3-2024

Childhood Discipline Disparities for African American and Latinx Students

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Abstract

African American and Latinx students are disproportionality impacted by punitive discipline models including suspensions, detention, and expulsions. This disproportionality removes students from the education setting creating adverse social emotional, academic, and economic outcomes. Students who are suspended and expelled are more likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system and or to be pushed out of school into alternative settings. Therefore, punitive discipline leads to increased school-based pathways to the juvenile justice system (SPJJ), also known as the school the prison pipeline (STPP). Despite knowledge of these adverse outcomes, schools continue to utilize punitive discipline practices. School psychologists are in a unique position to advocate for and model alternative discipline practices, as they work with all facets of the school system including students, teachers, families, special services providers, and administrators.

This dissertation investigated the experiences, practices, and resources that influenced educator mindsets and how these mindsets impacted the use of various discipline practices. This investigation sought to understand how school psychologists could support school systems in utilizing strengths-based and preventative discipline practices. Manuscript One offered an examination of current American mainstream discipline practices and the lifelong impacts it has on students. The literature review also examined the influences on the use of these practices including deficit-based models of thinking, implicit bias, and lack of mental health consultation and resources. The literature review demonstrated a gap in research related to discipline models and how school psychologists can advocate for and model strengths-based approaches. With this gap in mind, collaboration and advocacy for strengths-based models, such as restorative justice, were proposed.

Manuscript Two described a qualitative case study that examined the experiences, pedagogies, and internal and external factors that influence the use of various discipline practices used by educators from a large urban district. A rich description of each case as well as cross case thematic analysis was used to further understand the utilization of various discipline practices. Findings identified the most common punitive and preventative models of discipline practices utilized, external and internal influences on discipline, and common educator pedagogies ascribed by educators. Recommendations derived from the findings included advocacy for the implementation of strengths-based models of discipline, training on positive preventive practices, and culturally humble education environments.

Document Type

Dissertation

Degree Name

Ph.D.

First Advisor

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Second Advisor

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Keywords

Education, Discipline, Juvenile justice system, School psychology

Childhood Discipline Disparities for African American and Latinx Students

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A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

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March 2024

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Degree Date: March 2024

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This dissertation investigated the experiences, practices, and resources that influenced educator mindsets and how these mindsets impacted the use of various discipline practices. This investigation sought to understand how school psychologists could support school systems in utilizing strengths-based and preventative discipline practices. Manuscript One offered an examination of current American mainstream discipline practices and the lifelong impacts it has on students. The literature review also examined the influences on the use of these practices including deficit-based models of

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ABBREVIATIONS

ECE	Early Childhood Education
CE	Childhood Education
Pre-K	Prekindergarten
APA	American Psychological Association
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NASP	National Association for School Psychologist
NBCDI	National Black Child Development Institute
CRDC	Civil Rights Data Collection
ED	U.S. Department of Education
HHS	Health and Human Services
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
OCR	Office of Civil Rights
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social & Emotional Learning
ECERS	Early Childhood Education Rating Scales
SEL	Social Emotional Learning
SWPBIS	School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports
RJ	Restorative Justice
RJC	Restorative Justice Coordinator
RPC	Restorative Practices Coordinator
RC	Restorative Coordinator
DC	Dean of Culture
DB	Dean of Behavior
STPP	School to Prison Pipeline
SPJJ	School-based Pathways to the Juvenile Justice System
ISS	In School Suspension
OSS	Out of School Suspension
CRT	Critical Race Theory
CSP	Critical School Psychology
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

OPENING COMMENTARY

According to the National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP) *Principle for Professional Ethics* (2020), school psychologists have a special obligation to advocate for an equitable and quality education for all children based on their individual needs. Research informs us that providing children with high quality, nurturing preschool education leads to better outcomes for all students (Andersson, 1989; Bagnato et al. 2002; Bakken et al., 2017; Gormley et al., 2005). These positive outcomes persist well into secondary school when children continue to attend high quality elementary schools (Ansari & Pianta, 2018; Brownell et al., 2014; Entwisle & Hayduk, 1988; Pustjens et al., 2007). Despite this knowledge, there is a current and alarming trend of suspensions, expulsions, and punitive discipline across all academic settings. Such punitive trends adversely affect African American and Latinx youth. Punitive forms of discipline remove the child from their learning environment and therefore limit a child's access to equitable and quality education. Researchers have begun to explore the cause of these large percentages of suspensions and expulsions. Early research has described implicit bias, deficit mindsets, and a lack of mental health and behavioral supports as reasons for this discipline disproportionality (Adamu & Hogan, 2015; Albritton et al., 2016; Bryan, 2017; Durden et al., 2014; Gilliam & Reyes, 2018; Gilliam et al., 2016; Howard, 2013; Martin et al., 2018; Quintana & Mahgoub, 2016; Souto-Manning, 2013;

Souto-Manning & Rabadi-Raol, 2018). School psychologists sit at a unique intersection to address these issues, providing interventions and services that support the healthy social-emotional development of students as well as providing culturally humble consultation to educators, administrators, and school systems around disrupting and revamping discipline practices.

This dissertation includes two connected manuscripts investigating discipline practices, educator mindsets, internal and external influences, and how school psychologists are in a unique position to advocate for positive systemic change including utilizing more strengths-based discipline practices. The first manuscript explores current discipline practices and their impacts. The literature review also examines the use of these practices and their influences including deficit-based models of thinking, implicit bias, and lack of consultation and resources. The literature review demonstrates a gap in research related to discipline models and how school psychologists can advocate for and model strengths-based approaches. With this gap in mind, collaboration and advocacy for strengths-based models such as restorative justice are proposed.

In order to add to the literature on supporting strengths-based discipline practices, a qualitative case study examining educators' mindsets and usage of discipline practices was explored in Manuscript Two. The qualitative study examined five cases within a large urban district. The study addressed three research questions: (1) How do educators ascribe meaning to their use of discipline practices?; (2) What internal and external factors influence educators use of discipline practices?; and (3) How do educators ascribe meaning to their discipline pedagogy? As stated in research question one, ascribed

meaning to their use of discipline focused on how educators defined the various types of discipline they used and why they used it. In research question three, ascribed meaning to their discipline pedagogy focused on how they conceptualized the overall theme or type of discipline they used. These questions sought to answer the when, why, and how of discipline usage.

Interviews with educators and data review provided in-depth insight into the experiences, mindsets, and factors that influenced educators' use of various discipline practices. The cross-case analysis found five main themes: common types of discipline, positive preventive practices, external influences on discipline, internal influences on discipline, and discipline pedagogy. These two manuscripts attempted to fill the gap in literature related to punitive discipline practices and the disproportionality of African American and Latinx students, deficit models of thinking, and school psychologists as potential change agents in this area. This dissertation provided concrete solutions for school psychologists to utilize in supporting their school's use of preventative and restorative discipline practices. These solutions included advocating for strengths-based models of discipline, training educators in strength-based preventive practices, and universal changes to stagnant mindsets through culturally humble practices.

This dissertation was a call to practice to school psychologist to help increase access to quality childhood education by decreasing the discipline disproportionality African American and Latinx students have faced since the creation of the American school system. By increasing the number of school psychologists in all childhood academic settings, providing educators and administrators with strengths based, culturally

humble training and consultation, and dismantling deficit based and punitive systems of thinking, African American and Latinx students can begin to equitably access the myriad of social, emotional, and economic benefits high quality educational environments provide. Overall, the aim was to promote a better understanding of how school psychologists could promote effective strengths based and culturally humble practices for African American and Latinx students to thrive and retain access to high quality education and the positive lifelong pathways it creates.

MANUSCRIPT ONE

Building the Case for Strengths Based Education Practices for African American and Latinx Students

Childhood education (CE) has long been regarded as an important learning environment for young children as they are able to learn foundational social-emotional and academic skills. High-quality early childhood schools are seen as the most effective environment for this learning to happen. Once students acquire these skills, they are able to maintain them with access to high-quality elementary settings. However, which students have access to these high-quality settings has always been cause for concern. For the purposes of this paper, early child education (ECE) will be defined as settings serving children ages three to five while elementary education settings are schools that serve children in kindergarten through fifth grade. When referring to this population as a whole, the term childhood education will be used to encompass children in preschool through 5th grade.

Gilliam (2005) published groundbreaking research exposing the phenomenon of prekindergartners left behind due to discipline disparities. This was the nation's first look at suspension and expulsion rates at the ECE level. It was determined that prekindergartners were expelled at a rate of more than three times that of K-12 students. The study concluded that the likelihood of expulsion significantly decreased when the classroom teacher had access to behavioral consultation. However, it was not until almost

ten years later that this issue gained national attention when the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the United States Department of Education (ED) released a joint policy statement describing this phenomenon and provided recommendations to decrease the discipline disparities and use of suspension and expulsion in early childhood settings (2014). Their recommendations included bias free policies, early childhood mental health consultation, positive behavior supports, and eliminating the use of suspension and expulsions in ECE centers.

It was also in 2014 that the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) released national data on the disproportionate suspension and expulsion rates of ethnically and racially diverse students. This data showed that African American students, specifically, were most frequently subject to punitive and restrictive discipline across all academic settings. Despite this disproportionality, elementary settings have not had the same discipline reform as ECE settings and discipline disparities have been exacerbated as a result. In the early 2000's, districts across the country started to shift away from zero-tolerance policies, but this shift has not alleviated the discipline disparities we see today (Black, 2016; Riter, 2018). Many districts moved from expulsions and out of school suspensions (OSS) to in school suspensions (ISS). However, this model has only continued to remove high rates of African American and Latinx students from the classroom (Wiley, 2018).

Although the aforementioned data, policy shifts, and policy statement were released over ten years ago, many childhood programs still utilize discipline practices that remove students from the learning environment and there continues to be a lack of

mental health consultants in CE settings. This phenomenon also continues to disproportionately impact African American and Latinx students. This disproportionality is great cause for concern and will be used to frame the narrow focus of this paper: an examination of research that acknowledges why African American and Latinx students are losing access to high-quality CE settings and a call to practice for school psychologists as social justice change agents.

Statement of the Problem

For many children, foundational social-emotional, and academic skills are established in ECE settings and the formative elementary school years. However, when a child is removed from the learning environment, they are not able to build upon these foundational skills. There is a long and current trend in childhood education in which teachers and administrators use suspension and expulsion as a form of punitive discipline. Researchers refer to this as push out, noting that starting in preschool, children are suspended and expelled at a rate three times more than K-12 students (Gansen, 2019; Gilliam, 2005; Henneman, 2014; Morris, 2016). This push out phenomenon disproportionally impacts African American and Latinx students. Disproportionality refers to a group's representation that exceeds the expectations of that group or differs substantially from the representation of others in a category, and will be used to explain to the overrepresentation of ethnically and racially diverse students in punitive discipline pathways (NASP, 2013; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2011). This disproportionate use of suspension and expulsion leads African American and Latinx students to lose access to

high-quality education at rates much higher than their White counterparts and therefore contributes to poorer educational and social-emotional outcomes for these students.

This system of inequity begins in ECE. However, research has shown that a number of approaches can disrupt this system, including additional access to behavioral support for teachers, mental health consultation services, and positive discipline policies encompassing social and restorative justice practices (Gilliam, 2016; HHS/ED, 2014; NBCDI, 2018). However, these approaches are not utilized comprehensively in today's CE settings.

Review of the Literature

To better understand the adverse impact of suspension and expulsion on African American and Latinx students, high-quality CE settings must be defined and the benefits highlighted. One must also understand who has access to high-quality schools and the impact a lack of access creates. Last, the literature review will describe reasons for this phenomenon including a discussion around deficit models of thinking and implicit bias. This will lay the foundation to conceptualize the needed supports to disrupt this system and gain an understanding to what students are missing out on when they are suspended or expelled from school.

High-Quality Education

There are many terms and indicators of high-quality by state, district, and education level. It is important to explore the many definitions of high-quality in order to take a closer look at how high-quality education systems provide positive academic and social-emotional outcomes. When analyzing the standards, it is also important to

understand how the quality indicators are conceptualized and how they are supposed to work, including who they are designed to benefit. The variation of high-quality indicators leads practitioners to try and use them as a one-size fits all. The sections below will conceptualize various indicators by their strengths and weaknesses and provide examples of less used but more culturally relevant high-quality standards.

High-Quality Early Childhood Education

When thinking about the benefits of high-quality education, it is important to understand how ECE quality indicators came to be. Gilliam (2016) described how high-quality indicators for ECE settings were created as a response to the overwhelming research on the benefits of early education opportunities. This research was done primarily on African American children. He writes,

> We have used data belonging to Black children to build the case for early education opportunities for all of our children, and then turned our collective attention elsewhere when those same children are disproportionately excluded from the programs their data were used to create (p. 8).

Therefore, high-quality ECE is well researched, however indicators were created off the backs of African American children without contextual input into how those indicators benefit them. There are many national organizations that define what high-quality ECE is. There are many academic, social-emotional, and teacher-specific guidelines that show what high-quality looks like. Albritton et al. (2016) reviewed various programs and found that high-quality programs are usually characterized by:

> The use of research-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum and strategies, well prepared teachers with backgrounds in early education and child development, intentional well-planned interactions between children and teachers, and opportunities to engage families meaningfully in their child's development and learning (p. 240).

These indicators are well intentioned yet vague and offer no guidance on integrating cultural humility.

When looking at quality standards in ECE settings, Locasale-Crouch et al. (2007) observed quality profiles of state-funded pre-kindergarten (pre-K) programs and found five various profiles, with profile one describing programs above the quality standards with positive emotional climate and high instructional quality (highest quality) and profile five describing a program operating below the quality standards with poor emotional climate and low instructional quality (lowest quality). The majority of the programs (31.4%) fell within profile three or the average range with positive emotional climate and mediocre instructional quality. However, the researchers found that few African American and Latinx students attended profile one programs and instead made up the highest proportion of students in profile five programs (Locasale-Crouch et al., 2007). High-quality indicators included positive climate, teacher sensitivity, behavior management, quality feedback, and consistent social-emotional and instructional support to children. These quality indicators did not focus on cultural humility and displayed the inequitable access African American and Latinx have to high-quality education settings. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) also created standards that many ECE training programs follow for teacher training, as well as for child development. These standards describe an optimal learning environment for all

children and describe how children should thrive in ECE settings. The NAEYC (2019) accredits programs based upon ten standards: relationships, curriculum, teaching, assessment of child progress, health, staff competencies, preparation, supports, families, community relationships, physical environment, and leadership and management. Standard three, teaching, includes "using a variety of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching approaches that enhance each child's learning and development in the context of the programs curriculum goals" (p. 3). Although the NAEYC defines these high-quality standards, they have no standards around discipline or a teacher's cultural responsiveness. Garrity et al. (2017) reviewed 282 NAEYC accredited programs utilizing the Early Childhood Discipline Policy Essentials Checklist (EC-DPEC). The checklist utilizes nine essential features that focus on preventative discipline practices. The nine standards are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Early Childhood Discipline Policy Essentials Checklist (EC-DPEC)

Early Childhood Discipline Policy Essentials Checklist
1. Reflect an instructional, proactive approach to guidance that supports the learning and practice of appropriate prosocial behavior.
2. Identify primary secondary and tertiary preventative and intervention practices for promoting prosocial behavior and reducing challenging behavior in young children.
3. Describe clear and consistent expectations for behavior
4. Describe behavior expectation that are developmentally appropriate and essential to social academic success
5. Recommend evidence based and developmentally appropriate guidance strategies for promoting prosocial behavior and reducing challenging behavior
6. Emphasize the importance of sufficient and active adult supervision
7. Reflect the family centered nature of early childhood education

8. Ensure that staff has access to training and technical assistance in implementing policy guidelines and promoting the social competence of young children
9. Reference the use of data collection system by which the relative success or failure of the guidance policy will be evaluated.

Note. Adapted from "An Examination of the Quality of Discipline Policies in NAEYC-Accredited Early Care and Education Programs," by S. Garrity, S. Longstreth, and Linder, L, 2017, *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education,* 37, 94-106.

Garrity et al. (2017) found that over half of the sites did not utilize evidence-based discipline strategies and did not meet over half of the guidelines described by the EC-DPEC. The high-quality indicators described by the NAEYC are a foundational tool that ECE settings base their curriculum. However, there are no direct policies or guidelines for schools in terms of discipline, and many schools considered to be high-quality are not following the standards that are in place.

Not only are NAEYC programs not meeting the NAEYC standards, the standards themselves are not culturally responsive. Rashid (2009) notes curriculum quality and relevance is often not developmentally appropriate or culturally relevant for African American and Latinx learners. Bailey and Boykin (2001) give the example of African American children preferring movement and stimulus variability. Movement and various physical activities are often not an indicator of high-quality ECE settings. Brown et al. (2009) analyzed physical activity levels of preschoolers and found that a typical preschool day is comprised of only 11% of physical activity. Rashid (2009) concludes high-quality indicators in ECE settings are seen as a "one size fits all" (p. 354). This model, however, does not include sociocultural and contextual factors for African American and Latinx students. Rashid (2009) provides high-quality indicators for African American boys which include highlighting assets of African American boys, warmth and

control as dimensions of effective socialization, individualized literacy representation, and high levels of vigorous physical activity. High-quality indicators for ECE settings need specific indicators for cultural humility and flexibility to allow ECE centers to meet the unique needs of all students.

High-Quality Childhood Education

Learning standards for CE settings vary widely by state as each state creates their own curriculum for the students they serve. The U.S. Department of Education monitors student success by state, utilizing academic achievement outcomes from standardized assessments for English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies/history (NCES, 2020). The U.S. Department of Education does not provide high-quality indicators. Individual state education boards often use the term developmentally appropriate practice or teacher quality. Once children transition to elementary school, the focus moves heavily to the teacher and their training to produce high-quality education for elementary children. A report by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) in 2015 looked at issues of teacher quality in elementary and secondary education. They found that African American and Latinx students had less access to high-quality teachers compared to their White counter parts. In this report, a high-quality teacher was defined as a teacher that possesses a baccalaureate degree, full state teaching certification, and subject-matter knowledge in all the areas that he or she teaches (CRS, 2015). Teacher quality at the national level has no relation or standards for cultural humility, social-emotional teaching, or working with diverse learners.

Additional research has been conducted taking a more comprehensive look at elementary quality. Wilson et al. (2007) assessed over 800 first grade classrooms across the United States and found four profiles of quality. Classrooms were assessed by positive or negative emotional climate, overcontrol, classroom management, literacy instruction, and evaluative feedback. Type one was described as a positive emotional climate with lower academic demand; type two was described as the highest quality across all indicators; and type three was rated as mediocre across all indicators. Type four was described as overall low quality with a negative emotional climate and inconsistent academic demand. Ansari and Pianta (2018) looked at elementary quality and how it impacts the positive effects of high-quality ECE settings. They described elementary quality based upon school strain, school safety practices, academic performance, instructional resources, school climate, and school violence and crime. The researchers concluded that students that attended a high-quality setting based upon these indicators sustained the academic benefits provided by high-quality ECE programs well into 5th grade compared to students who did not. This study shows the benefits of high-quality elementary education; however, these indicators also do not take cultural humility or experiences for African American and Latinx learners into account. High-quality and its impact are measured by academic performance and not social-emotional performance.

NBCDI: Affirming and Inclusive Settings

High-quality standards need to expand and evolve to include culturally humble learning spaces for African American and Latinx students. The National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI, 2018) has created standards for Nurturing and Inclusive

Learning Environments for African American students. These standards describe the optimal learning environment for Black students specifically. They define six standards that if utilized, will promote optimal learning. The characteristics are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Characteristics of Inclusive and Affirming Learning Environments for Black Children

1. Collaborative relationships with families
2. Connections to their home language, traditions, and lived experiences
3. Fun and engaging learning content that incorporates children's racial and ethnic heritage within caring, family, and community type environments.
4. Interactions that build on their positive racial and self-identity
5. Warm demander with high expectations
6. Fair, non-judgmental disciplinary practices free of racial bias and microaggressions

Note. From "Delivering on the Promise of Effective Early Childhood Education [Position Statement]," by *National Black Child Development Institute,* 2018, (https://www.nbcdi.org/sites/default/files/resource-files/Delivering%20on%20the%20Promise%20of%20Effective%20Early%20Childhood%20Education.pdf).

The indicators are specific and provide indicators for discipline, academics, social-emotional learning, and student and family engagement. Although these indicators were created for African American learners, they would benefit all students as they focus on incorporating a child's culture and background into the classroom. This model can be applied to all classrooms and all students by creating inclusive and affirming learning environments.

Benefits of High-Quality Education

There is a plethora of well researched academic and social-emotional benefits for children who attend high-quality schools. This study refers to ECE as a critical period for

developing foundational skills in linguistic, cognitive, social, and emotional (Andersson, 1989; Bagnato et al. 2002; Bakken et al., 2017; Gormley et al., 2005). The foundational learning during this period allows children to build the necessary skills needed to succeed in future educational and social settings. Access to high-quality education predicts future prosocial functioning and positive academic outcomes (Barnett & Ackerman, 2006). Once these benefits are in place, high-quality elementary education helps maintain these benefits and further promotes positive academic, cognitive, and prosocial outcomes (Ansari & Pianta, 2018).

Academic and Social-Emotional Benefits in Early Childhood Education

Children receive academic and social-emotional benefits from attending high-quality ECE programs. This is displayed in longitudinal increases in math, language, social, and cognitive skills. Research has explored the various long-term academic impacts for children who attend high-quality ECE programs. Bakken et al. (2017) looked at programs that were certified as high-quality by The Opportunity Project. They found that by 3rd and 4th grade students who attended high-quality ECE programs scored significantly higher on math and reading tests compared to the control group. 93% of the children in the group were economically disadvantaged and 79% of the group were racially and ethnically diverse.

Burchinal et al. (2000) rated programs as high-quality utilizing the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS). Findings concluded African American students who attended high-quality childcare centers had significantly higher scores in cognitive, language, and communication abilities. Researchers also found that quality

was more strongly related to language skills for children from historically marginalized backgrounds (Burchinal et al, 2000). Peisner-Feinberg et al. (2001) also specifically found benefits related to language and math. When exploring high-quality classroom practices and closer teacher relationships utilizing the ECERS, they concluded students had higher language scores. Higher math scores were also associated with high-quality classroom practices well into kindergarten. Closer teacher-child relationships have consistently been seen as a positive predictor of higher academic outcomes and are considered an indicator of high-quality (Birch & Ladd, 1998; Hamre & Pianta, 2007; Howes et al., 2008).

Gormely et al. (2005) explored the impacts of the 1998 Oklahoma universal pre-kindergarten program. They found that Latinx children benefited the most followed by African American children in terms of language and cognitive skills. By age seven students also had notably higher math scores. The High Scope Perry Preschool study examined the longitudinal impacts of high-quality Piagetian preschool interventions for African American children (Schweinhart et al., 1993). The age 40 follow up showed the students in the intervention group displayed higher graduation, employment, and average salary rates, and were less likely to commit crimes (Schweinhart et al., 2015).

Early access to high-quality education also leads to early experiences with peers and social-emotional learning. These early interactions coupled with scaffolding from high-quality early childhood instructions create the foundation for positive prosocial skills. The Bakken et al. (2017) study described above also explored the social-emotional outcomes of high-quality ECE programs. Results indicated that by third and fourth grade

students had higher attendance rates, used significantly more appropriate behaviors, received significantly fewer discipline referrals, were significantly better at social interactions, and were significantly seen as more mature. Burchinal et al. (2000) also found that children who had access to high-quality ECE programs were less likely to have problematic behavior later in life. As mentioned above, Peisner-Feinberg et al. (2001) looked at the cognitive and social-emotional long-term benefits of high-quality ECE programs. The researchers utilized the ECERS to examine classroom practices and the environment. They concluded that while high-quality classroom practices were related to stronger language and academic skills, closeness of the teacher-child relationship strongly impacted cognitive and social skills going into second grade (Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2001). More specifically, they found teachers reported less behavior problems and higher levels of sociability into second grade.

Early academic experiences are vital to a young child's success. ECE not only serves to help young children learn academic concepts, but also teaches them how to self-regulate, problem solve, and build relationships. Such skill development constitutes the foundation of social-emotional and academic learning, a vital initiative of school psychologists (McKevitt, 2012). Without these foundational skills, children are not able to access and navigate their educational environment appropriately.

Academic and Social-Emotional Benefits in Elementary Education

Children receive just as many academic and social-emotional benefits with high-quality elementary education. Research has shown that students who receive high-quality teacher interactions in first through third grade displayed higher reading and mathematics

scores four to nine years later, showing long lasting impact (Entwisle & Hayduk, 1988). Other researchers have explored the short term impacts elementary education has on students' academic performance. Pustjens et al. (2007) reported mathematics and language scores were higher two years after students left elementary school. Their sample included an overrepresentation of private schools which were seen as high-quality compared to the sample of public schools.

Along with academic benefits, elementary education provides great social-emotional benefits. Universal social-emotional curriculum provided in elementary school includes lessons in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2013). A meta-analysis conducted revealed that students who received social-emotional curriculum during elementary school performed better academically compared to students who did not (Sklad et al., 2012). Students showed an 11% gain in academic achievement as well as improvements in conduct, discipline, prosocial behavior, and emotional regulation. Research also found social-emotional learning in elementary schools produces long term social-emotional benefit as students reported higher paying jobs (Dusenbury et al., 2015).

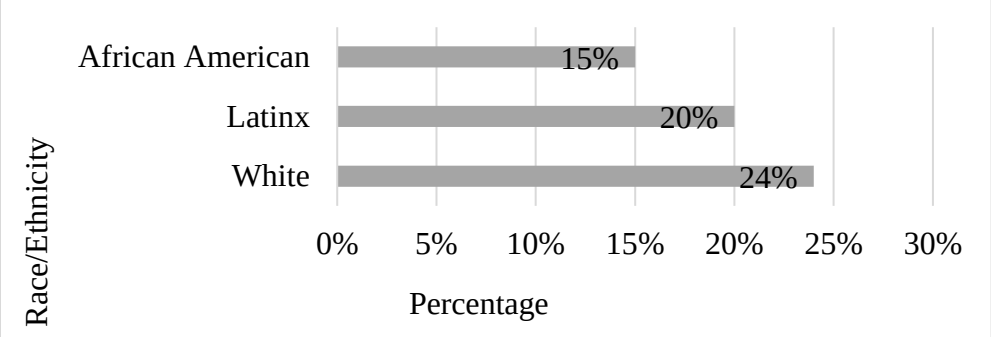
Taken together, high-quality early childhood and elementary education experiences leave a lasting social-emotional and academic impact. Ansari and Pianta (2018) found that when coupled together, high-quality early childhood experiences and high-quality elementary education experiences benefit math and language and literacy skills well into age 15. These experiences are integral to student success and should be provided to all students.

Who Has Access?

Although ECE has high-quality standards and elementary education is based upon teacher quality, many students do not have access to these schools. Specifically, African American and Latinx learners miss out on these opportunities due to push out, disproportionality, and punitive discipline practice. Not only are high-quality standards not culturally relevant, access to high-quality schools is also disproportionate. Nores and Barnett (2014) found African American children continue to access high-quality ECE settings less than their White and Latinx peers. They found in 2005 that 35% of ECE centers are high-quality with 36% White, 40% Latinx, and 25% African American attendance (Nores & Barnett, 2014). Friedman-Krauss et al. (2016) completed the same analysis five years later and found the rates had changed, furthering the access gap between White students and African American and Latinx students, with 24% White, 20% Latinx, and 15% African American (*See Figure 1*).

Figure 1

Access to High-Quality ECE Programs



Note: Adapted from "High-quality rated as a 5 or higher on the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale," by A., Friedman-Krauss, S., Barnett., and M., Nores, 2016, *Council of State Governments Justice Center*, (http://justicecenter.csg.org/resource).

Not only are African American and Latinx students less likely to receive access to high-quality schools, they are also more likely to be excluded from school due to exclusionary discipline practices. Merriam Webster defines discipline as "control gained by enforcing obedience or order, punishment, training that corrects molds, or perfects, to bring under control or impose order upon, or a rule or system of rules governing conduct or activity" (2020). This definition of discipline is harsh, reactive, and punitive in nature. Discipline should focus on child guidance that is preventative and integrates teaching appropriate behaviors and strategies for problem solving and expressing emotions (Garrity et al. 2017; Kaiser & Rasminsksy, 2017). Instead, schools are utilizing punitive and exclusionary discipline practices. Exclusionary discipline is any form of discipline that removes the student from the learning environment including OSS, ISS, expulsion, and detention (Wesley & Ellis 2017). This form of discipline removes students from the learning environment in one way or another and disproportionality impacts African American and Latinx learners.

Suspension and Expulsion

Many students are being what is referred to as pushed out of school settings by exclusionary discipline practices including suspensions and expulsions. Both early childhood and elementary settings utilize OSS and expulsions. OSS is defined as an instance in which a student is temporarily removed from their regular school day for at least half of the day for disciplinary purposes to another setting (Civil Rights Data Collection [CRDC], 2016). Expulsions are defined as removal from their regular school setting for disciplinary purposes and no educational services are provided for the child for

the remainder of the school year (CRDC, 2016). Other forms of punitive discipline used in childhood education are corporal punishment and ISS. Corporal punishment refers to spanking, paddling, or other forms of physical punishment given to a student (CRDC, 2016). Lastly, ISS refers to students who are temporarily removed from the classroom for discipline for at least half of the day but remain under the care and responsibility of the school (CRDC, 2016). These policies are punitive in nature and do not teach the student how to correct their behavior, restore relationships, or prevent reoccurrences.

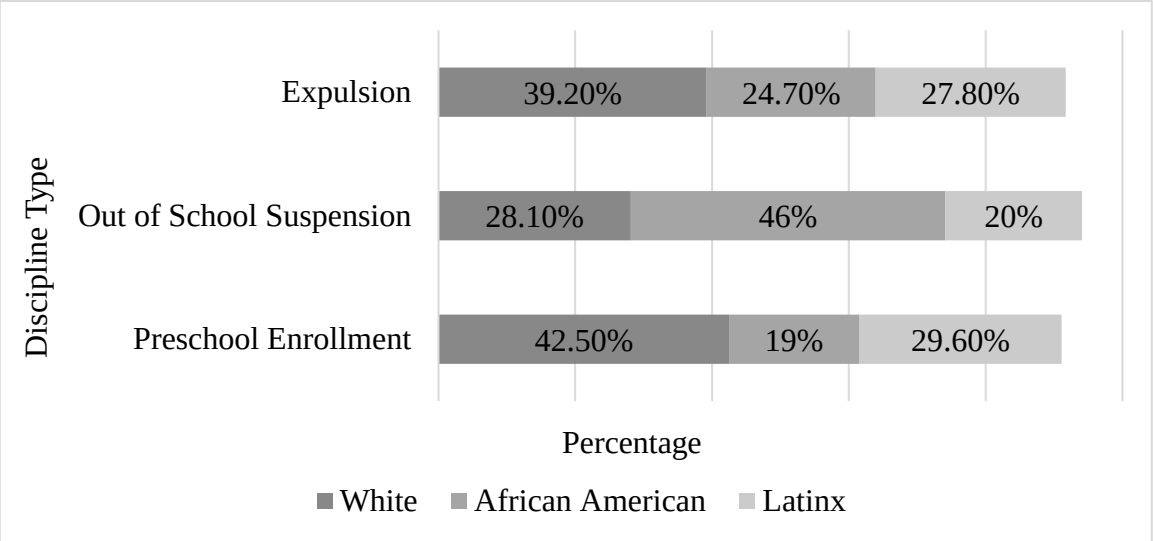
Discipline Disparities

Disciplinary disproportionality refers to the disproportionate high rates that students from a specific racial or ethnic group are subject to various forms of discipline including suspension, expulsion, referrals, and arrests (NASP 2013). The existing rates and statistics help to inform how extensive an issue the phenomenon of childhood suspension and expulsion is in our schools. Gilliam (2005) refers to this phenomenon as push out. He found that preschool children are suspended and expelled at a rate three times more than K-12 students, and these disparities still exist today (Gilliam, 2005). Furthermore, great disparities by race and gender exist within this phenomenon across all education levels. African American preschoolers make up 19% of preschool enrollment, however they also make up 46% of OSS and 24.7% of expulsions in public ECE settings (Office of Civil Rights [OCR], 2016). Compared to their female counterparts, male students are three times more likely to be suspended in ECE settings (Gilliam, 2016; OCR, 2016). Latinx boys account for 15.6% of the population but 21% of preschool suspension and 27.9% of expulsions (OCR, 2016). Latinx girls account for 13.9% of the

public preschool population and 16% of preschool suspensions and 27.6% of preschool expulsions (OCR, 2016). Together, African American boys account for 27.9% of male preschool children receiving expulsions and African American girls account for 27.6% of the female population receiving expulsions (OCR, 2016). Based on this data, African American boys and girls are affected most adversely by this phenomenon as they only make up 19% of the preschool population (Meek & Gilliam, 2016). The disparities published by OCR (2016) are alarming and portray yet another example of how African American and Latinx students are deprived of a fair and equitable education. See Figure 2 and 3 for visual summaries of this data.

