

Student Work

6-1-2013

Behavior Outcomes of Kindergarten Through Third-Grade Students Following an Exclusionary Consequence or an In-School Alternative Consequence for Violent or Aggressive Behavior at School

Amy E. Williams
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork>

 Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Please take our feedback survey at: https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE

Recommended Citation

Williams, Amy E., "Behavior Outcomes of Kindergarten Through Third-Grade Students Following an Exclusionary Consequence or an In-School Alternative Consequence for Violent or Aggressive Behavior at School" (2013). *Student Work*. 3493.

<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork/3493>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Work by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.

Behavior Outcomes of Kindergarten Through Third-Grade Students Following an
Exclusionary Consequence or an In-School Alternative Consequence for Violent or
Aggressive Behavior at School

By

Amy E. Williams

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Educational Administration

Under the Supervision of Dr. John W. Hill

Omaha, Nebraska

June 2013

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Jeanne L. Surface

Dr. Neal F. Grandgenett

Dr. Karen L. Hayes

UMI Number: 3588230

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI 3588230

Published by ProQuest LLC (2013). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

Abstract

BEHAVIOR OUTCOMES OF KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THIRD-GRADE STUDENTS FOLLOWING AN EXCLUSIONARY CONSEQUENCE OR AN IN- SCHOOL ALTERNATIVE CONSEQUENCE FOR VIOLENT OR AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR AT SCHOOL

Amy E. Williams, M.S., Ed.D.

University of Nebraska 2013

Advisor: Dr. John W. Hill

The purpose of this study was to compare the behavior outcomes of kindergarten ($n = 20$), first-grade ($n = 20$), second-grade ($n = 20$), and third-grade ($n = 20$) students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving out-of-school suspensions for violent and/or aggressive behaviors with the behavior outcomes of same school district kindergarten ($n = 20$), first-grade ($n = 20$), second-grade ($n = 20$), and third-grade ($n = 20$) students receiving non-exclusionary, in-school disciplinary alternatives for matched levels of violent and/or aggressive behaviors. The results of this study support the notion that school administrators and district level decision makers should strongly consider utilizing non-exclusionary consequences in response to the violent or aggressive misbehavior of young students. This consideration should be based upon the lack of statistical significance found in all four post-posttest—post-posttest, four to six weeks after administration of the disciplinary alternative, ANCOVA comparisons for kindergarten, first-grade, second-grade, and third-grade students indicating no intra-grade difference in the rate of behavior outcomes change between students who were suspended out-of-school for violent or aggressive behavior and students who were

assigned an in-school alternative consequence in response to their violent or aggressive behavior. Given this observed equipoise, the more aversive out of school alternative, which takes young students away from the very adults who can provide them with instruction and positive emotional support leading to self regulation and more positive replacement behaviors, should be discontinued.

Acknowledgements

I am forever indebted to so many people for their invaluable assistance in the completion of this dissertation and degree. My husband initially planted the seed of this program and my ability to complete it; I have no doubt that without his unwavering confidence in me, I never would have taken the first step. “We need a doctor in the family,” he has said countless times, “and it’s not going to be me.” For what it is worth, I dedicate these chapters to him and the marvelously motivating power of his conviction.

As I began to hole myself up weekly in order to complete my classes and writing, my mother took it upon herself to institute “Grandma Monday”. Once a week, every week, for the past two years, my mother has retrieved, fed, and doted upon our children so that I could work in peace and without “mom guilt”. To the kids it is a fun night away, to me, an invaluable gift. In a similar fashion, my mother-in-law has made herself available to be our on-call childcare provider, meal preparer, kid ferrier, and general family support system. To both of these strong women, who have fostered meaningful and rock-solid relationships with their grandchildren, I am eternally grateful.

While our four children possess varying degrees of non-interest in my scholastic endeavors, I cannot help but to be grateful to them as well. As teenagers and a preteen, the three older ones have conducted themselves in such a fashion that has been far less traumatic than my husband and I could have dared to hope for. The jury is still out on the little one. Lucky for us they are all hilarious and brilliant, and they seem to have inherited preferable traits all around.

I am also in the debt of the superb faculty of the Department of Educational Administration and Supervision at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Not in every

college department is the faculty so supportive in every way. Each member of the faculty has offered his or her encouragement and advice at one time or another over the years. The love of teaching and the pride in the program are evident in every aspect of the department. I feel lucky to have been a part of that environment. Specifically, my dissertation committee chair has talked me back from the edge numerous times throughout this process. If nothing else (and there is so much more), he has kept my blood pressure well within the zone of safety.

I must also thank all of my supportive colleagues at the school district where I work. In the department where I have “lived” for the past seven years, there are many smart, dynamic, hilarious, caring individuals who are dedicated to supporting students and their families in such a way that they can be successful at school. For everything they have offered: the kind words, the true professionalism, and single-handedly preventing the Grinding Halt, as well as for making it a pleasure (more or less) to come to work every day, I say thank you.

And finally, had I not spent the first five years of my career at Wilson Alternative Middle School, it may have been many more years before I wondered why the same student could excel in one setting and fail miserably in another. For better or worse, there is no question that it is because of those students and staff that I have spent the past seven years working to answer that question for myself and others. I hope they have all found someone to believe in them.

Table of Contents

Abstract *ii*

Acknowledgments *iv*

Table of Contents *vi*

List of Tables *xi*

Chapters

1. Introduction *1*

Literature Related to the Study *1*

Adverse effects of school exclusion *2*

Disproportionate application of school exclusion *3*

There is another way *4*

In summary *5*

Purpose of the Study *6*

Research Questions *6*

Data Collection Procedures *14*

Significance of the Study *15*

Contribution to practice *15*

Contribution to policy *15*

Contribution to research *16*

Definition of Terms *16*

Assumptions *19*

Delimitations of the Study *20*

Limitations of the Study *21*

Organization of the Study	22
2. Review of the Literature	23
The Function of Schooling	23
Beyond Behavior: Other Factors Related to Exclusionary Discipline	24
Negative Impact of School Exclusion	27
Negative impact on the student	27
Negative impact on the school environment	28
Damage to relationships	29
Is suspension from school actually punishment?	30
Disproportionate application of exclusionary discipline	32
Exclusion addresses the incident, but does not address the problem	34
Specific Concerns with Early Elementary Exclusion	36
The Most Severe Infractions at School	37
The infractions themselves	37
Violence and aggression in young people	38
Effective School Discipline	40
Children and behavior support	40
Positive relationships	41
Explicit understanding of standards of conduct	43
Ongoing communication of feedback to students	45
Adequate and effective supervision	46
Differentiated support for students	47

Appropriate response to students' violence and aggression	48
Conclusion	50
3. Methodology	52
Purpose of the Study	52
Participants	52
Number of participants	52
Gender of participants	54
Age range of participants	54
Racial and ethnic origins of participants	54
Socio-economic status of participants	54
Inclusion criteria of participants	55
Method of participant identification	55
Description of Procedures	56
Research design	56
Research Questions and Data Analysis	59
Research Question #1	59
Research Question #2	60
Research Question #3	60
Research Question #4	61
Research Question #5	62
Research Question #6	62
Research Question #7	63
Research Question #8	64

Research Question #9	64
Research Question #10	65
Research Question #11	65
Research Question #12	66
Data Collection Procedures	67
Performance site	67
Confidentiality	67
Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects approval category	67
4. Results	69
Purpose of the Study	69
Implementation of the Independent Variable	69
Dependent Measures	70
Results	70
Results for Research Question #1	73
Results for Research Question #2	73
Results for Research Question #3	75
Results for Research Question #4	79
Results for Research Question #5	79
Results for Research Question #6	81
Results for Research Question #7	85
Results for Research Question #8	85
Results for Research Question #9	87

Results for Research Question #10 91

Results for Research Question #11 91

Results for Research Question #12 93

5. Conclusions and Discussion 95

Conclusions 95

Conclusions for Research Question #1 95

Conclusions for Research Question #2 96

Conclusions for Research Question #3 96

Conclusions for Research Question #4 97

Conclusions for Research Question #5 98

Conclusions for Research Question #6 99

Conclusions for Research Question #7 99

Conclusions for Research Question #8 100

Conclusions for Research Question #9 101

Conclusions for Research Question #10 101

Conclusions for Research Question #11 102

Conclusions for Research Question #12 103

Discussion 103

Implications for practice 104

Implications for policy 107

Implications for research 111

References 114

List of Tables

Tables

- Table 1. Demographic Information of Kindergarten Students Receiving Out of School Suspensions for Aggressive or Violent Behavior 71
- Table 2. Demographic Information of Kindergarten Students Receiving In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action for Aggressive or Violent Behavior 72
- Table 3. Dependent t Test Comparison of Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined, Observed One to Three Weeks and Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to Kindergarten Following Out of School Suspension or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action 74
- Table 4. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Total Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined, Observed Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to Kindergarten Following Out of School Suspension or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action 76
- Table 5. Demographic Information of First-Grade Students Receiving Out of School Suspensions for Aggressive or Violent Behavior 77
- Table 6. Demographic Information of First-Grade Students Receiving In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action for Aggressive or Violent Behavior 78
- Table 7. Dependent t Test Comparison of Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined Observed One to Three Weeks and Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to First-Grade Following Out of School Suspension or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action 80

- Table 8. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Total Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined, Observed Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to First-Grade Following Out of School Suspension or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action 82
- Table 9. Demographic Information of Second-Grade Students Receiving Out of School Suspensions for Aggressive or Violent Behavior 83
- Table 10. Demographic Information of Second-Grade Students Receiving In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action for Aggressive or Violent Behavior 84
- Table 11. Dependent *t* Test Comparison of Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined Observed One to Three Weeks and Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to Second-Grade Following Out of School Suspension or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action 86
- Table 12. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Total Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined, Observed Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to Second-Grade Following Out of School Suspension or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action 88
- Table 13. Demographic Information of Third-Grade Students Receiving Out of School Suspensions for Aggressive or Violent Behavior 89
- Table 14. Demographic Information of Third-Grade Students Receiving In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action for Aggressive or Violent Behavior 90

- Table 15. Dependent t Test Comparison of Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined Observed One to Three Weeks and Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to Third-Grade Following Out of School Suspension or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action 92
- Table 16. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Total Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined, Observed Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to Third-Grade Following Out of School Suspension or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action 94

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Literature Related to the Study

In an unprecedented, but likely foreshadowing move, the Oakland (CA) Public Schools and the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) have agreed to implement a long-term plan for change in the district (Shah, 2012). The plan is a direct result of a federal investigation into discipline practices and the resultant finding of racial disparities in the Oakland district. Such racial disparities are not unique to the Oakland school district, but are concerning nonetheless (Shah, 2012).

Every day, thousands of students are suspended or expelled from school. In the United States, 3.3 million students were suspended in 2006 (Fablio et al., 2011). During the 2009-2010 school year in California, over 400,000 students were suspended out-of-school a total of over 750,000 times (Losen, Martinez, & Gillespie, 2012). Fabilio et al. (2011) found that the majority (nearly 60%) of Texas secondary students were assigned an exclusionary consequence at some point in middle or high school.

School exclusions are not however, limited to older students. The Washington Post reported that during the 2010-2011 school year, 6,112 elementary students were suspended or expelled from one of thirteen Washington DC-area school systems (St. George, 2012). Of those Washington DC-area elementary suspensions, 3,009 of the students were in grades kindergarten through third (St. George, 2012). Almost all of those Washington-area systems included kindergarteners in their suspension numbers (St. George, 2012). According to the Massachusetts State Department of Education, more than 2,100 Massachusetts pre-kindergarten through third-grade students were suspended

during 2009-2010, including four-year-old children (Ford, 2012). In New York City, elementary students were suspended 6,119 times during the 2008-2009 school year (Monahan, 2011). Nationally, the youngest public school students, those in state-funded pre-kindergarten programs, are expelled at a rate three times higher than that for students in kindergarten through twelfth-grade (Gilliam, 2008).

Adverse effects of school exclusion. This increase in exclusionary discipline is cause to reexamine practice. Clearly, exclusion from school in the form of suspension and expulsion is used by school officials as a form of punishment, which by definition is the contingent presentation of a stimulus that suppresses behavior (Perone, 2003). Though most of the research is over several decades old (Meindl & Casey, 2012; Perone, 2003), researchers have consistently found that the presentation of an aversive stimulus (punishment) does work to increase individuals' cooperation and compliance (Balliet, Mulder, & Van Lange, 2011; Parke, 1969) and reduce future misbehavior (Baumrind, 1996; Bear, 2012). Alternately explained, punishment is a type of feedback that assists in learning (Balliet et al., 2011). As part of the present discussion, it is relevant to examine whether or not school exclusion does in fact act as a punisher by suppressing undesired behavior.

Overwhelmingly, suspension and expulsion have not been shown to improve student behavior, school climate, or school safety (Gladden, 2002; Michail, 2011; Ryan & Zoldy, 2011; Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008), which might be reason enough to limit the practice. Yet additionally, the use of exclusionary discipline practices has been shown to increase aggression (Bandura, 1962; Berkowitz, 1983), violence (Michail, 2011) and other negative behavior (Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle,

2010) in students. Noguera (2003) described this phenomenon as self-fulfilling, resulting “in a cycle of antisocial behavior that can be difficult to break” (p. 343). Suspension is also correlated with academic failure and disengagement from school (Gladden, 2002; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Michail, 2011; Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010; Skiba & Peterson, 2000), not an unlikely outcome for a consequence that separates students from their instruction. Losen and Skiba (2010) wrote that schools with high numbers of suspensions were found to focus less on their school climates than other schools and were rated lower in terms of academic quality.

Incarceration and/or involvement with juvenile justice are additional correlates to exclusionary school discipline (Nichols, 2004; Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010; Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Students’ legal troubles may be one symptom of a more general disengagement from school and even society as a whole (Hayden, 1994). Michail (2011) argued that school exclusion segregates not only the student, but also his or her family as well as his or her community. This can greatly disrupt a school’s efforts to reach out and build community trust and partnerships.

Disproportionate application of school exclusion. As mentioned above, another frequent criticism of exclusionary discipline is that it is disproportionately applied (Gladden, 2002; Hayden, 1995). In the Oakland school district during the 2009-2010 school year, the OCR found that Black students accounted for almost 64% of students who were suspended from school and 51% of students who were expelled, despite accounting for just 33% of the student body (Shah, 2012). Schools most often suspend students who are academically, socially and economically their neediest clientele (Noguera, 2003). Schools also most often suspend their students who are members of a

minority group (Nichols, 2004; Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Specifically, an extensive body of research documents that Black and Hispanic students are widely disproportionately more likely to receive exclusionary consequences (Chesler, Crowfoot, & Bryant, 1979; Mayer, 1995; Hayden, 1995; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Nichols, 2004; Noguera, 2003; Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997; Winton, 2011). In his work with the Equity Project at Indiana University, Skiba (2008, personal communication) found that minority students did not display more violent or more severely disruptive behavior than White students, but that they were more likely to be suspended for less serious offenses or offenses that depended on the perception of the staff member, such as displaying threatening behavior. Osler, Watling, Busher, Cole, and White (2001) too found that some school staff members believe that ethnic groups are treated differently in regard to discipline, possibly due to misinterpretation of minority student behavior by their White teachers.

Other groups of students are similarly more likely to receive exclusionary discipline. Schools with high percentages of recipients of free or reduced-price lunch are likely to have higher rates of suspension and expulsion than those schools with lower percentages (Michail, 2011). Similarly, the students themselves who qualify for a free or reduced price lunch are more likely to receive such discipline (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010). Over-representation among suspended students was also found in children in foster care (Osler et al., 2001), children receiving special education services (Hayden, 1995), and in males (Hayden, 1995; Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010).

There is another way. While exclusive consequences have not been shown to mete out positive results, schools have employed a number of strategies that do have

positive effects on student behavior and school climate (Frey, Hirschstein, Edstrom, & Snell, 2009; Mattaini, 2001; Mayer, 2002; Omaha Public Schools (OPS), 1999; Smith and Lambert, 2008; Sugai, 2009; Wilson, Lipsey, & Derzon, 2003; Wilson & Lipsey, 2007). Positive behavioral support strategies such as building positive relationships with students, clarifying expectations, and prompting appropriate behavior can prevent a great deal of misbehavior from occurring (Sugai, 2009). Those same strategies can be packaged into interventions for students who have exhibited misbehavior, and can often be used as non-exclusionary alternatives to suspension.

In Summary. The use of suspension and expulsion actively disengages students from school (Michail, 2011). Specifically, the students around whom schools most need to wrap their collective arms; students experiencing poverty, students from minority cultures, students with disabilities, and students with mental illness; are the very students being excluded from their education (Nichols, 2004; Noguera, 2003; Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010). Researchers who study exclusionary school discipline overwhelmingly arrive at similar conclusions: behavior does not improve; climate does not improve; test scores do not improve (Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Michail, 2011; Ryan & Zoldy, 2011; Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008b). Conversely, exclusionary discipline does negatively impact students who are suspended, in part by disengaging them and their families and communities from the learning process (Michail, 2011). Particularly in the case of young school-aged children, sending them home from school seems counter-productive. Thus, is exclusion an appropriate response to violent and/or aggressive behavior in school, and does it promote improved behavior upon students' return? When

students in early primary grades display such behavior, should school officials be sending them home?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to compare the behavior outcomes of kindergarten, first-grade, second-grade, and third-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving out-of-school suspensions for violent and/or aggressive behaviors with the behavior outcomes of same school district kindergarten, first-grade, second-grade, and third-grade students receiving non-exclusionary, in-school disciplinary alternatives for matched levels of violent and/or aggressive behaviors.

