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The Early Effects of the Removal of Willful Defiance

From the Discipline Policy At Urban High Schools

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

by

Sara Lasnover

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Early Effects of the Removal of Willful Defiance

From the Discipline Policy At Urban High Schools

by

Sara Lasnover

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Sandra H. Graham, Co-Chair

Professor Linda P. Rose, Co-Chair

Nationwide, African-American students are being suspended at disproportionate rates. This is also true in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). In 2011-2012, while 9% of K-12 enrollment was African-American, 28% of the suspensions were given to African-American students. Of this 28%, 27.9% were categorized as "willful defiance," a very subjective, ambiguous, category. In an effort to decrease suspension rates overall as well as the disproportionate rate of suspensions of African-American students, the Board of Education of LAUSD chose to remove "willful defiance" as a reason for suspensions beginning the 2013-2014 school year. They were the first school district in the state of California to implement this policy.

The purpose of this study was to gain an early perspective as to what effects this removal would have on discipline practices at the high school level. Through analysis of existing District

data, interviews of six high school principals, and questionnaire responses from 69 high school teachers, this concurrent mixed methods study explored suspension patterns before and after the change in policy, as well as the discipline beliefs and practices of principals and teachers.

Data show that although all six schools in the study had substantial rates of suspensions overall from 2009-2009 to 2013-2014, three of the schools saw an increase in rates of disproportionality of their African-American students. As well, the first year after the removal of "willful defiance," the schools saw an increase in the use of less subjective categories, *Caused Physical Injury to Another Person* and *Willful Use of Force/Violence Not Self Defense*. Principal interviews revealed that while some believe that students should only be removed from class for reasons of safety, others still feel that defiance and respect warrant removal. In the questionnaire, more than 25% of the respondents indicated a lack of awareness of the policy change, and 30% of the teachers admitted to continuing to refer students for suspension but using a different category. Finally, the study describes various implementations that may help to decrease the disproportionate rate of suspensions of African-American students.

The dissertation of Sara Lasnover is approved.

Christina Christie

Jaana Juvonen

Sandra H. Graham, Committee Co-Chair

Linda P. Rose, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to two very special people, the memories of whom
kept me going and got me through to the end of this process:

My "mumsie"
Karen Ann Lasnover
1944 – 2010

You weren't on Earth when I began this endeavor, but you've been with me
the whole way through. I love you most.
Here we grow again.

My friend and colleague
Dr. Leigh C. Woods
1970 - 2014

Thank you for your support as I began this process and worked through all of the challenges
it presented to me. I wish you were here with me to celebrate the end result.
The lives you touched were many.

Memories of you will always bring a smile to my face.

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Finally, but most importantly, I wish to thank my friends and family for their unconditional love, encouragement, patience, and understanding over the past three and a half years. Now that I have made it through this process, the adventure in my life can return and I can enjoy my time with you all again. The World is waiting! To Dad, Rosa, and Tamara, thoughts of your pride in me helped get me to the end. Thank you. And, my dear Kaya, let this endeavor of mine prove to you that you can do anything you put your mind to. Finally, to my FOFs, I know that our girl is thrilled that I chose to take this journey as a Bruin!

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Chapter One: Statement Of The Problem

Introduction

> *"Suspension, generally viewed as a disciplinary action that is administered as a consequence of a student's inappropriate behavior, requires that a student absent him/herself from the classroom or from the school for a specified period of time. Suspension serves to protect school staff and other students from further verbal or physical abuse and, by isolating the offending student, it allows the classroom to function without undue disruption."*
>
> -Costenbader and Markson (1998)

But is school suspension effective? Studies show that in fact, it appears to predict higher future rates of misbehavior and suspension among those students who are suspended, rather than reducing the likelihood of disruption (Bowditch, 1993; Costenbader & Markson, 1998; Raffaele Mendez, 2003; Tobin, Sugai, & Colvin, 1996). The effects of suspension on students can be negative and are often long term. Research indicates a negative relationship between the use of school suspension and school-wide academic achievement (Davis & Jordan, 1994; Raffaele Mendez, 2003; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). In the long term, school suspension and expulsion are moderately associated with a higher likelihood of school dropout and failure to graduate on time (Bowditch, 1993; Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Nationally, a disproportionately high number of African-American students are being suspended from school. With the exception of Hawaii, in 2009 the ten largest school districts in the country had a disproportionate rate of suspensions for their African-American students (see Figure 1). For example, in 2009 in the New York City Schools, African-American students represented 30.1% of the population, yet they represented 53.6% of the students who were suspended (http://ocrdata.ed.gov). This disproportionality persists even when socioeconomic and other factors are controlled for (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Skiba & Sprague, 2008; Wallace Jr, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). This would indicate that a disproportionate

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number of African-American students' academic achievement is negatively affected and there is a higher likelihood that they will drop out. This disproportionate rate also exists in the state of California as well as within the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the nation's second largest school district, and California's largest. According to The California Department of Education website, (http://cde.ca.gov) the overall suspension rate for LAUSD for the 2011-12 school year for all K-12 students was 4.0%; however, 30.6% of these suspensions were given to African-American students. More specifically, the percentage of African-Americans enrolled in LAUSD in 2011-12 was only 9.6%. This means that while only 9.6% of the District is African-American, 30.6% of the students suspended were African-American.

	New York, NY	Los Angeles, CA	Chicago, IL	Dade County, FL	Clark County, FL	Broward County, FL	Houston, TX	Hillsborough, FL	Hawaii, HI	Orange County, FL
■ Enroll	30.1%	9.4%	45.0%	25.2%	14.4%	39.1%	26.5%	22.9%	28.0%	28.0%
■ Susp.	53.6%	27.6%	75.8%	49.3%	25.8%	58.0%	46.5%	46.2%	28.0%	52.0%

Source: http://ocrdata.ed.gov
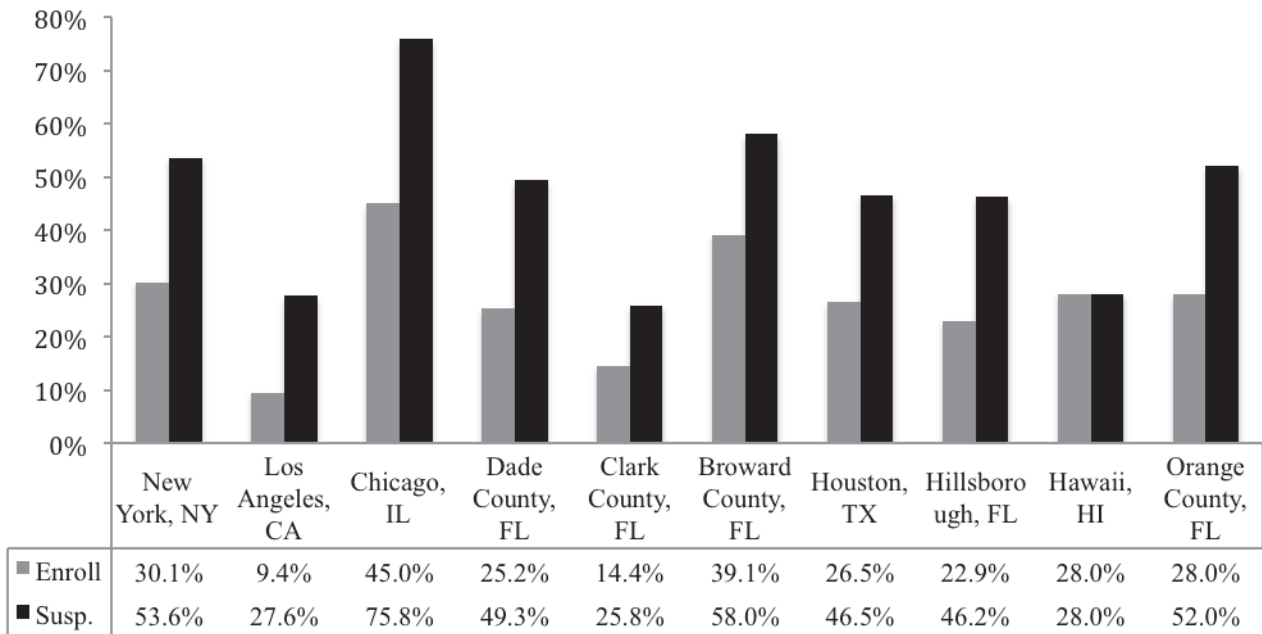
Figure 1. Rates of enrollment vs. rates of suspension for African-American students at the ten largest U.S. school districts.

In 1975, The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) released a report on data from the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (Children's Defense Fund, 1975). This report indicated higher suspension rates for African-American students compared to White students on

a variety of measures. They also reported that African-American students were more likely than White students to be suspended more than once. African-American students are also more frequently exposed to harsher disciplinary strategies (Gregory, 1995; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982) and less likely than other students to receive mild disciplinary alternatives when referred for an infraction (McFadden, Marsh, Price, & Hwang, 1992).

Background

According to Skiba, Shure, and Williams (2011) there is little research on interventions in the area of racial and ethnic disproportionality in suspensions. One intervention that has been tried is the use of positive school-wide discipline. In one study of this intervention, although overall exclusions or removals from class in the form of suspensions decreased, White students appeared to benefit most from this decrease whereas African-American students remained overrepresented in exclusions, in particular long-term exclusions (Vincent & Tobin, 2011). However, there have been numerous recommendations as to how this disproportionality may be reduced. Some of these recommendations include: race conscious approaches at the teacher preparation and professional development levels (Monroe, 2005); incorporating multi-tiered prevention strategies (Drakeford, 2006); and discontinuing the use of zero-tolerance discipline policies (Creswell, 2009; Drakeford, 2006; Monroe, 2009).

California Education Code §48900(k) states that a "pupil shall not be suspended from school or recommended for expulsion unless the superintendent of the school district or the principal of the school in which the pupil is enrolled determines that the pupil has committed an act as defined pursuant to… disrupt[ing] school activities or otherwise willfully defy[ing] the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties." However, the Code neglects to

specifically define the term, "willful defiance." Therefore, the classification of "willful

defiance" has become a catch-all for many of the students' behaviors.

Data from the California Department of Education indicate that for the 2011-12 school

year in LAUSD, 31.33% of suspensions for all students were classified as "willful defiance"

compared to 35.43% of the suspensions of African-American students - a high rate overall as

well as a disproportionate rate for African-American students (http://cde.ca.gov). In October

2011, LAUSD entered a voluntary agreement with the Office for Civil Rights that will accelerate

its efforts on closing the achievement and opportunity gaps for its African-American students.

Specifically, the District agreed to work to report disparate discipline rates and to eliminate

inequitable and disproportionate discipline practices (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). To

this end, they removed "willful defiance" as a classification for suspension beginning in the

2013-2014 school year, and were the first school district in California to do so.

The District believes that removing "willful defiance," which is a subjective use of

suspension, from the discipline policy will bring about a change in discipline practices, decrease

the number of suspensions overall, and more importantly, reduce the disproportionate rate of

suspensions of African-American students (LAUSD, 2013) thereby increasing their attendance in

school and their academic achievement. However, I do not believe that removing "willful

defiance" from the discipline policy will have the intended effects. To further investigate this

supposition, my study focused on the following research questions:

1. When comparing documented reasons for suspensions of African-American
   students at urban high schools, what differences are there before and after the
   removal of suspensions for "willful defiance?"

2. How does racial representation influence discipline practices in urban high
   schools?

3. After the removal of suspension for "willful defiance," how do administrators and teachers describe their policies and practices around school suspensions?

As discussed, the disproportionate rate of suspensions of African-American students is a problem within the LAUSD, the state of California, as well as nationally. LAUSD is the second largest school district in the country and is very diverse, which means that research done within the district will likely reflect problems and potential solutions for other urban districts throughout the country.

Research Design

The research questions were studied through concurrent mixed methods to explore the results of a recent change in policy, which had yet to be examined (Creswell, 2009). I compiled and cross-analyzed data from three different sources: existing data regarding school suspensions, results from teacher questionnaires, and responses from administrator interviews. Data from the District's non-Charter comprehensive high schools were analyzed for the study. Six of the schools - three with a relatively large population of African-American students and three with a relatively small population of African-American students – were selected for more detailed analysis. Their teachers filled out questionnaires and their principals were interviewed.

Using school records data, the first part of the study consisted of a comparison of the reasons documented for suspension for the five years before the removal of "willful defiance" and the first year after its removal. The second part of the study was an analysis of the responses received from teachers from a questionnaire regarding the revised discipline policy and their reactions to the change. The final step was conducting interviews with the six principals from the participating schools. The transcripts of these interviews were analyzed and coded to determine the various themes that arose.

Significance of the Research For Solving the Problem

While there are a variety of methods to be considered when attempting to reduce the suspension rates of African-American students, reducing or eliminating zero-tolerance from discipline policies can have a great effect. A step in this direction is removing the ability to suspend students for "willful defiance." However, will this removal have its intended effect or will school administrators and teachers turn to other reasons for suspending their African-American students? The intended goal is to keep the students in class, but if schools are still finding ways to remove them, then something other than or in addition to the removal of "willful defiance" should be considered.

My findings and recommendations will be presented, at minimum, to the Deputy Superintendent of Operations, the District Superintendent, and the Board of Education of the Los Angeles Unified School District. I hope that this research will lead to the District looking more closely at educating District staff on the cultural differences of our students, specifically our African-American students. As stated earlier, the disproportionate rate of suspensions of African-American students is both a national and state problem and there is little intervention research in the area of racial and ethnic disproportionality in suspensions (Skiba, Shure, et al., 2011). Therefore, I hope to disseminate the data and information I collected through various journals as my research may be of assistance to other school districts throughout the country that have proportionately high suspension rates for specific groups.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter offers an overview of the existing research that is pertinent to this study. I begin with a summary of both national and state data related to suspensions, with a focus on the disproportionality for African-American students. I then discuss the research on the effects that suspension can have on a child and why suspension is so detrimental. This includes a negative relationship between the use of school suspension and expulsion and school-wide academic achievement (Davis & Jordan, 1994; Raffaele Mendez, 2003; Skiba & Rausch, 2006), school dropout (Bowditch, 1993; Ekstrom et al., 1986), and involvement in the juvenile justice system (Wald & Losen, 2003).

In seeking to understand administrators' and teachers' beliefs about the purpose of suspensions, I then provide a brief history and summary of four types of discipline practices: the zero-tolerance discipline policy, which is a style of discipline that leads to a large number of suspensions - especially of African-American students; School-wide Positive Behavior Support, a framework that ensures that all students have access to the most effective and accurately implemented instructional and behavioral practices possible - here I specifically emphasize a study that focused on its effects on students of color; Culturally Relevant Classroom Management, a method which focuses on the utilization of students' social, cultural and language backgrounds; and Restorative Justice, which provides an alternative framework for thinking about wrongdoing (Zehr, 2002).

Suspension Data

> *"When confronted by high rates of problem behavior, the traditional urban reactive response is to direct school resources to those students with the most persistent, intensive, or chronic academic and behavioral needs. The result is increases in suspensions and expulsions and negative school climate and student-adult relations."*

National data released by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights indicate that in 20006, although only 17% of students were African-American, they made up 37% of first-time suspensions (see Figure 2). In fact, across the country African-Americans are about three times more likely to be suspended than other ethnic groups (APA Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). However, the report does not analyze the specific reasons that the students are disciplined. Additionally, data from the National Center from Education Statistics show that at the high school level in 1999, 2003 and 2007, African-American students represented the greatest percentage of suspensions (see Figure 3).

	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black (non-Hispanic)	White (non-Hispanic)
% Suspended	14.3%	19.0%	20.2%	37.4%	39.1%
% Enrolled	12.4%	48.1%	20.4%	17.1%	56.4%

Source: http://ocrdata.ed.gov
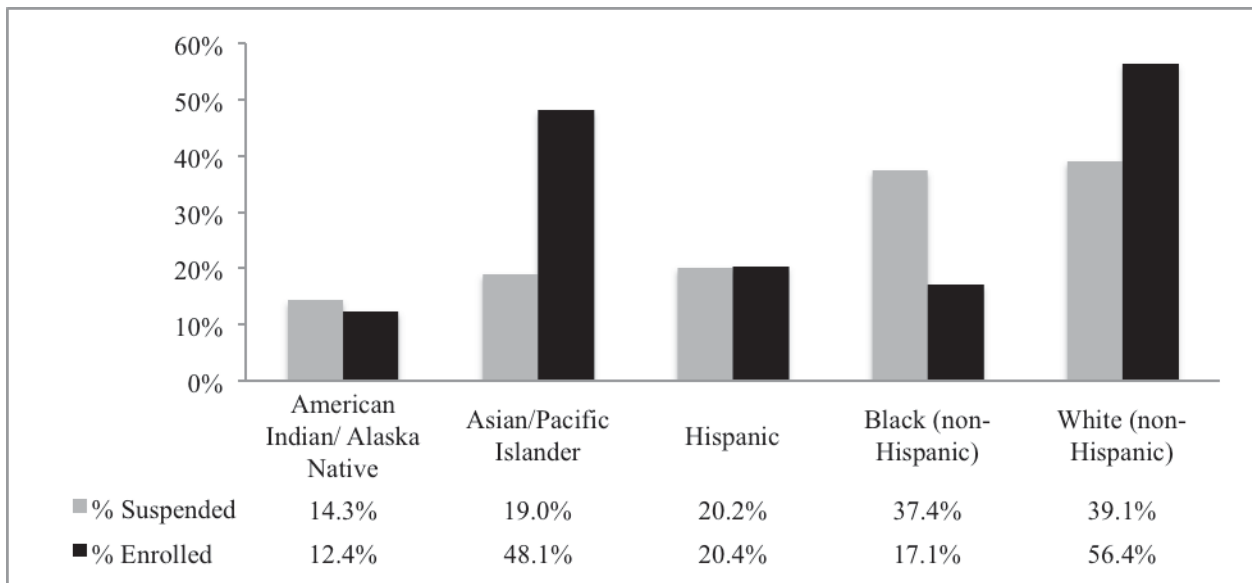
Figure 2. National suspension data, 2006

According to Section 48900(k) of the California Education Code, a student can be suspended or expelled if he or she has "disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties;" in other words, "willful defiance or

disruption of school activities." During the past school year, 2011-2012, approximately 42% of

all suspensions in California were attributed to these behaviors. However, these terms are very

vague and open to substantial interpretation by school officials, who desire clearer definitions of

these behavior categories at the district level (EdSource, 2012).

