

Closing the School Discipline Gap

Research to Practice

January 10, 2013

Washington, D.C.



The Center for Civil Rights Remedies at
The Civil Rights Project

Proyecto Derechos Civiles

EDUCATION WEEK

GALLUP®

The
Equity Project at Indiana University

CLOSING THE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE GAP: RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

Conference Agenda

8:00 AM	Registration and Continental Breakfast		
8:30 AM	Welcome Remarks: Tim Hodges (Gallup)		
8:35 AM	Introduction: Dan Losen (The Center for Civil Rights Remedies, Civil Rights Project @UCLA)		
8:55 AM	Part I: <i>Quality Counts 2013</i>: A School-Level View of Climate, Discipline, and Disparities: Chris Swanson (Education Week)		
9:10 AM	Plenary 1: Difference-Making: Why education policymakers should attend to frequent and disparate disciplinary exclusion from school		
	<i>Tia Martinez</i>	<i>The Center for Civil Rights Remedies</i>	<i>Moderator</i>
	Robert Balfanz	Johns Hopkins University	Sent Home and Put Off-Track: The Antecedents, Disproportionalities, and Consequences of Being Suspended in the Ninth Grade
	Tracey Shollenberger	Harvard University	Racial Disparities in School Suspension and Subsequent Outcomes: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997
	Matthew Steinberg	University of Pennsylvania	What Conditions Jeopardize and Support Safety in Urban Schools? The Influence of Community Characteristics, School Composition and School Organizational Practices on Student and Teacher Reports of Safety in Chicago
	Russell Skiba	Indiana University	Where Should We Intervene? Contributions of Behavior, Student, and School Characteristics to Suspension and Expulsion
	<i>Judith Browne-Dianis</i>	<i>Advancement Project</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
	<i>Wade Henderson, Esq.</i>	<i>The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
	Student Voices and Responses:		
10:25 AM	“Hope, Engagement, and Wellbeing: Lessons Learned from a Million U.S. Students” Tim Hodges (Gallup)		
10:45 AM	Concurrent Breakout sessions		

11:00 AM- 12:20 PM	Session A: Unintended Policy Consequences: How some interventions do more harm than good		
	<i>Leticia Smith-Evans</i>	<i>NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.</i>	<i>Moderator</i>
	Jeremy D. Finn	The University at Buffalo – SUNY	Misbehavior, Suspensions, and Security Measures in High School: Racial and Ethnic and Gender Differences
	Judi Vanderhaar	Jefferson County Public Schools	Reconsidering the Alternative: The Relationship between Suspension, Disciplinary Alternative School Placement, Subsequent Juvenile Detention, and the Salience of Race
	<i>Karega Rausch</i>	<i>Indiana University</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
	<i>Judith Browne-Dianis</i>	<i>Advancement Project</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
		<i>Student</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
	Session B: Assessing the costs of suspension in dollars and civic sense		
	<i>Kavitha Mediratta</i>	<i>The Atlantic Philanthropies</i>	<i>Moderator</i>
	Miner P. Marchbanks III	Texas A&M University	The Economic Effects of Exclusionary Discipline through Grade Retention and High School Dropout
	Aaron Kupchik	University of Delaware	Discipline and Participation: The Long-Term Effects of Suspension and School Security on the Political and Civic Engagement of Youth
	<i>Robert Balfanz</i>	<i>Johns Hopkins University</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
		<i>Student</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
	Session C: What policymakers can learn from data on disparities in discipline		
	<i>Cheri Hodson</i>	<i>The Center for Civil Rights Remedies</i>	<i>Moderator</i>
	Ivory Toldson	Howard University	Reducing Suspensions by Improving Academic Engagement among School-age Black Males
	Claudia Vincent	University of Oregon	Towards Identifying School-level Factors Reducing Disciplinary Exclusions of American Indian/Alaska Native Students
	Tia Martinez	The Center for Civil Rights Remedies	Students with Disabilities and Race with Gender (Additional findings from CRDC and implications for IDEA)
	<i>Joe Tulman</i>	<i>Took Crowell Institute for At-Risk Youth (UDC)</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
		<i>Student</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
12:20 PM	Lunch		

1:05 PM – 1:20 PM	Part II: <i>Quality Counts 2013: Perspectives on School-Discipline Remedies</i>; Chris Swanson (Education Week)		
1:25 PM – 2:10 PM	Plenary 2(A): Can lift-all-boat strategies address the racial/ethnic gaps?		
	<i>Tanya Coke</i>	<i>The Atlantic Philanthropies</i>	<i>Moderator</i>
	Jeffrey R. Sprague	University of Oregon	The Effectiveness of School-wide Positive Behavior Support for Reducing Racially Inequitable Disciplinary Exclusions in Middle Schools
	Pamela Fenning	Loyola University Chicago	A Mixed Methods Approach Examining Ethnic Disproportionality in Exclusionary Discipline
	Kent McIntosh	University of Oregon	Examining Disproportionality in School Discipline Practices for Native American Students in Canadian Schools Implementing PBIS
	<i>George Sugai</i>	<i>University of Connecticut</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
2:15 PM – 3:05 PM	Plenary 2(B): <i>Promising gap-closing interventions</i>		
	<i>Tanya Coke</i>	<i>The Atlantic Philanthropies</i>	<i>Moderator</i>
	Mara Schiff	Florida Atlantic University	Dignity, Disparity, & Desistance: Effective Restorative Justice Strategies to Plug the School-to-Prison Pipeline
	Anne Gregory	Rutgers University	The Promise of a Teacher Professional Development Program in Reducing the Racial Disparity in Classroom Exclusionary Discipline
	<i>Jamilia Blake</i>	<i>Texas A&M University</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
	<i>Ivory Toldson</i>	<i>Howard University</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
		<i>Student</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
3:05 PM	Break		
3:20 PM – 3:55 PM	Plenary 3: <i>Large scale systemic action and overcoming obstacles to change</i>		
	<i>Dan Losen</i>	<i>The Center for Civil Rights Remedies</i>	<i>Moderator</i>
	David Osher	American Institutes for Research	Avoid Simple Solutions and Quick Fixes: Lessons Learned from a Comprehensive Districtwide Approach to Improving School Safety
	Dewey Cornell	University of Virginia	Student Threat Assessment as a Method of Reducing Student Suspensions
	<i>Lisa Thomas</i>	<i>American Federation of Teachers</i>	<i>Respondent</i>
4:00 PM	Town Hall: <i>What have we learned? Where do we go from here?</i> (Moderator: Wade Henderson) Panelists: Lisa Thomas, AFT; Invited: Bob Wise; Russlynn Ali; Robin Delaney-Shabazz; Kristen Harper		
5:00 PM	End		

Respondents, Moderators, and Speakers

Robert Balfanz, Ph.D.

