



Article

Got A Match?: How School Leaders' Race Affects Suspension Odds Among Black Students in Texas Urban High Schools

Pamela Nicholas-Hoff^a and John Williams, III^b

^a University of Virginia, Texas A&M University ^b pyn8f@virginia.edu, jwilliams3@tamu.edu

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of school leaders' race on suspension rates among Black students in Texas urban high schools. Despite representing only 15.1% of student enrollment, Black students face disproportionate disciplinary actions. The research highlights systemic biases and structural barriers, such as culturally irrelevant curricula and educator bias. Using data from the Texas Education Agency (2011-2019) and logistic regression models, the study finds that Black students are more likely to be suspended under White and Asian principals. Conversely, Black principals are associated with lower out-of-school suspension rates but higher in-school suspension rates for Black girls. The findings emphasize the need for culturally responsive discipline policies to address these disparities.

KEYWORDS: school discipline, Black children, high schools, Texas, logistic regression

INTRODUCTION

For millions of Black students in the U.S., the promise of a quality education is thwarted by numerous structural and systemic barriers such as culturally irrelevant curricula, educator biases, discriminatory policies, and exclusionary discipline practices (Childs & Wooten, 2013; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Williams, 2024). These issues remain salient regardless of the type (traditional public, private, or charter) of school or grade level (elementary, middle, or high) that a Black student attends (Cohen et al., 2023; Fix et al., 2023). According to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR; 2021), Black students are more than three times more likely to be assigned exclusionary discipline consequences (out-of-school suspension [OSS], in-school suspension [ISS], and expulsion) than their white peers. The OCR (2021) reveals significant disparities in disciplinary actions across racial groups in U.S. public schools. During the 2017-18 academic year, of the approximate 51 million (50,922,024) students enrolled in U.S. kindergarten through twelfth-grade public schools, approximately 2.6 million faced ISS, 2.5 million faced OSS, and 101,000 faced expulsion. Black students, despite



Copyright © [2025] by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

comprising only 15.1% of student enrollment, accounted for a disproportionate share of disciplinary actions: 31.3% of in-school suspensions, 38.5% of single suspensions, 46.7% of multiple suspensions, and 36.2% of expulsions (OCR, 2021). Black girls, who made up 7.4% of student enrollment represented 11.2% of students assigned ISS, 13.3% of students assigned OSS, and 11.8% of expelled students. Black boys, who made up 7.7% of student enrollment represented 20.1% of students assigned ISS, 24.9% of students assigned OSS, and 25.9% of expelled students (OCR, 2021). While research in the last several decades has illuminated the fact that exclusionary disciplinary approaches (suspensions, expulsions, etc.) do not serve to correct misbehavior and prevent future misbehavior (Children’s Defense Fund, 1974; Williams, 1988; Wu et al., 1982), schools and educators have only incorporated a limited number of alternatives (e.g., restorative practices, schoolwide positive behavior intervention supports, culturally responsive classroom management) as options (Darling-Hammond, 2023; Samimi et al., 2023; Williams et al., 2023). Conversely, studies have shown that despite a minor surge in the use of these alternatives, their usage is primarily dependent on the support of these practices by those who manage the schools, principals and assistant principals (APs) (Kim et al., 2024; Lustick, 2021).

While the common thought is that principals manage most disciplinary incidents at their school, Williams et al. (2023) denote that APs decide most disciplinary outcomes. Coined as the “discipline gatekeeper,” APs are responsible for managing student behavior once a teacher has removed that student from the classroom (Williams et al., 2023, p. 1544). A sizable portion of an AP’s day, depending on schooling context, can be solely focused on preventing or solving misconduct (Armstrong, 2004; Wyatt, 2010). Should the behavior be egregious (e.g., violence, drugs, threats), the disciplinary decision would then be escalated to the principal. Several studies note that while principals may not handle every disciplinary infraction, their disposition towards students and how discipline should function (restorative or punitive) within the school is a major indicator of whether school discipline disparities for Black children will exist (Golann & Jones, 2024; Pyo, 2020). Additionally, there is a line of research that investigates the aforementioned factors in conjunction with a principal’s race/ethnicity as influential factors in school discipline decision-making. This research line stems from the fact that most of the educator workforce (teachers, APs, principals) comes from white cultural backgrounds (Grissom et al., 2015; Owens, 2022). The desynchronization between the educator workforce and U.S. public school student population in regard to demographics is a longstanding problem which has grown in the last 70 years (Grissom et al., 2015). However, some scholars indicate that a potential solution to a few of the systemic and cultural barriers that exist in schools is to hire and support Black educators (Madkins, 2011). The level of support that Black educators particularly provide to Black children, through cultural synchronization, is important to note given the relative lack of affirming supports offered to Black children historically (Gershenson et al., 2016; Lindsay & Hart, 2017). Still, while teachers initiate the classroom referral, the decision to remove a child from the classroom/school environment legally rests with the AP and the principal. Drawing on the aforementioned concept of cultural synchronization with teacher, our study is driven by the inquiry of school leadership’s racial identity and its influence on Black students disciplinary outcomes in high school. Does having a Black principal actually produce better results for Black children in the area of school discipline?

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to assess the influence of a principal’s race, on the odds of a Black boy or girl receiving an in-school or out-school suspension in Texas high schools located in urban areas. Drawing on several years (2011 – 2019) of data from the Texas Education Agency. While school principals have the legal authority to remove or keep a student in class, we sought to determine if racial identity played a role in increasing Black children’s risk of punitive school discipline outcomes. In examining the data, we draw on critical legal scholarship of critical race theory, to ascertain the prevalence of racism in disciplinary outcomes for Black boys and girls; critique the legality of punitive approaches as a normative ahistorical occurrence that views students, particularly Black students as property; analyze how racial identity and gender identity shift the paradigmatic issue of school discipline; and proffer recommendations for stakeholders inside and outside of the school to reduce and hopefully eliminate the proliferation of Black bodies outside of the classroom for alleged conduct – regardless of the principal’s race.

LITERATURE REVIEW

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE DISPARITIES - A SYSTEMIC ISSUE

Discipline disparities in educational settings (even within preschools; OCR 2021) and the disproportionate impact of discipline consequences on historically marginalized students are extensively and well-documented (Bell, 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2022). Extant research consistently finds that disparities are not due to differential student behavior but are the result of inequities in the U.S. education system (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Owens, 2022; Ritter & Anderson, 2018; Skiba, Chung et al., 2014; Welsh & Little, 2018) that reflect systemic racism and societal biases prevalent in the U.S. (Ferguson & Smith, 2023; Skiba et al., 2022). These disparities exist because, despite evidence of their ineffectiveness (Children's Defense Fund, 1974), schools and school personnel still prefer to remove students via exclusionary discipline practices based on symptoms (i.e., misbehavior) rather than attempt to ameliorate the root causes of misbehavior – or the perception of it.

Exclusionary discipline practices have far-reaching consequences. They exacerbate achievement gaps and lead to negative outcomes such as academic underachievement (Arcia, 2006), reduced school engagement (Balfanz et al., 2015; Skiba, Arredondo, et al., 2014), attrition (Arcia, 2006; Balfanz et al., 2015; Skiba, Arredondo et al., 2014; Suh & Suh, 2007), reduced occupational opportunities (due to reduced attendance and graduation from higher education institutions; Belfield et al., 2012), and increased risk of incarceration (Mowen et al., 2020; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009; Rosenbaum, 2020). Research indicates that students are 2.10 times more likely to be arrested in months when they face suspension or expulsion (Monahan et al., 2014). The impact of discipline policies extends beyond disciplined students. Schools with higher rates of exclusionary discipline experience "collateral damage" that negatively affects the academic achievement of non-suspended students, particularly in environments with high discipline rates but low violence levels (Perry & Morris, 2014, p. 1). Furthermore, classroom management strategies significantly influence school climate perceptions, with exclusionary discipline associated with lower order and discipline scores, while positive behavior supports are associated with higher scores in various aspects of school climate (Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013). At the heart of the disparities is the lack of consistent enforcement of rules and policies based on how individuals perceive students' actions (or inactions).

