased by 16 students in comparison to the 2013-2014 school year. In the 2015-2016 school year, another decrease occurred, this time 78 fewer students who were enrolled in special education were assigned an expulsion in comparison to the 2014-2015 school year.

Insert Table 2.5 about here

A trend was clearly established with respect to the number of students enrolled in special education who were expelled from school in the 2012-2013 school year through the 2015-2016 school year. A steady and consistent decrease was observed in the number of students enrolled in special education who were expelled from school. Across the four school years, the total number of students in special education who were assigned an expulsion decreased from 842 students to 654 students.

Regarding the sixth research question on the percentages of the total expulsions that were assigned to students in special education in the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years, descriptive statistics were again calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As delineated in Table 2.6, the highest percentage of expulsions assigned to students who were enrolled in special education occurred in the 2014-2015 school year. Although the number of total expulsions assigned to students in special education from the 2012-2013 school year

through the 2015-2016 school year consistently decreased, the percentage of expulsions assigned to students enrolled in special education remained stable across the four school years investigated. The percentages across the four school years varied about 1.6%.

Insert Table 2.6 about here

To address the seventh research question regarding Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who were assigned a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement during the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years, descriptive statistics were calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As revealed in Table 2.7, the highest number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement occurred in the 2012-2013 school year. In comparison to the 2013-2014 school year, the number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement decreased by 1,136 students. Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, the number of students enrolled in special education who received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement decreased by 494 students in comparison to the 2013-2014 school year. In the 2015-2016 school year, another decrease occurred, this time 461 fewer students who were enrolled in special education were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement in comparison to the 2014-2015 school year.

Insert Table 2.7 about here

A trend was clearly established with respect to the number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement from the 2012-2013 school year through the 2015-2016 school year. A steady and consistent decrease was observed in the number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Across the four school years, the total number of students in special education who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement decreased from 18,538 students to 15,289 students.

To address the eighth research question on the percentages of the total Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements that were assigned to students in special education in the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years, descriptive statistics were again calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As delineated in Table 2.8, the highest percentage of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements assigned to students who were enrolled in special education occurred in the 2012-2013 school year. Although the number of total Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements assigned to students in special education from the 2012-2013 school year through the 2015-2016 school year consistently decreased, the percentage of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements assigned to students enrolled in special education remained stable

across the four school years investigated. The percentages across the four school years varied by about 1.1%.

Insert Table 2.8 about here

To address the ninth research question regarding Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement during the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years, descriptive statistics were calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As revealed in Table 2.9, the highest number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement occurred in the 2012-2013 school year. In comparison to the 2013-2014 school year, the number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement decreased by 16 students. Regarding the 2014-2015 school year, the number of students enrolled in special education who received a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement decreased by 28 students in comparison to the 2013-2014 school year. In the 2015-2016 school year, another decrease occurred, this time 40 fewer students enrolled in special education were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement in comparison to the 2014-2015 school year.

Insert Table 2.9 about here

A trend was clearly established with respect to the number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement from the 2012-2013 school year through the 2015-2016 school year. A steady and consistent decrease was observed in the number of students enrolled in special education who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement. Across the four school years, the total number of students in special education who were assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement decreased from 531 students to 441 students.

Concerning the percentages of the total Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements that were assigned to students in special education in the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years, descriptive statistics were again calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As delineated in Table 2.10, the highest percentage of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements assigned to students who were enrolled in special education occurred in the 2015-2016 school year. Although the number of total number of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements assigned to students in special education from the 2012-2013 school year through the 2015-2016 school year consistently decreased, the percent of Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements assigned to students enrolled in special education remained stable across the four school years investigated. The percentages across the four school years varied by about 1%.

Insert Table 2.10 about here

Discussion

In this investigation, the numbers and percentages of students who were enrolled in special education and who were assigned an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, or a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were determined for the 2012-2013 school year through the 2015-2016 school year. Four school years of statewide archival data were analyzed from the Texas Education Agency so that a description could be provided of the number and percentage of students who were enrolled in special education and who were assigned exclusionary discipline consequences. Following the analysis of all four school years of data, trends were identified in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences for students who were enrolled in special education.

Connections to Existing Literature

In this 4-year statewide investigation, findings were congruent with the results established by previous researchers (e.g., Allman & Slate, 2011; Benson & Slate, 2017; Curtiss & Slate, 2014; Sullivan et al., 2014; University of California, Center for Civil Rights Remedies, 2015) regarding the high percentages of exclusionary discipline assignments given to students in special education when compared to the total student population. In this empirical statewide investigation, the numbers and percentages of exclusionary discipline assignments received by students in special education over time

were analyzed. Although previous researchers (e.g., Curtiss & Slate, 2014; Leone et al., 2014; Sullivan et al., 2014) established exclusionary discipline assignments received by students in special education greatly exceeded those assignments received by students who were not in special education, the number of students who received an exclusionary discipline placement consistently decreased across the four school years investigated in this study. Of note herein was that the percentages of students in special education who were assigned exclusionary discipline placements were consistent across the years of school data analyzed.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Based upon the results of this multiyear, Texas statewide investigation, several implications for policy and for practice can be made. First, educational leaders and school administrators are encouraged to examine in depth the degree to which inequities may be present in the assignment of exclusionary discipline assignments received by students in special education on the basis of their specific disability. That is, are inequities present in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences by student disability category? Educational leaders and school administrators should also be mindful of the implications of exclusionary discipline assignments on student success. Are the students who are assigned these exclusionary discipline assignments repeating the non-preferred behavior, resulting in increased exclusion from the classroom? Based upon that information, educational leaders could improve discipline programs and investigate a behavioral curriculum which may allow more individualized behavioral intervention for students in special education.

A third implication is to examine school district Manifestation Determination Review procedures and decision making process. Federal legislation was implemented to ensure students in special education are not excessively excluded from the classroom due to behavior which are a manifestation of their disability. This decision is determined by a committee of educators and the parents or adult student. School district leaders should examine the training, education, and experience of the members of this committee. School leaders should collect data on the number of meetings held and decisions handed down by the committee to be mindful of trends in offense, and length and frequency of disciplinary assignments received by students in special education. Documentation in Individualized Education Plans should be investigated to determine appropriate services and supports are provided.

School leaders should also consider examining the allocation of school staff. Staffing and budget constraints are difficulties that almost every, if not every, school district in Texas likely faces. More school staff should be allocated to assist students in special education within the general education setting. Although students in special education comprise a small percentage of the overall students, they tend to have the most substantial needs.

Recommendations for Further Research

In this study, the number of students in special education who received exclusionary discipline assignments steadily decreased whereas the percentages of the total exclusionary assignments received by students in special education remained stable across the four school years investigated. A recommendation for future research is for researchers to investigate the numbers of exclusionary assignments that were assigned

repeatedly to the same students. The number of students in special education who received an exclusionary discipline assignment decreased, while the number of assignments received by special education students when compared to their non-disabled peers remained stable across four school years.

Based upon the results of this statewide, multiyear investigation, researchers are encouraged to examine the frequency of manifestation determination meetings held in Texas and analyze the outcomes of those meetings. Researchers are also encouraged to analyze the educators who participate in these meetings and the training and education they have earned to make them an essential participant in determining if a student in special education should be excluded from the classroom.

In this study, data were only provided in regard to students in special education in Texas. Additional information could be gathered to include exclusionary discipline assignments received by students in special education in other states. This research could also be extended to include student gender, ethnicity/race, and economic status of Texas students in special education. Researchers are encouraged to investigate the reasons why out-of-school suspensions are assigned more frequently to students in special education than other exclusionary discipline consequences.

Conclusion

In this multiyear analysis, the numbers and percentages of students who were enrolled in special education and who received a discipline consequence during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years were addressed. In each of the school years, the number of students in special education who were assigned any exclusionary discipline assignment steadily decreased. When examining the percentages of the total

exclusionary assignments received by students in special education in the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years, however, the percentages of the total exclusionary assignments given to students in special education remained stable across the four school years. The percentages of the total exclusionary assignments received by students in special education across the four school years never varied more than 1.10%.

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Table 2.1

*Number of Students in Special Education Who Were Assigned to an In-School Suspension
in the 2012-2013 Through the 2015-2016 School Years*

School Year	Assigned to an In-School Suspension	Difference from Previous School Year
2012-2013	76,884	
2013-2014	72,804	-4,080
2014-2015	69,516	-3,288
2015-2016	67,990	-1,526

Table 2.2

Percentage of Total In-School Suspensions Assigned to Students in Special Education in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year

School Year	Total Number of In-School Suspensions	In-School Suspensions of Students in Special Education <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013	1,391,273	(<i>n</i> = 213,468) 15.34%
2013-2014	1,311,901	(<i>n</i> = 199,865) 15.23%
2014-2015	1,221,538	(<i>n</i> = 187,615) 15.35 %
2015-2016	1,157,635	(<i>n</i> = 178,416) 15.41%

Table 2.3

Number of Students in Special Education Who Were Assigned to an Out-of-School

Suspension in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year

School Year	Assigned to an Out-of-School Suspension	Difference from Previous School Year
2012-2013	44,186	
2013-2014	42,255	-1,931
2014-2015	40,782	-1,473
2015-2016	40,662	-120

Table 2.4

Percentage of Total Out-of-School Suspensions Assigned to Students in Special

Education in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year

School Year	Total Number of Out-of-School Suspensions	Out-of-School Suspensions of Students in Special Education <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013	503,151	(<i>n</i> = 99,836) 19.84%
2013-2014	500,840	(<i>n</i> = 97,590) 19.49%
2014-2015	475,529	(<i>n</i> = 91,954) 19.34%
2015-2016	443,288	(<i>n</i> = 90,921) 20.51%

Table 2.5

Number of Students in Special Education Who Were Assigned an Expulsion in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year

School Year	Assigned an Expulsion	Difference from Previous School Year
2012-2013	791	
2013-2014	719	-72
2014-2015	703	-16
2015-2016	625	-78

Table 2.6

Percentage of Total Expulsions Assigned to Students in Special Education in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year

School Year	Total Number of Expulsions	Expulsions Assigned to Students in Special Education <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013	4,805	(<i>n</i> = 842) 17.52%
2013-2014	4,190	(<i>n</i> = 742) 17.71%
2014-2015	4,098	(<i>n</i> = 732) 17.86%
2015-2016	4,029	(<i>n</i> = 654) 16.23%

Table 2.7

*Number of Students in Special Education Who Were Assigned to a Disciplinary
Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the
2015-2016 School Year*

School Year	Assigned to a DAEP Placement	Difference from Previous School Year
2012-2013	14,182	
2013-2014	13,046	-1,136
2014-2015	12,552	-494
2015-2016	12,091	-461

Table 2.8

Percentage of Total Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placements Assigned to Students in Special Education in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year

School Year	Total Number of DAEP Placements	DAEP to Students in Special Education <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013	102,640	(<i>n</i> = 18,538) 18.06%
2013-2014	97,732	(<i>n</i> = 17,089) 17.49%
2014-2015	93,798	(<i>n</i> = 16,041) 17.10%
2015-2016	90,181	(<i>n</i> = 15,289) 16.95%

Table 2.9

Number of Students in Special Education Who Were Assigned to a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year

School Year	Assigned to a JJAEP Placement	Difference from Previous School Year
2012-2013	509	
2013-2014	493	-16
2014-2015	465	-28
2015-2016	425	-40

Table 2.10

*Percentage of Total Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program Placements**Assigned to Students in Special Education in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year*

School Year	Total Number of JJAEP Placements	JJAEP Placements of Students in Special Education <i>n</i> and %age of Total
2012-2013	2,916	(<i>n</i> = 531) 18.21%
2013-2014	2,779	(<i>n</i> = 502) 18.06%
2014-2015	2,640	(<i>n</i> = 483) 18.30%
2015-2016	2,571	(<i>n</i> = 441) 17.15%

CHAPTER III

EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE ASSIGNMENTS AND THE READING ACHIEVEMENT OF GRADES 3 THROUGH 8 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: A TEXAS STATEWIDE, MULTIYEAR INVESTIGATION

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

Abstract

In this investigation, the academic performance of students in special education who received between 1 to 30 days, between 31-60, and more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and had STAAR Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory, STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory, STAAR Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory, and STAAR Reading Level III: Advanced standard during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years were determined. In each of these four school years, the percentage of students in special education who received Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and had Unsatisfactory Standard performance on the STAAR Reading exam consistently increased for all grades except for Grade 4. The percentage of students who had Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance on the STAAR Reading exam consistently decreased for all grades except for Grade 4. The percentages of students who had Satisfactory and Advanced Standard performance remained consistent across the four school years, never varying more than 7%. Recommendations for research and implications are discussed along with suggestions for policy and practice.