Figure 2

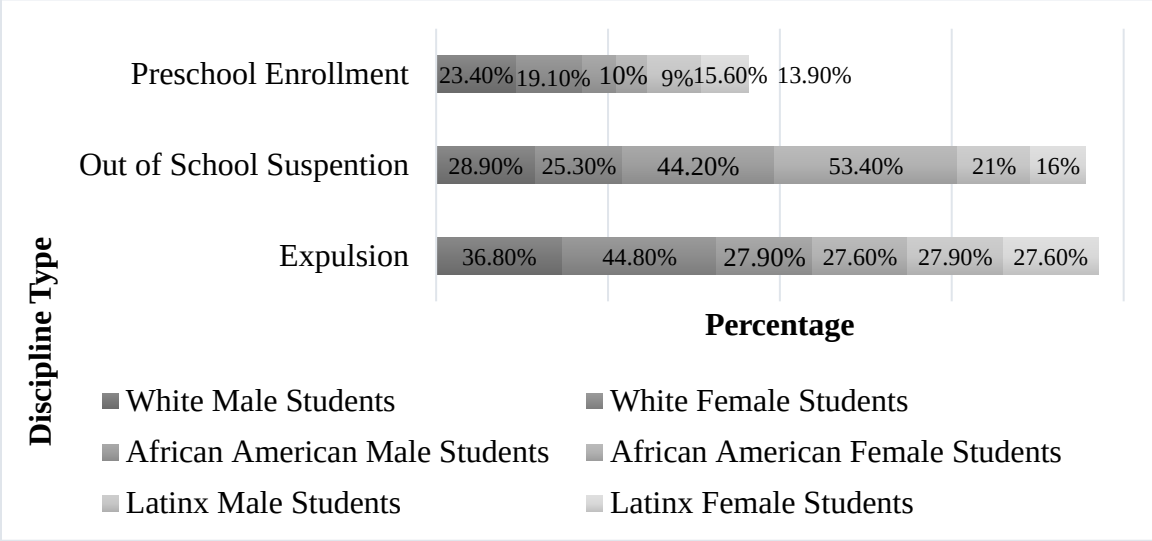
Preschool Expulsion and Suspension Trends 2015-2016



Note: Adapted from "Civil Rights Data Collection: An Overview of Exclusionary Discipline Practices in Public Schools for the 2015-16 School Year," by The Office for Civil Rights, 2016, *Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.*

Figure 3

Preschool Discipline Trends by Race/Gender 2015-2016

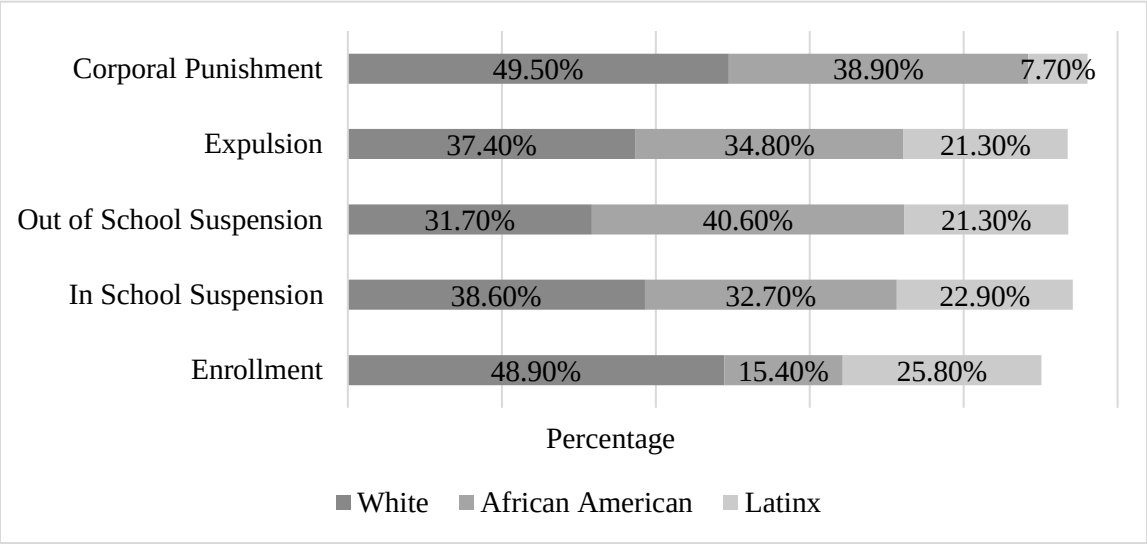


Note: Adapted from "Civil Rights Data Collection: An Overview of Exclusionary Discipline Practices in Public Schools for the 2015-16 School Year," by The Office for Civil Rights, 2016, *Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.*

Similar disparities by race and gender are also seen in K-12 settings. African American students make up 15.4% of the public-school K-12 population, however they account for 34.8% of expulsions, 32.7% of ISS, and 40.6% of OSS (OCR, 2016). African American males account for 7.9% of the male student population but 33.2% of male expulsions, 30.4% of male ISS, and 37.7% of male OSS (OCR, 2016). Similarly, Latinx males account for 13.2% of the male population and 21.8% of male expulsions, 21.5% of male OSS, and 22.7% of male ISS (OCR, 2016). Figure 4 provides a visual summary of these outcomes.

Figure 4

K-12 Discipline Trends 2015-2016



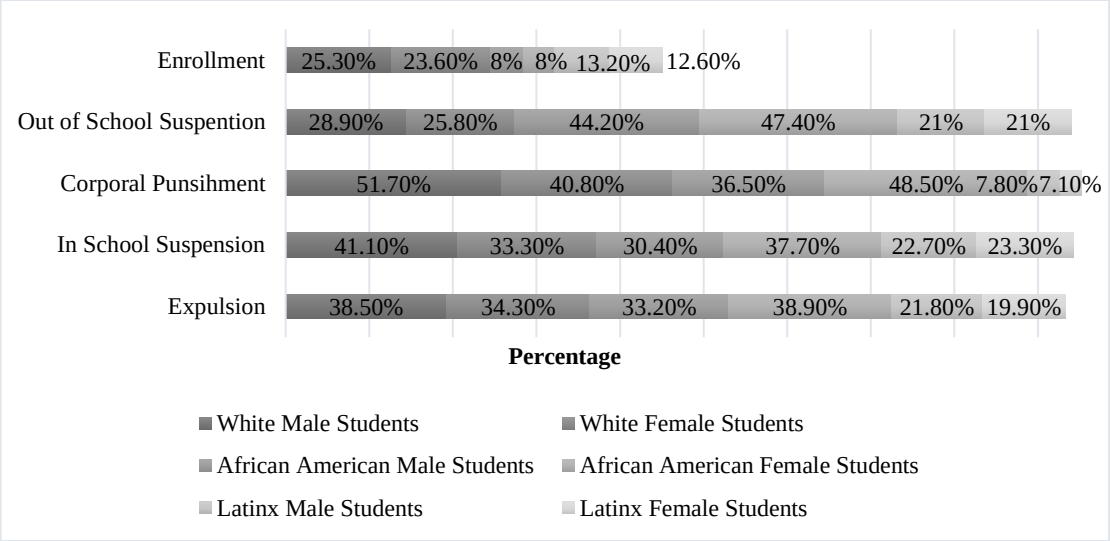
Note: Adapted from "Civil Rights Data Collection: An Overview of Exclusionary Discipline Practices in Public Schools for the 2015-16 School Year," by The Office for Civil Rights, 2016, *Department of Education*, Office for Civil Rights.

African American girls make up 7.5% of the female population and 37.7% of ISS, 47.4% of OSS, and 38.9% of expulsions. Latinx girls make up 12.6% of the female population and 23.3% of ISS, 20.7% of OSS, and 19.9% of expulsions (OCR, 2016). Another form of discipline not often talked about is corporal punishment. Many believe this form of discipline is no longer in use. However, many states still use this mode of discipline. Disparities in this category exist for African American males and females. As mentioned earlier, African American students make up 15.4% of K-12 students but 38.9% of corporal punishment. African American males and females make up 7.9% and 7.5% of the student population and 36.5% and 48.5% of corporal punishment recipients respectively, signaling African American girls as the most impacted by this form of discipline (OCR, 2016). These disparities show how ethnically and racially diverse

students and particularly African American children are disciplined at rates far beyond their peers across all education levels. Figure 5 displays a visual representation of these disparities by race and gender.

Figure 5

K-12 Discipline Trends by Race/Gender 2015-2016



Note: Adapted from "Civil Rights Data Collection: An Overview of Exclusionary Discipline Practices in Public Schools for the 2015-16 School Year," by The Office for Civil Rights, 2016, *Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.*

Impact

It is evident that African American and Latinx students face disproportionate suspension and expulsion rates compared to their White peers and thus, are at a higher risk for reaping the consequences of such punitive discipline practices. However, suspensions and expulsions against all children, no matter their racial or cultural background, can have a negative impact on students' future outcomes. Specifically, early childhood and elementary education is a time where students are highly impressionable and vulnerable. Facing suspension or expulsion during this developmental stage pre-

emptively exposes children to the idea that school may be unsafe, insensitive, and/or unresponsive to their individual needs.

Pathways to the Juvenile Justice System

The statistics from OCR display great inequity in punitive discipline towards racially and ethnically diverse learners. This push out phenomenon has now been linked to the preschool-to-prison pipeline or pathways to the juvenile justice system. Adamu and Hogan (2015) describe the preschool-to-prison pipeline as a system that pushes preschool children out of school and into the criminal justice system through suspension and expulsion disciplinary actions. Meek and Gilliam (2016) explain this further by powerfully stating, “early expulsions and suspensions predict later expulsions and suspensions, academic failure, school dropout, and an increased likelihood of later incarceration-a ‘preschool to prison pipeline’ with devastating consequences” (p. 1). The concept of the preschool-to-prison pipeline describes how preschool children, especially racially and ethnically diverse students, are pushed out of school and into the criminal justice system through suspension and expulsion disciplinary actions (Adamu & Hogan, 2015).

In K-12 education this phenomenon has been described as school pathways to juvenile justice. Biehl (2020) describes the multiple pathways that lead students to juvenile justice, including exclusionary school discipline, White-centric teaching and curriculum, and the over identification of African American and Latinx students to special education. Exclusionary discipline places historically marginalized students on a pathway to juvenile justice by criminalizing and controlling student behavior (Biehl,

2020). These disciplinary actions show young children early on that school is not a safe place for them. Punitive disciplinary strategies in childhood education also demonstrate to children and families that their students are undervalued and under supported. Such messages will likely deter students and families from forming valuable partnerships with educators and schools, a relationship that is essential to supporting the individual needs of students.

Academic and Social-Emotional Outcomes

Not only does punitive and exclusionary discipline place students on a pathway to juvenile justice, it also greatly impacts academic and social-emotional outcomes. Meek and Gilliam (2016) describe how suspensions and expulsions in ECE settings lead to larger gaps in access to resources and education, and therefore create greater deficits in academic achievement and social-emotional well-being. Students who are expelled or suspended are ten times as likely to drop out of high school, experience academic failure, face incarceration, and hold negative school attitudes (Adamu & Hogan, 2015; Meek & Gilliam, 2016). More specifically, African American boys are most likely to drop out of high school, face incarceration, and have trouble accessing a job later in life if suspended or expelled (Adamu and Hogan, 2015). African American girls are the fastest growing population in the juvenile justice system and are more likely to receive harsher punishments (Adamu and Hogan, 2015). A study completed by the Council for State Governments Justice Center (Fabelo et al. 2011) in Texas found that suspensions also increased the likelihood of grade retention, dropping out of school, and referral to the juvenile justice system. They found it was particularly impactful for African American

males. This data is especially alarming considering the disproportionate rates at which African American boys and girls are being suspended and expelled.

Why Is This Happening?

Such negative impacts and outcomes of exclusionary discipline on African American and Latinx students leads one to wonder why the education system continues to utilize these practices if they know such poor outcomes are a result? Just like various pathways to juvenile justice, there are various reasons for the continued use of these practices and the disproportionate use against African American and Latinx students. Deficit models of thinking, implicit bias, and lack of resources are just a few concepts impacting this phenomenon.

Deficit Models of Thinking

Deficit models of thinking are directly related to the views educators and the education system hold against African American and Latinx learners. Deficit thinking includes negative or deficit-based thoughts about a student's personality, characteristics, or performance. Valencia (1997) describes deficit thinking as

> "the notion that students (particularly those of low income, racial/ethnic minority background) fail in school because such students and their families have internal defects (deficits) that thwart the learning process (for example, limited educability, unmotivated; inadequate family support)" (p. 2).

This type of thinking blames the students and can be linked to the discipline disparities of African American and Latinx students. Bryan (2017) took a theoretical look at how White teachers are perpetuating the school-to-prison pipeline for ethnically and racially diverse students, and African American males in particular. The researcher outlined how two main factors are contributing to this outcome. The first is a White

teacher's deficit thinking in terms of African American males, which has been taught to them by society and their pre-service training. Second, this thinking then plays out in the classroom as White teachers punish and critique African American boys more frequently (Bryan, 2017). Therefore, there is a need to shift this thinking and shift how educators work with African American and Latinx students.

These deficit ways of thinking start in early childhood and continue throughout all levels of education. Martin et al. (2018) studied teacher's perceptions of childcare and preschool expulsion to better understand the path to expulsion. They concluded that teachers would first view the child as struggling but over time with no behavior improvements would come to see the child as bad or unsafe, making it easier to make an expulsion decision. It was along this path that teachers go from strengths-based to deficit-based thinking, leading to an expulsion. Adiar et al. (2017) also described the deficit thinking around ethnically and racially diverse students in early childhood settings. When talking about the justification for early childhood interventions, it is often from the perspective that children are at risk or in a gap behind their White peers. This thinking places the White student as the norm and situates ethnically and racially diverse students as the other. A common example of this includes the word gap argument, which situates African American and Latinx students behind their White peers in terms of words heard and spoken in English. This model places a deficit on African American and Latinx students and does not acknowledge the other systems at work including class, literacy superiority, and cultural context (Adiar et al., 2017). Most importantly, it does not recognize that by focusing on a word gap, educators are not recognizing African

American and Latinx students and their own oral narratives. The word gap focuses on literacy and language practices that align with the dominant White middle-class culture. (Sperry et al., 2015). The word gap argument therefore blames families and places them in a deficit and only displays success as one way to communicate.

African American and Latinx students often display cultural and familial characteristics that differ from the dominant White culture the education system operates in. Adamu and Hogan (2015) note "teachers may perceive behavior such as independent mindedness and a willingness to assert one's views as being disruptive, defiant, or aggressive instead of recognizing these traits as leadership strengths and opportunities" (p. 8). White students may display these same behaviors but are not viewed in this way. This deficit view leads educators to criminalize and punish African American and Latinx students at disproportionate rates.

A shift from deficit-based to strengths-based thinking is greatly needed to reduce the harm the education system in perpetuating. Hilliard (2006) describes how schools need to get rid of labels for African American and Latinx students such as "at risk" and "disadvantaged", and instead adopt beliefs that speak to the "brilliance" and "cultural tools" these students bring to the classroom (p. 224). Rashid (2009) describe how early childhood and early elementary experiences often turn African American children from "brilliant babies" to "children placed at risk" (p. 347). This change is often due to educators' lower expectations based upon social class, race, and gender (Rashid, 2009).

Implicit Bias

Differences from the White norm are conceptualized as deficits, and this leads to deficit and biased thinking (Souto-Manning, 2013); Implicit bias are "automatic and unconscious stereotypes that drive people to behave and make decisions in certain ways" (p. 3). In thinking about the disproportionate rate of African American and Latinx students being expelled, researchers have also looked at teachers' implicit biases when using exclusionary disciplinary measures. Implicit bias, or the unconscious stereotypes that drive a person's behaviors and decisions, will impact how a teacher addresses behavior in their classroom (Cousins, 2014). Research suggests that all preschool children exhibit challenging externalizing behaviors, however, a teacher's implicit bias regarding African American and Latinx students impacts the types of discipline strategies selected (Gilliam et al., 2016). A study by The Child Study Center at Yale University (Gilliam et al., 2016) examined whether teachers' implicit biases on race and gender related to behavior expectations and recommendations for preschool suspension and expulsion. They found that when teachers were primed to expect challenging behaviors, the teachers gazed longer at African American children, especially toward African American boys (Gilliam et al., 2016). Teachers were also given a narrative attached with either stereotypical White or African American names. Teachers reported feeling more troubled by the offenses of the African American children and recommended more severe punishments compared to the White student with the same narrative (Gilliam et al. 2016). Another study revealed that the degree to which a teacher felt a preschool child posed a

danger to class was a major predictor of a teacher's decision to seek expulsion (Gilliam & Reyes, 2019).

Goff et al. (2014) found African American children were seen as less innocent and more deserving of punishment than their White peers. African American boys were seen as older and less innocent, contributing to the dehumanization of African American children. Skiba et al. (2002) found that African American students are referred for disciplinary infractions that are more subjective in nature compared to their White peers. It is important to note that these racial disparities have been found to be independent of socioeconomic status (Skiba et al., 2002). Skiba et al. (2011) also found that even when the behavior infraction is similar, African American students are more than twice as likely than their White peers to be referred to the principal's office and expelled or suspended. These studies show implicit bias based upon race is at work no matter the age of the student. Implicit biases about African American children impact how their behaviors are perceived and how they should be addressed (Meek and Gilliam, 2016).

African American and Latinx students are more likely to be removed from class or school setting for minor infractions including arriving late to class, hat wearing, chewing gum, and wearing sagging pants (Bryan, 2017; Elias, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2011). These studies demonstrate what is prevalent in today's society: even starting in early childhood, African American and Latinx students are perceived as dangerous and troubling. Teachers' implicit biases about African American and Latinx students are creating adverse academic and social-emotional outcomes.

Call to Practice

In order for school psychologists to provide interventions and services that support the healthy social-emotional development of all students, they must think about this deficit approach to discipline and how they can begin to shift the discipline paradigm to a strengths-based approach. School psychologists are in a unique position to collaborate with teachers, administrators, families, and students. This creates an opportunity to help educators interact with African American and Latinx students in a different way, by first seeing them in a new light. Souto-Manning (2013) describes how educators can begin to identify the strengths each child brings to the classroom, value children's knowledge and experiences, strengthen children's cultural identity, and embrace conflicts as learning opportunities. These ideals describe culturally humble teaching and are often tenets taught in many school psychology training programs today. When thinking about ECE settings, Cabrera (2013) notes African American and Latinx children enter preschool with high levels of social competence, linguistic strengths in terms of understanding multiple languages, dialects, and code switching, adaptation, and resiliency. As children age, they display various forms of cultural capital in linguistic, familial, and social ways (Howard, 2013). However, these strengths and capital are not acknowledged or valued and are often seen as deficits. As students get older these negative views only get worse. School psychologists can begin to disrupt this phenomenon at various levels including teaching strengths-based models and advocating for less exclusionary discipline practices.

Strengths Based Models

There are various models that have begun to receive attention for their strengths-based approach. Restorative justice (RJ) models are seen as the opposite of exclusionary discipline. RJ is conceptualized as a set of values that emphasizes restoration (Evans & Lester, 2013). RJ utilizes seven principles that include: meeting needs, providing accountability and support, making things right, viewing conflict as a learning opportunity, building healthy learning communities, restoring relationships, and addressing power imbalances (Evans & Lester, 2013). This is viewed as the opposite of exclusionary discipline because the focus is on keeping students engaged in the school community (Wesley and Ellis 2017). Restorative practices focus on social engagement versus social control (Quintana & Mahgoub, 2016). It is important to utilize RJ not just in a reparative manner for behavior or harm but also to build community between teachers, students, and the entire school community. It is the community approach that encourages the school to value and respect all individuals that operate within it.

Another model that focuses on the strengths of all students goes by various names. Over the last twenty years, cultural responsiveness, cultural competence, cultural difference, and now cultural humility describe how educators can first acknowledge their own culture and biases; then identify the strengths children bring to the classroom, value children's knowledge and experience, strengthen children's cultural identity, and embrace conflicts as learning opportunities (Durden et al., 2014; Richard et al., 2007; Souto-Manning, 2013). Cultural humility has expanded this concept to a process versus a model that can be attained or reached. Cultural humility encourages the educator to

maintain an openness to all, utilizing a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation, a desire to fix power imbalances, and developing partnerships with people and groups who advocate for others (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998).

School Psychologists as Change Agents

As mentioned above, school psychologists are in a unique position to advocate for students. School psychologists operate under Principles for Professional Ethics (PPE) (2020), which describe a special obligation to advocate for an equitable and quality education for all children based on their individual needs. Albritton et al. (2016) describe how school psychologists can move beyond the traditional roles of assessment and incorporate more social justice actions into practice. One way to do this is to have an increased presence in childhood settings, especially since many ECE programs are located on K-12 or K-5 campuses (Albritton et al. 2016). With an increased presence, school psychologists can focus on being change agents to transform school discipline polices and how schools are thinking and interacting with African American and Latinx students.

School-based behavior consultation has been proven to lower the rates of expulsion in ECE settings (Gilliam, 2005). Gilliam (2005) found that when teachers had access to a behavior consult that provided classroom support for dealing with challenging behaviors, the likelihood of expulsion was lower. Rates were lowest when teachers had regular and ongoing relationships with the consultant. In 2005, only 22.9% of ECE teachers had regular access to a psychologist or psychiatrist (Gilliam, 2005). Only 47.4% of elementary schools across the country have access to a school psychologist (OCR,

2016). Having access to more school psychologists in schools will increase support for educators and students. School psychologists are trained in social-emotional learning and culturally humble practices. They are in a position to interrupt the system and pathways to the juvenile justice system, and provide alternatives to exclusionary discipline (NASP, 2013). School psychologists can commit to teaching the system to be proactive instead of reactive and provide a strengths-based presence to schools serving children in childhood education settings.

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MANUSCRIPT TWO

One Child's Risk Is Another Child's Resource: A Case Study Exploring the Relationship Between Childhood Discipline Disparities and Educator Mindsets

According to the National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP) *Principles for Professional Ethics* (PPE) (2010), school psychologists have a special obligation to advocate for an equitable and quality education for all children based on their individual needs. Research informs us that providing children with high quality, nurturing education leads to better outcomes for all students (Andersson, 1989; Bagnato et al., 2002; Bakken et al., 2017; Gormley et al., 2005). Despite this knowledge, there is a current and alarming trend of suspensions and expulsions across all educational settings (Leung-Gange et al., 2022; Office for Civil Rights [OCR], 2021; Welsh, 2022; Welch et al., 2022; Young et al., 2018). Such punitive trends adversely impact African American and Latinx students socially (Cooper at al., 2022; Hirschfield, 2008; Sorensen et al., 2021), emotionally (Eyllon et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2018), financially (OCR, 2014a; Simson, 2014), and academically (American Psychological Association [APA], 2012; National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP], 2022; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2023a). Punitive and exclusionary forms of discipline remove the student from their learning environment and therefore limit their access to equitable and quality education. Punitive and exclusionary forms of discipline stem

directly from systems created by American White supremacist mainstream culture (Aronson & Boveda, 2017; Keisch & Scott, 2015; Simson, 2014).

Review of Literature

To better understand this phenomenon and how school psychologists can help disrupt these trends and adverse outcomes for students, we must first clearly describe historically marginalized students and our target population for this study. Next, we lay out common American mainstream forms of discipline, the evolution of White supremacists' punitive and exclusionary discipline practices, and how these forms of discipline impact students. Additionally, we discuss proactive and restorative discipline models and what might impact an educator's decision to utilize various discipline practices. Once we understand these intersecting variables, we begin to piece together how school psychologists are bound by their ethical and moral principles to utilize their privilege and power within American White supremacist culture, their unique intersection within school systems, and their training in culturally humble practices to disrupt punitive and exclusionary discipline systems.

Historically Marginalized Students

When hearing the term historically marginalized students, many intersecting identities come to mind. Due to the vast and complex intersection of these identities, it is important to define and specify the population for this study. It is impossible to clearly define the historical marginalization of all groups; therefore, one must specify the intersecting identities in which they are speaking about. Marginalization can come in many forms including, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, migration, mental illness,

occupation, living status, freedom, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status, just to name a few (Danaher et al., 2013). Schiffer and Schatz (2008) researched marginalization, social inclusion, and health. They conceptualized "definitions or indicators for marginalization and social exclusion might vary in different settings and regions" (Schiffer & Schatz, 2008, p. 5). They defined marginalization as "the position of individuals, groups or populations outside of 'mainstream society,' living at the margins of those in the center of power, of cultural dominance and economical and social welfare" (p. 6). It is important to note, mainstream society is conceptualized as the dominant White supremacist American culture. White supremacist American culture denies marginalized communities equal and equitable access to cultural, social, political, and economic power (Rose & Drake, 2018). Danaher et al. (2013) found marginalization as both material and theoretical: "material because of the practical consequences of having reduced access to power and welfare, and theoretical as deviating from mainstream society" (p. 6). Marginalized communities have no control over the decisions made by those in power, and therefore have no control over how those decisions negatively impact their lives. Although individuals may find ways to overcome marginalization, it is important to move away from "deficit discourses related to individual members of marginalized groups" as marginalization is a process over time that creates significant, lifelong individual and inter-generational negative effects on social, political, economic, and physical and mental health (Danaher et al., 2013, p. 7).

Due to the population of the participant sample of this study, historically marginalized students are defined as African American and Latinx students attending

public school within a large urban district. A large majority of students from the sample population are considered low income by state standards as they qualify for free and reduced lunch. Therefore, the marginalization of these students intersects at race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, all which are impacted by decisions made by the mainstream White supremacist American culture.

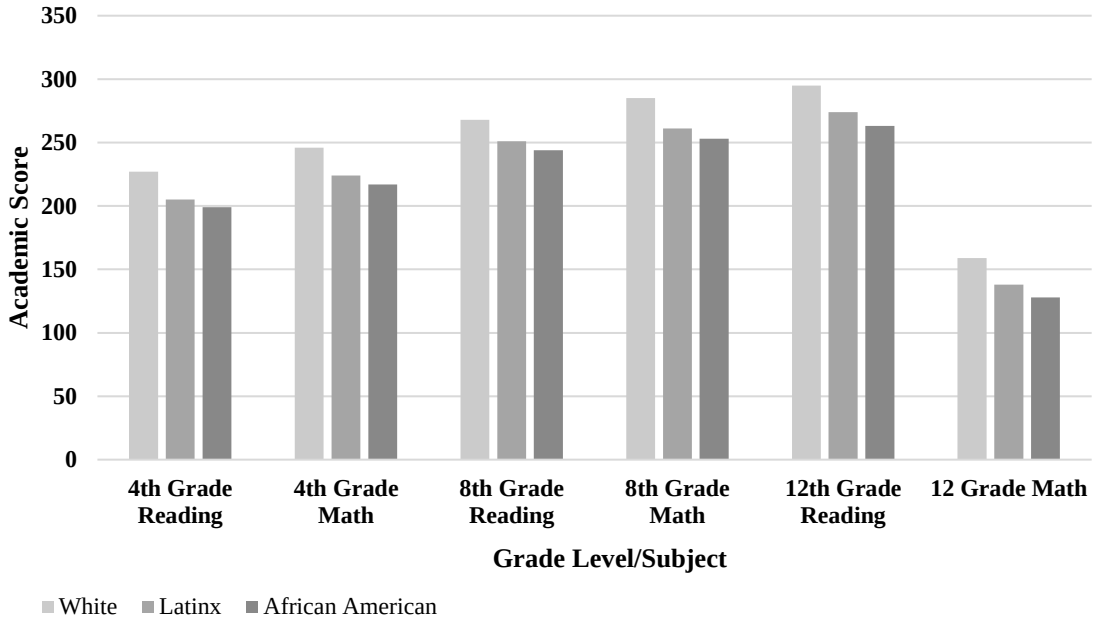
This population of students is greatly impacted by the marginalization of the White supremacist American culture (Simson, 2014). Disparities for this population exist across academic (APA, 2012; OCR, 2014a; Theim & Dasgupta, 2022), mental and physical health (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; Schiffer & Schatz, 2008), economic (Creamer et al., 2021), social capital (Gilbert et al., 2022), and physical generational wealth (Fluri et al., 2022; Weller & Roberts, 2021). The APA (2012) defines disparities as "unjust or unfair differences and implies the need for redress of these differences" (p. 11). Ethnic and racial educational disparities have long existed for students in this population and are a great cause for concern. Educational disparities for African American and Latinx students start in early childhood and persist throughout kindergarten to high school, including underachievement in reading and mathematical achievement, grade retention, graduation rates, dropout rates, involvement in gifted and talented programs, college enrollment, college graduation, and high rates of punitive discipline compared to their White counterparts (APA, 2012; Aud et al., 2010; Young et al., 2018).