Robert Balfanz is a research professor at Johns Hopkins University, School of Education, where he is also co-director of Talent Development Secondary and the Everyone Graduates Center, as well as co-operator of Baltimore Talent Development High School, an Innovation High School operated in partnership with the Baltimore City Public Schools. He is a leader and a co-founder of Diplomas Now, an evidence-based school transformation model for high needs middle and high schools, which combines whole school reform with enhanced student supports guided by an early warning system. Diplomas Now is winner of a federal Investing in Innovation (I3) validation grant currently being implemented in forty schools across twelve school districts. He has published widely on secondary school reform, high school dropouts, early warning systems and instructional interventions in high-poverty schools. He is also a frequent speaker on dropout prevention and early warning indicators and has consulted with numerous SEA's through partnerships with the National Governors Association and Jobs for the Future. He also served on the US Department of Education's waiver review panel for flexibility from NCLB. Dr. Balfanz is the first recipient of the Alliance For Excellent Education's *Everyone a Graduate Award* and the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform Joan Lipsitz Lifetime Achievement award. He holds a B.A. in history from Johns Hopkins University and a PhD in education from the University of Chicago.

Jamilia Blake, Ph.D.

Dr. Blake is an assistant professor in school psychology at Texas A&M University, Department of Educational Psychology. Dr. Blake earned her doctoral degree in educational psychology at the University of Georgia. She is a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) and is certified in School Crisis Response. She received three awards and two extramural grants for her research on peer-directed aggression, bullying, and victimization in socially marginalized and ethnically diverse youth. She is also a Montague-Center for Teaching Excellence Scholar.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Judith Browne-Dianis, J.D.

Browne-Dianis has an extensive background in civil rights litigation and advocacy in the areas of education, voting rights, housing, immigrants' rights, and employment. Her work on discipline policies and the criminalization of youth in public schools has also received national recognition. She was the recipient of the distinguished Skadden Fellowship in 1999, and joined the Advancement Project that same year. Previously, she served as managing attorney of the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund in Washington, D.D. At the Advancement Project, Browne-Dianis directed the Opportunity to Learn Project, and now directs the Strategic Initiatives Project. Browne-Dianis and staff have authored several reports, including the groundbreaking 2003 study, *Derailed: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track*, and *Education on Lockdown: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse* that documents how public schools feed the juvenile justice system. She also co-authored, *Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline*. Her work has been published in journals, newspapers and magazines. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the National Center of Fair and Open Testing (FairTest), which challenges the misuse of standardized tests and is a Convener of the Forum for Education and Democracy. She is also on the Board of Directors of the Twenty-First Century Foundation. Browne-Dianis is a graduate of Columbia University, School of Law. She served as a Tobias Simon Eminent Scholar at Florida State University Law School and is currently an Adjunct Professor of Law at Georgetown Law Center. She has appeared on national and local news and was named one of the "Thirty Women to Watch" by Essence Magazine.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Tanya Coke, J.D.

Tanya Coke, J.D. is a program development consultant for major foundations and social justice nonprofits in the United States. Past clients include the American Civil Liberties Union, the Open Society Institute, the Brennan Center for Justice, the Ford Foundation, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and the Atlantic Philanthropies. Ms. Coke was previously Program Manager for the US Human Rights Fund, a donor collaborative of Public Interest Projects. The US Human Rights Fund provides field-building support to human rights advocacy in the United States. Ms. Coke's areas of expertise include racial justice, criminal justice and human rights. From 1998 to 2002, she was a program director at the Open Society Institute, where she supervised OSI's grantmaking on indigent defense, death penalty and sentencing reform. Ms. Coke began her career at the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund as a research director in its capital punishment project. After attending law school, she practiced as a trial attorney in the Federal Defender Division of the Legal Aid Society, defending clients in drug, immigration and other federal matters in New York City. Ms. Coke graduated from Yale College and New York University School of Law, where she was a Root Tilden public interest scholar and Editor-in-Chief of the New York University Law Review. She served as law clerk to the Honorable Pierre N. Leval of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. Ms. Coke received the Reebok Human Rights Award in 1988 and the Distinguished Recent Graduate Award from NYU's School of Law in 2004. She serves on the advisory board of Human Rights Watch's US Program, and on the board of directors for the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana and the IMANI College Advocacy Center of Montclair, New Jersey. Currently she is leading a Montclair Public Schools task force commissioned to update the school district's nationally recognized integration program.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Kristen Harper, Ed.M.

A graduate of the Harvard School of Education, Kristen Harper, currently serves the U.S. Department of Education as Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. Since 2009, she has worked to reshape the Department's strategy for creating safe schools by increasing focus on school climate measurement and by offering grantees greater flexibility to tailor programming to local need. As of June 2011, Ms. Harper began assisting the Department to improve teacher effectiveness via programs such as Title II and the Teacher Incentive Fund, and to strengthen the Department's strategy for serving rural students. She is currently the Education Department's lead for the Supportive School Discipline Initiative, a joint initiative between the Departments of Education and Justice, which seeks to improve behavior management and thereby reduce discriminatory, excessive, and inappropriate school discipline. Her accomplishments include the Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students proposal included in the Education Department's proposal for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, *A Blueprint for Reform*, the launch of the Safe and Supportive Schools program, and the redesign of the Teacher Incentive Fund.

Wade Henderson, Esq.