Keywords: Special education, Discipline Alternative Education Program Placement, Reading achievement, Grade 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, School Years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016.

EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE ASSIGNMENTS AND THE READING
ACHIEVEMENT OF GRADES 3 THROUGH 8 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: A
TEXAS STATEWIDE, MULTIYEAR INVESTIGATION

Students who receive special education services constitute 12% of the student enrollment in public schools in the United States (Diament, 2014). Of the students who were enrolled in special education during the 2011-2012 school year, they accounted for 25% of all the students who were enrolled in public schools and who were arrested and referred to law enforcement. Also documented by Diament (2014) was that students who were enrolled in special education represented 75% of the students who were physically restrained and 58% of the students who were placed in seclusion. Students who were enrolled in special education were twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension than their peers who were not enrolled in special education.

Lewis (2015) provided data regarding the suspension of students who were enrolled in special education during the 2011-2012 school year. More than 5% of elementary students in the United States who were enrolled in special education were suspended, more than double the overall suspension rate. More than 18% of secondary students who were enrolled in special education were suspended, compared to 10% of secondary school students. Students with emotional disorders were suspended at a high rate in the 2011-2012 school year. One-third of students with emotional disorders were suspended at least once during the school year. These numbers are concerning because as Lewis (2015) reported, one suspension can make students enrolled in special education three times more likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system and twice as likely to drop out of school than their peers who are not in special education.

Exclusionary discipline consequences can have severe and long-term implications for students with disabilities. Students enrolled in special education may demonstrate inappropriate classroom behaviors, that make learning more difficult for them than for their typically developing peers. The frustration caused by inadequate academic skills can result in exclusionary discipline assignments. Exclusion from instruction and lack of exposure to typically developing peers will influence the academic achievement and functional skills of students enrolled in special education.

With respect to the state of interest for this article, Texas, Allman and Slate (2012) analyzed the effect of exclusionary discipline assignments on the academic achievement of students with disabilities. In their investigation, they examined the reading test scores of Grade 9 students with disabilities in Texas. Specifically, they compared scores on the Texas state-mandated assessments for students with disabilities who had been assigned an exclusionary discipline assignment with the test scores of their counterparts with disabilities who had not been assigned exclusionary discipline assignments in the 2008-2009 school year. In their analyses, they established the presence of statistically significant differences in the reading test scores between students with disabilities who were assigned to an in-school suspension, to an out-of-school suspension, or to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and their counterparts in special education who had not been assigned such a consequence. Allman and Slate (2012) analyzed the effect of each disciplinary consequence separately on reading achievement. Students with disabilities who received an in-school suspension had an average reading score that was 37 points lower than their counterparts who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Students with disabilities who were assigned to

an out-of-school suspension had an average reading score that was almost 61 points lower than their counterparts with disabilities who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Students with disabilities who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had an average reading score that was 71 points lower than their counterparts with disabilities who were not assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. In their investigation, Allman and Slate (2012) documented that students with disabilities who were assigned exclusionary discipline consequences had statistically significantly lower average reading test scores than their peers who were not assigned exclusionary discipline assignments.

In a similar study, Allman and Slate (2013) analyzed the relationship of exclusionary discipline assignments on reading performance by student disability category. In their investigation, they compared reading test scores on the Texas state-mandated assessment for students who had a Learning Disability, Other Health Impairment, or Emotional Disturbance. They specifically compared the reading performance of these three groups of students in special education as a function of whether or not they had been assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence. In regard to the influence of exclusionary discipline assignments on reading achievement, students who had a Learning Disability and who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average reading score that was almost 39 points lower than their counterparts with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Students who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average reading score that was almost 23 points lower than their counterparts with an Emotional Disturbance who were not assigned to an in-school

suspension. Students who were Other Health Impaired and who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average reading score that was almost 38 points lower than their counterparts who were Other Health Impaired and who were not assigned to an in-school suspension.

With respect to out-of-school suspension and reading achievement, students with a Learning Disability who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average reading score that was 65 points lower than their counterparts with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Students who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average reading score that was almost 49 points lower than their counterparts who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Students who were Other Health Impaired and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average reading score that was almost 58 points lower than their counterparts who were Other Health Impaired and who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension.

Finally, concerning assignment to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and reading achievement, students who had a Learning Disability and who received this consequence had an average reading score that was 74 points lower than their counterparts with a Learning Disability and who were not assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Students who were Emotionally Disturbed and was assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had an average reading score almost 49 points lower than their counterparts who had an Emotional Disturbance who were not assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Students who were Other Health Impaired and who were assigned

Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had an average reading score 78 points lower than their counterparts who were Other Health Impaired and who were not assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement.

In their Texas statewide analysis, Allman and Slate (2013) established that students regardless of their specific disability who received an exclusionary discipline consequences had statistically significantly lower reading scores than their peers who were not assigned an exclusionary discipline consequence. As such, they determined the presence of a clear relationship between exclusionary discipline consequence assignment and reading test performance of students in special education. Of note for this article is that Allman and Slate (2013) did not examine the duration of exclusionary assignments and the influence of extended periods of exclusion from the classroom on the academic achievement of students with disabilities.

In an examination of discipline consequence assignment and reading achievement for students in special education, Benson and Slate (2018) analyzed data on Grade 9 White, Black, and Hispanic students with a Learning Disability in the 2008-2009 school year. In their investigation, Benson and Slate (2018) examined the reading test scores for these three groups of Grade 9 students with a Learning Disability based on whether or not they had been assigned to either an in-school suspension or to an out-of-school suspension. In their statistical analyses, White, Black, and Hispanic students who were assigned to an in-school suspension had statistically significantly lower reading test scores than their counterparts who had not been assigned to an in-school suspension. White students with a Learning Disability who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average reading test score that was 40 points lower than White students with a

Learning Disability who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Hispanic students who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average reading test score that was almost 36 points lower than Hispanic students with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Black students with a Learning Disability who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average reading test score that was 22 points lower than Black students with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an in-school suspension.

When examining the effects of out-of-school suspension, Benson and Slate (2018) documented that White, Hispanic, and Black students with a Learning Disability and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had lower achievement scores in reading when compared to their counterparts with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Specifically, White students with a Learning Disability who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average reading score that was 64 points lower than White students with a Learning Disability and who were not assigned to out-of-school suspension. Hispanic students who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average reading test score that was almost 63 points lower than Hispanic students with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Black students with a Learning Disability who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average reading test score that was 51 points lower than Black students with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Benson and Slate (2018) established that in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension were clearly related to the reading achievement of Grade 9 students with Learning Disability.

In an article directly related to the research questions in this study, Arcia (2006) examined the influence of suspension on reading achievement. Arcia (2006) analyzed data on reading for over three school years and by the number of suspensions received by students. The number of suspensions were grouped by 1 to 10 days, 11-20 days, and 21 or more days of suspension over three years. Students who had not been suspended gained 198 points. In comparison, students who had been suspended in 1 of the 3 years gained 176 points, students who had been suspended in 2 of the 3 years gained 168 points, and students who had been suspended in all three years gained only 159 points in their reading test scores. Of note in the Arcia (2006) investigation was that Grade 6 students who had been suspended 21 or more school days had almost the same reading ability as Grade 4 students who had never been suspended. Based on the results on his investigation, Arcia (2006) concluded that student suspension was negatively related to student reading. As student suspensions increased, reading achievement decreased. Accordingly, Arcia (2006) clearly established the presence of a relationship between reading achievement and suspension.

Statement of the Problem

Students who are enrolled in special education are less likely to acquire academic and functional skills at the same rate as their peers who are not disabled. Students who were enrolled in special education are more likely to receive exclusionary discipline assignments than their peers without disabilities (Sullivan et al., 2014). Students who are enrolled in special education typically struggle both academically and functionally. Exclusion from the classroom will only decrease their exposure to typically developing peers and make academic tasks even more difficult. Allman and Slate (2012) provided

evidence that exclusionary discipline assignments are clearly related to the reading academic achievement of students enrolled in special education. Updated and extended research is needed to investigate the effect of exclusionary discipline assignments on the reading achievement of students enrolled in special education.

In this article, student reading achievement was student reading test scores on the current Texas state-mandated assessment. The Texas Education Agency (2017b) defined The State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) is a state readiness program that was implemented by Texas Education Agency in the 2011-2012 school year. This assessment was designed to measure the extent to which students have learned and are able to apply knowledge and skills defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. For this investigation, the level of academic performance is categorized by four levels that describe student performance. On the STAAR exam, Level I Unsatisfactory Academic Performance refers to the label given to students who are inadequately prepared and who are unlikely to succeed in the next grade level. Level II Satisfactory Academic Performance refers to the label given to students who are prepared for the next grade level. Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance refers to the label given to students who are prepared for the next grade level, by Phase-In standards. The Phase-In Standard is 1.0 standard deviations below the Level II Recommended Performance standard reported to be established in the 2021-2022 school year (Texas Education Agency, 2015). STAAR Level III Advanced Academic Performance refers to the label given to students who are well-prepared for the next grade level and who have a high likelihood of success with little intervention (Texas Education Agency, 2016, chapter 4, p. 26).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the academic performance of students in special education who received between 1 to 30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement on their STAAR Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory, STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory, STAAR Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory, and STAAR Reading Level III: Advanced standard. A second purpose of this study was to determine the STAAR Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory, STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory, STAAR Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory, and STAAR Reading Level III: Advanced performance of students in special education who received between 31 and 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. The final purpose of this study was to ascertain the performance of students in special education who received more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement on their STAAR Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory, STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory, STAAR Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory, and STAAR Reading Level III: Advanced Standard. The reading achievement of students enrolled in special education was analyzed separately for Grades 3 through 8 and analyzed separately for the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years.

Significance of the Study

Research providing current information in regard to the influence of exclusionary discipline practices on the reading achievement of students enrolled in special education is sparse. Very few empirical research investigations are in the extant literature in which exclusionary discipline assignments and their relationships to the reading achievement of students in special education are addressed. Current evidence on the influence of

exclusionary discipline assignments on the reading performance of students enrolled in special education is needed, particularly for the State of Texas. In the current study, the relationship of exclusionary discipline assignments and the reading performance of students who were enrolled in special education was examined. The relationship of exclusionary discipline assignments and reading achievement over time was addressed. Trends established concerning discipline assignments and reading achievement from the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years was determined.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory Standard performance and received between 1 to 30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (b) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory Standard performance and received between 31 to 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (c) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory Standard performance and received more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (d) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory Standard performance and received between 1 to 30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (e) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory Standard performance and received between 31 to 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (f) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR

Reading Level II: Satisfactory Standard performance and received more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (g) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance and received between 1 to 30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (h) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance and received between 31 to 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; and (i) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance and received more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (j) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Reading Level III: Advanced Standard performance and received between 1 to 30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (k) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Reading Level III: Advanced Standard performance and received between 31 to 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; and (l) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Reading Level III: Advanced Standard performance and received more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement? These research questions were repeated for students in Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 and for the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years.