Despite significant national attention to these disparities over the last 60 years, the NCES (2023a; 2023b) continues to display disparities in academic achievement for

African American and Latinx students in public schools across the United States. The NAEP (2022) found that White students continue to outperform both African American and Latinx students in reading and mathematics across grades 4, 8, and 12 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

2022 National Average Achievement Scores



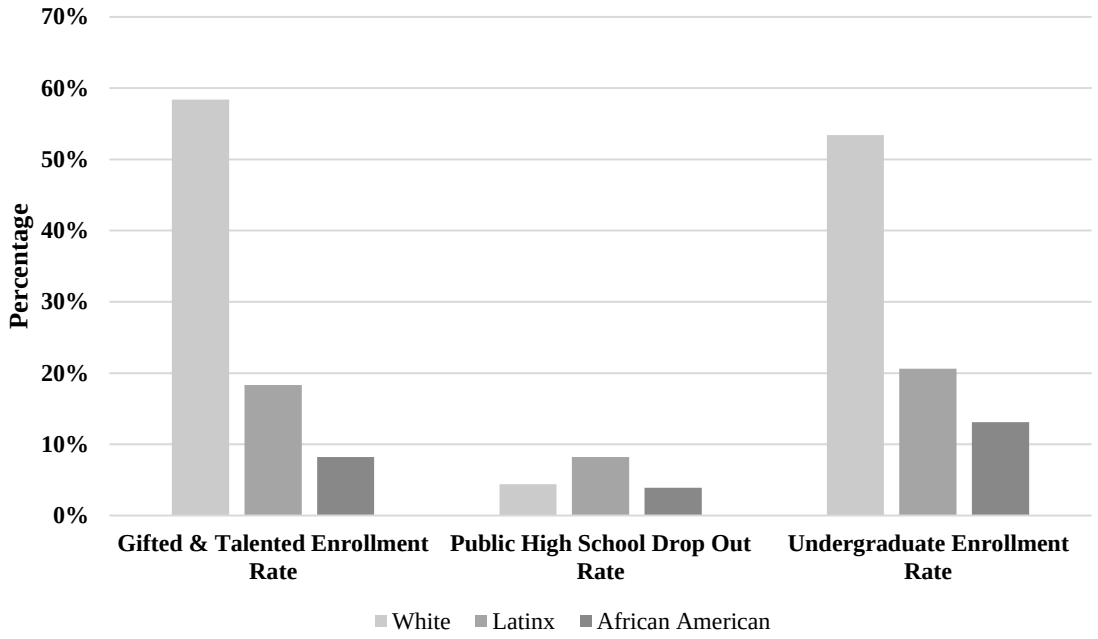
Note. Adapted from "The Nation's Report Card: Achievement Gaps Various Years and Subjects: 1990–2022 Mathematics; 1992–2022 Reading," by The National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2022, *Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics*, (https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/dashboards/achievement_gaps.aspx#).

Academic underperformance is directly related to education quality. African American students are more than four times and Latinx students are twice as likely to attend schools in which 80% or less of the teachers are uncertified or unlicensed; data shows schools with this rate of unofficial certification leads to higher rates of racial disparities (OCR, 2014b). African American and Latinx students also have less access to higher performing programs such as gifted and talented and Advanced Placement (AP)

classes. The OCR continued to find African American and Latinx students were underrepresented in AP classes, while White students were overrepresented. African American students represented 16% of the nationwide enrollment in 2012 but only 9% took an AP course, 9% took an AP exam, and 4% received a qualifying score of three or greater. Latinx students represented 21% of the nationwide enrollment in 2012, but only 18% took an AP course, 17% took an AP exam, and 14% received a passing score of three or greater (OCR, 2014a). Meanwhile, White students comprised 54% of the national sample, were 59% took an AP course, 60% took an AP exam, and 67% received a passing score of three or greater. (OCR, 2014a). Additionally, White students comprised 58.4% of students enrolled in gifted and talented programs compared to 18.3% of Latinx and 8.2% of African American students (NCES, 2022; see Figure 2).

Figure 2

2021 Education Rates



Note. Adapted from "The Condition of Education Digest Tables," by The National Center for Education Statistics, 2022, *Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics*, (https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/2022menu_tables.asp).

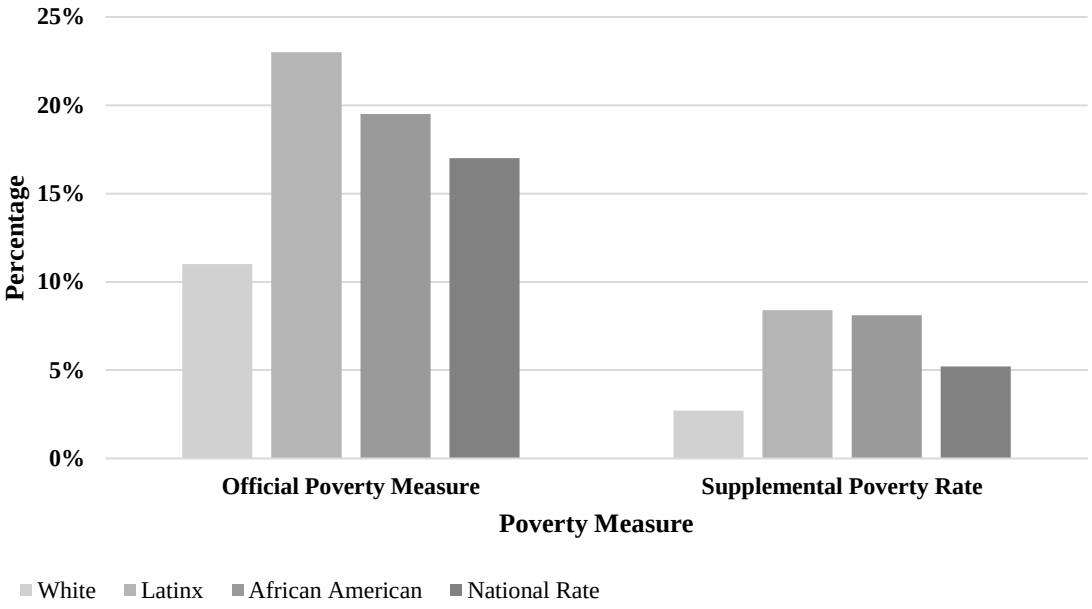
In 2021, the dropout rate for Latinx students was nearly twice the rate of White students (NCES, 2023a). Latinx (83%) and African American (81%) students continue to graduate at a rate below the national average (87%) compared to their White counterparts (90%) (NCES, 2023b). This directly impacts college enrollment rates in which 13.1% and 20.6% of African American and Latinx students enroll in undergraduate education compared to 53.4% of White students (NCES, 2022; see Figure 2). African American and Latinx students are also more likely than their White counterparts to be first-generation college students and the college completion rate for first-generation college students is lower than that of continuing-generation students (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022).

African American and Latinx students' ability to succeed in school is also directly impacted by adverse discipline disparities. In 2018, African American students across all age ranges were found to be expelled and suspended at rates more than twice their enrollment rate (OCR, 2021). School systems consistently utilize more exclusionary discipline with African American and Latinx students, compared to their White peers and research consistently shows African American students are overrepresented across all disciplinary facets, including suspension, expulsion, and law enforcement referrals (Curtis, 2014; Gregory et al., 2018, Sliva, 2021).

In addition to adverse academic and discipline outcomes, this population also displays socioeconomic disparities. The Annie E. Casey Foundation (ACF) analyzed the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey and Official Poverty Measure (2022) and found the percentage of children under age 18 who live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level in 2021 was 17%; of this population 11% were White, 31% were African American, and 23% were Latinx. The United States Census Bureau also released new data starting in 2009 analyzing the poverty rate considering the impact of stimulus payments, social security, and the expansion of the Child Tax Credit, called the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM). Taking these measures into account, they found that in 2021, 5.2% of children lived below the poverty line; of this population 2.7% were White, 8.1% were African American, and 8.4% were Latinx (Creamer, 2022; see Figure 3). Even with these supplemental programs, African American and Latinx children are still disproportionality impacted by poverty. Exposure to child poverty limits skill-building opportunities and impacts academic outcomes (ACF, 2022).

Figure 3

2021 National Poverty Rates



Note. Adapted from "Children in Poverty by Race and Ethnicity," by Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2022, *Kids Count Data Center*, (https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/bar/44-children-in-poverty-by-race-and-ethnicity?loc=1&loct=1#1/any/false/2048/9,12,1,13/323).

Discipline

> The effectiveness of any disciplinary system may be judged by the extent to which it teaches students to solve interpersonal and intrapersonal problems without resorting to disruption or violence (Skiba & Peterson, 2000, p. 335)

To understand the disproportionate discipline practices used against African American and Latinx students, forms of discipline must be defined. For the purposes of this study, discipline is categorized as exclusionary, restorative, or preventative. Exclusionary discipline is any method of punishment that removes a student from the school community including out of school suspension (OSS), in school suspension (ISS), and detention (Wiley et al., 2022). OSS is an instance in which a student is temporarily removed from their regular school routine and not allowed to enter school grounds for at

least half of the day (Civil Rights Data Collection [CRDC], 2016). ISS refers to students who are temporarily removed from their regular classroom and school routine for at least half of the day but remain under the care and responsibility of the school (CRDC, 2016). Detention is when students remain in a presumably undesirable place for a specified amount of time before school, after school, during recess, or during lunch (Fluke et al., 2014).

These exclusionary practices are seen as traditional methods of American discipline and have historically been used disproportionally against marginalized students. When these methods are used against students, they are more likely to experience adverse outcomes into adulthood. As African American and Latinx students are more likely to receive exclusionary discipline compared to their White counterparts, they are substantially more likely to drop out of high school, be arrested and jailed as adolescents and adults, and are less likely to attend a 4-year college or university (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2021). Therefore, exclusionary discipline practices place African American and Latinx students on a pathway to juvenile justice and decrease their access to social and economic capital (Biehl, 2020; Young et al., 2018).

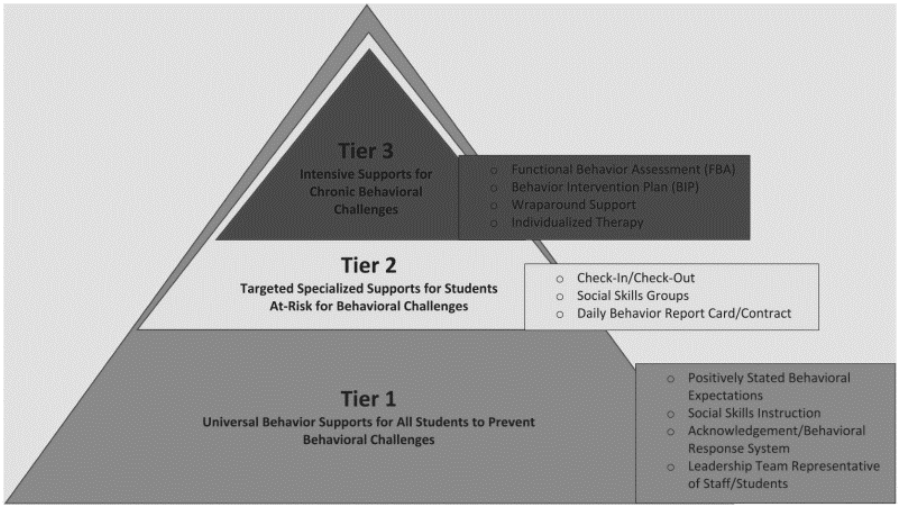
Restorative discipline practices are methods that seek to engage students in a learning process about their behaviors and keep students at school (Wesley & Ellis, 2017). Restorative discipline focuses on seven principles that include: meeting needs, providing accountability and support, making things right, viewing conflict as a learning opportunity, building healthy learning communities, restoring relationships, and addressing power imbalances (Evans & Lester, 2013). Restorative practices can be used

as either a whole school approach in which the entire community utilizes a restorative "way of being" in response to behavior or a skill-based approach in which a few individuals are trained to respond to behaviors using restorative strategies (Hurley et al., 2015). Restorative practices have been found to decrease suspensions and misbehavior and improve school climate (Sandwick et al., 2019). These methods are becoming more popular within the American education system, however, for restorative practices to be most effective they often require additional funding for training the whole school or individual personnel to effectively utilize the practices (Hurley et al., 2015). These systems also need time and buy-in from school staff to change deeply rooted exclusionary based discipline mindsets (Morrison et al., 2005).

Preventative discipline practices are proactive methods that focus on positive reinforcement, relationship building, creating positive school climates, and promoting social and emotional skills (Gage et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2018). Common preventative practices include School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). SWPBIS provides a three-tiered approach to promote positive behavior and prevent and support behavior challenges within a school (see Figure 4). Tier 1 supports should meet the needs of 80% or more of students, Tier 2 should target 5-15% of students that do not respond to Tier 1 supports, and Tier 3 should target 3-5% of students not responsive to the first two levels (Center on PBIS, 2023).

Figure 4

Positive Behavior Intervention Tiers



Note. From "Strategies for Including Students with Extensive Support Needs in SWPBIS," by V.L. Walker, and S.L. Loman, 2022, *Inclusive Practices*, 1(1), p. 23–32 (https://doi.org/10.1177/27324745211000307).

A promising underlying tenet of SWPBIS is to "change underlying attitudes and policies concerning how behavior is addressed" (Losen, 2011, p. 14). This is an important focus as current exclusionary methods are prevalent due to historical mindsets that behavior must be addressed through punitive practices to deter repeat infractions. Tier 1, also known as the universal level, integrates school wide prevention methods that include explicitly and consistently teaching behavioral expectations to all students across settings (recess, hallways, classrooms, before and after school; Gage et al., 2020). This includes making explicit classroom management techniques, appropriate conflict resolution, and parental and family involvement (Skiba, 2014). Tier 2, also known as the targeted level, focuses on students who require additional support, teaching, and practice to be successful behaviorally. Interventions include small social skills groups, explicit teaching

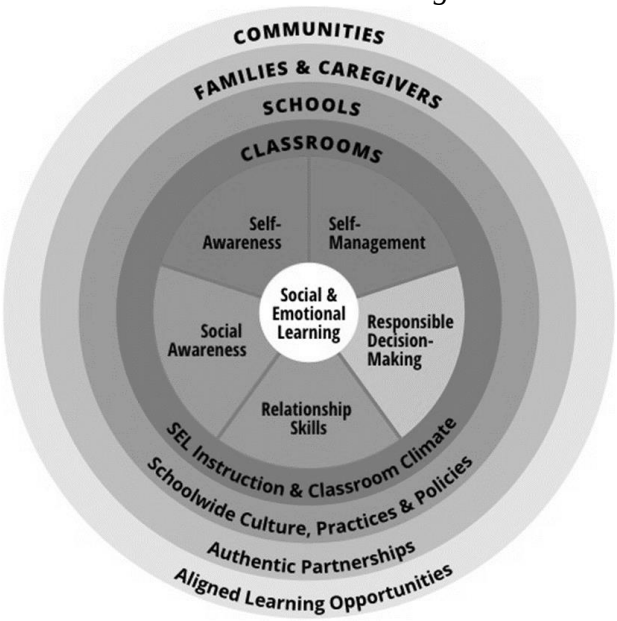
of coping skills, mentoring, and consistent teacher or administrator check-ins (Center for PBIS, 2023; Gage et al., 2020; Skiba, 2014).

Tier 3, also known as the intensive level, focuses on students who display serious behaviors and require immediate support and individualized plans (Center for PBIS, 2023; Gage et al., 2020). Interventions include functional behavior assessments (FBA), behavior contracts and positive reinforcements, collaboration with other mental health systems, explicit instruction of adaptive or replacement behaviors, and safety routines (Center for PBIS, 2023; Skiba, 2014). SWPBIS is linked to a variety of positive impacts for students including less disciplinary referrals, decreases in aggression and problem behaviors, decreases in suspensions, increases in prosocial behaviors, and increased academic achievement (Center for PBIS, 2023; Gage et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2018; Osher et al., 2010).

Appropriate social and emotional skills are foundational to any child's learning. SEL focuses on providing students with direct instruction in social and emotional regulation and coping skills to provide alternatives to negative behavior (Jones et al., 2018). SEL curriculum is often taught as an additional curriculum all students are exposed to, or it can be embedded into school wide structures such as daily SEL time (Jones et al., 2018; Osher et al., 2010; Skiba, 2014). Programs include school created curriculum, *Zones of Regulation* (Kuypers, 2023), *Superflex* (Madrigal & Garcia-Winner, 2008), *Second Step* (Beland, 2014), and *Coping Cat* (Kendall & Hedtke, 2006). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) describes five main areas of competency for strong social and emotional development: self-awareness,

self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2020). Comprehensive SEL curriculums utilize a systems level approach similar to SWPBIS, including classrooms, schools, families and caregivers, and the community (see Figure 5).

Figure 5
CASEL Social Emotional Learning Framework



Note. From "CASEL's SEL Framework," by Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2020, (https://casel.org/casel-sel-framework-11-2020).

Strategies are provided to help students independently solve problems, see other's point of views, and build stronger relationships by increasing their ability to regulate their emotions and behaviors (Jones et al., 2018). SEL is linked to a variety of positive impacts for students including reduced aggressive and negative behaviors, reduced suspensions, increased academic performance, and increased levels of emotional regulation (Anyon et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2018; Osher et al., 2010).

The Evolution of Punitive and Exclusionary Discipline Practices

> Ironically, zero tolerance policies once promoted as a solution to youth violence have created a school to prison pipeline. Widespread discipline practices of suspension, expulsion, and arrest for school behavior problems are turning kids in conflict into criminal offenders (Skiba, 2014, p. 27)

Punitive and exclusionary discipline practices have a long history in the United States. The extreme rise in use was brought on in the early 1990s by the inaction of policies known as zero tolerance. Zero tolerance policies created mandated and automatic punishments or consequences, similar to criminal sentences, for offenses involving alcohol, drugs, violence, and weapon possession (Hirschfield, 2008). These policies removed control away from teachers and administrators to utilize discretion and consider a student's social, emotional, and personal circumstances when deciding which discipline practices to utilize (Hirschfield, 2008). Zero tolerance policies aimed to increase school safety by making an example out of students utilizing extreme disciplinary responses (e.g., immediate expulsion) for major and minor behaviors to deter other students from committing the same offenses (Gregory et al., 2018; Skiba, 2000).

Research has shown zero tolerance policies have disproportionally impacted African American and Latinx students, closely resembling patterns seen in the American criminal justice system (Hirschfield, 2008; Jones et al., 2018). African American and Latinx students are more frequently subject to automatic expulsions and suspensions mandated through zero tolerance policies, and they are also more frequently given suspensions for subjective negative behaviors (Hirschfield, 2008), even though there is no evidence that African American and Latinx students display higher levels of negative behavioral challenges compared to their White counterparts (Young et al., 2018).

Through a meta-analysis of school disparities in discipline practices toward African American students, researchers found the odds of being disciplined if African American were more than two and a half times the odds of being disciplined if White, regardless of grade level and gender (Young et al., 2018). Research has also shown racial disparities in discipline are "as likely or more likely to occur in rich, suburban districts as they are in poor, urban districts" (Skiba, 2014, p. 30).

In summary, the existing body of evidence suggests that not only have zero-tolerance policies failed to make schools safer, but they have also created significant negative academic, social, emotional, and life outcomes for African American and Latinx students, including direct involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice system (Jones et al., 2018; Skiba, 2014), hence the terms school-to-prison-pipeline or pathways to juvenile justice. The pipeline or pathways refer to the multifaceted ways schools push marginalized youth into the juvenile justice system, including zero tolerance discipline policies, educational inequalities, and police involvement in schools (Heitzeg, 2009). The NAACP (2005) described this phenomenon almost 20 years ago:

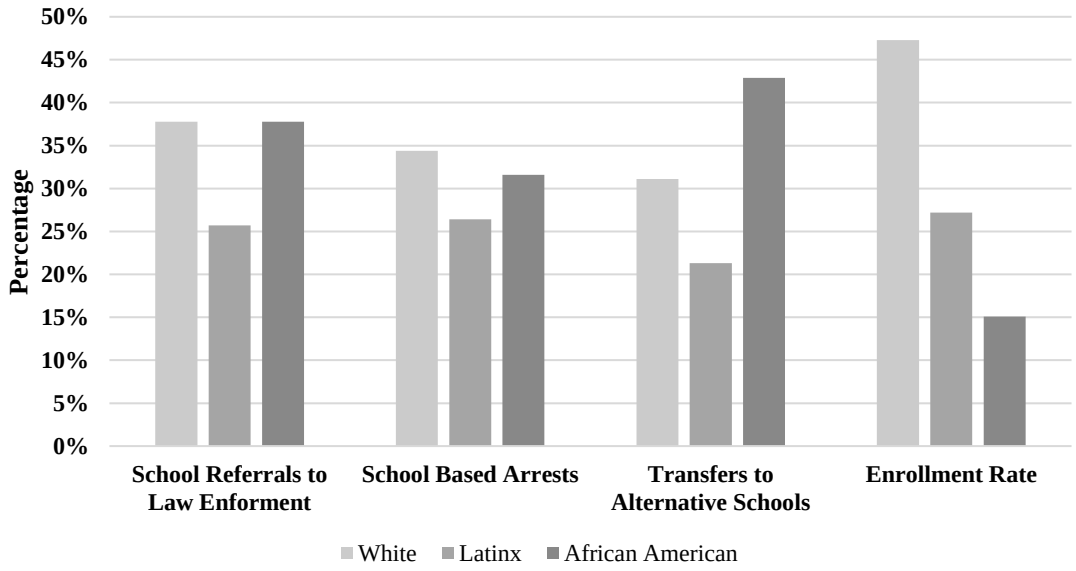
> The punitive and overzealous tools and approaches of the modern criminal justice system have seeped into our schools, serving to remove children from mainstream educational environments and funnel them onto a one-way path toward prison. Historical inequities, such as segregated education, concentrated poverty, and racial disparities in law enforcement, all feed the pipeline. The School-to-Prison Pipeline is one of the most urgent challenges in education today. (p. 2).

Today these pathways are still active and disproportionately impact African American students (Biehl, 2020). During the 2018 school year, African American students accounted for 15.1% of student enrollment but 28.7% of referrals to school law enforcement, 31.6% of school-based arrests, and 42.9% of transfers to alternative schools

(OCR, 2021). During the 2021 school year it was found that 23.7% of school-based referrals to law enforcement led to an arrest (OCR, 2021). This leads one to wonder what truly impacts educators' decisions to make these referrals knowing the harm they may cause. Figure 6 displays the disproportionality African American students face related to juvenile justice contact, significantly increasing their chances of entering the criminal justice system.

Figure 6

Pathways to Juvenile Justice



Note. Adapted from "2015-2016 National Discipline Trends," by Civil Rights Data Collection, 2016, *U.S Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights*, (https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/frontpage/faq/crdc.html).

Notably, as mentioned in Manuscript One, in the early 2000's, districts across the country began to shift away from zero-tolerance policies, however this shift did not alleviate the discipline disparities we see today (Black, 2016; Riter, 2018). Many districts that utilized expulsions and OSS began to utilize ISS; however, this practice continues to

remove high rates of African American and Latinx students from the classroom and perpetuates the disproportionality seen in discipline practices (Wiley, 2018).

Disproportionality Across Developmental Stages

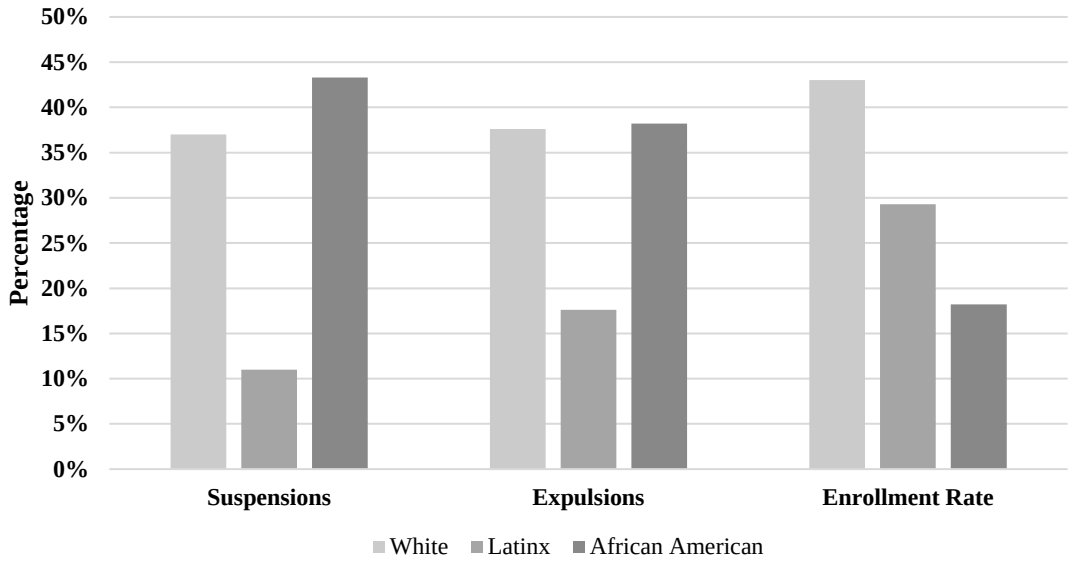
Disproportionality describes a group's under or overrepresentation in any category. NASP (2013) defines discipline disproportionality as "the disproportionately high rates at which students from certain racial/ethnic groups are subjected to office discipline referrals, suspensions, school arrests, and expulsion" (p. 1). The utilization of zero tolerance and exclusionary discipline practices has led to significant racial disparities in the disciplining of students, with Latinx and African American, being disciplined in schools more frequently and more harshly relative to White students across all grade levels (APA, 2012). These exclusionary disparities lead African American and Latinx students of all ages to miss out on foundational and critical learning opportunities. The OCR found in 2018, students have missed out on over eleven million days of educational instruction due to out of school suspension alone (OCR, 2022). However, there is extreme disproportionality in terms of losing access to education. Nationally, African American students account for 66% of these lost days, compared to 14% for White students and 17% for Latinx students (Losen & Whitaker, 2023). These out of school suspensions have contributed to lost classroom time, academic instruction, and have created a disconnect, for African American students especially, that school is not a place of safety to learn (NASP, 2013).

Early experiences in education have long been regarded as an important learning environment for children as they are able to learn foundational social emotional and

academic skills. Gilliam (2005) published groundbreaking research exposing the phenomenon of prekindergarten (Pre-K) students left behind due to discipline disparities. This was the nation's first look at suspension and expulsion rates at the Early Childhood Education (ECE) level. It was determined that Pre-K students were expelled at a rate of more than three times that of K-12 students. The study concluded the likelihood of expulsion was significantly decreased when the classroom had access to behavioral consultation. However, it was not until almost ten years later that this issue gained national attention when the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the United States Department of Education (ED) released a joint policy statement describing this phenomenon and provided recommendations to decrease discipline disparities and the use of suspension and expulsion in early childhood settings (2014). Their recommendations included bias free policies, early childhood mental health consultation, positive behavior supports, and eliminating the use of suspension and expulsions in ECE schools. However, this phenomenon continues to disproportionately impact African American students, in particular. Figure 7 below displays the racial disproportionality seen across the U.S in preschool education settings.

Figure 7

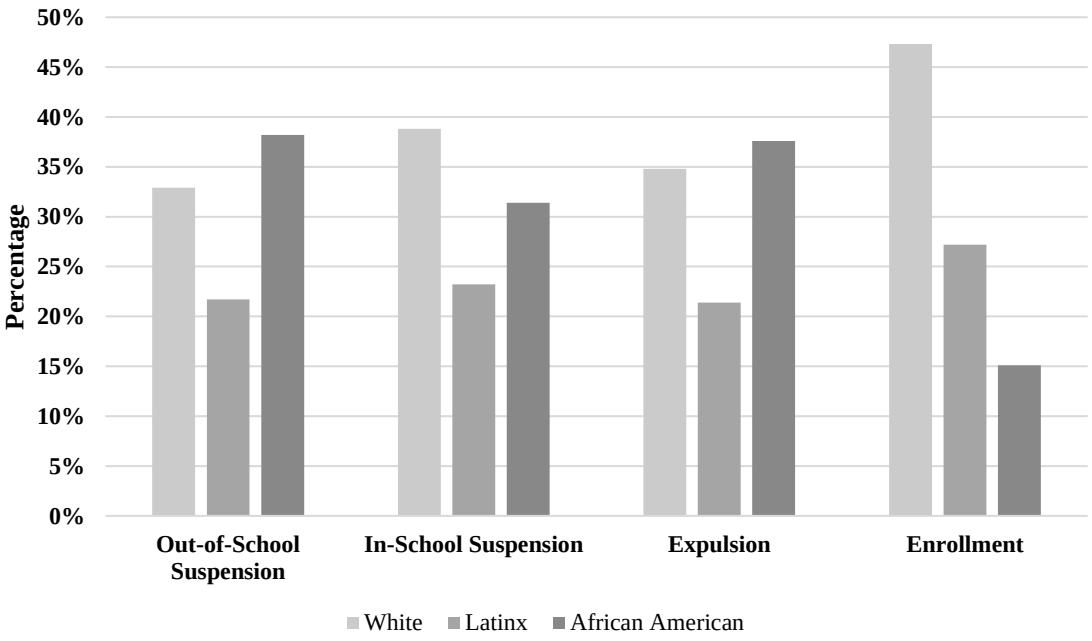
Preschool Discipline Trends 2017-2018



Note. Adapted from "Civil Rights Data Collection: An Overview of Exclusionary Discipline Practices in Public Schools for the 2017-18 School Year," by The Office for Civil Rights, 2021, *Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.*

Although seen as a new cause of concern in ECE, this research has shown disproportionality has always been of great concern in K-12 settings. During the 2017-2018 school year, African American students made up 15.1% of the public-school K-12 population, however they accounted for 37.6% of expulsions, 31.4% of in school suspensions, and 38.2% of out of school suspensions (OCR, 2016). Figure 8 displays the racial disproportionality seen across the U.S in K-12 education settings.

Figure 8
K-12 Discipline Trends 2017-2018



Note. Adapted from "Civil Rights Data Collection: An Overview of Exclusionary Discipline Practices in Public Schools for the 2017-18 School Year," by The Office for Civil Rights, 2021, *Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.*

Manuscript two utilized data from schools that educated students across grades Pre-K through eighth grade. Therefore, the term "childhood education" was created to describe this unique population of students. Preschool through 12 grade disproportionality is therefore presented to fully encapsulate how exclusionary discipline impacts marginalized students, particularly African Americans. Pre-K through 8th grade educational settings uniquely serve students across two developmental stages. Because of this, discipline trends and implications across both settings are analyzed and presented as childhood education (CE).

Impacts to the Use of Discipline

Although it is clear that zero-tolerance policies have greatly impacted discipline disparities across childhood education, researchers have also described other major indicators impacting discipline use, including deficit mindsets, implicit bias, and a lack of mental health supports (Adamu & Hogan, 2015; Albritton et al., 2016; Bryan, 2017; Durden et al., 2014; Gilliam & Reyes, 2018; Gilliam et al., 2016; Souto-Manning, 2013; Souto-Manning & Rabadi-Raol, 2018).

Educator Mindset

> Deficit ideology is rooted in the belief that poverty is the natural result of ethical, intellectual, spiritual, and other shortcomings in people who are experiencing it... Pointing to differences in test scores or graduation rates, as evidence of these shortcomings... As a teacher, can I believe a student's mindset is deficient, that she is lazy, unmotivated, and disinterested in school and also build a positive, high-expectations relationship with her? (Gorski, 2016, p. 381)

As discussed in Manuscript One, deficit and strengths-based or growth mindsets have been linked to negative and positive outcomes for African American and Latinx students. The White American dominant culture in which discipline methods stem from, operate from a deficit view in which traits of other cultures are often seen as different or in deficit of White Americans (Zhao, 2016); this includes personality traits, personal values, and performance. As the quote describes above, educator mindset can directly impact how students perceive themselves, their teachers, and the education system. If a teacher views them as deficient, how can a student feel fully supported within their learning environment? Research shows students display more defiant behaviors when they perceive the teacher as "uncaring and having low expectations," however their

behavior significantly improves when they perceive their teacher as “caring and having high expectations” (APA, 2012, p. 50).