In comparison to objective offenses (e.g., possession of a controlled substance or firearm), subjective offenses (e.g., defiance, disorderly conduct, insubordination) are often discretionary and may be determined as such by school personnel. Smolkowski and colleagues (2016) determined that Black students were more likely to receive office discipline referrals for behaviors that are subjectively defined, such as disrespect. Gregory and Weinstein (2008) found that over two-thirds of discipline referrals were classified as "defiance of adult authority" with Black students, who represented only 30% of student enrollment, comprising 58% of students referred for defiance. Skiba et al. (2014) examined how exclusionary discipline practices reflect broader societal inequalities. Their research demonstrates how the practice of excluding students as a discipline consequence is intertwined with racial biases, that manifest in the disproportionate punishment of students of color. Skiba and colleagues posit that discipline disparities are indicative of a broader pattern of discrimination within educational institutions.

In their comprehensive review of school discipline literature, Welsh and Little (2018) examined factors that contribute to the persistent disparities in discipline for some students. They found that Black students, students with disabilities, and LGBTQ students experience higher rates of exclusionary discipline than their peers and that disparities are influenced by factors at multiple levels including student characteristics (e.g., race, gender, economic status, disability status), teacher and classroom factors (e.g., teacher-student racial/gender match, teacher biases and perceptions), and school level factors (e.g., demographic make-up, school achievement levels, principal perspectives). Race was a significant predictor of disciplinary outcomes, even when controlling for student behavior. Regardless of the type or frequency of challenging behavior, discipline consequences for Black students were harsher and more frequent than those assigned to their peers. Welsh and Little's review parallels extant research on the matter – that race still matters in the decision process for Black boys and girls (Gregory et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2022). Gregory and colleagues (2010) found that, despite hypotheses implicating potential confounders (i.e., "poverty and neighborhood characteristics," "low achievement," and "differential behavior" [p. 61]), the overrepresentation of Black students among those issued office referrals is most likely due to differential selection. Prior to being differentially selected for behavior evaluation, students are often differentially surveilled or watched and observed in a way that differs from the way white students are watched and observed (Williams, 2024). Educators are likely socially and culturally conditioned to perceive Black students and their cultures through a deficit lens cultivating implicit biases and leading to differential selection of Black students. While the differential

selection of Black students is evident in their alarming rates of over-referral by teachers, it is school leadership that ultimately determines the length and severity of discipline consequences.

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Ritter and Anderson (2018) suggest that discipline disparities often reflect systemic inequities and that principals' discipline decisions can mitigate or exacerbate disparities. Schools with leaders who adopt and implement equitable discipline policies and practices – with fidelity and ongoing professional support – can reduce racial discipline disparities (Welsh, 2023). Not surprisingly, Welsh and Little (2018) found that though some schools experience an overall decline in discipline incidents, in many, especially those serving urban communities and those with higher proportions of Black students, racial discipline disparities persist. The American Psychological Association's Presidential Task Force on Preventing Discrimination and Promoting Diversity (2012) reports that implicit racial biases are ubiquitous among U.S. citizens. Therefore, school administrators likely possess implicit biases. Those biases may lead to discipline policies, practices, and decisions that result in disproportionate rates of exclusionary discipline and harsher punishments for Black students (Gregory et al., 2016; Gregory et al., 2010) and those experiencing economic disadvantage (Noltemeyer et al., 2015) when compared to white students and those not experiencing economic disadvantage, respectively. In regard to harsher punishment, scholars note that events or elements are not viewed through a neutral lens. Rather, the implicit biases that administrators hold affect the discipline decision-making process (McIntosh et al., 2014; Smolkowski et al., 2016; Welsh, 2023). One potential explanation for differential treatment and inconsistent outcomes is due to a school leader's race/ethnicity (Edwards et al., 2023; Welsh, 2024). Ritter and Anderson (2018) found that in schools with predominantly white administrators, historically minoritized students experience disproportionate rates of exclusionary discipline.

Discipline disparities may be exacerbated by the racial and gender mismatch that often exists in schools between students, their teachers, and school leaders especially when school personnel lack cultural competence and are culturally insensitive (Skiba et al., 2011). In 2020-21 within U.S. kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) public schools, 77% of principals were white, 10% were Black or African American, 9% were Hispanic, 1% were Asian, and 2% were another race/ethnicity (Taie & Lewis, 2022) while 46% of students were white, 28% were Latinx/Hispanic, 15% were Black or African American, 5% were Asian, 4% were two or more races, 1% were American Indian or Alaska native, and less than 1% were Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data; CCD). Therefore, while 77% of principals in U.S. public K-12 schools were white, 54% of students were non-white. White principals and APs may, even unconsciously, apply disciplinary policies in ways that disproportionately affect Black students. Studies suggest that white school leaders are more likely to perceive Black students as being disruptive or defiant, particularly when those students challenge authority, a behavior that may be interpreted through a racially-biased lens (Khalifa et al, 2016; Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015; Williams et al., 2023). Such perceptions often result in harsher disciplinary actions, such as suspensions or expulsions, that contribute to the broader disparities seen in school discipline statistics (Skiba et al., 2011).

Conversely, having a Black principal may offer a protective effect for Black students. Black school leaders may be more attuned to the cultural nuances of behavior exhibited by Black students and consider such behaviors as pro-social rather than anti-social (McCray & Beachum, 2014). However, context matters. Black principals in predominantly White schools or school districts may face resistance in their efforts to reform discipline practices and policies that could lead to reduce disparities (Welsh & Sobti, 2023). The intersection of race and gender may further inhibit efforts by school leaders to implement discipline reform with Black, female principals experiencing opposition related to race and gender biases (Brown, 2016). Additionally, the romanticization of having a Black principal may prevent stakeholders from examining if punitive approaches exist or even supporting those approaches. Khalifa (2015) conducted a two-year ethnographic study of Black principals and found that many carried out punitive practices based on district policies, to the point where the treatment of Black students was considered abusive to parents who were receiving reports from their children. In examining the role of racial identity as it relates to principals' decision-making towards Black children, the statement “all kin folk and skin folk” applies, as anti-Black dispositions, approaches, and policies still dominate the current discourse in education (Sobati & Welsh, 2023).

The treatment of Black students by principals has been researched both qualitatively and quantitatively, with no conclusive evidence that Black principals are better or worse at supporting Black students than their racial/ethnic peers. Their interactions, however, cannot be viewed solely in a vacuum. Again, principals' primary responsibility is not school discipline despite their indirect and direct influence on the enforcement of student conduct policies. While they attend to more overarching challenges and opportunities on the campus, they relegate the responsibility of school discipline matters to their APs. The number of APs per campus may differ, yet before any official decision to remove a student reaches the principal's desk, it must be reviewed by an AP.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

Because of their crucial role in discipline decisions and how school discipline consumes a significant portion of their daily responsibilities in certain school contexts, assistant principals APs are a key component in school discipline outcomes (Williams & Lewis, 2022). Beyond their school discipline duties, literature denotes that APs are often forced to split their time between this responsibility, teacher supervision, curriculum development, and filing administrative paperwork. These responsibilities are even more cumbersome in schools where resources are limited such as rural and urban schools. Additionally, individuals engage in these responsibilities with limited experience. Williams et al. (2021) in a study which explored the influence of AP's years of experience on discipline outcomes for Black students found that the typical AP only had about two to five years of actual experience on the job. However, the scholars note that APs' years of experience as teachers were more of a positive influence on reducing suspensions for Black students than their years of experience in the AP position.

The other challenge facing APs, as it pertains to school discipline, is the competing interests they must manage. Whereas when these individuals were teachers, their responsibility was to one classroom, APs are often responsible for several classrooms including teachers, paraprofessionals, and students. While implementing their school's discipline policies, APs must facilitate "the vision and guidance of their principal, the teacher's request to" (Williams, Lewis et al., 2023, p. 1561) alleviate their classroom management "burden," all while protecting the rights and educational needs of students (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015; Smith & Hains, 2012). Often, these aforementioned factors run contrary to one another. Welsh (2023) notes that when APs philosophical approach to discipline differs from that of the principal or any given teacher, their ability to enact responsive and restorative disciplinary practices is severely limited. However, one element that appears to benefit Black students is when teachers and APs share similar cultural backgrounds and are able to construct meaningful relationships built on trust, understanding, and transparency (Welsh, 2023). Still, building relationships with every teacher takes time, effort, and resources which are sometimes not in abundance (Shabazian, 2020). The inability to individualize discipline approaches towards Black students based on contextual factors (classroom, teacher, community environment) leads to higher discipline disproportionality for Black students, whether APs know it or not (Carter et al., 2017; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2011).