Research Questions

The following research questions were utilized to examine student behavior outcomes as measured by a count of disruptive, aggressive and violent behaviors coded into the district student data system during the first three weeks and then the second three weeks following the return to class after either receiving an exclusionary consequence or a non-exclusionary in-school alternative consequence.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question

#1. Do kindergarten students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #1 utilized a dependent t test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question

#2. Do kindergarten students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #2 utilized a dependent t test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Post-Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research

Question #3. Do kindergarten students in a large urban Midwestern school district

returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors compared to kindergarten students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #3 utilized an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to compare the total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed four to six weeks after students returned to kindergarten following either an out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question

#4. Do first-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #4 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive

behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question

#5. Do first-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #5 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Post-Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research

Question #6. Do first-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors compared to first-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week four through week six post-

posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #6 utilized an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to compare the total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed four to six weeks after students returned to first-grade following either an out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question #7. Do second-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #7 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question

#8. Do second-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #8 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Post-Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research

Question #9. Do second-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors compared to second-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #9 utilized an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to compare the total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed four to six weeks after students returned to second-grade following either an out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question #10. Do third-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #10 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question #11. Do third-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive

behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #11 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Post-Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research

Question #12. Do third-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors compared to third-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #12 utilized an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to compare the total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed four to six weeks after students returned to third-grade following either an out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action. An alpha level of .01 to control

for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Data Collection Procedures

All of the student behavior information utilized in this study was archival, routinely collected data from a large, urban Midwestern school district. Two stratified, proportional samples of students were selected for each grade, kindergarten through third-grade. The samples were selected by identifying all 2011-2012 kindergarten through third-grade behavior events including the descriptors *violence, fighting, assault, harassment, threatening, willful damage, or bullying*. Of those behavior events, all but each student's first violent or aggressive offense were eliminated, and the incidents will be separated by grade.

For each grade, the behavior events were divided into groups consisting of either exclusionary or non-exclusionary resolutions. For all behavior incidents, the enrollment and attendance of the student was evaluated for 30 school days following the student's return to school after the incident. Incidents were eliminated if the student left the district or did not attend regularly during that 30 day period. Regular attendance was defined as missing no more than an average of one day per week during the evaluation period.

From each grade level group of exclusionary and non-exclusionary behavior incidents, a stratified, proportional sample was selected in regard to percentages of research district White and non-White students in each grade. The behavior of students in each sample was evaluated for two periods following the return to class after the behavior incident, the first 15 school days and the second 15 school days. For every two days of absence, one day was added to the pertinent evaluation period (the first 15 days

following the return to class or the second 15 days following the return to class). If only one day of absence was accrued, no days were added. If an odd number of days of absence was accrued, then a number of days corresponding to the largest even number of days missed was added.

Significance of the Study

This study adds behavior outcome data to the existing body of research surrounding exclusionary discipline. The specific focus on early elementary students provides insight to educational leaders as they make decisions regarding student discipline.

Contribution to practice. In light of the behavior outcome data presented, this study suggests age-appropriate behavior resolutions for young students. Additionally, outcome data helps to inform day-to-day responses to student misbehavior.

Contribution to policy. Currently, even in the current climate of evidence-based practice, there is a large gap between evidence supported best practice behavior response and current behavior policy. This research supports education officials in closing that gap.

Contribution to research. This study provides behavior outcome data regarding early elementary students who were or were not suspended for serious behavior infractions. At present, most of the research around exclusionary discipline is focused on the middle and high school levels. This study will further clarify the effects of two disciplinary practices: school exclusion and non-exclusionary discipline alternatives.

Definition of Terms

Aggressive behavior. For this study, aggressive behavior is defined as behavior that is intended to confer harm to another individual either physically or emotionally. This includes behavior up to but not including physical harm. Examples may include emotional harassment or bullying, threatening, or maintaining a threatening stance.

Aversive consequence. For this study, an aversive consequence is defined as a contingent stimulus that suppresses behavior (also a punisher) (Perone, 2003).

Behavior incident (Incident). For this study, a behavior incident (or incident) is defined as misbehavior perpetrated by a student at school, which was logged into the student data system by a school official.

Behavior resolution (Resolution). A behavior resolution is defined as the consequence applied by the school official in response to a behavior incident.

Behavioral intervention. A focus on manipulating the environment or teaching new skills in order to render a student's problem behavior ineffective or inefficient in achieving his or her desired outcomes (Dragow, Yell, Bradley, & Shriner, 1999).

Bullying. For this study, bullying is defined as the repeated harassment, either physical or emotional, of an individual perpetrated by another, more powerful individual (Englander, 2012).

Differentiated support. Differentiated support is defined as a school practice of providing a tiered continuum of behavior support, ranging from universal behavior support for all students to very intensive support for the most needy students (Sugai, 2009).

Disruptive behavior. For this study, disruptive behavior is any behavior event that results in a substantial disruption to the learning environment to the extent that the student was referred out of class.

Evaluation period. For this study, an evaluation period is defined as the amount of time during which the behavior of students in each sample was evaluated. The evaluation time was divided into two periods following the return to class after the behavior incident, the first 15 school days and the second 15 school days. For every two days of the student's absence, one day was added to the pertinent evaluation period (the first 15 days following the return to class or the second 15 days following the return to class). If only one day of absence was accrued, no days were added. If an odd number of days of absence were accrued, then a number of days corresponding to the largest even number of days missed was added.

Exclusionary discipline. For this study, exclusionary discipline is defined as the utilization of behavior consequences that require the student to leave the school setting for a determined period of time.

Expulsion. An expulsion is defined as a behavior consequence in which a student is excluded from school for a minimum of the remainder of the current school semester and at maximum, one calendar year.

Harassment. Harassment is defined as any physical or verbal conduct or graphic/written material that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive school environment, substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student's school performance, or otherwise adversely affecting a student's school opportunities (Omaha Public Schools, 2011).

In-school disciplinary alternative. For this study, an in-school disciplinary alternative is a behavior consequence that is implemented within the confines of the school setting. Overwhelmingly, the alternative used with students in this study was assignment to the Positive Action Center. An in-school disciplinary alternative is also referred to as a non-exclusionary consequence.

Negative reinforcement. Negative reinforcement is defined as the process of a behavior triggering the stopping, reducing, or postponing an adverse stimulus, thus increasing the likelihood of that behavior to occur again (Goldstein & Naglini, 2011).

Positive Action Center (PAC). The Positive Action Center is defined as an out-of-classroom school setting, used to help students to learn or relearn skills related to self-regulation of behavior and cool down and for teachers to work one-on-one with students to strengthen positive replacement behaviors.

Positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is defined as a situation where a behavior triggers the addition of a desired stimulus, thus increasing the likelihood that the behavior will be exhibited again (Goldstein & Naglini, 2011).

Punishment. Punishment is defined as the contingent application of a stimulus that represses behavior (Perone, 2003).

Regular attendance. For this study, regular attendance is defined as missing no more than one day per week. Though this is ordinarily considered excessive absence, the one day per week is allowed for study purposes due to the circumstance that students who act out at school also often have poor attendance. A higher standard for attendance would have eliminated an excessive number of students from the study.

Remanded home. Remanded home is a behavior resolution utilized by the research district. It is a consequence in which the student is sent home, often for the remainder of the day, but is not officially suspended from school.

Resolution (Behavior resolution). For this study, a behavior resolution, or resolution, is defined as the consequence applied to a specific incident of misbehavior at school. The administrator selects a behavior resolution from a dropdown menu of options when he or she logs a behavior incident into the student data system.

Resolution length. For this study, resolution length is the duration of the applied behavior resolution.

School climate. For this study, school climate is defined as the character and the quality of the school environment (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009).

Suspension. For this study, suspension is defined as a behavior consequence, involving a period of time during which the student is not allowed to attend school.

School disengagement. School disengagement is defined as an individual student's process of disconnecting from the norms and values of school, which will often lead to misbehavior, truancy, and school failure (Balfanz, Herzog, & Mac Iver, 2007).

Violent behavior. For this study, violent behavior is defined as behavior of a physical nature (i.e. hitting, kicking, biting), that is intended to harm or does harm to another individual or to property.

Assumptions

This study has a number of strong features. The data is drawn from a large school district of nearly 50,000 students and over 16,000, kindergarten through third-grade students. All elementary schools utilized the same data system to log behavior incidents

and other student data. The schools also share a code of conduct, including descriptions of defined misbehavior. School administrators choose from a drop down menu of behavior infractions and resolutions. These factors combine to increase the likelihood that a behavior event will be similarly identified and logged across district elementary schools.

Random sampling procedures were used to create ethnically stratified proportional samples of students. The students represent schools from across the district, which have varying proportions of White and non-White students. However, when combined, the samples will be selected to have matching proportions of White and non-White students to the district as a whole, for each grade level. Because of the established general disproportionality in the application of exclusionary consequences to White and non-White students nationwide, this was determined to be an important distinction.

Delimitations of the Study

This study was delimited to students who were enrolled in kindergarten through the third-grade in one large, urban, Midwestern school district during the 2011-2012 school year. The students included in the study exhibited violent or aggressive behavior at least one time during that school year to an extent that the behavior event was logged into the district student data system along with a resolution, or consequence, for the behavior. The behavior incidents included in the study were limited to each student's first violent or aggressive behavior event of the research school year. School officials throughout the school year recorded all behavior data included in the study in the student data system. If the student did not attend school regularly or if the student left the district

during either of his or her 15-day evaluation periods, that student was not included in the study.

Limitations of the Study

Because of the large number of schools that will be included in the study (there are 64 elementary schools in the research district), the researcher will be unable to determine how behavior resolutions were carried out in all cases. For example, each school had a Positive Action Center or PAC, which was used to help students to learn or relearn skills related to self-regulation of behavior, cool down, and for working one-on-one with teachers to strengthen positive replacement behaviors. It is impossible to know to what extent best practices were used in that endeavor at each individual school or whether individual students were assigned a longer-term schedule of visits to the PAC room to support their behavior. Similarly, it is unknown how each school administrator approached students and families or how rationale was used to explain logic behind discipline resolutions. Nor is it known if there was follow-up intervention put into place each time a student was excluded from school due to misbehavior.

Another limitation encountered was the number of White students in the excluded groups. In the kindergarten and second grade exclusionary groups, the researcher utilized all available White students in the sample. In the case of the kindergarten exclusionary group, only four students were available, so that sample is not quite proportional. Anecdotally, White, excluded students were much more likely than non-White excluded students to transfer schools, spend time in inpatient care, or leave school temporarily to attend a behavior intervention program during the day. Thus, a greater percentage of

White, excluded students than non-White, excluded students were eliminated from the sample pool due to irregular attendance or transfer.

Finally, by selecting samples based only upon the students' first violent or aggressive behavior event for the research year, an attempt was made to limit the impact of a history of such behavior on the administrator's decision regarding the resolution. This aspect of the design was also intended to limit the students' behavioral response to their own previous experiences during the research school year. However, some students in the study may have a history of violent or aggressive behavior from previous school years. This was seen as an acceptable limitation.

Organization of the Study

A review of relevant literature is presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the research design, methodology, and procedures that were used to gather and analyze the data of the study. This includes a detailed synthesis of the participants, a comprehensive list of the dependent variables, dependent measures, and the data analysis that was used to statistically determine if the null hypothesis shall be rejected for each research question. Chapter 4 reports the research results and findings--including data analysis, tables, and descriptive statistics. Chapter 5 provides conclusions and a discussion of the research findings.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

The Function of Schooling

Schools have a dual and sometimes conflicting role to play in regard to student behavior. On the one hand, schools are a key component in the socialization process of young people (Hayden, 1995; Noguera, 2003; O'Connor, Dearing, & Collins, 2011; Skiba & Rausch, 2006; Wager, 1993). Laws worldwide as well as numerous philosophical writings reference the universal human right to education (Ladenson, 2011). The school setting socializes young people to the norms and values of mainstream society (Noguera, 2003). The student receives broad exposure to expected civility, which benefits society as a whole by promoting social order (Noguera, 2003; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Without the opportunity to practice appropriate conduct in the relatively safe context of school, children may not gain social skills that can really only be understood and mastered through experience, instruction, and practice (Wager, 1993). School provides the background knowledge and skills to significantly participate in the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship (Ladenson, 2011). Ideally, the school will provide support for students in understanding what is expected and in practicing behavior appropriate to the context (O'Connor et al., 2011; Sugai, 2009).

On the other hand, schools must provide safe, productive environments for staff and students, and discipline is a fundamental part of the school environment and mission (Michail, 2011). In all schools, particularly in schools composed of a wide variety of cultures, a baseline of shared values and expectations must be established in order for the school to function both as an academic institution and a socialization mechanism (Wager,

1993). Educators must effectively address misbehavior, particularly that which involves aggression or violence, in order to maintain a safe and productive environment (Michail, 2011).

Herein lies a conflict: school officials tend to use exclusionary discipline as a consequence for students who are not displaying appropriate behavior. Among other rationales, ensuring a safe environment is often cited as one reason for doing so. Yet, are positive outcomes likely when the misbehaving student is banished from the ordered environment of the school? There is evidence that school officials were discussing this challenge as early as the turn of the last century (Haynes, 2005). At minimum, a school building is a structured environment employing a number of educated and well-behaved adults who can act as mentors and models of appropriate behavior. Is that not the ideal setting for a young person who has engaged in inappropriate behavior? What better environment than that of a school to promote pro-social behavior patterns in a young person?

Beyond Behavior: Other Factors Related to Exclusionary Discipline

The use of exclusionary discipline practices is almost certainly on the rise (Gladden, 2002; Hayden, 1995; Michail, 2011; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). True rates of exclusion are rather difficult to discern, especially between different districts, states, or countries. This is due to inconsistent and unregulated record-keeping (Skiba & Rausch, 2006), which may actually be masking numbers of exclusions (Osler et al., 2001), but is in all certainty muddying the water. Individual notion on the part of the school official to exclude may or may not be increasing, but other factors are currently impacting rising suspension and expulsion rates.

One such factor is the increasing intolerance of truancy on the part of the school as well as the government (Haynes, 2005). As students are more aggressively compelled to comply with compulsory attendance laws, more students who are likely to misbehave are more often present in school (Hayden, 1994; Haynes, 2005). Hayden (1994) described another such cause, the creation by legislation of an “education market” (p. 259), an education climate in which schools compete against each other. Hayden (1994) was writing about the United Kingdom, but the United States has also seen legislation that has created a market-like climate in K-12 education in recent years.

Zero-tolerance policies, which first appeared in California, New York, and Kentucky in 1989 (Skiba & Rausch, 2006), have likely increased incidences of exclusion by mandating that school administrators suspend or expel students without utilizing their professional judgment. Additionally, according to a report from an American Psychological Association task force, zero-tolerance has likely increased behavior problems as well as dropout rates (Green, 2008). The original policies required school officials to expel students who engaged in serious offenses such as fighting, drug possession and use, and activities related to gang involvement (Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Within five years, zero tolerance policies were common across the country and had expanded to include less serious offenses such as disruptive behavior (Gladden, 2002; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Such policies have certainly resulted in more students being suspended or expelled (Gladden, 2002; Noguera, 2003; Skiba & Rausch, 2006).

Additionally, rates of suspension and expulsion are not consistent across schools, even those serving similar grade levels, and such rates have been linked to numerous factors unrelated to student behavior or attitude (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010; Skiba

& Rausch, 2006). Such factors include administrator philosophy (Losen, 2011; Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010), teacher tolerance and ability (Hayden, 1995; Skiba & Rausch, 2006), school climate and atmosphere (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010; Skiba & Rausch, 2006), and school district socioeconomic status (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010). Because exclusion is an option for school officials in many discipline cases, but is not always used, and because different schools and different administrators respond differently to similar behavior, there are clearly other factors at work (Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982).

School (administrator, teacher, staff, or cultural) opinion on why students misbehave is an extremely powerful influence on the school's rate of suspension (Michail, 2011). When school adults frame student misbehavior as disrespectful or malicious or if children are viewed as disorderly or wild, then poor relations as well as poor opinions are likely to develop (Noguera, 2003). If alternate yet plausible justifications for student behavior are generated, such as the student is lacking skills, then adults are more likely to respond in a manner that specifically addresses that issue, rather than with suspension or other punishment (Weiner, 2003). For instance, the teacher who believes that a student is being blatantly disrespectful may send the student out of class. In a similar situation, if the teacher believes the seemingly disrespectful behavior is a result of the student's unfamiliarity with the context and lack of appropriate skills, that teacher may choose to redirect the behavior and prompt or teach appropriate behavior for the situation.

Negative Impact of School Exclusion

There is great concern about schools' continued reliance on exclusionary consequences throughout students' school experience, and particularly in preschool and the early elementary grades (Michail, 2011). Wager (1993) was referencing her own philosophical journey, and echoing others', when she described her suspension rates as a first year principal and wrote, "long before I had an alternative to propose, it was clear that suspension did not work" (p. 36). The ingrained culture of suspension is seen as a problem, for the most part because suspension has been shown to be damaging to the individual suspended student as well as to the school environment overall (Fablio et al., 2011; Losen et al., 2012; Noguera, 2003; Ryan & Zoldy, 2011). In her examination of the evolution of discipline policies in school districts in Toronto, Ontario, and Buffalo, New York, Winton (2011) wrote, ". . .the continued practice of excluding students from schools in both districts as a discipline approach casts doubt on the sincerity of governments' commitments to utilize evidence-based policy in education at all levels" (p. 247).

Negative impact on the student. Research indicates that as students accumulate negative school experiences, they lose faith that school is going to "work" for them to provide a positive future (Noguera, 2003). For students, banishment from the school environment can have a negative psychological impact (Ryan & Zoldy, 2011), and they may begin to disengage from school. Students can feel as though they are no longer part of the school community. In their own perception, excluded students can become outsiders.

Though school safety is often cited as a reason for suspensions (separating the bad from the good), there is no evidence that exclusionary discipline or even referrals out of class make schools safer or improve school climate (Losen et al., 2012; Winton, 2011). Manufacturing ‘good’ and ‘bad’ groups of students through exclusion does not improve school climate; rather, it may serve to segregate the student population (Gladden, 2002; Losen, 2011). Excluded students are less likely to be involved in sports, clubs, or other extra-curricular activities (Ryan & Zoldy, 2011). They are more likely than other students to be held back a grade, fail classes, and drop out of school (Fablio et al., 2011; Losen, 2011; Ryan & Zoldy, 2011). They are also more likely to be incarcerated, and therefore involved with the juvenile justice system (Fablio et al., 2011).

Negative impact on the school environment. In addition to the negative impact of exclusion on the individual, suspension and expulsion can also have a negative impact on academics, school climate, and the community (Ryan & Zoldy, 2011; Winton, 2011). Across a variety of student demographics, schools with high rates of exclusionary discipline have been found to have lower standardized test scores (Losen et al., 2012). Students who are suspended tend to fall behind academically, resulting in costly remedial services, lower grades, and often, poor attendance (Ryan & Zoldy, 2011). Further, the use of suspension and expulsion to separate the “bad” students from the majority has not been shown to make schools safer or make other students behave better (Losen, 2011; Losen et al., 2012; Skiba & Peterson, 2000).