Deficit thinking within the education system describes marginalized students fail in school, not because of systemic barriers of oppression, but from internal deficits (Valencia, 2010). These internal deficits are seen as challenges that need to be fixed and there is a strong focus on blaming the student versus blaming the system. For example, when utilizing a deficit lens, families experiencing poverty are believed to be there because of deficiencies in the family versus being impacted by systemic factors such as economic injustice, exploitation, and social inequity (Wang et al., 2021). Students from low-income families are seen as having parents that do not care about or value their education and are less likely to be involved in the school community; teachers then focus their efforts on changing these parent’s views compared to fixing systemic inequalities that keep them in poverty (Gorski, 2016; Valencia, 1997). Therefore, they throw time and resources at a nonexistent part of the problem and wonder why student outcomes do not change.

In addition, deficit mindsets are seen as fixed (Dweck, 2015; Zhao, 2016), and impact not only how teachers see their students, but how students see themselves (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022). When a learning environment focuses on a student's deficits versus their strengths, it creates a space in which students do not feel capable or safe enough to grow their strengths. As mentioned in Manuscript One, instead of seeing student’s unique traits as “brilliant” or “cultural tools,” deficit models of thinking label African American and Latinx students as “at risk” or “disadvantaged” compared to their White counterparts

(Hilliard, 2006). Moving this paradigm to a more strength-based approach in which all students are seen as bringing unique gifts to the educational table would allow educators to turn risks into resources.

The opposite of a deficit or fixed mindset is a growth mindset. Growth mindsets center around the fact that intelligence and ability are strengthened through hard work, perseverance, and a positive and conducive learning environment (Dweck, 2015). In direct opposition to a deficit mindset, a growth mindset views families experiencing poverty as targets of unjust social and economic policies and events, rather than a direct cause to their situation (Gorski, 2016). In the education system, growth mindsets stem from the idea that all students have their own unique strengths, and these differences are not seen as deficits or risks (Ridley, 2003). Students all have different values, motivators, knowledge, experiences, qualities, resources, and abilities that can be leveraged in their academic success. Growth mindsets reject the idea of mainstream culture as the standard and instead believe all students arrive with their own strengths and resources whether they align with mainstream standards or not (Hines et al., 2022). Schools and educators that utilize growth mindsets see positive social emotional and academic effects. Thiem and Dasgupta (2022) found that students have increases in motivation and optimism about their grades and abilities when their teachers utilize growth mindsets. The academic achievement gap between African American and Latinx and White students was also reduced in classrooms that utilized growth mindsets (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022).

Bias

> One of the most powerful consequences of implicit racial bias is that it often robs us of a sense of real compassion for and connection to individuals and groups who

> suffer the burdens of racial inequality and injustice in our society (Staats et al., 2016, p. 3)

Educator bias has also been linked to negative academic and discipline outcomes for African American and Latinx students. Implicit biases are "attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner" (Staats et al., 2016, p. 14). One's implicit biases are unconscious and impact our decision making and behaviors leading to responses that may be opposite of one's true intentions. Implicit biases are formed at a young age and are directly impacted, reinforced, and perpetuated by one's experiences and interactions with family members, the communities one operates within, and the media they interact with (NASP, 2017).

Negative implicit biases are held most commonly against African American and Latinx students as they differ from White American mainstream culture. For instance, television often displays African American and Latinx people as criminals, gang members, or drug addicts to be feared (NASP, 2017). This constant exposure from the media causes society to subconsciously begin to develop negative feelings and attitudes towards these individuals and society begins to see young African American and Latinx males as young as five as dangerous (Rudd, 2014).

This negative unconscious stereotype of African American boys leads directly to discipline disproportionality. When African American boys engage in minor behavior infractions, teachers and administrators utilize excessive and exclusionary discipline practices more harshly compared to White students (Losen & Whitaker, 2023). Research consistently shows that African American and Latinx students are punished more frequently for subjective behaviors such as defiance, disrespect, refusal, and challenging

teacher authority (APA, 2012; Gregory et al., 2010; Rudd, 2014; Skiba, 2014). Discipline tends to be more evenly applied across racial groups for more severe and objective behaviors such as fighting, possessing a weapon, or utilizing drugs on campus (APA, 2012; Gregory et al., 2010; Skiba, 2014). Yet there is no evidence that African American and Latinx students exhibit larger amounts of negative behaviors or severe infractions compared to their White counterparts (Rudd, 2014). The uneven application of discipline is directly linked to implicit racial biases (APA, 2012).

Implicit racial bias not only impacts how a teacher assigns discipline, but it also impacts how teachers hold academic expectations, view students' strengths and capabilities, and care for their overall wellbeing (Rudd, 2014). These implicit biases are dangerous as they impact all educators' behaviors and decision-making processes, especially in subjective or ambiguous situations. Since school psychologists are also shaped by White supremacist mainstream culture, they are also vulnerable of having implicit racial biases against African American and Latinx students. These biases can directly impact how assessment and academic data are analyzed and therefore, the recommendations they make for support (NASP, 2017). Consequently, implicit racial biases and deficit mindsets directly impact how African American and Latinx students are seen as risks and not resources.

Mental Health Resources

The constant implicit and explicit biases held against African American and Latinx students lead not only to academic and disciplinary disproportionality, but also to mental health disparities (Alegria et al., 2010). This includes both access to and the

quality of mental health support. Left untreated, mental health disorders can lead to various negative outcomes for students including social, emotional, academic, and overall quality of life (Fazel et al., 2014; NASP, 2016; Sanchez et al., 2018).

The 2018-2019 Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) found that African American and Latinx youth were significantly less likely to receive treatment and access to high quality mental health supports compared to White youth (Reinert et al., 2021). Instead of specialty mental health care such as residential or day treatment facilities, private therapists, or in-home therapies, African American and Latinx youth were more likely to receive non-specialty mental health care. This included school-based services (e.g., social worker, school psychologist, counselor), specialized schools for students with emotional or behavioral problems, pediatricians, juvenile detention centers, or therapeutic foster care centers (Reinert et al., 2021). These results suggest that African American and Latinx students disproportionally access their mental health care in educational or governmental settings.

This lack of access to quality mental health supports leads to negative and adverse outcomes for African American and Latinx students. African American and Latinx students that are served by the child welfare systems are often referred to the juvenile justice system for mental health conditions that display disruptive or aggressive behaviors (Alegria et al., 2010; Hoover & Bostic, 2019). Schools can also commonly utilize exclusionary discipline practices to handle emotional and physical behaviors that stem from mental health challenges (Prins et al., 2022). Thus, these systems create additional

pathways to the juvenile justice system by not adequately meeting mental health needs. Additionally, untreated childhood mental health disorders are also linked to several poor outcomes: poor social mobility, reduced social capital, low educational attainment, compromised physical health, substance abuse, and premature mortality (e.g., suicide; Alegria et al., 2010; NASP, 2016; Richter et al., 2022).

Thus, improving mental health support and access for African American and Latinx students not only leads to less exclusionary discipline used against them, but also to positive life outcomes. Quality and comprehensive mental health supports have been found to promote good mental health and positive outcomes including: the development of appropriate developmental milestones, high academic achievement, prosocial and emotional functioning, strong regulation and coping skills, and adaptability in various school and home settings (Bitsko et al., 2022; NASP, 2016). Therefore, knowing that African American and Latinx youth rely on the school system to provide mental health access and disrupt negative outcomes, makes high quality school-based mental health providers more important than ever.

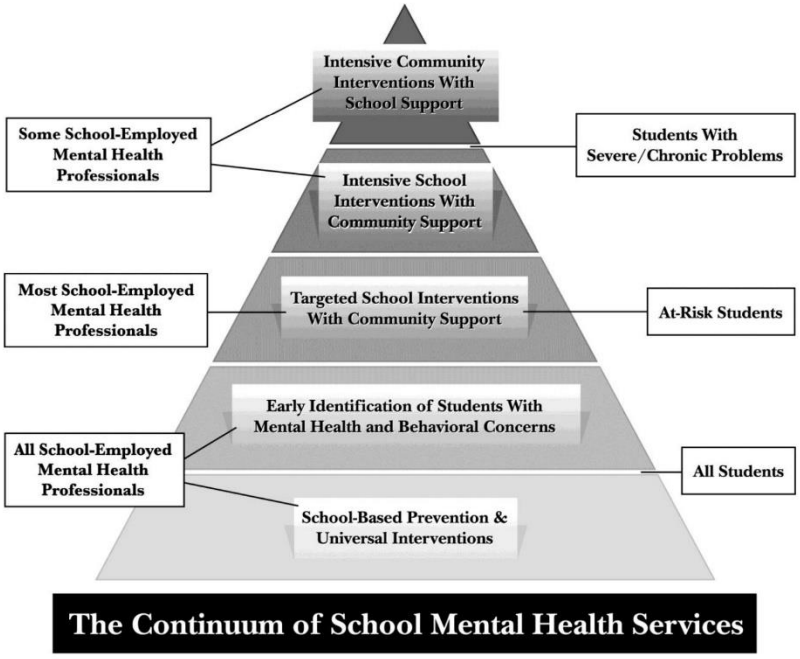
School counselors and school psychologists are uniquely positioned to provide quality comprehensive school-based mental health services. These providers are crucial to supporting the most vulnerable youth in schools. However, reliance on school-based professionals to meet these needs creates a major challenge as schools nationally are underfunded and under sourced. In 2020, 54.3% of schools reported inadequate funding and 40.1% of schools reported inadequate access to licensed mental health professionals as the major factors limiting their efforts to provide mental health services for students;

leaving only 56% of schools feeling that they could adequately address the mental health needs of their students (NCES, 2020). Nationally schools are experiencing disproportionate ratios, as the national student to school counselor ratio is 408-1, while the recommended ratio is 250-1; The school psychologist ratio is 1162-1, while the recommended ratio is 500-1 (NASP, 2021).

These ratios are of great cause for concern as school-based mental health providers cannot adequately implement the comprehensive mental health supports they are trained to provide. Figure 9 displays how school psychologists provide services to all students at any needed level.

Figure 9

The Continuum of School-Based Mental Health Services



Note. From "School-Based Mental Health Services: Improving Student Learning and Well-Being," by National Association of School Psychologists, 2016, (https://.NASP%202016%20improving%20mental%20well%20being%20in%20schools.pdf).

Therefore, although this shortage impacts all students, it leaves African American and Latinx students most vulnerable as they disproportionately rely on these school-based services. School psychologists are more important than ever to turn student's risks into resources.

School Psychologists

School psychologists are in a unique position to disrupt the deficit mindsets and implicit biases that contribute to discipline disproportionality. Not only that, but they are also integral to providing access to quality mental health supports to all students. School psychologists sit at the intersection of teachers, students, parents, and administrators and are therefore able to provide the resources recommended by the OCR (2014) that includes advocating for bias free policies, providing mental health consultation and positive behavior supports, and advocating for the elimination of suspension and expulsion practices. However, less than half of the elementary schools across the country have access to a school psychologist (Albriton et al., 2016).

School psychologists are bound by the *Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services* and the PPEs (NASP, 2010). These models guide school psychologists to deliver effective individualized services to students while prioritizing social justice (Shriberg & Moy, 2014). School psychologists are trained and ethically driven to "correct school practices that are unjustly discriminatory" (Shriberg & Moy, 2014, p. 22), including advocating for the elimination of zero-tolerance, punitive, and exclusionary discipline policies (NASP, 2021). Therefore, their training positions them to see discipline inequities, understand the impacts of punitive discipline, and advocate for

and create new systems of preventative and restorative discipline that meet the individual needs of their school's culture.

School psychologists are in an ideal role to support and sustain these changes over time as they are trained in systems levels services, supporting students' behavior through teaching skills, and advocating as change makers to dismantle inequitable systems. As school psychology training and programs continue to grow across the country, focus can be placed on how school psychologists can continue to shift the paradigm away from traditional punitive discipline practices. NASP released nine key steps school psychologists should take to address discipline disproportionality (see Table 1).

Table 1

Steps for School Psychologists to Address Discipline Disproportionality

Role of School Psychologists to Address Disparity in Discipline Practices
1. Using evidence-based and research-oriented frameworks that integrate knowledge of diversity, child development, and learning to solve problems of school ineffectiveness and to facilitate alternatives to special education placements and traditional punitive disciplinary practice.
2. Examining their own biases to be sure that they do not act in ways that negatively affect the families and children they serve.
3. Acknowledging that consistent exclusion of historically marginalized groups of students is not acceptable and must be questioned, whether such exclusion is observed overtly or covertly
4. Empowering children and families to self-advocate for effective discipline procedures when inequities exist**.**
5. Acquiring supervision, consultation, and professional development to continuously expand our multicultural understanding and knowledge of nondiscriminatory practice and improve our levels of competency in working with diverse populations.
6. Implementing MTSS, which may include SWPBIS, SEL and RJ approaches that empower all students to succeed in school.
7. Collaborating with others to review, disaggregate, and analyze district-wide data to identify systems level biases with certain racial and ethnic groups.
8. Assisting administrators and school teams in analyzing yearly academic and behavioral data in evaluating current practices, policies, and procedures related to special education identification rates and school discipline.
9**.** Consulting with educational stakeholders such as parents, students, families, teachers, and policy makers to develop appropriate school discipline policies.

Note. Adapted from "Racial and Ethnic Disproportionality in Education [Position Statement]," by National Association of School Psychologists, 2013, p. 1-8, (https://www.nasponline.org/assets/Documents/Research%20and%20Policy/Position%20Statements/Racial_Ethnic_Disproportionality.pdf).

Although the school psychology PPEs centers around service delivery and social justice, it is important to acknowledge the foundation in which school psychology was built and the issues facing the field. School psychology is comprised predominately of

White women (86%; Goforth et al., 2021) who, subsequently, benefit from White supremacist mainstream culture. The tenets of service delivery, assessment, and consultation within school psychology were also developed utilizing White supremacist mainstream culture as the norm, including central concepts of intelligence, strengths, and weaknesses (Sullivan et al., 2022). Intelligence testing has origins in eugenics in which society believed people of color demonstrated lower scores on IQ tests due to their inferior intellect and genetics compared to White people (Gillborn, 2016; Hiermeier & Verity, 2022). This positionality of innate biological difference has been used to justify the racist and inequitable policies used throughout American history (Gould, 1981; Katz, 2022). Although widely discredited today, these foundational beliefs are rooted within American culture and people of color still perform on average 15 IQ points below their White counterparts due to the inherent biases and needed cultural knowledge embedded within intelligence tests (Gould, 1981). Due to these limitations, school psychologists need to move from viewing psychometric tools as objective to subjective.

Although school psychologists are trained to support schools and students utilizing a social justice lens, the field must also grapple with the fact that it not only utilizes tools rooted from White supremacist ideas, but it also has not diversified its own field as it continues to lag behind other professional fields in its focus on systemic inequality, intersectionality, and cultural humility (Pham et al., 2021). As of 2018, only 14% of school psychologist are non-white, 10% of peer-reviewed research articles focus on school psychology and racism, and even fewer focus on how school psychologists can utilize positive or protective factors when working with students of color (Pham et al.,

2021). For school psychologists to effectively advocate for African American and Latinx students and dismantle White supremacist systems, they must utilize their foundational knowledge and training and, model the continuous journey of cultural humility and critical self-reflection. Since the field is comprised predominately of White women, they can use their position, power, and privilege within the mainstream White supremacist culture to dismantle it from the inside out and lead others to do the same.

Cultural Humility

> Cultural humility is the keen awareness of how culture shapes all individuals' experiences and perspectives, including the impact of power, privilege, and oppression. This also includes practitioners' understanding of how their own culture impacts their interactions with others. Cultural humility can be conceptualized as a way of being that allows the practitioner to become more fully aware of social injustices and to actively engage in socially just practice (Fisher, 2020, p. 8)

Cultural terminology has evolved and will continue to evolve as society changes and learns over time. In order to understand the complexity and intersectionality of these terms, culture must be defined. Culture is seen as the beliefs, attitudes, values, social norms, and everyday experiences and practices, shared by a group in a certain place and time (Wheeler, 2018). Culture is intersectional, dynamic, varied, individualized, and ever changing, but all people are shaped by their culture. In 1995, Gloria Ladson Billings introduced the term culturally relevant pedagogy and its relation to teaching. She positioned that teachers must "utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning" (Ladson Billings, 1995, p. 160). Students were seen to be most successful in environments in which they experienced academic success, developed their own cultural competence, and

developed critically conscious skills to challenge mainstream culture and social inequities they may face (Ladson Billings, 1995).

Five years later, Genva Gay took this concept further and introduced culturally responsive teaching. Gay positioned that not only should learning environments utilize student's culture and experiences, but it should be done comprehensively at the institutional, personal, and instructional level (Gay, 2002, Richards et al., 2004). The institutional level includes the administration, school district, and the policies and values it holds including reforming the system away from White supremacist policies; the personal level includes the self-reflection and cultural exploration teachers must go through to become culturally responsive including acknowledging their own biases; and the instructional level includes the cultural curriculum and strategies utilized in the classroom, including empowering students' culture and language as strengths and resources (Richards et al., 2004). Gay (2002) concluded that when schools utilized all three intersecting levels, the academic achievement of students not centered within White supremacist mainstream culture improved as they are taught comprehensively through a culture that they can directly relate to in meaningful ways.

Although the critical race theory framework utilized a comprehensive approach with elements of self-reflection, learning, and action, educators began to focus solely on the learning aspect known as cultural competence (Wheeler, 2018). Cultural competency is often seen as a concrete concept with an end goal rather than a continuous process. Although educators utilizing cultural competency may complete some initial self-reflection of their own views, the main focus is on increasing one's ability to interact

successfully with people from various cultural backgrounds by learning about the beliefs, values, and customs of these groups (Wheeler, 2018). Educators were responsive to this positionality as it removed the intersectionality and complexity of disrupting systems at various levels, and instead simplified the process. Consequently, cultural competency continued to position Whiteness as the norm and marginalized communities as "others" that needed to be learned about in order to work effectively with them (Yaeger & Bauer-Wu, 2013). Cultural competency also became a box educators could check off, and more specifically became a sense of pride for White female educators to feel confident and comfortable when working with students from othered cultures, (i.e., "I am culturally competent"). Cultural competence assumes one can become effective in their work by simply gaining knowledge about various cultural groups.

These terms, although well intentioned, continue to position historically marginalized students as "other" and maintain White supremacist ideals that students with cultures different from the norm are a challenge (or problem) that requires "competency" in to be handled and effectively educated. The onus continues to be placed on historically marginalized students instead of focusing on the systems that create these negative mindsets. Fortunately, social and educational theorists began to notice these inequities, and adopted cultural humility as a more appropriate concept (Fisher-Borne, et al., 2015). Cultural humility first appeared in the medical field and was coined by Dr. Melanie Tervalon and Dr. Jann Murray-Garcia as a way to deliver healthcare to diverse populations by redressing patient-physician power imbalances (1998).

Cultural humility encompasses cultural competency but goes further and describes a cyclical and never-ending process including intense self-reflection, intentional exposure to various cultures, a willingness to learn from key stakeholders, and a constant commitment to improve the outcomes for historically marginalized people through the destruction of White supremacist systems (Wheeler, 2018; Yaeger & Bauer-Wu, 2013). Cultural humility acknowledges that maintaining a culturally competent lens, by continuously learning about various cultures, is important; however, cultural humility is intentional, centered on personal and systemic action, and requires acknowledging that one can never fully know all there is to know about any one culture (Cooke, 2023; Foronda et al., 2016; Tervalon & Murrary-Garcia, 1998). Cultural humility returns to the idea that ones' identity within a historically marginalized community is dynamic, intersectional, ever changing, and directly impacted by power differences and social injustices caused by White supremacist systems (Cooke, 2023; Fisher, 2020). Table 2 and Figure 10 display the key tenets and hierarchy of cultural competence and cultural humility. It is easy to see how educators may wish to stop at cultural competency as cultural humility is multi layered and requires educators to not only continuously hold a mirror up to themselves, but also directly disrupt systems in which they may be comfortable in or receive power and privilege from.

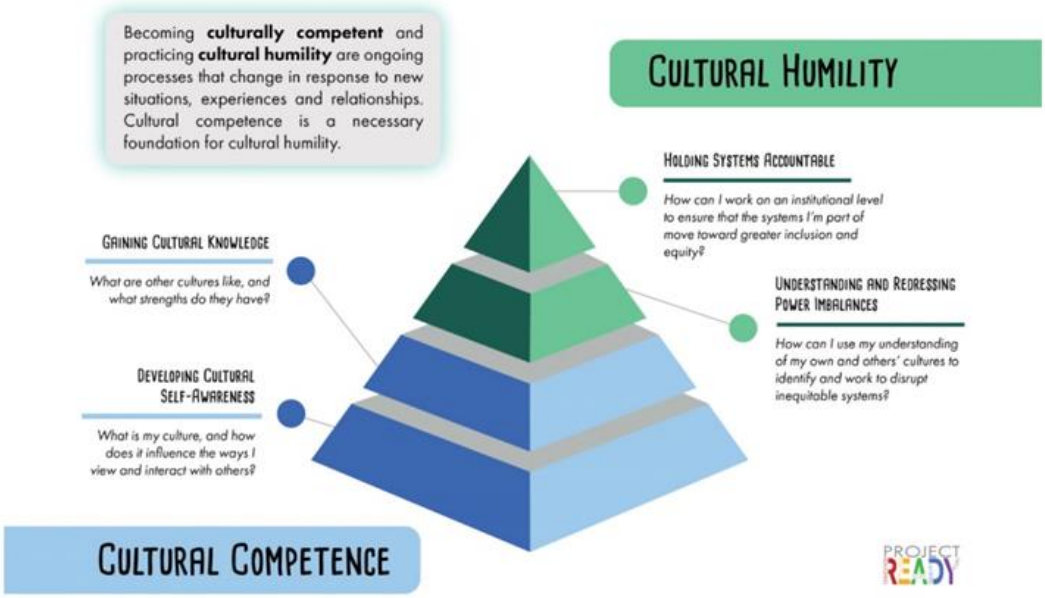
Table 2

Key Tenets of Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility

Cultural Competence	Cultural Humility
Reflect on and identify one's personal values, beliefs, and world views.	Engage in the process of cultural competency, with the understanding that culture is intersectional, dynamic, and influenced by interactions with others within the various systems one interacts in.
View cultural differences through a strengths-based lens.	Acknowledge a lifetime commitment to the self, including self-reflection, self-exploration, self-critique, and self-evaluation.
Seek out knowledge of different cultures from relevant stakeholders.	Recognize and understand that social and cultural inequities and disparities are directly caused by power imbalances created by White supremacist systems.
Develop appropriate communication and interaction skills across cultures.	Disrupt and reframe power imbalances and hold the systems in which one operates in and holds power within accountable.

Note. Adapted from "Module 8: Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility" by N. Cooke, 2023, *Project READY: Reimagining Equity and Access for Diverse Youth*, (https://ready.web.unc.edu/section-1-foundations/module-8/).

Figure 10
Cultural Competence & Cultural Humility Pyramid



Note. From "Module 8: Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility" by N. Cooke, 2023, *Project READY: Reimagining Equity and Access for Diverse Youth*, (https://ready.web.unc.edu/section-1-foundations/module-8/).

Culturally humble educators reject the idea that students from cultures different than the White norm are problematic and instead focus on the idea that the educational system needs to be held accountable for creating learning environments in which disparities exists for African American and Latinx students (Cooke, 2023; Yaeger & Bauer-Wu, 2013). This culturally humble existence directly aligns with NASP's core values and goals including integrity, diversity, advocacy, and social justice. NASP (2021) defines social justice as "a process and a goal that requires action to ensure the protection of the educational rights, opportunities, and well-being of all children, especially those whose voices have been muted, identities obscured, or needs ignored" (p. 1). NASP strongly encourages school psychologists to take a proactive role when advocating for

social justice including a) understanding the impact of biases in service delivery, b) recognizing equitable practices for diverse student populations, c) directly intervening when they witness discrimination, and d) striving to reform systems level patterns of injustice (NASP, 2019; NASP, 2020; Pham et al., 2021).

School psychologists are trained to understand systems and act when they witness injustices; therefore, they have an ideal perspective to not only utilize a culturally humble lens but to teach others to as well. Due to their training and unique intersection and interaction with many facets (school, teachers, administrators, students, parents), school psychologists are often seen as the experts related to topics of social justice, child development, behavior supports, and mental health needs. However, one can argue that school psychologists can better serve African American and Latinx students by modeling a key component of cultural humility in which they move away from this position of power and instead think of themselves as collaborative partners in advocacy and the services they provide (Pham et al., 2021). Given the racial and gender homogeneity comprising the field of school psychology, it is critical for school psychologists to use cultural humility to listen, learn, and respect the unique needs of African American and Latinx students by directly including them and key stakeholders in their service delivery and advocacy. School psychologists can lead the charge by showing other educational providers that it is ok to relinquish power and control and begin to dismantle White supremacist models of education in which African American and Latinx students have suffered.

Current Study

Broadly, this research study critically examined punitive and exclusionary discipline practices and its direct link to discipline disproportionality, including potential causes and the negative outcomes it creates for African American and Latinx students. Specifically, this study's aim was to better understand ways in which school psychologists can support educators' use of restorative and preventative discipline practices. This study positions school psychologists as agents of change, as their training and ethical and moral standards make them uniquely adept at challenging inequitable systems that negatively impact African American and Latinx students. However, there is a gap in the literature describing how school psychologists can use culturally humble practices to disrupt White supremacist discipline systems, change American deficit mindsets, and lead the charge in dismantling punitive and exclusionary discipline practices.

To fill this gap, this study aimed to explore educator mindsets and their relationship to the use of discipline practices. Educators are defined as school personnel who teach students academic, social emotional, and behavioral skills. By understanding the why, how, and when educators utilize punitive and exclusionary discipline practices, the study sought to use this information to better inform school psychologists on how to disrupt the use of punitive and exclusionary discipline practices and influence others to do the same. This collective disruption would reduce discipline disproportionality and allow African American and Latinx students to retain access to high quality education, and the positive outcomes it creates and that they deserve. Using a multi-case design, this

study aimed to describe the ways in which educators conceptualize and utilize discipline practices and analyze how educator mindset contributes to these practices.

Research Questions

The following research questions posed by this study included:

1. How do educators ascribe meaning to their use of discipline practices?
2. What internal and external factors influence educators' use of discipline practices?
3. How do educators ascribe meaning to their discipline pedagogy or philosophy?

Through data analysis, the researcher hoped to gain a better understanding of how educators conceptualize their use of discipline practices as well as understand other factors that impact discipline use. Each school explored below utilized restorative and punitive and exclusionary discipline policies that made the researcher wonder how, when, and why they decided to use specific models. It was hypothesized that a variety of influences including mindsets, implicit biases, life experiences, and school policy would impact how educators utilize and conceptualize various discipline practices.

Theoretical Frameworks and Positionality

To best understand the findings and implications of this study, it is important to examine the researcher's theoretical framework and positionality. A theoretical framework outlines the underlying thinking or assumptions of the study and grounds the researcher during data analysis and interpretation (Grant & Osanloo, 2015). Researcher positionality refers to the researcher's identity, personal characteristics, and personal experiences that may impact how the study was formed, analyzed, and concluded

(Wilson et al., 2022). It is impossible for one to be completely unbiased when conducting research, therefore outlining one's positionality helps the reader understand the study and form their own opinions about the outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

> Critical Race Theory identifies and examines the ways in which White supremacy and racism permeate systems today, including the continuation of generational poverty; barriers in accessing housing, education, and healthcare; and funding and economic development approaches that privilege predominantly White neighborhoods and disadvantage marginalized and minoritized communities (NASP, 2021, p. 2).

In order to fully understand how African American and Latinx students' cultural resources are positioned as risks with the American education system, Critical Race Theory (CRT) was used as the underlying framework for this study. CRT was initially theorized and applied to tenets of American law by Derrik Bell and Kimberlé Crenshaw, both African American legal scholars. They sought to transform American laws as they found the laws were not applied neutrally and instead sustained racial hierarchy's that benefited White people (Bell, 1995; Crenshaw et al., 1995). CRT was a direct response to colorblind and racially neutral ideology that viewed racism as a problem that could be solved through equality and conceptualized that acts of racism were only committed by individual bigots (Sabnis & Proctor, 2021).

When applied to education, CRT does not ask "Does racism play a role in educational disparities?" but instead, it queries "How has racism contributed to educational disparities and how can it be dismantled?" (Howard, 2010, p. 99). CRT brings an understanding that racism is rooted within American culture therefore it has infected all systems within it including governmental, legal, educational, and the social

landscapes (NASP, 2021). CRT not only identifies that racism is intersectional and always at play, but it also seeks to bring this deeply rooted issue to the surface in order to change it (Crenshaw, 1995). If practitioners wish to truly understand how to dismantle discipline disproportionality for African American and Latinx students, they must critically examine the role racism plays. Therefore, CRT is embedded in the foundation of this research and was used as a critical lens to examine why, how, and when educators utilize punitive and exclusionary forms of discipline. Utilizing the lens of CRT when examining how African American and Latinx students are disproportionately disciplined, views this phenomenon as the direct result of systemic racism enacted and sustained by White supremacist mainstream culture.

CRT operates from six major tenants that include, (1) counter-storytelling; (2) the permanence of racism; (3) the social construction of race; (4) whiteness as property; (5) interest convergence; and (6) the critique of liberalism (, DeCuir & Dixson, 2014). Table 3 outlines the tenets of CRT as they apply to the education system.

Table 3

Key Tenets of Critical Race Theory Applied to Education

Critical Race Theory Tenet	Definition	Application
Counter-Storytelling	Provide counternarratives in order to counteract and critique the narratives perpetuated by White supremacist culture such as racial stereotypes.	The narratives told about African American and Latinx students are directly related to the deficit mindsets and implicit biases educators hold. Counternarratives within the education system are critical as an alternative and accurate narrative is needed for African American and Latinx students.
The Permanence of Racism	The understanding that racism is permanent, always at work, and is working the way it is intended to.	Systemic racism within the education system contributes to the educational and discipline disparities African American and Latinx students experience.
The Social Construction of Race	Race is a societal creation and does not reflect innate biological differences within people.	Race is constructed by the dominate White culture to benefit White supremacy and therefore White students within the education system.
Whiteness as Property	The benefits of systemic racism are seen exclusively for White individuals.	The education system does not positively impact African American and Latinx students in the same ways it does their White counterparts.
Interest Convergence	The rights given to people of color are only given when they benefit White people first.	Since discipline disproportionality does not negatively impact White students, there is no rush by society to dismantle the systems that create these inequities.
The Critique of Liberalism	Liberal ideologies including colorblindness, neutrality in law, and incremental change are insufficient, position equality over equity, and ignore the historical inequities perpetuated by society.	Educational strategies used thus far focus on either students or educators and do not adequately address academic or discipline inequities.