	1999	2003	2007
■ White	18.2%	18.1%	17.7%
■ Black	37.0%	30.2%	49.0%
■ Hispanic	22.7%	21.9%	26.5%
■ Asian/Pacific Islander	18.4%	11.6%	12.8%
■ American Indian/Alaska Native	36.3%		
■ Two or more races			29.1%
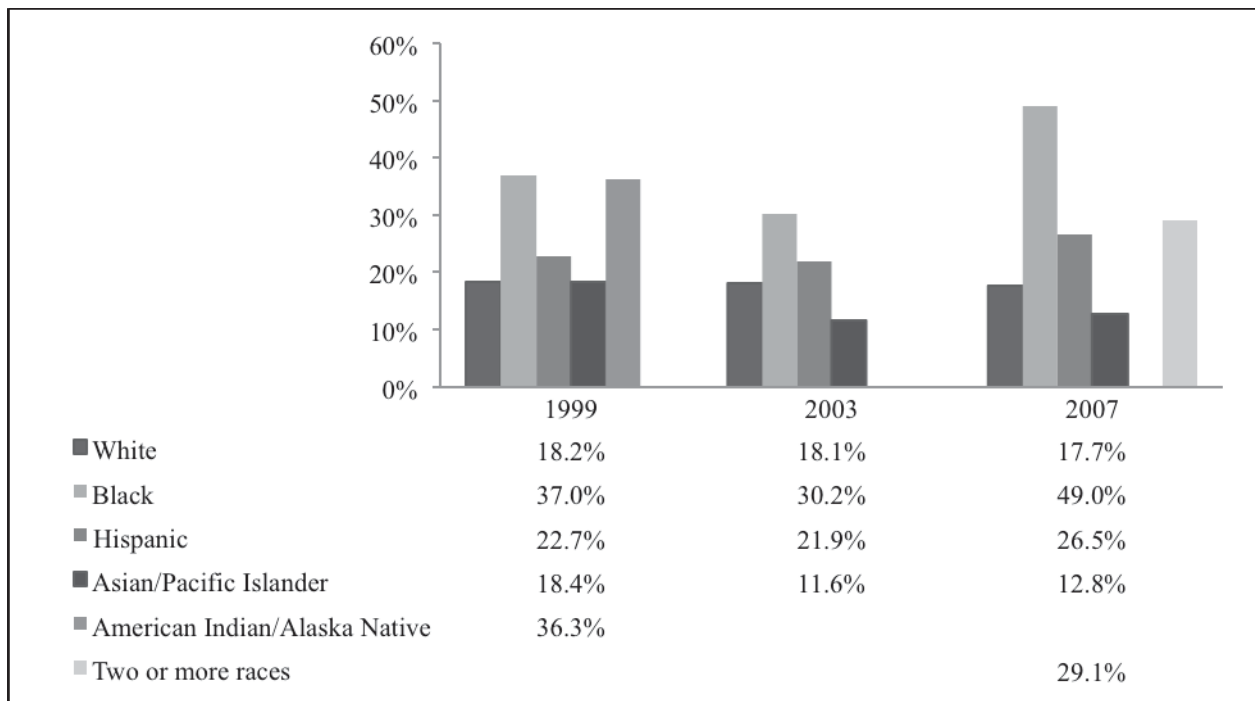
Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics

Figure 3. National student suspension rates grades 9-12 – 1999, 2003, 2007

       In California, school districts have discretion on the number of days a suspension will

last, usually with a maximum of five days. In a recent statewide survey of California school

districts that was conducted by EdSource (EdSource, 2012) respondents indicated that at the high

school level, 65% of suspended students are suspended for three or more days each time they are

suspended and 14% are suspended for the maximum five days. Responses to this same survey

indicate that two-thirds of the survey takers (68%) expressed concern that their school discipline

policies are having a differential impact on students from different racial and ethnic

backgrounds, with 34% saying they were "very concerned."

Effects of Suspension

Before we begin to look at the differential impacts of suspension, it is important that we look at the reasons for which students are being suspended and recognize the differences in reasons for suspension between African-American students and White students. For example, Skiba, Horner, et al. (2011) found that African-American students tended to be referred for more subjective reasons (Fallon, O'Keeffe, & Sugai, 2012) such as disruption, defiance, disrespect, insubordination, and noncompliance, whereas White students tended to be referred for minor inappropriate verbal language or minor physical contact. Additionally, Gregory (1995); Irvine (1990); and Townsend (2000) noted that minority students are more likely to receive harsher and more punitive punishments for less serious behaviors, such as defying school authority and "bothering others" (McFadden et al., 1992), than their non-minority classmates are.

Although several studies have explored the negative effects of suspension, researchers have cited the need for additional studies in this area (Christle, Nelson, & Jolivette, 2004; Townsend, 2000). Students' exclusion from school in the form of suspensions and expulsions can lead to many negative outcomes including low academic achievement (Cartledge, Tillman, & Johnson, 2001; Christle et al., 2004; Scott, Nelson, & Liaupsin, 2001), delinquency (Christle et al., 2004; Dunbar Jr. & Villarruel, 2002; R Skiba & R. Peterson, 1999), and dropping out (Cassidy & Jackson, 2005; Christle et al., 2004; Dunbar Jr. & Villarruel, 2002; Skiba, 2000; R. Skiba & R. Peterson, 1999; R Skiba & R. Peterson, 1999; Wald, 2001). School exclusion also jeopardizes students' graduation rates and therefore professional opportunities (Vincent & Tobin, 2011) and earning potential. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), the unemployment rate in 2012 for a person who does not graduate from high school was 12.4% compared to 8.3% for a person who does graduate from high school (see Figure 4). Additionally,

that same person who does not graduate from high school will only earn an average

of $471 a week compared to the high school graduate who will earn $652 a week – this is

approximately $9,400 more annually (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012).

Unemployment rate in 2012 (%)		Median weekly earnings in 2012 ($)
2.5	Doctoral degree	1,624
2.1	Professional degree	1,735
3.5	Master's degree	1,300
4.5	Bachelor's degree	1,066
6.2	Associate's degree	785
7.7	Some college, no degree	727
8.3	High school diploma	652
12.4	Less than a high school diploma	471
All workers: 6.8%		All workers: $815
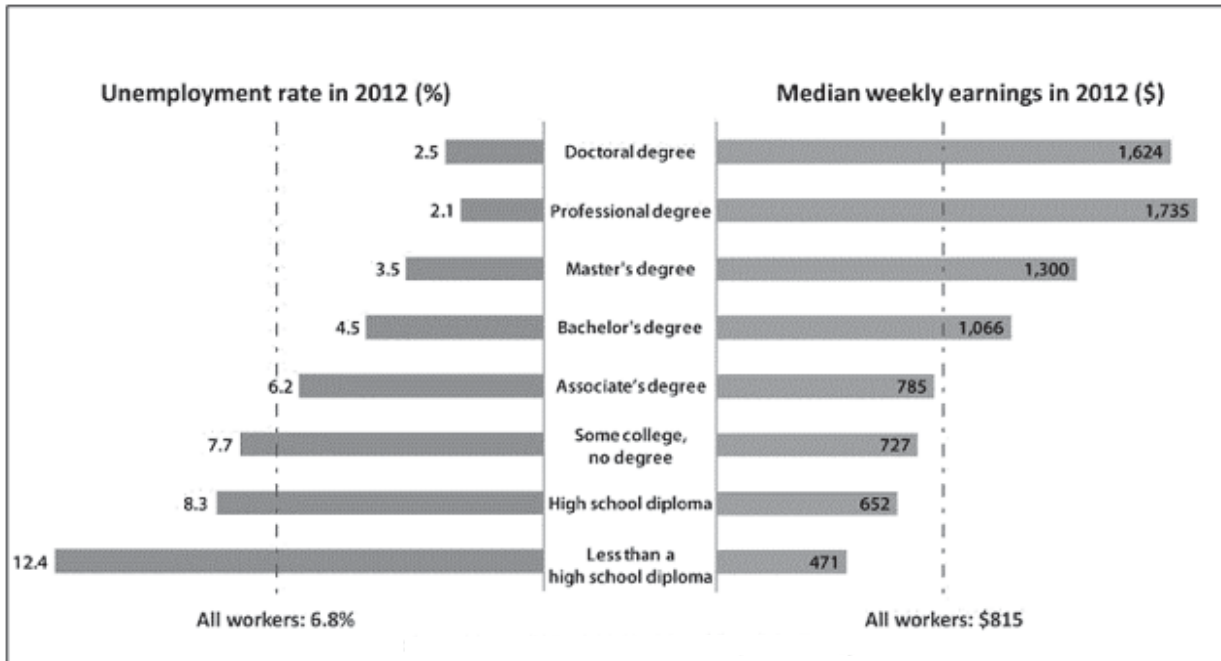
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Figure 4. Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2012

Specifically, students in urban districts who do not attend school due to suspension,

expulsion, or dropping out usually remain in the school's neighborhood. This can lead to chronic

exposure to violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and higher mortality rates (Lane, Lanza-Kaduce,

Frazier, & Bishop, 2002). Moreover, when looking at the pattern of discipline for African-

American students, they seem to foreshadow the number of African-American men who are

incarcerated, as compared to those enrolled in colleges or universities (Justice Policy Institute,

2002). The United States Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics (2011) reported

that in 2010 the total number of inmates in state and federal prisons was 1.3 million, 38% of

whom were African-American (U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011).

However, African-Americans only represent 12.7% of the United States' population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011), which suggests that African-Americans are three times more likely to be incarcerated than non African-Americans. This percentage of inmates is also nearly three times greater than the 14.46% of African-American students who were enrolled in degree-granting institutions in the fall of 2010. Darensbourg, Perez, and Blake (2010) also propose that suspensions steer African-American males toward the criminal justice system and away from the classroom and academic success by estranging them from the learning process.

Types of Discipline Practices

> *"The goal of any effective disciplinary system must be to ensure a safe school climate while avoiding policies and practices that may reduce students' opportunity to learn."*
> *- Skiba, 2008*

When considering the rates of suspension, it is important to look closely at the types of discipline that may be taking place at the school site. Some of the more common methods of discipline include zero-tolerance and positive behavior support, which play a role in the disproportionate rate of suspensions for African-American youth.

Zero-tolerance policies.

The United States Department of Education defines zero tolerance as a "school or district policy mandating predetermined consequences for various student offenses (Heaviside, Rowand, Williams, & Farris, 1998). The term "zero-tolerance" became commonly used by schools as "a philosophy or policy that mandates the application of predetermined consequences, most often severe and punitive in nature, that are intended to be applied regardless of the gravity of behavior, mitigating circumstances, or situational context" (Skiba, 2008, p. 852). Zero-tolerance can be traced back to the 1980s when it was developed by the U.S. Customs Agency to target the growing drug trade problem in America (Henault, 2001; Martinez, 2009; Pipho, 1998; R. Skiba

& R. Peterson, 1999; R Skiba & R. Peterson, 1999). Zero-tolerance was introduced into the school system after Congress passed the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994. This act mandated a one-year expulsion of any student who was found in possession of a firearm on school grounds (Browne, Losen, & Wald, 2001; Fries & DeMitchell, 2007). Drugs were added to the policy in 1997 (Casella, 2003). Schools later added serious offenses such as fighting, unauthorized use of laser pointers, and sexual harassment (R. Skiba & R. Peterson, 1999), and less serious ones including swearing, truancy, insubordination, defiance of authority and dress-code violation (Axtman, 2005; Essex, 2004; Fries & DeMitchell, 2007; Skiba, 2000; Wald, 2001).

The addition of these various behaviors gave permission to school administrators to suspend students more frequently and freely (Martinez, 2009) and most of them utilize suspension or expulsion for discipline because they don't know what else to do (Skiba & Sprague, 2008). However this expansion of definition to include objective, nonviolent behaviors has resulted in a disproportionate number of students of color being punished under zero-tolerance policies (Browne et al., 2001).

The original goal of zero-tolerance policies was to remove or minimize any discretion on the part of the administrator in order to ensure objectivity when punishing a student (Browne et al., 2001); however, Judge Hamilton, Senior Circuit Judge, saw it as a stripping away of any judgment or discretion on the part of those administering it (Fries & DeMitchell, 2007). Its intent was to send a message that certain behaviors will not be tolerated by punishing those offenders severely (Skiba, 2000).

A review of the literature finds that the majority of evidence dealing with zero-tolerance policies is negative. However, there are supporters of zero-tolerance policies who feel that they provide opportunities for establishing and maintaining a safe environment at the school site

(Fries & DeMitchell, 2007) by removing students who engage in disruptive behavior and therefore deter others from disruption, which sends a clear message that dangerous acts will not be tolerated (Ewing, 2000). It is also believed by some, that when applying zero-tolerance policies, students are held responsible for their own actions (Fries & DeMitchell, 2007; Gorman & Pauken, 2003) and that subjective influences or contextual factors are removed from the disciplinary action, which gives fairer treatment to students (Fries & DeMitchell, 2007) – especially those who tend to be disciplined more frequently (APA Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Casella, 2003).

The evidence of the negative impact of zero-tolerance is overwhelming. Rather than reducing the likelihood of disruption, school suspension predicts higher future rates of misbehavior and suspension among previously suspended students (Bowditch, 1993; Costenbader & Markson, 1998; Raffaele Mendez, 2003; Tobin et al., 1996). So when students return to school from their suspension and display the same or even more severe behaviors (Cartledge et al., 2001; Cassidy, 2005; Christle et al., 2004; Dunbar Jr. & Villarruel, 2002; Noguera, 2003; Skiba, 2000; R. Skiba & R. Peterson, 1999; R Skiba & R. Peterson, 1999), the administrators will continue to repetitively suspend them.

School-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS).

"SWPBS is a set of intervention practices and organizational systems for establishing the social culture and intensive individual behavior supports needed to achieve academic and social success for all students."

-Sugai, Horner, & Lewis, 2009

School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS), or Positive Behavior Support (PBS), is a method of discipline in which all students are held to the same standards of behavior. It is built on the assumption that the entire school community needs to define, support, and implement the behavioral expectations of students in order to effectively establish a culture of

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positive behavior (G Sugai & Horner, 2002; George Sugai et al., 2000; George Sugai et al., 2005; Walker et al., 1996). The approach is a three-tiered model: Tier I, the foundational or primary intervention tier, involves supports for all students. In Tier 2, the secondary intervention tier, supports are used for students who do not respond to Tier 1 supports and are composed of targeted efforts to generate positive outcomes. Students whose behaviors continue to be unresponsive to Tier 1 and 2 interventions would be considered for more intensive supports found at the Tier 3, tertiary intervention tier, level (Fallon et al., 2012).

In order to implement SWPBS, a school must: (G Sugai & Horner, 2002; Warren et al., 2006) (a) establish a planning team, (b) define school-wide behavioral expectations, (c) teach behavioral expectations directly to students, (d) develop procedures for acknowledging appropriate behaviors and discouraging inappropriate behaviors, and (e) monitor and evaluate relevant outcomes (Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006).

Some of the benefits of SWPBS, when it is implemented with fidelity, can include recovered instructional time; increased academic performance; improved school climate; staff, better student, and parental satisfaction; and improvements in individual student and classroom behavior (Lassen et al., 2006; Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998; Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005; Nelson, Martella, & Marchand-Martella, 2002). However, the implementation of SWPBS in urban settings has been reported to be more challenging due to (a) high staff turnover rates, (b) less qualified or inadequately prepared staff, (c) the difficulty of maintaining integrity in its implementation, (d) bureaucracy, (e) continuous change in district leadership and priorities, (f) a disconnect between school and district administration, (g) competing initiatives that drain resources, (h) cultural differences between teachers and students (Putnam et al., 2009), and (i) a higher percentage of students in urban schools requiring Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports (Turnbull et

al., 2002; Warren et al., 2003).

Utley and Sailor (2002) identified four main themes that can have an influence on the utility and responsiveness of SWPBS in urban education, particularly in inner-city schools: (a) a need for cultural responsiveness; (b) a focus on prevention; (c) collaborative and team-driven processes and (d) active participation by district leaders. George Sugai et al. (2000) also observed that the use of culturally appropriate interventions, or interventions that consider the unique histories of the students, families, teachers, administrators and community partners, is strongly emphasized in PBS approaches. It is these cultural affinities that are critical factors in obtaining the support from families and community members in order to successfully implement the program (Fox, Dunlap, & Powell, 2002; Netzel & Eber, 2003; Sailor et al., 2006). Therefore, the success of SWPBS efforts may depend on the ability of administrators and the school leadership team to relate the multiple cultural contexts of families and the community to the values, beliefs, circumstances, and history of the school and its staff (Bohanon et al., 2006; Turnbull et al., 2002).