Very often, suspended students are already experiencing serious stressors in their home lives such as poverty, violent neighborhoods, or mental illness (Noguera, 2003). When these students are suspended, the addition of the new stressor can create

circumstances that encourage more frequent or severe misbehavior (Ryan & Zoldy, 2011). When students are suspended, they often leave the structured environment of school for an unsupervised environment at home or elsewhere in the neighborhood, providing ample opportunity for further misbehavior and bad influence (Haynes, 2005; Losen, 2011; Ryan & Zoldy, 2011). Ryan & Zoldy (2011) wrote, suspension “just does not produce the desired outcomes, but merely shuffles the problems . . . on to the community” (p. 325).

Damage to relationships. This “problem shuffling” is one reason that exclusionary discipline can be damaging to relationships in the school community. Overall, the segregation of a student population that occurs as a result of exclusionary discipline can ultimately reinforce students’ own perceptions of being a “bad” kid or belonging to the “bad” group (Ryan & Zoldy, 2011). Unless discipline is done in such a way that exudes careful consideration and empathy, suspension can make the student dislike the administrator (Winton, 2011). A relationship of mistrust can develop that can make the student(s) unlikely to learn skills or take advice or direction from one who has acted in a negative and/or rejecting manner (Noguera, 2003; Gladden, 2002). Additionally, students at various income levels have reported that they believe that low-income students are more often in trouble and more severely punished than their fellow higher-income students (Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010; Skiba & Peterson, 2000). The concept of punishment and exclusionary discipline as a tool used by powerful on the weak is reinforced by such beliefs (Goldstein & Naglini, 2011). The resultant animosity can produce significant increases in misbehavior (O'Connor et al., 2011). According to Skiba and Rausch (2006) the factor of school bonding versus school alienation is one of

the strongest variables in predicting delinquency. The school-family relationship can similarly be damaged when a school perceives the family as the root cause of the student's misbehavior (Skiba & Peterson, 2000).

Is suspension from school actually punishment? Yet, to step away from the anti-school exclusion research for a moment, suspension and expulsion are clearly intended to be forms of punishment at school, and punishment, by definition, improves cooperation and reduces misbehavior (Balliet et al., 2011; Baumrind, 1996; Bear, 2012; Parke, 1969). In the present study, the behavior of young school-aged children has been evaluated. Young children need extrinsic reinforcement in order to learn and display appropriate behavior (Baumrind, 1996), and their behavior is certainly influenced by the consequences that follow the behavior (Aamodt & Wang, 2011). In a meta-analysis of reward and punishment research, Balliet et al. (2011) found that both rewards and punishment positively impacted subjects' cooperation.

Researchers have identified several factors that seem to impact the effectiveness of aversive consequences (i.e. school exclusion). One such factor is providing a rationale or cognitive structuring along with the consequence (Baumrind, 1996; Parke, 1969). Baumrind (1996) wrote that the combination of punishment and reasoning will both capture the child's attention (punishment) and also contribute to their understanding about what behavior is acceptable (reasoning). She wrote that "once the connection has been established, reasoning alone may suffice" (p. 410).

Similar to the provision of a rationale, another factor impacting the effectiveness of disciplinary consequences at school is clarity of expectations and the firm, fair application of rules and consequences (Baumrind, 1996; Bear, 2012). Bear (2012) wrote

that when students view suspension as fairly applied, it can be an influential deterrent (Bear, 2012). Gregory et al. (2010) found that a high level of structure in a school, defined as a fair system of rules which is strictly enforced, is associated with higher levels of safety. When students described high levels of structure in their schools, they also reported adults in the school to be more supportive than did students describing lower levels of structure (Gregory et al., 2010).

Finally, a positive or warm relationship with staff seems to impact the effectiveness of adverse school consequences (Gregory et al., 2010). Gregory et al. (2010) found that teachers who were perceived as caring and having high standards elicited more positive responses to their authority from African American students with a history of misbehavior. Additionally, a supportive or responsive environment is associated with higher levels of school safety (Gregory et al., 2010).

Few researchers have gone as far as to say that school suspension is an effective tool. However two researchers, both prolific writers about child discipline and behavior, do advocate for the use of suspension in the context of a clear and fair school discipline system (Baumrind, 1996; Bear, 2012). Bear (2012) acknowledged the limitations of suspension, but wrote, “suspension and other forms of punishment serve as effective deterrents of behavior problems for most children, especially when they are combined with positive and proactive alternatives to suspension” (p.174). Baumrind (1996) used the term “judicious” (p. 409) to describe appropriate use of suspension, and wrote that the harm to children comes when such discipline is used arbitrarily. Exclusion from school is only punishment if it serves to suppress the misbehavior that it addresses. Alternately, the exclusion may actually be reinforcing of future misbehavior.

Disproportionate application of exclusionary discipline. Aside from the impact on students, the school, and the community, an additional, and hopefully motivating, concern for the educational community regarding the use of exclusionary discipline is that it has been exhaustively shown to be disproportionately applied (Fablio et al., 2011; Hayden, 1995; Losen et al., 2012; Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Nichols, 2004; Skiba et al., 1997; US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 2012). A statewide, longitudinal study of Texas secondary students found that almost 75% of students who qualified for special education services experienced exclusionary discipline at least one time during secondary school (Fablio et al., 2011). The US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) similarly found that students who qualify under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) were suspended-out-of-school over twice as often as students who do not qualify (US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 2012).

Minority students, particularly African American students, are also more likely to experience exclusionary discipline (Losen & Skiba, 2010; Skiba et al., 1997; USDoe, OCR, 2012). The OCR (2012) found that, “African American students represent 18% of students in the CRDC [Civil Rights Data Collection] sample, but 35% of students suspended once, 46% of students suspended more than once, and 39% of students expelled” (p. 2). In their comprehensive look at suspension in California schools, Losen et al. (2012) found that one in five African American students were suspended during the 2010-2011 school year versus one of every 17 White students. Fablio et al. (2011) found that African American students in Texas were more likely than students of any other race to be disciplined. Between the early 1970s until the middle of the first decade of this

century, suspension rates of both Black and White students increased. However, the rate of suspension of Black students increased at over four times the rate of the increase of suspension of White students (Losen, 2011).

Overrepresentation of minority students as well as students with special needs is not a US phenomenon. Internationally, school location in a community of lower socioeconomic status is linked to higher suspension rates (Michail, 2011). A Canadian government report on the Safe Schools Act (Ontario) 2002 amendments found that the mandated zero-tolerance law “seemed to unduly suspend minorities and those requiring special education services, which seemed to oppose both common sense and the needs of the youth” (Ryan & Zoldy, 2011, p. 326). Osler et al. (2001) wrote about “looked after” children, or foster children, in the UK, who are more likely than other children to be excluded from school. There also appears to be a struggle to support the educational needs of Traveller children, a minority group in the UK (Osler et al. 2001).

Despite the overrepresentation of African American students, no evidence has been found to indicate that this group actually misbehaves more often than others (Losen, 2011). Skiba (2008, personal communication) found that discrepancies in discipline for African American students were often found within referrals for offenses that could be subjective in nature (i.e. disrespectful or threatening behavior) versus objective offenses such as smoking or hitting. Osler et al. (2001) suggested that these discrepancies may be due to cultural misunderstanding. In a historically-related article, in 1969, Ornstein wrote:

[I]t is essential, too, for the teacher to respect the child. Having middle-class values, most teachers measure progress on a middle-class scale. They encourage the

child to succeed on their terms, therefore teaching the child that his values are wrong . . . It does little good to belabor the teacher for his middle-class values. Teachers need only to be made aware of the differences in cultural values without viewing one as right or better. (p. 99)

Just over thirty years later, Mayer (2001) concurred, stating that often behavior problems are the result of cultural misunderstanding. He and others suggested that school staffs be provided with professional development in regard to the body of cultural differences research (Mayer, 2001; Mayer, 2002; Mendez & Knoff, 2003).

Exclusion addresses the incident, but does not address the problem. Yet another concern involving the use of exclusionary discipline is the lack of supplementary strategies utilized alongside such discipline. Suspension, it is thought, does not generally change a student's proclivity to misbehave, but other strategies, such as teaching social and life skills, rewarding positive behavior, and relationship-building do help students change their behavior (Goldstein & Naglini, 2011). Student behavior can improve, given the appropriate support (Sugai & Horner, 2002). All too often however, school officials do not supplement suspensions with interventions. Thus, the antecedents to the student's misbehavior (unclear expectations, poor relationships, or lack of skills) are still present when the student returns, lying in wait to influence future inappropriate behavior (Ryan & Zoldy, 2011). As structured environments where young people spend a great deal of time, schools are uniquely situated to identify and address students' behavior problems (Hayden, 1995). When those problems are not adequately addressed, it can result in "tremendous costs" (O'Connor et al., 2011, p. 121) to both the students and society at large. Students with unaddressed behavior problems often become unemployed or

underemployed, are involved with crime, and can struggle with mental illness (O'Connor et al., 2011).

Hirschfield (2008) wrote about the “criminalization” (p. 80) of student deviance at school, particularly in urban settings. He wrote that beyond traditional incidents seen as “crime” in a school including incidents involving drugs, weapons or other violence, the response to deviant behavior such as truancy has increasingly been punitive. Overall, a number of writers and researchers have expressed concern with the rising number of students who are excluded from school for increasingly minor offenses (Gladden, 2002; Losen, 2011; Michail, 2011; Ryan & Zoldy, 2011; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). When Skiba and Rausch (2006) examined data from one Midwestern state for the 2002-2003 school year, they found that 95% of the suspensions out of school were for offenses labeled “disruptive behavior” and “other”. More generally stated, it seems that the vast majority of offenses for which students are suspended are of a non-violent nature (Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Since their appearance in the late 1980s, school zero tolerance policies have broadened to include more minor infractions such as truancy under the umbrella of offenses addressed by suspension (Ford, 2012).

As detailed above, the use of suspension comes at a cost. The benefits received seem often slight, as suspension does not generally impart the outcomes that school officials seem to expect. What might be the most compelling argument against suspension is that it does not significantly decrease misbehavior (Ryan & Zoldy, 2011; Simonsen, Sugai et al., 2008b). Losen and Skiba (2010) found that students who are suspended in sixth-grade are more likely than others to be involved in office discipline in the eighth-grade. They cite this as one example of the flawed reasoning behind using

exclusionary discipline to impart behavior change, although Bear (2012) argued that future suspension is a shaky measure of the effectiveness of suspension due to the number of other variables involved.

Suspension or expulsion, intended as forms of punishment, may have some impact on immediate or short-term behavior, but have little impact on longer-term, habitual behavior (Goldstein & Naglini, 2011). This finding is consistent with that of others who have studied the effects of punishment; that is, punishment is effective in the immediate or short-term (Balliet et al., 2011), and more cognitive training is necessary in order to achieve internalization of the behavior change (Baumrind, 1996). The utilization of this particular form of discipline operates on the assumption that the child has been willfully troublesome, and that the opportunity to reflect upon the punishment will compel the child to change his or her behavior (Michail, 2011).

Specific Concerns with Early Elementary Exclusion

Hayden (1994) wrote that early elementary years were possibly the most damaging time for a student to experience exclusionary discipline. She wrote:

Not only may children be missing out on developmentally essential skills of numeracy and literacy, but they will also be missing out on the development of their social skills through daily contact with a peer group and responsible adults, outside family and local community. (p. 258)

While this may be true, scholarly writing on the topic of early elementary suspension or expulsion is rare (Hayden, 1995). Seventeen years after Hayden's 1995 article, such material is still extremely limited. Clearly, the concerns with exclusionary discipline outlined above apply to primary-aged children as well. An argument can be

made that the negative consequences experienced by older children might be exacerbated by early experience with school removal, particularly when teaching and encouraging prosocial behavior is the most effective way to reduce antisocial behavior in school (Aamodt & Wang, 2011). O'Connor et al. (2011) found that elementary students' behavior was predicated by their relationship with their teacher. Behavior problems were likely to increase significantly when that relationship was characterized by high conflict and low closeness (O'Connor et al., 2011). In their longitudinal study of 179 children from kindergarten through eighth-grade, Hamre and Pianta (2001) found that kindergarten teachers' own perceptions of their relationships with students were predictive of student academic achievement and behavior through the eighth-grade.

Further information can be gleaned from related work on the general topic of child development. The focus in this study is on students in kindergarten through third-grade. On the younger end, students in kindergarten and first-grade may often perceive others as objects rather than as human beings with thoughts and emotions (Buckley, 2000). Because of this objectification, young children may not understand the rationale behind rules against hurting others or taking playthings (Buckley, 2000). Older children in the study may well understand that others possess individual thoughts and feelings, but may still view a situation as black-and-white or "no-choice." Children living in poverty are more likely than other children to experience delayed social-emotional competence (Jensen, 2009).

The Most Severe Infractions at School

The infractions themselves. Violent and aggressive behavior has become a severe problem in schools, with a global estimate of 200 million young people being

victimized (Spiel, Salmivalli & Smith, 2011). Even within classrooms, multiple bullying events are occurring every hour (Frey et al., 2009). This is particularly concerning because, in addition to the obvious issues in regard to safety, such behavior interferes with the learning of all students and leads to earlier teacher burnout (Englander, 2012; Osher et al., 2010). Bullying, the repeated harassment, either physically or emotionally, of an individual perpetrated by another, more powerful individual (Slee & Mohyla, 2007), is a particularly damaging and widespread form of violent and/or aggressive behavior (Slee & Mohyla, 2007). Bullying, as well as other forms of school violence and aggression, is associated with negative physical, emotional and academic effects for all parties involved (Slee & Mohyla, 2007; Spiel et al., 2011). Additionally, fear of bullies is the number one reason students give for bringing weapons to school, furthering the potential for school violence (Englander, 2012).

Violence and aggression in young people. A certain amount of aggression is common and developmentally appropriate in young children (Farmer, Farmer, Estell, & Hutchins, 2007). Youngsters use horseplay and teasing to establish themselves in the social hierarchy (Farmer et al., 2007). However, children who display much more frequent aggression are likely to view others as hostile, and their own aggression as a reasonable response to that hostility (Buckley, 2000; Englander, 2012; Frey et al., 2000). Aggressive children are also likely to anticipate positive consequences from their behavior (Buckley, 2000). Manning and Bear (2011) found that students who were rated as highly aggressive by their teachers were likely to focus on consequences of their behavior in regard to themselves. Conversely, those children rated as showing less

aggression were likely to focus on consequences of their behavior faced by others (Manning & Bear, 2011; Frey, Hirschstein, & Guzzo, 2000).

A child's specific rationale regarding behavior depends on the child's cognitive level, which is likely (but not necessarily) correlated with chronological age (Buckley, 2000). Young school-age children (approximate age 5-7) are self-centered in their thinking and have trouble empathizing or seeing a situation from another's perspective. They also will often objectify the target of their aggression, not recognizing him or her as an individual, with feelings (Buckley, 2000). Because of young children's developmentally appropriate, self-centered thinking, "violence presents itself as an attractive tactic to get what one wants" (Buckley, 2000, *Young Children (Ages 5-7) Developmental Characteristics*, para. 3).

Additionally, young children have trouble delineating a cause-effect relationship in regard to what might lead to an episode of violence (Buckley, 2000). Slightly older children (age 8-10) are often able to understand a cause-effect relationship (what might lead to an incident of violence), and they are able to understand that others have different perspectives (Buckley, 2000). However, they are likely to view rules as black and white (I have to do this because . . .) and can still be self-centered in their thinking and interpretation of situations (Buckley, 2000). Children age 11 and older are likely able to think in an abstract manner, unlike younger children (Buckley, 2000). They may be able to process feelings and/or motivations of other individuals and understand outside factors that may be impacting a given situation (Buckley, 2000). As noted above, cognitive functioning must be considered when addressing student misbehavior.

Effective School Discipline

Children and behavior support. Beyond who gets suspended and the infractions for which those suspensions occur, it is relevant to discuss pertinent knowledge about how children learn behavior and how behavior change can be affected. There seems to be clear evidence that exclusion as a consequence generally does not change behavior and is therefore not a punisher (Michail, 2011; Noguera, 2003). Such exclusionary discipline is often rationalized as being the only way to maintain a safe and secure environment, conducive to learning (Noguera, 2003). Thus, such discipline is utilized to further the broader objectives of the school and not to support the behavior/success of the individual student (Haynes, 2005). Because of what we know regarding outcomes for students who have been excluded from school, the question becomes, do we believe that we cannot help all students be successful and are therefore willing to sacrifice some for the benefit of others (Noguera, 2003)? Or possibly, school administrators are suspending students because they believe that it is the only appropriate punishment available (Noguera, 2003; Wager, 1993). Reflecting upon 25 years in education, Wager (1993) wrote, “A quarter of a century had passed; the world had been scientifically, culturally, and geopolitically revolutionized—but not one new idea had emerged in the world of education to deal with disruptive [students]” (p. 36).

Due to the quantity of evidence regarding the impact of exclusive discipline practices, it is an ethical imperative for school officials to adopt school discipline practices as well as non-exclusionary disciplinary alternatives that have been shown to be effective in creating safe, productive, disciplined school environments. Mayer and Leone (1999) put the burden of school safety squarely on the shoulders of school officials when

they wrote, “with regard to school violence, *the organization of the school environment plays a critical role as either a facilitator or an inhibitor of violence and disruption*” (p. 334).

Effective school discipline practices [such practices that have been shown to positively influence behavior] can be arranged into five categories: positive and functional student, staff, and family relationships; explicit understanding by all parties of the expected standards of conduct and the consequences of misconduct; ongoing communication of feedback to students regarding their achievement and behavior; adequate and effective supervision; and differentiated support, dependent upon the needs of the individual student (Omaha Public Schools , 1999). Proactive and preventive are common features of these discipline practices. Smith and Lambert (2008) wrote, “The most effective classroom management comes in the form of strategies that prevent acting out before it occurs” (p. 16); a bevy of authors agree (Burns, 1985; Knoff, 1984; Mattaini, 2001; Mayer, 1999; Skiba, et al., 1997). Another feature these practices all share is endorsement within the research and scholarly writing of the last half-century. Though effective school discipline practices are inherently proactive, the practices can also be used as a basis for behavioral intervention as part of the last group, differentiated support for students. Ideally, these discipline practices are also a core component of a school’s menu of non-exclusionary, in-school disciplinary alternatives.