Method

Research Design

In this investigation, a descriptive approach (Creswell, 2009) were used to answer the previously discussed research questions. In that approach, the relationship of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement on the reading achievement scores of students enrolled in special education during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years were calculated. When using a descriptive approach, large amounts of data can be analyzed. The outcomes of these analyses are descriptive information in which the available data are summarized.

Limitations are clearly present in a descriptive research design (Creswell, 2009). The data that were analyzed can only be described and cannot be used to establish any relationships or any cause-and-effect relationships (Creswell, 2009). Although the information provided in a descriptive research design can be easily interpreted, generalizations are limited.

Participants

Participants in this study were Texas students between Grade 3 and Grade 8 who were enrolled in special education and who attended any Texas public school or a school who reported disciplinary information to the Texas Education Agency during the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years.

Instrumentation and Procedures

For this investigation, the data that were analyzed were accessed from the Texas Education Agency discipline reports, Annual State Summary, which can be located on the Texas Education Agency website. The data provided through the URL,

https://rptsrv1.tea.texas.gov/adhocrpt/Disciplinary_Data_Products/Download_State_Summaries.html are available to the public. Disciplinary data were provided from the Annual State Summary for the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years.

In this study, the reading achievement scores of students enrolled in special education and the receipt of a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement was analyzed and compared. The Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process provided by Texas Education Agency (2016b) defined special education in Texas to be a student between the ages of 3 and 21 who has met the criteria established for one or more of the 13 eligibility categories defined by the state of Texas. The student must have a disability and as a result of that disability, the student must demonstrate a need for specialized services and supports in order to benefit from education (Texas Education Agency, 2016b).

The discipline consequence assignment of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement was analyzed separately for students in Grades 3 through 8. Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement is the third method of disciplinary action. Students are removed from the regular classroom and placed in an alternative classroom setting for an extended period of time, not to exceed 45 school days. Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement may be located on or off campus, but students are educated away from the regular classroom (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

The STAAR is a state-mandated assessment in which student ability to apply knowledge and skills defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills in Grades 3 through 12 is measured (Texas Education Agency, Glossary of Acronyms, 2017b, p. 10).

On the STAAR exam, Level I Unsatisfactory Academic Performance label is given to students who are not adequately prepared and who are not likely to be prepared for the next grade level. These students would likely require extensive academic interventions. Level II Satisfactory Academic Performance is the label given to students who are prepared for the next grade level and who may require very little or no academic intervention. Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance refers to the label given to students who are prepared for the next grade level, by Phase-In standards. The Phase-In Standard is 1.0 standard deviations below the Level II Recommended Performance standard reported to be established in the 2021-2022 school year (Texas Education Agency, 2015). Level III Advanced Performance is the label given to students who are well-prepared for the next grade level and who have a high likelihood of success with little or no academic intervention (Texas Education Agency, 2016a, Chapter 4, p. 26).

Results

To address the research questions regarding Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who had STAAR Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory Standard performance and received between 1 to 30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement in the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years, descriptive statistics were calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As revealed in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, the percentage of students in special education who were assigned 1 to 30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and who had Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance on STAAR increased from the 2012-2013

school year to the 2015-2016 school year for all grade levels investigated except for Grade 4.

 Insert Tables 3.1 and 3.2 about here

With respect to Grade 3 students, as delineated in Table 3.1, 49% and 60% of them who had received 1-30 days had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. For students who had received between 31-60 days, 50%, 53%, 59%, and 72% of them had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. Of the Grade 3 students who received more than 60 days, 38% and 69% of them had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 3 students who had Level I Unsatisfactory performance ranged from 48% to 60% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 20% to 72% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 38% to 69% for students who were assigned for more than 60 days.

Concerning Grade 4 students, as revealed in Table 3.1, 58%, 64%, and 58% of them who received between 1-30 days had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. Regarding Grade 4 students who received between 31-60 days, 60%, 81%, and 69% of them had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. Of the Grade 4 students who received more than 60 days, 71% and 55%, respectively, of them who received more than 60 days had an

Unsatisfactory Standard performance in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. The percentage of Grade 4 students who had a Level I Unsatisfactory performance ranged from 58% to 63% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 57% to 81% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 55% to 71% for students who were assigned for more than 60 days.

In regard to Grade 5 students, as represented in Table 3.1, 59%, 50%, and 65% of them who had between 1-30 days had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2015 school years, respectively. Of the Grade 5 students who received between 31-60 days, 65% and 56% of them had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years, respectively. Concerning Grade 5 students who had received more than 60 days, 65%, 71%, 65%, and 74% had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 5 students who had a Level I Unsatisfactory performance ranged from 56% to 65% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 62% to 69% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 65% to 74% for students who were assigned for more than 60 days.

Concerning Grade 6 students, as delineated in Table 3.2, 61%, 56%, 57%, and 65% of them who had received between 1-30 days had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. For the 2013-2014 school year, 67% of Grade 6 students who received between 31-60 days had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance. Of the students who had received more than 60 days, 71%, 67%, 71%, and 74% of them had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and

2015-2016 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 6 students who had a Level I Unsatisfactory performance ranged from 56% to 65% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 65% to 69% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 67% to 74% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

With respect to Grade 7 students who were enrolled in special education, as delineated in Table 3.2, 53%, 60%, 58%, and 61% of them who had between 1-30 days had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. For Grade 7 students who received more than 60 days, 63%, 72%, 67%, and 71% of them had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 7 students who had a Level I Unsatisfactory performance ranged from 53% to 61% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 58% to 67% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 63% to 72% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

Concerning Grade 8 students who received between 1-30 days, as revealed in Table 3.2, 41%, 44%, 51%, and 44% of them had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. Of the Grade 8 students who received more than 60 days, 51%, 54%, 58%, and 60% of them had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 8 students who had a Level I Unsatisfactory performance ranged from 41% to 51% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 48% to 56% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 51% to 60% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

A trend was clearly established with respect to the number of students enrolled in special education who had Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory Standard performance on STAAR and who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Students. The percentage of students in Grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 who received 1-30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement who had Unsatisfactory Standard Performance on the STAAR Reading exam increased from the 2012-2013 to the 2015-2016 school year.

To address the research questions regarding Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who had a STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory Standard performance and received between 1 to 30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement in the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years, descriptive statistics were calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As revealed in Tables 3.3 and 3.4, data concerning student performance during the 2015-2016 school year were only provided for Grade 7.

 Insert Tables 3.3 and 3.4 about here

In regard to Grade 3 students who were enrolled in special education and had a Satisfactory Standard performance on the STAAR Reading exam in the 2012-2013 school year, as presented in Table 3.3, 16% of students who received between 1-30 days had a Satisfactory Standard performance. Regarding Grade 3 students who received between 1-30 days, 18% and 14% of them had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the

2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, respectively. No data were available for the 2015-2016 school year. Concerning Grade 3 students who received between 31-60 days, 20% and 13% of them had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 3 students who had a Level II Satisfactory performance ranged from 14% to 16% for students who were assigned 1-30 days placement from 2012-2013 through 2014-2015 school year. The percentage of Grade 3 students who received 31-60 days and had a Satisfactory Standard performance decreased from 20% in the 2012-2013 school year to 13% in the 2013-2014 school year.

With respect to Grade 4 students who were enrolled in special education and had a Satisfactory Standard performance on the STAAR Reading exam, as delineated in Table 3.3, 12% of students who received between 1-30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 school year. For the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, 10% and 12%, respectively, of students who received between 1-30 days had a Satisfactory Standard performance. Concerning Grade 4 students who received between 31-60 days, 15% of them had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 school year. The performance of students who received more than 60 days from the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years was not available.

Concerning Grade 5 students who were enrolled in special education and who had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 school year, as presented in Table 3.3, Grade 5 students who received between 1-30 days had 14% who had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2013-2014 school year and in the 2014-2015 school year.

Data were not available for the 2015-2016 school year. The percentage of Grade 5 students who had a Level II Satisfactory performance ranged from 12% to 14% for students who were assigned 1-30 days from 2012-2013 through 2014-2015 school year.

For Grade 5 students who received between 31-60 days, 5% of them had a Satisfactory Standard performance. Grade 5 students who received between 31-60 days demonstrated higher performance with 12% and 9%, respectively, of them having a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 school years. The percentage of Grade 5 students who received 31-60 days and who had a Satisfactory Standard performance ranged from 5% in 2012-2013 to 12% in the 2013-2014 school year. The performance of students who received more than 60 days from the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years was not available.

In regard to Grade 6 students who were enrolled in special education and had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 school year, as reflected in Table 3.4, 8% of students who received between more than 60 days had a Satisfactory Standard performance. Regarding Grade 6 students who received between 1-30 days, 11%, 11%, and 12% of them had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 school years, respectively. Data were not available for the 2015-2016 school year. For the 2013-2014 school year, 7% of Grade 6 students who received between 31-60 days had a Satisfactory Standard performance. During the 2014-2015 school year, 6% of Grade 6 students who received more than 60 days had a Satisfactory Standard performance. The percentage of Grade 6 students who had a Level II Satisfactory performance ranged from 11% to 12% for students who were assigned 1-30 days. The percentage of Grade 6 students who received 31-60 days who had a

Satisfactory Standard performance ranged from 10% to 8%. The percentage of Grade 6 students who had a Level II Satisfactory performance ranged from 6% to 8% for students who were assigned more than 60 days from 2012-2013 through 2014-2015 school year.

For Grade 7 students who were enrolled in special education and had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 school year, as delineated in Table 3.4, 12%, 10%, 10%, and 14% of them who received between 1-30 days had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. Of the Grade 7 students who received more than 60 days, 7%, 6%, 9%, and 9% of them had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 7 students who had a Level I Satisfactory performance ranged from 10% to 14% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 8% to 11% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 6% to 9% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

With respect to Grade 8 students who were enrolled in special education and had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 school year, as represented in Table 3.4, 18%, 18%, and 14% of them who received between 1-30 days had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 school years, respectively. Data were not available for the 2015-2016 school year. Concerning students Grade 8 students who received more than 60 days, 14%, 14%, and 10% of them had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 school years, respectively. Data were not available for the 2015-2016 school year. The percentage of Grade 8 students who had Level II Satisfactory performance ranged from 14% to 18% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 11% to 15% for students

who were assigned between 31-60 days; and from 10% to 14% for students who were assigned more than 60 days. The percentage of students in special education who were assigned 1 to 30 days and who had a STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory Performance increased for Grades 5 and 6. Student percentages decreased in Grades 3 and 8.

To address the research questions regarding Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who had a STAAR Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance and received between 1 to 30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement in the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years, descriptive statistics were calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As revealed in Tables 3.5 and 3.6, the percentage of students in special education who were assigned 1 to 30 days and had a Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance on STAAR decreased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016 school year for all grade levels investigated except for Grade 4 and 8.

 Insert Tables 3.5 and 3.6 about here

In regard to Grade 3 students who were enrolled in special education, as revealed in Table 3.5, 51% and 40% of them who received 1-30 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. For Grade 3 students who received between 31-60 days, 50%, 47%, 41%, and 28% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. 2012-2013 school years. Concerning Grade 3 students who received more than 60 days,

62% and 41% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 3 students who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory performance ranged from 40% to 52% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 28% to 47% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 41% to 62% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

With respect to Grade 4 students who were enrolled in special education and who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance, as revealed in Table 3.5, 42% and 36% of them who received between 1-30 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, respectively. Concerning Grade 4 students who received between 31-60 days, 40%, 19%, and 39% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. For students who received more than 60 days, 29%, 45%, and 43% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 4 students who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory performance ranged from 36% to 42% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 19% to 43% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 29% to 43% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

In regard to Grade 5 students who were enrolled in special education, as presented in Table 3.5, 44%, 41%, 50%, and 42% of them who had between 1-30 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. For Grade 5 students who received between 31-60 days, 35% and 31% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard in the 2012-2013 and 2015-2016 school years, respectively.