In urban settings, SWPBS includes a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies in order to achieve important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behavior (R. H. Horner & Sugai, 2000). To attain sustained and significant student success, it must be implemented with intensity and persistence. According to Putnam et al. (2009), a number of factors in urban settings that have an impact on the implementation of SWPBS include: (a) the need for preventive interventions due to the higher rates of problem behavior in urban areas (b) contradictory cultural and contextual community issues; (c) collaborative processes as reflected in planned, proactive, teaching-focused interventions, team-driven action planning, and data-based decision making; (d) competency of the workforce; and (e) district and

administrative leadership.

The few studies that have examined SWPBS in urban schools have found reductions in problem behavior (McCurdy, Mannella, & Eldridge, 2003; Scott, 2001; Warren et al., 2006; Warren et al., 2003), which are evidenced by an overall reduction in office discipline referrals (Barrett, Bradshaw, & Lewis-Palmer, 2008; Bohanon et al., 2006; Colvin & Fernandez, 2000; Lohrmann-O'Rourke et al., 2000; Luiselli, Putnam, & Sunderland, 2002; Mass-Galloway, Panyan, Smith, & Wessendorf, 2008; Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008; S. Taylor-Greene et al., 1997; S. J. Taylor-Greene & Kartub, 2000). However, little research has been conducted specifically regarding how many of the overall reductions in office referrals associated with SWPBS affect the exclusion of students of varying ethnic backgrounds (Vincent & Tobin, 2011).

In a study that examined suspension and expulsion (exclusion) data from 77 schools that were reported to be implementing SWPBS during academic years 2005-2006 (Time 1) and 2006-2007 (Time 2), the number of instructional days that was lost to exclusions dropped considerably. At Time 1, a total of 12,876 student days were lost compared to 9,643 days at Time 2 – a decline of 3,233 days in one year's time (Vincent & Tobin, 2011). When looking specifically at African-American students, however, at Time 1, 34.34% of the students suspended were African-American and at Time 2, 36.32% were African-American. Not only was this an overall increase in percentage of African-American students, only 21.81% of the school's population is African-American. This means that African-American students were overrepresented at both Time 1 and Time 2, regardless of the implementation of SWPBS. So, although SWPBS might be associated with a reduction in office referrals and number of exclusions overall, evidence still does not exist that it is associated with reducing the disproportionate rate of suspensions of African-American students (Vincent & Tobin, 2011).

Culturally relevant/responsive classroom management (CRCM).

"Classroom management in urban schools is more difficult than in rural or suburban schools because gaining students' cooperation while ensuring their learning involves addressing students' cultural, ethnic, social, identity development, language, and safety needs, as well as their academic growth."

-Brown, 2003

Culturally Relevant Classroom Management (CRCM), also referred to as Culturally Responsive Classroom Management, has its roots in culturally responsive pedagogy, which specifically focuses on the classroom instruction of ethnically and culturally diverse students. The literature on culturally responsive pedagogy includes implementing culturally responsive communication methods and instructional strategies; developing respect between students and teachers; and acknowledging the various cultural and language differences of their students (Brown, 2003). According to Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007), CRCM is not the same as general classroom management as it requires different knowledge, dispositions, and skills. Instead, "CRCM makes it explicit that classroom management is grounded in teachers' judgments about appropriate behavior and that these judgments are informed by cultural assumptions (Bondy et al., 2007)." For example, viewing a certain behavior as a manifestation of difference in culture might lead one to believe that alternative behaviors should be taught. However, if the same behavior is viewed as a manifestation of defiance, it will most likely lead to conflict, the student being alienated, and the learning environment being disrupted (Thompson, 2004). Gay (1993) explains that because the problematic behaviors of many urban students differ so much from their behavioral expectations, most teachers do not know how to interpret or understand the behaviors of their students who may be going through life-challenging experiences on a daily basis. This can lead to teachers misinterpreting these student behaviors as deviant, which results in punitive treatment (Utley, Kozleski, Smith, & Draper,

2002).

During his study, which included interviews with 13 teachers from urban schools, Brown (2003) identified three salient principles that can help create effective Culturally Responsive Classroom Management, which in turn can provide urban students the opportunity for academic success: caring for students, being assertive and acting with authority, and communicating effectively with students.

Care and psychological safety of students are critical components of urban classrooms and the personalized care that children and adolescents need is sometimes not present in the homes of these children. The teachers in his study placed a great importance on the development of caring relationships, which demonstrated a willingness to respond in a culturally responsive manner (Brown, 2003).

Being assertive and acting with authority is another critical component of CRCM that emerged in Brown's study, as urban teachers must verbally demonstrate their assertiveness and establish their authority with their students. They demonstrated their assertiveness by establishing and making a clear set of academic expectations, enforcing the rules, policies and expectations of behavior, and maintaining contact with the students' parents in order to gain their support (Brown, 2003). However, they did not engage in power struggles or humiliation of students (Bondy et al., 2007). According to Delpit (2006), authoritative teachers who are sensitive to their students' cultural norms can better hold their students' attention by using the communicative style of their culture, appealing to affiliation rather than authority to maintain order, and do not believe that it is necessary to control behavior with coercive means.

In contrast to suburban or rural students, urban children expect more direct verbal commands and they may ignore commands that are phrased and expressed like questions instead

of direct commands (Delpit, 2006). Urban teachers should also have expectations that are clearly stated, should accept no excuses from their students, and should deal with inappropriate behaviors immediately (Wilson & Corbett, 2001).

Communicating effectively with students is the third principle that emerged during Brown's study. It is important that teachers develop a mutually respectful relationship with their students by recognizing that there are differences in communication styles. For example, some African-American students utilize a method of social interaction known as "call response" where students may speak aloud while the teacher is speaking as a response to the teacher's comments. While they may be considered rude disruptions or demonstrations of disrespect, they are actually meant as acknowledgement of agreement or even concerns about the teachers' comments (Gay, 2000) also noted that loudly talking, a common African-American cultural characteristic, can also be misinterpreted as defiance.

By recognizing these differences, responding as a listener, and designing instructional activities that reflect their students' needs, the quality of relationships between teachers and their students can be positively affected (Brown, 2003). The teachers in Brown's study used both verbal and nonverbal communication processes that were familiar to students; a forward style of speaking that incorporated cultural humor; and a tone that was kind but firm, which communicated clear expectations without demeaning their students (Bondy et al., 2007).

Restorative Justice (RJ).

"Restorative Justice in the school setting views misconduct not as a school-rule-breaking and therefore as a violation of the institution, but as a violation against people and relationships in the school and wider community."
-Cameron & Thorsborne, 2001

Restorative Justice is a practice that began in the 1970's in an effort to deal with relatively minor offenses such as burglary and other property crimes. However, more recently,

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they are implemented for much more severe types of criminal violence such as assault, rape and murder (Zehr, 2002). The practice first moved into the school environment in 1994, when schools in Australia began to implement Restorative Justice (Payne & Welch, 2013).

The primary goal of Restorative Justice is ensuring that the offending student makes amends for the injuries (Ashworth et al., 2008; Haft, 1999) his or her misbehavior has caused as well as ensuring that the student remains part of the school community rather than being exiled (Haft, 1999). In order to participate in Restorative Justice, the student must acknowledge what he/she has done wrong as well as admit to some level of responsibility for the offense itself (Morrison, 2003; Payne & Welch, 2013; Zehr, 2002). The offending student and his/her victim(s) must then reconcile in order to mend the relationship (Payne & Welch, 2013).

Instead of focusing discipline on excluding students through suspension, Restorative Justice focuses on relationship building and repairing the harm caused by acts of misbehavior rather than punishment and isolation (Ashworth et al., 2008; McCluskey et al., 2008; Morrison, 2003; Morrison, Blood, & Thorsborne, 2005; Wearmouth, McKinney, & Glynn, 2007). Specifically, it involves the offending student, the victim, and the community, where the student's misbehavior is considered a violation of relationship (Drewery, 2004; Morrison, 2003; Van Ness, 1993), and seeks to heal any parties who may have been injured by the misbehavior (Haft, 1999).

Two of the techniques to the Restorative Justice process in schools are classroom circles/student conferences and peer mediation (Chmelynski, 2005). When implementing circles, anyone who was affected by the student's misbehavior sits in a circle. A "talking piece" is passed around the circle giving everyone a chance to speak as well as be an active listener. The goal of the circles is to include everyone, offender and victims, in a healing and learning process;

it is not intended for problem solving (Chmelynski, 2005). Mediation is one of the most transparent processes of Restorative Justice. It usually takes place between the offending student and the victim, but may also include other affected members of the school community. This is a non-adversarial, informal, face-to-face process (Haft, 1999) that allows all participants to speak to the impact of the offender's actions in hopes of determining appropriate restoration and restitution. It is important to note that this is a voluntary process and may involve individual meetings with the mediator and each party prior to the actual mediation taking place (Umbreit, Coates, & Kalanj, 1994).

In the 2002-2003 school year, six school districts in Wisconsin began implementing Restorative Justice processes in their schools. As a result, some of the changes they noticed included a stronger sense of community and safety; a significant increase in students reporting the misbehaviors of other students; students self-reporting their misbehaviors; and parents reporting their children's misbehaviors as well. There was also a decrease in the number of disciplinary referrals and a reduction in the number of fistfights. They recognized the meaningful change was being brought about by the relationships that were being formed, not the strategies that were being implemented (Chmelynski, 2005).

In 2004, 18 pilot schools in Scotland began developing Restorative Justice strategies. Included in this group were ten secondary schools. A team from Edinburgh and Glascow Universities conducted a two-year evaluation of the pilot project. The evaluation included interviews and focus groups of District and school staff; staff and student surveys; observations of and participation in meetings, activities and lessons; a review of District and school policies; and an analysis of national and school data (McCluskey et al., 2008).

Early findings of the study revealed that in both primary and secondary schools, the key indicators for successful implementation of Restorative Justice were readiness for change and a balance of clarity and flexibility regarding the identification of their goals. They also found that the schools that saw the greatest success were those who saw a need for change and were committed to improving their school's culture. According to Nancy Reistenberg, prevention specialist with the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning (Mirsky, 2003):

> [Restorative Justice] is a process that should be voluntary. Just let go of the idea that everybody in a school is supposed to do this and that every incident needs to be handled this way and everybody needs to be a believer and everybody needs to participate… Look for people who are friends… who are compatible… who would be advocates with you. Go where the strengths are. Do that in a respectful way. That's what the philosophy calls people to do.

Most importantly, Restorative Justice seemed most effective when the schools recognized that behavior issues needed to be addressed through restorative strategies that involved all members of the school community (McCluskey et al., 2008).

District Policy

On May 14, 2013, as a response to its agreement with the Office for Civil Rights, the Los Angeles Board of Education adopted the Board Resolution - *2013 School Discipline Policy and School Climate Bill of Rights,* which asked that District staff review current policies related to discipline, utilize alternatives to school suspension to correct student misbehavior, and develop and implement Restorative Justice practices as an alternative to traditional school discipline by the year 2020.

The District responded to the Board with policy bulletin BUL-6231 – *Discipline Foundation Policy: School-Wide Positive Intervention and Support*, dated February 14, 2014, which is a revision of a similar policy from 2007, *Discipline Foundation Policy: School-Wide Positive Behavior Support*. The bulletin "provides guidelines and procedures for a consistent

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framework for developing, refining, and implementing a culture of discipline built on positive

behavior support and interventions" (LAUSD, 2014). The policy includes lists of responsibilities

for school administrators (14 items) and teachers (10 items), which are meant to "establish a safe

and welcoming school environment" and "create an environment conducive to learning for all

students and prevent student misconduct" (LAUSD, 2014). The School Climate Bill of Rights,

an attachment to the policy, promises that "all Los Angeles Unified School District students will

attend schools with climates that focus on safety, teaching and learning, interpersonal

relationships, and the institutional environment that influence [sic] student learning and well-

being" through the use of methods such as School-wide Positive Behavior Support and

Restorative Justice (LAUSD, 2014).

The District's suspension policy, BUL-5655.2 – *Guidelines for Student Suspensions,*

aligns the District's suspension policies and procedures with both State and Federal laws as well

as with the Discipline Foundation Policy (LAUSD, 2013). The District's expectation of the use

of Positive Behavior Support is clearly stated on the first page of the document: "Prior to issuing

a student suspension, school administrators should implement a system of positive behavior

support and strategic intervention that are age appropriate and designed to progressively and

effectively address and correct the student's specific misconduct." Also included in the policy is

the Matrix For Student Suspension and Expulsion Recommendation (see Appendix A) which

categorizes student offenses into three categories: Category I – no principal discretion (principal

must suspend immediately and recommend for expulsion), Category II – limited principal

discretion, and Category III – broad principal discretion. For behaviors listed in Category III,

on-site remedial measures, resources, and interventions that address the needs of the student

should be considered before a student is suspended.

Summary

As can be seen in the literature, a disproportionate rate of suspensions of African-American students exists and is a problem, and there are discipline practices that exacerbate this issue. Additionally, there are other practices in place that are intended to ameliorate this matter and reduce suspensions overall. One of the greatest challenges of School-wide Positive Behavior Support, Culturally Relevant Classroom Management and Restorative Justice is that in order to be implemented successfully, schools will have to fully change their view of discipline and be willing to experience a shift in culture. In Chapter Three I will discuss yet another approach - the removal of "willful defiance" from the discipline policy - to reduce suspensions and its disproportionate rate for African-American students that is being attempted in one urban school district in California.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have described evidence that students' exclusion from school in the form of suspensions and expulsions can lead to many negative outcomes including low academic achievement, drug use, delinquency and dropping out. These aftereffects will continue to put students at a disadvantage later in life. Data indicate that nationally, a disproportionately high number of African-American students are being suspended from school. In other words, the percentage of the suspensions that were given to African-American students is higher than the percent of African-American students enrolled at the school. This would suggest that a disproportionate number of African-American students are being set up for a future fraught with difficulties.

The construct that guided my research is the idea that the removal of "willful defiance" from a school district's discipline policy will not have the intended effect of a change in discipline practices nor a reduction of suspensions of African-American students. To further investigate this supposition, my study focused on the following research questions:

1. When comparing documented reasons for suspensions of African-American students at urban high schools, what differences are there before and after the removal of suspensions for "willful defiance?"

2. How does racial representation influence discipline practices in urban high schools?

3. After the removal of suspensions for "willful defiance," how do administrators and teachers describe their policies and practices around school suspensions?

Research Design

This study was influenced by a pragmatic worldview as I wished to use multiple approaches to best understand the problem (Creswell, 2009) of the disproportionate rate of

suspensions of African-American student suspensions and the immediate impact of a change in discipline policy. Therefore, I employed a concurrent mixed methods design (Creswell, 2009), which included an analysis of current District suspension data; a teacher questionnaire; and principal interviews. Analyzing existing suspension data gave me a broad perspective and history of the patterns that have arisen regarding the reasons used for suspending children as well as some early insight as to what the future patterns may become with the removal of "willful defiance." Responses to a questionnaire distributed to a large population of teachers provided an understanding of whether or not discipline practices at the schools have changed since the removal of "willful defiance," and interviews of principals allowed me to probe more deeply into their thoughts and beliefs regarding the recent policy change.

Site/Sample Selection

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is the second largest school district in the country – with over 600 schools, kindergarten through twelfth grade (68 high schools), and more than 650,000 students (http://lausd.net). The racial make-up in the 2011-2012 school year was 72.3% Hispanic, 10.0% White, 9.6% African-American, and 8.1% other ethnicities. The rates of suspension[1] were 59.9% for Hispanics (30.0% of which were for "willful defiance"), 6.2% for Whites (25.6% for "willful defiance"), and 30.6% for African-Americans (35.4% for "willful defiance") (http://ocrdata.ed.gov). I selected this District for the study because their seven-member School Board chose to take major steps towards the reduction of suspensions by removing "willful defiance" from the discipline policy beginning in the 2013-14 school year.

Of the three levels of school – elementary, middle, and high - the greatest percentage of suspensions in the District is at the high school level. Therefore, the study focused on high schools. Specifically, I focused on large comprehensive high schools as it may be hypothesized

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[1] These data include suspension rates for LAUSD Charter schools.

that they will have the most change in number and reasons for suspension as it relates to the new

policy. My focus did not include LAUSD charter schools, as they are not required, under

California Education Code, to follow the District's discipline policies.

Table 1

High Schools Contacted for the Study

School	API[2]	2011-12 Enrollment	2011-12 % of Students Enrolled Who Are AA	2011-12 % Students Suspended Overall	2011-12 % Students Suspended That Are AA	2011-2012 Rate of Disproportionality of AA Students
Green						
G1	**650**	**1900**	**24.50**	**5.00**	**53.00**	**28.50**
G2	**750**	**3100**	**25.50**	**2.50**	**58.00**	**32.50**
G3	**600**	**1850**	**52.00**	**2.50**	**79.50**	**27.50**
G4	600	1500	54.00	5.00	7.00	18.50
Red						
R1	750	2900	2.50	4.00	8.00	6.00
R2	600	950	2.50	6.00	3.50	1.50
R3	700	2700	2.50	4.00	4.50	2.00
R4	650	1200	3.00	2.00	13.50	10.50
R5	**650**	**2600**	**3.50**	**7.50**	**9.00**	**5.50**
R6	600	1000	4.00	5.50	7.50	3.00
R7	700	1800	5.00	7.50	8.00	3.00
R8	**550**	**2200**	**6.50**	**5.00**	**24.00**	**17.50**
R9	**700**	**2300**	**9.00**	**4.50**	**20.00**	**11.50**
R10	650	2400	9.00	5.00	25.00	16.00
R11	650	2000	12.00	10.50	25.00	13.50

*Bolded data represent schools in study.
Note: All data have been rounded to conceal the identity of the schools.