Note. Adapted from multiple sources including "So When it Comes Out, They Aren't That Surprised That it is There: Using Critical Race Theory as a Tool of Analysis of Race and Racism in Education," by J. DeCuir, and A. Dixson, 2014, *Educational Researchers,* 26-31; "Just What is Critical Race Theory and What's it Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?," by G. Ladson-Billings, 1998, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7-24; "Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement," by K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller, and K. Thomas, 1995, *The New Press.*

Utilizing CRT has become more important than ever as it recently has been labeled divisive by White mainstream culture (See BBC, 2021; CNN, 2021; EducationWeek, 2021; New York Times, 2021). CRT is currently seen by American society as a concept that needs to be banned in schools as it positions all White people as racists. This uproar displays that CRT continues to be a relevant and needed positionality, as systems of oppression always fight back when it feels its power slipping away. 28 years ago, Kimberlé Crenshaw described what we still see today: "angry white males who, against all the evidence, have positioned themselves as the chief victims of contemporary racial politics" (1995, p. xxi). When marginalized communities ask for equitable rights, spaces that integrate and value their experiences, and the dismantling of racist systems the mainstream White supremacist society maintains their control by perpetuating stereotypes about flaws in these individuals versus acknowledging flaws in the system.

Critical School Psychology

> The goal of Critical School Psychology is to challenge the field of school psychology by uncovering and naming the ways in which school psychology is complicit in oppression and to force it to do better. In addition to increasing self-conscious critique, Critical School Psychology would also have an activist component of seeking to transform. Thus, Critical School Psychology would seek to open new spaces in the landscape of school psychology that are more accessible to and representative of marginalized groups. Critical School Psychology also seeks to foreground the 'voices' and experiences of marginalized people by strengthening its ties to ongoing social movements that are primarily led by marginalized groups in search of a better world (Sabnis & Proctor, 2021, p. 8)

CRT is also relevant to this study as a key component of cultural humility, and one this study challenges school psychologists to use, is criticizing and dismantling racist

systems. Sabnis and Proctor (2021) have introduced a new conceptual framework they hope will gain traction in the field of school psychology and its subsequent training. Sabnis and Proctor (2021) describe Critical School Psychology (CSP) as a framework that seeks to transform the homogenous field of school psychology into a more critical and anti-oppressive space. They credit both critical theory and CRT as the foundations of their framework. Given the homogeneity of the field of school psychology, critical theory is important as it critiques the concept that those who hold mainstream power get to define and produce "knowledge" for all of society; therefore, how and who obtains this needed knowledge can never be "objective and neutral." (Sabnis & Proctor, 2021, p. 3). This directly relates to school psychologists as they utilize assessments, interpretation tools, and concepts that are rooted in White supremacy to determine intelligence quotients, special education placements, and the delineation of resources and services.

Therefore, a key component of CSP is to turn the field inward and humbly critique and confront "its own complicity in reproducing various forms of social injustices" (Sabnis & Proctor, 2021, p. 10). Once this is done, CSP then positions school psychologists should focus on increasing the critical consciousness of others within the education system to understand the systems that perpetuate disparity, inequity, and oppression (Sabnis & Proctor, 2021). The third component of CSP is to create new knowledge and spaces that highlight the experiences and voices of marginalized groups (Sabnis & Proctor, 2021). This includes supporting counter-knowledge (i.e., knowledge formed by marginalized groups), creating safe spaces for marginalized groups (i.e., spaces that provide relief and strength), creating critical spaces (i.e., amplifying

marginalized perspectives in White supremacist spaces), and creating educational spaces in which marginalized groups have access (i.e., advocating and allowing access for more BIPOC school psychologist; Sabnis & Proctor, 2021).

These three steps are integral to bringing about social change to the field of school psychology and the education systems with which it operates in. Therefore, CRT is utilized as the underlying foundation of this work, with the goal of not only highlighting how to reduce discipline disparities for African American and Latinx students but also highlighting how school psychologist can utilize a more critical framework to do so, ultimately turning all children's risks into resources.

Author Positionality

By utilizing CRT and CSP, the researcher also brought in their own experiential knowledge to help understand what is taking place within the education and discipline systems. Barnes (1990) notes "critical race theorists integrate their experiential knowledge drawn from a shared history as `other' with their ongoing struggles to transform a world deteriorating under the albatross of racial hegemony (p. 1864-1865)." In other words, it is not possible for a researcher to analyze or critique a problem without bringing in their own subjective experiences. Therefore, this researcher's experience as an African American student who has gone through the education system, as well as their positionality as an early childhood educator and school psychologist all intersected. This lens was used to analyze each educator's story, interactions, and meaning behind their use of discipline practices.

It is important to acknowledge this researcher's subjectivity to obtain a clear understanding of how the researcher is conceptualizing the work. As noted above, there is an assumption taken from this researcher's experiences, as well as critical theories, that systemic racism and implicit bias are at play when it comes to utilizing discipline practices. Qualitative research is inherently, interpretative research, therefore researchers must, "explicitly identify reflexively their biases, values, and personal background, such as gender, history, culture, and socioeconomic status (SES) that shape their interpretations formed during a study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 237). Therefore, this researcher must acknowledge how their own experiences impacted how this study came together, the writing, and the interpretation of the results in which the reader is experiencing. By being transparent, the reader will better understand how conclusions were drawn.

Exploring my Past Experiences and Connection to the Phenomenon Studied

I am a queer African American woman born and raised in Northern California in a single parent home. I grew up below the poverty line as the middle sister of two brothers; my younger sister was born when I was 13. I took on a motherly role in her life, which allowed me to gain skills as a mother figure and caretaker at a very young age. I was the first in my family to attend college and have broken generational cycles of poverty by receiving a ten-year college scholarship from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. When I attended my undergraduate institution, I experienced culture shock due to both racial and social economic differences. I majored in pre-med with hopes to become a

pediatrician but struggled with the memorization of scientific information. I began to take additional courses in other topics and fell in love with education and psychology.

I chose to continue my education and further explore these newfound passions through enrollment in graduate education. I received my master's degree in early childhood special education and became a lead teacher in a constructivist preschool classroom at a lab school. It was here I learned the term pedagogy and began to integrate child development theories by Piaget, Vygotsky, and Erikson into my understanding and application of educating children and young adults. I began to train other masters level students in early childhood special education and fell in love with consultation and teacher training.

After spending five years in this role, my scholarship pushed me to finish the final step of my education. I looked into fields that would allow me to combine my passions of consultation, teacher training, psychology, and special education. I entered the Child, Family, and School Psychology program at the University of Denver, and was quickly thrust into public schools where I was met with the internal conflict of disliking how students were being disciplined and how I was meant to be just an observer as a student trainee. These practices conflicted with my teaching pedagogy. Through my course work, I was able to engage in topics of social justice, equity, disrupting systems, cultural humility, and individualized service delivery.

During my second year I gained experience as a qualitative researcher and joined a multidisciplinary team of social workers, educational leadership, and school psychology researchers. This unique team allowed me to engage in dialogue with other disciplines

around the complexities and intersections of child development, school policy, and discipline practices. As I continued to work in schools through my various practicums and internships, I became a critical advocate for change and began to use my voice to demand change to the unjust systems or treatment that I observed of marginalized students. As a queer African American woman and school psychologist, I had a personal and professional commitment when I overheard or observed any unjust treatment of students. My desire and passion continue to be to dismantle White supremacist and systemic punitive and exclusionary discipline practices and the disproportionate academic, social, and financial disparities they perpetuate for marginalized students. I want to facilitate more strengths-based conversations and ideologies about marginalized students and shift the paradigm away from deficit models of educating.

How These Experiences Have Molded my Interpretation

My drive to advocate for marginalized youth within schools is what pushes this research forward. I was eager to look into this topic to find connections between punitive and exclusionary discipline, implicit bias, and deficit mindsets. I originally found myself thinking negative thoughts about why an educator might use punitive or exclusionary discipline. I had to check my own biases before beginning each interview and I reflected with my team before beginning my data coding. By allowing myself to stray from the interview questions, as needed, I was able to have honest and vulnerable conversations with each educator to ask clarifying questions and create an open dialogue to best understand each educator's conceptualization when working with students. Through these conversations, I was able to see that although they utilized punitive and exclusionary

discipline practices, we are all products of our experiences and influenced by the White supremacist system we are indoctrinated in. Ultimately, all the participants entered education with the same passion, to help students succeed.

Methodology

The current study analyzed extant data utilizing a previous interview data bank from an initial study that explored in-school suspension models in a large urban school district. The initial study was approved by the institutional review board on November 1st, 2018. The initial study interviewed school staff including deans, vice principals, restorative justice coordinators, principals, and teachers at ten different schools. The school personnel interviewed served students in grades preschool through twelfth grade. The interview protocol for the initial study can be found in Appendix A. This researcher was recruited to participate on the research team and collected data at three of the ten schools. The lead investigator previously conceptualized the research hypotheses and questions and trained this researcher on the interview protocol.

Initial Study Research Design

Purposeful maximal sampling was used to select participants for the initial study. Each case was selected to show different perspectives on school discipline to provide greater external validity (Yin, 2014). Therefore, schools in various sections of the same large urban district were used. Schools were recruited through word of mouth by the lead researcher and fellow social work and educational leadership colleagues of the lead researcher. Schools were chosen for their use of both restorative justice and exclusionary punitive discipline practices. Additionally, each school was seen as a model for

alternative discipline practices by the district although they still used exclusionary punitive discipline. All schools and participants interviewed signed their consent to participate in hour long interviews (see Appendix B). Participants were told they could drop out of the study at any point during the process. Each school was given a $250 gift card for participating and individuals interviewed received a $20 gift card. Funds were provided by an educational research grant obtained by the lead researcher.

Initial Study Data Collection Methods

Various data collection methods were used during the initial study including interviews and quantitative data collection through school discipline and demographic records. In order to have strong construct validity, the lead researcher identified "correct operational measures for the concepts being studied" (Yin, 2014, p 46). Therefore, multiple methods of data collection were used, and a chain of evidence was established utilizing interview protocols. Reliability was also enhanced through demonstration of repeated data collection procedures (Yin, 2014). Quantitative characteristics, including discipline rates, of each school were provided by the administration of the large urban district. Each principal of the participating schools also provided written summaries on their school's culture, discipline policies, team, and best practices. The research team reviewed these documents during team meetings and created summaries of each school.

Interviews were conducted by four members of the data collection team utilizing an interview protocol. Members included doctoral level research students from school psychology, social work, and educational leadership. This researcher conducted ten of the twenty-two interviews used in the initial study. Interviews were collected from November

to May during the 2018-2019 school year. Through data collection, the research team utilized replication logic across the ten schools. The data collection procedure was replicated for each interview to help enhance external validity, or the domain in which the data can be generalized (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2014). A semi-structure interview protocol with pre-determined questions was used by each member of the data collection team. The interview questions were both open-ended and factual and were meant to be conversational in nature. See Appendix A for interview questions protocol.

Once members of the team conducted an interview, the interview was logged into an excel document detailing the time, location, and interview name. The interview recording was uploaded to an online drive and transcribed by a transcription company. The lead researcher confirmed the transcript and uploaded the transcript to both the online and Dedoose (2019) analysis system. The research team met weekly to discuss the interview protocol, interview timeline, and any data collection challenges to problem solve.

Once all the interviews were complete, the lead researcher provided detailed code definitions and themes for the team to utilize. This researcher coded five of the ten schools utilizing the lead researcher's codes. The themes of the codes focused on in-school suspension and district policy, however, the coded data was never utilized or published. Therefore, the principal investigator gave this researcher permission to analyze the data from a new but relevant perspective.

Current Research Design

Having participated in great detail in the initial data collection process, this researcher was interested in re-examining the data, but focusing on discipline use and educator mindset. Thus, a secondary analysis and re-coding of the interview data utilizing the positionality and theory described above was initiated. The current research study also utilized a multiple case study methodology in which the phenomenon (i.e., discipline use) was studied across multiple natural contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). The goal of this study was to understand a specific problem; therefore, a multi-instrumental case study was used. Case study was appropriate for this study because it sought to "understand a real-world case and assume that such an understanding is likely to involve important contextual conditions pertinent to the case" (Yin, 2014, p 16). This methodology was crucial to this research since there was an understanding that an underlying system is at play. Case study allowed this researcher to analyze the various contextual factors at play which may include various internal and external factors. Case study was also a good match as rigorous case study research is grounded in theory (Yin, 2014). This research was grounded in CRT, and it was used to guide the research and analysis process.

In summation, a qualitative approach was appropriate because qualitative research makes the world visible and attempts to make sense of something in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Understanding the meaning educators are using when utilizing various discipline practices helped the researcher understand the mindset educators hold during this process. Qualitative research also allows researchers

to explore real life contemporary bounded systems through detailed in-depth data from multiple sources (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This approach allowed the researcher to take a critical look at the interpersonal and external systems at play within this phenomenon.

Document Review

In order to better understand the large urban district and each case, a review of relevant statistics and educational summaries was completed. These documents were provided by the large urban district and the principals of each case. These documents allowed this researcher to access historical data that was not possible to glean during the interviews (Stake, 1995). The documents outlined the racial and social economic make-up of the large urban district and each school as well as the district discipline matrix. This matrix was invaluable as it provided the researcher with background context when participants referenced the matrix during interviews. Additionally, information provided by principals included current discipline rates and qualitative summaries of their school's social makeup, discipline culture, staffing, and procedures. This information also provided further context and understanding when conducting interviews, allowing for more fluid conversations when participants mentioned their discipline rooms or procedures. This researcher also utilized these documents to create rich case descriptions to help the reader understand the contextual factors of the large urban district and each case. Tables including the quantitative information provided were also created to succinctly describe the overall district and case statistics.

Participants

This study defined each case as one school within the large urban district. The large urban district is comprised of 208 schools. See Table 4 for an overview of the district's racial/ethnic make-up and discipline rates. Overall, due to the suspension rates White students missed 699 days of school, Latinx students missed 2,112, and African American students missed 3,481.

Table 4
District Characteristics

208 Schools	Race/ Ethnicity	Out of School Suspension Rate	In School Suspension Rate	Expulsion Rate	Referral to Law Enforcement Rate
	%	%	%	%	%
Latinx	54.8	53.5	59.5	51.1	55.6
African American	13	28.8	13	35.6	26.8
White	24.1	10.9	10.5	4.4	10.2

This researcher analyzed 22 interviews from five of the ten schools from the initial study. Five schools were chosen as they fit into the childhood education category. The other five schools served middle and high school students only and were therefore excluded from this study. Of the schools selected, four schools were comprised of ECE through 5th grade students and one school was comprised of ECE through 8th grade students. Each school served a majority of African American and Latinx students and all schools utilized both exclusionary punitive discipline and restorative justice practices. Therefore, the five schools were seen as the best fit for a reanalysis to answer the research questions above. Each school was given a case number and is described below in terms of the students they serve, as well as the discipline models used. All five schools operated within the

same school district and were provided with district level discipline requirements. However, each school also utilized their own system. Table 5 shows the racial/ethnic makeup, free/reduced lunch percentage, and ISS rate for each case. The district did not provide the racial make-up of lunch or suspension rates by school. Table 6 outlines the titles of the personnel interviewed for each case.

Table 5

Case Characteristics

Case #	Race/Ethnicity		Free/Reduced Lunch Rate	In School Suspension Rate
		%	%	%
01	Total	100	93	0
	Latinx	78		
	African American	13		
	White	4		
	Multicultural	1		
	Asian	0		
	Native American			
02	Total	100	94	5
	Latinx	30		
	African American	28		
	White	15		
	Multicultural	2		
	Asian	25		
	Native American	0		
03	Total	100	80	0
	Latinx	55		
	African American	22		
	White	10		
	Multicultural	6		
	Asian	6		
	Native American	1		
04	Total	100	77	4
	Latinx	28		
	African American	44		
	White	20		
	Multicultural	6		
	Asian	1		
	Native American	1		
05	Total	100	67	2
	Latinx	37		
	African American	19		
	White	31		
	Multicultural	6		
	Asian	6		
	Native American	1		

Table 6

Summary of Interviews

Case #	Personnel Role	Data Collection Method	Date Interviewed
01	Assistant Principal	Interview	04/15/2019
	Classroom Teacher 1	Interview	04/24/2019
	Classroom Teacher 2	Interview	05/22/2019
	Restorative Justice Coordinator 1	Interview	04/15/2019
	Restorative Justice Coordinator 2	Interview	05/03/2019
02	Dean of Behavior	Interview	03/22/2019
	Assistant Principal 1	Interview	04/11/2019
	Assistant Principal 2	Interview	04/11/2019
	Principal	Interview	04/09/2019
	Restorative Justice Coordinator	Interview	11/11/2018
03	Principal	Interview	03/15/2019
	Restorative Justice Coordinators (Interviewed Together)	Interview	02/19/2019
	Classroom Teacher	Interview	05/12/2019
04	Dean of Culture	Interview	02/04/2016
	Teacher Coach	Interview	04/30/2019
	Restorative Justice Coordinator	Interview	04/15/2019
	Principal	Interview	05/06/2019
	Classroom Teacher	Interview	05/09/2019
05	Dean of Culture 1	Interview	05/07/2019
	Dean of Culture 2	Interview	05/20/2019
	Restorative Justice Coordinator	Interview	04/29/2019
	Classroom Teacher	Interview	05/07/2019

Case #1. Case #1 is an ECE-5, innovation elementary. Approximately 422 total students attend the school. Case #1 utilizes a separate classroom for the primary purposes of reflective action, "cool-down breaks," one-on-one social emotional and academic support, and conflict resolution. Two Restorative Justice (RJ) staff members are assigned to this classroom, with one member typically responsible for logistics and incident documentation within the room, and the other member providing more of an instructional role for students. Working within this staff team, the social worker assists at times by providing social emotional and behavioral support for students. This team primarily operates using a preventative discipline "push-in" model, where they regularly visit and monitor classrooms with the most student behavioral challenges and directly respond to radio calls from teachers when behavioral support is needed. While behavioral issues are addressed on a case-by-case basis, most low-level behavioral issues are handled within the classroom. Most students involved in medium-high level behavioral issues are sent to the RJ room or social worker's room to de-escalate, review or learn social emotional skills, and/or participate in an RJ conversation to resolve the conflict with those involved. When behavioral incidents reach a higher level of severity, one of the assistant principals provides discipline support to the team and teachers. The RJ room is open Monday-Friday, during school hours.

Case #2. Case #2 is an ECE-8 school that serves as the magnet school in the district for refugee students. The school's foundational values center on acceptance and inclusivity through an instructional focus on development of skills and knowledge in the areas of Language, Academics and Culture. Approximately 1245 total students attend.

Within the diverse student body, there are more than 60 different languages and over 40 different countries represented. Case #2 utilizes a separate classroom for the primary purposes of supervising lunch detention, student check-ins following behavior incidents, and facilitating support groups. The dean of behavior (DB) is the main staff member that facilitates the room when students are assigned to serve lunch detention for concerning behaviors. More severe behavior incidents are discussed with students in the DB's office. While the DB is primarily in charge of discipline practices, they are supported by the restorative justice coordinator (RJC), who helps the DB in running support groups, monitoring the hallway during mornings, transitions, and dismissal routines. The DB is further supported by the teachers and administrators through email and phone communication and by sending students to the room with a pass. The security guards provide support by walking students from their classroom to the room and with hallway supervision. Additional student services are delivered through restorative circles in classrooms facilitated by the RJC following conflict, and through social emotional support from the school counselor. The room operates Monday- Friday, during school hours.

Case #3. Case #3 is an ECE-5 innovation elementary school. The school specifically focuses on prioritizing high-quality instruction, positive school culture, student ownership of academic learning and personal development and instruction. The school has approximately 812 students enrolled. Case #3 utilizes a separate RJC office primarily for student check-ins, completion of restorative justice packets, lunch detention and completion of academic work for students that have exhibited challenging behaviors.

Two RJ staff members including the RJC and RJ paraprofessional are assigned to this classroom, with most of the discipline practices in the school being divided between these two staff members. The school uses a school-wide green, yellow, orange, and red behavior system with a visual clip and a colored zone chart. When students enter the "red zone," they can be sent to the RJC office with a pass from the teacher or the RJ is radioed to pick them up from the classroom to walk to the RJC office. Once students arrive in the RJC office, they are assigned a restorative packet to complete, which includes a discussion of what occurred, why it occurred, and how to do better in the future. Students are sent back to class once the RJC checks and discusses the restorative packet with them. When the same students continue with challenging behavior, they can be sent back to the RJC office to stay for a set amount of time or for the remainder of the day to complete classroom work or additional restorative forms. The RJ staff is supported by the principal, and vice principals while monitoring the lunchroom, hallways, and recess during transitions.

Case #4. Case #4 is an ECE-5, innovation elementary school. The school aims to foster a global perspective that values family and community by hosting several social and educational events that are representative of their multicultural school population. Approximately 505 total students attend. Within the diverse student body, there are around 22 different languages represented. Case #4 utilizes two separate rooms for discipline practices, including an ISS room located in the basement, and the "calm room," a small room located on the second floor that serves many purposes. The ISS room is primarily utilized as an alternative setting to complete class work or "restorative work" to

repair harm that they caused within the school. Students are provided movement breaks along with lunch breaks on the days they are serving ISS. ISS is mainly reserved for students that are involved in physical altercations. In contrast, the calm room serves as the "catch-all" room that at various times is occupied by the Dean of Culture (DC), Restorative Practice Coordinator (RPC), SEL coach, and Team Lead Coach. Uses of the calm room include restorative conversations with students that have been sent there for disrespect and disruptions, "cool down" breaks, and student check-ins. Discipline practices within the calm room are primarily addressed by the DC and the RPC, with discipline support being provided as needed by the principal, assistant principal, and the SEL learning coach. The ISS room operates on Mondays and Fridays during school hours when students are assigned ISS on a given week. Conversely, the calm room operates Monday-Friday during school hours.

Case #5. Case #5 is an ECE-5, innovation elementary school. Instruction is grounded in the Expeditionary Learning Education model, which organizes the school curriculum primarily within Learning Expeditions. Approximately 549 total students attend. Case #5 utilizes a separate classroom called the calm room for the primary purposes of RJ circles for conflict resolution between students (and conflict between students and staff), social emotional learning lessons for various groups of students, and "cool-down" breaks. The RJC facilitates most activities that occur in the calm room and is supported by volunteers and interns. The calm room is utilized by all staff and escalated students are typically sent there to calm down. When there is a conflict in individual classroom communities, calm volunteers visit the class to facilitate Peace

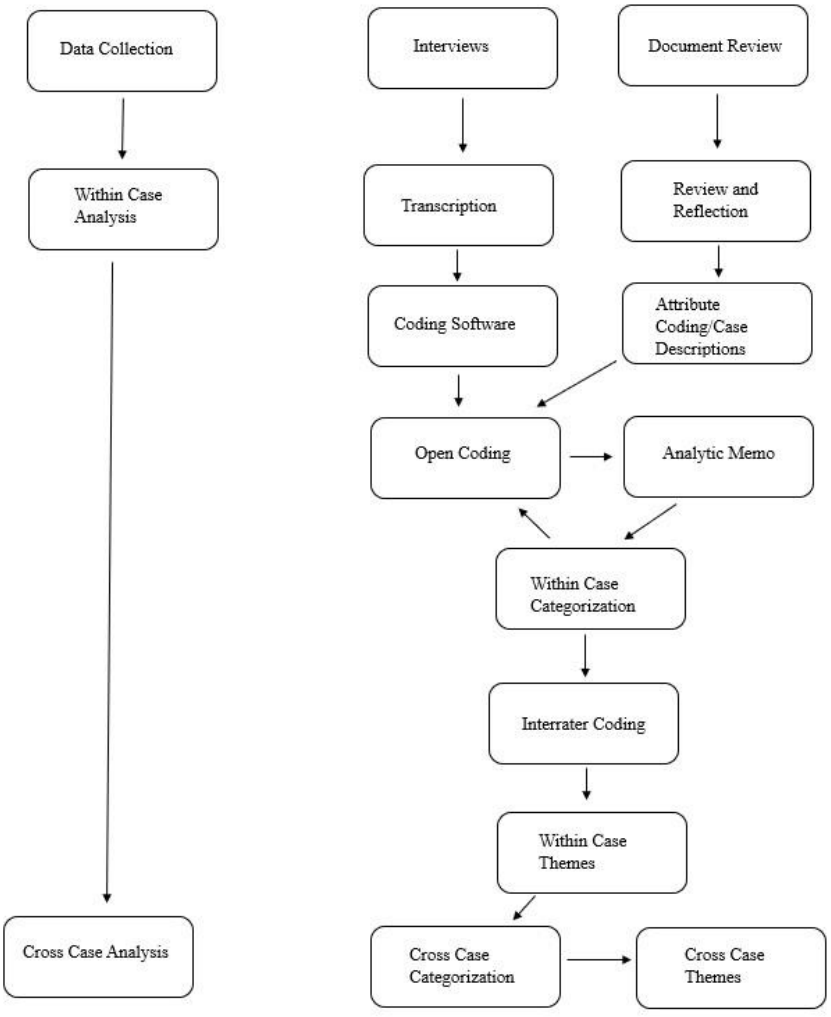
Circles as needed. Staff members that support with discipline practices consist of dean of student culture, dean of student support, RJC, vice principal, school psychologist, and principal, with the two deans handling most of the discipline within the school. The duties of the deans include responding to calls from classrooms to retrieve students following behavior incidents (they split morning and afternoon shifts for responding to these calls), assign suspensions based on the discipline matrix, and lead restorative practices with students following an incident. Additional dean roles involve supporting teachers with classroom management to ensure that students stay in the classroom as much as possible, and monitoring the hallways, lunchroom, recess, while checking in with paraprofessionals during this time that assist with supervision. The vice principal, school psychologists, and restorative justice coordinator assist with discipline as requested by the deans. When deans and students determine that an RJ circle is necessary following an initial conversation after an incident, the RJC is contacted, and the student is sent to the calm room. Moreover, detention and OSS are used in rare circumstances. Students with special needs and ECE students are supported by the deans with regulation strategies such as working with sensory tools and sending students back to the classroom once they have calmed down to finish the day. Further, Spanish speaking students are supported by the vice principal in facilitating conversations and contacting parents.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted utilizing a process in which meaning is derived from the data collected from each case (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2014). Through this data analysis, the researcher hoped to gain a better understanding of how educators

conceptualize their use of discipline practices. Each case study school utilized restorative and punitive and exclusionary discipline policies that made the researcher wonder how, when, and why they decided to use specific models. The how, when, and why are tied directly to all three research questions. Figure 11 visually displays the multistep data analysis process for the study.

Figure 11
Data Analysis Process



Yin (2018) describes a two-step process in which the researcher provides a detailed description of each case and identifies themes within the case. Therefore, to

begin an initial document review, reflection, and description were completed before coding the interview data. Before starting the coding for this current study, the researcher took a moment to review the research questions and coding manual to ensure grounding in the study. Qualitative and quantitative documents were reviewed, and a rich description of each case was written utilizing attribute coding. Attribute coding identifies descriptive information including participant roles and characteristics, demographics, and school discipline use. Attribute coding provided rich and essential participant information and context and is a key coding procedure in all qualitative case studies (Saldana, 2013). The descriptions created for each case were read and the research questions were reviewed before beginning the open coding process in order to ground the researcher.

After the initial attribute coding of the provided documents was complete and the descriptions of each case were created, the coding process began. Each case was analyzed using open coding, also known as eclectic coding, to gain a deeper understanding of each case. Saldana (2013) describes eclectic coding as a process in which various coding methods are used at various points to "enhance accountability and the depth and breadth of findings" (p. 60). Therefore, various methods of coding took place over three rounds and are described below. After each round of coding the number of codes were condense and transformed into categories, sub categories, and eventually over themes and assertions.

Additionally, analytic memos were utilized after the first and second rounds of coding. Analytic memos are notes that support the analysis process by helping create an audit trail, document emerging patterns, maintain research momentum by connecting

initial thoughts, and providing a space for the researcher to reflect on biases and assertions (Saldana, 2013). Analytic memos were integral to this case study research as they helped document the analysis process and supported the researcher in fleshing out emerging patterns. Questions included: Describe the main codes or themes that you are noticing; What patterns are emerging?; Describe commonalities and differences within the case itself; Describe commonalities and differences across cases; What questions are you wondering about? What do you know? What don't you know? (see Appendix C). By reflecting on the initial codes or themes the researcher began to answer research questions one and two by categorizing the internal and external factors of discipline as well as the described definitions of discipline. The wondering questions allowed this researcher to think about research question three as pedagogy is a theoretical concept. The wondering questions pushed this researcher to think more critically and dive below the initial surface of the codes. The questions regarding the commonalities and differences within and across cases allowed the researcher to begin thinking about the cross-case analysis that would take place at the end of the data analysis process. Therefore, all three research questions were supported by the analytic memo process.

Round One. As mentioned above, initial open coding or eclectic coding was used to comprehensively code the data and begin to answer all three research questions in the first round, while being open to all possibilities. Open coded methods included grammatical and inductive in-vivo.

During the first round of coding, grammatical methods of coding were used including magnitude, simultaneous, and subcoding. Grammatical methods allow the

researcher to apply various coding methods in a systematic way. When initially exploring the data magnitude coding was used to first track the frequency in which the various types of discipline were mentioned, allowing this researcher to see quantitatively how often discipline types were mentioned and utilized. This frequency supported research question one. Additionally, simultaneous and subcoding allowed this researcher to apply various codes to the same data point allowing for a multi-dimensional perspective of the data (Onwuegbuzie, 2016). This was especially crucial for research question three when coding for not only discipline pedagogy, but more specifically the pedagogy theme such as affirmative or strengths based. These multidimensional coding methods allowed the researcher to begin to identify initial themes and sub themes related to all three research questions both descriptively and inferentially (Salanda, 2013).

Simultaneously, the data was also coded utilizing inductive in-vivo methods to gain an understanding of the language used by each participant (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Saldana, 2013). These methods were crucial to allow participant voices and experiences to shine through in the results. In-vivo coding pushes the researcher to create codes by applying participant words verbatim (Onwuegbuzie, 2016). This method supported research questions two and three, as it shined light on the internal factors and ascribed pedagogy described by participants by directly using their words and voices. After these initial coding methods were utilized, the researcher utilized the analytic memo process described above to begin to reflect on and organize the initial codes identified. These initial codes were tentatively organized and categorized before beginning round two.

Round Two. After the initial round of codes and memos were created, a second review was used to apply elemental methods of coding including values and structural codes creating a more refined code list. Values coding allowed the researcher to reflect each participant's beliefs, attitudes, and values related to the research questions (Saldana, 2013). Values coding supported research questions one and three as "ascribed meaning" directly relates to one's beliefs, attitudes, and values. Simultaneously, structural coding was used to allow this researcher to begin to think about the hypotheses of the study and code themes related to research question two including internal and external influence. Structural coding was used to identify main components of the research questions by utilizing conceptual themes such as internal, external, and pedagogy (Onwuegbuzie, 2016). After these coding methods were applied and the memo process was complete, a code book was created and an in-depth analysis of the codes across participants was reviewed and patterns and salient themes within each case were noted connecting to the overall research goals and questions (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Round Three. Finally, interrater coding was used to refine the code book and ensure this researcher did not miss key themes or concepts. Creswell and Poth (2017) describe the importance of utilizing a team approach when conducting qualitative research. This includes not only a research methodologist but also a team of colleagues to provide additional insight and expertise to the coding process. After developing a refined list of codes, this researcher met with their research methodologist to review the initial coding process, review the codes, and condense the code categorization within each case further. After receiving approval, the codebook was shared with a coding team comprised

of two research colleagues, each with experience in qualitative research. These colleagues utilized the codes and definitions to complete interrater coding. Each member coded five transcripts (one from each case) utilizing the code book and took note of any outliers or additional codes left out. Their codes were then compared to each other and the initial code book for interrater consistency. Inter-rater reliability, or the percentage of which the raters agreed, was acceptable at 86%. Finally, the coding team met over zoom to discuss the coding tree and themes. A robust discussion regarding how each theme and subcategory related to the various hypothesis questions took place and the team discussed claims and outlier information. A code map with connecting themes was then created for each case.