Wade Henderson is the president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and The Leadership Conference Education Fund. Mr. Henderson is also the Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., Professor of Public Interest Law at the David A. Clarke School of Law, University of the District of Columbia. Mr. Henderson is well known for his expertise on a wide range of civil rights, civil liberties, and human rights issues, and is the author of numerous articles on civil rights and public policy issues. Since taking the helm of The Leadership Conference in June 1996, Mr. Henderson has worked diligently to address emerging policy issues of concern to the civil and human rights community and to strengthen the effectiveness of the coalition. Under his stewardship, The Leadership Conference has become one of the nation's most effective advocates for civil and human rights. Mr. Henderson currently serves on the National Quality Forum Board of Directors, which seeks to improve healthcare quality through performance measurement and public reporting; the FDIC Advisory Committee on Economic Inclusion, which was created in 2006 to provide the FDIC with advice and recommendations on important initiatives focused on expanding access to banking services by underserved populations; the Board of Directors of the Center for Responsible Lending, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting homeownership and family wealth by working to eliminate abusive financial practices; and the Board of Trustees of the Education Testing Service, a private, nonprofit organization devoted to educational measurement and research. As a tireless civil rights leader and advocate, Mr. Henderson has received countless awards and honors, including the prestigious Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights. He holds an honorary Doctorate in Law from Queens College School of Law, City University of New York.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Tim Hodges, Ph.D.

Tim Hodges, Ph.D., is Executive Director of Gallup University. He leads the growth, development, and performance management of more than 80 workplace consultants around the world. Hodges also collaborates with other Gallup researchers and Gallup Senior Scientists to conduct research on positive psychology, strengths-based development, and leadership development programs. He has delivered many presentations and written several journal articles, technical reports, and book chapters on topics including the Clifton StrengthsFinder, strengths-based development, and leadership development. His publications include book chapters and contributions to *Positive Psychology in Practice*, *Organizational Behavior (10th edition)*, and the *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work*. His research has also appeared in the journals *Educational Horizons*, *Organizational Dynamics*, and *College and University*.

Cheri Hodson, M.A.

Cheri Hodson is a Ph.D. student in the Psychological Studies in Education division at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. Her research interests include positive youth development and prevention and early intervention programs for at-risk youth. Prior to attending UCLA, Ms. Hodson was an Educational Research Analyst at the Los Angeles Unified School District for eight years. She received her B.A. in Psychology from Spelman College and her M.A. in Clinical Psychology from California State University, Northridge.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Daniel Losen, J.D., M.Ed.

Daniel Losen is director of the Center for Civil Rights Remedies, an initiative of the Civil Rights Project/*Proyecto Derechos Civiles* (CRP) at UCLA. He has worked at the CRP since 1999, when it was affiliated with Harvard Law School, where he was a lecturer on law. His work concerns the impact of law and policy on children of color and language minority students including: the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act with a focus on promoting diversity, access to effective teachers, and improving graduation rate accountability; racial inequity in special education; and revealing and redressing the “School-to- Prison Pipeline.” He conducts law and policy research and works closely with federal and state legislators to inform legislative initiatives and provides guidance to policymakers, educators and advocates at the state and district level. Losen has testified before Congress, the United Nations and done extensive independent work across the nation with districts seeking to remedy racial inequities in special education and school discipline. He co-authored, *The School-to-Prison Pipeline: Structuring Legal Reform*, (with C. Kim and D. Hewitt, 2010); *Suspended Education: Urban Middle Schools in Crisis*, (with R. Skiba, 2011); *Suspended Education in California*, (with T. Martinez, 2012) and *Opportunities Suspended: The Disparate Impact of Exclusionary School Discipline* (with J. Gillespie, 2012). He also wrote two policy briefs, *Discipline Policies, Successful Schools and Racial Justice* (2011), and *Good Discipline: Legislation for Education Reform* (2011). Before becoming a lawyer and researcher, Mr. Losen taught in public schools for ten years and was the founder of an alternative public school.

Kavitha Mediratta, M.Ed.

Before joining Atlantic Philanthropies, Ms. Mediratta was the program officer for education at The New York Community Trust. Prior to that, she was responsible for the Youth Organizing and Community Organizing Research projects at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform of Brown University. The principal investigator of a six-year study of community organizing for school reform, she is the lead author of *Community Organizing for Stronger Schools: Strategies and Successes* (2009). Previously, Mediratta served as a Warren Weaver Fellow at the Rockefeller Foundation. She also worked with public school teachers as a staff developer with the Institute for Urban and Minority Education at Columbia University’s Teachers College. She has taught in elementary and middle schools in southern India, Chicago, and New Jersey. Ms. Mediratta has a B.A. from Amherst College, a Masters of Education from Columbia University’s Teachers College and is currently working towards a PhD in education from NYU.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Karega Rausch, M.A.

M. Karega Rausch is a research associate with the Equity Project at Indiana University. As a member of the leadership team, Rausch is responsible for strategic planning, meeting the Project's research, practice, and dissemination goals, ensuring that each initiative exceeds project goals, outcomes, and deliverables, and attending to the long-term viability of the Project. Prior to joining the Equity Project, Rausch was the Indianapolis director of a national educational advocacy non-profit, and served as the education director for Mayor Bart Peterson (D) and Mayor Greg Ballard (R), two Indianapolis mayors affiliated with different political parties. Rausch received his bachelor's degree in psychology from DePauw University, earned a master's degree in education and is currently completing his doctorate at Indiana University. He has also been a teacher of high school social studies. As an unwavering advocate for educational equity and underserved children, Rausch's professional experiences and research projects focus on how to create and reform schools to ensure all students are served exceptionally well. Karega has authored or co-authored more than 20 professional publications on special education and school discipline reform, and serves on a number of national and local boards. He has presented on educational equity and accountability for national organizations, such as the American Educational Research Association, the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, the American Psychological Association, the University Council for Educational Administrators, the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, and the Harvard Civil Rights Project.

Leticia Smith-Evans, J.D., Ph.D.