In order to determine which District high schools to use in my study, I looked at

enrollment of African-American students for the 2011-12 school year. A list of high schools,

arranged by enrollment of African-American students (highest to lowest) was developed. Based

on color-coding used in my lists, throughout the study, schools with a high enrollment of

African-American students are referred to as "green schools" and schools with a lower rate of

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[2] The Academic Performance Index (API) was created by the California State Department of Education in 1999 to gauge schools' year-to-year improvement in student achievement in the areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The API combines scores from schools' standardized tests into a single score, which ranges from 200-1000. A higher API score generally indicates higher achievement on standardized tests.

enrollment of African-American students are called "red schools."

Table 1 above includes a list of the high schools whose principals I invited to participate in my study. The first four principals of green schools whom I contacted agreed to participate in my study. Recruiting principals from the red schools proved to be much more difficult. When participation couldn't be obtained from one of the red schools, the next school on the list was invited to participate in the study. I contacted eleven different red school principals before I finally received agreements from three of them. Early in my study, due to unforeseen circumstances, I needed to remove one of the green schools from the study, which left me with three green schools and three red schools.

Data Collection Methods

To address my research questions, data were collected from three areas: District suspension data, a teacher questionnaire, and principal interviews. To answer Research Question 1, "When comparing documented reasons for suspensions of African-American students at urban high schools, what differences are there before and after the removal of suspensions for "willful defiance?" I compared and analyzed suspension data obtained from the District. Responses to the scenarios in the teacher questionnaire provided me with information to answer Research Question 2, "How does racial representation influence discipline practices in urban high schools?" Data to answer Research Question 3, "After the removal of suspensions for 'willful defiance,' how do administrators and teachers describe their policies and practices around school suspensions?" were obtained through the teacher questionnaire and principal interviews.

      Phase one: Suspension data.

When a child is suspended from school, the suspension should be documented in the District's computer system and classified under a specific code (e.g. 3.6 – *Possessed or Used*

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Tobacco, 3.9 – *Disruption/Willful Defiance, or* 3.16 – *Willful Use of Force/Violence Not Self Defense*). These suspension data from 2008-14 as well as demographic data for the six high schools in my study were obtained and reviewed.

Phase two: Questionnaire.

In order to gain insight from the teachers, a questionnaire (Appendix B) was created on Survey Monkey. The first six questions gathered experiential information regarding the teacher (i.e. school of employment, subject taught, years teaching, etc.). The following eleven questions specifically focused on the District's discipline policy – teachers' awareness of the change, their beliefs around the purpose of suspension, and it's effect on their own discipline practice. These questions allowed for short answers, if applicable. There were three questions that asked about the effect the removal of "willful defiance" might have on the students followed by two more questions which referred to their perceived effect on their administration's and fellow teacher's discipline practices. The survey ended with two optional demographic questions.

Scenarios.

As part of the questionnaire, teachers were presented with three scenarios that included students participating in various acts of "willful defiance." These acts included a student who refused to change his/her seat, a student who refused to put his/her phone away, and a student was kissing in the quad.

The names of the student in each scenario were varied (Connor, D'Shawn, and Fernanda) to prime a specific race in the participant's mind as he/she answered the questions about each scenario. After each scenario the teachers were asked to rate, on a 7-point rating scale, how much the child's behavior irritated them, how much they would ignore the child's behavior, how disruptive the behavior was, the likelihood that they would refer the child to the office, and how

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much they felt the child deserved to be disciplined for his/her behavior. Answer choices ranged from a low of 1 (e.g. not at all) to a high of 7 (e.g. a whole lot). In order to avoid any bias that could have resulted from the order in which the student (ethnicity) was presented, teachers were randomly assigned to the order in which the student's names appeared in the scenarios.

After piloting the questionnaire with middle school and central office administrators, it was updated and disseminated to the teachers at each of the six selected high schools. To disseminate the questionnaire, principals who agreed to have their school participate in the study were asked to email a link of the electronic questionnaire to their teachers. Included at the beginning of the questionnaire was a consent form that the teachers had to agree to before they could continue with the questionnaire. The questionnaire took approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete, and at the end, teachers were given the opportunity to participate in a random drawing for a $50 gift card. The teachers were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and if they included their name for the drawing, it was not connected to their answers.

During the time period of March 10, 2014 to May 5, 2014, a total of 94 teachers and other school staff responded to the questionnaire. Three were removed as, due to circumstances beyond my control, their school was eliminated from my study. An additional six were disqualified because they did not agree to the terms of the study, and the responses of 16 non-teachers were not included. This left a total of 69 teacher responses – 53 complete and 16 incomplete - from the six schools.

Phase three: Interviews.

In addition to responses from the questionnaires, data to answer Research Question 3 was collected through interviews with principals from the six selected high schools. Once the results from the questionnaire were examined, a 12-question interview protocol for principals, which

incorporated information from some of the teachers' responses to the questionnaire, was created (see Appendix C). Similar to the teacher questionnaire, the first four questions sought general information about the principal's history with LAUSD and their current school, as well as the number of teachers currently working at their school and the manner in which their teachers were notified about the recent change in discipline policy. Three of the questions asked about their beliefs regarding students' removal from class, out-of-school suspensions, and the effect that this may have on students. Four of the questions surrounded their teachers' discipline practices and their expectations for those practices. The final question referred to their school's suspension rate and asked them to discuss the possible influences of that reduction. Each interview was audio recorded, lasted approximately 20-30 minutes and took place at an agreed upon time in the principals' office. Participants who took part in an interview were given a $10 gift card as a token of thanks.

Table 2 illustrates the specific data collection methods that were implemented to answer each of the research questions.

Table 2

Breakdown of Data Collection Methods and Population for Research Questions

Research Question	Data Collection Method	Population
When comparing reasons documented for suspensions of African-American students at urban high schools, what differences are there before and after the removal of suspensions for "willful defiance?"	Collection of suspension data for 2008 through 2014	Six LAUSD comprehensive high schools: three with a high percentage of enrollment of AA students, three with a low percentage of enrollment of AA students
How does racial representation influence discipline practices in urban high schools?	Scenarios in questionnaire	Teachers from the six high schools
After the removal of suspensions for "willful defiance," how do administrators and teachers describe their policies and practices around school suspensions?	Questionnaire	Teachers from the six schools
	One-on-one interviews	Principals from the six schools

Data Analysis Methods

Step I: Analysis of reasons for suspension, LAUSD high school suspension data.

After collecting District suspension data of the six schools for the school years 2008-2014, it was organized into two areas for each school:

1. Enrollment and number and percentage of suspensions for all students and African-American students

2. The categories and reasons that were used for the suspensions of African-American students

Each set of data was analyzed differently.

Enrollment, and Number and Percentage of Suspensions

These data were used to calculate the rate of disproportionality of suspensions of the African-American students at each of the schools in the study. It was calculated by subtracting

the percentage of enrolled students who were African-American from the percentage of suspended students who were African-American. A larger number indicated a greater rate of disproportionality. A graph of these data was created (see Figure 5) to provide a visual of the trends from 2008-2014 at each of the six schools. Because the removal of "willful defiance" occurred at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year, a comparison of the disproportional rates of suspension from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014 was also done to determine the effect the policy change had on each schools' suspension disproportionality.

Suspension Categories and Reasons

The data collected for the categories under which African-American students were suspended during the years 2008-2014 provided specific information about the actual number of times African-American students were suspended for a given reason. Only the categories under which principals have broad discretion (see Appendix A, Category III) for suspension were analyzed. The data were combined for all green schools and all red schools, and then 2008-2009 through 2012-2013 data were combined and compared to 2013-2014 data. Calculations were done for the overall Category III suspension counts compared to the "willful defiance" only suspension counts (see Table 7), as well as the change in numbers of suspensions by reason after "willful defiance" was removed (see Appendix E).

Step II: Questionnaire, high school teachers.

Once all questionnaires were submitted, the multiple-choice answers were tallied and short answer responses organized by theme. These responses were triangulated with those from the interviews (see Step III below) to answer Research Question 3. The answers to the three scenarios included in the questionnaire were analyzed through SPSS using a between and within factorial analysis and were used to answer Research Question 2.

Step III: Interviews, high school principals.

The interviews with principals were transcribed and coded for themes; the information was then compared to the results from the teacher questionnaire and school suspension data. This multi-step and multiple method of data collection allowed for triangulation as it provided me with the ability to cross verify the information I collected. This allowed for increased credibility and validity of the data. I was able to compare the responses from the teachers to those of the principals and those to the actual suspension data from the schools.

Ethical Considerations

One ethical issue that needed to be taken into consideration was the fact that at the time of the study I was an administrator at the District level in the same district in which I conducted my study. Fortunately, I did not have any supervisory or evaluative oversight with any school site personnel. However, the level of my position may have had an effect on the actions of the principals. To lessen this, I made it clear to the study participants that I am at their site as a student in a doctoral program, not an administrator from the District. I also informed them that neither their names nor the real names of their schools would be used at any time.

Another ethical issue that may have existed was that I asked teachers to share their own practices and those of their coworkers and administrators, which may have made them uncomfortable and therefore hesitant to answer honestly. Similarly, I asked the principals to share their feelings regarding District policies and the practices taking place at their school, which they may have be hesitant to do knowing that their responses could be connected to them directly. However, all participants were reassured that their participation – both in the questionnaire and interview – would be kept confidential and that codes were substituted for names.

Validity/Reliability

Validity.

As a concurrent mixed methods study, this study was susceptible to issues of validity. In an effort to ensure the validity of the study, I used the strategy of triangulation by analyzing suspension data, distributing a questionnaire and employing interviews with principals. Implementing a questionnaire with teachers allowed me to examine teacher perspectives. The information gathered during the interviews helped to expand on the results from the questionnaire, and both helped to validate the data retrieved from the schools' suspension reports.

Additionally, as the interviewer, in an attempt to elicit open and honest responses to the questions, I strived to build rapport with each interviewee. I conducted member checks both during the interview process, by restating and summarizing responses, as well as after the interview, by sharing a transcript with each interview participant, which allowed them to confirm that my interpretation of their statements correctly reflected their perspectives and experiences.

One possible threat to internal validity was the number of years that the teachers have been teaching. The removal of "willful defiance" may be a more difficult transition for veteran teachers who are accustomed to suspending their students for "willful defiance." Their perspectives may be very different from newer teachers who have not had the opportunity to use "willful defiance" for very long in their discipline practices.

Reliability.

My study focused on urban high schools that suspend disproportionate percentages of African-American students, and that tend to classify a large number of the suspensions as "willful defiance." My hypothesis is that the schools will continue to suspend African-American

students at a higher rate and will find different categories under which to suspend them. While this study is replicable, because of the timing – the first year after the removal of "willful defiance" from the discipline policy, it may be rather difficult to do so. However, if the study is replicated at other urban high schools immediately following the removal of "willful defiance" or a similar category, the results may prove to be reliable.

Generalizability/Transferability.

This study was very specialized as I studied schools in a District immediately after "willful defiance" had been removed from the discipline policy, which leaves little room for generalizability to other studies. Nevertheless, while not all states include "willful defiance" as a reason for suspension, there are other types of policies in place throughout the country that are negatively affecting African-American students. Therefore, some of the results from my research could transfer to other studies that are focusing on the removal of discipline policies that negatively affect specific subgroups.

Summary.

My research sought to document and examine the immediate effects of the removal of "willful defiance" from a school district's discipline policy from the perspective of school administrators and teachers through the use of data analysis, a teacher questionnaire, and interviews with school administrators. A document review of District suspension data informed the selection of schools to be used in the study. The teacher questionnaire and interview data collection were implemented at the six schools that best meet the pre-determined enrollment criteria. In Chapter Four I will present the suspension data from each of the schools that was selected to participate in this research, which was based on their enrollment of African-American students. I will also provide a comparison analysis of the emerging themes from the

questionnaires and interviews, in order to examine them for common themes and patterns. As my

goal was determine the early effects of a discipline policy change, it was important that I looked

at the effects from different perspectives as well as at the pre-existing data itself. The findings

and implications for practice are discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

In this chapter I present quantitative data from six years of District suspension data. I also

present qualitative and quantitative data from 69 questionnaires filled out by teachers and

qualitative data from interviews with six principals. The purpose of the analysis of the

suspension data, the teacher questionnaires, and principal interviews was to learn what effect the

removal of "willful defiance" had on discipline policies and practices at the high school level

during its first year of implementation.

The three data sources provided the opportunity to investigate teachers' and principals'

perspectives and practices surrounding recent changes to the District's suspension policy. The

questions that guided this research were as follows:

1. When comparing documented reasons for suspensions of African-American students at urban high schools, what differences are there before and after the removal of suspensions for "willful defiance?"

2. How does racial representation influence discipline practices in urban high schools?

3. After the removal of suspensions for "willful defiance," how do administrators and teachers describe their policies and practices around school suspensions?

Review of the Sample - Schools

Six comprehensive high schools within the Los Angeles Unified School District

(LAUSD) were included in the study – three whose enrollment of African-American students

was among the highest in the District (the green schools), and three with low African-American

enrollment (the red schools) as documented by 2011-2012 District data. Additionally, the rates

of suspension disproportionality[3] for the African-American students were higher at the three

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[3] For the purposes of this study, disproportionality has been defined as the difference between the percent of African-American students enrolled at the school and the percentage of the suspensions that were given to African-American students.

green schools than they were at the red. The schools are located throughout the District's 720

square miles (http://LAUSD.net) and vary in enrollment size as well as academic achievement

(as measured by the Academic Performance Index, API). The six schools (given pseudonyms)

are described in Table 3.

Table 3

The Six Schools Included In the Study

School	API	2011-12 Overall Enrollment	2011-12 % Students Enrolled Who Were AA	2011-12 % Students Suspended	2011-12 % Students Suspended Who Were AA[4]	2011-12 AA Disproportionality
Green						
Cornell	650	1900	24.50	5.00	53.00	28.50
Stanford	750	3100	25.50	2.00	58.00	32.50
Yale	600	1850	52.00	2.50	79.50	27.50
Red						
Pomona	650	2600	3.50	7.50	9.00	5.50
Reed	550	2200	6.50	5.00	24.00	17.50
Smith	700	2300	8.50	4.50	20.00	11.50

Note: All data have been rounded to conceal the identity of the schools**.**

Of the four green schools and 11 red schools that I contacted, four green and three red

agreed to participate. Early in the process, one of the green schools was removed from the study

due to unforeseen circumstances. The remaining six schools met the selection criteria as non-

charter, comprehensive high schools within the LAUSD.

Findings

Research question 1.

The first research question asked whether there were differences in the documented

reasons for suspensions of African-American students before and after the removal of

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[4] These data represent a non-duplicated student count. However, it does not take into consideration students who have been suspended more than once.

suspensions for "willful defiance." I focused on student ethnicity, before and after suspension

rates, and reasons for suspension at each of the six participating high schools.

School enrollment and suspension history.

For the enrollment and suspension data for the six schools, there are no similarities that

occur across the board within the red and green groups. Below are highlights of the data from

each of the two groups of schools. Table 4 provides a comparison of the data from 2008-2009

and 2013-2014. Appendix D provides complete data on all six schools for all six years. Figure 5

also shows the comparison of averages of suspension rates of African-American students from

2008-2014, while Figure 6 provides a graphic view of the fluctuation of rates of

disproportionality at all the schools over the six years.

The Green Schools (High AA Enrollment).

Enrollment

Cornell High, Stanford High, and Yale High were selected based on their high percentage

of enrollment of African-American students. However, both their overall enrollment and

percentage of African-American enrollment are not similar to each other. The smallest of the

three schools, Yale, has the smallest student body, almost 2,500 in 2008 down to nearly 1,400 in

2013, but with the highest African-American population, just over 50%. The other two green

schools, Cornell and Stanford, averaged a 25% enrollment of African-American students over

the past six years, but Cornell's overall enrollment has decreased by nearly 50% since 2008 to

just over 1,600 while Stanford's has remained fairly steady at about 3,100.

Suspensions and Disproportionality

By removing "willful defiance" as a reason for suspensions, the District's goal was to

decrease suspensions both overall as well as for African-American students (Waldman, 2012;

Strickland, 2013). Since the 2008-2009 school year, the overall suspension rate at all three green schools remained below 10.0% (Cornell and Yale both saw a spike in suspension rates in 2009-2010 to 12.0% and 18.0% respectively) and generally declined over the six years. In 2013-2014, the first year after the removal of "willful defiance," both Stanford and Yale reached their lowest overall suspension rates since 2008 (approximately 1.0%), and that of Cornell dropped by nearly 50% to 5.0% compared to six years prior.

However, the average percentages of students who were suspended that were African-American were high at all three green schools over the six years – over 50% at Cornell and Stanford, and as high as nearly 70% at Yale (see Appendix D). Cornell and Stanford saw increases in the percentage of suspended students who were African-American after "willful defiance" was removed. In fact, in 2013-2014, African-Americans represented an average of 70.0% of all suspensions at all three green schools, compared to an average of 59.0% in the 5 years before the new policy. This is shown in Figure 5. At the green schools, during the 2008-2009 through 2012-2013 school years, the proportion of students who were suspended that were African-American was 0.56, while in 2013-2014 it was 0.72. Chi-squared test results determined that the difference in these proportions is statistically significant, χ^2 (1, N = 2695) = 10.72, p<0.0011.