However, Williams et al. (2023) assert that, in their role as discipline consequence decision makers, "assistant principals serve as disciplinary gatekeepers" for those most disproportionately assigned exclusionary discipline—Black students (p. 1543). Therefore, we argue, it is also prudent and salient to examine how the characteristics of APs are associated with discipline decisions and disparities within schools. The social construct of race is of particular interest since student race/ethnicity (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023; Little & Welsh, 2022; Riddle & Sinclair, 2019) and student-educator race/ethnicity mismatch (Blake et al., 2016) have been found to be predictors of discipline disparities. Further, the use of discretion and subjective evaluation of student behavior by school personnel and the decisions concerning the assignment and severity of discipline consequences are concerning. This is especially troubling considering the pervasiveness of implicit bias in the U.S. (American Psychological Association, Presidential Task Force on Preventing Discrimination and Promoting Diversity, 2012) and the harmful outcomes associated with exclusionary discipline practices (Hirschfield, 2008; Skiba et al., 2014). Examining the relationship between principal characteristics while controlling for AP characteristics and discipline disparities can assist researchers in identifying treatment targets to reduce disparities for historically marginalized students.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a framework examines how structures, policies, systems, and organizations oppress and regularly discriminate against historically marginalized communities. Originally, this framework was utilized to assess how specific actions, approaches, structures, systems, and organizations within the legal system, operated in such a fashion that promoted the subjugation of non-white individuals (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefanic, 2000). It was through this framework that scholars began to crystalize centuries of mistreatment enacted by the legal system, which operated as an acolyte to societal structures and systems that thrived from racism. CRT exists as a myriad of interconnected tenets: a) permanence of racism throughout society, b) whiteness as property through legal ruling, c) ahistorical narratives that can only be dismantled by the counternarratives from racialized communities, d) interest convergence, and e) an interdisciplinary approach to implementing and sustaining justice as racism cuts across multiple social constructs (gender, race, socioeconomics, etc.) (Burrell-Craft, 2020; Crenshaw et al., 2001; Delgado & Stefanic, 1994; Matsuda, 1991).

The permanence of racism can be viewed through the structural, systemic, and historical nature in which race has and continues to formalize the life expectancy and outcomes of individuals – through no fault of their own (Bell, 1992). The tenet, whiteness as property, illuminates how the racial identity of white people is protected and affords rights and resources by legal rulings and proceedings (Harris, 1993). Whiteness is therefore protected and sustained while purporting domination over historically marginalized communities. The tenet, ahistorical narratives, stems from the chronic misrepresentation of marginalized communities by way of one story that only celebrates the contributions of white people while pathologizing communities of color (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). Counternarratives challenge dominant narratives that inadequately explain why inequities exist (i.e., school discipline disparities) (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). These counternarratives, often grounded in the experiences of historically marginalized students, expose how policies, procedures, and practices (i.e., school discipline) are not neutral but are instead deeply rooted in racialized assumptions, stereotypes, and biases (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Scholars denote that any societal changes that occur to benefit racialized groups, only happen when societal changes for these groups are connected to the interests of the dominant, liberal white majority through interest convergence (Bell, 1980). However, to liberate all individuals from racism which intersects across social constructs (e.g., race, gender, socioeconomics), interdisciplinary approaches, methods, and strategies must involve multiple stakeholders who are actively pursuing solutions that are vested in justice (Crenshaw et al., 2001).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), who examined the way legal scholars utilized CRT to confront ahistorical and colorblind notions in the legal world, offered a pivotal transition of the framework into the field of education. Rather than dwell on deficit and pathological examinations of Black people, scholars in the field of education who invoke this framework indicate that the outcomes that Black students persist through are due to an education system that is constructed by a society seeped in racism (Taylor et al., 2023; Ladson-Billings, 2021). One such result is the disproportionate manner in which Black students are disciplined at higher rates than any other racial/ethnic group in the U.S. CRT has been used to examine several factors that contribute to school discipline disparities for Black children (Anyon et al., 2018; Bell, 2023; Dutil, 2020; Nolan, 2021; Simson, 2013). In fact, Wiley (2020) offers a cogent summarization, through the lens of CRT, of how educators view school discipline as a dual system: one where whiteness was protected and preserved and another where the idea of doing the right thing was preserved while Black children were prosecuted to maintain order. Black children's rights and access to a quality education is not a primary concern if the decision not to remove from them the classroom could potentially upset the normal way to maintain order. Even when viewing school discipline disparities and Black students overall, it is imperative to parse out the data by gender, socioeconomics, and the characteristics of school leaders. For example, examined how racial discipline disparities are exacerbated in schools with higher proportions of economically disadvantaged students. They suggest that school personnel biases, often implicit, contribute significantly to those disparities. Schools with a less diverse population of teachers and leaders and higher percentages of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch are especially vulnerable to racial discipline disparities. Because racism cuts across multiple social constructs, racial disparities for Black children are not monolithic. Morris (2007) posits that when evaluating Black female students' behavior, limiting gendered stereotypes of acceptable female behavior are employed, increasing the likelihood that students behaving outside those limits will be deemed deserving of disciplinary

consequences. Thus, school discipline disparities have negative effects on Black boys and Black girls in different ways, which requires school discipline data to be disaggregated to parse out root causes.

To examine the influence of race, as a social construct, on ISSs and OSSs for Black boys and girls, the following research questions were posed.

RQ1: Controlling for certain school-level factors (e.g., school demographics, Title 1 eligibility) and student-level factors (e.g., “at risk” designation, student demographic), what is the relationship between principal/AP race/ethnicity and odds of assignment to ISS for Black girls and boys?

RQ2: Controlling for certain school-level factors (e.g., school demographics, Title 1 eligibility) and student-level factors (e.g., “at risk” designation, student demographic), what is the relationship between principal/AP race/ethnicity and odds of assignment to OSS for Black girls and boys?

METHODS

DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE

For this study, district-, school-, and student-level data were collected from the Texas Education Agency from 2011 to 2018. The initial sample size was 11 million students which includes duplicate counts. However, upon removing all non-Black students and only including students who attended high school in an urban area ($n=286$ campuses), the sample size was reduced significantly ($n = 558,969$). Of that number, only 48,331 students (non-duplicated) received an in-school suspension (ISS) or out-of-school suspension (OSS). The urbanicity of a school was determined by the U.S. Department of Education Common Core Database, which categorizes schools as urban, rural, or suburban with each category having three subcategories. Urbanicity was labeled as large = 1, midsize = 2, or small = 3. Additionally, school-level variables included in this study were Title I eligibility (coded as 0 and 1) and school-wide Title I eligibility (coded as 0 and 1), if the school were a magnet school (coded as 0 and 1), the number of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch, the number of full-time teachers, the student demographic percentages for Black, Latinx, and White by gender, the total number of assistant principals, and the percentage of assistant principals by race/ethnicity (Black, Latinx, and White). Student-level identifiers include whether or not a student was labeled as gifted, immigrant, at-risk, and/or economically disadvantaged. At-risk is defined as a student who is pregnant, not making academic progress, is involved with the juvenile system, is homeless, has a parent who is incarcerated or is in a residential treatment facility or juvenile justice system (Texas Education Agency, n.d.). The dependent variables were ISSs and OSSs by gender for Black students and the predictor variable was the race of the principal of the school. Latinx principals were used as the reference group because of their congruence with the largest student population (Latinx children), and because researchers wanted to determine if the odds ratio was different for Black and White principals as the disciplinarian.

DATA ANALYSIS

All data was cleaned and screened utilizing StataCorp 17.0. Upon initial analysis there were no outlying data. All observations that contained missing student-level information (i.e., gender, race, etc.) were removed from the dataset. Some of that data was masked due to the sensitive high number of students that fit multiple categories, that would be easy to identify. To determine if the race of a principal (and assistant principal) influenced the odds of a Black boy or girl receiving a suspension (in-school or out-of-school), a series of logistic regression models were conducted. Logistic regressions are utilized when the dependent variable is binary (Menard, 2002). In this study, a student’s disciplinary record was coded as 0 if no discipline outcome was present. ISS and OSS were coded as separate variables, and if a student received either disciplinary outcome, it was coded as 1. The predictor variable was the principal’s race. The variable was coded as 1 = Black, 2 = White, 3 = Latinx, 4 = Asian, and 5 = Multi-racial. This same coding scheme was present for assistant principals as well.