Leticia Smith-Evans is assistant counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. She advocates primarily for equal access to educational opportunities via impact litigation, policy advocacy and technical assistance. Much of her work centers around voluntary integration, desegregation, access to higher education and school discipline reform. She is a proponent of utilizing multi-stakeholder approaches to ensuring equal access to educational opportunities and is a member of a number of related collaborative efforts. Her research interests include intersections of diversity, equity, educational access and achievement with law, policy and education. Leticia has served as adjunct faculty at a number of educational institutions. She is also a former public elementary school teacher. Prior to joining LDF, Leticia was a litigation associate at an international law firm, a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Dickinson R. Debevoise of the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, and a policy advisor and agency liaison to former Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle. She received a B.A. in history from Williams College, an M.S. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a J.D. from the University of Wisconsin Law School and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

George Sugai, Ph.D.

Dr. George Sugai is the Carole J. Neag Endowed Professor in Special Education at the University of Connecticut, Neag School of Education. He is an expert in behavior analysis, classroom and behavior management, school-wide discipline, function-based behavior support, positive behavior supports, and educating students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Dr. Sugai has been a teacher in the public schools, treatment director in a residential program, and program administrator. He conducts applied school and classroom research and works with schools to translate research into practice. He is currently co-director (with Rob Horner) of the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at the University of Connecticut and University of Oregon, and Director of the Center on Behavioral Education and Research in the Neag School of Education.

Christopher Swanson, Ph.D.

Christopher Swanson is the director of the EPE Research Center, a division of Editorial Projects in Education, the nonprofit organization that publishes *Education Week*. In this capacity, he oversees a staff of full-time researchers and interns who conduct annual policy surveys, collect data, and perform analyses that appear in the *Quality Counts*, *Technology Counts*, and *Diplomas Count*, the annual reports of *Education Week*. During the past few years, much of Swanson's research has examined the implementation of accountability provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act, particularly the challenges associated with accurately measuring high school graduation rates. He has been called on by the U.S. Department of Education as well as the Government Accountability Office to advise on issues related to graduation rates. In addition, Swanson has served on advisory panels for such groups as the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, and has provided guidance to a variety of professional and membership organizations.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Lisa Thomas, Ed.D.

Lisa Thomas is an associate director of educational issues, senior education policy analyst and the special education cadre coordinator with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). In addition, she is one of AFT's educational research and dissemination professional development coordinators, managing the student behavior and special education course content portfolios. Ms. Thomas also directs the AFT's national anti-bullying campaign, *See a bully, Stop a bully*. She represents the AFT on a number of federal committees, national leadership and coalition groups, including the IDEA Partnership, National UDL Task Force and State Accountability for All Students Advisory Board, and Atlantic Philanthropies Collaborative on Equity and Access, among others. In addition, Ms. Thomas is a former general and special educator and has served on numerous state and district committees on issues of disproportionality, cultural relevancy, and equity and access for diverse student populations. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, in industrial management. She completed master course work in early childhood education at the College of Charleston (SC), and received Certification in Urban Special Education from Harvard University, and a M.A. in Special Education from Trinity University in Washington, D.C. She completed doctoral studies at the University of Pennsylvania, concentrating her studies in Organizational Leadership and the role of targeted professional development in improving school climate.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Ivory Toldson, Ph.D.

Dr. Ivory A. Toldson is an associate professor at Howard University, senior research analyst for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, and current editor-in-chief of "The Journal of Negro Education." Dr. Toldson has published reports challenging the merits of popular research reports and news sources that present negative statistics about Black people, which have been widely discussed in academic and popular media. He is contributing education editor of The Root, and has a monthly column called "Show Me the Numbers," published in association with The Journal of Negro Education, which dispels common myths and challenge conventional wisdom about education in black America. He has given more than 50 presentations in 30 US states, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Scotland, South Africa, and Paris. His work has been featured on C-SPAN2 Books, NPR News, The Al Sharpton Show (XM Satellite Radio), The Root, Essence.com, BET.com and The Griot. He also provided expert commentary in three documentaries on Black male achievement. In 2005, Dr. Toldson won EboNetwork's Changing Faces Award for outstanding literary achievement for his novel, "Black Sheep." He is the author of "The Breaking Barriers Series," which analyzes academic success indicators from national surveys that together give voice to more than 10,000 Black male pupils from schools across the country. Through his consulting firm, CREATE, LLC, he routinely works with schools to increase their capacity to promote academic success among Black males. After receiving a Ph.D. in counseling psychology at Temple University, Dr. Toldson became a correctional and forensic psychology resident at the United States Penitentiary. He joined the faculty of Southern University and was the fourth recipient of the prestigious DuBois Fellowship from the US Department of Justice. He also served as the clinical director of the Manhood Training Village. Dr. Toldson has received formal training in applied statistics from the University of Michigan and held visiting research and teacher appointments at Emory, Drexel, and Morehouse School of Medicine.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Joe Tulman, J.D., M.A.T.

Joseph B. Tulman, professor of law at the University of the District of Columbia, David A. Clarke School of Law, directs the law school's Juvenile and Special Education Law Clinic and is also the director of the Took Crowell Institute for At-Risk Youth. He received the School of Law's distinguished service award in 1995 and the University's distinguished service award in 2012. Tulman has pioneered the use of special education advocacy for young people in the delinquency and criminal systems. He has taught at the National Judicial College in Nevada and has trained defenders across the country. The A.B.A. awarded Professor Tulman its 1996 Livingston Hall Juvenile Justice Award. The D.C. Bar Foundation named Professor Tulman the winner of the 2001 Jerrold Scoutt Prize for sustained, fulltime service to underrepresented D.C. residents. In 2007, the Clinical Section of the American Association of Law Schools designated Professor Tulman as a Bellow Scholar. In 2011, COPAA named Professor Tulman the recipient of the Diane Lipton Award for outstanding contributions in special education advocacy.