Even after the removal of "willful defiance" from the discipline policy, there is still a very high rate of disproportionality - over 40.0% - at both Cornell and Stanford; it actually increased by nearly 11.5% at Cornell and 23.0% at Stanford. Yale's rate of disproportionality, however, had the greatest decrease of all six schools in the study, dropping by around 12.0% to about 12.5% in 2013-2014 (see Figure 6).
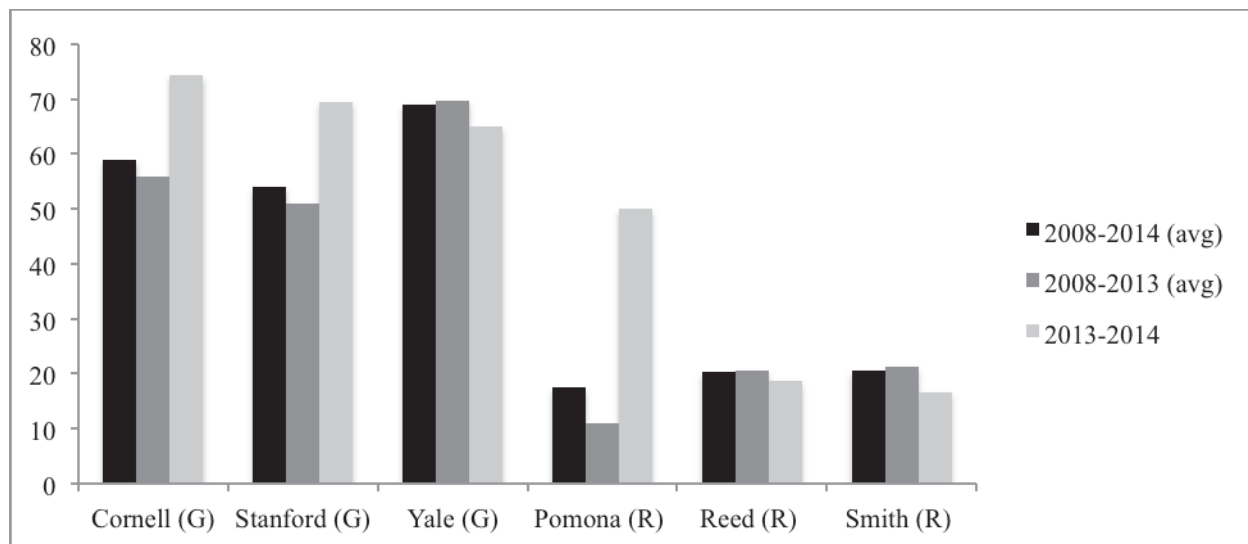
Figure 5. African-American suspension rates, 2008-2014

The Red Schools (Low AA Enrollment)

Enrollment

There are few similarities among the data for three red schools in the study: Pomona

High, Reed High, and Smith High. Reed, the smallest of the three schools with about 1,900

students in 2013-2014, was twice as large in 2008-2009 yet their African-American enrollment

only dropped by about 2.5% in the same time frame to a low of around 6.0% in 2013-2014. The

overall enrollments at Pomona and Smith each decreased by around 500 each over the past six

years to around 2,500 and 2,200 respectively. However, their enrollments of African-American

students were not as similar – Pomona's remained at around 3.5% all six years, while Smith's

fluctuated between 9.0 and 11.0% throughout the six years (see Table 4).

Suspensions and Disproportionality

Across all three red schools, the overall suspension rate has steadily dropped since 2008-

2009. Pomona had the highest suspension rates in 2008-2009 with 11.0%, but both Reed and

Smith had less than a 9.0% suspension rate for all six years. Once "willful defiance" was

removed, the rate at all three schools dropped to below 1.0%.

Table 4

Enrollment and Suspension Overview of Participating Schools, 2008-2009 and 2013-2014

	Overall Enrollment		% AA Enrollment		% Students Suspended		% Students Suspended Who Were AA		% Disproportionality	
	2008-2009	2013-2014	2008-2009	2013-2014	2008-2009	2013-2014	2008-2009	2013-2014	2008-2009	2013-2014
Green										
Cornell	3,200	1,700	33.0%	24.0%	8.0%	4.0%	56.0%	74.0%	23.0%	50.0%
Stanford	3,200	3,100	31.0%	27.0%	9.0%	1.0%	54.0%	70.0%	23.0%	43.0%
Yale	2,500	1,400	53.0%	53.0%	6.0%	1.0%	76.0%	65.0%	23.0%	12.0%
Red										
Pomona	2,900	2,600	4.0%	4.0%	11.0%	0.0%	13.0%	50.0%	9.0%	46.0%
Reed	3,700	1,900	8.0%	6.0%	7.0%	1.0%	11.0%	19.0%	3.0%	13.0%
Smith	2,800	2,200	10.0%	11.0%	9.0%	0.0%	23.0%	17.0%	14.0%	6.0%

Note: All data have been rounded to conceal the identity of the schools.

When looking at the percentages of suspensions that were given to African-American

students, the rates at the red schools were much lower that those at the green schools – generally

under 25.0% (at Reed, the percentage of suspended students who were African-American saw a

slight peak at about 34.0% in 2012). At the red schools, during the 2008-2009 through 2012-

2013 school years, the proportion of suspended students who were African-American was only

0.15, while the proportion in 2013-2014 was 0.25. Unlike the green schools, the difference in

these proportions is not statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 2773) = 2.04$, p<0.1532. After the

removal of "willful defiance," both Reed and Smith saw a decrease in the percentage of

suspensions being given to African-American students, but Pomona's rate increased to 50.0% -

more than three times higher than the past five years (see Figure 5). Pomona's African-American

suspension data revealed that the difference in proportions of suspensions given to African-

American students in 2008-2009 through 2012-2013 was 0.10, compared to 0.50 in 2013-2014.

This was found to be statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, N=1211) = 10.26$, p< .0014.

Although their rates of African-American suspensions are lower than the green schools,

Table 4 shows that some of the rates of disproportionality at the red schools are actually higher.

For the 2013-2014 school year, Smith was able to reduce their rate of disproportionality to only

6.0% - the lowest of all six schools, and Reed was able to lower theirs to 13.0%. The rate at

Pomona High, however, saw a dramatic increase of almost 35.0% points to it's highest in six

years - the year after "willful defiance" was removed. Figure 6 shows a graphical representation
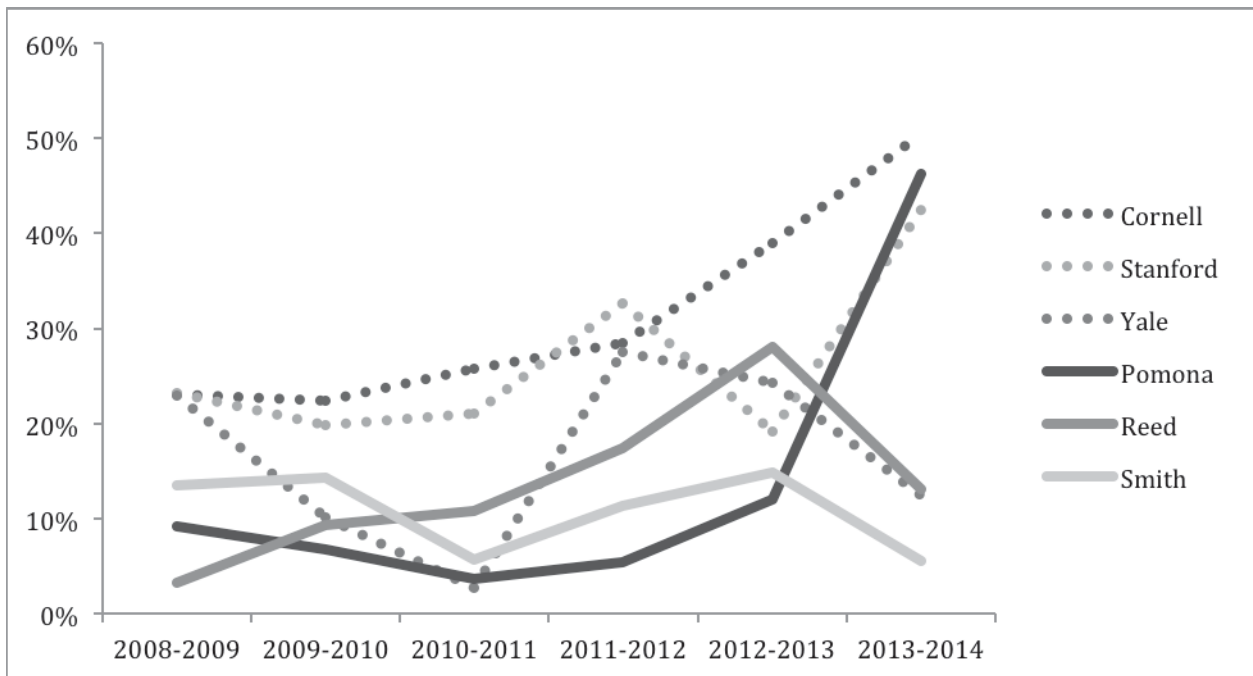
of trends between 2008 and 2014.

Figure 6. Rates of disproportionality at six schools, 2008-2014

Increases in suspension disproportionality.

Three of the schools in the study, two green and one red, showed large increases in their

rates of suspension disproportionality the first year after "willful defiance" was removed from

the discipline policy (see Figure 6 and Table 5). However, their rates of enrollment of African-

American students each increased by less than 0.2% and there was also very little change in the

overall rate of suspensions, which remained low. The percentage of students suspended who were African-American, however, increased at these three schools. Additionally, the rate of disproportionality is about the same as the increase in percentage of African-American student suspensions. This would suggest that although these schools were working to decrease their suspensions overall, there might not have been a specific focus on the reduction of suspensions of their African-American students.

Table 5

Schools With Increases in Suspensions of African-American Students After Policy Change

	% AA Enrollment		% Students Suspended		% Students Suspended Who Were AA		% Disproportionality	
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2012-2013	2013-2014	2012-2013	2013-2014	2012-2013	2013-2014
Cornell (G)	24.0%	24.0%	4.0%	4.0%	63.0%	74.0%	39.0%	50.0%
Stanford (G)	27.0%	27.0%	2.0%	1.0%	46.0%	70.0%	19.0%	43.0%
Pomona (R)	4.0%	4.0%	2.0%	0.0%	16.0%	50.0%	12.0%	46.0%

When comparing the disproportionality data from the six schools in the study to District-wide comprehensive high school disproportionality data from the year before the removal of "willful defiance" (2012-2013) to the first year after the removal (2013-2014), it can be said that the six schools selected for the study are somewhat representative of the LAUSD schools as a whole (see Figure 7). Of the 48 high schools analyzed (including the six in the study), 37.5% had an increase in the disproportionate rate of suspensions of African-American suspensions that was greater than 5%, 39.6% had less than a 5% change, and 20.8% of the schools had a decrease greater than 5% in their disproportionate rate of suspensions.
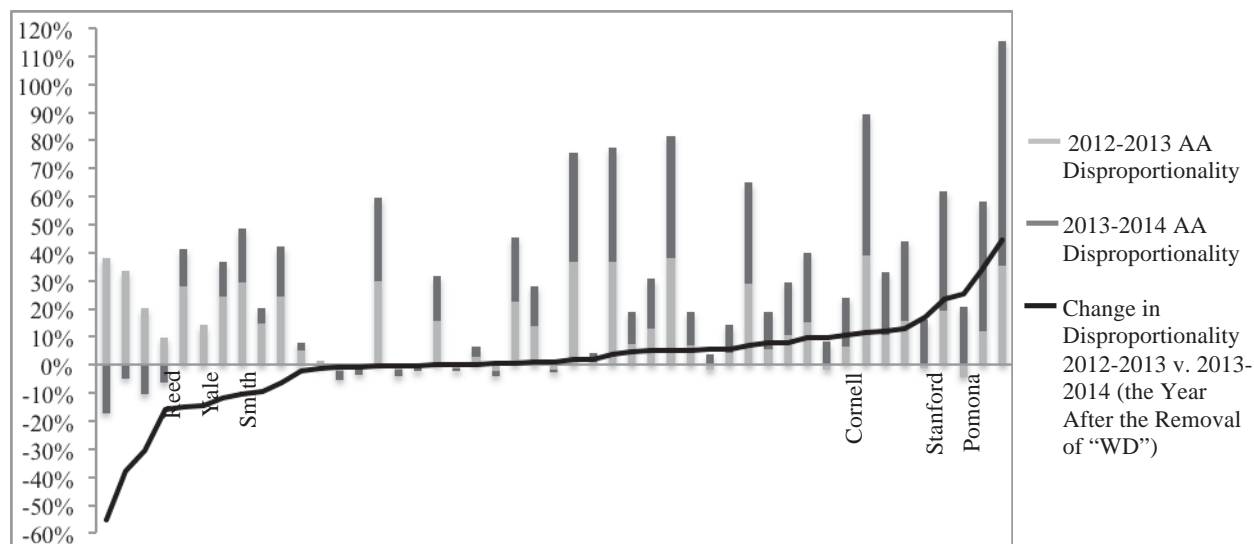
Figure 7: Changes in rates of suspension disproportionality of AA students at LAUSD comprehensive high schools before and after the removal of "willful defiance," 2012-2013 v. 2013-2014

Categories for suspension.

As discussed in Chapter One, there are three classifications that can be used when documenting student suspensions, all of which are taken directly from the California Education Code (E.C.). Those in Category I are student offenses with no principal discretion (except otherwise precluded by law) (E.C. 48951[c]); Category II offenses are student offenses that have limited principal discretion (E.C. 48951[a]); and offenses labeled as Category III are student offenses that allow for broad principal discretion (E.C. 48951[b] and [e]) (see Appendix A). To answer my first research question, "When comparing documented reasons for suspensions of African-American students at urban high schools, what differences are there before and after the removal of suspensions for "willful defiance?" I looked at the specific reasons for which African-American students at the six schools were being suspended. My theory was that because students could no longer be suspended for "willful defiance" in LAUSD that schools would continue to suspend them, but would classify suspensions differently. Prior to its removal from the policy, suspensions for "willful defiance" fell into Category III, so I focused solely on

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changes within this category. Table 6 includes a list of Category III reasons for which African-American students were suspended from 2008-2014 at the six schools in the study. It is important to note that beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, some of the reasons for suspension were divided into more specific categories (e.g., 3.1 – *Threatened/Caused/Attempted Physical Injury* was broken down in to 3.1a – *Caused Physical Injury*, 3.1b – *Attempted To Cause Physical Injury*, and 3.1c – *Threatened To Cause Physical Injury*) to get a clearer picture of the actual behavior that had taken place. Additionally, 3.09 – *Disrupted School Activities (School-wide Activities; Issued Only By An Administrator)* was added in place of 3.9 – *Disruption/Willful Defiance,* meaning that this reason could a) not be used for classroom-based behavior and b) an actual administrator (not a dean or a counselor) had to issue this suspension.

Table 6

Category III Reasons for Suspensions of African-American Students, 2008-2014

Reason Code	Reason for Suspension
3.09*	Disrupted school activities (School-wide activities; Issued only by an administrator)
3.1[†]	Threatened/caused/attempted physical injury
3.1a*	Caused physical injury to another person
3.1b*	Attempted to cause physical injury to another person
3.1c*	Threatened to cause physical injury to another person
3.2	Marijuana possession for 1st offense of less than 1 oz.
3.3	Substitute of a controlled substance
3.4	Damaged/attempted to damage school or private property
3.5	Stole or attempted to steal school or private property
3.6	Possessed or used tobacco
3.7	Obscenity/profanity/vulgarity
3.8	Drug paraphernalia
3.9[†]	Disruption/willful defiance
3.10	Received stolen school or private property
3.11	Imitation firearm
3.12[†]	Harassed/threatened/intimidated pupil or school personnel (grade 4-12)
3.12c*	Harassed/threatened pupil based on other factors (grade 4-12)
3.13	Sexual harassment (grade 4-12)
3.15	Terrorist threat (threat to cause death, great bodily injury)
3.16	Willful use of force/violence not self-defense
3.17	Harassed/threatened intimidated witness
3.21[†]	Bullying/cyber
3.21d*	Bullying/cyber toward a pupil based on other factors

† Removed as a reason for suspension beginning 2013-2014
* Added as a reason for suspension in 2013-2014

Suspension comparisons.

Increases.

When calculating the percentage of Category III suspensions of African-American students for the years 2008-2009 through 2012-2013 (which still included "willful defiance"), and comparing them to the percentage of Category III suspensions of African-Americans for the 2013-2014 school year (which no longer included "willful defiance"), some patterns emerged (see Table 7). Specifically, at both the green and red schools, during 2008-2009 through 2012-2013 an average of 37% of the suspensions were classified as "willful defiance," and about 53% were classified as one of the other Category III reasons. For the 2013-2014 school year however, both the green and red schools saw a big increase in Category III suspensions – to 90.9% and 77.8% respectively. In other words, it appears that once schools could no longer suspend for "willful defiance," there was an increase in the use of the remaining Category III suspensions.