Cross-Case Analysis. Finally, a thematic analysis across the cases was conducted to compare and contrast themes. This comparison process then led to a final interpretation or patterns (Yin, 2014) also known as assertions (Stake, 1995) or lesson learned (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). After within case categorization was complete, cross case analysis was used to identify common themes, similarities, and differences. The individual code maps for each case were compared to identify patterns and differences across cases (Yin, 2014). Triangulation was used to justify themes and rich and thick quotes were used to convey the findings (Creswell, 2013). Common codes with overlap across all five cases were noted and several themes and subcategories were created related to the research questions. Overall, five themes and three to four subcategories were created. See Appendix D for a finalized coding tree. Interview quotes and research were used to provide the reader with detailed descriptions of the influences of discipline practices.

Criteria for Judging the Quality of Case Study Research Design. Data analysis rigor was determined by several different criteria. See Table 7 for an outline of each tenet and its application.

Table 7
Case Study Rigor

Tenet	Definition	Application
Construct Validity	Identifies consistent and correct data collection measures for the concepts being researched.	Key members reviewed the data collection procedures including a qualitative research methodologist and discipline specialist. A chain of evidence and replicable data collection procedures were utilized during the data collection process.
Internal Validity	Credibility in qualitative research. Identifies if the information presented accurately reflects the views of the participants.	Data was triangulated through three researchers. Pattern matching and explanation building within and across cases were also utilized. Rival explanations within and across cases were also addressed. Thick descriptions through participant quotes and detailed case summary were also utilized.
External Validity	Identifies if a case's findings can be generalized or transferred.	Replication logic, through the use of consistent interview questions, was utilized to support transferability of the findings across cases. "How" hypothesis questions were also utilized to ensure participant voices and descriptions were analyzed. Critical theory was defined in depth and used as a grounding lens to analyze the data.
Reliability	The dependability that the data collection procedures can be repeated with the same results.	The data collection procedures were repeated by each member of the research team and detailed data collection and tracking measures were utilized. A detailed recollection of the data collection and analysis procedures were also provided.
Intercoder Reliability	The process in which additional researchers code the interview data to determine the accuracy of the code book, reduce researcher bias, and determine if any major themes were missed.	One post-doctoral student and one colleague from the initial study were chosen to code one de-identified transcript from each case using a codebook. The post-doctoral student was chosen because of her familiarity with coding qualitative research, passion for social justice, and interest in assisting with the project. The researcher from the previous study was chosen because of her familiarity with school discipline themes and her prior involvement coding similar qualitative data.

Results

This study provides an understanding of the various factors that influence an educator's use of discipline. Five themes emerged from the data: Most Common Types of Disciplines Used, Positive Preventative Practices, External Influences on Discipline, Internal Influences on Discipline, and Pedagogy. The analysis of the themes is supported by quotes from each case. Please refer to appendix D for a coding tree that describes the main themes and the subcategories identified.

How do Educators Ascribe Meaning to Their use of Discipline Practices?

Most Common Types of Discipline Used

All five cases discussed various types of discipline methods. The three most common forms of discipline used were identified as suspension, detention, and restorative justice practices. Educators discussed the most common forms of discipline they used, what each form of discipline looked like, and why they may hand it out. Through their descriptions, commonalities and differences of meaning across cases were noted.

Detention. Four out of five cases utilized detention as a form of discipline. Detention was discussed as during or after school detention. When a student has detention during the school day they may go to another room during lunch or recess to eat, clean, complete additional work, or talk about their behavior. The RJC from Case 2 explained, “Sometimes the kids do detention in the classrooms and sometimes teachers come in and check on their kids to see if they need any more homework.” Students serving detention do not get to go to lunch or recess with their peers. The RJC from Case

3 shared, “they miss recess and stay in the café to help clean tables, support the lady in the café that makes sure the kids are eating, and make sure they are being quiet at level one.” When a student has detention after school, they stay after school hours with other school personnel to sit, clean, complete additional work, or talk with others about their behavior or actions. The RJC from Case 1 described, “They stay after school to help Mr. B, who is our janitor, to clean the school, like pick up trash.” Detention had a large focus on work either academically or physically and matched the notion that detention is meant to be served in an undesirable place for a specific amount of time (Fluke et al, 2014).

Detention was also used as a way to reinforce a lesson if a student was not meeting expectations. The dean from Case 4 described, “We have set a line for the kids that if you are breaking expectations, then you will do replacement work in a different setting the next day.” When students continued to display the same behavior infractions over and over, educators felt detention was a necessary discipline resource that would help improve behavior. Detention was ascribed as punitive but necessary. The RJC from Case 3 explained, “No, it could be just a behavior that's over and over and over and it's just like okay at this point, okay this isn't working, what do we do next? So before even ISS, we have detention.” Although punitive, detention was seen as a helpful form of discipline that corrected behavior and was less punitive than other forms of discipline such as ISS. As one assistant principal from Case 2 shared,

> There are some punitive consequences. Sometimes you'll have a lunchtime detention. To help reinforce the idea that no, it's not okay to push other people in line or to trip them or what have you. We have Friday after school time, since

we've had an early release on Fridays. So, we have an early release and there are some students who for one altercation or one infraction or another, qualify for this after-school detention time. Again on, more punitive side of that.

In these cases, detention through work, either academically or physically, was meant to teach students through punishment that they were not meeting expectations. However, there was no mention of how students were supposed to understand the connection between completing additional work/cleaning and changing their behavior/meeting expectations.

Although most of the cases ascribed beneficial meaning to the use of detention, Case 5 did not use detention. Case 5 described a lack of resources and ascribed little benefit to utilizing lunch detention. The DC explained, "If they [students] were going to be missing out on recess, I was the one hanging out with them, and for some of our teachers that's the idea of having to spend your lunch with a student, that's my planning time." Compared to the other cases, Case 5 did not have additional staff to sit with students during lunch, therefore teachers were responsible for sitting with students during recess and their planning time. Overall, in order for detention to be seen as a beneficial and useful form of discipline, a school must also have adequate resources to staff the spaces students are sent to.

Suspension. Similar to detention, four out of five cases utilized suspension. Suspension was discussed as ISS and OSS. During ISS a student attended school but was not allowed to attend their classes. They sat in another room with other school personnel and completed work, cleaned, or talked with others about their behavior. The DC of Case

5 described, “If we had an in-school suspension, we would try to spend that time during the in-school suspension working on some sort of repair.” During OSS a student was not allowed to attend school for one or more days due to behavior or incidents at school.

Compared to detention which had more of a focus on physical work such as cleaning the school, ISS appeared to have more of a focus on academic work and behavior reflection. The RJC of Case 4 described,

> The classroom teacher gives them work, so they do all of the work that the classroom teacher gives them. Then, we have packets where they can reflect on what happened. What led to me being here? How did I feel? Who did I affect? Who did I harm? What harm reduction do I need to do? Who do I need to apologize to? Every time they have to fill out a sheet and map out all of the things that led them to being in ISS and what they can do to change that.

The principal of Case 2 shared a similar sentiment about the purpose of ISS and matched the definition that students remained removed from class but in the responsibility of the school (CRDC, 2016),

> But the purpose of it, is so that the children- they're surrounded in the room by a mental health team, most of my mental health team, not all of them. But my mental health team, so that they can be counseled. It's not just a place to sit and be punished. It's a place to work out problems.

Across all cases, suspension of any type was used as a punishment for significant behavior as well as a way to correct behavior that was not improving through other methods of discipline such as repeated detention. The assistant principal of Case 2

shared, “An in-school suspension can be for repeated infractions where the student is not turning it around. Things like, continued interference with a teacher's ability to instruct. Right? Or lower level pushing and fighting can result in that.” When discussing suspension, each case discussed the term “significant” and did not take the decision to suspend students lightly. The DC from Case 5 described behavior such as “big fights and broken noses” that would cause OSS. A teacher from Case 3 described below significant behavior that would require a student to be given OSS. The RJC from the same case, shared their attempts to avoid ISS by differentiating between “disruption in class and something that's more major.”

> To be honest, the behavior has to be pretty significant for it to happen to remove them from class, even in third grade. So, for example, one of my kids was putting other kids in harm's way when his meltdown happened. So that was when he received it. Or bullying, like things that are pretty significant are the reasons why they get there. They do their work in there with Ms. G. It’s not like they have a free pass to just sit there. We're asked to provide the work.

Similar to Case 3, Case 4 made the differentiation between “disruption in class and something that's more major” very clear by having clear expectations as to which behaviors would end in ISS for a student. The DC elaborated,

> We have tried this year to really be clear if you do this, it will result in this. I think that's where our in-school suspension has been very successful, that we set a rule that said if you put your hands on another student, you are in school suspension.

When significant behavior continued to occur, several cases also discussed using OSS as a way to "by time" in order to allow the educational team time to create behavior plans in order to better work with a student. They utilized the traditional definition of OSS by removing the student completely from the school setting in an intentional manner (CRDC, 2016). The principal of Case 4 shared,

> The only place and time that I think an out of school suspension really is the right thing is when the school needs time to create a behavior plan or a support plan for a kiddo that's not in place. Like, great we need this day to be able to get this in place so that when this student comes back, we're in a better place.

All four cases that utilized suspension also mentioned receiving pressure from the public on what discipline should be. Changes in discipline systems are challenged by the notion that traditional discipline is driven by punitive measures and systemic zero tolerance policies that are embedded in the education system (Hirschfield, 2008; Morrison et al., 2005). Suspension is seen as the traditional method of discipline and society's (teachers, parents, community) view of discipline impacted the school's use of discipline even if the administrator did not agree that suspension was the most appropriate course of action to improve student behavior. The assistant principal from Case 2 explained,

> And it's interesting because sometimes an in-school suspension, even when you know that might not be what's going to reach the student who had the infraction. Sometimes it's still important because the rest of the community sees. "Hey, you can't do this because you'll have a consequence." So, I think a lot of the

time things like in-school suspension are important for the rest of the community, as it is for the student who has in-school suspension.

The DC of Case 5 continued,

> In school suspension we use sometimes if we really feel like the teacher needs a break, and it falls in the category of an in-school, or if we feel like other kids and parents need to see that something has happened to sort of avoid any kind of drama like that, but those aren't great reasons for suspension.

Although most of the cases ascribed beneficial meaning to the use of suspension such as buying time, appeasing the community, and learning lessons, Case 1 had moved away from suspension. Similar to Case 5 with detention above, Case 1 described a lack of resources and ascribed little benefit to utilizing ISS. The RJC explained, “There wouldn't be any [behaviors that lead to ISS]. We just don't have, we don't have the resources for it, so we just don't do it.” The assistant principal further described the lack of resources indicating students would end up following him around the school as they did not have enough personnel to staff an ISS room for students to go and complete work. Case 1’s ascribed meaning of suspension greatly differed from the other cases. They felt suspension was ineffective and did not work, therefore they put their resources towards other forms of discipline that had more meaning to them. The assistant principal shared,

> It's evolved. I think the big indicator is we don't suspend kids anymore. My first year, I don't know the number, I want to say it was fairly high, but even then, before that it was even higher, and as restorative justice became part of what we did, we just phased out of suspending kids. I think we've all probably known

through the years that it's just not effective [suspension]. Then the radio goes off and then you end up walking with three kids behind you, and they're all goofing off. It's just more of a shift I'd say. We looked to turnaround, like we weren't. suspending kids anymore.

Overall, while a majority of cases saw suspension as a beneficial and useful form of discipline for significant behavior and calming public perception, similar to detention a school must also have adequate resources to staff the spaces students are sent to. Similar to current trends, although schools seem to understand that punitive discipline practices such as suspension are ineffective and create disparities, movement away from these practices is slow moving. Traditional punitive approaches to discipline seem to manage student behavior rather than help students develop skills (Fronius et al., 2016). Only two cases showed signs of moving away from the public ideology of punitive discipline practices, however, the catalyst of their shifts were likely due to a lack of resources.

Restorative Practices. Unlike detention and suspension, all five cases utilized restorative discipline practices. Each case was able to ascribe detailed and rich meaning of their restorative justice process. Restorative discipline practices were seen as a conversation between students or other school personnel that discussed student behavior or an incident and how to fix or solve the problem, apologize, and or correct an action. It included some kind of conversation, action, or regulation for the student or students. A student could also be given or taught alternative skills and strategies to use during conflict. Specific and individualized strategies were also used to work with a student based upon the needs and personality of the student.

Although each case utilized restorative practices in slightly different ways with different techniques, all five cases ascribed positive skill building and restorative meaning to the practice. Restorative practices teach students to learn from their mistakes, resolve conflict, and refocus so they can return to class and continue to learn (Sandwick et al., 2019). Unlike detention and suspension, time away from class was used to allow students to calm down and refocus with the goal of returning students to class as soon as they were ready. Restorative practices could be used as either a whole school "way of being" or at an individual level with a few trained personnel (Hurley et al., 2015). Each case's unique approach to restorative justice is described below to display the wide variety in which restorative practices can show up in education. Case 1 described their restorative approach as collaborative between students with the goal to resolve conflict, fix behavior, and take accountability. The RJ described the process,

> My approach is the restorative way. It's like mediation between the victim and the perpetrator. What I try to do is to get both sides of the story and also to come up with a plan to move forward. And, at the same time, own up to your part of the incident. What did you do wrong? What did you do to hurt somebody? And how can you fix it? And how can I support you to fix the problem? And how can we move forward? So, I don't put the blame on, like you did this, so you're going to be suspended, and even the consequence, if I have to give consequences, we will come up with a plan. What do you think should be a consequence for you? So, I'm not the one who's gonna give you the consequence. We gonna come up with the consequence.

Case 2 described their restorative approach as a model that supports student's growth and teaches students the skills that they need. The assistant principal described their model,

> So, it's a growth model. I mean we understand that everybody makes mistakes. Everybody has their life experience, and within that, we need to learn from it. Right? Part of our model is the restorative justice model. What was the harm that was done? Who was harmed? How is it that we can repair that harm? How can we get back to a place where we can heal the community that was affected and then go forward? The purpose is not to put children out of school. We want them to learn from their mistakes, because if you don't learn from your mistakes, you're gonna keep making them over and over again.

Case 3 described their approach as a model that works to “refocus” students so they can continue to learn. Students are temporarily removed from the classroom in order to discuss the problem and refocus on what they need before going back to class. The RJC described their process,

> So, we really want them to sit there and actually think about their actions. What happened? What can you do when you go back? What grade can you show? Will you go back to that? And then how can you show that? And how's the rest of your day going to be so you don't end back up with me? Sometimes its not a perfect day and it’s like "oh, this is two". We're refocusing again. What's really going on? Now it’s to get deeper. What's really going on in their day? It’s not just a simple "I yelled out" or walked out of the classroom. It could be something deeper. It

could be something at home happened last night. We never know. So, we try to get a little deeper into it.

Case 4 described their approach as a space that allows students to first calm down and then begin the restorative process. Once calm, students were able to process their conflict and repair their situation. The principal described their process and unique space,

> I think the space was how do we create a space for kids to have a space to have people they trust and have a space that has fidget toys and things to actually de-escalate them and sort of support them in those moments of frustration or different things. Then we are doing restorative work with them, the last piece to restorative work has to be repairing the relationship.

Case 5 described their approach as a model that allows them to de-escalate students and then focus on resolving conflict, learning, and growing. The DC described their model as,

> Also, as they're describing it, of course we're listening to them and then these questions are more reflective, how do you think the other person feels and what could you have done differently? So then, usually they're calmer after they've done this. And then we say, so how can we help.? "Do you need to Peace Feet, if it's a big enough issue, do we do an RJ Circle? Maybe you just need to go back and apologize to your teacher, I'll go with you, do you wanna practice?" So we just support them in getting to a better place and then resolving the conflict. So that's typically what happens. Then we go and intervene with whatever the issue is. We either help to reset the student and get them back into class as soon as

possible. We might utilize Paws if it's a conflict with others, or if they need to de-escalate and we don't have time, but yeah, getting them back to their right brain and feeling better about what was happening, get them back into classes. We try to do that as quickly as possible.

Each case ascribed beneficial meaning to restorative practices and utilized a variety of the seven principles of restorative justice including: meeting needs, providing accountability and support, making things right, viewing conflict as a learning opportunity, building healthy learning communities, restoring relationships, and addressing power imbalances (Evans & Lester, 2013). The RJ from Case 1 described that although the school district that these cases reside in initiated restorative approaches, he hopes the initiatives continue so schools may continue to build their restorative programs. He shared, “it's a district-wide spread and I hope they continue with it at all levels. I think it's effective. I really do think it's effective.” Overall, although the large urban district initiated a top-down mandate, all five cases passionately applied restorative practices in ways that matched their school’s culture.

Positive Preventative Practices

Each case engaged in or utilized positive practices or systems that prevented the need for either restorative or punitive discipline. This included relationship building, positive diverse school culture, and staff training.

Relationships. All five cases discussed the importance of building relationships with students. Relationships included building safe and trusting connections with students and families throughout the educational process through positive communication,

providing resources, and encouraging involvement. Relationship building was seen as the foundation to all educational work. A dean from Case 2 described strong relationships as integral to working with students. He shared,

> Absolutely. I think that's the only answer. I don't think that consistent ... consistent consequences, yeah. That's a piece of it. Consistent expectations, yeah, that's a piece of it, too, but if they don't think you care, it doesn't matter. You can punish them all you want. You can give them any consequence you want. They don't care because if you care about them, they care about you, and I've always been able to have good relationships with kids, and I found if you have a strong relationship with kids, they'll bend over backwards to please you. And you just got to keep telling them, even when they screw up, "Still love you. Want to shake you a little bit right now, but yeah, I love you."

Relationship building was done in a variety of ways including using formal and informal systems. Teachers from Cases 1 and 5 described their proactive home visit and home school communication systems. These systems allowed students to feel connected. Teacher 1 shared, "I've been to all my student's homes and then some of them I hang out with on the weekend, or they invite me to church, I go to church with them." Teacher 2 explained they call families before the first week of school and invite students to class before school officially starts. Teacher 3 described that although she differs from her student's culturally, she uses that to push herself to validate her student's experiences and connect with them. She elaborated,

> I really struggle with the fact that like I am pretty much the only White person in my classroom. The fact of the matter is I'm privileged, and my upbringing was very different from theirs because of my culture. And because like, you know, society does view me differently than they view my students. So no matter how hard I try, I can't relate to them on that level. But I try to validate all my kids and where they come from. I did a parent survey at the beginning of the year so I could get to know the kids and what happens at home. And again, I think it's just for me building relationships with families and just really understanding where they come from, what the expectations are at home, how I can better support what's going on at home. Because I believe that education is most successful when there's a strong partnership between home and school.

These teachers, similar to the dean in Case 2, valued connection with their students and their families and ascribed positive meaning to relationship building. These methods were also used proactively at the beginning of the year to build relationships with families and students right from the start. Each case utilized values from inclusive and affirming learning environments and sought to create these systems from the start including connecting student's lived experiences, communities, and heritages (NBCDI, 2013). The RJC from Case 5 elaborated on the importance of teachers establishing these relationships early.

> We encourage them to build relationships with students and families early. Cause as soon as you send them to the room [calm down space], you've given up on your relationship with the kid. And so, I think it serves a purpose, but the idea would

be that we wouldn't need the room over time, that the teachers would be able to handle that stuff themselves through their relationships.

Cases 3 and 4 also discussed formalized ways in which they build and track relationships. Case 3 created a structured mentorship program to ensure they built positive relationships with students who needed it. This system included tracking, home school communication, and an incentive program for students. The RJC described the program,

> We also have a mentee, mentor program. So, there's staff members that have the mentees which are students who teachers put on a list. Maybe they're shy and don't talk a lot, maybe they can't connect with another staff member and get them someone more outgoing or there's some that have had a death in the family and so then they need that extra support and so we have that too.

The principal elaborated,

> We also do a mentor/mentee program that currently has over 90 plus kids. I have mentees in our building, 90 plus kids that we just mentor on a daily basis. They come here every day. We also do a Student of the Week every single week, in the mail, where we put postcards in the mail so they can be mailed to the families, which they absolutely love. We also host continual home visits.

These programs ensured students continuously had touch points from teachers and integrated home school communication. Going even further, Case 4 shared the formalized ranking system they created to track which students they did not have strong relationships with. They utilized formalized data and goal setting to ensure all students in the building had strong relationships with teachers. The dean explained the process,

> She has done some really great work on having this very targeted relationship building tool where teachers are identifying students that they want to build strategic relationships with. She put up every student's name in our school in the gym, and we all went around and put our initials next to students that we felt we had relationships with, and I think what was really reeling about that was the students that didn't have many teachers who are marking that they knew them. Then we were able to turn this qualitative relationship touchy feely type thing into an actual piece of data about how which kids are falling through the cracks and nobody really feels that they know them. It was interesting just to see that there were certain kids that were falling through the cracks regardless of their background. So, then she did a great job creating this tracker where teachers are targeting specific kids they want to build relationships with. She asked teachers to set goals for kids who had low connectivity scores and then they turned that back into her a couple of weeks later to explain how they had built relationships. I think turning that into a very data driven process.

Cases 2 and 4 took their ascribed meaning a step further and described the connection between positive relationship building and decreased discipline use. When students felt more connected through positive relationships with the teachers and each other, student behavior improved and therefore less discipline was needed (Decker et al., 2007; Fredriksen & Rhodes, 2004). The assistant principal described,

> It really is developing relationships with students. And the students amongst themselves as well. Part of it has to do with greeting students at the door, every

> day. With a high five and a smile and making eye contact and, establishing that connection so that kids realize that, yes indeed, I do belong here. They do expect me to be here and they're happy to see me, which is so important. The teacher will also share something good that's happened either at school or even in their personal lives, and then choose a few students, "Hey, tell me something good." Just kind of get the whole good things happening. Right? So again, in efforts to both orient students to, a positive outlook and more positive community so that students feel that connectedness and that belonging. So then less discipline issues arise, or behavior issues arise, and students become self-disciplined and self-monitoring and monitoring each other.

Building strong relationships with students supported the school's ability to utilize less discipline overall and also promoted the student's ability to build good relationships with each other and learn interpersonal skills. The RJC of Case 4 similarly shared their schools big push to build relationships between teachers and students this year in order to decrease discipline. He shared,

> We concentrate on relationship building. We work at preventing disciplinary issues by building a structure within each classroom as its own community and having their classroom teacher be the primary adult relationship. They have someone who they can trust, and then the support staff who they know are there for their best interest, and if we want to build relationships not only on negative, but on some of the positive aspects of their school day as well. It's more on the prevention end.

Overall, building strong relationships with students was beneficial on various accounts. It was seen as a preventive measure, decreased the use of punitive discipline practices overall, and when students needed to engage in restorative conversations, they were more likely to engage in the problem-solving process independently. Positive teacher and student relationships longitudinally are found to increase student's emotional and behavior strengths and overall academic achievement (Sointu et al., 2017). Prioritizing positive relationships can be seen as a key practice in reducing negative discipline outcomes for students.

Positive Diverse School Culture. All five cases spoke of the importance of creating a positive diverse school culture. This was done in a variety of ways including highlighting people and resources from a range of different genders, sexual orientation, social, and ethnic backgrounds. A positive school culture also included consistent academic and social structure, norms, and expectations. This subcategory, unlike other categories, was the only category in which all five cases talked similarly about the concept. Each case spoke about the value of a positive diverse school culture and ascribed a positive meaning to its use within their discipline framework. Each case explained students respond well to consistent structures and routines as well as environments that value their culture. Each case described the importance of creating a space in which a student's culture was reflected back to them, matching inclusive and affirming learning environments (NBCDI, 2013). The RJ from Case 1 described,

> Do you have enough posters to show diversity in your classroom? Are you showing books that help the kids to connect with it? You know that express their

feelings, and I'm like are you connecting the kids to your lesson? I also find, most of the lessons the kids are not engaged in the lesson because they can't relate to that lesson.

A teacher from the same case shared a similar focus on creating culture affirming classrooms by matching the environment to their student's culture:

So, I had to start pulling things from their environment and their cultures and bring them into this classroom. So, I've really tried to pull as much of my students into my classroom that I possibly could. I do it with my books. All types of books that I'm like, "Okay, can my students see it? Do they see people of color in there?" So, I've really tried to bring in as much as I could to really make my students feel like it's a connection. I have pictures up here as you can see and it's like this is our family. They know that this is ... This is their other family, and it feels like that.

These educators valued creating an environment in which students were exposed to materials that reflected their own culture including music, language, art, and posters. This created a welcoming and positive learning environment in which students became more engaged and eager to learn. Case 2 made clear the value of all cultures and languages. The principal shared, "I tell them they're gifted! Because if you can speak more than one language, you're gifted. English may not be one of them, but they know two or three languages. I want them to feel good about speaking another language." A teacher from Case 3 shared a similar sentiment on the importance of valuing culture and language,

> So, to me, and this is something that I learned throughout my first year of teaching last year, is I never really realized how much the students like they value their culture, but sometimes I feel like they feel embarrassed of it. I feel like they feel like maybe it makes them different, or I just want to speak English. And I really try to value their culture so that they're proud of it. And I mean I tell them all the time, "I wish I could speak another language. I wish I had all these different cultural things that I could share with people." And I feel like it's such a gift and such a positive thing, that I want them to keep that. I don't want them to be like, "Oh I need to learn English, and I need to only speak English." They should continue their language, or their culture beyond school.

This focus on valuing students' individual cultures stems from a growth mindset (Ridley, 2003). The educators view their student's language as a resource and take it a step further by ensuring that their students view their own language in the same resourceful way. The principal from Case 4 shared further the importance of not only seeing cultures that look like themselves, but also literally seeing themselves. The goal was for students to not only value their culture, but also themselves. He described,

> And so, as you walk through the halls. Also, one of the things that our kids know is that famous people hang on the walls. So, I have said, "Every student's work needs to have the student's face on there," because kids need to see them on the walls like they're famous. And who are famous people? And we can't just highlight these classic historical individual Jackie Robinson narratives. We've got to actually get our kids to see themselves as teachers and doctors and educators

and whatever frame it is, but they need models for who they are.

The assistant principal from Case 2 also connected this positive diverse school culture to discipline. When students felt valued and seen the need for punitive discipline decreased (Craig & Martin, 2023). He explained,

> If some of those pieces that you wouldn't even think are directly related to discipline are out of whack, then you're going to see it in the discipline office. If you have a classroom whose instruction is not engaging, and whose classroom management is not inclusive, where kids don't feel as if they are valued, you're going to have problems. And you'll see that in the discipline office.

In addition to valuing student's cultures and creating culturally affirming environments, each case also described consistent routines and expectations as integral to a positive school culture. When students know what to expect it decreases behaviors and the need for discipline. The RJC from Case 4 described what a consistent routine looked like,

> Strategies that I found that are effective are not leaving anything to guess for the students. Classrooms having a procedure for everything. That is getting a pencil, passing out papers, going to the bathroom, getting a tissue, that they all know that there are procedures for doing that so that kids don't have to guess, or be out of their seat, or wonder around. They know exactly what I'm supposed to do in this case. I feel like they feel more secure in classrooms that have procedures for everything, and it shuts down on having to send kids out of the classroom for things that they have to guess on. This is something that is expected of me.

The principal elaborated that a consistent routine and positive environment created an engaging learning system which then decreased the need for discipline. He shared,

> The most critical response to student behavior is if a student is engaged in class. Like if they like their class, if they feel cared for by their teacher and they're engaged in the work, they are going to want to be in that classroom. And so, I think it is paramount in this conversation, when we have really active, strong teachers who are motivating kids, inspiring kids, has rigorous instruction, gives kids feedback regularly, we don't see ... we can see behaviors in there but they taper off very quickly because of those expectations from instruction.

Each case strongly agreed that the environment should have consistent and predictable expectations and structures in place. This helped students know what to expect and increased their regulation and academic success (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). The principal from Case 2 shared,

> For example, when students have a predictable routine, then they're like, oh, well this is just naturally what we do next. And so, we flow from here to here to here, and there's no anxiety because they know what's coming. If students know, what to expect from the social environment and from the community, if they know that they can expect support, and that their questions are encouraged, then they're going to be more comfortable and at ease to take those academic risks.

Overall, positive school culture included valuing student's cultures, reflecting student cultures visually in the environment, and creating consistent routines and expectations.

These culturally affirming and predictable environments decreased the needs for discipline (Darling-Hammond & DePaoli, 2020).

Staff Training. Each case described the benefits of educator training in various ways**.** Training was provided by the administration or the school district for personnel on various topics including bias, cultural responsiveness, inclusive practices, relationships, classroom management, or restorative justice practices. Cases 2 and 4 received training on building positive relationships with students. The assistant principal of Case 2 discussed the "significant investment of time" put into training the staff on how to build positive relationships and model the positive behaviors they wanted to see. The entire staff was trained in *Capturing Kids' Hearts* at the beginning of the school year. Capturing Kids' Hearts focuses on social-emotional wellbeing, relationship-driven campus culture, and student connectedness (CKH, 2023).

Case 4 did not utilize a formal program, and instead put on their own professional development (PD) with one another. The teachers utilized each other's past experiences with students to learn from one another on how best to connect. The teacher coach shared,

> It was powerful when the teachers stood around the posters and they told stories of kids, and how they connected with him, and 'I taught this older brother', and 'I taught this little sister.' That part was beautiful. Then we did a PD where we shared specific strategies to build relationships, healthy ones, ones that didn't gaslight the teachers. If you're looking to build this in a child, here are some specific things you can do, making connections to the greater community,

> inspiring them to try something new or different, because a lot of teachers would say things like, "I know I need to build relationships, but how?" The teachers had to then set their goals and they put those into a Google spreadsheet, using the specific strategies.

Cases 3 and 5 received training on restorative justice practices and building their teacher's tool boxes through inclusive practices. Both cases described the benefits of having everyone in the building trained in these practices in order to "build toolboxes" and had all staff use similar language and techniques. This also enhanced the consistency mentioned in positive school cultures. The RJC at Case 3 described the difference of having everyone participate in the training.

> One thing we do differently is our PDs. We joined the whole staff in. Before the PDs were just for teachers. Paras were never involved, the other specialists, they were never involved. But now, everybody has to be at the PDs, and everybody knows the basics of what's going on in our school.

Case 3 continued, by having everyone participate in these trainings, they utilized less discipline. The RJC continued,

> We have trainings. We have a lot of restorative training. Yes, so they get this whole rundown of how it goes, the steps, what step you're supposed to go, step by step. So, we have some teachers that we never even get calls from because they're so good at it and they get it handled in their classroom. We'll be walking down the hall and they'll be in the hallway right by their door, talking to the student one on

one while the other kids are doing what they're supposed to and so there's a lot that they do good.

Additionally, the RJC of Case 5 described trying to promote a similar environment. He shared, “we're trying to help teachers to learn their own restorative practices, how do you have an effective conversation? What can you do in the classroom?” Training teachers in effective restorative justice approaches allowed schools to keep students in the classroom.