Sent Home and Put Off-Track: The Antecedents, Disproportionalities, and Consequences of Being Suspended in the Ninth Grade

Robert Balfanz, Vaughan Byrnes, and Joanna Fox
Everyone Graduates Center, School of Education, Johns Hopkins University

ABSTRACT

This study is based upon a longitudinal analysis of data for a cohort of 181,897 Florida state students who were first time 9th graders in the 2000-01 school year and follows them through to high school and post-secondary outcomes. Analysis of 9th grade suspension data finds that black students, students who are economically disadvantaged, and special education students are three demographics subgroups that are disproportionately suspended, both in the frequency of suspensions and the duration in number of school days lost. While poverty and ethnicity are themselves highly correlated, poverty alone does not explain the disproportionate suspension rates amongst black students. Further analyses show that out-of-school suspensions in the 9th grade year are also significantly and negatively correlated to later high school graduation as well as post-secondary enrolment and persistence. Thus demographic disparities in disciplinary incidents serve to further widen any academic achievement gaps. Closer analysis though shows that disciplinary incidents are interrelated with other indicators of student disengagement from school, such as course failures and absenteeism. Therefore, policies seeking to address these issues cannot focus on reducing suspensions alone, but must also address student attendance and course passing in a comprehensive and systematic manner.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Student Threat Assessment as a Method of Reducing Student Suspensions

Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.

Peter Lovegrove, Ph.D.

Curry School of Education

University of Virginia

ABSTRACT

This paper presents two studies of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines, which is a systematic method for schools to respond to student threats of violence without resorting to zero tolerance suspension. The first study reports secondary analyses from a randomized controlled trial which previously reported that students attending schools using the Virginia Guidelines were less likely to receive a long-term suspension (Odds Ratio = .35) than students attending control group schools using a zero tolerance approach (Cornell, Allen, & Fan, 2012). The secondary analyses found no difference in the impact on White versus Black students, which means that both racial groups benefitted from the intervention. The second study examined the scaled-up implementation of the Virginia Guidelines in Virginia public schools using a retrospective, quasi-experimental design. School wide annual suspension rates were compared in 971 schools that chose to adopt the Virginia Guidelines versus 824 schools not using the Virginia Guidelines. Use of the Virginia Guidelines was associated with a 19% reduction in the number of long-term suspensions and an 8% reduction in the number of fewer short-term suspensions school wide during the 2010-2011 school year. Length of implementation was associated with greater reductions in suspensions. Schools with formal training in the Virginia Guidelines had greater reductions than schools that adopted them without formal training. There was not a significant interaction between use of the Virginia Guidelines and minority composition of the school, which means that schools of different racial composition demonstrated similar reductions. In conclusion, the two studies support use of the Virginia Guidelines as a promising approach for reducing suspension rates.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

A Mixed Methods Approach Examining Disproportionality in School Discipline

Pamela Fenning, Therese Pigott, K., Elizabeth Engler, Katie Bradshaw, Elizabeth Gamboney, Stephanie Grunewald, and Tamanna Haque
Loyola University Chicago

K. Brigid Flannery and Mimi McGrath Kato
University of Oregon

ABSTRACT

Based on analysis of discipline referrals for infractions and the content of written discipline policies as part of a larger study of Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) at the high school level, we argue that district-administered school discipline policies need to be better aligned with prevention-oriented practices, such as SWPBS and must integrate alternatives to suspension, particularly for minor behaviors, such as tardies. SWPBS focuses on teaching expected behaviors to the entire student population, but our findings are that these practices are not aligned with discipline policies, even in schools that received professional development and technical assistance in SWPBS implementation as part of a larger funded project.

Hierarchical linear modeling techniques indicated that, on the average, African-American and Latino(a) students and males in our sample were the most likely to generate discipline referrals to the office across the ten high schools that were included in the analyses. These findings were consistent for three years (2008-2009; 2009-2010 and 2010-2011) of discipline referrals analyzed. Statistical variation was found across schools in ethnic and gender disproportionality in referrals. However, the school level variables of SWPBS implementation status or type of discipline policy (punitive or proactive) did not account for this variation.

Because the discipline policies for each school were categorized as punitive, regardless of the degree of SWPBS implementation, we argue that in order for multi-tiered systems of support, such as SWPBS to be effective, formally adopted discipline policies need to align with these practices. At the high school level, SWPBS requires additional time to implement and the foundational of district-level buy-in to the effort must be evident formally as well as informally.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Misbehavior, Suspensions, and Security Measures in High School: Racial/Ethnic and Gender Differences

Jeremy D. Finn
The University at Buffalo – SUNY

Timothy J. Servoss
Canisius College

ABSTRACT

This study used merged data from three national surveys to address questions about security measures in American high schools, suspension rates, and student misbehavior. First, the study identified the characteristics of schools that implemented the most extreme security measures and those with the highest levels of discipline. Second, the study used data on individual students to examine misbehavior and race and gender disparities in suspensions not attributable to misbehavior. The main findings were: (1) In-school suspensions serve a 'gateway' function with regard to out-of-school suspensions. They may provide a time and place to address behavior problems before they escalate or disproportionate out-of-school suspensions before they occur; (2) Out-of-school suspensions were more frequent among schools in higher-crime neighborhoods. Thus students suspended may be relegated to an environment not conducive to positive educational or social outcomes; (3) African-American students and Hispanic/Latino students were suspended at higher rates than were non-Hispanic whites, differences in most cases not attributable to different levels of misbehavior; (4) Overall, males were more likely to be suspended than were females, an effect above and beyond that explained by differences in behavior. There was little or no difference in the suspension rates of black males and females, however; (5) High degrees of school security were associated with increased suspension rates and increased black – white disparities in total suspensions. At the same time, most black students were enrolled in schools with high degrees of security; (6) Black males were suspended at higher and higher rates as school size increased.