Concerning Grade 5 students who received more than 60 days, 35%, 29%, and 35% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 5 students who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory performance ranged from 41% to 50% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 31% to 38% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 29% to 35% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

For Grade 6 students who were enrolled in special education and had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 school year, as delineated in Table 3.6, 29% of students who received between 31-60 and more than 60 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance. Concerning Grade 6 students who received between 1-30 days, 39%, 44%, 43%, and 35% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school year, respectively.

For the 2013-2014 school year, 33% of Grade 5 students who received between 31-60 and more than 60 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance. Concerning Grade 6 students who received more than 60 days, 29% and 26% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. In the last school year examined, 26% of Grade 6 students who received more than 60 days during the 2015-2016 school year had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance. The percentage of Grade 6 students who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory performance ranged from 35% to 44% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 31% to 35% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 26% to 33% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

In regard to Grade 7 students who were enrolled in special education and had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance on the STAAR Reading exam in the 2012-2013 school year, as revealed in Table 3.6, 37% of students who received between 31-60 and more than 60 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance. Of the Grade 7 students who received between 1-30 days, 47%, 40%, 42%, and 39% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the four school years, respectively.

For the 2013-2014 school year, 28% of Grade 7 students who received between 31-60 days and more than 60 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance. Concerning Grade 7 students who received more than 60 days, 33% and 29% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. In the last school year examined, 29% of Grade 7 students who received more than 60 days during the 2015-2016 school year had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance. The percentage of Grade 7 students ranged from 39% to 47% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 30% to 42% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 29% to 37% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

In regard to Grade 8 students who were enrolled in special education and had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 school year, as delineated in Table 3.6, 59%, 56%, 49%, and 56% of them who received between 1-30 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. For Grade 8 students who received between 31-60 days, 49% and 46% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years, respectively.

Regarding Grade 8 students who received more than 60 days, 49%, 46%, 42%, and 40% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 8 students who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory performance ranged from 49% to 59% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 44% to 52% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 40% to 49% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

The percentage of students in special education who were assigned 1 to 30 days who had a Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance decreased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016 school year for all grade levels except for Grade 4. The percentage of students in special education who were assigned 1 to 30 days varied from a 2 percentage point decrease for students in Grade 5 to a 12 percentage point decrease for students in Grade 3.

With respect to the research questions on Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who had a STAAR Reading Level III: Advanced Performance and received between 1 to 30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days during the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years, descriptive statistics were calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As revealed in Tables 3.7 and 3.8, data for students who had Advanced Standard performance were limited.

Insert Tables 3.7 and 3.8 about here

In regard to Grade 3 students who were enrolled in special education and had a Level III: Advanced Standard performance o, as represented in Table 3.7, 5%, 5%, 4%, and 6% of students who received between 1-30 days had an Advanced Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 3 students ranged from 5% to 6% for students who were assigned 1-30 days. Concerning Grade 4 students who were enrolled in special education and had a Level III: Advanced Standard performance, as reflected in Table 3.7, 4%, 7%, 5%, and 5% of students who received between 1-30 days had an Advanced Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 4 students ranged from 4% to 5% for students who were assigned 1-30 days.

For Grade 5 students who were enrolled in special education and had Level III: Advanced Standard performance, as delineated in Table 3.7, 4%, 4%, 5%, and 3% of students who received between 1-30 days had an Advanced Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. . The percentage of Grade 5 students ranged from 4% to 6% for students who were assigned 1-30 days.

With respect to Grade 6 students who were enrolled in special education and, as revealed in Table 3.8, 4% and 3% of them who received between 1-30 days had had a Level III: Advanced Standard performance in the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 school

years, respectively. Concerning Grade 6 students who received between 31-60 days, 2%, 1%, 2%, and 3% of them had an Advanced Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. For Grade 6 students who received more than 60 days, only 2% of them had an Advanced Standard performance in the last school year. The percentage of Grade 6 students ranged from 2% to 4% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 1% to 2% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and 2% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

In regard to Grade 7 students who were enrolled in special education, as delineated in Table 3.8, 3%, 3%, 4%, and 4% of them who received between 1-30 days had a Level III: Advanced Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. Concerning Grade 7 students who received between 31-60 days, 2%, 2%, 2%, and 3% of them had a Level III: Advanced Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. For Grade 7 students who received more than 60 days, 2%, 2%, and 3% of them had a Level III: Advanced Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 7 students ranged from 3% to 4% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 2% to 3% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 2% to 3% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

For Grade 8 students who were enrolled in special education, as revealed in Table 3.8, 5%, 5%, 5%, and 4% of them who received between 1-30 days had a Level III: Advanced Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. Regarding Grade 8 students who received between 31-60 days, 4%, 3%, 4%, and 4% of them had a Level III: Advanced Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. Concerning

Grade 8 students who received more than 60 days, 4%, 5%, 3%, and 3% of them had a Level III: Advanced Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 8 students ranged from 4% to 5% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 3% to 4% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 2% to 5% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

The percentage of students in special education who were assigned 1 to 30 days who had a Reading Level III: Advanced Performance on STAAR increased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016 school year for Grades 3, 4, 5, and 7. A decrease in the percentage of students in Grades 6 and 8 was observed. The percentage of students who received between 1-30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days who had a Reading Level III: Advanced Performance on STAAR increased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016, however, the percentages varied by less than 2% across all grade levels.

Discussion

In this investigation, the percentage of students who were enrolled in special education and who were assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement between 1-30 days, between 31-60, and more than 60 days and had a STAAR Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory, STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory, STAAR Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory, and STAAR Reading Level III: Advanced Standard. Student placement during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years were addressed. Four school years of statewide archival data were had and analyzed from the Texas Education Agency so that a description could be provided of the relationship of reading performance to the duration of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement

over time. In this study, the percentage of students who were in special education, received Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, and had a passing standard on the STAAR Reading exam has decreased over time. Following the analysis of all four school years of data, trends were identified in the assignment of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and student reading achievement for students who were enrolled in special education. The longer the duration of placement, the lower the student performance in reading. Students who were placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement between 1-30 days had a highest level of reading performance than their peers who received 31-60 or more than 60 days in almost every grade level across the four years examined.

Connections to Existing Literature

In this 4-year statewide investigation, results were congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Allman & Slate, 2012, 2013; Benson & Slate, 2017; Arcia, 2006) regarding the influence of exclusionary discipline consequences on student reading achievement. In this empirical statewide investigation, the assignment of a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and student reading achievement for students who were enrolled in special education were analyzed. Previous researchers (e.g., Allman & Slate, 2012, 2013; Benson & Slate, 2017; Arcia, 2006) have documented that the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences negatively influences the reading achievement of students in special education. In this investigation, the highest percentage of students enrolled in special education had Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance on STAAR across all four school years and all 8 grade levels examined when compared to Reading Level II: Satisfactory Performance, Reading Level II: Phase-

In Satisfactory Performance, and Reading Level III: Advanced Performance. Less consistency was discovered when examining the variations between the student percentage increase or decrease over the four school years investigated.

When examining the percentage of students in special education who were assigned between 1-30 days , between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and who had Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance, their percentages increased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016 school year for students in Grades 3 through 8, except for Grade 4 students who received between 1-30 days and for Grade 4 students who received more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. As such, the percentage of students in special education who received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and who were unlikely to succeed in the next grade level increased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016 school year for students in Grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Based upon the results of the multi-year, Texas statewide investigation, several implications for policy and for practice can be made. First, state level educational leaders could be encouraged to examine and implement performance standards that are consistent and easily interpreted by parents and educators. These educational leaders should consider the influence of standardized assessments on students in special education, their teachers, and families. Educational leaders and school administrators should also be aware that exclusionary discipline assignments have a negative effect on student academic performance. Moreover, the degree to which exclusionary discipline

assignments result in students not repeating the non-preferred behavior is not known.

That is, do students who are assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence continue to exhibit the non-preferred behavior? A clear need exists for educational leaders to evaluate the efficacy of their current discipline programs. Results of such evaluative efforts could be used to improve existing discipline programs or to generate discipline programs that are effective.

Finally, educational leaders should also consider examining the allocation of staff. Staffing and budget constraints are difficulties every school district in Texas likely face. School leaders should consider allocating more staff to assist students in special education within the general education setting. Students in special education comprise a small percentage of the overall students, but have the substantial needs.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the results of this multiyear, statewide investigation, several recommendations for research are possible. First, because data on boys and girls were combined in this article, researchers are encouraged to analyze the research questions that were answered in this article, separately for boys and for girls. Whether results determined for all students hold true for boys and for girls separately is not known. Second, given the relationship of economic status to student academic performance in general, the extent to which the economic status of students in special education is related to both their assignment to exclusionary discipline consequences and to their reading achievement needs to be addressed.

A third recommendation would be to extend this study to students in other grade levels. Data on students in grades other than Grades 3 through 8 warrant analysis. The

degree to which findings based on students in Grades 3 through 8 might generalize to students in other grade levels is not known. A fourth recommendation would be to extend this study in which the emphasis was placed solely on reading to other academic subject areas, such as mathematics. Whether the findings delineated in this article based on reading would be generalizable to mathematics is unknown. A final recommendation would be to analyze data on students in special education in other states. Readers should keep in mind that the data analyzed in this article were only on students in special education in the State of Texas.

Conclusion

In this study, the percentage of students who were in special education who received between 1-30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days of a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and who had Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance on the STAAR Reading exam increased over time across almost all grade levels investigated. Regarding the STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory performance and Level III: Advanced Performance, trends could not be established due to missing data. The percentage of students did not vary more than 7 percentage points on the STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory performance and did not vary more than 1 percentage point on the STAAR Reading Level III: Advanced Performance. Concerning the percentage of student who were in special education who received between 1-30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory performance on the STAAR Reading test, a trend was present. The percentage of students in Grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory performance

on the STAAR Reading exam decreased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016 school year. As such, the percentage of students who were in special education and received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and had a passing standard on the STAAR Reading assessment has decreased over time.

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Table 3.1

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance on the STAAR Reading Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 3			
2012-2013	48%	50%	38%
2013-2014	57%	53%	69%
2014-2015	49%	59%	57%
2015-2016	60%	72%	N/A
Grade 4			
2012-2013	63%	60%	71%
2013-2014	58%	57%	55%
2014-2015	64%	81%	65%
2015-2016	58%	69%	65%
Grade 5			
2012-2013	56%	65%	65%
2013-2014	59%	66%	71%
2014-2015	50%	62%	65%
2015-2016	65%	69%	74%

Table 3.2

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance on the STAAR Reading Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 6			
2012-2013	61%	65%	71%
2013-2014	56%	67%	67%
2014-2015	57%	69%	71%
2015-2016	65%	69%	74%
Grade 7			
2012-2013	53%	58%	63%
2013-2014	60%	67%	72%
2014-2015	58%	63%	67%
2015-2016	61%	70%	71%
Grade 8			
2012-2013	41%	48%	51%
2013-2014	44%	50%	54%
2014-2015	51%	56%	58%
2015-2016	44%	50%	60%

Table 3.3

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Reading Level II: Satisfactory Performance on the STAAR Reading Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 3			
2012-2013	16%	20%	N/A
2013-2014	18%	13%	N/A
2014-2015	14%	N/A	N/A
2015-2016	No Data Available	No Data Available	No Data Available
Grade 4			
2012-2013	12%	15%	0%
2013-2014	10%	N/A	N/A
2014-2015	12%	N/A	N/A
2015-2016	No Data Available	No Data Available	No Data Available
Grade 5			
2012-2013	12%	5%	N/A
2013-2014	14%	12%	N/A
2014-2015	14%	9%	N/A
2015-2016	No Data Available	No Data Available	No Data Available

Table 3.4

Percentage of students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Reading Level II: Satisfactory Performance on the STAAR Reading Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 6			
2012-2013	11%	10%	8%
2013-2014	11%	7%	10%
2014-2015	12%	8%	6%
2015-2016	No Data Available	No Data Available	No Data Available
Grade 7			
2012-2013	12%	11%	7%
2013-2014	10%	8%	6%
2014-2015	10%	9%	9%
2015-2016	14%	10%	9%
Grade 8			
2012-2013	18%	15%	14%
2013-2014	18%	14%	14%
2014-2015	14%	11%	10%
2015-2016	No Data Available	No Data Available	No Data Available