Positive relationships. Researchers have long known that a positive working relationship between students and staff is a critical factor that needs to be in place in order for students to do well at school (Michail, 2011; O'Connor et al., 2011; Ornstein, 1969; Osher et al., 2010; Palardy & Mudrey, 1973; Weiner, 2003). Michail (2011) noted

that a close relationship between a school adult and a challenging student is the “one component that is consistently associated with positive outcomes” (p. 166) for that student. O’Connor et al. (2011) found that the existence of a high-quality relationship (defined as having high levels of closeness and low levels of conflict) was strongly linked to lower levels of externalizing behaviors in students. A respectful climate is frequently found to be one characteristic of schools designated as safe (Gladden, 2002). Within a human development framework, individuals acquire skills for interacting with others through the relationships that they have formed (O’Connor et al., 2011). Thus, it stands to reason that in order for students to interact successfully in a school environment, they must develop high quality relationships within that same environment.

This factor manifests itself in a number of ways in the research. Researchers have found that often, a teacher is able to be effective with a student purely by virtue of the student’s positive perception of the teacher’s intentions and concern for the student (Testerman, 1996; Saba, 1977). Others have found that modeling respectful or appropriate behavior within the context of the positive teacher-student relationship leads to positive discipline outcomes (Clarizio & Yelon, 1967; Mayer, 2001; Weiner, 2003). Weiner (2003) wrote that students must be able to relate these appropriate behaviors to their own success in the future. Farrar and Neufeld (1980) discussed the concept of students granting “personal authority” (p. 27) to teachers. According to their observations, students’ willingness to grant that authority is dependent upon the teacher’s respect, social skills, and content knowledge. Along the same lines, Mattaini (2001) described his strategy, *share power to build community*, as starting with the assumption that every individual in the community has something valuable to share with the larger

group. As a foundational concept, this validates all members of the group. The focus on cultural competence and understanding is a critical factor to supporting school staffs in building positive and productive relationships with all students (Mattaini, 2001).

That authority or the climate of respect allows teachers to effectively communicate expectations of student conduct and support student behavior in positive, proactive ways (O'Connor et al., 2011). This includes communicating rules as well as the social and coping skills necessary to follow the rules (O'Connor et al., 2011). Explicitly clear understanding on the part of all stakeholders of school rules, as well as the skills needed to adhere to the rules and consequences for breaking the rules is a critical factor in preventing acting-out behavior in school (Sugai & Horner, 2002; Wager, 1993). Ideally, such skills are taught as a part of a consistent, schoolwide system of expected behavior and support (Osher et al., 2010; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Clear, schoolwide rules provide a platform for teachers to reinforce and clarify the expectations specifically to their classroom setting (Weiner, 2003). School adults must do their due diligence, ensuring that students understand expected standards of conduct. That mutual understanding provides students with the opportunity to do well.

Explicit understanding of standards of conduct. Possibly the least controversial element of effective discipline is the practice of establishing and communicating expectations. Schools must establish specific standards of conduct and then communicate those standards to the students (Burns, 1985; Daly & Fowler, 1988; Farrar & Neufeld, 1980; Fellmy, 1983; Palardy & Mudrey, 1973; Sugai & Horner, 2002). The communication process can include developing expectations in cooperation with the students (Mayer, 2002), posting expectations specific to each area of the school (OPS,

1999; Simonsen, Fairbanks, et al., 2008), teaching the expectations explicitly and directly to students using the same best-practice techniques used to teach academics (Mayer, 2001; OPS, 1999), prompting the students to be mindful of the expectations prior to entering the setting (Mayer, 2001), modeling (Bandura, 1962; Chesler et al., 1979; Clarizio & Yelon, 1967; Mayer, 2001), and ensuring the entire staff uses a common language when referencing the expectations (Burns, 1985; Daly & Fowler, 1988).

Effectively communicating standards of conduct goes beyond presenting school rules and expectations. Students need to be taught key social skills and life skills (Simonsen, Fairbanks, et al., 2008; Connolly, Dowd, Criste, Nelson, & Tobias, 1997; Mayer, 2002). Social-emotional learning has been shown to decrease bullying behavior and other aggressive and disruptive behavior at school (Osher et al., 2010). Such learning (and reteaching) can be an effective non-exclusionary disciplinary alternative for student violence or aggression at school (Buckley, 2000; Young, Boye, & Nelson, 2006). Skills such as studying and note taking, organization, making an apology, and disagreeing appropriately are examples of those that students do not always have in their repertoires. If students are to be expected to display the skill, it must be taught directly, students must be given the opportunity to practice, and the skill must be reviewed until it is mastered (Connolly et al., 1997; Farrar & Neufeld, 1980).

Generally, a school or district's official rules are outlined in a school's code of conduct. Alongside those rules should be clear consequences for noncompliance (Mattaini, 2001; Mayer, 1995; Sugai, 2009). Establishment of clear consequences is generally not where schools struggle, as most have codes of conduct. The struggle comes in devising and implementing effective, appropriate consequences, which is more

complex. Concern regarding discipline and its impact on student behavior dates back decades. Leading mental health experts as far back as the 1960's questioned discipline practices (Redl, 1965). Redl (1965) wrote:

The crucial question which underlies all speculation about the wisdom of punishment as a tool in a given case: Just what is there to the underlying assumption that producing an unpleasant experience in a child is going to help him rally better to reason and control than he was able to before? (p. 345)

Appropriate and effective consequences are often logical in nature. Nelson (1985) described logical consequences as related, respectful and reasonable. *Related* denotes the condition of being logically linked in a solution-focused manner to the misbehavior in question (Nelson, 1985). In this historical context, it is important to consider the function of the misbehavior so as to not inadvertently reinforce the behavior (Redl, 1965; Mayer, 2002). Respectful and reasonable denote the maintenance of dignity and the comparability of the offense to the consequence (Nelson, 1985). Disrespect during the application of the consequence has long been noted as causing the student to blame the adult rather than their own behavior (Redl, 1965). All three characteristics must apply in order for a consequence to be logical (Nelson, 1985).

Ongoing communication of feedback to students. Misbehavior at school must be corrected, and often a consequence must be applied. Students need ongoing feedback about which of their behaviors and skills need improvement as well as what they are doing well (Sugai, 2009). Ideally, in order for a school climate to be positive and focused on the desired behaviors and outcomes, adults in the setting are providing significantly more instances of positive feedback versus corrective feedback (Mattaini, 2001; OPS,

1999; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Focusing exclusively or heavily on negative traits or misbehavior, like punitive practices, creates an aversive environment, which actually encourages more aggression and misbehavior (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Unfortunately, school environments have often been found to be extremely negative. Mayer (2001) found instances of developmentally delayed children receiving fifteen times more corrective feedback than positive. He also found that teachers of chronically misbehaving students failed to acknowledge those students academic successes (Mayer, 2001). In instances such as these, increasing the frequency of praise statements could improve school climate and reduce misbehavior (Mattaini, 2001; Mayer, 1999; Mayer, 2001; Simonsen, Fairbanks, et al., 2008).

A second best practice related to feedback is establishing a recognition system to reward desired behavior. This element of behavior modification has been consistently present and supported in the literature over the past five decades (Clarizio & Yelon, 1967; Daly & Fowler, 1988; Mattaini, 2001; Mayer, 1995; Simonsen, Fairbanks, et al., 2008; Sugai, 2009). A critical element of any reward system is the verbal interaction between adult and student when the reward or token is presented. It is important that the adult be very specific about what exact behavior has led to the reinforcement (Simonsen, Fairbanks, et al., 2008). It is helpful too, if the behavior being praised has been explicitly taught in the same setting. In addition to supporting positive student behavior, the actual behavior support system acts as a support for the staff, helping the adults to form the habit of providing the positive feedback to students.

Adequate and effective supervision. Effective school supervision has a positive impact on school discipline (Burns, 1985; Colvin, Sugai, Good, & Lee, 1997; Fellmy,

1983; Sugai & Horner, 2002). The practice of supervision becomes a best practice when it is both adequate (Fellmy, 1983; McCaffery & Turner, 1970; OPS, 1999) and effective (Burns, 1985; Simonsen, Fairbanks, et al., 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Adequate denotes numbers of supervisors in relation to the square footage and the student population. Are there logistically *enough* adults to supervise the school grounds and population? Effective supervision refers to the practice of supervising, and is often described as active (Colvin et al., 1997; Simonsen, Fairbanks, et al., 2008), or scanning, moving and interacting with students (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Burns (1985) contrasted the above described quality supervision with “lackluster or turn-your-back supervision” (p. 2). The three previously discussed best practices can be incorporated into effective supervision: adults engaging in positive interactions with students, providing preventive prompts to encourage appropriate behavior, and praising and correcting student behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Differentiated support for students. Students are unique in the types and levels of support they require in order to be successful at school (Mayer, 1999; Mayer, 1995; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; OPS, 1999; Knoff, 1984; Sugai, 2009; Quay & Glavin, 1970; Walker & Mattson, 1967). During the 1960s, intervention for struggling students began to consist of behavior modification strategies (Quay & Glavin, 1970; Walker & Mattson, 1967). Strategies included determining replacement behaviors for the undesired behavior being demonstrated and reinforcing desired behavior when it occurred. In 1984, Knoff advocated a tiered system of intervention with primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies. According to the model, all students receive the basic level of support, and students are provided with higher-tier prevention and intervention if they demonstrate the

need for additional support, beyond the universal (Knoff, 1984). A number of others also have advocated that a menu of tiered prevention and intervention strategies must be in place for students (Mendez & Knoff, 2003; OPS, 1999, Osher et al., 2010; Skiba, personal communication, 2008; Sugai, 2009; Sugai & Horner, 2002). These strategies must be available for students who are at greater risk for school disengagement, behavioral problems or academic failure (Mendez & Knoff, 2003).

This “three-tiered framework” (Sugai, 2009, p. 37) is a foundational piece of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBiS) (Sugai, 2009), an approach to school discipline that is currently being used successfully in thousands of schools (Horner et al., 2009) and is supported by the US Department of Education Office on Special Education Programming as one of its “Ideas that Work”. At the Tier I or universal level, PBiS addresses the challenge of managing the school environment with strategies and systems that manipulate the environment to support positive student behavior (Sugai, 2009). As students demonstrate their need for additional behavior support, a system of PBiS provides a continuum of intervention for staff to utilize (Horner et al., 2009).

Appropriate response to students’ violence and aggression. Any efforts to prevent or intervene in violent and aggressive behaviors at school must take into account the cognitive functioning of the students involved as well as the circumstances of the situation (Buckley, 2000). Both strategies that prevent violence as well as strategies designed to intervene once violence has occurred are necessary (Farmer et al., 2007; Smith, 2011) though particularly as children get older, the focus should be on prevention (Buckley, 2000). One basic intervention is to assist children and youth in understanding the feelings and perspective of others as well as the impact their behavior has on others

(Buckley, 2000; Frey et al., 2009; Manning & Bear, 2011). Young children, who have particular difficulty with empathy, as well as older children, can benefit from focusing on their responsibility for behavior that negatively impacts other people (Manning & Bear, 2011). Older children and youth can benefit also from evaluating their perceptions of and responses to a situation (Englander, 2012).

School violence and aggression can also be reduced by providing students with particular skills and information (Buckley, 2000; Frey et al., 2009; Slee & Mohyla, 2007). One such intervention is to provide students with information about violence and aggression such as risk factors, non-violent alternatives, negative consequences of violence, and anger management (Buckley, 2000). For bullying in particular, students benefit from understanding the wide-ranging definition of bullying, how to deal with a bully and how to be a good bystander (Frey et al., 2009). Slee and Mohyla (2007) found that post-intervention students who said that they knew how to stop a bully were very likely to also report being bullied less. A focus on social skills instruction can also help mitigate the frequency and effects of school violence by increasing the likelihood that potential victims have strong social support (Young, et al., 2006) and also for providing the ability to deal with emotion and problems without resorting to violence (Buckley, 2000). Care should be taken not to emphasize empathy in social skills training with young children, as they may be unable to process such a rationale, though young children can certainly learn basic social skills (Buckley, 2000).

As interaction with peers can be a beneficial tool to positively socialize children, peer mediation and conflict resolution can reduce school violence (Buckley, 2000; Englander, 2012). One caveat is that such interventions presume equality amongst

participants. Thus, these approaches are not appropriate in the case of bullying (Englander, 2012). Otherwise, such peer interaction can improve children's ability to take another's perspective (Buckley, 2000). It is also of benefit for students to be actively engaged in and to take ownership of assisting in improving the school climate (Buckley, 2000; Mayer, 2002). In fact, a focus on improving school climate overall (using the strategies outlined above), even if reducing violence is not a priority, can reduce both office referrals and bullying and increase prosocial behavior (Farmer et al., 2007; Young et al., 2006). School officials should respond to violent and aggressive behavior in young children with non-exclusionary discipline when at all possible. Such discipline should be pre-determined, developmentally appropriate, and include aspects of effective discipline as outlined above.

Conclusion

Even though violent and aggressive behavior does not account for the majority of school exclusions, it is the most prevalent reason for school exclusion in the US (Skiba and Rausch, 2006). Though school exclusion as a result of such behavior is a common practice and is unquestionably part of school culture in the United States and elsewhere, it is not at all clear that exclusion is the most appropriate response to such behavior, even if the foremost concern is school safety (Losen et al., 2012; Winton, 2011). There are circumstances that arise at school that will make some manner of student exclusion unavoidable, when safety concerns or disruptions to learning reach very high levels. However, this research study focuses on the youngest elementary students. These are students at an age when they are most likely to be physically manageable as well as

behaviorally malleable (Frey et al., 2009). For these reasons, it seems that circumstances surrounding such unavoidable exclusion are less likely at the early elementary level.

Fablio et al. (2011) suggested perhaps the most pertinent take-away for current administrators and teachers is that they need not wait for significant, official policy change in order to change discipline practices. The authors noted that that the vast majority of student discipline is of a discretionary nature; that is, it is not guided by law or official policy, but by the decision-making of the individual administrator. There are already vast discrepancies in exclusionary discipline rates, even between schools with statistically identical student populations operating under similar policies (Fablio et al., 2011). The education community currently possesses the knowledge to design effective discipline structures; it is merely a question of assigning priority.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to compare the behavior outcomes of kindergarten, first-grade, second-grade, and third-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving out-of-school suspensions for violent and/or aggressive behaviors with the behavior outcomes of same school district kindergarten, first-grade, second-grade, and third-grade students receiving non-exclusionary, in-school disciplinary alternatives for matched levels of violent and/or aggressive behaviors.

Participants

Number of participants. The maximum accrual for this study was ($N = 160$) and included eight ethnically stratified proportional groups¹--each based on the non-White and White ethnicity ratio in the research school district for the particular grade--of students who displayed violent and/or aggressive behavior at school to the extent that the behavior incident was logged into the school district data system and a consequence was applied. For each grade, kindergarten ($n = 20$), first-grade ($n = 20$), second-grade ($n = 20$), and third-grade ($n = 20$) an ethnically stratified proportional sample of students was selected who had engaged in a violent or aggressive behavior and were subsequently assigned an exclusionary consequence for that behavior. An exclusionary consequence was defined as a consequence requiring that the student leave the school premises and

¹In every case possible, the groups were ethnically stratified and randomly selected. In some cases, the researcher needed to use all students from a population, precluding random selection. In other cases, there were not enough White students in the population to ensure an ethnically stratified proportional group. These issues impacted the kindergarten suspended group and the second-grade suspended groups only.

stay away for at least one day. Specifically in the school district data system, the consequences were referred to as *suspended short-term* and *remanded home*.

Additionally, for each grade, kindergarten ($n = 20$), first-grade ($n = 20$), second-grade ($n = 20$), and third-grade ($n = 20$) an ethnically stratified proportional sample of students was selected who had engaged in a violent and/or aggressive behavior at school and were subsequently assigned a non-exclusionary disciplinary alternative consequence. The non-exclusionary consequences varied. Most often, 41 times (51%), the student was assigned to the school's "Positive Action Center" or PAC, an area set aside for students to relearn skills related to self-regulation of behavior, cool down, and work one-on-one with the PAC teacher to strengthen positive replacement behaviors. The next most common non-exclusionary consequence was to hold a conference with the student and parent and possibly the teacher. This was used 31 times (39%). Two times (2%) the student was removed from the classroom or activity for a period of time, but remained in the school building. Six times (8%) in-school suspension was assigned.

All participating students receiving both exclusionary and non-exclusionary disciplinary procedures ($N = 160$) were enrolled in grades kindergarten through third-grade within the same large, urban, Midwestern school district during the 2011-2012 school year. The study subjects in each research arm were randomly assigned and ethnically proportional $n = 20$ in each of the eight study arms with a set Alpha = .05 giving the study a Power of .90 or a 90% probability of rejecting a false null hypothesis thus not committing a Type I error with a corresponding Effect Size of 1.00 (Lipsey, 1990). The research design's ethnically stratified proportionality ensured a reasonable probability of correctly rejecting a false null hypothesis. Maintaining the eight study

arms allowed for determination of the potential effect of the exclusionary disciplinary intervention and non-exclusionary, in-school disciplinary alternatives at different grade levels—in other words, will the interventions work better for younger students or work better for older students or work well for students in all grades equally or not at all? Knowing this allowed the researcher to answer the research questions and address important policy, practice, and implications for future research questions.

Gender of participants. Of the total number of participants, $n = 124$ (77.5%) are male and $n = 36$ (22.5%) are female. Of the total number of students receiving a non-exclusionary consequence $n = 63$ (79%) are male and $n = 17$ (21%) are female. Of the total number of students receiving an exclusionary consequence $n = 61$ (76%) are male and $n = 19$ (24%) are female.

Age range of participants. The age range for all study participants was from 5 years to 9 years. All participants were in kindergarten, first-grade, second-grade, or third-grade during the research school year. The age range of the study participants is congruent with the research school district's age range demographics for kindergarten through third-grade students.