All of these have implications for school policy and practice. These are discussed in the paper together with limitations of the investigation.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Examining Disproportionality in School Discipline Practices for Native American Students in Canadian Schools Implementing PBIS

Sara Greffund
University of British Columbia

Kent McIntosh
University of Oregon

Sterett H. Mercer
University of British Columbia

Seth L. May
University of Oregon

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate the extent to which Canadian students with Aboriginal status (i.e., Native American students) receive disproportionate levels of Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) and more severe administrative consequences relative to students without Aboriginal status. The participants were all 1750 students in five British Columbia and Alberta elementary and middle schools implementing PBIS, with adaptations to be more responsive to Aboriginal culture. Binary multilevel logistic regression was used to determine to what extent disproportionality was present. Contrary to hypotheses, Students with Aboriginal status were no more likely to receive ODRs than students without Aboriginal status. Students with Aboriginal status were more likely, but not statistically significantly more likely, to receive suspensions and harsh administrative consequences from ODRs. Potential factors for these encouraging findings include the small sample, the Canadian context, and implementation of PBIS with culturally responsive adaptations for students from Aboriginal cultures. Results are discussed with respect to how these findings may contribute to reducing disproportionate discipline for Native American students in the United States.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

The promise of a teacher professional development program in reducing the racial disparity in classroom exclusionary discipline

Anne Gregory, Rutgers University

Joseph P. Allen, University of Virginia

Amori Yee Mikami, University of British Columbia

Christopher A. Hafen, University of Virginia

Robert C. Pianta, University of Virginia

ABSTRACT

Advocates call for schools with high suspension rates to receive technical assistance in adopting “proven-effective” systematic supports. Such supports include teacher professional development. This call is justified given evidence that good teaching matters. But what types of professional development should be funded? Increasingly, research points to the promise of programs that are sustained, rigorous, and focused on teachers’ interactions with students. The current study tests whether a professional development program with these three characteristics helped change teachers’ use of exclusionary discipline practices—especially with their African American students. Exclusionary discipline is when a classroom teacher sends a student to the administrators’ office for perceived misbehavior. Administrators then typically assign a consequence, usually in the form of suspension (in-school or out-of school). The My Teaching Partner-Secondary (MTP-S) aims to improve teachers’ interactions with their students when implementing instruction and managing behavior. MTP-S helps teachers offer clear routines, implement consistent rules, and monitor behavior in a proactive way. The program also supports teachers in developing warm, respectful relationships that recognize students’ needs for autonomy and leadership. Teachers are paired with a coach for an entire school year (sustained approach), they regularly reflect on video recordings of their classroom instruction and carefully observe how they interact with students (approach focused on interactions), and they apply the validated Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS-S) to improve the quality of their interactions (rigorous approach). In the current study, a randomized controlled trial found that teachers receiving MTP-S relied less on exclusionary discipline with all of their students compared to the control teachers. Furthermore, the program was the most beneficial for teachers’ reduction of exclusionary discipline with African American students. This is the first study to show that programs like MTP-S that focus on teacher-student interactions in a sustained manner using a rigorous approach can actually reduce the disproportionate use of exclusionary discipline with African American students. More broadly, the findings offer policymakers direction in identifying types of professional development programs that have promise for reducing the racial discipline gap.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Discipline and Participation: The Long---Term Effects of Suspension and School Security on the Political and Civic Engagement of Youth

Aaron Kupchik
University of Delaware

Thomas J. Catlaw
Arizona State University

ABSTRACT

In this study we use the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (Add Health) dataset to evaluate the long-term influence of school discipline and security on political and civic participation. We find that young adults with a history of suspension in school are less likely than others to vote and volunteer in civic activities after high school, suggesting that suspension negatively impacts the overall likelihood that youth will engage in future political and civic activities. Though Black and Hispanic students suffer negative long-term effects of school suspension far more frequently than others, the results suggest that the intensity of the effect of suspension is consistent across racial/ethnic groups. Overall, these findings are consistent with prior theory and research highlighting the long-term negative implications of punitive disciplinary policies and the salient role schools play in preparing youth to participate in a democratic polity as adults. We conclude that suspension, in particular, is anti-democratic insofar in that it substitutes the exclusion and physical removal of students for dialogue and collaborative problem-solving. The research lends empirical grounds for recommending the concrete reform of school governance and the implementation of more constructive models of discipline.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

The Economic Effects of Exclusionary Discipline on Grade Retention and High School Dropout

Miner P. Marchbanks III

Jamilia J. Blake

Eric A. Booth

Dottie Carmichael

Allison L. Seibert

Texas A&M University

Tony Fabelo

Justice Center, Council of State Governments

ABSTRACT

Nearly 15% of students are disciplined in a given year, with 60% of students being disciplined at-least once between grades 7 through 12. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of school discipline contact on students' risk for grade retention and school dropout using a statewide sample of 7th grade students tracked through their 12th grade year. Results indicate that school discipline is associated with approximately 4,700 grade retentions per year in the state of Texas. The delayed workforce entry related to grade retention has an effect of over \$68 million for the state, including \$5.6 million in lost tax revenue. Given the higher discipline rate for minorities, these costs disproportionately affect them. Further, the additional year of instruction costs the state nearly \$41 million dollars. For each year an individual student is retained the effect on the net social surplus exceeds \$23,000. Results also indicate that school discipline relates to a 29% increase in high school dropout. These additional dropouts account for an economic effect of \$711 million per year. It is recommended that educational agencies adopt evidenced-based programs that reduce school officials' use of punitive and exclusionary measures to manage student behavior such as Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports. Further, these results underscore the need for school officials to employ secondary and tertiary dropout prevention programs that are targeted at the most academically and behaviorally at-risk students in schools in addition to primary prevention programs.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Avoid Simple Solutions and Quick Fixes: Lessons Learned from a Comprehensive Districtwide Approach to Improving Student Behavior and School Safety

David M. Osher, Ph.D.

Jeffrey M. Poirier, M.A.

G. Roger Jarjoura, Ph.D.

American Institutes for Research (AIR)

Russell Brown, Ph.D.

Deputy Chief of Organizational Accountability,
Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Kimberly Kendziora, Ph.D.