Table 3.5

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance on the STAAR Reading Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 3			
2012-2013	52%	50%	62%
2013-2014	43%	47%	41%
2014-2015	51%	41%	43%
2015-2016	40%	28%	N/A
Grade 4			
2012-2013	37%	40%	29%
2013-2014	42%	43%	45%
2014-2015	36%	19%	35%
2015-2016	41%	39%	43%
Grade 5			
2012-2013	44%	35%	35%
2013-2014	41%	34%	29%
2014-2015	50%	38%	35%
2015-2016	42%	31%	35%

Table 3.6

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance on the STAAR Reading Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 6			
2012-2013	39%	35%	29%
2013-2014	44%	33%	33%
2014-2015	43%	31%	29%
2015-2016	35%	31%	26%
Grade 7			
2012-2013	47%	42%	37%
2013-2014	40%	33%	28%
2014-2015	42%	37%	33%
2015-2016	39%	30%	29%
Grade 8			
2012-2013	59%	52%	49%
2013-2014	56%	50%	46%
2014-2015	49%	44%	42%
2015-2016	56%	50%	40%

Table 3.7

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Reading Level III: Advanced Performance on the STAAR Reading Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 3			
2012-2013	5%	N/A	N/A
2013-2014	5%	0%	0%
2014-2015	4%	N/A	N/A
2015-2016	6%	N/A	0%
Grade 4			
2012-2013	4%	7%	0%
2013-2014	5%	N/A	N/A
2014-2015	5%	0%	N/A
2015-2016	5%	N/A	N/A
Grade 5			
2012-2013	4%	N/A	N/A
2013-2014	4%	N/A	0%
2014-2015	5%	N/A	N/A
2015-2016	6%	3%	N/A

Table 3.8

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Reading Level III: Advanced Performance on the STAAR Reading Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 6			
2012-2013	4%	2%	N/A
2013-2014	2%	1%	2%
2014-2015	3%	2%	N/A
2015-2016	3%	2%	2%
Grade 7			
2012-2013	3%	2%	2%
2013-2014	3%	2%	2%
2014-2015	4%	2%	3%
2015-2016	4%	3%	3%
Grade 8			
2012-2013	5%	4%	5%
2013-2014	5%	3%	3%
2014-2015	4%	4%	3%
2015-2016	4%	3%	2%

CHAPTER IV

DISCIPLINE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM PLACEMENT AND THE MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT OF GRADES 3 THROUGH 8 STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION OVER TIME: A TEXAS STATEWIDE ANALYSIS

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

Abstract

In this investigation, the mathematics performance of Grades 3 through 8 students who were enrolled in special education and who were assigned to a Discipline Alternate Education Program placement was addressed. Four years of Texas statewide data were analyzed by the number of days (i.e., 1-30 days, 31-60 days, and more than 60 days) students in special education received this discipline consequence. Across all four school years and for all six grade levels, mathematics performance decreased as students spent more days in this discipline consequence. Implications of these findings are discussed, along with recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Special education, Discipline Alternative Education Program Placement, Mathematics achievement, Grade 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, School Years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016.

DISCIPLINE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM PLACEMENT AND THE
MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT OF GRADES 3 THROUGH 8 STUDENTS IN
SPECIAL EDUCATION OVER TIME: A TEXAS STATEWIDE ANALYSIS

Students with disabilities were more than twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension than were their counterparts who did not have a disability (National Council on Disability, 2015). For instance, in the 2011-2012 school year, students who were enrolled in special education represented a quarter of school-related arrests. Moreover, only 61% of students in special education graduated high school, a much lower rate than the 80% graduation rate of their peers without a disability. As exclusionary discipline assignments increased, graduation rates decreased. The National Council on Disability (2015) reported that in the 2009-2010 school year, 13% of students who were enrolled in special education in the United States were assigned an out-of-school suspension, almost double the percentage of students who were not enrolled in special education and who were assigned an out-of-school suspension.

Federal legislation was established to protect students enrolled in special education from lengthy exclusionary discipline assignments. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was reauthorized in 1997 providing school districts with the ability to exclude students with disabilities from the classroom as a discipline consequence for up to 10 days without requiring a meeting to review and possibly revise the student's individual education plan. According to the National Council on Disability (2015), included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is the statement that school districts should "provide an education that is specially designed to meet a student's unique needs supported by services that will permit him or her to benefit

instruction” (p. 17). The National Council on Disability (2015) argued allowing students to be excluded from the regular classroom setting for up to 10 days is a failure to provide students with a free and appropriate public education. During the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1997, Senator Edward Kennedy stated, “Discipline should never be used as an excuse to exclude or segregate students with disabilities because of failure to design behavioral management plans, or the failure to provide support services and staff training” (National Council on Disability, 2015, p. 18). Following the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, students enrolled in special education continued to receive exclusionary discipline assignments.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was established to ensure students with disabilities receive the same educational opportunities as their non-disabled peers. This federal legislation was implemented to ensure students enrolled in special education have opportunities within the classroom along-side their non-disabled peers. Exclusion from the classroom due to discipline assignments would make it difficult for students enrolled in special education to perform academically (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004).

In a recent analysis of the relationship of discipline consequence assignment and academic achievement for students in special education, Benson and Slate (2018) examined data on Grade 9 White, Black, and Hispanic students with a Learning Disability in the 2008-2009 school year. In their investigation, Benson and Slate (2018) analyzed the mathematics test scores for these three groups of Grade 9 students with a Learning Disability based on whether or not they had been assigned to an in-school suspension or to an out-of-school suspension. White, Black, and Hispanic students with a

Learning Disability who were assigned to an in-school suspension had statistically significantly lower mathematics test scores than their counterparts with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. In particular, White students who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 77 points lower than White students who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Hispanic students who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 49 points lower than Hispanic students who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Black students who were assigned in-school suspension had an average mathematics score almost 36 points lower than their counterparts who were assigned in-school suspension.

When examining the effects of out-of-school suspension, Benson and Slate (2018) established that White, Black, and Hispanic students who had a Learning Disability and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had statistically significantly lower average mathematics test scores than White, Black, and Hispanic students who had a Learning Disability and who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Specifically, White students who had a Learning Disability and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 107 points lower than White students with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Hispanic students who had a Learning Disability and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was almost 88 points lower than Hispanic students with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Finally, Black students with a Learning Disability who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 81

points lower than Black students with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. As such, Benson and Slate (2018) determined that the mathematics achievement of Grade 9 students with a Learning Disability was influenced by the receipt of in-school suspension and by the receipt of out-of-school suspension.

In a similar study, Allman and Slate (2012) investigated the relationship of exclusionary discipline assignments on the mathematics achievement of Grade 9 students with disabilities. The discipline consequences they focused on were in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Allman and Slate (2012) analyzed the effect of each disciplinary consequence separately on student mathematics achievement. Students with disabilities who received an in-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was almost 60 points lower than their counterparts who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Students with disabilities who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was almost 100 points lower than their counterparts with disabilities who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Finally, students with disabilities who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had an average mathematics score that was almost 118 points lower than their counterparts with disabilities who were not assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. As such, clear evidence was present that students with a disability and who were assigned to an in-school suspension, to an out-of-school suspension, or to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had statistically significantly lower mathematics performance than their counterparts with a disability who was not assigned any of these three discipline consequences.

In a follow up study, Allman and Slate (2013) investigated the relationship of three discipline consequences (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement) with the mathematics achievement of Texas Grade 9 students who qualified as having a Learning Disability, Emotional Disorder, or Other Health Impairment. When examining the effect of exclusionary discipline assignments on students enrolled in special education as a function of disability type, Allman and Slate (2013) established that all three groups of students with a disability had statistically significantly lower mathematics test performance than their peers with disabilities who were not assigned to any of these discipline consequences.

In regard to the influence of exclusionary discipline assignments on mathematics achievement, students who had a Learning Disability and who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 59 points lower than their counterparts with a Learning Disability and who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Students who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 52 points lower than their counterparts who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Students who were Other Health Impaired and who were assigned to an in-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was 62 points lower than their counterparts with an Other Health Impairment who were not assigned to an in-school suspension.

Concerning out-of-school suspension and mathematics achievement, students who had a Learning Disability and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an

average mathematics score that was almost 98 points lower than their counterparts with a Learning Disability who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Students who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was almost 105 points lower than their counterparts who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were not assigned out-of-school suspension. Students who were Other Health Impaired and were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was almost 100 points lower than their counterparts who were Other Health Impaired and who were not assigned to an out-of-school suspension.

In regard to Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and mathematics achievement, students who were Learning Disabled and were assigned to an out-of-school suspension had an average mathematics score that was almost 117 points lower than their counterparts with a Learning Disability and who were not assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Students who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had an average mathematics score that was 103 points lower than their counterparts who were Emotionally Disturbed and who were not assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. Students who were Other Health Impaired and were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had an average mathematics score that was 132 points lower than their counterparts who were Other Health Impaired and who were not assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. In their statewide analysis, Allman and Slate (2013)

established that exclusionary discipline assignments were clearly related to the mathematics achievement of students with disabilities.

Statement of the Problem:

Students who are enrolled in special education are less likely to acquire academic and functional skills at the same rate as their peers who are not enrolled in special education. Students who were enrolled in special education are more likely to receive exclusionary discipline assignments than their peers without disabilities (Sullivan et al. 2014). Exclusion from the classroom will only decrease their exposure to typically developing peers and make academic tasks even more difficult. Allman and Slate (2012) provided evidence that exclusionary discipline assignments are clearly related to the mathematics achievement of students enrolled in special education. In a follow up study, Allman and Slate (2013) established that Grade 9 students who had a Learning Disability, Emotional Disturbance, or Other Health Impairment had statistically significantly lower mathematics test scores when they were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence than their counterparts who were not assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence. Given the recent changes in the Texas state-mandated assessments, current information is needed to determine the effect of exclusionary discipline assignments on the mathematics achievement of students enrolled in special education. Such information would be useful to determine the extent to which progress has been made in using alternatives to exclusionary discipline and decreasing the effect of exclusionary discipline assignments on the mathematics achievement of students enrolled in special education.

Student mathematics performance in this article was defined as their mathematics test scores on the current Texas state-mandated assessment. The Texas Education Agency (2017b) defined The State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) as a state readiness program implemented by the Texas Education Agency in the 2011-2012 school year. This assessment was designed to measure the extent to which students have learned and are able to apply knowledge and skills defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. For this investigation, the level of academic performance is categorized by three levels that describe student performance. On the STAAR exam, the level of Level I Unsatisfactory Academic Performance is assigned to students who are inadequately prepared and who are unlikely to succeed in the next grade level. Level II Satisfactory Academic Performance refers to the label given to students who are prepared for the next grade level. Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance refers to the label given to students who are prepared for the next grade level, by Phase-In standards. The Phase-In Standard is 1.0 standard deviations below the Level II Recommended Performance standard reported to be established in the 2021-2022 school year (Texas Education Agency, 2015). The label of Level III Advanced Academic Performance is given to students who are well-prepared for the next grade level and who have a high likelihood of success with little intervention (Texas Education Agency, 2016a, Chapter 4, p. 26).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the performance of students in special education who received between 1 to 30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement on their STAAR Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory, STAAR

Mathematics Level II: Satisfactory, STAAR Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory, and STAAR Mathematics Level III: Advanced performance. A second purpose of this study was to ascertain the performance of students in special education who received between 11 and 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement on their STAAR Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory, STAAR Mathematics Level II: Satisfactory, STAAR Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory, and STAAR Mathematics Level III: Advanced performance. The final purpose of this study was to determine the performance of students in special education who received more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement on their STAAR Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory, STAAR Mathematics Level II: Satisfactory, STAAR Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory, and STAAR Mathematics Level III: Advanced standards. The mathematics achievement of students enrolled in special education was analyzed separately for Grades 3 through 8. The influence of exclusionary discipline assignments on the mathematics achievement of students with disabilities was also analyzed separately for the 2005-2006 through 2015-2016 school years.