Table 7

Category III Suspension Count 2008-2009 through 2012-2013 vs. 2013-2014

	Willful Defiance Only				Category III Events Only (No Willful Defiance)			
	2008-2009 through 2012-2013		2013-2014		2008-2009 through 2012-2013		2013-2014	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Green	721	37.98%	-	-	1052	55.40%	90	90.91%
Red	235	36.43%	-	-	338	52.51%	7	77.78%

Appendix E shows the breakdown of reasons in Category III and the frequency in which the African-American students were being suspended in those areas over the past six years. During the years 2008-2009 through 2012-2013, before it was removed from the policy, "willful defiance" was the most frequently used reason for suspensions - 37.98% at the green schools and 36.43% at the red. When looking more closely at the specific Category III reasons for

suspensions and comparing those used at the green schools to those used at the red schools, after

the removal of "willful defiance" the most frequently used reason at the green schools was code

3.1a – *Caused Physical Injury to Another Person*, which was used for 39.39% of the suspensions

of African-American students in 2013-2014. Alternatively, at the red schools, the most frequent

reason for suspensions used was code 3.16 – *Willful Use of Force/Violence Not Self Defense*,

which was used for 33.3%, for the 2013-2014 school year. Also of note was the schools' use of

the "new" reason code 3.09 - *Disrupted School-Activities (Issued By An Administrator).* For the

2013-14 school year, 7% (seven students) of the green schools' suspension events and 11% (one

student) at the red schools were categorized this way. This may put into question the percentage

of "willful defiance" suspensions that may have been attributed to the disruption of school

activities compared to "willfully defiant" behavior that was taking place in the classroom when

the use of reason code 3.9 – *Disruption/Willful Defiance* was allowable.

　　　Decreases.

　　　There were a few notable decreases in suspensions. From 2008-2009 through 2012-2013,

the average number of students at green schools being suspended each year under 3.2 –

Marijuana Possession was nine, but in 2013-2014, no students were suspended for this offense.

Also, the average number of students per year suspended for 3.6 - *Possessed or Used Tobacco*

dropped from 12 to zero, and 3.7 – *Obscenity/Profanity/Vulgarity* decreased from an average of

13 suspensions each year to three. And, while the green schools saw an increase in 3.1

(especially 3.1a - *Caused Physical Injury to Another Person)*, the average number of students

suspended for 3.16 – *Willful Use of Force/Violence Not Self Defense* dropped from about 17 a

year to only four in the 2013-2014 school year.

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At the red schools, an average of 25 students per year were suspended under category 3.1 – *Threatened/Caused/Attempted Physical Injury*, but in 2013-2014, no students were suspended using any of the 3.1 sub-categories that were created. Finally, although the greatest percentage of increase of suspension category used at the red schools was 3.16 – *Willful Use of Force/Violence Not Self Defense*, it also saw a great decrease in the number of students who were suspended for that offense – from an average of 15 students a year to only three in 2013-2014. The significance of some of these drops is discussed in Chapter Five.

Summary.

While the District's goal is to reduce both overall suspensions as well as those of African-American students (Waldman, 2012; Strickland, 2013), it seems that the removal of "willful defiance" has not yet had the intended result at half of the six schools in this study. Although the overall percentage of suspensions decreased at five of the six schools after the removal, the percentage of suspensions given to African-American students as well as the rate of disproportionality actually increased at three of the schools, two green and one red.

In addition to the overall increase of Category III suspensions, when looking at the trends of reasons for suspensions used for African-American students before and after the removal of "willful defiance," there were some noteworthy shifts in the two groups of schools. At the green schools, prior to the removal of "willful defiance," the most frequently used suspension reasons were 3.1 – *Threatened/Caused/Attempted Physical Injury* and 3.9 – *Disruption/Willful Defiance.* Once the schools could no longer suspend for "willful defiance," there was a great increase in the use of Code 3.1 – specifically the new sub-category, 3.1a – *Caused Physical Injury to Another Person* as well as usage of the new category, 3.09 – *Disrupted School Activities*. Similar to the green schools, the red schools' most frequently used categories before the removal of "willful

defiance" were 3.1 – *Threatened/Caused/ Attempted Physical Injury* and 3.9 – *Disruption/Willful Defiance.* The red schools also used 3.16 – *Willful Use of Force/Violence Not Self-Defense.* However, once "willful defiance" was removed, their usage of reasons for suspensions became more varied than at the green schools. They, too, began using 3.09 – *Disrupted School Activities* and saw a great increase in their use of 3.16 – *Willful Use of Force/Violence Not Self-Defense,* but there was also an increase in the use of 3.7 – *Obscenity/Profanity/Vulgarity*, 3.12c – *Harassed/Threatened Pupil Based On Other Factors*, and 3.21d – *Bullying/Cyber Toward a Pupil Based on Other Factors*.

It is important to note that although some of the percentages of African-American students have increased, due to the great decrease in the number of suspensions overall, in most cases, such as 3.16 - *Willful Use of Force/Violence Not Self-Defense* at the red schools, the number of actual students suspended was quite low overall. The implications of this will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Research question 2.

To answer Research Question 2, "How does racial representation influence discipline practices in urban high schools?" quantitative data from the scenarios in the teacher questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS.

Review of the sample – teachers.

A total of 69 teachers filled out the questionnaire online. Nearly the same number of teachers from each of the two groups responded - 35 from the green schools and 34 from the red. The highest rate of teacher response at a school site was 22%, which was at Cornell, a green school, and Reed, a red school. The lowest was at Stanford High School, where only 8% of their 120 teachers participated in the questionnaire. Their principal was disappointed in this low

response rate and said, "It would be nice to have had a lot of teachers fill out the survey. I can't get them to do the District survey that's online, [either]." Table 8 includes specific data about the participating teachers from all six schools.

Table 8

Participating Teachers by School

School	Number of Teachers at School	Number of Teachers Responded	% of Teachers Responded	Average Years At Current School (Below 21 Years)	Number Teaching 21+ Years at Current School	Average Years Teaching (Below 21 Years)	Number of Teachers Teaching 21+ Years
Green							
Cornell	67	15	22%	8	2	9	9
Stanford	120	10	8%	5.5	0	10	1
Yale	82	10	12%	8	0	12	0
Red							
Pomona	87	10	11%	11	0	12	3
Reed	72	16	22%	6	0	12	3
Smith	80	8	10%	10	1	14	2

Design

The questionnaire included three scenarios that involved hypothetical students committing one of three transgressions, which all represented "willfully defiant" behavior: a student who refused to move to his/her assigned seat; put his/her phone away after repeated requests from the teacher; or was disrespectful to the teacher when asked to stop kissing in the quad (see Appendix B). Twenty-six high school teachers, from schools not included in the study, participated in an online survey, which gave them the opportunity to rate each of the three scenarios on their severity. The test scenarios included race-neutral names. The teachers were provided with a seven-point rating scale (1 = not bad at all to 7 = very bad) and asked to determine how "bad" the students' behavior was. The average ratings were as follows: "seat" – 5.5; "phone" – 5.85; and "kiss" – 5.38. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the differences in mean scores for each of the three scenarios. When using a

Greenhouse-Geisser correction, the differences for each scenario were not significant (F(1.660, 41.495) = 1.923, p=0.165). In the questionnaire, the ethnicity was manipulated by giving the offender an ethnicity-linked name: *Connor* (White), *D'Shawn* (African-American), and *Fernanda (*Hispanic). Each teacher received three scenarios – the three transgressions, each committed by Connor, D'Shawn, or Fernanda (i.e., 3 of 9 possible combinations matching transgression with ethnicity of perpetrator). Teachers were randomly assigned to student name (ethnicity) order to reduce any bias that could have resulted from the order in which the student's names appeared in the scenarios. Table 9 shows the order in which each participant was presented with the scenarios.

Table 9

Order of Scenarios Presented to Participants

	First	Second	Third
Last Name A-I	Connor Seat	D'Shawn Phone	Fernanda Kiss
Last Name J-R	Fernanda Seat	Connor Phone	D'Shawn Kiss
Last Name S-Z	D'Shawn Seat	Fernanda Phone	Connor Kiss

For each scenario, teachers responded to 5 questions using 7-point rating scales:

- How much would the student's behavior irritate you? (1 = Not at All and 7 = A Whole Lot)

- How much would you ignore the student's behavior? (1 = Definitely Would and 7 = Definitely Would Not)

- How disruptive is the student's behavior? (1 = Not at All and 7 = Very)

- What is the likelihood that you would refer the student to the office? (1 = Not at All Likely and 7 = Very Likely)

- How much does the student deserve to be disciplined? (1 = Not at All and 7 = A Whole Lot)

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The first three questions tapped the emotional effect on the teacher from the student's behavior, the fourth question would require some sort of action from the teacher, and the last asked the teachers' belief about punishment deservingness. I wanted to know if the responses from the teachers at the green schools would differ in any way from those at the red schools. Specifically, I looked at pair-wise comparisons between school types (green and red) and ethnicity of student (Connor, D'Shawn, and Fernanda) as a within-subject factor.

Findings.

A between and within factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for each of the five questions to assess the effect of school type on student (ethnicity). School type was the between subjects variable with two levels (green schools and red schools) and student (ethnicity) was the within subjects variable with three levels (Connor, D'Shawn, and Fernanda).

Scenario question one: How much would the student's behavior irritate you?

The main effect of the between subjects variable, school type, is not significant using an alpha of .05 (F (1, 55.31) = .098, p = .76), which suggests that there is no difference between the level of irritation of the teachers at the green and red schools. The main effect of the within subjects variable, student (ethnicity), is not significant using an alpha of .05 (F (2, 107.02) = .15, p = .86), suggesting that the student (ethnicity) does not have an effect on the teachers' level of irritation. The interaction between school type and student (ethnicity) is not significant using an alpha of .05 (F (2, 107.02) = .54, p = .58), which suggests that there is no difference in level of irritation of teachers at the green and red schools and the three students (ethnicities). Table 10 includes all data for this scenario question.

Table 10

Dependent Variable: Irritate

Student	Mean	Standard Error	N
Green			
Connor	4.41	.40	27
D'Shawn	4.49	.40	26
Fernanda	4.56	.40	27
Total	4.49	.35	80
Red			
Connor	4.83	.38	30
D'Shawn	4.50	.38	29
Fernanda	4.58	.38	28
Total	4.64	.33	87
Total			
Connor	4.62	.27	57
D'Shawn	4.50	.28	55
Fernanda	4.57	.28	55
Total	4.56	.24	167

Scenario question two: How much would you ignore the student's behavior?

The main effect of the between subjects variable, school type, is not significant using an alpha of .05 (F (1, 54.90) = .00, p = .97), which suggests that there is no difference between the level of how much the teachers at the green and red schools would ignore the "willfully defiant" behavior. The main effect of the within subjects variable, student (ethnicity), is not significant using an alpha of .05 (F (2, 106.35) = .78, p = .46), suggesting that the student (ethnicity) does not have an effect on how much the teachers would ignore the behavior. The interaction between school type and student (ethnicity) is also not significant. Data for this question are represented in Table 11.

Scenario question three: How disruptive is the student's behavior?

The main effect of the between subjects variable, school type, is not significant using an alpha of .05 (F (1, 54.99) = .21, p = .65). The main effect of the within subjects variable, student (ethnicity), is not significant using an alpha of .05 (F (2, 107.35) = .35, p = .71). The interaction

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between school type and student (ethnicity) is not significant using an alpha of .05 (F (2, 107.35) = .54, p = .59). Table 12 shows the specific data used to analyze this question.

Table 11

Dependent Variable: Ignore

Student	Mean	Standard Error	N
Green			
Connor	4.75	.41	26
D'Shawn	4.75	.41	26
Fernanda	4.74	.41	27
Total	4.74	.32	79
Red			
Connor	4.73	.39	30
D'Shawn	4.35	.39	29
Fernanda	5.10	.40	28
Total	4.73	.31	87
Total			
Connor	4.74	.28	56
D'Shawn	4.55	.28	55
Fernanda	4.92	.28	55
Total	4.74	.22	166

Table 12

Dependent Variable: Disruptive

Student	Mean	Standard Error	N
Green			
Connor	4.59	.39	27
D'Shawn	4.59	.40	26
Fernanda	4.37	.39	27
Total	4.52	.30	80
Red			
Connor	4.53	.37	30
D'Shawn	4.04	.38	29
Fernanda	4.41	.38	28
Total	4.33	.29	87
Total			
Connor	4.56	.27	57
D'Shawn	4.32	.28	55
Fernanda	4.39	.28	55
Total	4.42	.21	167

Scenario question four: What is the likelihood that you would refer the student to the office?

The main effect of the between subjects variable, school type, is not significant using an alpha of .05 (F (1, 54.72) = .16, p = .69), The main effect of the within subjects variable, student (ethnicity), is not significant using an alpha of .05 (F (2, 106.63) = .09, p = .91); nor was the interaction significant using an alpha of .05 (F (2, 106.63) = .04, p = .96) (see Table 13).

Table 13

Dependent Variable: Refer

Student	Mean	Standard Error	N
Green			
Connor	3.15	.44	27
D'Shawn	3.34	.44	26
Fernanda	3.19	.44	27
Total	3.22	.37	80
Red			
Connor	3.43	.42	30
D'Shawn	3.46	.42	29
Fernanda	3.40	.43	28
Total	3.43	.35	87
Total			
Connor	3.29	.30	57
D'Shawn	3.40	.31	55
Fernanda	3.29	.31	55
Total	3.33	.26	167

Scenario question five: How much does the student deserve to be disciplined?

The main effect of the between subjects variable, school type, is not significant using an alpha of .05 (F (1, 54.99) = .33, p = .57. The main effect of the within subjects variable, student (ethnicity), is not significant using an alpha of .05 (F (2, 106.95) = .01, p = .99), The interaction between school type and student (ethnicity) is not significant using an alpha of .05 (F (2, 106.95) = .07, p = .94). See Table 14 for complete data.

Table 14

Dependent Variable: Disciplined

Student	Mean	Standard Error	N
Green			
Connor	4.63	.36	27
D'Shawn	4.68	.37	26
Fernanda	4.63	.36	27
Total	4.65	.30	80
Red			
Connor	4.43	.34	30
D'Shawn	4.34	.35	29
Fernanda	4.44	.35	28
Total	4.41	.29	87
Total			
Connor	4.53	.25	57
D'Shawn	4.51	.25	55
Fernanda	4.54	.25	55
Total	4.52	.21	167

Summary.

The results of the ANOVA led me to conclude that the responses of the teachers at the green schools were not significantly different from those of teachers at the red schools in any of the questions or with any of the students (ethnicities). However, when looking more closely at the mean scores for each rating (see Figure 8), there is a noticeable reduction in average ratings at both types of schools for all three students for the question, "What is the likelihood that you would refer the student to the office?" This is the one question that would require some sort of action by the teacher. It is difficult, however, to determine to what this reduction can be attributed.
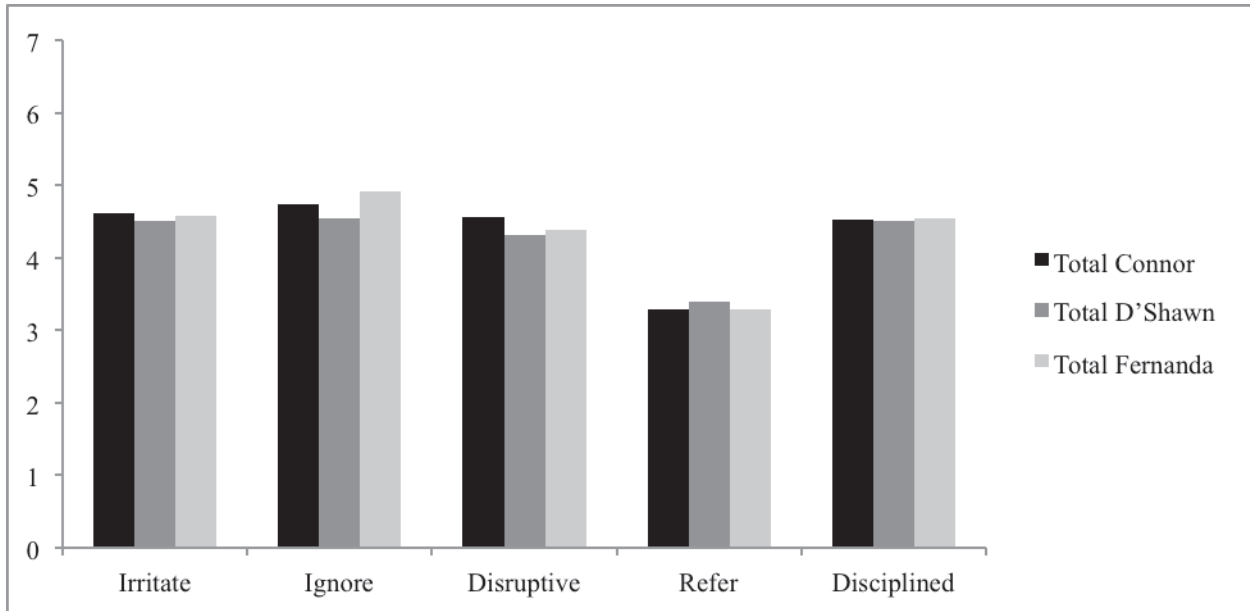
Figure 8. Mean scores by scenario question

Research question 3.

The findings to answer Research Question 3, "After the removal of suspensions for 'willful defiance' how do administrators and teachers describe their policies and practices around school suspensions," reflect the responses from six principal interviews and from 69 teacher questionnaires. The interview and questionnaire asked about notification and awareness of the new policy; student removal from class; and past and present discipline procedures and practices. In this section I focused on overall responses as well as a comparison of the green schools to the red schools. In some cases, when there were notable similarities or differences, I also compared the responses of the principals to their teachers in each of the two types of schools. Given the unexpected finding of the increase in suspension disproportionality at three of the schools (see Figure 6), I also looked for any commonalities or standouts between the three schools and the other three schools whose rate of disproportionality decreased after the first year of the policy change.