American Institutes for Research (AIR)

ABSTRACT

Urban schools are often viewed as disorderly and unsafe and have poor conditions for learning that affect student attendance, behavior, achievement, and safety. These conditions include the experience of emotional and physical safety, connectedness to caring adults and peers, peer social and emotional competence, and academic engagement and challenge. Although connectedness and appropriate mental health services can improve safety as well as conditions for learning, many school districts focus on control through hardware and security officers. This paper examines the Cleveland Metropolitan School District's (CMSD) systematic efforts during the past four years, which built upon regular use of school-level data to improve safety, order, and the conditions for learning. These district wide approaches included implementing (1) an empirically validated social and emotional learning program that helps students in elementary grades to understand, regulate, and express emotions (*Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, PATHS*); (2) *student support teams*, a widely used planning model for students who exhibit early warning signs (including those related to attendance and behavior) with a referral process to respond to student needs in a timely, coordinated, and effective manner; and (3) *planning centers*, which replaced punitive in-school suspension with a learner-centered approach to discipline that focuses on student needs and helps them learn to self-discipline, and aligns with the student support teams and district focus on social emotional learning.

Five sets of findings illustrate the importance of CMSD's efforts between 2008–09 and 2010–11 (and, in one case, 2010–12):

- Improved conditions for learning for students in Grades 5 to 12.
- Improved teacher ratings of student social competence and attentiveness, but not in aggression, for students K – 5 during the 2010–12 academic years.
- Improved student attendance districtwide, which increased 1.5 percentage points.
- Improved student behavior—the average number of reported suspendable behavioral incidents per school declined from 233.1 to 132.4, including reductions in:
 - Disobedient/disruptive behavior (from 131.8 to 73.9).
 - Fighting/violence (from 54.5 to 36.4).
 - Harassment/intimidation (from 12.8 to 5.6).
 - Serious bodily injury (from 13.3 to 5.8).
- Reduced use of school removal:
 - Out-of-school suspensions decreased district wide by 58.8%.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

DIGNITY, DISPARITY AND DESISTANCE: EFFECTIVE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE STRATEGIES TO PLUG THE “SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE”

Mara Schiff, Ph.D.
Florida Atlantic University

ABSTRACT

School suspensions and expulsions resulting from zero tolerance disciplinary policies have directly expanded the “school-to-prison pipeline” while disproportionately and negatively affecting minority students. This paper reviews current research on zero tolerance, evidence for the effectiveness of restorative justice in schools as an alternative to punitive disciplinary policies, and local and national policy efforts to increase use of restorative practices in schools. The evidence shows that RJ is viable school policy strategy for keeping students in school while also useful for redefining the collaborative role of justice professionals and educators in the school setting to keep youth in school and out of juvenile justice systems.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Where Should We Intervene? Contributions of Behavior, Student, and School Characteristics to Suspension and Expulsion

Russell J. Skiba
Megan Trachok
Choong-Geun Chung
Timberly Baker
Adam Sheya
Robin Hughes

Indiana University

ABSTRACT

It has been widely documented that the characteristics of behavior, students, and schools all make a contribution to school discipline outcomes. The purpose of this study is to report on a multilevel examination of variables at these three levels to identify the relative contributions of type of behavior, student demographic variables, and school characteristics to rates of and racial disparities in out-of-school suspension and expulsion. Results indicated that variables at all three levels made a contribution to the odds of being suspended or expelled. Type of behavior and previous incidents at the behavioral level; race, gender and to a certain extent SES at the individual level; and percent Black enrollment, school achievement levels, and principal perspectives on discipline at the school level all made a contribution to the probability of out-of-school suspension or expulsion. For racial disparities in discipline, however, school level variables, including principal perspective on discipline, appear to be stronger predictors of disproportionality in suspension and expulsion than either behavioral or individual characteristics. These results indicate that school suspension and expulsion are not simply an inevitable result of student misbehavior, but are rather determined by a complex set of factors, including irrelevant factors such as race, and the school principal's belief in the necessity of suspension and expulsion. For racial disparities in particular, these results suggest that a focus, in policy and practice, on changing characteristics of the way schools carry out discipline may be the course most likely to reduce inequity in school suspension and expulsion.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

What Conditions Jeopardize and Support Safety in Urban Schools?

The Influence of Community Characteristics, School Composition and School Organizational Practices on Student and Teacher Reports of Safety in Chicago

Matthew P. Steinberg
Elaine Allensworth
David W. Johnson

ABSTRACT

School safety is a pressing issue in urban schools. Yet, there is little research that shows why schools vary in safety and whether school practices mediate the influence of neighborhood characteristics. Using a unique dataset on Chicago Public Schools, this study examines the internal and external conditions associated with students' and teachers' reports of safety, showing that factors under the school's control – their social and organizational structure – mediate the external influences of crime, poverty, and human resources in students' residential communities. In particular, the quality of relationships between school staff, students and parents define safe schools in Chicago. In contrast, frequent use of suspensions is associated with less safe environments, even when comparing schools serving students with similar backgrounds. The findings from this paper point to the important role that school leaders and personnel can play in fostering safe school environments for students, even in schools that serve students from disadvantaged neighborhoods. Policymakers should attend to the important influence of supportive, collaborative relationships among teachers and parents, and between teachers and students, for mediating the adverse influences of neighborhood circumstances on student and teacher reports of safety.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Reconsidering the Alternatives: The relationship between suspension, disciplinary alternative school placement, subsequent juvenile detention, and the salience of race

Judi E. Vanderhaar, PhD, Jefferson County Public Schools, KY; Joseph M. Petrosko, PhD, University of Louisville, KY; Marco A. Muñoz, EdD, Jefferson County Public Schools, KY