FINDINGS/RESULTS

DESCRIPTIVES

Table 1 Black boys occurred the large number of OSS and ISS respectively. Additionally, White principals were the largest racial/ethnic subgroup, followed by Black (27%) and Latinx principals (19%). Notably, the difference between the number of Black APs and White APs was two percent, with there being 71,352 (41%) white APs and 67,871 (39%) Black APs. Latinx APs comprised 17% or 29,585 of the total number of APs in the sample. With regard to the student population, nearly a quarter of the students were considered either economically disadvantaged or “at-risk”.

LOGISTIC REGRESSION

For logistic regressions, having odds equal to one indicates a normal risk of something happening. Anything higher than one indicates greater odds of that event occurring and anything lower than one indicates a decreased risk of something occurring. In this study, if the odds ratio is greater than one, the predictor variable or controlled variable increases the likelihood of a student receiving an OSS or ISS.

BLACK BOYS

OSS. According to our model in Table 2 that investigated whether a principal’s race influences the odds of a Black boy receiving an OSS, there were no statistically significant findings along the lines of the principal’s race. However, for school-level factors, Black boys in large, urban schools were 7.75 times as likely to receive an OSS. This variable had the highest odds above 1.0. The number of students receiving free lunch, the number of APs at the school and if a Black boy were labeled as “At-Risk” increased the odds slightly for Black boys to receive an OSS.

ISS. For ISS (see Table 3), having a Black principal carried lower odds ($OR = .03$) of receiving an ISS as compared to having a white principal ($OR = .11$). However, the highest odds for Black boys to receive an ISS occurred when they attended a school that was Title I eligible. Attending a Title I school for Black boys meant they were 33 times as likely to receive an ISS as a disciplinary consequence. When Black boys attended schools with a larger number of Black students, they were 1.4 times as likely to receive an ISS. Lastly, having Black APs was associated with higher odds of receiving an ISS ($OR = 2.39$) as compared to having a white ($OR = 2.27$) or Latinx AP ($OR = 1.86$).

BLACK GIRLS

OSS. In analyzing the model in Table 4, which took into account OSSs for Black girls, the findings indicate that having a white principal significantly raised the odds ($OR = 6.59$) of being suspended for a discipline incident. However, Black girls were 7.4 times as likely to receive an OSS if their principal were Asian. Having a Black principal decreased the likelihood that a Black girl would receive an OSS; however, this finding was not statistically significant. In examining school-level factors, an increase in the number of students receiving free lunch resulted in slightly higher odds ($OR = 1.01$) of Black girls receiving an OSS for discipline infractions. Lastly, if a Black girl were labeled as “At-Risk” they were 12 times more likely to receive an OSS for discipline infractions as opposed to Black girls who were not identified as “At-Risk.”

ISS. Conversely, the odds of receiving an ISS for a discipline infraction were lowest when a white principal supervised the school (see Table 5). Black girls having a Black principal were 6.7 times as likely to receive an ISS for violating school rules. In this model, the population density in the school mattered, with schools that were considered large urban increasing the odds of a Black girl receiving an ISS by 40 times. Similar to the OSS model, an increase in the number of students receiving free lunch slightly increased Black girls' odds for receiving an ISS ($OR = 1.01$). Interestingly, when Black girls were in schools with a large Latinx population, they were 2.68 times more likely to receive an ISS. Lastly, while the label of “At-Risk” raised the risk of an OSS by 12 times, Black girls who received this label were 2.81 times more likely to receive an ISS.

DISCUSSION

In summary, the purpose of this study was to ascertain how a principal's race/ethnicity influenced the likelihood of Black high schoolers receiving an OSS or ISS, while controlling for various school- and student-level factors. Researchers in the last few decades have sounded the proverbial alarm regarding the disproportionate rate at which Black children are removed from their classroom or school (Wallace et al., 2008; Wiley et al. 2018; Williams et al., 2024). This research seeks to extend the scholarship regarding school administration's racial/ethnic identity as an influential variable in determining Black children's risk of exclusionary discipline and further support the continuation of research that investigates the lived experiences or outcomes for both Black boys and girls.

First, our findings indicate that Black girls are at greater risk of being suspended from school for offenses by White and Asian principals, and they have a higher risk of receiving an ISS if their principal identifies as Black. Through the lens of critical race theory, these findings highlight the permanence of racism/race influencing disciplinary outcomes for Black girls. CRT was originally forged to interrogate the U.S. legal systems' function in promoting and sustaining racism towards Black and other racially marginalized communities. Principals and assistant principals are legally authorized to use suspensions to correct misbehavior or to deter future misbehavior (Williams & Lewis 2022). The findings indicate that White and Asian principals in urban schools prefer to utilize their legal power to push Black girls out of schools, whereas Black principals utilize their legal authority to remove Black girls from the classroom but keep them inside the school building. There is a portion of research that underscores how race/ethnicity influences how school administrators treat Black children (DeMatthews et al., 2017; Williams et al., 2020). These findings suggest that a principals' race/ethnicity is influencing how they wield their legal authority to discipline Black girls – echoing other sectors in society where arbiters (judges in the criminal justice system, human resource personnel in companies, and healthcare providers) are double penalizing Black women and girls based on gender and race. CRT scholars have long documented how racism intersects across multiple social constructs, with some scholars such as Crenshaw (2013), highlighting this phenomenon specifically for Black women and girls through the lens of intersectionality.

For Black boys, the likelihood of receiving an OSS was not statistically significant regardless of the principal's race/ethnicity. However, for ISSs Black boys were less likely to receive this outcome when their principal identified as Black, White, or Multi-Racial, with the lowest odds ratio occurring with multi-racial principals. Essentially, Black boys according to our findings, are not at a higher risk to receive a suspension regardless of the principal's race. What our findings suggest is that factors outside the race of the principal, play a greater role of increasing the odds of a Black boy receiving an OSS or ISS. While APs, regardless of racial/ethnic identity, are less likely to recommend an OSS for Black boys, Black APs utilized ISSs at greater odds than any other racial/ethnic group. Contrary to Black girls, Black boys run a greater risk of being removed from the classroom and placed in often non-learning environments. Viewing this finding through CRT framework, the salience of race could be producing a paradoxical situation. Legally, APs are afforded the same authority to suspend children as principals, and what we see within the findings is higher odds of Black boys having an ISS, with the odds increasing when there are more Black APs in their building. The racial congruency between Black APs and Black boys could be preventing Black boys from being removed from school completely, but viewed through the CRT tenet of permanence of racism, Black boys are still highly susceptible to being placed in ISS at rates higher than everyone else because of their race. Carter and colleagues (2017) assert that just because race does not appear to be a factor between Black children and Black administrators, it does not nullify the influence of class on how middle-class Black administrators treat Black students from communities experiencing economic disadvantages. Class, as a social construct, is visible through Black boys' attendance at a Title I school, being labeled as economically disadvantaged, and also in the way that Black students are overly labeled as "at-risk". The latter point will be discussed later on in this section. Interventions that intend to assist administrators in confronting their biases must focus on multiple social constructs (race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomics, etc.) and examine how they reveal themselves (biases) in discipline data and decisions.

In viewing the findings for Black girls and boys collectively, we still see an ahistorical approach to school discipline despite numerous reports and studies which promote the reduced usage if not elimination of school suspensions for students. This ahistorical approach, through a CRT lens, tends to extinguish counternarratives/approaches related to school discipline that are better suited to promote engagement and learning

for Black children in high school. At a time when Black children are preparing to leave the K-12 system and enter into a vocational trade, the military, or a post-secondary institution, missing a day of learning is unacceptable when there are alternative forms of school discipline that do not require students to be pushed out of school. Furthermore, Black boys' and girls' identities cannot be disaggregated, yet the labels placed on them (at-risk, economically disadvantaged, etc.) by schools and school personnel can elevate the odds of them receiving an ISS or OSS disproportionately (Bottiani et al., 2017).