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Review of the sample – principals.

Three principals from the green schools (proportionately high enrollment of African-American students) and three from the red schools (proportionately low African-American student enrollment) were interviewed. The principals differed in gender, years of experience, and years as principal at their current site. The principals at Cornell (green), Stanford (green) and Pomona (red) had each been with the District for approximately 30 years. Although the principal from Reed, a red school, had only been in LAUSD for two years, he had prior experience as a principal in another school district. Information on each of the principals can be seen in Table 15.

Table 15

Participating Principals by School

School	Gender	Total Years in LAUSD	Years as Principal at Current School
Green			
Cornell	M	30	6[5]
Stanford	M	29	8
Yale	F	18	<1
Red			
Pomona	M	30	4
Reed	M	2	2
Smith	F	13	4

Notification and awareness of new policy.

Principals.

The removal of "willful defiance" from the discipline policy appears in LAUSD's BUL-5655.2 - *Guidelines for Student Suspensions,* dated August 19, 2013 (LAUSD, 2013). Reason code 3.9 – *Disruption/Willful Defiance* is no longer listed as a reason for suspension. The bulletin specifically states, "the District's policy prohibits suspension and expulsion be utilized as corrective measures in response to student misconduct of "willful defiance" as described in E.C. Section 48900 (k). Throughout LAUSD, principals were notified about this change at a

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[5] The principal at Cornell High School has been principal there twice – once from 2004 to 2008 and again from 2012 to the present, 2014.

principal's operations meeting at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year. The expectation was that principals would share all pertinent information learned at this meeting with their staff. Principals used different methods for disseminating information about District policies, but it is usually shared at the first staff meeting of the new school year. Additionally, all District staff members have access to all District policy bulletins through an internal E-Library on the District's website.

When asked how their teachers were notified about the change in the District's discipline policy regarding the removal of "willful defiance," there was great variation in the responses at both the green and red schools. While all six principals indicated that there was some form of announcement during a staff meeting, the depth of notification ranged from very little attention given to the policy such as "put up a notice to the teachers and mentioned in the staff meeting" and "didn't make a big deal of it" to an in-depth focus on the topic including "we had professional development sessions" and "the teachers participated in role playing." The level of notification of the policy change did not seem to have an effect on whether the school's suspension disproportionality increased or not as some of the principals at the schools whose rate went up gave more attention to the topic than others.

Teachers.

The teacher questionnaire was disseminated on March 10, 2014 – nearly seven months after the school year had begun and the new policy had been implemented. Still, not all teachers were aware of the change. When asked if they were aware that the District no longer allows for suspensions based on "willful defiance," only 73% of the 67 teachers who responded to this question - 27 of 35 teachers (77%) from the green schools and 22 of 32 (69%) from the red schools - said that they were aware of this change in policy. Moreover, when asked how they had

learned about the change in policy, only 19 (39%) of the 49 teachers who were aware of the change - 12 green school teachers (44%) and seven red school teachers (32%) - indicated that they had learned about it at a staff meeting or professional development. The remaining teachers heard about the change in the following ways: newspaper/TV/radio; colleagues; District website; and an individual meeting with the principal. Specific percentages are outlined in Table 16.

Table 16

Teachers' Awareness of Suspension Policy Change

"How did you learn about the removal of "willful defiance" from the discipline policy?"				
	Green Schools (n=35)		Red Schools (n=32)	
	#	%	#	%
Did know about the change	27	77%	22	69%
Staff Meeting/ Professional Development	12	44%	7	32%
Newspaper/TV/Radio	10	37%	7	32%
Colleagues	4	15%	4	18%
District website	1	4%	2	9%
Meeting with the principal	0	0%	1	5%
Don't remember	0	0%	1	5%
Did not know about the change	8	23%	10	31%

Removing students from class

The District removed "willful defiance" as a category for suspensions to reduce the amount of class time that students were losing due to suspensions. However, there are other behaviors that teachers and principals feel warrant a student's removal from class. Often, it is the opinion of the principal that determines the school's practice regarding student removal from class. By asking the principals and teachers about their personal beliefs surrounding students' removal from class I hoped to gain a clearer picture of the culture of the school as a whole, regarding discipline. I wanted to know whether or not some teachers would name "willfully defiant behavior" as a reason to remove a child from class. I also wanted to know if there was a difference in the responses from the teachers at the green and red schools.

During the interview, the principals were asked, "For what reasons is it acceptable to remove a student from class?" and in the questionnaire the teachers were given the opportunity to list behaviors that they felt were legitimate reasons to remove a student from class. Responses from the principals at the green schools were very similar to the most commonly listed reasons of the teachers at the green schools as were those from the principals at the red schools and their fellow teachers. However, overall, the responses from teachers at the green schools differed from those at the red schools.

Principals.

Green Schools.

All three principals at the green schools said that the only reason that it is acceptable to remove a student from class is for reasons of safety, such as fighting, or when the teacher feels that there is an emergency taking place. One principal at a green school specifically stated that "willful defiance' is not one [of the reasons to remove a student from class]."

Red Schools.

In contrast, the three principals at the red schools stated reasons such as "extreme defiance," "blatant disrespect to teachers," and "extreme profanity;" but contrary to their green school counterparts, none mentioned areas of safety such as fighting, physical assault or violence. One principal from a red school said that sending a child out sets an example for the other students in the class:

> …this blatant disrespect to teachers is the reason for them to send a student to the dean's office because then that just sets the model for the rest of the kids. And if a kid sees that they can get away with that, then a teacher starts losing respect and control of the classroom.

Another principal from a red school described what this disrespect might look like:

…a kid telling a teacher, "F, you, you're stupid, you don't know what you're doing." Or a teacher asking a kid to move a seat and the kid's saying, "No, no, no," and it just becomes a major disruption in class.

The principal from the red school did refer to the appropriateness of removing a student from class if he/she "is interfering with other kids' right to learn and the process of learning," but this was the only principal out of the six who made any reference to disruption of learning as a reason for classroom removal.

Teachers.

Teachers at both red and green schools listed behaviors that they felt were legitimate reasons to remove a student from class; they gave as few as one to as many as seven different reasons. In order to better analyze them, I categorized the responses received. The answers given most frequently by the 60 teachers who responded to this question were in the areas of disrespect, refusal and "willful defiance." Of the 56.7% teachers who indicated a reason related to disrespect, refusal and "willful defiance," 23% specifically mentioned "defiance" or "willful defiance" as a reason for removal from class. Of note, disrespect, refusal, and "willful defiance" were cited more often by teachers as reasons to remove students from class than were reasons that involve violence, weapons, safety issues, and theft. Additionally, 52% of the teachers (60% at the green schools and 43% at the red schools) indicated that disruption of class/learning was a legitimate reason to remove a student from class.

When comparing responses between the teachers from the green schools to those at the red schools, the greatest difference in opinion was regarding the removal of students for fighting. While 47% of the teachers from the green schools felt students who were fighting should be

removed, only 10% of the teachers from the red schools listed this as a reason. Table 17

provides a complete list of the categories and the percentages of responses from the two groups

of teachers.

Table 17

Legitimate Reasons to Remove Students from Class (According to Teachers)

	Green Schools (n=30)		Red Schools (n=30)		TOTAL (n=60)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Disrespect/Refusal/Willful Def.	16	53.3%	18	60.0%	34	56.7%
Disruption of Class/Learning	18	60.0%	13	43%	31	51.7%
Bullying	16	53.3%	13	43%	29	48.3%
Drugs/Alcohol	10	33.3%	18	60.0%	28	46.7%
Profanity/Verbal Disrespect	15	50.0%	13	43.3%	28	46.7%
Physical Assault/Violence	11	36.7%	13	43.3%	24	40.0%
Fighting	14	46.7%	3	10.0%	17	28.3%
Weapons	8	26.7%	7	23.3%	15	25.0%
Dangerous/Safety Issue	6	20.0%	7	23.3%	13	21.7%
Destruction of property/Theft	6	20.0%	5	16.7%	11	18.3%
Other	5	16.7%	3	10.0%	8	13.3%
General Rule Breaking	4	13.3%	2	6.7%	6	10.0%
Inappropriate Sexual Behavior	3	10.0%	2	6.7%	5	8.3%
Leaving Class Without Permission	3	10.0%	0	0%	3	5.0%
Chronic Absenteeism	0	0%	2	6.7%	2	3.3%
Inappropriate Clothing	0	0%	2	6.7%	2	3.3%

Principals' expectations for discipline since policy change.

Removal from class.

After discussing with principals acceptable reasons for removing a student from class,

they were asked to review the steps that their staff should take to remove a student from class

should a student's behavior reach that level. Across the six schools, the most common

expectation of the principals, three green and two red schools, for removal from class was that

the student be sent to the dean; it is then the dean who determines the consequences for the

student. There was also an expectation at one of the green schools, and all of the red schools, that

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the child's parents be called. Another common expectation at the schools, which is a District policy as well, is that the teachers appropriately document the incident in the online incident reporting system (LAUSD, 2013). In an effort to lessen the burden for the teachers, one of the green schools implemented a system where the teacher fills out a school-created referral form and the dean later inputs the referral into the computer system. Only one principal mentioned that in a situation where the student is removed from class that the teacher should try interventions with the student in the classroom.

Disrespect.

Based on the responses from the principals, the expectations for discipline if a student is disrespectful to a teacher vary across the six schools. This is at the root of the issue as "willful defiance" is a form of disrespect. At two of the schools, one green and one red, all of the expectations involve helping the student to improve his or her own behavior and learn from it. These include implementation of "progressive behavior" and a "behavior intervention model" which a principal from a green school described:

> The expectations, what we have for discipline, we actually use behavior intervention models. If a student, for example, is sent to either the counselor or the dean's office, we have several books and literature, little packets for students to actually complete an intervention model. They have to write and do reading comprehension and they have a time frame to be able to do so, and then they also present that information in front of a panel of our school-wide behavior support team that is comprised of students, parents, administrative, classified, certificated personnel, and community members to be able to organize what the behavior expectations are. Students will present their information on their learning and their intervention task to the panel based upon a rubric, and if in fact…

one of the criteria along the rubric, there's a question that states, "Describe what it is you learned and how you would handle the situation differently," and so if they haven't really responded to that question appropriately, and/or the panel deems there are additional resources that are necessary then they go into another intervention model, so they would get more intensive support on being able to deal with that.

Two other schools, one green and one red, implemented positive strategies such as de-escalating the situation and having conversations with the student. However, their methods also included a seemingly negative consequence for the student such as sending the student to the counselor or "corrective action." At two schools, one green and one red, the response to disrespect is more punitive – detention and out-of-class suspension. At these two schools, there was no mention of working with the student to improve his/her behavior.

When it comes to suspending students one of the principals from a green school, discussed the idea of "teacher power":

…I think for some teachers [suspending students is] a way to exercise power… to say, "I suspended you from my class." And not that I'm anti-teacher, but it's--I don't want [a teacher] to tell a kid that. I want [the teacher] to say; "You're going to go talk to the dean because we have to get to the bottom [of your behavior] - you know, why are you acting like this? And that's why you're out of my class, not because I have the power of suspension." So it's semantics, but it's more than that, it's how the kids feel they're being treated…

Disciplinary processes.

Generally speaking, the three principals at the green schools seemed to have more specific and consistent processes in place for all types of student discipline compared to their red school

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counterparts. One of the principals at a green school explained the process for removing students from class at her school:

> The steps that my staff actually are charged with taking… they need to first call a buddy teacher and have the student go to the buddy teacher with their work. If it is something that is physically alarming or something that is excessively out of control they need to contact security; security will come and assist and bring them down to either the counselor or the dean's office. They have a list of behaviors that would go to either one of the areas. So, if it's a crime then it goes to the dean. If it's something that's behavioral it needs to go to the counselor for behavior modification.

A principal at another green school puts a large amount of responsibility on the teacher:

> What we want teachers to do is… de-escalate the situation. Tell the kid, "I'll talk to you after class. We're not going to do that right now," and go about [their] teaching. Then after class, [they] deal with it. [The teacher] should be able to take care of it [him/her]self, call the parent, warn the student, try to talk to the student, and if it's an ongoing [problem], that's where we… take [the student] out of the classroom.

The third green high school recently implemented a detention policy:

> The way we handle discipline here we're pretty pro-active, and so first of all, kids have to be on time, and if they're late then they automatically go to the dean's office where we give them detention. If it's first thing in the morning and they're late, they get one detention. If they're late during the school day… then they would get three detentions. If they're out of class without a pass they get six detentions. Teachers have the ability to give detentions themselves… To serve detentions kids come in during lunch to the social hall, which is a big, multi-purpose room. They sit down at a table and they write an essay

about how to do better in school… If they show up on their own, they write a one-page

essay. If they don't show up on their own, every day we [the administrators] go to

classrooms and we pick up kids who owe detention, and so if we have to pick them up

then they write a two-page essay.

This principal related enforcement of tardiness to the "Broken Window Theory[6]":

…when [New York City Police] started enforcing the minor stuff then the major crimes

decreased significantly, and that's kind of what this is. This is like the Broken Window

Theory for a school where we go real hard enforcing tardiness and that's what reduces

[the other bad behaviors such as "willful defiance"].

Changes to discipline practice.

Principals' perception of teachers' practice.

The responses were mostly positive from the principals at both groups of schools to

teachers' perceptions of the new policy and only one principal from each group of schools had

something negative to report. Principals at both sets of schools mentioned that they see teachers

holding students more accountable and that they are making them take ownership of their own

behavior.

Green schools (High AA enrollment).

The principals at the green schools discussed an increase in conversation amongst the

teachers regarding the purpose of school suspension; a recognition that the issues of conflict

happen as a result of students' difficulties at home and therefore an increase in referrals to the

local Wellness Center; the creation of behavior protocols and procedures; and teachers placing

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[6] The Broken Window Theory by Professor James Q. Wilson and Professor George Kelling is over 30 years old and has been used successfully worldwide by small towns and large cities. The term "Broken Window" comes from the metaphor used to describe this concept: "If a window is broken and left unrepaired, people walking by will conclude that no one cares and no one is in charge." This theory says that the little things matter (Missoula Police Department, 2014).

more of an effort on diffusing situations before they got out of hand. One principal from a green

school stated that some of his teachers are still sending students out of class. He did assure me,

however, that the deans work with students who are removed from class.

Red schools (Low AA enrollment).

The principals at the red schools said that they see their teachers working more with the

students and using more interventions. One red school principal also stated that there was now a

higher level of teacher tolerance and another indicated that they have begun utilizing Restorative

Justice processes (see Chapter Two) at his school.

A principal from a red school said that he believes that his teachers feel less supported by

administration now, which aligns with the questionnaire responses received from the teachers:

[Teachers] are definitely more willing to work with the students, at the same time I know

that several staff members feel less support from admin[istration] and from the dean

because here you have a kid saying, "F' you," and we can't suspend like we would have

in the past. And that's totally understandable. So, the teachers feel that it sends the wrong

message when there's no major consequence for an extreme act of defiance that is

unacceptable.

Teachers' self-reflection on past and present discipline practices.

Teachers reflected on the changes that they have made to their own discipline practices

after the policy changed. When answering the question, "Now that suspensions for 'willful

defiance,' are no longer allowed, what changes have you personally made to your discipline

practices," teachers were given the opportunity to select as many of the five options that they felt

were applicable to them. Of the 60 teachers who responded to the question, 33 (55%) stated that

the change in policy did not affect their practice, 19 (32%) have begun to implement Positive

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Behavior Support strategies with their students, 18 (30%) still refer students, but no longer use the classification of "willful defiance," 17 (28%) said they just don't refer students anymore, and 8 (13%) have made "other changes."

Green schools vs. red schools.

As seen in Table 18, when comparing the personal changes to discipline practices of the green schools' teachers to those of the teachers at the red schools, there is very little difference between the two. More than 50% of the teachers in each of the two groups indicated that the removal of "willful defiance" had not affected their practice. Only one major difference between the teachers at the two sets of schools was noticed: seven, or 23%, of the teachers from the green schools compared to 12, or 40%, of the teachers at the red schools acknowledged that they had begun to implement Positive Behavior strategies in their classrooms.

Table 18

Self-defined Changes in Teachers' Discipline Practice

	Green Schools (n=30)		Red Schools (n=30)		Total (n=60)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
The change did not affect my practice	16	53.5%	17	56.7%	33	55.0%
I just don't bother to refer students anymore	9	30.0%	8	26.7%	17	28.3%
I find other categories to use for referring students who are "willfully defiant."	8	26.7%	10	33.3%	18	30.0%
I have begun to/already implement positive behavior support strategies	7	23.3%	12	40.0%	19	31.7%
Other	5	16.7%	3	10.0%	8	13.3%

Increased disproportionality schools vs. decreased disproportionality schools.

When using these same data, but comparing the responses of the teachers from the schools whose suspension disproportionality increased to those from the schools whose decreased, two noteworthy differences occurred. At the schools where the disproportionality increased, 63% of the teachers, compared to 46% of the teachers at the schools whose disproportionality decreased, indicated that the policy change did not affect their practice. Also, only 25% of the teachers at the "increased schools" indicated that they had already begun to implement positive behavior support strategies, but 39% of the teachers at the "decreased schools" indicated as such. These results align to the change in rates of disproportionality. Contrary to the patterns of suspension rates, however, are the responses regarding finding other categories to use for referring students – only 25% of the teachers at the schools with an increase in disproportionality admitted to finding other categories while 36% of the schools with a decrease stated this.