> The more we pull them [students] out, and they see that the class is moving forward, and the class knows the lesson that they don't know. They're just this outsider, and it just pushes them further and further away, so the behaviors get more and more escalated. We're hoping that over the next couple of years that we're able to further assist teachers to provide them with the support that they need so that they can build their threshold and to have a larger toolbox.

Therefore, trainings were ascribed as an essential part of preventive practices. The more teachers knew, the more effective they could be in the classroom, hence reducing the need for discipline and increasing student’s academic success.

Case 1 differed in their training approach. They completed training on their discipline system in order to ensure all staff understood the system and procedures. The assistant principal shared, “we do a PD every year to go over schoolwide routines, to coach new teachers. We'll do a discipline PD around what your classroom management system is going to look like.” This same case also discussed training further and

expressed a desire to expand their training on bias and privilege. This was the only case to discuss training related to concepts of race. The same assistant principal explained,

> We're planning a workshop series, around being aware of your biases, and from a White perspective, your privilege. As the dominant culture or the culture of power and being aware how those things show up and create disparities.

Schools that engage in consistent professional developments focused on organizational development, curriculum development, teacher education, research, and school culture showed positive social and academic outcomes for all students (Pine, 2003). Overall, the benefits of training appeared in various ways. Each school utilized training in a way that met their school's needs. Most schools focused on discipline and restorative justice practices.

What Internal and External Factors Influence Educators' Use of Discipline Practices?

Each case described various external and internal factors that influenced how educators utilized discipline. The concepts of external and internal were analyzed separately.

External Influences on Discipline

Each case discussed various external factors that impacted the use of discipline in their school. Factors included having additional or enough personnel, district policies that all schools must follow, and administration and leadership support.

Additional Personnel. Each case discussed the impact and benefit of additional personnel on their discipline practices. Additional personnel support the school, students,

social emotional programs, and impact the use of discipline. Each case discussed the major benefit and impact of additional personnel. The RJ from Case 1 described the impact of working at a previous school with no additional support personnel. He shared, “I couldn’t take it, because it was just me, so I told my principal I was going to leave to a different school, and she said, ‘You know, we gonna find you some help.’” The principal, therefore, found additional funding through a mill levy and funded a school psychologist, social worker, three RJCs, and a dean of students. Before this funding allocation, the school had one counselor and one RJC. Therefore, this case was able to utilize more restorative discipline practices due to the additional staffing and funding found by the administrator.

Case 4 shared a similar sentiment about the benefits and needs of additional personnel. The principal of Case 4 made a commitment in the budget to keep the needed additional staff she obtained first through grants. The commitment of additional staff allowed them to continue to utilize restorative practices. She shared,

> Adding in a full-time psychologist, and then some of that social emotional funds we've used to pay for our restorative practices' coordinator. M is through the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) grant. S is through the Personalized Learning grant. N is from the SEL funds and then E has just been from our school budget that we've prioritized. So that's four staff that we did not have as of four years ago when we were thinking about this. We have committed to keeping our Personalized Learning Coordinator, we have committed to keeping our SEL Coordinator. I built those into our school budget now. We've committed to

keeping our Restorative Practices Coordinator and we may even add a half-time Restorative Practices Coordinator. Since adding these positions it's shifted 100%.

Case 2 shared the additional resources and personnel, allowed teachers to feel comfortable reaching out and asking for support, thus impacting the discipline they used. The team was able to collaborate with one another to identify the best way to support students. The assistant principal shared,

> Teachers have the support that they need, and they ask for it. We have two counselors, one social worker, one psychologist, full time nurse, along with a partnership through Health with two more mental health therapists as well, and access to a child psychiatrist. So, we have a lot of mental health resources and social support type resources. Some funded through grants, some provided through district funding and others, through our own general fund. We've also got a phenomenal special ed team so that we all work together to help provide whatever needs these kids have, and luckily, we've got great paras that are very dedicated. So, we provide the support that the teachers request and need.

Case 3 described the impact that additional personnel had on the students. Students exhibited less behavior. Additionally, teachers had a variety of resources to access to help solve conflicts if they did arise. The principal shared,

> We just don't have that many challenges with our students with severe needs just because we've overstaffed. And so, we have, right now we have five special education teachers, and our school would say that we only need three. So, five special education teachers, a social worker, a psych, probably over five paras, two

> RJC, two APs. With 800 students it’s important just to have a team. So, either way they have options, they can come see me, we really tag team on even with SPED, they come with us.

Case 5 utilized additional personnel similarly to the other cases; however, they accessed additional personnel in a slightly different way. Instead of hiring additional staff, they relied on volunteers to staff their social emotional office. They had two full-time employees who were responsible for training and supervising the volunteers. The RJC shared,

> There are probably five other volunteers. I would love for this model to grow 'cause I think it works for one thing, but I think it works because it's mostly retired people and so to me, it's an intergenerational thing that a lot of older people want to still be giving back, but we've created the model so that if somebody goes to Florida for six weeks, that's alright. There's no guilt. Most of them come one day a week. At the base It's a huge resource. And then for certain students, it's very reinforcing.

Since this particular school did not have the funding to create full time positions, the volunteer model allowed them to continue to reach students with additional personnel in the same way as the other cases, therefore continuing to provide restorative models of discipline. The DC explained,

> I mean, probably 10 times more kids are getting the attention that they need, the time that they need to really work through whatever's going on. I can't imagine how many kids would not be getting what they needed if it weren't for the

volunteers, and I'm sure that's the case in all schools. Kids are not getting as much as they need because there's just not enough psych services and all of that.

Integrative systems of support that include both classroom and student level resources drastically improve student's social and emotional outcomes (Fazel et al., 2014). Additional personnel provided in these cases allowed schools to implement restorative discipline. Additional personnel, however funded or accessed, reduced the need for punitive discipline and allowed school personnel to work together and collaborate to support students.

District Policies. Three out of the five cases discussed the impacts of district policies on discipline. District policies were discussed as a set of guidelines created by the school district that determined the type of discipline to be used based upon a student's behavior. District policies were meant to provide equal discipline across students as they are highly behavior focused. A policy can be based upon a population of students such as students in special education or early childhood classes. The discipline matrix resembles zero tolerance policies in that it is intended to remove disciplinary discretion from teachers and instead onto to the objective codes (Hirschfield, 2008). All three cases that utilized the district matrix to determine the type of discipline to use were conflicted in their use of it. Although the matrix was often seen as an external factor, when a school did not agree with the matrix, they were driven by internal factors of how they chose not to follow it. Therefore, the matrix provides "guidance" for all schools to follow. However, schools choose to follow or "balance" the matrix with their own "gut feelings" or additions of restorative justice to enhance the system.

Case 2 described the benefit of utilizing the matrix to ensure internal factors such as personal bias or negative mood did not impact the type of discipline used against a student. The dean explained,

> There's a ladder and a matrix that the district gives us, and it starts on the bottom. These are little things like gum, minor physical altercation, gambling, those are called a type one. So, then it goes up to type two, and those are a little more severe. And then, here are the infractions and possible interventions or what the school has to do. The more serious the behavior, the more serious the consequence. So, that's how we decide to, you don't randomly go, "Well, you kind of made me mad today. So, I'm going to give you five days of in-school suspension." You can't do that, which is really great because, sometimes, you're like, "Okay, calm down. Can't give them a lifetime of lunch detention." So, that's what we use as a guide.

The assistant principal of the same case described a similar sentiment in which they must always follow the district matrix. However, he also described instances in which the school had “discretion” and was able to add in their own systems of discipline. He shared,

> That it has to be. Has to be dealt with. There are just certain things. Drugs, weapons, those different kinds of things. Those are automatic. I mean, we have no control. Those things are always reported, always have to be handled with the matrix. Where we have discretion is when and if we can do restorative pieces, that's the most important thing.

Therefore, there was a district policy ladder that the school followed, however restorative justice practices appeared to serve as an internal factor that influenced how the matrix was followed or not. Schools followed the district matrix but not with the original intention of zero tolerance policies which sought to remove discretion. However, it was the removal of schools' discretion that contributed to more frequent suspension and expulsion of marginalized students (Hirschfield, 2008). Case 5 shared similar sentiments in that they balanced the district discipline matrix with elements of restorative practices. The DC shared,

> We do follow the matrix as much as possible in terms of if a consequence is appropriate in terms of an in-school suspension, but repair would always be part of that also. So sometimes they go hand in hand. So, if we had an in-school suspension we would try to spend that time during the in-school suspension working on some sort of repair.

Teachers also felt similarly about using discretion and spoke of a severity level that led them to utilize the matrix. She shared,

> I think, I don't know, for me I've always just, basically, handle it unless it's something that's on the district behavior ladder, which then needs to get referred. If it's a big theft or if it's continuous racial slurs or bullying, or if it gets physical beyond a one push or a one hit. If it's a brawl, it goes downstairs. But if it's one kid hits one kid and it's done, we deal with it.

Case 3 conceptualized the district matrix differently. They did not follow the district policy per se; however, they expressed the need to create a discipline system that worked for their particular student population. The principal shared,

> I don't think I've ever got a mandate that says, "You have to X, Y, or Z." It's more so of like create a system that works for your school and your school community, and as long as it works, it works. If you're suspending first graders, that is a systemic problem in your school. ECE, there's no way, there's no way. That's a systemic problem with your school and your culture.

Case 4 also conceptualized the district policy differently. They did not utilize it like the other schools, but the district policy influenced their shift away from OSS and towards ISS. The RJC shared,

> It definitely has a factor in the influence. Just the way that ISS and OSS is approached by the discipline and the push towards kind of more ISS versus OSS which I understand. But yeah, it affects how we structure and our view our in-school suspension.

Although Case 4 did not utilize the district matrix, there was a theme that the matrix should be followed in order to determine if the matrix was effective. In other words, in order to determine if the matrix could work as a true external factor. The same RJC shared,

> I think it's necessary to follow through on them, so we really know if the policy works, or it doesn't. If we are kind of giving exceptions, then you never really

know if it's not working, but it appears to be working because you are adjusting then there will be no push for change if change is necessary.

Nationally, district policies have been found to not include the research based policy recommendations to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline practice (Green et al., 2021). Overall, each case utilized the district matrix differently with some schools acknowledging the negative impact the matrix could have on student outcomes. Districts either followed it exactly, balanced it with other practices, used it to influence other systems, or did not utilize it at all. For schools that chose not to utilize the matrix, more restorative practices were utilized leaving one to assume the district matrix still increases the likelihood of exclusionary discipline practices.

Administration. Each case discussed the impact the school administrator played on the types of discipline used. Policies, training, hiring, culture, or guidelines created by administrators in the school building impacted the type of discipline used by the school. Schools found that administrators had a large impact on what happens in the building. Administrators played a strong role in establishing school climate and determining the utilization of various types of discipline (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2021).

Cases 1, 2, 3, and 4 described the impact of administrator consistency and leadership. Consistent leadership throughout the years created a consistent culture for the staff and students to follow. This impacted their ability to continue to use restorative approaches and focus on social emotional learning consistently. The assistant principal shared,

> Probably the biggest factor is leadership that the principal that's been here six or seven years, so our fifth graders had her as an ECE kid, so there's no change in expectation. She and I are on the same page I would say for the most part. She often talks about firm but kind in terms of how people work with kids. That's warm demander. They need to repair the harm that they've done. She's on board with SEL, she's on board with restorative approaches. Obviously, this stuff is something she's behind.

Case 2 described similar sentiments and added, the administrator is also responsible for creating trust and a solid team of employees and resources who can consistently deliver the discipline systems they have created. The dean shared,

> Until I came into this position, discipline in this building was a nightmare because there were three or four, five people handling it. Nobody was communicating with each other. They weren't consistent from person to person or situation to situation, and you know I don't mean you're going to handle it exactly this way, but okay, I'm going to handle this differently because I know this kid, and when I agreed to take this position, I asked my principal, I said, "I need permission to be the only cook in the kitchen because it's not going to work any other way." And that's what I've been given. I get to do all of it. And she trusts me, which is nice, and when it's a big thing, I'll always touch base with her, and if I'm not really super sure, I'll consult with her, but at the very least, I keep her informed of bigger things that are going on.

Case 3 described the key role the administration played in creating the discipline system that the school uses. The RJC shared,

> Him (principal) and the PBIS team, the whole PBIS team, we met, and we came together to figure out what works, what doesn't work. We came up with all this, the chart, everything.

Case 4 continued to describe the impact the administration had on discipline practices. The administration revamped the schools discipline system and allowed time and space for training as well as prioritized resources for their discipline system. The dean shared,

> The new AP pushed on some of the procedures that we had always just thought were the way things go. She came in and said that. She challenged us and said why do you do it that way? Do you have to do it that way? Could we do it this way? I think just having somebody in the group who is a fresh perspective who can really ask us to explain exactly where we were doing it the way we were.

Therefore, administrators were seen as key in structuring not only the discipline teams, but the type of discipline used. Additionally, the principal from Case 3 was the only administrator who mentioned the superintendent. The principal shared the impact of the highest level of administration sharing,

> But then also there was a need for more administration that was more active in student discipline, but then also an administration that wasn't scared of particularly fifth and fourth graders. But no, he's [superintendent] supportive to

whatever he feels I need in the school, and he does observations with me. I have a great superintendent.

Most cases did not describe this level of support or impact from the highest level of administration and instead focused on principals and assistant principals as most impactful. Straying away from this theme, Case 5 mentioned administration overall, however it placed less emphasis on the impact of administration. Administration provided the tools and feedback (coaching), however, administration only stepped in to support with discipline when students engaged in physical behaviors. A teacher explained,

> I think our admin is really supportive with giving us the tools and also pointing out in a gracious, helpful way, these are things that maybe you could try differently in your classroom. I think also they kind of new teachers rely on older teachers to figure out what do I do with this? Which I think is pretty typical in a lot of schools with a lot of things. Admin does tend to get more involved with those kinds of ... once it's a safety issue versus just an annoying issue.

Administrators who lead with social justice orientations including acknowledging racism, building authentic relationships, and disrupting outdated systems were found to have more favorable student outcomes and positive school cultures (DeMatthews, 2016). Consistent administration and leadership appeared to help create a consistent discipline system. Administration also had a large impact on the resources and discipline system utilized by the school. Overall, administration impact varied with most cases agreeing that administrators supported their use of discipline through systems creation, team support, and resource allocation priorities. When administrators did not engage in these

processes, teachers felt administrators were less supportive. Overall, administration support and intentional leadership appeared to play a significant role in utilizing more restorative discipline systems.

Internal Influences on Discipline

Each case discussed various internal factors that impacted the use of discipline in their school. Factors included previous life experiences, personal or school-based mindsets, and personal or school-based biases.

Previous Experience. Every case participant mentioned how their previous personal and or academic experiences led them to their current positions at their current schools. However, three schools went further and discussed how their personal experiences impacted how they approached their work with students and their discipline practices.

Cases 1 and 2 described themes of how educators brought their own personal experiences into how they worked with students. This could be both a positive and negative experience. The RJ from Case 1 described his process of rethinking how he thought about discipline and student behavior due to his previous experiences as a police officer. He explained,

> My background is in law enforcement. So, I did that for about 23 years. After retirement, I went on and got into security here at the school district. I just noticed there was a lot of things that I was doing as police officer. Because on the streets it's, I don't want to hear why you did it, you did it and you're going. There's not a lot of conversation about it. Here, working with kids is, okay, now I gotta dig a

> little deeper on why you are acting like this. It could be family life; it could be something that's really bothering you. So that was a hard curve for me, changing my whole frame of thought, not being so defensive, not being so sharp and not argumentative but it's my way or no way and that's it. So, it was a little bit of a learning curve. I'm kind of hot tempered so I had to tone that down and say, okay, this is a five-year-old. I can't react like it's a 25-year-old. Separating one career and starting another. These guys didn't just shoot somebody. They didn't listen to the teacher. They threw an eraser. They hit Sally but they didn't go do a major assault, so I had to say, okay, you got to put the crime with the punishment, and these are innocent minds that I'm trying to help. On the streets, that's not the job right now. I'm not trying to rehabilitate you on the streets.

His previous experiences impacted how he initially thought about discipline, and he had to unpack his views and change his perspective. At the same time, although he changed his views, he also kept some of his views based on his previous experiences. Because of his own personal experience as an African American male, he had views on how he felt other African American males should be treated in relation to discipline. He explained,

> It's a personal thing for me, especially with African American males, just by my experience. And not even trying to save them, this is what you're up against as you get older. And you continue this type of behavior, this is what's going to happen to you. And it's not like I think it, this is what I know. So, I think that's where my role is, it’s the outside thing, just like, "Hey, I'm gonna pull you aside.

> When I sit you in here, I'm gonna talk to you real. First, you shoulda talked to the teacher, but let me tell you how it is. It’s hard enough to be a black male. And that's how I use my own personal relations with them as far as, this is what you should expect. This is the way life is right now. So, I like to put the reality part of it in, even at this young age. This is the real world right now, and they may pamper you now, but when you hit 18 years old, heck, they'll throw the book at you, you don't know what happened because you got pampered. Don't let them trick you, I tell parents that. Don't let them trick you like that, "Oh, it's okay, it's okay, no big deal," and once you hit 18, now you're doing 10 years and like, "Wait a minute, this is the same stuff I was doing right here." And I think, that's my personal view of it. I think it's a setup, I really do. I think it's a setup.

Therefore, although he changed his views due to his previous work experiences, he also kept several views due to his personal experiences that impacted how he works with students. He proceeds with tough love because of his personal experiences, particularly for African American boys. Case 2 described similar sentiment in that previous work experiences impacted the way educators saw and handled situations. The RJ described,

> My experience is I just have ... I cover everything, human services, substitute teacher, educational, juvenile justice, correction, adults, juveniles. I've just had the opportunity to get an overview on how the dynamics of this works. So, I'm able to see things other people can't see. I'll say, "Hey, what about this? Is this child going through a sexual identity, you know," and they're like, okay, I can see that.

Her previous work experience allowed her to see situations differently compared to her other colleagues. She was able to ask different questions and approach why students may behave differently, therefore impacting how she handled situations. Case 3 also discussed how previous life experience impacted how they worked with students. However, they also added themes of how a lack of experience could impact how they handled situations with students. The principal shared,

> I was raised in a single-parent family. My mother was my sole provider. But there was all those wraparound services that helped me that were teachers, so I had my fifth grade teacher, actually is still my mentor to this day, he sends me one of those text messages every morning, the words of motivation, And so I saw those people give me those wraparound services to say like, "Well, whatever you witnessed wasn't right, and it's not acceptable. However, this is how you fix this and this and this is how you move forward. I want to create that culture at the school.

His previous experiences with other teachers impacted how he wanted to be a resource for students. Hence using that experience as a blueprint. At the same time a teacher shared,

> “I know for myself last year with it being my first year of teaching, I did not know how to appropriately handle situations, because like I said I didn't have the training, and I was just almost ... it was almost learned. You have to learn how to do this. I finally said I have to figure out how to take care of this in my own classroom you know?

Her lack of experience impacted the way she handled situations and she needed to gain more experience and confidence in herself. She was not able to work from a blueprint and was instead learning through her current experience. Overall personal and professional experiences or a lack there of, greatly impacted how educators worked with students and perceived situations.

Bias. Three out of the five cases discussed acknowledging biases and working hard to adjust behavior and improve school culture. Bias and discipline were seen as either conscious or unconscious prejudice against a student based upon a characteristic such as race or gender that impacts the type of discipline used (Staats et al., 2016). Bias was by far the most complex subcategory of this study as each case had various nuances within itself as well as themes across cases. Two cases had conflicting views within themselves on how they thought about bias. One case discussed directly treating students differently because of their race in order to prepare them for society and another case utilized a color-blind mentality describing there could not be any biases because the school was diverse. The final case did not mention bias at all. Overall, a case's views on bias, whether indirectly or directly, impacted how the case viewed discipline and interacted with students.

Implicit biases about African American children impact how their behaviors are perceived and how they should be addressed (Meek & Gilliam, 2016). Case 1 discussed themes that African American male students should be disciplined with tough love in order to prepare them for the way society was going to treat them. The RJC explained,

> I say well, you guys keep babying, you keep doing this and that and I just don't think it's helpful. And especially being with the African American males, I really look at that a lot differently, being in a majority White populated teaching situation. From my experience, what I feel works, what they listen to, and what I feel hinders them sometimes, some brand-new teachers out of college thinking poor kid, but you can't really be like that with some of them looking at you. You gotta be stern and be right on them and make them accountable. Well, I will bring it up to them. I mean, with him especially if he's supervising one of the teachers, I'm just like, "I'm having an issue with the way this teacher's talking to some of the African males. She's pampering them. She's this and that." And then he'll observe, or he'll make some suggestions to that teacher. 'Cause I've done that this year and I'll just notice it, I'm just like, "You're not making men out of them, they're making little boys out of them, and she can't do that.

At the same time, another teacher from this case mentioned feeling uncomfortable with the idea that other White teachers continued to send African American students to his classroom as if it was his responsibility because he is an African American male teacher. He described teachers struggling to connect with African American students.

> Now I'm personally not in other classrooms, so I wouldn't know offhand with my own eyes, but some of the secondhand accounts that I have heard from other students is that it's not equitable, and they don't feel like they are disciplined at the same rate as the other children. And I can definitely see that when people are consistently bringing me all the Black children, or when a White teacher will

> bring me a Black student, I'm like "Well why are you sending him to me?" That's sending him a message that whatever he's doing is too much for you and you don't want to deal with it so you just want to push it out. You just want to push him away and that's not a good feeling. He's comforted with me and that's great that he feels like he can be comfortable with me and like he's loved and wanted, but he needs to feel that in your classroom because I'm not his teacher.

Although this case did not say the words bias directly, each member mentioned themes of either treating students differently directly because of their race or seeing others do so because of their race. These behaviors are viewed as implicit biases (NASP, 2017).

Case 2 presented differing themes on bias as well. The dean and principal shared that although student and teacher personalities may not click, the school itself could not experience bias due to the diversity of the school. The dean explained,

> Yeah. I think, sometimes, personalities may not match, and I've experienced that with some kids, but I've been here 11 years, and I have never heard a staff member or witnessed a staff member treating someone differently because of where they come from or what they look like, never, not a single one, and I think if there were one, they'd be railroaded out pretty quick.

The principal continued with the same sentiment,

> It's hard to have racial bias in this school because it's so diverse. You know, that doesn't really come up that much in this school, hasn't come up in a while. It's mostly just understanding the different cultures. But I'm not seeing it as racial

> bias. I'm not saying it doesn't exist, it's just not heavy weight in this school because everyone looks different in this school.

This thinking could be characterized as colorblind (Tatum, 2017). Colorblind mentality is one that is only privileged to White educators and maintains that by ignoring a student's race, racism is minimized in the education setting, hence treating all students the same (Blaisdell, 2005; Ullucci & Battey, 2011). Both individuals in this case believed that because the student body was diverse the educators did not treat students differently because of their race as there were so many races. At the same time, the assistant principal of the same case disagreed with this sentiment. Instead, he described that everyone has bias built into their experience and educators must all recognize it and work hard to counteract it. He explained,

> We first of all have to accept the fact that everybody has their lens. And their lens by definition has some biases in it. But at the same time, if you recognize that's there, then you can work to counteract any negative effects of that. But you can also use it as okay, so this has happened here. Some, and you can use it for good as well as for evil.

He then continued that by acknowledging this bias, he could also use this understanding to better understand where student behavior may stem from. However, there is a fine line to balance between stereotyping, discrimination, prejudice, and bias. He continued to explain,

> So, some of the strategies that might work better based on this infraction by a student who was in this group, would be to work through the parents or with,

> another thing would be not to work through their parents, necessarily because, that's where some of these behaviors are coming from. So ‘of course I told my kid to smack him inside of the head. He looked at them cross ways.’ So, there are sometimes when parents reinforce a wrong message. So, I don't know. So again, with regards to cultural biases, I think it's important to recognize those. It's also, there's a difference between discrimination and prejudice. Discrimination in its truest form means to be able to tell the difference between. Can you discriminate between right and wrong? That's can you tell the difference? And to understand that there are differences and to be able to see the differences is a hugely important thing.

Cases 4 and 5 took themes of bias further and discussed ways in which their teams openly discuss concepts of bias, acknowledge them, examine them, and work to change behavior. Case 4 starts with the hiring process. In order to be hired at the school, you must be willing to discuss bias. The dean explained,

> We have in our hiring, everybody who goes through our hiring procedures has to have an equity task. We don't expect anybody to be a finished product, and totally done with that work, because no matter where you are, you're always processing through. Even people who are extremely aware of their biases, then they still have their next steps too about what they're working on. We just ask our teachers to be open to those conversations.

Once hired on, the process continued, and the school moved into continued coaching. The teacher coach explained,

> I think the coaches spend a good amount of time talking to each other. Here's what I'm seeing happening in this class, or if someone sees something that feels like a biased practice, if I see it happening for a classroom teacher that isn't on my case load, I could just go to that teacher, because relationships, but I could also go to that coach and say, "What have you guys worked on here? I heard this comment," or there's one specific thing that I've been in touch with one of the coaches where there's a teacher who's been mispronouncing a student's name for a good portion of the year, and it drives me nuts. How do you build a relationship with someone if you're calling them the wrong name.

The teachers confirmed the impact of this process. The teacher who had been at the school for an extended period of time, saw the changes from the previous administration to the new administration in the hiring process. The previous administration did not prioritize conversations on bias, and it showed in how the teachers worked with students. She mentioned,

> Oh yeah. I've also noticed, for example, I have noticed that some teachers, the ones that have been here before R, if they send a White kid, ‘he was just having a break.’ But if it was the Black kid, it was like, “Oh, he needs to be here, because he can't be in my classroom.”

Therefore, the hiring process and changes around intentionally having these conversations around bias and teaching coaching around bias made a difference that was noticed. It was noticed in how teachers treat and discipline the students.

Case 5 took their conversations around bias further and looked at data to see how biases played out in their discipline data (sending too many kids of color to the office). Case 5 also brought in another term "triggered" which described how biases showed up in the classroom. The DC described how he used data to help teachers see how their biases might show up in their discipline practices. Using data helped reduce "defensiveness" and created opportunities for more open conversations. She described,

> The area where I know it's happened is when I go into coach teachers on no nonsense nurturing. Equity is a big part of that. So, helping teachers understand how the way they address behavior is creating a bigger equity issue, and literally going in and taking data on the re-directions and who they're going to by race and gender. And helping teachers see that it's a thing because unless you show them data. It's going to be a defensive 'no I'm not' type of thing. So, I think when you show teachers the data, they're like 'oh', and so talking about that and talking about how being consistent and delivering re-directions neutrally for all behaviors that fall into whatever the category is, is something that can shift a classroom in terms of the equity and how kids are feeling about themselves, and how they are looked at by their teachers.

The RJC also mentioned the idea of being "triggered" by other cultures. She described the importance of recognizing and reflecting on these triggers in order to not allow them to impact how she worked with students. She described,

> And I just said this in the behavior team that I think that the school's learning edge is to appreciate the ways that teachers get triggered and how that creates the

problems in the classroom. It takes two people to be in a relationship, and so teachers need to learn those self-care strategies, so that when they feel themselves getting triggered, that they need to make other choices to go to the cool down corner themselves, plus I also think if kids saw the teachers modeling that. I think that kids from other cultures trigger us in ways that kids from our own culture don't. And so, to see teachers not being triggered by kids of color. You have to own your shit you know, and we as a culture need to be able to address cultural issues, equity issues in our language, in our conflicts. We typically ignore them because they scare us and we don't want to admit that we're part of the problem, so yeah it would look like people owning their part in a conflict. When teachers do come down here, they would be more willing to hear it, and then to have a change their practice.

Overall, bias was complex and presented with dichotomous themes within cases. Bias runs deep in American society due to White supremacy, however educators were split on acknowledging this fact (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Some educators felt more comfortable acknowledging bias and their intentionality around disrupting these thoughts. Other educators took a colorblind approach not acknowledging the impact of biases. Lastly, other educators did not mention bias at all, leaving one to reflect on the impacts of these positionalities.

Mindset. Three out of the five cases mentioned mindset. Mindset can be growth or deficit based. It centers around the belief that students have positive attributes regardless of their behavior and would benefit from restorative discipline versus the idea

that students are bad because of their behavior and need punitive discipline (Adam & Hogan, 2015). Two cases mentioned the idea that positive mindsets are best, but it takes work to change mindsets especially since they are established by our previous experiences and deeply established cultures.

Case 1 did not use the word "mindset," but explained how teachers saw certain student attributes as negative instead of viewing them as positive which causes conflict. This was due to differences in culture. The classroom teacher described,

> I mean he loves to talk but that's just his culture, that's what he does. I think we try to box kids in so much, we try to box them in, and we want them to be the White way. It's like well, that's not who he is. He likes to talk and that's how he interacts, that doesn't mean he's not learning, that doesn't mean he's being distracting, he's still learning. He's extremely smart. He writes brilliantly, he's brilliant. But he just loves to talk and that's just how he interacts, but it's seen as a negative thing versus something positive, and he's Black. He's a Black male and it causes behavior issues.

When there was a difference in culture, minority cultures are often compared to the White majority culture and are seen as different or bad from the "norm" (Gorski, 2016). The RJC explained about her own personal culture,

> We talk loudly, we talk, I mean, Africans. I know we, sometimes we talk, we raise our voice. And, to a Caucasian teacher would take it as being disrespectful, right, like you, why are you raising your voice at me? And, I have a teacher who struggles with that too. And I brought it up to Ms. C, like, because of culture

backgrounds Africans, if you are talking to Africans, usually we look down like this, to show respect. But, I know, some Caucasians, look at my face, look when I'm talking to you. Yes, look at me when I'm talking to you. And it makes it hard. And it causes all these issues and behavior issues in the classroom, like hey, this child is talking at home, when I am talking to you, put your head down. But, when the kids, when the child comes to school, when I'm talking to you, look at my eyes. You know, look at me when I'm talking to you. Conflict, right here.

These differences in culture were seen as bad instead of a difference and they were not understood. Case 2 also described a similar sentiment. The administrators are attempting to change the mindset of the adults working with students. Students are not bad, but instead they are dealing with strong emotions. American society has a common mindset that children need to “mind” adults and this mindset often plays out in schools. The dean described this challenge changing educator's mindset who were educated this way,

> Some of them still had, no matter what I did, they still had that mindset, "Well, they just need to mind." I can't change their mindset unless they're open-minded enough to go, "Oh, I get it." I don't think that's it. I just think that, sometimes, teachers just forget that you're dealing with children. There's a poster I put up; it's something like, "There are no bad children, just young people who are frustrated and confused, trying to get through life and express their feelings the only way they know how." That's what it boils down to. They're not doing that because they love annoying you, and even if they are, if you bite every time, then you deserve

it. Sorry, but if they know what button to push, and you react every time ... I tell kids that. I shouldn't have to tell a grown professional adult that.

Even with training, because of past personal experiences and deep cultural indoctrination, it’s easy to slip back into previous mindsets. The principal explained.

Some teachers, we have had some de-escalation training, and it's fantastic, but even some teachers that I saw in trainings two years in a row, I still don't see them implementing those strategies, and the only thing I can think of is that they get frustrated, and I think their mindset is backwards. We said that, "You're doing that to annoy me." No, they're doing that because something's wrong, and they need help, and they don't know how to ask for it any other way, and that really frustrates me.