Racial and ethnic origins of participants. Of the total number of study participants who receive a non-exclusionary consequence $n = 53$ (66%) are non-White and 27 (34%) are White. Of the total number of study participants who received an exclusionary consequence $n = 56$ (70%) are non-White and 24 (30%) are White. Of all study participants ($N = 160$), 109 (68%) are non-White and 51 (32%) are White.

Socio-economic status of participants. District-wide, the percentage of students eligible for federal free and/or reduced-price lunch program participation is 65%. The

socio-economic status of the study participants will be congruent with the school district percentage of students eligible for free and/or reduced price lunch program participation.

Inclusion criteria of participants. Participants in this study were enrolled in kindergarten through the third-grade at various schools within the same large, urban, Midwestern school district during the 2011-2012 school year. During that school year, the identified students displayed violent or aggressive behaviors on at least one occasion, for which suspension was an option in the code of conduct. The specific behaviors included the descriptors: violence, fighting, assault, harassment, or bullying. Students were included in the study if they attended school regularly during the six-week evaluation period following the behavior event and consequence. Regular attendance was defined as not missing more than an average of one day per week. For each two days of absence, one day was added to the evaluation period. If a student was absent only one day, no days were added. If the student was absent an odd number of days, a number of days corresponding to the largest even number of days missed was added to the evaluation period.

Method of participant identification. Two ethnically stratified proportional samples of students were selected from each grade for the two disciplinary consequences: out-of-school suspensions and in-school disciplinary alternative. Students were randomly assigned individually to groups or intact groups were used when the number of students is limited requiring selection of all available study subjects into a specific research arm. Students were identified who displayed a violent and/or aggressive behavior during the 2011-2012 school year. Only first violent/aggressive offense events (for that school year)

were included. In other words, all research subjects are included based upon the school response to their first incident of violent or aggressive behavior during the research year.

An ethnically stratified proportional sample of students ($n = 20$) was selected from all kindergarten students who were assigned an exclusionary consequence. A second ethnically stratified proportional sample of students ($n = 20$) was selected from all kindergarten students who were assigned a non-exclusionary consequence. An ethnically stratified proportional sample of students ($n = 20$) was selected from all first-grade students who were assigned an exclusionary consequence. A second ethnically stratified proportional sample of students ($n = 20$) was selected from all first-grade students who were assigned a non-exclusionary consequence. An ethnically stratified proportional sample of students ($n = 20$) was selected from all second-grade students who were assigned an exclusionary consequence. A second ethnically stratified proportional sample of students ($n = 20$) was selected from all second-grade students who were assigned a non-exclusionary consequence. An ethnically stratified proportional sample of students ($n = 20$) was selected from all third-grade students who were assigned an exclusionary consequence. A second ethnically stratified proportional sample of students ($n = 20$) was selected from all third-grade students who were assigned a non-exclusionary consequence.

Description of Procedures

Research design. The posttest, post-posttest, eight-group comparative efficacy study design extended in time is displayed in the following notation:

Group 1 $X_1 Y_1 O_1-O_2$

Group 2 $X_1 Y_2 O_1-O_2$

Group 3 $X_1 Y_3 O_1-O_2$

Group 4 $X_1 Y_4 O_1-O_2$

Group 5 $X_1 Y_5 O_1-O_2$

Group 6 $X_1 Y_6 O_1-O_2$

Group 7 $X_1 Y_7 O_1-O_2$

Group 8 $X_1 Y_8 O_1-O_2$

Group 1 = study participants #1. An ethnically stratified proportional group of kindergarten students ($n = 20$)

Group 2 = study participants #2. An ethnically stratified proportional group of kindergarten students ($n = 20$)

Group 3 = study participants #3. An ethnically stratified proportional group of first-grade students ($n = 20$)

Group 4 = study participants #4. An ethnically stratified proportional group of first-grade students ($n = 20$)

Group 5 = study participants #5. An ethnically stratified proportional group of second-grade students ($n = 20$)

Group 6 = study participants #6. An ethnically stratified proportional group of second-grade students ($n = 20$)

Group 7 = study participants #7. An ethnically stratified proportional group of third-grade students ($n = 20$)

Group 8 = study participants #8. An ethnically stratified proportional group of third-grade students ($n = 20$)

X₁ = study constant. All students attended the same large urban Midwestern school district and were in kindergarten, first-grade, second-grade, or third-grade during the 2011-2012 school year. All students were observed producing violent and/or aggressive behaviors requiring administrator coding of the behavior into the district student information system (Infinite Campus) where the administrative determination of a consequence was also recorded.

Y₁ = study independent variable condition #1. Kindergarten students who received out-of-school suspensions for violent and/or aggressive behaviors

Y₂ = study independent variable condition #2. Kindergarten students who received non-exclusionary in-school disciplinary alternatives for violent and/or aggressive behaviors

Y₃ = study independent variable condition #3. First-grade students who received out-of-school suspensions for violent and/or aggressive behaviors

Y₄ = study independent variable condition #4. First-grade students who received non-exclusionary in-school disciplinary alternatives for violent and/or aggressive behaviors

Y₅ = study independent variable condition #5. Second-grade students who received out-of-school suspensions for violent and/or aggressive behaviors

Y₆ = study independent variable condition #6. Second-grade students who received non-exclusionary in-school disciplinary alternatives for violent and/or aggressive behaviors

Y₇ = study independent variable condition #7. Third-grade students who received out-of-school suspensions for violent and/or aggressive behaviors

Y₈ = study independent variable condition #8. Third-grade students who received non-exclusionary in-school disciplinary alternatives for violent and/or aggressive behaviors

O₁ = study posttest dependent measures. (1) End of third week following out-of-school suspension or following an in-school disciplinary alternative for violent and/or aggressive behaviors days 1 through 15 following return to the regular classroom cumulative recorded disciplinary incidences for (a) disruptive behaviors, (b) aggressive behaviors, and (c) violent behaviors.

O₂ = study post-posttest dependent measures. (1) End of sixth week following out-of-school suspensions or following an in-school disciplinary alternative for violent and/or aggressive behaviors days 16 through 30 following return to the regular classroom cumulative recorded disciplinary incidences for (a) disruptive behaviors, (b) aggressive behaviors, and (c) violent behaviors.

Research Questions and Data Analysis

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question

#1. Do kindergarten students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #1 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school

cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question

#2. Do kindergarten students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #2 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Post-Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research

Question #3. Do kindergarten students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors compared to kindergarten students in a large urban Midwestern

school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #3 utilized an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to compare the total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed four to six weeks after students returned to kindergarten following either an out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question

#4. Do first-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #4 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to

control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question

#5. Do first-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #5 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Post-Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research

Question #6. Do first-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors compared to first-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week four through week six post-

posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #6 utilized an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to compare the total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed four to six weeks after students returned to first-grade following either an out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question #7. Do second-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #7 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question

#8. Do second-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #8 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Post-Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research

Question #9. Do second-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors compared to second-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #9 utilized an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to compare the total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed four to six weeks after students returned to second-grade following either an out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question #10. Do third-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #10 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research Question #11. Do third-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive

behaviors have congruent or different week one through week three posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies compared to their week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #11 utilized a dependent *t* test of significance for the data observed to compare students' week one through week three posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies to their week four through week six post-posttest back to school cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies. An alpha level of .01 to control for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Overarching Post-Posttest, Post-Posttest Discipline Outcome Research

Question #12. Do third-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving exclusionary out-of-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors compared to third-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to class after receiving non-exclusionary in-school discipline for violent and/or aggressive behaviors have congruent or different week four through week six post-posttest back to class cumulative disruptive behavior, aggressive behavior, and violent behavior frequencies?

Analysis. Research Question #12 utilized an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to compare the total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed four to six weeks after students returned to third-grade following either an out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action. An alpha level of .01 to control

for Type I errors was utilized to test the null hypothesis for these frequencies. Mean frequencies and standard deviations were displayed in tables.

Data Collection Procedures

All data used in the research study were routinely collected, retrospective and archival. Permissions were obtained from appropriate school district personnel as well as from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and University of Nebraska at Omaha Institutional Review Board prior to starting research. Aggregated group data, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistical analysis were utilized and reported with means and standard deviations on tables.

Performance Site. The research study was conducted in the public school setting through normal educational practices. As the data was archival, the study did not in any way interfere with educational procedures and practices. There was no impact upon study participants. Data was stored on the computer of the primary researcher, which was kept in a locked cabinet. Individual identifiers were not attached to the data.

Confidentiality. Non-coded numbers were used to display individual de-identified achievement and skills data. Aggregated group data, descriptive statistics, and parametric statistical analysis were utilized and reported as means and standard deviations on tables.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects

Approval Category. The IRB determined this study to be exempt under 45 CFR 46:101b, category 4. The data collected was routine and archival, and the study procedures did not interfere in any way with normal educational practices. The research

school district did provide a letter of approval to the IRB board prior to the board granting final approval.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to compare the behavior outcomes of kindergarten, first-grade, second-grade, and third-grade students in a large urban Midwestern school district returning to school after receiving out-of-school suspensions for violent and/or aggressive behaviors with the behavior outcomes of same school district kindergarten, first-grade, second-grade, and third-grade students receiving non-exclusionary, in-school disciplinary alternatives for matched levels of violent and/or aggressive behaviors.

Implementation of the Independent Variable

The students included in the study exhibited violent or aggressive behavior at least one time during that school year to an extent that the behavior event was logged into the district student data system along with a resolution, or consequence, for the behavior resulting in either an exclusionary out of school suspension or an in school disciplinary alternative. The two disciplinary actions served as the study independent variables for students in kindergarten, first-grade, second-grade, and third-grade. The behavior incidents included in the study were limited to each student's first violent or aggressive behavior event of the research school year. School officials throughout the school year recorded all behavior data included in the study in the student data system. If the student did not attend school regularly or if the student left the district during either of his or her 15-day evaluation periods, that student was not included in the study.

Dependent Measures

The study's posttest dependent measures were: (1) End of third week following out-of-school suspension or following an in-school disciplinary alternative for violent and/or aggressive behaviors days 1 through 15 following return to the regular classroom cumulative recorded disciplinary incidences for (a) disruptive behaviors, (b) aggressive behaviors, and (c) violent behaviors. The study's post-posttest dependent measures were: (1) End of sixth week following out-of-school suspensions or following an in-school disciplinary alternative for violent and/or aggressive behaviors days 16 through 30 following return to the regular classroom cumulative recorded disciplinary incidences for (a) disruptive behaviors, (b) aggressive behaviors, and (c) violent behaviors.

All study achievement data related to each of the dependent variables were retrospective, archival, and routinely collected school information. Permission from the appropriate school research personnel was obtained before data were collected and analyzed.

Results

Table 1 displays demographic information of kindergarten students receiving out of school suspensions for aggressive or violent behavior. Table 2 displays demographic information of kindergarten students receiving in-school alternative disciplinary action for aggressive or violent behavior.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Kindergarten Students Receiving Out of School Suspensions for Aggressive or Violent Behavior

Number	Gender	Ethnicity ^a	Reason for Initial Discipline Decision
1.	Male	White	Violent
2.	Male	Non-White	Violent
3.	Male	White	Violent
4.	Female	White	Violent
5.	Male	White	Violent
6.	Male	Non-White	Violent
7.	Male	Non-White	Violent
8.	Female	Non-White	Violent
9.	Male	Non-White	Violent
10.	Male	Non-White	Violent
11.	Male	Non-White	Violent
12.	Female	Non-White	Violent
13.	Male	Non-White	Violent
14.	Male	Non-White	Violent
15.	Female	Non-White	Violent
16.	Male	Non-White	Violent
17.	Male	Non-White	Violent
18.	Male	Non-White	Aggressive
19.	Male	Non-White	Violent
20.	Female	Non-White	Violent

^aNote. Research school district-wide kindergarten ethnicity based on 2011 enrollment was 65.7% Non-White and 34.3% White.

Table 2

Demographic Information of Kindergarten Students Receiving In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action for Aggressive or Violent Behavior

Number	Gender	Ethnicity ^a	Reason for Initial Discipline Decision
1.	Male	Non-White	Violent
2.	Male	White	Violent
3.	Female	Non-White	Aggressive
4.	Male	Non-White	Violent
5.	Male	Non-White	Aggressive
6.	Female	Non-White	Violent
7.	Female	Non-White	Violent
8.	Female	White	Violent
9.	Female	Non-White	Violent
10.	Male	Non-White	Violent
11.	Female	Non-White	Aggressive
12.	Male	White	Violent
13.	Male	White	Aggressive
14.	Male	White	Aggressive
15.	Male	Non-White	Violent
16.	Male	Non-White	Violent
17.	Female	Non-White	Violent
18.	Male	White	Aggressive
19.	Male	White	Violent
20.	Female	White	Violent

^aNote. Research school district-wide kindergarten ethnicity based on 2011 enrollment was 65.7% Non-White and 34.3% White.

Table 3 displays dependent *t* test comparison of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed one to three weeks and four to six weeks after students returned to kindergarten following out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action.

Results for Research Question #1. As seen in Table 3, the null hypothesis for disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed one to three weeks posttest and four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to kindergarten following out of school suspension was rejected in the direction of post-posttest score improvement where the decreasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency for one to three weeks posttest was $M = 3.20$, $SD = 3.80$, and four to six weeks post-posttest was $M = 1.85$, $SD = 2.48$, and $t(19) = -2.22$, $p = .0019$ (one-tailed), $ES = -0.429$.

Results for Research Question #2. Also as seen in Table 3, the null hypothesis for disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed one to three weeks posttest and four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to kindergarten following an in-school alternative disciplinary action was not rejected in the direction of post-posttest score improvement where the decreasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency for one to three weeks posttest was $M = 0.35$, $SD = 0.57$, and four to six weeks post-posttest was $M = 0.30$, $SD = 0.90$, and $t(19) = -0.24$, $p = .4064$ (one-tailed), $ES = -0.068$.

Table 3

Dependent t Test Comparison of Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined, Observed One to Three Weeks and Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to Kindergarten Following Out of School Suspension or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary Action	Return to Kindergarten Classes						<i>t</i> ^c	<i>p</i>
	One to Three Weeks Mean Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behavior Incidences		Four to Six Weeks Mean Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behavior Incidences		<i>ES</i>			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
^a Suspension	3.20	(3.80)	1.85	(2.48)	-0.429	-2.22	.0019**	
^b Alternative	0.35	(0.57)	0.30	(0.90)	-0.068	-0.24	.4064 [†]	

Note. ^aStudents (*n* = 20) in kindergarten who received out of school suspension.

^bStudents (*n* = 20) in kindergarten who received in-school alternative disciplinary action.

^cNegative *t* result is in the direction of decreasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors.

[†]*ns.* ***p* < .01.

Results for Research Question #3. Table 4 displays Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed four to six weeks after students returned to kindergarten following out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action. As seen in Table 4, the null hypothesis was not rejected for four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to kindergarten following out of school suspension compared to four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to kindergarten following in-school alternative disciplinary action where disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined using ANCOVA adjusted posttest mean scores for students following out of school suspension ($M = 2.43$) and for students following an in-school alternative disciplinary action ($M = 1.12$) were not significantly different, $F(1, 37) = 3.40, p = .073$. Because no significant main effect was found, *post hoc* contrast analyses were not conducted where the rate of test score adjusted mean change equipose correlation $r = .68$ and coefficient of determination $r^2 = .47$.

Table 4

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Total Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined, Observed Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to Kindergarten Following Out of School Suspension^a or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action^b

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Adjusted Means	14.47	14.47	1	3.40	.073 [†]
Adjusted Error	157.50	4.26	37		

	Posttest	
	Observed Means	Adjusted Means
^a Students in kindergarten who received out of school suspension	3.20	2.43
^b Students in kindergarten who received in-school alternative disciplinary action	0.35	1.12

[†]*ns.*

Table 5 displays demographic information of first-grade students receiving out of school suspensions for aggressive or violent behavior. Table 6 displays demographic information of first-grade students receiving in-school alternative disciplinary action for aggressive or violent behavior.

Table 5

Demographic Information of First-Grade Students Receiving Out of School Suspensions for Aggressive or Violent Behavior

Number	Gender	Ethnicity ^a	Reason for Initial Discipline Decision
1.	Female	White	Violent
2.	Male	White	Violent
3.	Male	Non-White	Violent
4.	Male	White	Violent
5.	Male	White	Violent
6.	Male	White	Violent
7.	Female	White	Violent
8.	Male	Non-White	Violent
9.	Male	Non-White	Violent
10.	Male	Non-White	Violent
11.	Male	Non-White	Violent
12.	Female	Non-White	Violent
13.	Male	Non-White	Violent
14.	Male	Non-White	Violent
15.	Female	Non-White	Violent
16.	Male	Non-White	Aggressive
17.	Male	Non-White	Violent
18.	Male	Non-White	Violent
19.	Male	Non-White	Violent
20.	Female	Non-White	Violent

^aNote. Research school district-wide first-grade ethnicity based on 2011 enrollment was 66.9% Non-White and 33.1% White.

Table 6

Demographic Information of First-Grade Students Receiving In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action for Aggressive or Violent Behavior

Number	Gender	Ethnicity ^a	Reason for Initial Discipline Decision
1.	Male	Non-White	Aggressive
2.	Female	Non-White	Violent
3.	Male	Non-White	Aggressive
4.	Female	Non-White	Violent
5.	Male	Non-White	Violent
6.	Male	Non-White	Violent
7.	Male	Non-White	Violent
8.	Male	Non-White	Violent
9.	Male	Non-White	Violent
10.	Male	Non-White	Violent
11.	Female	Non-White	Aggressive
12.	Male	Non-White	Violent
13.	Male	Non-White	Violent
14.	Male	White	Violent
15.	Male	White	Violent
16.	Male	White	Aggressive
17.	Male	White	Violent
18.	Male	White	Violent
19.	Male	White	Violent
20.	Male	White	Violent

^a*Note.* Research school district-wide first-grade ethnicity based on 2011 enrollment was 66.9% Non-White and 33.1% White.

Table 7 displays dependent *t* test comparison of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed one to three weeks and four to six weeks after students returned to first-grade following out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action.

Results for Research Question #4. As seen in Table 7, the null hypothesis for disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed one to three weeks posttest and four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to first-grade following out of school suspension was not rejected in the direction of post-posttest score improvement where the decreasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency for one to three weeks posttest was $M = 1.45$, $SD = 2.39$, and four to six weeks post-posttest was $M = 0.80$, $SD = 1.36$, and $t(19) = -1.15$, $p = .1322$ (one-tailed), $ES = -0.346$.