Significance of the Study

Research providing current information concerning the relationship of exclusionary discipline practices on the mathematics achievement of students enrolled in special education is sparse. Very few empirical research investigations are in the extant literature in which the relationship of exclusionary discipline assignments with the mathematics achievement of students in special education has been addressed. Current evidence on the exclusionary discipline assignments of students enrolled in special education and influence on the mathematics achievement is needed, particularly for the

State of Texas. Exclusionary discipline assignments and how the effect of these assignments varies when considering the duration of exclusionary assignment was investigated. The effect of exclusionary discipline assignments on mathematics achievement over time was examined. Trends concerning discipline assignments and mathematics achievement for the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years were investigated.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory Standard performance and received between 1 to 30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (b) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory Standard performance and received between 31 to 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (c) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory Standard performance and received more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (d) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Mathematics Level II: Satisfactory Standard performance and received between 1 to 30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (e) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Mathematics Level II: Satisfactory Standard performance and received between 31 to 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (f) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Mathematics Level II: Satisfactory Standard performance and received more

than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (g) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance and received between 1 to 30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (h) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance and received between 31 to 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; and (i) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance and received more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (j) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Mathematics Level III: Advanced Standard performance and received between 1 to 30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; (k) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Mathematics Level III: Advanced Standard performance and received between 31 to 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement?; and (l) What is the percentage of students in special education who had STAAR Mathematics Level III: Advanced Standard performance and received more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement? These research questions were repeated for students in Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. These research questions were also repeated for the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years.

Method

Research Design

In this investigation, a descriptive approach (Creswell, 2009) was used to answer the previously discussed research questions. In that approach, the relationship of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement on the mathematics achievement of students enrolled in special education during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years was calculated. When using a descriptive approach, large amounts of data can be analyzed. The outcomes of these analyses are descriptive information in which the available data are summarized.

Limitations are clearly present in a descriptive research design (Creswell, 2009). The data that were analyzed in this article can only be described and cannot be used to establish any relationships or any cause-and-effect relationships (Creswell, 2009). Although the information provided in a descriptive research design can be easily interpreted, generalizations are limited.

Participants

Participants in this study were Texas students in Grades 3 through Grade 8 who were enrolled in special education and who attended a public school in the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years. Data on only students enrolled in special education and who had been assigned to at least one Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement were analyzed in this study.

Instrumentation and Procedures

For this investigation, the data that were analyzed were accessed from the Texas Education Agency discipline reports, Annual State Summary, which can be located on the Texas Education Agency website. The data provided through the URL, https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/adhocrpt/Disciplinary_Data_Products/Download_State_Summaries.html is available to the public. Disciplinary data were provided by the Annual State Summary for the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years. The indicated school years were analyzed separately.

In this study, the mathematics achievement scores of students enrolled in special education and the receipt of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement was analyzed and compared. The Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process provided by the Texas Education Agency (2016b) defined special education in Texas to be a student between the ages of 3 and 21 who has met the criteria established for one or more of the 13 eligibility categories defined by the state of Texas. The student must have a disability and as a result of that disability, the student must demonstrate a need for specialized services and supports in order to benefit from education (Texas Education Agency, 2016b).

The discipline consequence of a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement was analyzed. Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement is the third method of disciplinary action. Students are removed from the regular classroom and placed in an alternative classroom setting for an extended period of time, not to exceed 45 school days. Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement may be

located on or off campus, but students are educated away from the regular classroom (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

The STAAR is a state readiness program designed to measure students' ability to apply knowledge and skills defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills in Grades 3 through 12 (Texas Education Agency, Glossary of Acronyms, 2017b, p. 10). On the STAAR exam, Level I Unsatisfactory Academic Performance label is given to students who are inadequately prepared and who are unlikely to be prepared for the next grade level. These students would likely require extensive academic interventions. The label of Level II Satisfactory Academic Performance is assigned to students who are prepared for the next grade level and who may require very little or no academic intervention. Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance refers to the label given to students who are prepared for the next grade level, by Phase-In standards. The Phase-In Standard is 1.0 standard deviations below the Level II Recommended Performance standard reported to be established in the 2021-2022 school year (Texas Education Agency, 2015). Level III Advanced Performance is the label given to students who are well-prepared for the next grade level and who have a high likelihood of success with little or no academic intervention (Texas Education Agency, 2016a, chapter 4, p.26). The discipline consequence assignments of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement was analyzed separately for students in Grades 3 through 8. The mathematics achievement of students enrolled in special education during the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years was analyzed separately by their Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement.

Results

To address the research questions regarding Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who had a STAAR Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory Standard performance and who received between 1 to 30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement in the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years, descriptive statistics were calculated from the Excel files that were downloaded from the Texas Education Agency website. As revealed in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, the percentage of students in special education who were assigned 1 to 30 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement who had a STAAR Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance increased for students in Grades 3, 6, and 8, but decreased for students in Grades 4 and 5 in the 2012-2013 school year.

Insert Tables 4.1 and 4.2 about here

In regard to Grade 3 students who were enrolled in special education and had received between 1-30 days, as presented in Table 4.1, 65%, 49%, and 60% of them had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school year, respectively. Concerning students who had received between 31-60 days, 76%, 79%, 75%, and 68% of them had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school year, respectively. For Grade 3 students who received more than 60 days, 57% of them had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 school year. The percentage of Grade 3 students ranged

from 49% to 65% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; and from 68% to 79% for students who were assigned 31-60 days.

For Grade 4 students, as delineated in Table 4.1, 72%, 67%, 66%, and 63% of students who received between 1-30 days in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively, had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance. Concerning Grade 4 students who received between 31-60 days, 54% and 82%, of them, respectively in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance. Regarding students who had received more than 60 days, 72% and 79% of them, respectively, had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years. The percentage of Grade 4 students ranged from 63% to 70% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 68% to 82% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 73% to 79% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

With respect to Grade 5 students, as presented in Table 4.1, 65%, 56%, 58%, and 57% of them who received between 1-30 days had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. Concerning Grade 5 students who received between 31-60 days, 68% and 70%, respectively, had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 school year, respectively. For Grade 5 students who received more than 60 days, 77% and 71% of them had an Unsatisfactory Standard performance in the 2013-2014 and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 5 students who had a Level I Unsatisfactory performance ranged from 56% to 65% for students who

were assigned 1-30 days; from 68% to 71% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 67% to 71% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

Concerning Grade 6 students, as delineated in Table 4.2, the percentage of Grade 6 students who had a Level I Unsatisfactory performance ranged from 57% to 62% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 66% to 68% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 68% to 78% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days. With respect to Grade 7 students, as delineated in Table 4.2, the percentage of them who had a Level I Unsatisfactory performance ranged from 63% to 70% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 67% to 77% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 70% to 83% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days. Regarding Grade 8 students, as presented in Table 4.2, the percentage of Grade 8 students who had a Level I Unsatisfactory performance ranged from 41% to 51% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 48% to 56% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 51% to 60% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

A trend was clearly established with respect to the number of students enrolled in special education who had a Level I: Unsatisfactory Standard performance on the STAAR Mathematics exam. The percentage of students in Grades 3 through 8 who received more than 60 days in Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and who had Unsatisfactory Standard Performance on the STAAR Mathematics exam increased from the 2012-2013 to the 2015-2016 school year.

Next, the research questions regarding Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who had a STAAR Mathematics Level II: Satisfactory Standard performance and who received between 1 to 30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than

60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement were addressed.

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 contain the descriptive statistics for these research questions.

 Insert Tables 4.3 and 4.4 about here

As revealed in Table 4.3, 11%, 10%, and 13% of Grade 3 students who received between 1-30 days had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 school years, respectively. For Grade 3 students who received between 31-60 days, only 9% of them had a Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 school year. The performance of students who received more than 60 days for the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years and for students who received 31-60 days in the 2013-2014 and 2015-2016 school years was not available.

With respect to Grade 4 students, as delineated in Table 4.3, low percentages, ranging from 7% to 11%, of them who received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had a Satisfactory Standard performance. Similar to Grade 4 students, as presented in Table 4.3, low percentages, ranging from 0% to 10%, of Grade 5 students who received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had a Satisfactory Standard performance. As revealed in Table 4.3, the percentages of Grade 6 students who received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and who had a Satisfactory Standard performance ranged from 3% to 9%. For Grade 7 students, as delineated in Table 4.4, the percentage of them who had a Level I Satisfactory performance ranged from 10% to 14% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 8% to 11% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 6% to 9% for students

who were assigned to more than 60 days. Concerning Grade 8 students, as presented in Table 4.4, the percentage of them who had a Level II Satisfactory performance ranged from 9% to 10% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 7% to 8% for students who received between 31-60 days; and from 4% to 6% for students who were assigned more than 60 days.

Next, the research questions regarding Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who had a STAAR Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance and who received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement were addressed. As revealed in Tables 4.5 and 4.6, the percentage of students in special education who were assigned 1 to 30 days and had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance on the STAAR Mathematics exam decreased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016 school year for all grade levels except for Grade 4 and 5. No change was present for Grade 7.

Insert Tables 4.5 and 4.6 about here

In regard to Grade 3 students, as presented in Table 4.5, 41%, 35%, 51%, and 40% of the students who received between 1-30 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. Concerning Grade 3 students who received between 31-60 days, 21%, 25%, and 32% of Grade 3 students who received between 31-60 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. A very low percentage, 3%, of students who received more

than 60 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 school year. The percentage of Grade 3 students who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory performance ranged from 35% to 51% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 11% to 32% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and 3% for students who received more than 60 days.

With respect to Grade 4 students, as delineated in Table 4.5, 30%, 33%, 34%, and 37% of them who received between 1-30 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. Concerning Grade 4 students who received between 31-60 days, 28%, 26%, and 18% of them had students had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015 school years, respectively. Regarding students who had more than 60 days, 28% and 21% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 4 students who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory performance ranged from 30% to 37% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 18% to 32% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 21% to 28% for students who were assigned more than 60 days.

Concerning Grade 5 students, as presented in Table 4.5, 35%, 44%, 42%, and 43% of them who received between 1-30 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. For the students who received between 31-60 days, 32% and 30% of them who received between 31-60 days had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 school years, respectively. Regarding Grade 5 students who received more than 60 days, 23% and 29% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2013-2014 and

2015-2016 school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 5 students who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory performance ranged from 35% to 44% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 29% to 32% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 29% to 39% for students who were assigned more than 60 days.

With respect to Grade 6 students, as revealed in Table 4.6, 39%, 43%, 40%, and 38% of them who received between 1-30 days had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years, respectively. For students who received more than 60 days, 32%, 27%, 22%, and 25% of them had a Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance in the four school years, respectively. The percentage of Grade 6 students who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory performance ranged from 38% to 43% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 32% to 34% for students who were assigned 31-60 days; and from 22% to 32% for students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

Concerning Grade 7 students who were enrolled in special education and who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance on the STAAR Mathematics exam, the percentages ranged from 30% to 37% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 30% to 42% for students who were assigned 31-60 days from 27%-33%; and from 17% to 30% for Grade 7 students who were assigned to more than 60 days. These percentages are contained in Table 4.6. With respect to Grade 8 students who were enrolled in special education and who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance on the STAAR Mathematics exam, their percentages ranged from 38% to 50% for students who were assigned 1-30 days; from 32% to 44% for students who were

assigned 31-60 days; and from 21% to 46% for Grade 8 students who were assigned to more than 60 days.

The percentage of students in special education who were assigned more than 60 days and who had Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance decreased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016 school year for all grade levels. The percentage of students in special education who were assigned 1 to 30 days varied from a 9 percentage point decrease for students in Grade 8 to an 8 percentage point increase for students in Grade 5. The percentage of students in special education who were assigned 31-60 days varied from a 10 percentage point decrease for students in Grade 8 to a 21 percentage point increase for students in Grade 3.