Case 4 shared similar conflicts. They want to shift away from a punitive mindset around discipline to a growth mindset. However, it's not always easy to do during conflict as it's easy to slip back into old habits. The principal shared this conflict,

Yes. I think we still run into mindset challenges. We have ... yeah mindset's still around pretty punitive consequences. I'll have staff say like, "Well what's going to happen now? What are we going to do to hold this student accountable? so we've done a couple of different trainings. We've done some trauma informed trainings, we've done a lot of the relationship training and things like that, so. I do think all of that stuff is helping to shift the mindset. Going back to that question of like how far are we along. But I think in the most extreme situations, mindset goes out

and you go with instinct and what you used to do or how you remember school or those pieces.

Changing deeply held discipline mindsets are challenging due to the functioning of systemic systems of oppression and White supremacy (DeCuir & Dixson, 2014). Disrupting these systems takes intentionality. Overall discipline is impacted by internal and external actors as they are intertwined with our own internal views but also systemic factors of how we received discipline. The principal from Case 4 described this sentiment,

> Yeah. I mean I think we still have a long way to go with restorative practices. I don't think we have done that well yet. I think we still have a lot of punitive things that happen in our school. I think that work is the preventative piece. In the past it's always been a student does this, we swing with this consequence, but if we can stop it before it happens, then we don't have to have those consequences that are just harsh and meaningless. It's a real big shift for everyone, especially when teachers that have been teaching for many, many years, and that's not how we do business. Teachers weren't feeling bought into it, and feeling like they still wanted to go back to how things were done when they were at school with the discipline, and the harsh consequences.

Overall, internal factors were complex and varied based upon individual experiences, cultures, mindsets, and current personal journey. Critical theory helps explain these intricate facets as internally individuals all hold biases due to the inherent and systemic racism embedded within society (Blaisdell, 2005). However, educators are

on individual journeys, some consciously and others unconsciously, in their understanding, complicity, and reflection of these concepts, hence the varied responses and therefore impacts to discipline use.

How do Educators Ascribe Meaning to Their Discipline Pedagogy?

Four main pedagogies were identified across all five cases. A discipline pedagogy, also known as a philosophy, is defined as a person's individual theory and or approach when working with students (Beethan & Sharpe, 2007). Pedagogies include how educators talk about, plan, and structure student learning and their overall understanding and rationale of their approaches.

Individualized

An individualized educator is one that responds using a student's individualized needs or strengths to support them (Galloway et al., 2020). They utilize discipline approaches that are specific to each individual student. Individualization was the most common pedagogy utilized by educators across cases. The following are three examples of educators across cases that applied individualized approaches to their work with students. This allows one to see the diversity in individualized approaches. A teacher described,

> I don't know if I have a formal philosophy, but I try to be really patient. But with each child I kind of based on what I think they need, and there's been a lot of trial and error, so it's not actually like a philosophy that goes classroom wide because I think every kid needs something different.

This educator focused on the individualized needs of students in order to support them. Although she was unsure of the terminology, she clearly identified her approach and understanding as “every kid needs something different.” This is the heart of individualized pedagogy. Second a principal shared,

> The right answers, you got to keep on trying until you find something that works and when you find something that works, you do it until it doesn't work anymore and then you find the next thing that works.

This educator focused on continually finding answers by evolving and adapting to the needs of students. When one support stopped working another one was found. This shows the flexibility and adaptability of individualized philosophies. Lastly, a dean shared,

> Oh, and many times, instead of just blatantly giving out consequences, I try to gauge the student and whether just a discussion will be helpful and beneficial and effective or if they really do need a consequence, and it depends on the kid. It depends on the day, the situation, and of course, the severity.

Educators that identify the individual needs of students in their classrooms, value children’s knowledge and experiences and embrace conflicts as learning opportunities are seen as individualized educators (Souto-Manning, 2013). Overall, these educators described responding with strategies that met each student’s individualized needs. Individualized educators recognized that students needs are complex and ever changing therefore they utilized flexible and adaptive responses to create the best outcomes for students either academically or behaviorally (Gardner & Toope, 2011).

Warm Demander/Authoritative

A warm demander/authoritative educator describes being firm, structured, and consistent as well as loving, kind and positive (Pacansky-Brock, 2022). They utilize a balanced approach when working with students and it is cautioned that this approach may appear harsh to those that do not conceptualize this method into their teaching (Bondy & Ross, 2008). The following are two examples across cases that describe warm demander approaches. A dean of culture shared,

> I've just always had this mindset of kids would behave if they could. No one chooses to behave that way because they've decided that's what they want, and so I think that just with that mindset I've always been able to kind of approach behavior with empathy. But yeah, my approach is based in relationships, but I'm also very no nonsense, and I believe very strongly in consistency and boundaries, and I think that really works for me with kids.

This educator described being empathetic, relationship based, and no nonsense displaying the firm and soft balance warm demander educators bring to their classrooms. Additionally, a RJC shared,

> Sometimes it's questioned, and not questioned in a negative way, it's like this is how I deal with these types of situations. You gotta be stern and be right on them and make them accountable. I'm real hard but yet I'm very fair and very caring. I'm not the, "Oh poor Johnny." This is what's expected, this is what you're supposed to do. But then, I coached a lot, so my thing is, every time you tear a player down, you gotta build them up in a couple of ways, and I do that with the

> kid. I man them, but then within that same frame, I would say, "But you know what? Earlier today you did a great job at da, da, da, so there's some positive things that you're doing. But right now, this isn't a positive decision you're making. So I feel I never want them to go away feeling real down here. I want you to know, you made a bad decision, but overall I think you've done a good job and you have the capability of doing the right thing. I like to build you up and be a real confidence builder. I want you to think you're really, really terrific. But yeah, I still want you to be accountable.

This educator describes fair, caring, stern, and accountable methods to reach students. Warm demanders build relationships deliberately, learn about students' and their cultures, and communicate an expectation of success (Bondy & Ross, 2008). Overall, these educators describe a balance of care and firm expectations. The firm expectations are successful as these educators prioritize strong relationships and affirming their sense of self.

Positivity

Positivity describes an educator that leads with positivity when working with students. They see the innate good in all students and situations and target positive emotional, cognitive, and academic experiences (Obrien &Blue, 2017). The following three examples across cases describe the positive intention positivity educators utilize. One teacher shared,

> For me, I feel like my personal teaching style is that I like the kids to talk, and I don't mind if they are laying on the floor with the clipboard, as long as they're

> engaged, and they're learning, and they're doing what they're supposed to be doing. I don't mind because I feel like kids learn best, like all kids learn differently pretty much. I feel like the expectation sometimes at the school is that the kids need to be sitting in their desk, they need to be silent, they need to be very rigid and structured. Whereas myself as a teacher, I feel like if you have the foundation of a strong classroom environment, strong classroom management, then it's having them stray from a little bit is more manageable and it's okay. But that's all about positively reacting to situations, like restorative justice, all of that. So, I think that's where I've taken a lot of my approach of how I handle things is through that program and what they've taught us.

This educator sees the good in all student's learning strategies even though they may differ from the norm or what is traditionally expected. She positively reflects on their learning and needs and seeks to create an environment in which students feel they can be themselves, hence creating a positive learning environment. Additionally, a principal shared,

> It's not a curriculum, it's more like your approach to children. Greeting them in the morning. Everybody should say good morning to them as they come into their classroom. Affirmations. Just a change of mind on how we treat children. So that would be my philosophy.

This educator described starting each student's day with positive affirmations. This mindset approaches students in a positive manner and seeks to change the way educators think about children. Additionally, a RJC shared,

> We model the same thing we want them to do. And so, at the end of the day, its all-positive school culture. So that's what we do to try to stay away from ISS to keep that positive

This educator models positive actions so their students in turn utilize the same positive behavior therefore creating a positive environment. Overall, positive educators seek to create an environment in which students feel a sense of positivity which inherently impacts student behavior for the better. Overall, pedagogy was complex as educators did not directly utilize "pedagogy" or "philosophy" to describe their approaches to education. However, meaning was derived from these educators as they clearly spoke of their understanding, approach, and rationale when working with students.

Summary of Major Findings

Most Common Types of Discipline Used

Various types of discipline were used across all five cases. The most common types of discipline utilized included detention, ISS, OSS, and restorative practices. Schools utilized detention to reinforce a lesson if a student was not meeting expectations and detention was seen as punitive but necessary. One case did not utilize detention, citing the reason being a lack of personnel available during recess or lunch times. Suspensions of all types were used for significant behavior as well as a way to correct behavior that was not improving through other methods of discipline. Overall, discipline was seen as a way to reinforce or correct behavior. This could be done in both punitive and restorative ways. There were systemic impacts to punitive discipline practices, such

as suspension because of historic zero tolerance policies and traditional ideologies around punitive methods of discipline to teach students a lesson. This view is slowly changing among educators as they have fewer resources and are looking to utilize richer models of restorative practices. However, pressure from the community still leads to punitive uses of discipline. Restorative practices are meant to allow students to learn, grow, restore, and eventually become self-disciplined. Restorative models also have a wide variety of individualism and can be tailored to each school's community and needs.

Positive Preventative Practices

Each case discussed positive preventive practices or systems in place that prevented the need for punitive or restorative discipline. Each case discussed the value of a positive diverse school culture. Students respond well to consistent structures and routines as well as environments that value their culture. When students know what to expect throughout the day, and when students feel their lives are valued, they are more eager to engage at school which decreases behaviors. Each case also discussed the ways in which they built relationships with students and their families. Some cases had more formal systems including home visits, phone calls or letters home, or ranking and tracking systems. Regardless of which systems a school used, building strong relationships with students supported the school's ability to utilize less discipline overall. Lastly, each case engaged in professional training of some kind. Themes related to relationship building, restorative justice, and inclusive practices were mentioned.

External Influences on Discipline

Each case discussed various external factors that impacted the use of discipline in their school. Factors included having additional or enough resources and personnel, district policies that all schools must follow, and administration and leadership support. Additional resources for staff and training allow schools to implement restorative discipline. Additional resources reduce the need for punitive discipline and allow school personnel to work together and collaborate to support students. District policies, similar to zero tolerance policies, provide guidance for all schools to follow. Schools within this study choose to follow the discipline matrix exactly, balance the matrix with their gut feelings, or add restorative justice approaches to enhance their discipline system. This balance, or discretion, helps deter frequent suspensions and expulsions often seen with straight zero tolerance policies. Lastly, consistent administration and leadership help create a consistent discipline system. Administration has a large impact on the resources and discipline system utilized by the school, as administrators set the tone, priorities, and resources a school utilizes.

Internal Influences on Discipline

Each case discussed various internal factors that impacted the use of discipline in their school. Factors include previous life experiences, personal or school-based mindsets, and personal or school-based biases. Each educator mentioned how their previous personal and academic experiences led them to their current positions and schools. Three schools went further and discussed how their personal experiences impacted their approach to their work with students. Educators were able to reflect on

their personal experiences and discussed how these experiences helped and hindered their interactions with students at times. Schools' views on bias whether indirectly or directly also impacted how the school viewed discipline and interacted with students. Two schools had conflicting views on how they thought about biases, showing the complexities of the issue. One school discussed the idea that students should be treated differently because of their race in order to prepare them for society and the other displayed a color-blind mentality in that there could not be any biases because the school was diverse. The last school did not mention bias at all. Lastly, three out of the five schools mentioned mindset. Two schools mentioned the idea that positive mindsets are best, but they acknowledged that it takes work to change educators' and society's mindsets since they are established by previous experiences and deeply established systemic cultures.

Pedagogy

Three main pedagogies were identified across cases. Pedagogy is defined as a person's individual theory and or approach when working with students. Individualized educators were the most common pedagogy utilized. It describes responding to student behavior using a student's individualized needs or strengths. Warm Demander/Authoritative educators describe a balance of firm, structured, and consistent responses as well as loving, kind and positive relationships. Lastly, positivity educators describe using positive language and actions when responding to behavior and working with students.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to better understand the various internal and external factors that influence educators' use of discipline. It also sought to understand how educators conceptualize their use and discipline. In understanding these factors, the hope was to better position myself and other school psychologists as change makers and social justice agents for discipline disparities for marginalized students. By understanding these factors, we can better advocate for changes to the system and better support educators in their work with students. This study confirmed some thinking as well as provided new insight into the complexities of discipline use in childhood education settings.

Implications for School Psychologists and Future Directions

School Psychologists are trained to meet the mental and behavioral health needs of students in school-based settings (NASP, 2019). School psychologists provide this support through assessment, collaboration, systems level services, individualized student services, research, and advocacy (NASP, 2020). Within these services, school psychologists are bound by a legal and ethical obligation to advocate for the equitable and culturally humble treatment of all students so they can thrive in the academic environment and beyond (NASP, 2013). Therefore, school psychologists are positioned as change agents with specialized training in cultural humility, practices to address disparities, and courageous and collaborative conversations (Shriberg & Moy, 2014). This training provides an extensive knowledge of the systemic inequities in education, the negative impacts of punitive discipline, and the benefits of preventative and

restorative practices (NASP, 2021). As school psychologists are best positioned to advocate for the most vulnerable youth in schools, they should utilize their unique training to advocate for policies that disrupt oppressive discipline models and deficit mindsets, provide training on positive preventive practices, and create culturally humble education environments.

Implementation of Strengths Based Models of Discipline

As evidenced in this study, schools continue to utilize deficit mindsets and historically oppressive definitions of exclusionary discipline. This was impacted by a variety of factors including community pressure, lack of resources, district policies, and educator's historical and personal experiences within the American education and social system. Educators described a desire to change deficit practices and mindsets as they understood the negative impact these practices had on their students. Exclusionary discipline and deficit mindsets within education have been proven to impact African American and Latinx student's overall life outcomes negatively (Jones et al., 2018; Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022). In order to disrupt these deeply embedded oppressive and racist discipline practices and mindsets, system wide reversal policies must be enacted.

Exclusionary discipline is not synonymous with teaching and learning and is not proven to adjust student behavior for the better (Nese et al., 2020). School psychologists should advocate for discipline policies that move away from *correcting*, *punishment*, and *control* and redefine discipline as *learning*, *collaboration*, and *restore*. Restorative practices should be embedded within these policies to meet these needs. Restorative practices respond to behavior by engaging students in a reflective learning and

accountability process (Wesley & Ellis 2017). Restorative practices view discipline as learning. The discipline process should provide students with opportunities to learn how to resolve conflict, take accountability, restore relationships, regulate, and meet their emotional needs (Evans & Lester, 2013). Restorative practices improve student outcomes by reducing suspension and improving school climate, which are two positive indicators for academic success (Sandwick et al., 2019).

Additionally, these policies will require buy-in from the entire ecological system that students operate in including teachers, administrators, parents, and the larger community (Osher et al., 2010). School psychologists should use their expertise in consultation and systems level support to gain buy-in from these community members. It will be essential for the entire ecological system to enact a paradigm shift by recognizing the impact exclusionary discipline and deficit mindsets have on student outcomes (Morrison et al., 2005). This is required as African American and Latinx students who experience exclusionary discipline are more likely to be placed on a pathway to juvenile justice (Young et al., 2018) and experience poorer academic outcomes (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2021). Table 8 outlines applicable action steps school psychologists can take and their relation to the NASP practice domains (2022).

Table 8

Strengths Based Models in Action

NASP Practice Domain	Application
Domain 1: Data-Based Decision Making	Present data on your school's discipline disparities to the school principal and leadership. Use the data to advocate for strengths-based models of discipline
Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration	Provide consultation to your school's discipline team on alternative models of discipline. Directly model how to use strengths-based models
Domain 5: School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning	Provide multiple school wide trainings during professional development time on restorative justice practices to all adults in your school building. Directly model and provide information on the positive benefits of restorative justice. Be available to patiently answer questions as changing mindsets takes time.
Domain 10: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice	Present information to your school board on discipline disparities and the benefits of restorative justice practices. Advocate to the board to change discipline policies district wide.

Training in Preventative Practices

Preventative practices are proactive methods used in schools that decrease the need for educators to utilize discipline all together (Gage et al., 2020). Common practices observed in this study included a positive and diverse school community, positive and strong relationships between students and staff, and staff training. Preventative practices were found to reduce the need for exclusionary discipline, increase academic success, increase self-esteem, and increase emotional regulation (Anyon et al., 2014). School psychologists are trained in a variety of preventative supports and have a deep

understanding of the benefits of these practices (NASP, 2013). Two of the most common practices school psychologists are trained in include SWPBIS and SEL. SWPBIS is crucial as it includes an underlying paradigm shift in how educators should conceptualize and respond to discipline (Losen, 2011). Together, SWPBIS and SEL focus on learning, self-regulation, and collaboration (CASEL, 2020; Center for PBIS, 2023).

School psychologists are trained as experts to advocate for the use of preventative practices through teacher training. Having experienced these trainings themselves, school psychologists can lead the charge by providing these trainings and consultation on these methods. As seen in this study, educators passionately discussed the positive impact preventative practices had on their students and classroom culture, however they benefited from training on integrating these practices into their teaching. As African American and Latinx students are more likely to experience exclusionary discipline methods, preventative practices play a significant role in reducing this discipline disproportionality (Gregory et al., 2018). Table 9 outlines applicable action steps school psychologists can take and their relation to the NASP practice domains (2022).

Table 9

Preventative Practices in Action

NASP Practice Domain	Application
Domain 5: School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning	Provide school wide training on building positive relationships and creating culturally affirming environments to all adults in your school building. Directly model and provide consultation to those who require additional resources.
Domain 6: Services to Promote Safe and Supportive Schools	Advocate for and participate in a home visit program for new students or students who require more support.
Domain 7: Family, School, and Community Collaboration	Advocate for and participate in coffee talks with school leadership and families to hear directly from the community. Ask the community about their perspective and needs related to school policy, the school environment, and student support.

Culturally Humble Education Environments

Research has long established that implicit racial biases exists and disproportionality impact African American and Latinx students (NASP, 2017; Rudd, 2014). Implicit biases are unconscious attitudes or thoughts that impact how one thinks and reacts (Staats et al., 2016). Implicit biases are formed by experiences and are reinforced by societal messages (NASP, 2017). Research has connected the negative implicit biases against African American and Latinx students and the higher rates of excessive and exclusionary discipline they experience (APA, 2012; Gregory et al., 2010; Losen & Whitaker, 2023; Skiba, 2014). Although educational researchers view these statements above as facts, many educators continue to deny both that implicit biases exist and that they impact how they work with students. This denial is likely due to how deeply

racial biases are embedded in White American mainstream culture, leading to true unconscious thought (Rudd, 2014).

As seen in this study, educators were mixed in their acceptance and understanding of implicit biases. Within the same case educators differed in their views with some taking a colorblind approach and others taking an intentional approach to confront their biases and impacts. This dichotomy matches what is seen in society today. A colorblind educator is one that minimizes the impact of race-based differences and believes that they do not take race into account when working with students (Sabnis & Proctor, 2021). This view is problematic as the data described above outlines the disproportionate negative outcomes African American and Latinx students experience at the hands of the education system.

To counteract the racial biases and punitive discipline practices used against African American and Latinx students, school psychologist should advocate for the systems wide use of culturally humble practices. Culturally humble practices, known as cultural humility, describe a constant and cyclical process of various ideas, including self-reflection, self-critique, engaging in intersectional cultural competency, recognizing cultural disparities caused by White supremacists' systems, disrupting power imbalances, and holding White supremacists' systems accountable (Cooke, 2023). Cultural humility is seen as a "way of being" that allows educators to better understand how social injustices operate and actively work to disrupt them (Fisher, 2020). School psychologists should be at the forefront of this process and can actively model this practice while simultaneously bringing others along through consultation, collaboration, advocacy, and direct training;

all in which are key skills that school psychologists are uniquely trained in. School psychologists can help create culturally humble academic environments that seek to critically reflect on their decisions, understand privilege and oppression, utilize social justice policies, build community partnership, and leverage all student strengths (Pham et al., 2021). Table 10 outlines applicable action steps school psychologists can take and their relation to the NASP practice domains (2022).

Table 10

Culturally Humble Practices in Action

NASP Practice Domain	Application
Domain 8: Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations	Actively participate in and model self-reflection and self-critique as you work with students in your school building. Model the process of critiquing our own actions and owning your impact versus intent.
Domain 5: School-Wide Practices to Promote Learning	Provide school wide training on the tenets of cultural humility, implicit bias, and the White supremacist causes of educational disparities. Be available to patiently answer questions as changing mindsets takes time.
Domain 2: Consultation and Collaboration	Consult with others on the process of self-critique. Lead a book group or group reflection team to provide a safe space for others to be vulnerable and engage in the process. Ensure your group utilizes a critical lens when thinking about the education system.
Domain 10: Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice	Encourage those participating in the self-critique process to advocate with you for alternative discipline practices. This includes at the school and district level. Model how to present to the school board on your self-critique process and advocate for district wide implementation.

Research continues to show that African American and Latinx students are disproportionality referred for punitive and exclusionary discipline at a much higher rate

than their White counterparts (OCR, 2016). Although the data analyzed for this study was collected in 2019, this research is just as applicable as ever to the current socio-political context. School districts across the country continue to push back against culturally relevant practices (See HarvardEdcast, 2022; Time, 2023). Critical race theory tells us that when White supremacy feels under attack it will push back to retain its socio-political control (Ladson-Billings, 1998). This data represents the seed to this blossoming phenomenon. Although it appears as if these discipline disparities and strong feelings related to implicit bias and critical theory is new in a post covid era, this data shows quite the opposite. Educators have had an awareness of these disparities pre-covid and we now have an imperative to act. Disrupting these trends and the negative outcomes that go along with it is possible by first acknowledging the various factors that impact the use of punitive discipline practices. Second, restorative, preventative, and culturally humble practices have been proven to decrease the use of punitive discipline practices and increase positive outcomes for students (Fisher, 2020; Jones et al., 2018). These two processes can play a key role in disrupting African American and Latinx student discipline disproportionality. School psychologists should take on this charge and advocate for the engagement of these processes, critically and intentionally demanding the education system to transform its thinking from at-risk to resources.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. First, the data collection methods and interview questions from this original study were not created for this study. The questions asked to participants were not tailored to this study. It can be argued that the findings can

be difficult to generalize given the original scope of the data collection interview questions. Second, although this researcher participated in the entirety of the collection of the original study, the original data collection took place in schools before the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants could not be contacted further as many had moved to other schools or left education all together. The impact of COVID-19 on discipline is also not known at this time. Therefore, these results should be interpreted with the understanding that participants are describing their experiences and philosophies around discipline pre-COVID-19. Future publications could replicate this study to investigate the impacts of COVID-19 on discipline practices and philosophies, noting similarities and differences.

Furthermore, although cases were compared across one another to deduce themes, all cases operate within the same large urban school district within the Rocky Mountain Region. These cases all utilize the same district wide resources and follow the same discipline matrix. Therefore, the generalization of the results to other discipline structures is limited. Future research is necessary to compare discipline practices across states and other populations of students. Additionally, this study did not provide in depth information on the historical injustices and systemic racism of schools and the discipline system. American school systems have historically marginalized and segregated black and brown students. We must acknowledge that the American school system was founded on racists practices, and the history is complex and deeply related to this work.

Finally, this case study utilized participant voices to study the phenomenon at hand. Therefore, this research is considered subjective and is a limitation (Yin, 2018). The study relied on voices of those who administer discipline including teachers,

restorative justice coordinators, principals, deans, and assistant principals. Historically, these individuals have been viewed as disproportionately administering negative discipline to students of color. Future research could include more voices to include a broader perspective including those directly impacted by discipline disproportionately, such as students and parents. It should also be noted that the original study was created to look at the impacts of utilizing more restorative approaches to discipline compared to punitive models such as ISS and OSS. Therefore, it's important to note that participants may have subconsciously or intentionally discussed more positive themes related to restorative practices as the school district was making a claim to be the model for new alternative discipline practices.

Conclusion

This study confirmed the hypothesis that a variety of factors including mindset, bias, personal experiences, and school policies would impact how educators utilize various discipline practices. However, this study only offered one perspective on the impacts of discipline from the view of five schools within a singular school district. Even after COVID-19, discipline disparities and punitive forms of discipline continue to exist. Therefore, a deeper examination of discipline practices, their impacts, and factors that determine their uses should continue to be studied.

The next step of this study would be to go back to the same schools and examine the impacts of COVID-19 on each school's discipline system. Important research questions would include: Were schools able to sustain their additional resources, administrations, and sustain their restorative justice programs? Did schools come up with

new discipline practices as a response to COVID-19? What new external and internal factors are at play? Additionally, seeking information and perspectives from other key members including parents and students, would enhance data collection methods and broaden the scope.

Educators strive to utilize positive preventative discipline practices, however uncontrollable external factors such as public perception of discipline, district policies, and funding may limit educators' ability to fully engage in the practices they may desire. Internal influences and pedagogies are more nuanced and bias, mindset, and previous experiences are highly individualized. In hindsight the generalization of these topics is difficult and more specific questions and observations can be utilized in future research to better understand these concepts.

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CLOSING COMMENTARY FOR MANUCRIPTS 1 AND 2

African American and Latinx students are disproportionately impacted by exclusionary and punitive discipline models compared to their White peers. These models disproportionately remove African American and Latinx students from the academic environment creating adverse life outcomes and create additional pathways to the juvenile justice system. Despite consistent research on these outcomes, exclusionary and punitive discipline practices continue to be utilized across the country. School psychologists can play a key role in advocating and modeling alternative discipline practices. Additional research was conducted to further analyze this phenomenon and better understand how school psychologists can act as change agents.

The use of exclusionary, restorative, and preventative discipline practices within school systems are impacted by a variety of internal and external factors. This research study utilized a qualitative multi-case methodology to better understand how educators conceptualize their use of discipline practices through their mindsets, external and internal factors, and pedagogies. Schools within a single large urban school district were utilized. Cases in this study identified four main discipline practices including detention, in school suspension, out of school suspension, and restorative. Both punitive and restorative discipline were used to correct or reinforce behavior. Additionally, cases reported external and internal factors that influenced their use of punitive and restorative

discipline. External factors included adequate resources, district policies, and administration leadership. Internal factors included personal life experiences, mindsets, and biases. All cases also discussed the benefits of positive preventative practices that decreased the need for discipline of any kind. Preventative practices included creating consistent and structured culture affirming environments, building positive relationships, and staff training. Overall, the culture of school discipline still predominantly focused on exclusionary discipline practices, however schools reported a strong desire to change mindsets and intentionally utilize more restorative and preventative practices.

Taken together, these results highlighted the need for systematic reforms to education systems that focus on strengths-based models of discipline, cultural humility, and training in preventative practices. The literature review in manuscript one as well as the results in manuscript two where connected as they described current discipline practices, the impact these practices have on students, and several internal and external factors that influence educators' use of these practices. Various recommendations for school psychologists were made as a result of these two papers.

School psychologists can act as agents of change and work within school systems to provide education and direct modeling on strengths based, cultural humble, and preventive practices. As mental health professionals, school psychologists are expected to advocate for the needs of students in ways that promote academic, social, and emotional success. School psychologists can utilize their expertise and privilege within the school system to both critically and effectively create systemic change.

APPENDICES

Appendix A- Interview Protocol

Approach to School Discipline & ISS

1. Can you tell me a bit about your background and position?
2. Can you tell me about how your school's approach to discipline?
3. Which staff are involved in discipline and what are their roles and responsibilities?
4. What strategies have you found effective for reducing the number of students sent out of the classroom?
5. Has your approach to discipline changed significantly over time? If so, please describe.
6. Now to ISS -- Can you tell me about when you use ISS?
7. Can you share a few examples from when you have used ISS?
8. What kinds of things do students do in ISS?

Early Childhood & Special Education Considerations

1. Are there special discipline considerations for students in Pre-K? 1st -3rd?
2. Has the ECE-suspension policy changed your schools approach to OSS or ISS?
3. How often do you discipline students with disabilities? If so, what strategies do you use?

Cultural Responsiveness & Equity

1. Do the demographics of teachers match your student population?
2. What are the implications of matching/mismatching racial demographics for teacher-student relationships? For teacher-student conflict?
3. To what extent have teachers and staff undergone training for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students?
4. What does culturally relevant/responsive teaching mean to you?
5. What does culturally relevant/responsive teaching look like in your classroom?
6. The recent Bailey (2016) study suggested the presence of institutional racism and racial bias throughout the district. Are there specific considerations about institutional racism and implicit racial bias that guide your approach to discipline?

Leadership

1. How does your approach to discipline align to your school values and vision?
2. Have staff been resistant to your approach to discipline?
3. What factors have influenced your approach to discipline the most?
4. Personal experiences?
5. Values?
6. Budget?
7. Instructional superintendent?
8. District discipline policy?
9. To what extent do you feel accountable to the district for following specific policies and procedures related to discipline?
10. Does the district provide you resources to help with discipline? If so, please describe.

Appendix B- Administrative Consent Form

Title of Research Study: In-school suspension models in XXX Public Schools: Strategies, practices and implications for effectiveness and improvement

Researcher(s): Kathryn Wiley, PhD and Yolanda Anyon, PhD, University of Denver

Study site: XXX Public Schools

Purpose: You are being asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Kathryn Wiley, Phd and Yolanda Anyon, Phd from the University of Denver about in-school suspension (ISS) models in XXX Public Schools. Dr. Wiley and her team will describe the study and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part.

Procedures: If you agree to be part of the research study you will be invited to participate in an audiotaped, 1-hour interview about ISS programs, their effectiveness, and your suggestions for improvement.

Voluntary Participation: Participating in this research study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and withdraw your consent or stop participating at any time. You have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) or refuse to continue to the interview for any reason. Refusing to participate in this study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your employment and role at XXX Public Schools will not be affected by participation in this research or non-participation. This project is not an evaluation.

Possible risks and discomforts: Potential risks and/or discomforts of participation may include a breach of confidentiality or a loss of privacy. Although the researchers will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data, the nature of research in schools may make it difficult to protect your anonymity.

Possible benefits of the study: If you agree to take part in this study, there will be no direct benefit to you for participating. You may indirectly benefit from this study because the information gathered may help identify practices and strategies that can improve in-school suspension in XXX Public Schools and beyond.

Incentives to participate: You will receive a $20 gift card as compensation for participating.

Confidentiality: To keep your information safe, only pseudonyms (fake names) for participants and the school site will be included in interview transcriptions and reports of study findings. The digital audio recording of your interview will be moved to a password-protected computer and then erased from the audio equipment. Only members of the

research team will have access to the recording for the purposes of transcription. These digital files will be destroyed five years after the completion of the project.

All study findings will be shared in aggregate form, carefully edited to protect the identities of the participants and school sites. Your individual identity will be kept private when information is presented or published. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. The research information may be shared with federal agencies or local committees who are responsible for protecting research participants.

Questions: If you have any questions about this project or your participation, please feel free to ask questions now or contact Dr. Kathryn Wiley anytime at (937) 572-2047 or email her at kathryn.wiley@du.edu**.**

If you have any questions or concerns about your research participation or rights as a participant, you may contact the DU Human Research Protections Program by emailing IRBAdmin@du.edu or calling (303) 871-2121 to speak to someone other than the researchers.

Options for Participation:

Please initial your choice for the options below:

___The researchers may audio record me during this study.

___The researchers may NOT audio record me during this study.

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

_____ _____

Participant Signature **Date**

Appendix C- Memo Protocol

Describe main codes or themes that you are noticing.

What patterns are emerging?

Describe commonalities and differences within the case itself

Describe commonalities and differences across cases

What questions are you wondering about? What do you know? What don't you know?

Appendix- D Coding Tree