Results for Research Question #5. Also as seen in Table 7, the null hypothesis for disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed one to three weeks posttest and four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to first-grade following an in-school alternative disciplinary action was not rejected in the direction of post-posttest score improvement where the decreasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency for one to three weeks posttest was $M = 0.70$, $SD = 0.90$, and four to six weeks post-posttest was $M = 0.50$, $SD = 0.92$, and $t(19) = -0.68$, $p = .2523$ (one-tailed), $ES = -0.219$.

Table 7

Dependent t Test Comparison of Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined Observed One to Three Weeks and Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to First-Grade Following Out of School Suspension or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary Action	Return to First Grade Classes						<i>t</i> ^c	<i>p</i>
	One to Three Weeks Mean Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behavior Incidences		Four to Six Weeks Mean Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behavior Incidences		<i>ES</i>			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
^a Suspension	1.45	(2.39)	0.80	(1.36)	-0.346	-1.15	.1322 [†]	
^b Alternative	0.70	(0.90)	0.50	(0.92)	-0.219	-0.68	.2523 [†]	

Note. ^aStudents (*n* = 20) in first-grade who received out of school suspension.

^bStudents (*n* = 20) in first-grade who received in-school alternative disciplinary action.

^cNegative *t* result is in the direction of decreasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors.

[†]*ns.*

Results for Research Question #6. Table 8 displays Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed four to six weeks after students returned to first-grade following out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action. As seen in Table 8, the null hypothesis was not rejected for four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to first-grade following out of school suspension compared to four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to first-grade following in-school alternative disciplinary action where disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined using ANCOVA adjusted posttest mean scores for students following out of school suspension ($M = 1.41$) and for students following an in-school alternative disciplinary action ($M = 0.74$) were not significantly different, $F(1, 37) = 1.26, p = .268$. Because no significant main effect was found *post hoc* contrast analyses were not conducted where the rate of test score adjusted mean change equipoise correlation $r = .19$ and coefficient of determination $r^2 = .04$.

Table 8

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Total Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined, Observed Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to First-Grade Following Out of School Suspension^a or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action^b

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Adjusted Means	4.32	4.32	1	1.26	.268 [†]
Adjusted Error	126.54	3.42	37		

	Posttest	
	Observed Means	Adjusted Means
^a Students in first-grade who received out of school suspension	1.45	1.41
^b Students in first-grade who received in-school alternative disciplinary action	0.70	0.74

[†]*ns.*

Table 9 displays demographic information of second-grade students receiving out of school suspensions for aggressive or violent behavior. Table 10 displays demographic information of second-grade students receiving in-school alternative disciplinary action for aggressive or violent behavior.

Table 9

Demographic Information of Second-Grade Students Receiving Out of School Suspensions for Aggressive or Violent Behavior

Number	Gender	Ethnicity ^a	Reason for Initial Discipline Decision
1.	Male	White	Violent
2.	Male	White	Violent
3.	Male	White	Violent
4.	Male	White	Violent
5.	Female	White	Violent
6.	Female	White	Violent
7.	Male	Non-White	Violent
8.	Male	Non-White	Violent
9.	Male	Non-White	Violent
10.	Male	Non-White	Violent
11.	Female	Non-White	Violent
12.	Male	Non-White	Violent
13.	Female	Non-White	Violent
14.	Male	Non-White	Violent
15.	Female	Non-White	Violent
16.	Male	Non-White	Violent
17.	Male	Non-White	Violent
18.	Male	Non-White	Violent
19.	Male	Non-White	Violent
20.	Male	Non-White	Aggressive

^aNote. Research school district-wide second-grade ethnicity based on 2011 enrollment was 68.2% Non-White and 31.8% White.

Table 10

Demographic Information of Second-Grade Students Receiving In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action for Aggressive or Violent Behavior

Number	Gender	Ethnicity ^a	Reason for Initial Discipline Decision
1.	Male	Non-White	Aggressive
2.	Male	Non-White	Violent
3.	Male	Non-White	Aggressive
4.	Male	Non-White	Violent
5.	Female	Non-White	Violent
6.	Male	Non-White	Aggressive
7.	Male	Non-White	Violent
8.	Male	Non-White	Violent
9.	Male	Non-White	Violent
10.	Female	Non-White	Violent
11.	Male	Non-White	Violent
12.	Male	Non-White	Aggressive
13.	Male	Non-White	Violent
14.	Male	Non-White	Violent
15.	Male	White	Violent
16.	Male	White	Aggressive
17.	Male	White	Violent
18.	Male	White	Violent
19.	Male	White	Violent
20.	Male	White	Violent

^aNote. Research school district-wide second-grade ethnicity based on 2011 enrollment was 68.2% Non-White and 31.8% White.

Table 11 displays dependent *t* test comparison of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed one to three weeks and four to six weeks after students returned to second-grade following out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action.

Results for Research Question #7. As seen in Table 11, the null hypothesis for disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed one to three weeks posttest and four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to second-grade following out of school suspension was rejected in the direction of post-posttest score improvement where the decreasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency for one to three weeks posttest was $M = 1.85$, $SD = 2.61$, and four to six weeks post-posttest was $M = 1.20$, $SD = 1.69$, and $t(19) = -1.99$, $p = .0305$ (one-tailed), $ES = -0.302$.

Results for Research Question #8. Also as seen in Table 11, the null hypothesis for disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed one to three weeks posttest and four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to second-grade following an in-school alternative disciplinary action was not rejected in the direction of post-posttest score improvement where the decreasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency for one to three weeks posttest was $M = 1.00$, $SD = 1.05$, and four to six weeks post-posttest was $M = 0.70$, $SD = 1.19$, and $t(19) = -1.19$, $p = .1243$ (one-tailed), $ES = -0.268$.

Table 11

Dependent t Test Comparison of Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined Observed One to Three Weeks and Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to Second-Grade Following Out of School Suspension or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary Action	Return to Second Grade Classes						<i>t</i> ^c	<i>p</i>
	One to Three Weeks Mean Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behavior Incidences		Four to Six Weeks Mean Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behavior Incidences		<i>ES</i>			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
^a Suspension	1.85	(2.61)	1.20	(1.69)	-0.302	-1.99	.0305*	
^b Alternative	1.00	(1.05)	0.70	(1.19)	-0.268	-1.19	.1243 [†]	

Note. ^aStudents ($n = 20$) in second-grade who received out of school suspension.

^bStudents ($n = 20$) in second-grade who received in-school alternative disciplinary action.

^cNegative t result is in the direction of decreasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors.

* $p < .05$. [†]*ns*.

Results for Research Question #9. Table 12 displays Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed four to six weeks after students returned to second-grade following out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action. As seen in Table 12, the null hypothesis was not rejected for four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to second-grade following out of school suspension compared to four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to second-grade following in-school alternative disciplinary action where disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined using ANCOVA adjusted posttest mean scores for students following out of school suspension ($M = 1.59$) and for students following an in-school alternative disciplinary action ($M = 1.26$) were not significantly different, $F(1, 37) = 0.59, p = .447$. Because no significant main effect was found *post hoc* contrast analyses were not conducted where the rate of test score adjusted mean change equipoise correlation $r = .77$ and coefficient of determination $r^2 = .59$.

Table 12

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Total Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined, Observed Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to Second-Grade Following Out of School Suspension^a or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action^b

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Adjusted Means	1.03	1.03	1	0.59	.447 [†]
Adjusted Error	64.54	1.74	37		

	Posttest	
	Observed Means	Adjusted Means
^a Students in second-grade who received out of school suspension	1.85	1.59
^b Students in second-grade who received in-school alternative disciplinary action	1.00	1.26

[†]*ns.*

Table 13 displays demographic information of third-grade students receiving out of school suspensions for aggressive or violent behavior. Table 14 displays demographic information of third-grade students receiving in-school alternative disciplinary action for aggressive or violent behavior.

Table 13

Demographic Information of Third-Grade Students Receiving Out of School Suspensions for Aggressive or Violent Behavior

Number	Gender	Ethnicity ^a	Reason for Initial Discipline Decision
1.	Male	Non-White	Violent
2.	Female	Non-White	Violent
3.	Female	Non-White	Violent
4.	Male	Non-White	Violent
5.	Male	Non-White	Violent
6.	Male	Non-White	Violent
7.	Male	Non-White	Violent
8.	Male	Non-White	Violent
9.	Male	Non-White	Violent
10.	Female	Non-White	Violent
11.	Male	Non-White	Violent
12.	Female	Non-White	Aggressive
13.	Male	Non-White	Aggressive
14.	Male	White	Violent
15.	Female	White	Violent
16.	Male	White	Aggressive
17.	Male	White	Violent
18.	Male	White	Aggressive
19.	Male	White	Aggressive
20.	Male	White	Violent

^aNote. Research school district-wide third-grade ethnicity based on 2011 enrollment was 66.4% Non-White and 33.6% White.

Table 14

Demographic Information of Third-Grade Students Receiving In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action for Aggressive or Violent Behavior

Number	Gender	Ethnicity ^a	Reason for Initial Discipline Decision
1.	Female	Non-White	Violent
2.	Male	Non-White	Violent
3.	Male	Non-White	Violent
4.	Male	Non-White	Violent
5.	Male	Non-White	Violent
6.	Male	Non-White	Violent
7.	Male	Non-White	Violent
8.	Male	Non-White	Violent
9.	Female	Non-White	Aggressive
10.	Male	Non-White	Violent
11.	Male	Non-White	Violent
12.	Male	Non-White	Violent
13.	Male	Non-White	Aggressive
14.	Male	White	Violent
15.	Male	White	Violent
16.	Male	White	Violent
17.	Male	White	Violent
18.	Male	White	Violent
19.	Male	White	Violent
20.	Male	White	Aggressive

^aNote. Research school district-wide third-grade ethnicity based on 2011 enrollment was 66.4% Non-White and 33.6% White.

Table 15 displays dependent *t* test comparison of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed one to three weeks and four to six weeks after students returned to third-grade following out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action.

Results for Research Question #10. As seen in Table 15, the null hypothesis for disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed one to three weeks posttest and four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to third-grade following out of school suspension was not rejected in the direction of post-posttest score worsening where the increasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency for one to three weeks posttest was $M = 1.10$, $SD = 1.67$, and four to six weeks post-posttest was $M = 1.45$, $SD = 2.11$, and $t(19) = 0.92$, $p = .1845$ (one-tailed), $ES = 0.185$.

Results for Research Question #11. Also as seen in Table 15, the null hypothesis for disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed one to three weeks posttest and four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to third-grade following an in-school alternative disciplinary action was rejected in the direction of post-posttest score worsening where the increasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency for one to three weeks posttest was $M = 0.45$, $SD = 0.97$, and four to six weeks post-posttest was $M = 0.70$, $SD = 1.35$, and $t(19) = 2.03$, $p = .0282$ (one-tailed), $ES = 0.216$.

Table 15

Dependent t Test Comparison of Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined Observed One to Three Weeks and Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to Third-Grade Following Out of School Suspension or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary Action	Return to Third Grade Classes						<i>t</i> ^c	<i>p</i>
	One to Three Weeks Mean Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behavior Incidences		Four to Six Weeks Mean Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behavior Incidences		<i>ES</i>			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
^a Suspension	1.10	(1.67)	1.45	(2.11)	0.185	0.92	.1845 [†]	
^b Alternative	0.45	(0.97)	0.70	(1.35)	0.216	2.03	.0282*	

Note. ^aStudents (*n* = 20) in third-grade who received out of school suspension.

^bStudents (*n* = 20) in third-grade who received in-school alternative disciplinary action.

^cPositive *t* result is in the direction of increasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors.

**p* < .05. [†]*ns*.

Results for Research Question #12. Table 16 displays Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined, observed four to six weeks after students returned to third-grade following out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action. As seen in Table 16, the null hypothesis was not rejected for four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to third-grade following out of school suspension compared to four to six weeks post-posttest after students returned to third-grade following in-school alternative disciplinary action where disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined using ANCOVA adjusted posttest mean scores for students following out of school suspension ($M = 0.89$) and for students following an in-school alternative disciplinary action ($M = 0.66$) were not significantly different, $F(1, 37) = 0.53, p = .471$. Because no significant main effect was found *post hoc* contrast analyses were not conducted where the rate of test score adjusted mean change equipoise correlation $r = .72$ and coefficient of determination $r^2 = .52$.

Table 16

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Total Disruptive, Aggressive, and Violent Behaviors Combined, Observed Four to Six Weeks After Students Returned to Third-Grade Following Out of School Suspension^a or In-School Alternative Disciplinary Action^b

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Adjusted Means	0.51	0.51	1	0.53	.471 [†]
Adjusted Error	35.82	0.97	37		

	Posttest	
	Observed Means	Adjusted Means
^a Students in third-grade who received out of school suspension	1.10	0.89
^b Students in third-grade who received in-school alternative disciplinary action	0.45	0.66

[†]*ns.*

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions and Discussion

The following conclusions may be drawn from the study for each of the twelve research questions.

Conclusions

Conclusions for Research Question #1. Inspecting the declining disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency change over time from one to three weeks posttest where students on average were observed with 3.20 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student compared to four to six weeks post-posttest where students on average were observed with 1.85 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student indicated that the average change in the combined mean disruptive, aggressive, and violent events per student who returned to kindergarten following out of school suspension ($M_D = -1.35$) was significantly different in the direction of improving behavior. However, any sustained improvement in students' disruptive, aggressive, and violent behavior events over time after returning from a required disciplinary intervention indicates in all likelihood the effects of continuous teacher classroom and schoolwide proactive behavior support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of students' positive on-task desirable behaviors rather than change based solely on the strength of the disciplinary intervention *per se*. Furthermore, some individual returning kindergarten students will require more intensive proactive behavior support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of positive on-task desirable behaviors in order to maintain classroom membership.

Conclusions for Research Question #2. Inspecting the declining disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency change over time from one to three weeks posttest where students on average were observed with 0.35 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student compared to four to six weeks post-posttest where students on average were observed with 0.30 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student indicated that the average change in the combined mean disruptive, aggressive, and violent events per student who returned to kindergarten following an in-school alternative disciplinary action ($M_D = -0.05$) was not significantly different in the direction of improving behavior. However, any sustained improvement in students' disruptive, aggressive, and violent behavior events over time after returning from a required disciplinary intervention indicates in all likelihood the effects of continuous teacher classroom and schoolwide proactive behavior support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of students' positive on-task desirable behaviors rather than change based solely on the strength of the disciplinary intervention *per se*. Furthermore, some individual returning kindergarten students will require more intensive proactive behavior support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of positive on-task desirable behaviors in order to maintain classroom membership. It should be pointed out that the frequency of misbehavior declined from just over one-third incident per student during the posttest period to just under one-third incident per student during the post-posttest period. Thus, the number of misbehavior incidents during each period was very low.

Conclusions for Research Question #3. Post-Posttest total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) adjusted

mean score comparison for students returning to kindergarten following out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action was not statistically different indicating a congruent post-posttest rate of intervention effectiveness over time with a coefficient of determination $r^2 = .47$ or 47% rate of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined frequency congruence. Equipose indicates that both disciplinary alternatives, out of school suspension and in-school alternative disciplinary action, may be viewed as necessary but not sufficient explanations for reducing students' disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors without sustained, robust, and positive teacher follow-up. Given this result it may be said that both exclusionary and in-school disciplinary actions may be thought of as equally effective or equally ineffective in reducing student incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors over time.

Conclusions for Research Question #4. Inspecting the declining disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency change over time from one to three weeks posttest where students on average were observed with 1.45 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student compared to four to six weeks post-posttest where students on average were observed with 0.80 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student indicated that the average change in the combined mean disruptive, aggressive, and violent events per student who returned to first-grade following out of school suspension ($M_D = -0.65$) was not significantly different in the direction of improving behavior. However, any sustained improvement in students' disruptive, aggressive, and violent behavior events over time after returning from a required disciplinary intervention indicates in all likelihood the effects of continuous teacher classroom and schoolwide proactive behavior

support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of students' positive on-task desirable behaviors rather than change based solely on the strength of the disciplinary intervention *per se*. Furthermore, some individual returning first-grade students will require more intensive proactive behavior support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of positive on-task desirable behaviors in order to maintain classroom membership.

Conclusions for Research Question #5. Inspecting the declining disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency change over time from one to three weeks posttest where students on average were observed with 0.70 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student compared to four to six weeks post-posttest where students on average were observed with 0.50 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student indicated that the average change in the combined mean disruptive, aggressive, and violent events per student who returned to first-grade following an in-school alternative disciplinary action ($M_D = -0.20$) was not significantly different in the direction of improving behavior. This sustained improvement in students' disruptive, aggressive, and violent behavior events over time after returning from a required disciplinary intervention, though not significant, indicates in all likelihood the effects of continuous teacher classroom and schoolwide proactive behavior support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of students' positive on-task desirable behaviors rather than change based solely on the strength of the disciplinary intervention *per se*. Furthermore, some individual returning first-grade students will require more intensive proactive behavior support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of positive on-task

desirable behaviors in order to maintain classroom membership. Again, it should be noted that during each evaluation period, the average number of misbehavior events was less than one per student and improved from seven tenths of a behavior event per student to one half of a behavior event per student.

Conclusions for Research Question #6. Post-Posttest total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) adjusted mean score comparison for students returning to first-grade following out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action was not statistically different indicating a congruent post-posttest rate of intervention effectiveness over time with a low coefficient of determination $r^2 = .04$ or 4% rate of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined frequency congruence. Equipoise indicates that both disciplinary alternatives, out of school suspension and in-school alternative disciplinary action, may be viewed as necessary but not sufficient explanations for reducing students' disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors without sustained, robust, and positive teacher follow-up. Given this result it may be said that both exclusionary and in-school disciplinary actions may be thought of as equally effective or equally ineffective in reducing student incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors over time.