Next, the research questions on Grade 3 through 8 students enrolled in special education who had a STAAR Mathematics Level III: Advanced Performance and received between 1 to 30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days during the 2012-2013 through the 2015-2016 school years were addressed. As revealed in Tables 4.7 and 4.8, data provided for students who had Advanced Standard performance is limited.

 Insert Tables 4.7 and 4.8 about here

With respect to Grade 3 students who were enrolled in special education and who had a Level III: Advanced Standard performance on the STAAR Mathematics exam, the percentages of students who received between 1-30 days and who had an Advanced Satisfactory Standard performance were low, ranging from 2% to 5%. Concerning Grade

4 students who were enrolled in special education and who had a Level III: Advanced Standard performance, no students who received more than 60 days had an Advanced Satisfactory Standard performance. In contrast, 10% of students who received between 31-60 days had a Level III: Advanced Standard Performance. The percentage of Grade 4 students who were assigned between 1-30 days and who had a Level III: Advanced Standard Performance ranged from 3% to 4%.

Regarding Grade 5 students who were enrolled in special education, very low percentages of them had a Level III: Advanced Standard performance, with percentages ranging from 3% to 5%. Similar results were present for Grade 6 students who were enrolled in special education, with the percentages of them who had a Level III: Advanced Standard Performance ranging from 1% to 2%. With respect to Grade 7 students, the percentages of them who had a Level III: Advanced Standard Performance were similarly poor, ranging from 1% to 2%. Concerning Grade 8 students, percentages ranged from 0% to 1% for students who had a Level III: Advanced Standard Performance on the STAAR Mathematics exam.

Discussion

In this investigation, the percentage of students who were enrolled in special education and who were assigned a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement between 1-30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days and who had a STAAR Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory, STAAR Mathematics Level II: Satisfactory, STAAR Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory, and STAAR Mathematics Level III: Advanced Standard. Student placement during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years were addressed. Four school years of statewide archival

data were analyzed from the Texas Education Agency. Following the analysis of all four school years of data, trends were identified in the assignment of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and the mathematics performance of students who were enrolled in special education. The longer the duration of placement, the lower the student performance was in mathematics. Students who were placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement between 1-30 days had better mathematics performance than their peers who received 31-60 days or who received more than 60 days in almost every grade level across the four years examined. In the data analyzed, the highest percentage of students had an Unsatisfactory Performance on the STAAR Mathematics exam.

Connections to Existing Literature

In this 4-year statewide investigation, results were congruent with previous researchers (e.g., Allman & Slate, 2012, 2013; Benson & Slate, 2017; Arcia, 2006) regarding the influence of exclusionary discipline consequences on student academic performance. In this empirical statewide investigation, the assignment of a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and the mathematics performance of students who were enrolled in special education were addressed. Previous researchers (e.g., Allman & Slate, 2012, 2013; Benson & Slate, 2017; Arcia, 2006) have documented that the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences negatively influences the achievement of students in special education. In this investigation, the highest percentage of students enrolled in special education had Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance across all four school years and all grade levels, in comparison to the percentage of students who had a Mathematics Level II: Satisfactory Performance,

Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance, and Mathematics Level III: Advanced Performance.

When examining the percentage of students in special education who were assigned between 1-30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and had Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance, the percentage of students increased from the 2012-2013 to the 2015-2016 school year for Grades 3 through 8 students who received more than 60 days of this consequence. The percentage of students who received more than 60 days and had Satisfactory and Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance decreased for all grade levels over the four years investigated except for Grade 8 students who had a Satisfactory Standard performance. As such, the percentage of students in special education who received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement of more than 60 days, and who were unlikely to succeed in the next grade level increased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016 school year for Grades 3 through 8 students. For Grades 7 and 8 students, the percentage of students who had Unsatisfactory Standard performance increased for all students who received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Based upon the results of the multi-year, Texas statewide investigation, several implications for policy and for practice can be made. First, educational leaders and policymakers are encouraged to examine and implement performance standards that are consistent and easily interpreted by parents and educators. These educational leaders should consider the influence of standardized assessments on students in special

education, their teachers, and families. An increase in the performance standard in the 2015-2016 school year without adequate explanations provided to the public yielded a substantial decline in the performance of all students.

Educational leaders and school administrators should also be mindful of the implications of exclusionary discipline assignments on student success. Are the students who are assigned these exclusionary discipline assignments repeating the non-preferred behavior, resulting in increased exclusion from the classroom? Based upon that information, educational leaders could improve discipline programs and investigate a behavioral curriculum which may allow more individualized behavioral intervention for students in special education. District and campus leaders should investigate the instruction, support, and resources provided to students who are placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program.

A third implication is to examine school district Manifestation Determination Review procedures and decision making process. Federal legislation was implemented to ensure students in special education are not excessively excluded from the classroom due to behavior which are a manifestation of their disability. This decision is determined by a committee of educators and the parents or adult student. School district leaders should examine the training, education, and experience of the members of this committee. School leaders should collect data on the number of meetings held and decisions handed down by the committee to be mindful of trends in offense, and length and frequency of disciplinary assignments received by students in special education. Documentation in Individualized Education Plans should be investigated to determine appropriate services and supports are provided.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the results of this multiyear, statewide investigation, several recommendations for future research can be made. First, researchers are encouraged to determine the degree to which the results obtained herein on all students in special education might be generalizable to boys only and to girls only. A second recommendation is to ascertain the extent to which student economic status might be a factor, both in the assignment to a disciplinary consequence and to the academic achievement of students who receive a disciplinary consequence. A third suggestion would be to analyze the degree to which student ethnicity/race might be a factor in student assignment to a disciplinary consequence and to their academic performance.

A fourth recommendation would be to extend this investigation to other grade levels. In this article, data on only students in Grades 3 through 8 were analyzed. Whether the results of this article are generalizable to students in special education in other grade levels is not known. Fifth, researchers are encouraged to extend this investigation to other subject areas such as reading, writing, science, and social studies. A sixth recommendation would be to extend this study to other states. The extent to which the findings from this investigation conducted on Texas students would be generalizable to students in other states is not known.

Conclusion

In this study, the performance of students who were enrolled in special education and who were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement on the Texas state-mandated mathematics assessment was examined for four school years. Using statewide data on Grades 3 through 8 students, the number of days students were

assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement was determined to be related to student mathematics performance. The passing rates of students declined as the number of days assigned went from 1-30, 31-60, and more than 60 days in this discipline consequence.

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Table 4.1

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance on the STAAR Mathematics Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 3			
2012-2013	59%	76%	57%
2013-2014	65%	79%	N/A
2014-2015	49%	75%	N/A
2015-2016	60%	68%	N/A
Grade 4			
2012-2013	70%	72%	72%
2013-2014	67%	74%	73%
2014-2015	66%	82%	79%
2015-2016	63%	68%	79%
Grade 5			
2012-2013	65%	68%	67%
2013-2014	56%	71%	77%
2014-2015	58%	70%	61%
2015-2016	57%	68%	71%

Table 4.2

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance on the STAAR Mathematics Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 6			
2012-2013	61%	67%	68%
2013-2014	57%	66%	73%
2014-2015	60%	68%	78%
2015-2016	62%	66%	75%
Grade 7			
2012-2013	64%	68%	75%
2013-2014	70%	77%	83%
2014-2015	63%	67%	70%
2015-2016	64%	73%	77%
Grade 8			
2012-2013	53%	58%	74%
2013-2014	50%	56%	61%
2014-2015	60%	67%	63%
2015-2016	62%	68%	79%

Table 4.3

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Mathematics Level II: Satisfactory Performance on the STAAR Mathematics Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 3			
2012-2013	11%	9%	N/A
2013-2014	10%	N/A	0%
2014-2015	13%	N/A	N/A
2015-2016	Missing Data	Missing Data	Missing Data
Grade 4			
2012-2013	7%	11%	N/A
2013-2014	11%	10%	N/A
2014-2015	8%	N/A	N/A
2015-2016	Missing Data	Missing Data	Missing Data
Grade 5			
2012-2013	10%	6%	10%
2013-2014	13%	7%	0%
2014-2015	10%	6%	N/A
2015-2016	Missing Data	Missing Data	Missing Data

Table 4.4

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Mathematics Level II: Satisfactory Performance on the STAAR Mathematics Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 6			
2012-2013	8%	5%	3%
2013-2014	8%	5%	5%
2014-2015	8%	6%	3%
2015-2016	Missing Data	Missing Data	Missing Data
Grade 7			
2012-2013	6%	5%	4%
2013-2014	6%	4%	2%
2014-2015	7%	5%	6%
2015-2016	Missing Data	Missing Data	Missing Data
Grade 8			
2012-2013	9%	8%	6%
2013-2014	10%	8%	5%
2014-2015	9%	7%	4%
2015-2016	Missing Data	Missing Data	Missing Data

Table 4.5

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance on the STAAR Mathematics Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 3			
2012-2013	41%	11%	3%
2013-2014	35%	21%	N/A
2014-2015	51%	25%	N/A
2015-2016	40%	32%	N/A
Grade 4			
2012-2013	30%	28%	28%
2013-2014	33%	26%	27%
2014-2015	34%	18%	21%
2015-2016	37%	32%	21%
Grade 5			
2012-2013	35%	32%	33%
2013-2014	44%	29%	23%
2014-2015	42%	30%	39%
2015-2016	43%	32%	29%

Table 4.6

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance on the STAAR Mathematics Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 6			
2012-2013	39%	33%	32%
2013-2014	43%	34%	27%
2014-2015	40%	32%	22%
2015-2016	38%	34%	25%
Grade 7			
2012-2013	36%	32%	25%
2013-2014	30%	23%	17%
2014-2015	37%	33%	30%
2015-2016	36%	27%	23%
Grade 8			
2012-2013	47%	42%	46%
2013-2014	50%	44%	39%
2014-2015	40%	33%	27%
2015-2016	38%	32%	21%

Table 4.7

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Mathematics Level III: Advanced Performance on the STAAR Mathematics Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 3			
2012-2013	3%	N/A	N/A
2013-2014	3%	N/A	0%
2014-2015	2%	N/A	0%
2015-2016	5%	N/A	0%
Grade 4			
2012-2013	3%	10%	0%
2013-2014	3%	N/A	N/A
2014-2015	2%	N/A	0%
2015-2016	4%	N/A	0%
Grade 5			
2012-2013	3%	N/A	N/A
2013-2014	5%	4%	0%
2014-2015	2%	N/A	N/A
2015-2016	3%	3%	N/A

Table 4.8

Percentage of Students in Special Education Assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program Placement in the 2012-2013 School Year Through the 2015-2016 School Year who Had Mathematics Level III: Advanced Performance on the STAAR Mathematics Exam

School Year	1-30 Day Placement in DAEP	31-60 Day Placement in DAEP	More than 60 Days Placement in DAEP
Grade 6			
2012-2013	1%	N/A	1%
2013-2014	2%	1%	N/A
2014-2015	1%	N/A	N/A
2015-2016	2%	1%	N/A
Grade 7			
2012-2013	1%	1%	N/A
2013-2014	1%	1%	N/A
2014-2015	1%	1%	N/A
2015-2016	2%	1%	N/A
Grade 8			
2012-2013	0%	N/A	0%
2013-2014	1%	0%	N/A
2014-2015	1%	0%	N/A
2015-2016	1%	0%	N/A

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In the first article of this journal-ready dissertation, the numbers and percentages of students who were enrolled in special education and who were assigned an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, or a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placement were determined for the 2012-2013 school year through the 2015-2016 school year. Four school years of statewide archival data were had and analyzed from the Texas Education Agency so that a description could be provided of the number and percentage of students who were enrolled in special education and who were assigned exclusionary discipline consequences. Following the analysis of all four school years of data, trends were identified in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences for students who were enrolled in special education.