ABSTRACT

Alternative school settings for students who are identified as “disruptive or dangerous” are playing an increasingly prominent role in the world of public education, yet significant gaps in our understanding of their efficacy remain. Despite mounting use of disciplinary alternative schools, the vast majority of urban districts report that the demands for enrollment space outweigh the supply. While in theory these schools exist to provide alternative learning environments for students deemed too disruptive for mainstream schools, the evidence suggests that promoting this approach with little to no regulation is having grave unintended consequences for many students. The increasing demands for disciplinary alternative schools is indicative of the wider pervasive problems of detrimental school discipline policies, the criminalization of misbehavior and the exclusion and segregation of students based on race, poverty and disability in the educational system. This longitudinal investigation within a large school district serving 100,000 students examines multiple factors to determine how the risk of placement in the disciplinary alternative schools is systematically related to predictors and the risk of juvenile subsequent juvenile detention between 3rd and 12th grade. Results revealed that cumulatively, nearly 1 in 10 children entering 3rd grade experienced placement in a disciplinary alternative school by 12th grade. The racial gaps were pronounced as 13% of all African-American students in the cohort experienced placement compared to 4% of the White students. The risk of placement was greatest in 7th grade. Race, school mobility, grade retention, special education status, attendance, and out of school suspension were systematically related to the risk of placement in alternative school. African-American students were disproportionately represented among those suspended, placed in alternative school, and detained as juveniles. Half of the students placed in elementary experienced subsequent juvenile detention within less than four years, 43% of students placed in middle school were detained as juveniles within less than two years. These findings, based on a robust data set, highlight strong relationships between out of school suspensions, disciplinary alternative school placement, and subsequent juvenile detention that are most salient for African-American children, particularly those receiving free/reduced lunch. These relationships raise considerable doubts about the efficacy of a system that relies on out of school suspensions and disciplinary alternative schools as strategies reduce delinquency and provide support for children deemed disruptive or dangerous. The results strongly suggest that early warning systems connected to supportive early intervention strategies would produce better and more equitable outcomes in the short and long term than exclusionary discipline practices and policies.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Towards identifying school-level factors reducing disciplinary exclusions of American Indian/Alaska Native students

Claudia G. Vincent
CHiXapkaid (Michael Pavel)
Jeffrey R. Sprague
Tary J. Tobin
University of Oregon

ABSTRACT

Our study examined the relationship between the Native American community's recommendations for improving outcomes for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) students and school level practices in Oregon. We merged data on teacher practices from the 2009 National Indian Education Study (NIES) with data reflecting disciplinary exclusions. Our unweighted sample consisted of 40 elementary schools, 40 middle schools, <10 high schools, and 10 K-8/12 schools. Results indicated that the majority of teachers did not participate in recommended professional development nor did they integrate Native culture into instruction. Although correlations between participation in professional development and use of Native culture were significant, linear regression outcomes indicated no significant association between school level practices and disciplinary exclusion patterns of AI/AN students. Follow-up analyses of K-8/12 schools, which had the lowest rates of disciplinary exclusions for AI/AN students, indicated that greater AI/AN enrollment density was associated with lower out-of-school suspension rates. Based on our analyses and current efforts in Oregon to improve educational outcomes for AI/AN students we recommended greater emphasis on (a) disaggregating discipline data by student race, (b) meaningful collaboration between state departments of education and Native community leaders, (c) schools' accountability for reaching out to Native parents and community members, and (d) sharing disaggregated data with all relevant stakeholders.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

The Effectiveness of School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports for Reducing Racially Inequitable Disciplinary Exclusions in Middle Schools

Claudia G. Vincent
Jeffrey R. Sprague
University of Oregon

Jeff M. Gau
Oregon Research Institute

ABSTRACT

We merged data on the extent to which middle schools implemented school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SWPBIS) with data on disciplinary exclusions occurring in those schools across a period of 3 years. We conducted descriptive and multivariate analyses of variance to examine if (a) SWPBIS can be implemented with fidelity in middle school settings, (b) SWPBIS implementation is associated with reductions in disciplinary inequity, and (c) changes in disciplinary inequity vary with the proportion of students from low socio-economic and non-White backgrounds. Analysis of intervention fidelity data indicated that schools implemented the core features of SWPBIS based on training and support provided. Based on descriptive outcomes SWPBIS implementation was associated with (a) overall lower rates of ISS, the least severe form of disciplinary exclusion; (b) overall high rates of truancy, especially for AI/AN and Hispanic students; (c) some reductions in disciplinary exclusions for Hispanic and AI/AN students, but few for African-American students; and (4) few increases in the durations of disciplinary exclusions. School-level demographic factors did not appear to impact racial/ethnic inequity in schools implementing SWPBIS. Based on our findings we suggest a number of recommendations, including focused research on integrating behavioral science and critical race theory, training SWPBIS implementers in disaggregating discipline data by student race/ethnicity and interpreting data patterns, increasing meaningful integration of non-White parents into SWPBIS implementation practices, and holding implementers accountable for promoting culturally responsive systems and practices.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice

Avoid Simple Solutions and Quick Fixes: Lessons Learned from a Comprehensive Districtwide Approach to Improving Student Behavior and School Safety

ABSTRACT (page 2)

Our analyses suggest the importance of implementation quality for PATHS, student support teams, and planning centers. Implementation quality, as reported by CMSD staff, was related to changes in behavior and conditions for learning. For example:

- Disciplinary incidents *decreased* more in schools with “medium” or “high” implementation of PATHS (35.9%), student support teams (49.1%), and planning centers (51.4%).
- Perceptions of safety increased more where these three interventions were rated higher in terms of their implementation quality.

Although our data suggest that the rate of suspension and expulsion decreased, disparities may remain. Our analyses of Office for Civil Rights (OCR) data for the one year available (2009-10) determined that the relative risk of experiencing suspension or expulsion for male and female Black and Latino students with or without disabilities was *higher* than for their White peers. In addition, the relative risk increased as disciplinary actions moved from less serious to more serious responses (i.e., from in-school suspension to one out-of-school suspension, more than one out-of-school suspension, and expulsion).

Improved school conditions for learning as well as student support interventions can reduce reliance on suspension and expulsion while fostering safer, more productive school communities. The paper concludes with six recommendations to improve conditions for learning, provide effective student support, and reduce discipline-related disparities:

- 1) External audits of conditions for learning and disparities in school discipline and safety.
- 2) Use of conditions for learning data to inform improvement efforts.
- 3) Three-tiered approaches to prevention and addressing mental health challenges, including those related to trauma.
- 4) Evidence-based social and emotional learning programming.
- 5) Broadened incentives for investing in student support
- 6) Improved implementation quality of interventions and greater cultural competence of school staff.

Transforming the conditions contributing to exclusionary discipline will often require a sustained, multi-year effort. This should begin with an understanding that a culture of change, unlike “quick fixes” like metal detectors, requires an extended period of time to engage stakeholders, cultivate their buy-in, and develop and implement an effective plan.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research to Practice