Conclusions for Research Question #7. Inspecting the declining disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency change over time from one to three weeks posttest where students on average were observed with 1.85 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student compared to four to six weeks post-posttest where students on average were observed with 1.20 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student indicated

that the average change in the combined mean disruptive, aggressive, and violent events per student who returned to second-grade following out of school suspension ($M_D = -0.65$) was significantly different in the direction of improving behavior. This sustained improvement in students' disruptive, aggressive, and violent behavior events over time after returning from a required disciplinary intervention indicates in all likelihood the effects of continuous teacher classroom and schoolwide proactive behavior support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of students' positive on-task desirable behaviors rather than change based solely on the strength of the disciplinary intervention *per se*. Furthermore, some individual returning second-grade students will require more intensive proactive behavior support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of positive on-task desirable behaviors in order to maintain classroom membership.

Conclusions for Research Question #8. Inspecting the declining disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency change over time from one to three weeks posttest where students on average were observed with 1.00 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student compared to four to six weeks post-posttest where students on average were observed with 0.70 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student indicated that the average change in the combined mean disruptive, aggressive, and violent events per student who returned to second-grade following an in-school alternative disciplinary action ($M_D = -0.30$) was not significantly different in the direction of improving behavior. This sustained improvement in students' disruptive, aggressive, and violent behavior events over time after returning from a required disciplinary intervention, though not

significant, indicates in all likelihood the effects of continuous teacher classroom and schoolwide proactive behavior support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of students' positive on-task desirable behaviors rather than change based solely on the strength of the disciplinary intervention *per se*. Furthermore, some individual returning second-grade students will require more intensive proactive behavior support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of positive on-task desirable behaviors in order to maintain classroom membership.

Conclusions for Research Question #9. Post-Posttest total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) adjusted mean score comparison for students returning to second-grade following out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action was not statistically different indicating a congruent post-posttest rate of intervention effectiveness over time with a coefficient of determination $r^2 = .59$ or 59% rate of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined frequency congruence. Equipose indicates that both disciplinary alternatives, out of school suspension and in-school alternative disciplinary action, may be viewed as necessary but not sufficient explanations for reducing students' disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors without sustained, robust, and positive teacher follow-up. Given this result it may be said that both exclusionary and in-school disciplinary actions may be thought of as equally effective or equally ineffective in reducing student incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors over time.

Conclusions for Research Question #10. Inspecting the increasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency change over time from one to three weeks posttest where students on average were observed with 1.10

incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student compared to four to six weeks post-posttest where students on average were observed with 1.45 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student indicated that the average change in the combined mean disruptive, aggressive, and violent events per student who returned to third-grade following out of school suspension ($M_D = 0.35$) was not significantly different in the direction of worsening behavior. This sustained increase in students disruptive, aggressive, and violent behavior events over time after returning from a required disciplinary intervention indicates in all likelihood that some individual returning third-grade students will require more intensive proactive behavior support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of positive on-task desirable behaviors in order to maintain classroom membership.

Conclusions for Research Question #11. Inspecting the increasing disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined observed frequency change over time from one to three weeks posttest where students on average were observed with 0.45 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student compared to four to six weeks post-posttest where students on average were observed with 0.70 incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors recorded per student indicated that the average change in the combined mean disruptive, aggressive, and violent events per student who returned to third-grade following an in-school alternative disciplinary action ($M_D = 0.25$) was significantly different in the direction of worsening behavior. This sustained increase in students disruptive, aggressive, and violent behavior events over time after returning from a required disciplinary intervention indicates in all likelihood that some individual returning third-grade students will require more intensive

proactive behavior support, redirection to appropriate behaviors, and reinforcement of positive on-task desirable behaviors in order to maintain classroom membership.

Conclusions for Research Question #12. Post-Posttest total disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) adjusted mean score comparison for students returned to third-grade following out of school suspension or in-school alternative disciplinary action was not statistically different indicating a congruent post-posttest rate of intervention effectiveness over time with a coefficient of determination $r^2 = .52$ or 52% rate of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors combined frequency congruence. Equipose indicates that both disciplinary alternatives, out of school suspension and in-school alternative disciplinary action, may be viewed as necessary but not sufficient explanations for reducing students' disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors without sustained, robust, and positive teacher follow-up. Given this result it may be said that both exclusionary and in-school disciplinary actions may be thought of as equally effective or equally ineffective in reducing student incidences of disruptive, aggressive, and violent behaviors over time.

Discussion

The results of this study support the notion that school administrators and district level decision makers should strongly consider utilizing non-exclusionary consequences in response to the violent or aggressive misbehavior of young students. This consideration may be based upon the lack of statistical significance found in all four post-posttest—post-posttest, four to six weeks after administration of the disciplinary alternative, ANCOVA comparisons for kindergarten, first-grade, second-grade, and third-grade students indicating no intra-grade difference in the rate of behavior outcomes

change between students who were suspended out-of-school for violent or aggressive behavior and students who were assigned an in-school alternative consequence in response to their violent or aggressive behavior. Given this observed equipoise, the more aversive out of school alternative, which takes young students away from the very adults who can provide them with instruction and positive emotional support leading to self regulation and more positive replacement behaviors, should be discontinued.

And yet understandably, many elementary principals are frustrated with frequent instances of hitting, kicking, biting, and bullying. In the interest of a safe and secure learning environment, such behavior must be effectively addressed. However, school efforts can not start with the violent or aggressive event. In order to bring such events down to a manageable number, the first focus must be on management of antecedent environmental variables as prevention and primary intervention (Burns, 1985; Colvin, 2007; Knoff, 1984; Mattaini, 2001; Mayer, 1999; Skiba, et al., 1997; Smith & Lambert, 2008).

Implications for practice. In order to prevent most violence and aggression at school (as well as most other acting out behavior) schools serving young children must have a sound, preventive discipline plan in place (Sprick, 2009). By focusing on environmental factors, such a plan will create a learning environment that is *safe*, *predictable*, and *positive*. As detailed in Chapter 2, a school must have clear standards of conduct, which are taught to all students using the same best practice strategies used to teach academic content (Mayer & Leone, 1999; Mayer, 2002; Sprick, 2009). Appropriate social skills and problem-solving strategies must be taught alongside the expectations so that students will have the skill sets necessary to meet the expectations. Such primary-

level, schoolwide intervention provides all students with skills and strategies to be socially successful (Simonsen et al., 2008). In addition, watching and interacting with more socially competent children is a meaningful intervention for children who need higher levels of behavioral support (Frey et al., 2000).

Students and staff should know what is expected as well as the consequences for misbehavior. Initial consequences for misbehavior should be implemented within the setting such as the classroom or the playground. Time-for-time and restorative (apologizing, fixing what was broken, cleaning a mess) consequences can be effectively implemented in the setting where the misbehavior has occurred. School staff should reteach the rules and expectations and prompt students to follow the expectations as often as necessary for the vast majority of the students to be successful. Additionally, staff should give frequent feedback to students when they are doing well as well as when behavior needs to improve (OPS, 1999). School leaders must ensure that there is adequate and effective supervision of all areas of the school at all times. All staff must maintain positive relationships with students and families by acting with kindness, respect, and fairness. In addition to being best practices, these are all features of schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports (Colvin, 2007; Sailor et al., 2009).

When effectively implemented, such strategies will support most students to the extent that they will most often exhibit appropriate behavior (Colvin, 2007). Levels of implementation required will vary from classroom to classroom and school to school. For instance, some schools may have a majority of students who arrive very well socialized to environments similar to school. These schools will likely need to spend less

time teaching, practicing, and prompting school expectations than another school with a majority of students who are less familiar with environments similar to school. Such primary-level behavior support strategies should be able to effectively support about 80% of the students to be able to behave well the majority of the time (Frey et al., 2000). However, despite the primary level of behavior intervention, some students will display a need for additional, more individualized behavior support at school (Saeki et al., 2011).

In addition to a proactive discipline plan, schools that experience frequent student violent or aggressive behavior should have a response plan in place. Such a plan should include immediate consequences as well as longer-term follow up. A menu of immediate consequences should be available for school administrators to use, based on severity and frequency of the behavior (Sprick, 2007). Small group or individualized behavior support (follow-up response) can be designed based upon a number of bodies of literature and research. At the most basic level, the above-detailed schoolwide behavior support strategies can be applied in a more targeted way. Because young children who display an unusual amount of aggression often lack the ability to identify and interpret social cues, assume that others are hostile, and lack the social skills to problem-solve and respond to others appropriately in social situations (Buckley, 2000; Frey et al., 2000), school staff should also design interventions to assist students in developing these competencies. Research indicates that students can learn behavioral skills, and attainment of such skills reduces their aggression (Frey et al., 2000). Furthermore, it is important that school staff understand why and how to teach specific skills and how to encourage their use and development in young children. These skills include how to teach anger management, impulse control, social problem-solving, and empathy as a schoolwide or primary

intervention (Frey et al., 2000; Wenz-Gross & Upshur, 2012) that may also be used for highly individualized intervention.

If the cause of the student's behavior is determined to be something other than a lack of skills, other follow-up interventions can be designed. For example, a traditional or silent mentor can be assigned to a student to increase positive engagement and school connectedness (Michail, 2011). School expectations can be re-taught in a small group or one-on-one setting according to an ongoing schedule. Student-driven behavior monitoring charts can be used to formalize frequent positive behavior feedback for the student. Schedules can be adjusted to provide higher levels of supervision and positive staff interaction to reinforce students' observed on-task desirable incompatible alternative behaviors.

Implications for policy. At the school district level, the decision must be made and stated in policy: we do not suspend young children from school. Yet, such a policy cannot be implemented without significant support. The most important step a school district can take to support such a policy is to require and assist schools in developing a proactive schoolwide discipline plan. During the research year, the research school district implemented a district-wide action plan to raise student achievement that included components of schoolwide discipline. Over the past two years, the plan has been disseminated to all school leadership and staff in a number of ways. First, the action plan was linked to each individual school's annual improvement plan. Four of the ten months of annual professional development was planned around key instructional strategies and provided to schools. Based upon the research of Joyce and Showers (2002), the professional development plan for each month included a cycle of presentation of a

strategy, planning and practice, peer observations and use, and discussion and review of results. Coaching visits by school leadership and district support staff were used to support teaching staff throughout the professional development cycle. Such a cycle of professional development ensures high levels of transfer, or actual classroom use of the strategies (Joyce & Showers, 2002). High priority was placed on the coaching visits by both building administration and central office support staff. At every principal, assistant principal, data representative, curriculum or grade level meeting, the focus was on some aspect of the district action plan. Finally, staff was continually supported in using their relevant data to plan and adjust practices, from the individual student/classroom level to the school building to the district level. Such an intensive, intentional focus on connection, planning, best practices, and desired outcomes is necessary to implement change across a school district or even within a school building.

An additional element of implementing a discipline improvement plan within a school building is a representative team of staff who will drive the discipline improvement process (Knoff, 2000; Mayer, 1999; OPS, 1999; Sugai, 2009). This team should consist of teachers, administrators, support staff, and family members as an essential component of sustained school improvement (Bambara, Nonnemacher, & Kern, 2009; Chrispeels, Castillo, & Brown, 2000; Irwin & Farr, 2004; Knoff, 2000). One factor may be that a representative school leadership team is likely to consist of both experts in a particular discipline, i.e. curriculum, English language learners, classroom discipline, as well as experts in the school's context, i.e. the particular school climate, school norms, each individual student's personality and nuances (Knoff, 2000). This combination of

expertise can lead to research-based practices yet also eliminate those practices that are not practical for the setting or student (Irwin & Farr, 2004; Wood, 2007).

The team approach as well as the intentional link with all aspects of school planning and development seems to be at the heart of Senge's (2006) "fifth discipline", systems thinking. Collaboration among professionals can provide the context for implementing and sustaining improvement practices that includes the emotional support necessary to challenge established norms (Bambara et al., 2009). Senge (2006) wrote, "vision without systems thinking ends up painting lovely pictures of the future with no deep understanding of the forces that must be mastered to move from here to there" (p. 12). A representative group within the school building in addition to district-wide or schoolwide structured and connected planning will inherently provide the perspective to focus systemically.

In this research study, the behavior of young students, those in kindergarten through third-grade, was evaluated for two periods (posttest and post-posttest) following their return to school or class after receiving a consequence for exhibiting violent or aggressive behavior at school. Specifically violent or aggressive offenses were chosen because it seemed that those might be the most likely cases for school administrators to choose to use the most serious consequences at their disposal. It should be noted that in-school non-exclusionary alternative consequences varied from school to school because there is currently no clear research school district best practice policy for this disciplinary alternative to out of school suspension. Most often, the non-exclusionary alternative consequence involved use of the PAC room, a district-wide resource set up for reteaching skills and redirecting misbehavior. Because the research district includes over 60

elementary schools, it stands to reason that the effectiveness and structure of the PAC rooms differs from school to school. Furthermore, there was no assessment of any plan to follow-up the initial consequence with behavior support to help the child develop alternate coping strategies to utilize in lieu of violence or aggression. Thus, this research was not a comparison of exclusionary consequences versus the best-practice version of an alternative consequence, but rather a simpler comparison of out of school versus in school alternatives.

Early on in the research, a concern arose that the non-excluded groups were overrepresented by students who had committed less serious aggressive (non-touch) offenses and that the excluded groups were overrepresented by students who had committed more serious violent (touching) offenses. This was a real concern because the groups would then have been inherently different, and it was possible because the samples were selected from a large pool of students who had committed either violent or aggressive offenses. At first glance, it seemed that these overrepresentations were present. The offenses in the non-excluded groups were more likely to be categorized by more vague terms such as bullying or harassment. The offenses in the suspended groups were more likely to be categorized by more specific terms such as assault or fighting. For example, in the kindergarten groups, the suspended group included just 6 incidences of bullying or harassment and fourteen incidences of assault. For the same grade, the non-suspended group included fifteen incidences of bullying or harassment and five incidences of assault. There was similar disparity in both the first-grade and third-grade groups.

However, despite the differences in categorization of the behavior, when the narratives were examined there was much less disparity. Tables 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, and 14 show that for both groups in each grade, the majority of incidents were of a violent nature (i.e. included hitting, kicking, biting, or other offense involving hands on). Thus, as a group, school administrators tended to code similar behavior (i.e. hitting) as assault if they were going to suspend the child or in a more vague manner (i.e. bullying or harassment) if they were going to apply a non-exclusionary consequence. This may have been subconscious; if the administrator viewed the incident as less serious, he or she may have been hesitant to code it with such a definite term as assault. The phenomenon may also have been intentional in some cases; if the administrator felt that suspension was not appropriate, he or she may have been compelled to code an incident with a less-serious sounding name.

Implications for research. The results of this study point to the need for more behavior outcome research with young children. In particular, these study subjects could be followed for a longer period of time to evaluate behavior patterns going forward. Care would have to be taken in such research, as in this research, to acknowledge other variables impacting student behavior. An examination of follow-up intervention plans may also offer helpful insights in regard to young student behavior. An investigation of factors such as length of intervention and components of intervention in relation to behavior outcomes would provide assistance to schools in the design of such programs.

For elementary schools experiencing high levels of misbehavior and thus often consequently high rates of student suspension, reducing student suspensions may seem unreasonable, impossible and/or counterproductive. In-school alternative consequences

require significantly more resources and skills than do exclusionary consequences.

However in most cases, the most significant reduction in student suspension is the result of a sincere, well-organized, and highly prioritized commitment to supporting student behavior at school, utilizing well-established best practice strategies.

Consistently over the past five decades, scholarly articles have cited the immediacy of the escalating discipline problem in schools (Burns, 1985; Clarizio & Yelon, 1967; Clarke & Hunka, 1977; Daly & Fowler, 1988; Farrar & Neufeld, 1980; Mayer, 2001; Mayer, 2002; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Nichols, 2004; Swick, 1980). The articles have been grounded in the notions that student discipline is of particular concern *now*; societal factors have created a particularly difficult generation of students *now*; and often, *right now* public education is at the proverbial fork in the road, teetering on obsolescence. During the same half-century, educators and researchers from other disciplines have sought to answer the question, ‘what is effective discipline?’

The situation in education today is no different. Stakeholder groups such as parents, community members, the media, teachers, administrators, and even students are concerned with school safety, graduation rates, adequate yearly progress, the opportunity gap, truancy, and countless other issues that ultimately boil down to a school’s ability to attend to the business of teaching and learning. The irony of the current situation stems from the fact that, with a few exceptions, effective discipline research over the past fifty years has reached remarkably similar conclusions. Not a great deal has drastically changed; rather, the discipline has been slowly building upon itself.

Likely, the piece bringing the puzzle together in a sustaining fashion for educators has been the structural component. It has been within the past twenty years that

researchers have begun to expound and test the theory that effective practice must have a solid place within the structure, practices, and norms that make up the overall climate of the school building. Without that structure, the “train and hope” model prevails and best practice has no support for longevity or effective implementation. With strong leadership and focus, districts and schools can effectively implement discipline and response plans to significantly diminish the need and the notion to suspend young students out of school.

References

- Aamodt, S., & Wang S. (2011). *Welcome to your child's brain*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Balfanz, R., Herzog, L., & Mac Iver, D. J. (2007). Preventing student disengagement and keeping students on the graduation path in urban middle-grades schools: Early identification and effective interventions. *Educational Psychologist*, 42(4), 223-235. doi: 10.1080/00461520701621079
- Balliet, D., Mulder, L. B., & Van Lange, P.A. (2011). Reward, punishment, and cooperation: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137(4), 594-615. doi: 10.1037/a0023489
- Bambara, L. M., Nonnemacher, S., & Kern, L. (2009). Sustaining school-based individualized positive behavior support: Perceived barriers and enablers. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 11(3), 161-176. doi:10.1177/1098300708330878
- Bandura, A. (1962). Punishment revisited. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 26(4), 298-301. doi:10.1037/h0043740
- Baumrind, D. (1996). The discipline controversy revisited. *Family Relations*, 45 (4), 405-414. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/585170>
- Bear, G.G. (2012). Both suspension and alternatives work, depending on one's aim. *Journal of School Violence*, 11 (2), 174-186. doi:10.1080/15388220.2012.652914
- Berkowitz, L. (1983). Aversively stimulated aggression: Some parallels and differences in research with animals and humans. *American Psychologist*, 38(11), 1135-1144.