In the second article of this journal-ready dissertation, the percentage of students who were enrolled in special education and who were assigned Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement between 1-30 days, between 31-60, and more than 60 days and had a STAAR Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory, STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory, STAAR Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory, and STAAR Reading Level III: Advanced Standard. Student placement during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years were addressed. Four school years of statewide archival data were analyzed from the Texas Education Agency so that a description could be provided of the relationship of reading performance to the duration of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement over time. In this study, the percentage of students who were in

special education, who received Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, and who had a passing standard on the STAAR Reading exam has decreased over time. Following the analysis of all four school years of data, trends were identified in the assignment of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and student reading achievement for students who were enrolled in special education. The longer the duration of placement, the lower the student performance in reading. Students who were placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement between 1-30 days had a highest level of reading performance than their peers who received 31-60 or more than 60 days in almost every grade level across the four years examined.

In the third article of this journal-ready dissertation, the percentage of students who were enrolled in special education and who were assigned a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement between 1-30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days and who had a STAAR Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory, STAAR Mathematics Level II: Satisfactory, STAAR Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory, and STAAR Mathematics Level III: Advanced Standard. Student placement during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years were addressed. Four school years of statewide archival data were analyzed from the Texas Education Agency. Following the analysis of all four school years of data, trends were identified in the assignment of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and the mathematics performance of students who were enrolled in special education. The longer the duration of placement, the lower the student performance was in mathematics. Students who were placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement between 1-30 days had better mathematics performance than their peers who received 31-60 days or who received more than 60

days in almost every grade level across the four years examined. In the data analyzed, the highest percentage of students had an Unsatisfactory Performance on the STAAR Mathematics exam.

Connections to Existing Literature

In this 4-year statewide investigation, findings were congruent with the results established by previous researchers (e.g., Allman & Slate, 2011; Benson & Slate, 2017; Curtiss & Slate, 2014; Sullivan et al., 2014; University of California, Center for Civil Rights Remedies, 2015) regarding the high percentages of exclusionary discipline assignments given to students in special education when compared to the total student population. In the first article, the numbers and percentages of exclusionary discipline assignments received by students in special education over time were analyzed.

Although previous researchers (e.g., Curtiss & Slate, 2014; Leone et al., 2014; Sullivan et al., 2014) established exclusionary discipline assignments received by students in special education greatly exceeded those assignments received by students who were not in special education, the number of students who received an exclusionary discipline placement consistently decreased across the four school years investigated in this study. Of note herein was that the percentages of students in special education who were assigned exclusionary discipline placements were consistent across the years of school data analyzed.

In the second article, the highest percentage of students enrolled in special education had Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance on STAAR across all four school years and all 8 grade levels examined when compared to Reading Level II: Satisfactory Performance, Reading Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance, and

Reading Level III: Advanced Performance. Less consistency was discovered when examining the variations between the student percentage increase or decrease over the four school years investigated. When examining the percentage of students in special education who were assigned between 1-30 days , between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and who had Reading Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance, their percentages increased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016 school year for students in Grades 3 through 8, except for Grade 4 students who received between 1-30 days and for Grade 4 students who received more than 60 days in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement. As such, the percentage of students in special education who received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and who were unlikely to succeed in the next grade level increased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016 school year for students in Grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Finally, in the third article, the assignment of a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and the mathematics performance of students who were enrolled in special education were addressed. Previous researchers (e.g., Allman & Slate, 2012, 2013; Benson & Slate, 2017; Arcia, 2006) have documented that the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences negatively influences the achievement of students in special education. In this investigation, the highest percentage of students enrolled in special education had Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance across all four school years and all grade levels, in comparison to the percentage of students who had a Mathematics Level II: Satisfactory Performance, Mathematics Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory Performance, and Mathematics Level III: Advanced Performance.

When examining the percentage of students in special education who were assigned between 1-30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and had Mathematics Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance, the percentage of students increased from the 2012-2013 to the 2015-2016 school year for Grades 3 through 8 students who received more than 60 days of this consequence. The percentage of students who received more than 60 days and had Satisfactory and Phase-In Satisfactory Standard performance decreased for all grade levels over the four years investigated except for Grade 8 students who had a Satisfactory Standard performance. As such, the percentage of students in special education who received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement of more than 60 days, and who were unlikely to succeed in the next grade level increased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016 school year for Grades 3 through 8 students. For Grades 7 and 8 students, the percentage of students who had Unsatisfactory Standard performance increased for all students who received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Based upon the results of this multiyear, Texas statewide investigation, several implications for policy and for practice can be made. First, educational leaders and school administrators are encouraged to examine in depth the degree to which inequities may be present in the assignment of exclusionary discipline assignments received by students in special education on the basis of their specific disability. That is, are inequities present in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences by student disability category? Educational leaders and school administrators should also be

mindful of the implications of exclusionary discipline assignments on student success. Are the students who are assigned these exclusionary discipline assignments repeating the non-preferred behavior, resulting in increased exclusion from the classroom? Based upon that information, educational leaders could improve discipline programs and investigate a behavioral curriculum which may allow more individualized behavioral intervention for students in special education.

Another implication is to examine school district Manifestation Determination Review procedures and decision making process. Federal legislation was implemented to ensure students in special education are not excessively excluded from the classroom due to behavior which are a manifestation of their disability. This decision is determined by a committee of educators and the parents or adult student. School district leaders should examine the training, education, and experience of the members of this committee. School leaders should collect data on the number of meetings held and decisions handed down by the committee to be mindful of trends in offense, and length and frequency of disciplinary assignments received by students in special education. Documentation in Individualized Education Plans should be investigated to determine appropriate services and supports are provided.

School leaders should also consider examining the allocation of school staff. Staffing and budget constraints are difficulties that almost every, if not every, school district in Texas likely faces. More school staff should be allocated to assist students in special education within the general education setting. Although students in special education comprise a small percentage of the overall students, they tend to have the most substantial needs.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this journal-ready dissertation, the number of students in special education who received exclusionary discipline assignments steadily decreased whereas the percentages of the total exclusionary assignments received by students in special education remained stable across the four school years investigated. A recommendation for future research is to investigate the numbers of exclusionary assignments that were assigned repeatedly to the same students. The number of students in special education who received an exclusionary discipline assignment decreased, while the number of assignments received by special education students when compared to their non-disabled peers remained stable across four school years.

Based upon the results of the three articles in this journal-ready dissertation, researchers are encouraged to examine the frequency of manifestation determination meetings held in Texas and analyze the outcomes of those meetings. Researchers are also encouraged to analyze the educators who participate in these meetings and the training and education they have earned to make them an essential participant in determining if a student in special education should be excluded from the classroom.

In this journal-ready dissertation, data were only provided in regard to students in special education in Texas. Additional information could be gathered to include exclusionary discipline assignments received by students in special education in other states. This research could also be extended to include student gender, ethnicity/race, and economic status of Texas students in special education. Researchers are encouraged to investigate the reasons why out-of-school suspensions are assigned more frequently to students in special education than other exclusionary discipline consequences.

Because data on boys and girls were combined in the three articles, researchers are encouraged to analyze the research questions that were answered in each article, separately for boys and for girls. Whether results determined for all students hold true for boys and for girls separately is not known. Given the relationship of economic status to student academic performance in general, the extent to which the economic status of students in special education is related to both their assignment to exclusionary discipline consequences and to their reading achievement needs to be addressed.

Another recommendation would be to extend this study to students in other grade levels. Data on students in grades other than Grades 3 through 8 warrant analysis. The degree to which findings based on students in Grades 3 through 8 might generalize to students in other grade levels is not known. Researchers are encouraged to extend this journal-ready dissertation to other academic areas such as writing, science, and social studies. Whether the findings delineated herein on reading and on mathematics would be generalizable to other content areas is unknown. A final recommendation would be to analyze data on students in special education in other states. Readers should keep in mind that the data analyzed in this article were only on students in special education in the State of Texas.

Conclusion

In the first article, the numbers and percentages of students who were enrolled in special education and who received a discipline consequence during the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years were addressed. In each of the school years, the number of students in special education who were assigned any exclusionary discipline assignment steadily decreased. When examining the percentages of the total

exclusionary assignments received by students in special education in the 2012-2013 through 2015-2016 school years, however, the percentages of the total exclusionary assignments given to students in special education remained stable across the four school years. The percentages of the total exclusionary assignments received by students in special education across the four school years never varied more than 1.10%.

In the second article, the percentage of students who were in special education who received between 1-30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days of a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and who had Level I: Unsatisfactory Performance on the STAAR Reading exam increased over time across almost all grade levels investigated. Regarding the STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory performance and Level III: Advanced Performance, trends could not be established due to missing data. The percentage of students did not vary more than 7 percentage points on the STAAR Reading Level II: Satisfactory performance and did not vary more than 1 percentage point on the STAAR Reading Level III: Advanced Performance. Concerning the percentage of student who were in special education who received between 1-30 days, between 31-60 days, and more than 60 days of Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory performance on the STAAR Reading test, a trend was present. The percentage of students in Grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 who had a Level II: Phase-In Satisfactory performance on the STAAR Reading exam decreased from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2015-2016 school year. As such, the percentage of students who were in special education and received a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement and had a passing standard on the STAAR Reading assessment has decreased over time.

Finally, in the third study, the performance of students who were enrolled in special education and who were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement on the Texas state-mandated mathematics assessment was examined for four school years. Using statewide data on Grades 3 through 8 students, the number of days students were assigned to a Discipline Alternative Education Program placement was determined to be related to student mathematics performance. The passing rates of students declined as the number of days assigned went from 1-30, 31-60, and more than 60 days in this discipline consequence.

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APPENDIX



Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
 1831 University Ave, Suite 303, Huntsville, TX 77341-2448
 Phone: 936.294.4875
 Fax: 936.294.3622
irb@shsu.edu
<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/office-of-research-and-sponsored-programs/compliance/irb/>

DATE: March 4, 2018

TO: Jamie Benson [Faculty Sponsor: Dr. John Slate]

FROM: Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: *A Descriptive Analysis of Disciplinary Consequence Assignments and the Academic Achievement of Texas Grade 3 through 8 Students in Special Education Over Time: A Statewide Analysis [T/D]*

PROTOCOL #: 2018-02-38835

SUBMISSION TYPE: INITIAL REVIEW

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: March 3, 2018

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

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

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

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

It is the PI's responsibility to consult with the IRB whenever questions arise about whether planned changes to an exempt study might make that study nonexempt human subjects research. In this case, please make available sufficient information to the IRB so it can make a correct determination.

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

Sincerely,

Donna Desforjes
 IRB Chair, PHSC

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

VITA

JAMIE HEINTZ BENSON

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

Doctorate of Education – Educational Leadership (August 2018)

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

Dissertation: *A Descriptive Analysis of Disciplinary Consequence Assignments and the Academic Achievement of Texas Grade 3 Through 8 Students in Special Education Over Time: A Statewide Analysis.*

Master of Special Education, December, 2012

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

Bachelor of Business Administration, May, 2009

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2012-Present Educational Diagnostician, Montgomery Independent School District,
Montgomery, TX

2010-2012 Special Education Teacher (Resource and Inclusion), Montgomery Independent School District, Montgomery TX

PROFESSIONAL LICENSES:

Texas Educational Diagnostician

Texas Teaching Certification (Special Education EC-12, Generalist EC-4, Generalist 4-8, and English 8-12)

SCHOLARLY RESEARCH ACTIVITY:

Benson, J. H., & Slate, J. R. (2017). Discipline assignment inequities by the gender and ethnicity/race of Grade 9 students with a Learning Disability. *Global Journal of Human Social Science: G Linguistics & Education*, 17(10), 1-7. Retrieved from https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS_Volume17/1-Discipline-Assignment-Inequities.pdf

PRESENTATIONS:

Benson, J. H., & Slate, J. R. (2017, October 5). *Discipline assignment inequities by the gender and ethnicity/race of Grade 9 students with a Learning Disability*. Paper presented at Texas Council of Professors and Educator Administration, Dallas, TX.