For example, the label "At-Risk" is often used as a proxy for socioeconomic status, but in many ways, the grouping of conditions under this label aligns with the ahistorical lens of racism for Black children. The lived experience of students (whether homeless, failing in school, pregnant, or involved with the juvenile justice system, etc.) should not be clustered under one variable unless that variable is disaggregated/coded in such a way that a student can be identified as having one or more of those conditions. At-risk in itself is problematic and when coupled with a student's racial identity, it offers a deficit lens for educators to look through. Rather, the conditions students exist through require different approaches and solutions that address root causes. In exhibiting a counternarrative approach, for example, supporting a Black girl who is homeless is different than supporting a Black girl who is pregnant and homeless, or pregnant and in the juvenile justice system. The label allows educators to gloss over their lived experiences and avoid directly addressing the nuanced support she needs to avoid being disciplined and succeed in the classroom. As Carter and colleagues (2017) indicate, you cannot fix what is not being examined, and through the models presented in this study, the failure to unpack the labels placed on Black students illuminates numerous opportunities to offer targeted preventative school discipline approaches that are affirming and not punitive. These findings require that school administrators critically examine how teachers and themselves recommend disciplinary outcomes based on labels placed on Black children. Typically, these labels follow students throughout the years from school to school and stigmatize their learning opportunities. It is not enough for school leaders to develop culturally responsive or anti-racist approaches to school discipline without interrogating how socio-cultural, economic, and gender identities merge as influential constructs in the decision-making process within these approaches.

LIMITATIONS

With any study, some limitations prevent full generalization. First, this sample consisted of only urban public high schools, thus the findings about principals' and APs' race/ethnicity being an influential factor cannot be transferred to middle, elementary, or private schools. Second, this study only examined the race of school administrators, with APs serving as covariates. A follow-up study should examine the same school- and student-level variables, with APs' race acting as the predictor variable and the race of the principal serving as a covariate. Also, we did not examine how race and gender of school leadership interact with school discipline outcomes. However, a future study must inquire as to how racial/ethnicity and gender congruency between principals and APs influence Black children's chances of being suspended.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the influence of principals' race/ethnicity on Black children's odds of receiving an ISS or OSS while controlling for the race of the assistant principal and other covariates. Our findings indicate that only Black boys benefited from having a Black or Multi-racial principal, as it reduced their odds of receiving an ISS. However, for Black girls our findings were mixed. The odds of receiving an OSS indeed increased when they were in a school led by White or Asian principals, and while having a Black principal lowered the odds for Black girls, that finding was not statistically significant. Conversely, Black principals were associated with higher odds for Black girls receiving an ISS.

Our findings elucidate the reality that racial congruency amongst school administrators and Black children, particularly in urban high schools, does not necessarily protect Black boys and girls from punitive school discipline outcomes. Moreover, from a CRT lens, our findings require educators to critically examine how policies, personnel (dispositions and attitudes?), and practices serve to embed racism into decision-making processes about school discipline. Examining how the aforementioned factors promote racism against Black children mandates a wholistic framework that is interwoven into all facets. From hiring practices that recruit school administrators dedicated to anti-deficit forms of school discipline, reoccurring professional development for school administrators, teachers,

school counselors, and school social workers that trains and demonstrates equitable school discipline practices that affirm Black students, to budgets that afford educators physical, social, and electronic resources to implement this framework – Black children in urban schools deserve to be educated in safe spaces that enrich their opportunities, not detract from them regardless of the color of their principal's skin.

Our recommendations include; constructing school discipline policies and practices that are evidence-based and supported by Black children in the school; offering several decision-making points where APs and principals are not forced to be the sole judge and executioner of school discipline decisions; creating and implementing indices and scales that can detect racial/gender biases and implement safeguards to remove individuals from the decision-making process who refuse to address and eliminate those biases towards Black children; and finally, coordinate a sustainable oversight board of informed community stakeholders and parents (especially Black parents) who understand the strengths of the school and the assets that Black students bring to the classroom. Through these recommendations, it is possible to protect Black students from being subjected to unfair practices and policies concerning school discipline even if their racial identity does not match the racial identity of their school administration.

REFERENCES

American Psychological Association, Presidential Task Force on Preventing Discrimination and

Promoting Diversity. (2012). Dual pathways to a better America: Preventing discrimination and promoting diversity. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Retrieved from

<http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/promoting-diversity.aspx>

Armstrong, L. (2004). *The secondary assistant principal in the state of Texas: Duties and job satisfaction*. University of Houston.

<https://proxy1.library.virginia.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Fsecondary-assistant-principal-state-texas-duties%2Fdocview%2F305196486%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D14678>

Anyon, Y., Lechuga, C., Ortega, D., Downing, B., Greer, E., & Simmons, J. (2018). An exploration of the relationships between student racial background and the school sub-contexts of office discipline referrals: A critical race theory analysis. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 21(3), 390-406. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2017.1328594>

- Arcia, E. (2006). Achievement and enrollment status of suspended students: Outcomes in a large, multicultural school district. *Education and Urban Society*, 38(3), 359-369.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124506286947>
- Balfanz, R., Byrnes, V., & Fox, J. H. (2015). Sent home and put off track. In D. J. Losen (Ed.), *Closing the school discipline gap: Equitable remedies for excessive exclusion* (pp. 17-30). Teachers College Press.
- Belfield, C. R., Levin, H. M., & Rosen, R. (2012). The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth. *Corporation for National and Community Service*.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED528650.pdf>
- Bell, C. (2020). "Maybe if they let us tell the story I wouldn't have gotten suspended": Understanding Black students' and parents' perceptions of school discipline. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 110, 104757.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.104757>
- Bell, D. A. (1980). Brown v. Board of Education and the interest convergence dilemma. *Harvard Law Review*, 93, 518–533. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1340546>
- Bell, D. (1992). *Faces at the bottom of the well: The permanence of racism*. Basic Books.
- Bell, D. A. (1995a). Racial realism. In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller, & K. Thomas (Eds.), *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement* (pp. 302–312). New York: The New Press.
- Bell, D. A. (1995b). Who's afraid of critical race theory. *University of Illinois Law Review*, 4(3), 823-846.
- Blake, J. J., Smith, D. M., Marchbanks, M. P., Seibert, A. L., Wood, S. M., & Kim, E. S. (2016). Does student–teacher racial/ethnic match impact Black students' discipline risk? A test of the cultural synchrony hypothesis. In R. J. Skiba, K. Mediratta, & M. K. Rausch

- (Eds.), *Inequality in school discipline: Research and practice to reduce disparities* (pp. 79-98). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-51257-4_5
- Bottiani, J. H., Bradshaw, C. P., & Mendelson, T. (2017). A multilevel examination of racial disparities in high school discipline: Black and white adolescents' perceived equity, school belonging, and adjustment problems. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 109(4), 532-545. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000155>
- Bradshaw, C. P., Mitchell, M. M., O'Brennan, L. M., & Leaf, P. J. (2010). Multilevel exploration of factors contributing to the overrepresentation of black students in office disciplinary referrals. *Journal of educational psychology*, 102(2), 508. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018450>
- Brown, C. A. (2016). *Understanding the impact of racism and sexism on the development of the professional identity of African American women principals*. The University of North Carolina at Charlotte.
<https://proxy1.library.virginia.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Funderstanding-impact-racism-sexism-on-development%2Fdocview%2F1896118130%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D14678>
- Burrell-Craft, K. (2020). Are (we) going deep enough?: A narrative literature review addressing critical race theory, racial space theory, and black identity development. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, 19(4), 2. <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/taboo/vol19/iss4/2>
- Carter, P. L., Skiba, R., Arredondo, M. I., & Pollock, M. (2017). You can't fix what you don't look at: Acknowledging race in addressing racial discipline disparities. *Urban education*, 52(2), 207-235. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916660350>

Children's Defense Fund. (1974). *Children out of school in America*. Washington, DC: Washington Research Project.

Childs, T. M., & Wooten, N. R. (2023). Teacher bias matters: an integrative review of correlates, mechanisms, and consequences. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 26(3), 368-397.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2022.2122425>

Cohen, D. R., Lewis, C., Eddy, C. L., Henry, L., Hodgson, C., L. Huang, F., ... & Herman, K. C. (2023). In-school and out-of-school suspension: Behavioral and psychological outcomes in a predominately black sample of middle school students. *School Psychology Review*, 52(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966X.2020.1856628>

Crenshaw, K. W. (2013). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. In *The public nature of private violence* (pp. 93-118). Routledge.

Crenshaw, K. W. (2001). The first decade: Critical reflections, or a foot in the closing door. *UCLA L. Rev.*, 49, 1343.