- Buckley, M. A. (2000). Cognitive-developmental considerations in violence prevention and intervention. *Professional School Counseling, 4*(1), 60-70. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/62250230?accountid=14692>
- Burns, J. A. (1985). Discipline: Why does it continue to be a problem? Solution is in changing school culture. *NASSP Bulletin, 69*(479), 1-5.
- Chesler, M., Crowfoot, J., & Bryant, B.I. (1979). Organizational context of school discipline: Analytic models and policy options. *Education and Urban Society, 11*(4), 496-510.
- Chrispeels, J. H., Castillo, S., & Brown, J. (2000b). School leadership teams: A process model of team development. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 11*(1), 20-56. doi: 10.1076/0924-3453
- Clarizio, H., & Yelon, S. (1967). Learning theory approaches to classroom management. *The Journal of Special Education, 1*(3), 267-274. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eoh&AN=17714607&site=ehost->
- Clarke, S. C., & Hunka, S. (1977). Comparative views on school discipline. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 23*(4), 305-316. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=1979-04498-001&site=ehost-live>
- Cohen, J., McCabe, L., Michelli, N. M., & Pickeral, T. (2009). School Climate: research, policy, practice, and teacher education. *Teacher College Record, 111*(1):180–213.
- Colvin, G. (2007). *7 steps for developing a proactive schoolwide discipline plan*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

- Colvin, G., Sugai, G., Good, R. H., & Lee, Y. (1997). Using active supervision and precorrection to improve transition behaviors in an elementary school. *School Psychology Quarterly, 12*(4), 344-363. doi:10.1037/h0088967
- Connolly, T., Dowd, T., Criste, A., Nelson, C. S., Tobias, L. (1997). *The well-managed classroom: Promoting student success through social skills instruction*. Boys Town, Nebraska: Boys Town Press.
- Daly, C., & Fowler, T. (1988). *Improving student discipline: Research in brief*. (Report No. IS-88-161-rib). Washington DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.
- Dragow, E., Yell, M. L., Bradley, R., Shriner, J. G. (1999). The IDEA amendments of 1997: A school-wide model for conducting functional behavior assessments and developing behavior intervention plans. *Education and Treatment of Children, 22*(3), 244-266.
- Englander, E. K. (2012). Spinning our wheels: Improving our ability to respond to bullying and cyberbullying. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 21*(1), 43-55. doi:10.1016/j.chc.2011.08.013
- Fablio, T., Thompson, M. D., Plotkin, M., Carmichael, D., Marchbanks, M. P., & Booth, E. A. (2011). *Breaking schools' rules: A statewide study of how school discipline relates to students' success and juvenile justice involvement*. (Report). New York: Public Policy Research Institute, Justice Center: The Council of State Governments.

- Farmer, T. W., Farmer, E. M., Estell, D. B., & Hutchins, B. C. (2007). The developmental dynamics of aggression and the prevention of school violence. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 15(4), 197-208. doi: 10.1177/10634266070150040201
- Farrar, E., & Neufeld, B. (1980). *Getting along: Negotiating authority in high schools. Final report*. Huron Institute: Cambridge, MA. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED203194>
- Fellmy, W. (1983). Keys to effective discipline: Making rules simple, clear, visible. *NASSP Bulletin*, 67(462), 68-70.
- Ford, B. (2012, February 12, 2012). Mass. schools suspend thousands under 'zero tolerance'. *North Andover Eagle-Tribune*, retrieved from <http://www.eagletribune.com>
- Frey, K. S., Hirschstein, M. K., Edstrom, L. V., & Snell, J. L. (2009). Observed reductions in school bullying, nonbullying aggression, and destructive bystander behavior: A longitudinal evaluation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101(2), 466-481. doi: 10.1037/a0013839
- Frey, K. S., Hirschstein, M. K., & Guzzo, B. A. (2000). Second step: Preventing aggression by promoting social competence. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 8(2), 102-112.
- Gilliam, W. S. (2008). *Implementing policies to reduce the likelihood of preschool expulsion*. (Policy brief no. 7). New Haven, CT: Foundation for Child Development.

- Gladden, R. M. (2002). Reducing school violence: Strengthening student programs and addressing the role of school organizations. *Review of Research in Education*, 26, pp. 263-299. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3568146>
- Goldstein, S., & Naglini J.A. (Ed.). (2011). *Encyclopedia of child behavior and development, volume I*. New York: Springer Science and Business Media.
- Green, R. W. (2008). *Lost at school: Why our kids with behavior problems are falling through the cracks and how we can help them*. New York: Scribner Press.
- Gregory, A., Cornell, D., Fan, X., Sheras, P., Shih, T., & Huang, F. (2010). Authoritative school discipline: High school practices associated with lower bullying and victimization. *Journal Of Educational Psychology*, 102(2), 483-496.
doi:10.1037/a0018562
- Hamre, B. K., & Pianta, R. C. (2001). Early teacher-child relationships and the trajectory of children's school outcomes through eighth grade. *Child Development*, 72(2), 625-638. doi: 10.1111/1467-8624.00301
- Hayden, C. (1994). Primary age children excluded from school: A multi agency focus for concern. *Children & Society*, 8(3), 257-273.
- Hayden, C. (1995). *Preventing primary school exclusion: What can education service based initiatives do?* Paper presented at a conference, "The Prevention and Management of Exclusion from School", York, England, UK. Retrieved from ERIC
- Haynes, B. (2005). The paradox of the excluded child. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 37(3), 333-341. doi: 10.1111/j.1469-5812.2005.00123

- Hirschfield, P. J. (2008). Preparing for prison? The criminalization of school discipline in the USA. *Theoretical Criminology*, *12*(1), 79-101.
doi:10.1177/1362480607085795
- Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., Smolkowski, K., Eber, L., Nakasato, J., Todd, A. W., & Esperanza, J. (2009). A randomized, wait-list controlled effectiveness trial assessing school-wide positive behavior support in elementary schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *11*(3), 133-144. doi:10.1177/1098300709332067
- Irwin, J. W., & Farr, W. (2004). Collaborative school communities that support teaching and learning. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, *20*(4), 343-363. Retrieved from <http://taylorandfrancis.metapress.com/link.asp?target=contribution&id=BC5K065LB18T2YVU>
- Jensen, E. (2009). *Teaching with poverty in mind*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).
- Joyce, B. R., & Showers, B. (2002) *Student achievement through staff development*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).
- Knoff, H. M. (1984). Conceptualizing discipline: A school psychologist's perspective. *NASSP Bulletin*, *68*(471), 80-85.
- Knoff, H. M. (2000). Organizational development and strategic planning for the millennium: A blueprint toward effective school discipline, safety, and crisis prevention. *Psychology in the Schools*, *37*(1), 17-32. doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1520-6807

- Ladenson, R. F. (2011). Limitations on legitimate authority to suspend and expel K-12 public school students: A moral analysis. *Theory and Research in Education*, 9(3), 265-281. doi: 10.1177/1477878511419561
- Lipsey, M. W. (1990). *Design sensitivity: Statistical power for experimental research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Losen, D.J. (2011). *Discipline Policies, Successful Schools, and Racial Justice*. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. Retrieved [date] from <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/discipline-policies>
- Losen, D. J., Martinez, T., & Gillespie, J. (2012). *Suspended education in California*. Los Angeles: The Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the Civil Rights Project at UCLA.
- Losen, D. J., & Skiba, R. J. (2010). *Suspended Education: Urban Middle Schools in Crisis*. Southern Poverty Law Center. Retrieved from http://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/downloads/publication/Suspended_Education.pdf
- Manning, M. A., & Bear, G. G. (2011). Moral reasoning and aggressive behavior: Concurrent and longitudinal relations. *Journal of School Violence*, 10(3), 258-280. doi:10.1080/15388220.2011.579235
- Mattaini, M. A. (2001). Construction cultures of non-violence: The peace power! strategy. *Education & Treatment of Children*, 24(4), 430-447. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hch&AN=5778419&site=ehost-live>

- Mayer, G. R. (1995). Preventing antisocial behavior in the schools. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 28*(4), 467-478.
- Mayer, G. R. (1999). Constructive discipline for school personnel. *Education & Treatment of Children, 22*(1), 36.
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=1883127&site=ehost-live>
- Mayer, G. R. (2001). Antisocial behavior: Its causes and prevention within our schools. *Education & Treatment of Children, 24*(4), 414. Retrieved from
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hch&AN=5778412&site=ehost-live>
- Mayer, G. R. (2002). Behavioral strategies to reduce school violence. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy, 24*(1-2), 83-100. doi:10.1300/J019v24n01
- Mayer, M. J., & Leone, P. (1999). A structural analysis of school violence and disruption: Implications for creating safer schools. *Education and Treatment of Children, 22*(3), 333-356.
- McCaffery, J. F., & Turner, D. S. (1970). Discipline in the Innovative School. *The Clearing House, 44*(8), 491-496..
- Meindl, J. N., & Casey, L. B. (2012). Increasing the suppressive effect of delayed punishers: A review of the basic and applied literature. *Behavioral Interventions, 27*(3). doi:10.1002/bin.1341
- Mendez, L. M. R., & Knoff, H. M. (2003). Who gets suspended from school and why: A demographic analysis of schools and disciplinary infractions in a large school district. *Education and Treatment of Children, 26*(1), 30-51.

- Mendez, L. M. R., Knoff, H. M., & Ferron, J. M. (2002). School demographic variables and out-of-school suspension rates: A quantitative and qualitative analysis of a large, ethnically diverse school district. *Psychology in the Schools, 39*(3), 259-277.
- Michail, S. (2011). Understanding school responses to students' challenging behaviour: A review of literature. *Improving Schools, 14*(2), 156-171. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/889926346?accountid=14692>
- Monahan, R. (2011, March 10). Elementary school suspensions, ages 4 to 10, jump 76% under Mayor Bloomberg's control of schools. *New York Daily News*, retrieved from <http://www.nydailynews.com>
- Nelson, J. (1985). The three R's of logical consequences, the three R's of punishment, and six steps for winning children over. *Individual Psychology, 42*, 161-165.
- Nichols, J. D. (2004). An exploration of discipline and suspension data. *Journal of Negro Education, 73*(4), 408-423. doi:10.2307/4129625
- Noguera, P. A. (2003). Schools, prisons, and social implications of punishment: Rethinking disciplinary practices. *Theory into Practice, 42*(4), 341-350. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/62004053?accountid=14692>
- Noltemeyer, A., & Mcloughlin, C. S. (2010). Patterns of exclusionary discipline by school typology, ethnicity, and their interaction. *Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education, 7*(1), 27-40. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/757170069?accountid=14692>

- O'Connor, E. E., Dearing, E., & Collins, B. A. (2011). Teacher-child relationship and behavior problem trajectories in elementary school. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(1), 120-162. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/851229183?accountid=14692>
- Omaha Public Schools. (2012). Omaha Public Schools Action plan. Retrieved from <http://www.ops.org/district/CENTRALOFFICES/CurriculumInstructionandAssesment/tabid/132/Default.aspx>
- Omaha Public Schools. (2011). *Secondary Code of Conduct and Records for Students*. Omaha, NE: OPS Printing and Publication.
- Omaha Public Schools. (1999). *Safe, Secure and Disciplined Schools Initiative*. Omaha, NE: Patricia Wells.
- Ornstein, A. C. (1969). Suggestions for improving discipline and teaching the disadvantaged. *Journal of Secondary Education*, 44, 99-106.
- Osher, D., Bear, G. G., Sprague, J. R., & Doyle, W. (2010). How can we improve school discipline? *Educational Researcher*, 39(1), 48-58. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/742862013?accountid=14692>
- Osler, A., Watling, R., Busher, H., Cole, T., & White, A. (2001). *Reasons for exclusion from school. research brief no. 24*. Department for Education and Employment, Annesley, Nottingham, UK. Web site: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research>. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/62352133?accountid=14692>
- Palardy, J. M., & Mudrey, J. E. (1973). Discipline: Four approaches. *The Elementary School Journal*, 73(6), 297-305. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1000910>

- Parke, R. D. (1969). Effectiveness of punishment as an interaction of intensity, timing, agent nurturance, and cognitive structuring. *Child Development*, 40(1), 213-235.
doi: 10.2307/1127169
- Perone, M. (2003). Negative effects of positive reinforcement. *The Behavior Analyst*, 26(1), 1-14.
- Quay, H. C., & Glavin, J. P. (1970). *The education of behaviorally disordered children in the public school setting: Interim report*. Report: ED053523. 113p.
- Redl, F. (1965). The concept of punishment. In Long, N.J., Morse, W.C., & Newnan, R.G., eds. *Conflict in the classroom: The education of emotionally disturbed children* (pp. 345-350). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Ryan, T. G., & Zoldy, S. (2011). Alternatives to suspension: A government initiative. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 20(4), 322-342. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/898322976?accountid=14692>
- Saba, R. G. (1977). The effect of unsolicited attention on the frequency of misbehavior in grade levels K-postsecondary. *Humanist Educator*, 16 (1).
- Sailor, W., Dunlap, G., Sugai, G., Horner, R., eds. (2009). *Handbook of Positive Behavior Support*. New York: Springer Science and Business Media, LLC.
- Saeki, E., Jimerson, S. R., Earhart, J., Hart, S. R., Renshaw, T., Singh, R. D., & Stewart, K. (2011). Response to intervention at the social, emotional, and behavioral domains: Current challenges and emerging possibilities. *Contemporary School Psychology*, 15.
- Shah, N. (2012). Oakland, OCR agree on plan to address student suspensions. *Education Week*, 32(7), 6-7.

- Simonsen, B., Fairbanks, S., Briesch, A., Myers, D., & Sugai, G. (2008). Evidence-based practices in classroom management: Considerations for research to practice. *Education and Treatment of Children, 31*(3), 351-380. Retrieved from <http://www.educationandtreatmentofchildren.net/>
- Simonsen, B., Sugai, G., & Negron, M. (2008). Schoolwide positive behavior supports: Primary systems and practices. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 40*(6), 32-40. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/61861604?accountid=14692>
- Skiba, R. J., & Peterson, R. L. (2000). School discipline at a crossroads: From zero tolerance to early response. *Exceptional Children, 66*(3), 335-346. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/62431798?accountid=14692>
- Skiba, R. J., Peterson, R. L., & Williams, T. (1997). Office referrals and suspension: Disciplinary intervention. *Education & Treatment of Children, 20*(3), 295. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hch&AN=195&site=ehost-live>
- Skiba, R. J., & Rausch, M. K. (2006). Zero tolerance, suspension, and expulsion: Questions of equity and effectiveness. In C. M. Evertson, & C. S. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues* (pp. 1063). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Slee, P. T., & Mohyla, J. (2007). The peace pack: An evaluation of interventions to reduce bullying in four Australian primary schools. *Educational Research, 49*(2), 103-114. doi:10.1080/00131880701369610

- Smith, P. K. (2011). Why interventions to reduce bullying and violence in schools may (or may not) succeed: Comments on this special section. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 35*(5), 419-423. doi:10.1177/0165025411407459
- Smith, R., & Lambert, M. (2008). Assuming the best. *Educational Leadership, 66*(1), 16-20. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.leo.lib.unomaha.edu/docview/61993903?accountid=14692>
- Spiel, C., Salmivalli, C., & Smith, P. K. (2011). Translational research: National strategies for violence prevention in school. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 35*(5), 381-382. doi:10.1177/0165025411407556
- Sprick, R. (2007, April). Progressive consequences: Do they work? [Safe and Civil Schools Newsletter]. Retrieved from <http://www.safeandcivilschools.com/newsletters/archive/06-07-4apr.php>
- Sprick, R. (2009). Doing discipline differently. *Principal Leadership, 9*(5), 18-22.
- St. George, D. (2012, February 12). Suspended from school in early grades. *Washington Post*, retrieved from www.washingtonpost.com
- Sugai, G. (2009). Beyond the discipline handbook: How schools can implement a positive approach to managing student behavior. *Education Digest: Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review, 75*(3), 37-41. Retrieved from <http://www.eddigest.com/sub.php?page=contents>
- Sugai, G., & Horner, R. (2002). The evolution of discipline practices: School-wide positive behavior supports. *Child and Family Behavior Therapy, 24* (1/2), 23-50. doi: 10.1300/J019v24n01_03

- Swick, K. J. (1980). *Disruptive student behavior in the classroom: What research says to the teacher*. National Education Association (NEA) Report. Retrieved from ERIC
- Testerman, J. (1996). Holding at-risk students. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 77(5), 364-365.
- US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. (2012). *2009-2010 civil rights data collection, data summary*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.
- Wager, B. R. (1993). No more suspension: Creating a shared ethical culture. *Educational Leadership*, 50(4), 34-37.
- Walker, H. M., & Mattson, R. H. (1967). *Identification and treatment of social-emotional problems: Interim report*. Report: ED022286. 118p.
- Weiner, L. (2003). Why is classroom management so vexing to urban teachers? *Theory into Practice*, 42(4), 305-312. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1477393>
- Wenz-Gross, M., & Upshur, C. (2012). Implementing a primary prevention social skills intervention in urban preschools: Factors associated with quality and fidelity. *Early Education and Development*, 23(4), 427-450. doi: 10.1080/10409289.2011.589043
- Wilson, S. J., Lipsey, M. W. (2007). School-based interventions for aggressive and disruptive behavior: Update of a meta-analysis. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 33(2 Suppl), S130-S143. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2007.04.011
- Wilson, S. J., Lipsey, M. W., & Derzon, J. H. (2003). The effects of school-based intervention programs on aggressive behavior: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology*, 71(1), 136-149. doi: 10.1037/0022-006X.71.1.136

- Winton, S. (2011). Managing conduct: A comparative policy analysis of safe schools policies in Toronto, Canada and Buffalo, USA. *Comparative Education*, 47(2), 247-263. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/881457436?accountid=14692>
- Wood, D. (2007). Teachers' learning communities: Catalyst for change or a new infrastructure for the status quo? *Teachers College Record*, 109(3), 699-739. Retrieved from <http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=12829>
- Wu, S. C.; Pink, W.; Crain, R.; & Moles, O. (1982). Student suspension: A critical reappraisal. *The Urban Review*, 14(4), 245-303. Doi: 10.1007/BF02171974
- Young, E. L., Boye, A. E., & Nelson, D. A. (2006). Relational aggression: Understanding, identifying, and responding in schools. *Psychology in the Schools*, 43(3), 297-312. doi:10.1002/pits.20148