Crenshaw, K., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., & Thomas, K. (Eds.). (1995). *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement*. The New Press.

Darling-Hammond, S. (2023). *Fostering Belonging, Transforming Schools: The Impact of Restorative Practices*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED630386>

DeCuir, J. T., & Dixson, A. D. (2004). "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. *Educational Researcher*, 33(5), 26-31. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033005026>

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (1994). Critical race theory: An annotated bibliography 1993, a year of transition. *U. Colo. L. Rev.*, 66, 159.

- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (Eds.). (2000). *Critical race theory: The cutting edge*. Temple University Press.
- DeMatthews, D. E., Carey, R. L., Olivarez, A., & Moussavi Saeedi, K. (2017). Guilty as charged? Principals' perspectives on disciplinary practices and the racial discipline gap. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 53(4), 519-555.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X17714844>
- Dutil, S. (2020). Dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline: A trauma-informed, critical race perspective on school discipline. *Children & Schools*, 42(3), 171-178.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdaa016>
- Edwards, W., Boggs, R., & Reyes, P. (2023). Student-principal racial/ethnic match, geographic locale, and student disciplinary outcomes. *Journal of School Leadership*, 33(3), 313-339.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/10526846221134009>
- Fix, R. L., Schaeffer, C. M., Bohnenkamp, J. H., & Hoover, S. (2023). Understanding disproportionate suspension practices for Black students in elementary, middle, and high schools. *School Psychology Review*, 52(4), 395-407.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966X.2021.1881819>
- Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(2), 106-116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053002003>
- Gershenson, S., Holt, S. B., & Papageorge, N. W. (2016). Who believes in me? The effect of student–teacher demographic match on teacher expectations. *Economics of Education Review* 52, 209–24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2016.03.002>
- Golann, J. W., & Jones, A. (2024). How principals balance control and care in urban school discipline. *Urban Education*, 59(1), 31-62.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00420859211046824>

- Gooden, M. A., & O'Doherty, A. (2015). Do you see what I see? Fostering aspiring leaders' racial awareness. *Urban Education*, 50(2), 225-255.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085914534273>
- Gregory, A., Clawson, K., Davis, A., & Gerewitz, J. (2016). The promise of restorative practices to transform teacher-student relationships and achieve equity in school discipline. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 26(4), 325-353.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2014.929950>
- Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Noguera, P. A. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin?. *Educational Researcher*, 39(1), 59-68.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357621>
- Gregory, A., & Weinstein, R. S. (2008). The discipline gap and African Americans: Defiance or cooperation in the high school classroom. *Journal of School Psychology*, 46(4), 455-475. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2007.09.001>Get rights and content
- Grissom, J. A., Kern, E. C., & Rodriguez, L. A. (2015). The “representative bureaucracy” in education: Educator workforce diversity, policy outputs, and outcomes for disadvantaged students. *Educational Researcher*, 44(3), 185-192.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X15580102>
- Grissom, J. A. & Loeb, S. (2017). “Assessing principals’ assessments: Subjective evaluations of teacher effectiveness in low- and high-stakes environments.” *Education Finance and Policy* 12(3), 369–95. https://doi.org/10.1162/EDFP_a_00210
- Ferguson, C. J., & Smith, S. (2023). Race, class, and criminal adjudication: Is the US criminal justice system as biased as is often assumed? A meta-analytic review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 101905.

Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, 1707-1791.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/1341787>

Hirschfield, P. (2008). The uneven spread of school criminalisation in the United States: Paul Hirschfield explains why school misconduct in the United States, especially in the inner cities, is increasingly treated as crime. *Criminal Justice Matters*, 74(1), 28-30.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09627250802476817>

Khalifa, M. (2015). Can Blacks be racists? Black-on-Black principal abuse in an urban school setting. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 28(2), 259-282.

Khalifa, M. A., Gooden, M. A., & Davis, J. E. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(4), 1272-1311.

Kim, E., Smith, J., Cordes, S., & Wohlstetter, P. (2024). “Positive Discipline Doesn’t Sound Like Discipline”: Experiences with Restorative Justice Implementation. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 23(3), 530-549.

Khalifa, M. (2015). Can Blacks be racists? Black-on-Black principal abuse in an urban school setting. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 28(2), 259-282.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2014.916002>

Khalifa, M. A., Gooden, M. A., & Davis, J. E. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(4), 1272-1311.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316630383>

Kim, E., Smith, J., Cordes, S., & Wohlstetter, P. (2024). “Positive discipline doesn’t sound like discipline”: Experiences with restorative justice implementation. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 23(3), 530-549. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2023.2174143>

- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465-491.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: Aka the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 74-84.
<https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.p2rj131485484751>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2021). Critical race theory—What it is not!. In G. T. Reyes, E. N. Ruglis, A. S. Tuck, & K. A. French (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education* (pp. 32-43). Routledge.
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47-68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146819509700104>
- Lindsay, C. A., & Hart, C. M. D. (2017). Exposure to same-race teachers and student disciplinary outcomes for Black students in North Carolina. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 39(3), 485–510. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373717693109>
- Little, S. J., & Welsh, R. O. (2022). Rac(e)ing to punishment? Applying theory to racial disparities in disciplinary outcomes. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 25(4), 564-584.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2019.1599344>
- Lustick, H. (2021). “Restorative justice” or restoring order? Restorative school discipline practices in urban public schools. *Urban Education*, 56(8), 1269-1296.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085917741725>
- Madkins, T. C. (2011). The Black teacher shortage: A literature review of historical and contemporary trends. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 80(3), 417-427.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41341143>

- Matsuda, M. J. (1991). Voices of America: Accent, antidiscrimination law, and a jurisprudence for the last reconstruction. *Yale Law Journal*, 1329-1407.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/796694>
- McCray, C. R., & Beachum, F. D. (2014). *School leadership in a diverse society: Helping schools prepare all students for success*. Information Age Publishing.
- McIntosh, K., Girvan, E. J., Horner, R. H., & Smolkowski, K. (2014). Education not incarceration: A conceptual model for reducing racial and ethnic disproportionality in school discipline. *Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk*, 5(2), Article 4. <https://doi.org/10.58464/2155-5834.1215>
- Menard, S. (2002). *Applied logistic regression analysis* (Vol. 106). Sage.
- Mitchell, M. M., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2013). Examining classroom influences on student perceptions of school climate: The role of classroom management and exclusionary discipline strategies. *Journal of School Psychology*, 51(5), 599-610.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2013.05.005>
- Monahan, K. C., VanDerhei, S., Bechtold, J., & Cauffman, E. (2014). From the school yard to the squad car: School discipline, truancy, and arrest. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 43, 1110-1122. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-014-0103-1>
- Morris, E. W. (2007). “Ladies” or “loudies”? Perceptions and experiences of Black girls in classrooms. *Youth & Society*, 38(4), 490-515.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X06296778>
- Noguera, P. A. (2003). Schools, prisons, and social implications of punishment: Rethinking disciplinary practices. *Theory into practice*, 42(4), 341-350.
- Mowen, T. J., Brent, J. J., & Boman IV, J. H. (2020). The effect of school discipline on offending across time. *Justice Quarterly*, 37(4), 739-760.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2019.1625428>

- Nicholson-Crotty, S., Birchmeier, Z., & Valentine, D. (2009). Exploring the impact of school discipline on racial disproportion in the juvenile justice system. *Social Science Quarterly*, 90(4), 1003-1018. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2009.00674.x>
- Nolan, K. (2021). Urban students' critical race-class narratives: An examination of the relationship between race and class within the context of punitive school discipline. *Teachers College Record*, 123(14), 21-40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01614681211063965>
- Noltemeyer, A. L., Ward, R. M., & McLoughlin, C. (2015). Relationship between school suspension and student outcomes: A meta-analysis. *School Psychology Review*, 44(2), 224-240. <https://doi.org/10.17105/spr-14-0008.1>
- Okonofua, J. A., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2015). Two strikes: Race and the disciplining of young students. *Psychological Science*, 26(5), 617-624. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797615570365>
- Owens, J. (2022). Double jeopardy: Teacher biases, racialized organizations, and the production of racial/ethnic disparities in school discipline. *American Sociological Review*, 87(6), 1007-1048. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224221135810>
- Perry, B. L., & Morris, E. W. (2014). Suspending progress: Collateral consequences of exclusionary punishment in public schools. *American Sociological Review*, 79(6), 1067-1087. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122414556308>
- Pyo, J. (2020). School principals' perceptions of crime risk and academic climate: Links to school safety practices. *Journal of School Violence*, 19(4), 594-609. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2020.1783671>

- Riddle, T., & Sinclair, S. (2019). Racial disparities in school-based disciplinary actions are associated with county-level rates of racial bias. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(17), 8255-8260. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1808307116>
- Ritter, G. W., & Anderson, K. P. (2018). Examining disparities in student discipline: Mapping inequities from infractions to consequences. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 93(2), 161-173. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2018.1435038>
- Rosenbaum, J. (2020). Educational and criminal justice outcomes 12 years after school suspension. *Youth & Society*, 52(4), 515-547. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X17752208>
- Samimi, C., Han, T. M., Navvab, A., Sedivy, J. A., & Anyon, Y. (2023). Restorative practices and exclusionary school discipline: An integrative review. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 26(1), 28-47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2023.2204884>
- Shabazian, A. N. (2020). Voices that matter: Chief administrative officers' role in the student discipline gap. *Urban Education*, 55(1), 66-94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916651319>
- Simson, D. (2013). Exclusion, punishment, racism, and our schools: A critical race theory perspective on school discipline. *UCLA L. Rev.*, 61(2), 506-563. <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/uclalr61&i=498>
- Skiba, R. J., Arredondo, M. I., & Rausch, M. K. (2014). New and developing research on disparities in discipline. *Bloomington, IN: The Equity Project at Indiana University*.
- Skiba, R. J., Chung, C. G., Trachok, M., Baker, T. L., Sheya, A., & Hughes, R. L. (2014). Parsing disciplinary disproportionality: Contributions of infraction, student, and school characteristics to out-of-school suspension and expulsion. *American Educational Research Journal*, 51(4), 640-670. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831214541670>

- Skiba, R. J., Fergus, E., & Gregory, A. (2022). The new Jim Crow in school 1: Exclusionary discipline and structural racism. In E. J. Sabornie, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of classroom management* (pp. 211-230). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003275312>
- Skiba, R. J., Horner, R. H., Chung, C. G., Rausch, M. K., May, S. L., & Tobin, T. (2011). Race is not neutral: A national investigation of African American and Latino disproportionality in school discipline. *School Psychology Review*, 40(1), 85-107.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02796015.2011.12087730>
- Skiba, R. J., & Peterson, R. L. (2000). School discipline at a crossroads: From zero tolerance to early response. *Exceptional Children*, 66(3), 335-346.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/001440290006600305>
- Smith, B. N., & Hains, B. J. (2012). Examining administrators' disciplinary philosophies: A conceptual model. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48(3), 548-576.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X12441363>
- Smolkowski, K., Girvan, E. J., McIntosh, K., Nese, R. N., & Horner, R. H. (2016). Vulnerable decision points for disproportionate office discipline referrals: Comparisons of discipline for African American and White elementary school students. *Behavioral Disorders*, 41(4), 178-195. <https://doi.org/10.17988/bedi-41-04-178-195.1>
- Sobti, N., & Welsh, R. O. (2023). Adding color to my tears: Toward a theoretical framework for antiblackness in school discipline. *Educational Researcher*, 52(8), 500-511.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X231191448>
- Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 8(1), 23-44.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040200800103>

- [StataCorp. 2021.](#) *Stata Statistical Software: Release 17*. College Station, TX: StataCorp LLC.
- Suh, S., & Suh, J. (2007). Risk factors and levels of risk for high school dropouts. *Professional School Counseling, 10*(3), 297–306. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X0701000312>
- Taie, S., & Lewis, L. (2022). Characteristics of 2020-21 Public and Private K-12 School Teachers in the United States: Results from the National Teacher and Principal Survey. First Look. NCES 2022-113. *National Center for Education Statistics*.
- Taylor, E., Gillborn, D., & Ladson-Billings, G. (Eds.). (2023). Foundations of critical race theory in education. Taylor & Francis.
- Texas Education Agency (n.d.). E0919 At-risk-indicator-code. Retrieved from <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/peims/standards/1314/e0919.html>
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary and Secondary Education," 1995-96 through 2022-23; and National Elementary and Secondary Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity Projection Model, through 2031, prepared December 2023. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d23/tables/dt23_203.50.asp
- U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2017-18 Civil Rights Data Collection, released October 2020, updated May 2021. <https://ocrdata.ed.gov>
- Wallace Jr, J. M., Goodkind, S., Wallace, C. M., & Bachman, J. G. (2008). Racial, ethnic, and gender differences in school discipline among US high school students: 1991-2005. The *Negro Educational Review, 59*(1-2), 47. [PMC2678799](#)
- Welsh, R. O. (2023). Navigating tensions in school discipline: Examining school leaders, teachers, and the conversion of referrals into suspensions. *American Journal of Education, 129*(2), 237-264. <https://doi.org/10.1086/723064>

- Welsh, R. O. (2024). School leadership, race, and school discipline: Examining the relationship between school leader-student racial congruence and the likelihood of exclusionary discipline. *Race and Justice*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21533687241227176>
- Welsh, R. O., & Little, S. (2018). The school discipline dilemma: A comprehensive review of disparities and alternative approaches. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(5), 752-794.
- Welsh, R. O., & Sobti, N. (2023). Moving from pathology to politicized care: Examining Black school leaders' perspectives on school discipline. *Journal of School Leadership*, 33(6), 579-606. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10526846231174153>
- Wiley, K. E., Anyon, Y., Yang, J. L., Pauline, M. E., Rosch, A., Valladares, G., Downing, B. J. & Pisciotta, L. (2018). Looking back, moving forward: Technical, normative, and political dimensions of school discipline. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 54(2), 275-302. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X17751179>
- Williams III, J. A., Davis, A., Richardson, S. C., & Lewis, C. W. (2022). Can assistant principals' years of experience make a difference in school suspensions? A state-wide analysis of North Carolina assistant principals. *Journal of School Leadership*, 32(3), 246-266.
- Williams III, J. A., & Lewis, C. W. (Eds.). (2022). *Reimagining school discipline for the 21st century student: Engaging students, practitioners, and community members*. IAP.
- Williams III, J. A., Lewis, C., Starker Glass, T., Butler, B. R., & Hoon Lim, J. (2023). The discipline gatekeeper: Assistant principals' experiences with managing school discipline in urban middle schools. *Urban Education*, 58(8), 1543-1571. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085920908913>
- Williams III, J. A., Mallant, C., & Svajda-Hardy, M. (2023). A gap in culturally responsive classroom management coverage? A critical policy analysis of states' school discipline

policies. *Educational Policy*, 37(5), 1191-1216.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/08959048221087213>

Williams, J. (1988). Reducing the Disproportionately High Frequency of Disciplinary Actions Against Minority Students: An Assessment-Based Policy Approach. *Equity & Excellence*, 24(2), 31-37.

Wu, S. C., Pink, W., Crain, R., & Moles, O. (1982). Student suspension: A critical reappraisal. *The Urban Review*, 14(4), 245-303.

Wyatt, R. W. (2010). *Voices of assistant principals on the importance of student discipline to effective schools*. University of Houston.

APPENDIX A

Table 1
Sample Distribution of Black Students Demographics and Suspensions in Texas Urban High Schools from 2011 to 2018

	<i>N (%)</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Black Girls	261,966		
Black Boys	297,003		
<i>Student Level</i>			
English as Second Language	1413	2.98	0.16
English Language Learner	1,416	2.01	0.11
Economically Disadvantaged	122,587	1.70	0.46
At-Risk	110,034	1.66	0.47
Immigrant	453	1.00	0.07
Gifted	12,359	1.05	0.22
<i>Campus Level</i>			
AP Total	174,030	5.1	2.55
Black AP	67,871 (39)		0.30
White AP	71,352 (41)		0.28
Latinx AP	29,585 (17)		0.21
Black Principals	75 (27)		0.43
White Principals	172 (52)		0.49
Latinx Principals	30 (19)		0.38
OSS			
Black Boys	7,146		
Black Girls	5,221		
ISS			

Black Boys	14,748
Black Girls	10,246

Note. Data retrieved from Texas Education Agency (n.d.).

APPENDIX B

Table 1***Logistic Regression Model for Principal's Race as Predictor of Texas High School Black Boy' OSS***

OSS	OR	Std.	z	P>z	95% CI	
<i>Principal Race</i>						
Black	0.05	10.76	-0.01	0.99	0.00	1.60
White	0.09	18.33	-0.01	0.99	0.00	2.70
Asian	-					
Mult-racial	0.02	3.69	-0.02	0.99	0.00	5.40
<i>Urbanicity</i>						
Large	7.75***	1.26	12.59	0.00	5.63	10.65
Midsize	0.61***	0.10	-2.92	0.00	0.43	0.85
Small	-					
<i>School Characteristics</i>						
Title I Eligible	0.07***	0.01	-22.30	0.00	0.05	0.09
Title I School-Wide	-					
Magnet	-					
FTE Teachers	0.93	0.00	-22.97	0.00	0.93	0.94
Free Lunch	1.01***	0.00	12.54	0.00	1.01	1.01
Free or Reduced Lunch	0.99***	0.00	-7.87	0.00	0.99	1.00
Black Students	0.05***	0.02	-8.52	0.00	0.02	0.09
White Students	0.03***	0.01	-10.02	0.00	0.01	0.05
Latinx Students	0.00	0.45	-0.03	0.98	-6.80	6.50
Asian Students	-					
Multi-Racial Students	-					
Total # of Assistant Principals	1.74***	0.04	26.17	0.00	1.67	1.81
% Black Assistant Principals	0.44***	0.06	-5.98	0.00	0.33	0.57
% White Assistant Principals	0.23***	0.03	-10.08	0.00	0.17	0.31
% Latinx Assistant Principals	0.03***	0.01	-22.16	0.00	0.02	0.05
English as Second Language	-					
English Language Program	-					
Economically Disadvantaged	0.80***	0.04	-4.22	0.00	0.72	0.88
At-Risk	1.62***	0.09	9.08	0.00	1.46	1.80
Immigrant	-					
Gifted	-					
cons	119.95	25433.2	0.02	0.98	-3.90	3.70

Note. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

APPENDIX C

Table 2***Logistic Regression Model for Principal's Race as Predictor of Texas High School Black Boy' ISS***

ISS	OR	Std.	z	P>z	95% CI	
<i>Principal Race</i>						
Black	0.03***	0.01	-6.98	0.00	0.01	0.08
White	0.11***	0.06	-4.33	0.00	0.04	0.30
Asian	-					
Mult-racial	0.01***	0.00	-9.47	0.00	0.00	0.01
<i>Urbanicity</i>						
Large	1.55***	0.12	5.93	0.00	1.34	1.80
Midsize	-					
Small	-					
<i>School Characteristics</i>						
	33.62** *	12.88	9.18	0.00	15.87	71.22
Title I Eligible	-					
Title I School-Wide	-					
Magnet	0.01***	0.02	-11.60	0.00	0.07	0.15
FTE Teachers	0.98***	0.00	-8.91	0.00	0.98	0.99
Free Lunch	0.99***	0.00	-21.94	0.00	0.99	0.99
Free or Reduced Lunch	1.01***	0.00	26.91	0.00	1.01	1.01
Black Students	1.41***	0.11	4.27	0.00	1.20	1.64
White Students	1.05	0.06	0.95	0.34	0.95	1.17
Latinx Students	0.10***	0.05	-4.53	0.00	0.04	0.28
Asian Students	-					
Multi-Racial Students	-					
Total # of Assistant Principals	0.70***	0.01	-23.79	0.00	0.67	0.72
% Black Assistant Principals	2.39***	0.29	7.11	0.00	1.88	3.04
% White Assistant Principals	2.27***	0.26	7.08	0.00	1.81	2.85
% Latinx Assistant Principals	1.86***	0.22	5.22	0.00	1.47	2.35
English as Second Language	-					
English Language Program	-					
Economically Disadvantaged	1.65***	0.06	14.00	0.00	1.54	1.78
At-Risk	0.48***	0.02	-21.45	0.00	0.45	0.52
Immigrant	-					
Gifted	0.01***	0.01	-9.66	0.00	0.01	0.03
cons	0.96	0.76	-0.06	0.96	0.20	4.56

Note. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

APPENDIX D

Table 3***Logistic Regression Model for Principal's Race as Predictor of Texas High School Black Girls' OSS***

OSS	OR	Std.	z	P>z	95% CI	
<i>Principal Race</i>						
Black	0.58	0.31	-1.01	0.31	0.20	1.67
White	6.59***	3.74	3.32	0.00	2.16	20.04
Asian	7.49***	3.94	3.83	0.00	2.67	20.98
Mult-racial	0.03***	0.02	-4.77	0.00	0.01	0.11
<i>Urbanicity</i>						
Large	0.28***	0.03	-12.37	0.00	0.23	0.35
Midsize	0.01***	0.00	-17.65	0.00	0.01	0.02
Small	-					
<i>School Characteristics</i>						
Title I Eligible	0.98	0.10	-0.23	0.82	0.79	1.20
Title I School-Wide	-					
Magnet	-					
FTE Teachers	0.99***	0.00	-4.48	0.00	0.99	0.99
Free Lunch	1.01***	0.00	16.00	0.00	1.01	1.01
Free or Reduced Lunch	0.99***	0.00	-13.02	0.00	0.99	0.99
Black Students	1.13	0.11	1.27	0.20	0.93	1.37
White Students	0.25***	0.06	-5.62	0.00	0.15	0.40
Latinx Students	0.25***	0.13	-2.74	0.01	0.09	0.67
Asian Students	-					
Multi-Racial Students	-					
Total # of Assistant Principals	0.64***	0.02	-18.10	0.00	0.61	0.68
% Black Assistant Principals	0.21***	0.03	-9.70	0.00	0.15	0.29
% White Assistant Principals	0.25***	0.04	-8.51	0.00	0.18	0.34
% Latinx Assistant Principals	0.15***	0.02	-11.60	0.00	0.11	0.21
English as Second Language	-					
English Language Program	-					
Economically Disadvantaged	0.77***	0.04	-5.29	0.00	0.70	0.85
At-Risk	12.00** *	0.87	34.21	0.00	10.41	13.84
Immigrant	-					
Gifted	-					
cons	0.02	0.01	-6.60	0.00	0.01	0.07

Note. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

APPENDIX E

Table 4***Logistic Regression Model for Principal's Race as Predictor of Texas High School Black Girls' ISS***

ISS	OR	Std.	z	P>z	95% CI	
<i>Principal Race</i>						
Black	6.75***	2.03	6.36	0.00	3.75	12.17
White	0.41***	0.12	-3.11	0.00	0.24	0.72
Asian	-	-				
Mult-racial	0.04***	0.02	-6.85	0.00	0.02	0.10
<i>Urbanicity</i>						
Large	40.27***	10.53	14.14	0.00	24.13	67.22
Midsized	-					
Small	-					
<i>School Characteristics</i>						
Title I Eligible	7.03***	3.52	3.90	0.00	2.64	18.75
Title I School-Wide	-					
Magnet	0.97	0.08	-0.42	0.68	0.82	1.13
FTE Teachers	0.96***	0.00	-10.47	0.00	0.96	0.97
Free Lunch	0.99***	0.00	-10.45	0.00	0.99	0.99
Free or Reduced Lunch	1.01***	0.00	12.60	0.00	1.01	1.01
Black Students	0.07***	0.01	-15.91	0.00	0.05	0.10
White Students	0.21***	0.02	-13.99	0.00	0.17	0.26
Latinx Students	2.68***	0.68	3.87	0.00	1.63	4.42
Asian Students	-					
Multi-Racial Students	-					
Total # of Assistant Principals	1.22***	0.03	7.23	0.00	1.15	1.28
% Black Assistant Principals	0.21***	0.03	-11.66	0.00	0.16	0.27
% White Assistant Principals	0.04***	0.01	-22.13	0.00	0.03	0.05
% Latinx Assistant Principals	0.01***	0.00	-27.26	0.00	0.01	0.01
English as Second Language	-					
English Language Program	-					
Economically Disadvantaged	0.30***	0.02	-21.54	0.00	0.27	0.34
At-Risk	2.81***	0.16	18.15	0.00	2.52	3.15
Immigrant	1.00	-				
Gifted	1.00	-				
cons	0.01	0.01	-7.65	0.00	0.00	0.03

Note. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001