Teachers' perception of colleagues' changes in discipline practice.

Teachers were also asked to reflect upon their perceived changes in the discipline practices of both the administration as well as their fellow teachers since the removal of "willful defiance." The comments of the teachers varied greatly.

Twenty-seven teachers from each of the two school groups responded to the open-ended question, "What changes in discipline practices have you noticed with your school's teaching staff since the removal of "willful defiance" from the discipline policy?" Forty-eight percent of the teachers at the green schools and 41% at the red schools indicated that they have noticed changes in the discipline practices of the teaching staff at their school. The remaining teachers

indicated that they have not noticed or do not know about changes in their fellow teachers' practices since the removal of "willful defiance."

Green schools (High AA enrollment).

At the green schools, responses included: using different suspension reason codes when suspending; sending students out without appropriate documentation; and allowing more usage of electronic devices within the classroom. A teacher at one green school indicated that teachers at his school are no longer sending students out to other classrooms because they are "not allowed to," while a teacher at another green school indicated that teachers at his school are sending students to other classrooms more often. However, some of the teachers at green schools indicated proactive changes such as teachers handling their own issues more, teachers helping one another more, and teachers communicating more with administration as to how to work with students with discipline problems.

Red schools (Low AA enrollment).

Teachers at the red schools cited practices such as teachers "kicking kids out of class" more often, which leads to more students roaming around campus; teachers having to deal with more extreme cases of defiance; and teachers no longer bothering to send students to the dean. They also indicated that the teachers appear to be making proactive changes such as more phone calls home and talking more with their students.

One additional topic that was mentioned by 33% of teachers at both green and red schools was a feeling of frustration. They stated that the teachers are frustrated for reasons such as, "they have 'more documentation' to deal with" (green school teacher), "students who are "willfully defiant" are not being suspended" (red school teacher), and "administration has no consequences so negative student behavior is escalating" (red school teacher).

Summary.

In seeking to answer Research Question 3, I learned that principals made different levels of effort to notify their teachers about the removal of "willful defiance" from the discipline policy. This may have led to the over 25% of teachers who indicated that they were unaware of the change. However, it is unknown how much this reflected the rest of the teaching staff at each of the schools.

At the green schools, the principals feel that the only acceptable reason for removing a student from class is if there is an issue of safety, and if he/she is sent out of class the dean should be involved in the discipline process. Their teachers feel that disruption of class and learning warrants removal from class. If a child at a green school disrespects his/her teacher, the principal expects that the teacher would work to de-escalate the situation and/or implement progressive discipline strategies. However one principal has implemented a detention program at his school, which does not remove the students from class.

Principals at the red schools all agree that defiance and disrespect justify a child's removal from class, and their teachers agree. They also expect that children be sent to the dean when they are asked to leave class, that disrespectful behavior be deescalated, and that teachers use progressive discipline with their students. One principal did mention that students who behave disrespectfully should receive an out-of-class suspension.

The principals in both groups of schools said that since the removal of "willful defiance," their teachers are holding students more accountable and are making them take ownership of their behavior. However, approximately 30% of the teachers in each group admitted to continuing to suspend students but state that they are using categories other than "willful defiance;" red school teachers also see their colleagues "kicking kids out of class" more often

now. The teachers stated that they and their fellow teachers are more frustrated due to the amount of documentation that is expected of them when students are disciplined, the lack of the support they receive from administration and the escalating negative behavior of their students as the types of consequences are changing or disappearing altogether.

Considering that none of the principals at the green schools mentioned that "willful defiance," disrespect, or profanity were behaviors that warrant removal of a student from class but at least 50% of the responding teachers from the green schools believe that those are legitimate reasons, those principals may have to work hard at changing the culture of their school to ensure that students do not continue to be removed from class for these reasons. The principals' responses from the red schools may indicate that the schools will have a more difficult time transitioning into the change of not suspending based on "willfully defiant" behavior as the leaders of the schools themselves still consider it appropriate to remove a child from class for these types of behavior. If a teacher at a red school were to remove a student from his/her class due to disrespect or extreme profanity, then he/she might have a higher likelihood of being supported by the principal.

Finally, when focusing on the responses of the principals and teachers from the schools whose suspension disproportionality increased in the first year after the removal of "willful defiance," and comparing the responses to the principals and teachers at the schools whose disproportionality rate decreased, the most striking variances related to teachers' self-defined changes in practice – specifically an increase in implementation of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) at the schools whose rate of disproportionality decreased. This aligns with the few studies that have examined PBS in urban schools that found reductions in problem behavior related to

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the use of PBS (McCurdy, et al., 2003; Scott, 2001; Warren et al., 2006; Warren et al., 2003), which was discussed in Chapter Two.

<center>**Chapter Five: Discussion**</center>

Introduction

   This study examined the early effects of the removal of "willful defiance" as a reason for suspension for students at six high schools within the Los Angeles Unified School District. Data analysis revealed that although overall suspension rates decreased after the removal, some schools continued to suspend their African-American students at disproportionate rates. Data collected through principal interviews and teacher questionnaires indicated that the beliefs and feelings of the teachers regarding discipline did not always match with those of their principal.

   In this chapter I will begin with a discussion of the meaning of the major findings from my research, including some that were unexpected, and how they relate to the existing literature. Next, I will provide recommendations that are based on the findings. I will then describe the limitations of my study and present suggestions for future research. Finally, the chapter will conclude with my personal reflections about the research.

Major Findings

   Suspension data.

   National and state data indicate that African-American students are being suspended at disproportionate rates, and LAUSD data are no different. During the 2011-2012 school year, the K-12 enrollment of African-American students in LAUSD was 9%, but they represented 28% of the suspensions. The high school rates, the level at which the study focused, were similar with an African-American enrollment of 9.5% and 22% of the suspensions being given to African-American students. When focusing specifically on suspensions for "willful defiance," 27.9% of suspensions given to African-Americans in K-12 were categorized as "willful defiance" and they represented 33.4% of the suspensions given to African-Americans at the high school level.

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As I began to analyze the data from the six schools in the study, I found that all six schools had substantial drops in rates of overall suspensions from 2008-2009 to 2013-2014 – one as high as 18.1%, and five of the six also saw declines in their rates of suspensions being given to their African-American students. However, this was not linked to a decrease in suspension disproportionality, which actually increased at four of the schools in the six years.

By removing "willful defiance" as a reason for suspension, it is assumed that LAUSD hoped that the overall suspension rate, and rate of disproportionality for African-American students, would drop as well. However, as described in Chapter Four, that was not the case at all six of the schools. When I compared the suspension and disproportionality rates from 2012-2013, the last year of "willful defiance," to the rates from 2013-2014, the overall suspension rates decreased (one school slightly increased), but at three of the schools the percentage of suspensions given to African-Americans increased, as did the rate of disproportionality.

As I had hypothesized in Chapter Four, once "willful defiance" was removed, the percentage of Category III suspension offenses of African-American students increased at both the green and red schools, an increase in the use of categories other than "willful defiance." At both the green and red schools, the increases were in areas that were less subjective – *Caused Physical Injury To Another Person* (green schools) and *Willful Use Of Force/Violence Not Self-Defense* – rather than "willful defiance," which is more subjective. This is not in line with the findings of Skiba, Horner, et al. (2011) and Fallon, O'Keeffe, and Sugai (2012) who found that African-American students tend to be referred for more subjective reasons. In addition to being less subjective, these areas of increase both surround students acting in a physically harmful manner; the behaviors of the African-American students are simply being re-labeled in a way

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that is even more negative that "willful defiance" ever was. Unfortunately, this is not an improvement for the African-American student population.

Teacher and principal perspective.

By interviewing the principals and having teachers complete questionnaires, I had hoped to understand the culture of the schools regarding their discipline beliefs and practices. However, the principals' beliefs did not always agree with those of their teachers, nor were all of the teachers' beliefs and practices the same at each school. Additionally, suspension rates at a school did not appear to be linked with the beliefs and practices of the principals.

At the schools with a high enrollment of African-American students, the green schools, all three principals stated that students should only be removed from class for reasons of safety, and data indicate that a large percentage of suspensions of their African-American students were for those reasons. They also had a large percentage of suspensions for "willful defiance" before its removal. The principals at the schools with a low enrollment of African-American students, the red schools, stated that defiance and disrespect were legitimate reasons to remove a student from class, which was illustrated by 36.4% of their suspensions from school years 2008-2009 through 2012-2013 in the "willful defiance" category. However, once "willful defiance" was removed, the greatest percent of Category III suspensions at their schools were for reasons of safety. While they agreed in some ways with their respective principals, many of the teachers said that students should be removed from class due to reasons of disruption of class/learning, which was not frequently mentioned by the principals.

This study was conducted through a lens of suspension disproportionality of African-American students. However, this specific framing was not provided to the teachers as they filled out the questionnaire – ethnicity was only implied as part of the scenario questions. The

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scenarios were included in the questionnaire as a way to gain insight into Research Question 2,

"How does racial representation influence discipline practices in urban high schools," without

directly asking a race-stated question. Based on the responses to the survey, ethnicity of a child

does not have any impact on these teacher's anticipated feelings in schools with high or low

disproportionality. Instead, the greater determinant seemed to be whether or not the teacher

would have to actively respond to a situation (e.g. What is the likelihood that you would refer the

student to the office?). In that case, the ratings for likelihood of response were lower than in the

other four questions. However, it is difficult to determine how much of an impact the implied

ethnicity of the students had on the teachers' responses to the scenarios.

Changes in practice.

If a teacher is expected to change his/her discipline methods and practices, it is important

that he/she is well informed about the new District policy. But, only half of the principals in the

study had spent time discussing the change in policy with their teachers and more than 25% of

the teachers said they were not even aware of the change. However, since the policy change, the

principals discussed positive changes that they have seen in their teachers' discipline practice

such as an increase in discussion surrounding the purpose of school suspensions, diffusing

situations before they get out of hand, and, at one school, an implementation of Restorative

Justice practices (as discussed in Chapter Two). Conversely, the teacher responses had a more

negative tone, with 20% complaining of a lack of administrator support and frustration about not

being able to suspend their students for "willfully defiant" behaviors anymore.

Recommendations

By removing "willful defiance" from the reasons for suspension, the District was hoping

to reduce suspensions, which data indicate did happen. However, the responses from the

principals and teachers indicated that the schools may not have changed their discipline practices to get to this reduction. Although many teachers discussed the purpose of suspensions and have been working to de-escalate negative student behavior, they are still frustrated and unsure of the best way to handle "willfully defiant" behavior. They expressed feeling unsupported by school administration. Based on this information, I believe there are some changes the District can make to more meaningfully reduce the suspension rates as well as the rate of suspension disproportionality for African-American students. As one teacher stated, "our suspension rate goes down, [but] not because our student behaviors have improved."

Combined implementation of methods.

In Chapter Two, three discipline methods were discussed – School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS), Culturally Relevant Classroom Management (CRCM) and Restorative Justice (RJ). Research suggests positive results both academically and behaviorally when schools utilize these methods, however only one principal and only one-third of the teachers referred to any of these methods in their responses, which leads me to question the extent of their implementation throughout the District.

While the District has already begun to show its commitment to reducing suspension and disproportionate rates of suspension of African-American students, they need to take further action to insure that its reductions are meaningful. Since 2007, SWPBS has been a part of LAUSD's Discipline Foundation policy and 31.7% of the teachers in my study indicated that they implement the strategies, but the District does not currently offer any training in these techniques. The District employs a small staff in its Academic English Mastery Program (AEMP) office to provide training in Culturally Relevant and Responsive Education (CRRE), which includes CRCM strategies, but the current focus of the CRRE implementation seems to be

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mainly at the elementary level and is more strongly focused on culturally relevant instructional strategies rather than CRCM strategies. The creation of the Restorative Justice Advisor position in the 2014-15 school year coincides with the District's commitment to implementing Restorative Justice practices in all District schools by 2020.

The implementation and utilization of each of the three methods requires extensive training, time, and support but can help to reduce problem behavior (McCurdy, Mannella, & Eldridge 2003; Scott, 2001; Warren et al., 2006; Warren et al., 2003), decrease suspension rates, and hopefully shrink the disproportionate rates of African-American suspensions as well. Each of these three methods presents benefits and challenges, but if used in concert, the school staff, parents, and teachers could all benefit greatly in areas such as behavior, effective communication (Brown, 2003), and academic performance. Additionally, my findings revealed that many of the teachers and principals still believe that students should be removed from the classroom disrupting learning and "willful defiance." If schools were trained in and implemented SWPBS, CRCM, and RJ methods, teachers and other school staff would be given the opportunity to learn the tools necessary for helping to diffuse negative behavior in the classroom, to prevent classroom disruption and to better understand cultural behaviors that might be considered "willfully defiant" (Utley, Kozleski, Smith & Draper, 2002). These changes would help to create a culture of positive behavior at the school (Sugai & Horner, 2002; Sugai et al., 2000; Sugai et al., 2005; Walker et al., 2006).

Designated staff.

Consistency in the implementation of SWPBS, CRCM, and RJ is vital, but time consuming – especially during early implementation. In order to be successful in any implementation, each District school, at every level, should have at least one person designated

to handle discipline of students and training of staff (or arranging training for staff). Too often, when trainings are required by the District, because they are short-staffed, schools will send someone who has no time to train and assist the staff in implementation as they have the duties and responsibilities of their own position such as classroom teacher or instructional coordinator. For example, a big part of Restorative Justice is the use of student conferences, which requires the participation of anyone who was affected by the student's behavior. In order to effectively implement these circles, there should be at least two school staff members (more for larger schools) who have been well trained in this method so that they can ensure it is implemented effectively and with fidelity. (If only one person per school is trained and that person leaves the school before full implementation has taken hold, then the knowledge leaves the school as well). This person will also need to investigate the incident to determine who was involved and affected, plan the actual meetings, and ensure that all are present at the meetings. Additionally, individual meetings may need to take place. Neither a classroom teacher nor a principal can do this, as they do not have the time during their day.

Intensive professional development

According to Skiba & Sprague (2008), students are often suspended because schools "don't know what else to do." The responses of the teachers on the open-ended questionnaire revealed that many teachers feel that they do not know how to handle discipline problems in their classroom. Other responses indicated that teachers still believe that students should be removed from class due to "willfully defiant" behavior. Every school has teachers who chronically refer their students to the office for behavior and those who handle the behavior themselves. According to Putnam et al. (2009), one of the challenges of implementing SWPBS in urban settings is inadequately prepared staff. The District needs to provide more intensive professional

development in the area of student discipline for teachers who fall into these categories –

especially those who repeatedly refer their students, as data can be collected on this. It is

important, however, that this professional development be provided as support, not in a punitive

manner, as the teachers will better respond to it.

Findings showed that principals communicated the change in policy to different extents

and that more than 25% of the teachers in the study were not aware of the suspension change.

Continuous discussions of this or any new policy by the principal with the teachers are

important. Each school needs to develop a process for communicating information about

changes and ways to implement the changes and to continue the discussion. There also needs to

be a way for principals and teachers to evaluate how a new policy is being implemented and

what is working and not working.

Limitations

Sample size.

There are 68 high schools in LAUSD. When preparing to do this study, I had intended to

include ten high schools. However, due to lower than expected principal response rates, the study

only focused on six high schools. A larger sample size may provide different data or help to

strengthen the data that were collected. Additionally, based on the various methods of teacher

contact that I used, including incentives, I had hoped to receive at least 200 teacher responses

(40%), yet only 69 (13.6%) teachers from those schools responded to the questionnaire. With a

low response rate, it can't be said that the survey responses capture a representative sample of

the teachers at these six schools even though there was a wide range in teachers' years of

experience, subject taught, and ethnicity.

Reporting of data.

LAUSD provides District-level suspension data as "number of students suspended one or more times" and "number of suspension events." "Number of students suspended one or more times" refers to a unique number of students who were suspended. For example, if the data indicate that 100 students were suspended one or more times, this refers to 100 different students. However, those same 100 students may generate 138 "suspension events." While "number of suspension events" tells us that some of those 100 students were suspended more than once, the data do not provide for specific information as to how many students were suspended multiple times, and for those students, how many times each was suspended. These data are only available at the school site level.

One school district.

The principals and teachers who participated in this study all work at schools in LAUSD – the second largest school district in the country. Beliefs and opinions about this topic may be very different for staff at schools in smaller districts where the communication may be more widespread. The Superintendent and Board members may also have more of an influence on their staff members in a smaller district. Additionally, other districts may have more or less of an implementation of SWPBS, CRCM and RJ, which would likely have an effect on the responses of the teachers.

Concern for anonymity.

The topic of removing "willful defiance" from the discipline policy– especially for their African-American population – is a bone of contention for principals, teachers, parents, and the community. One of the principals who declined my invitation to participate in my study stated:

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"This issue remains controversial with our deans and teachers… We have more than

enough issues before us without creating any additional topics for people to get angry

about. My task is to keep the school focused on student achievement and learning and

not to get distracted by hot point controversy."

One of the participating teachers stated, "This is one of the worst policies the [D]istrict has ever

implemented. Period." As I discussed my topic with numerous people who work in education –

both within and outside of LAUSD, there is much speculation that although suspension rates are

decreasing on paper, the students are still being removed from class but that it is not being

documented. One of the teachers in my study alluded to that as well when she said, "some

students were told they were suspended or changed to a different school but there was no official

paperwork done."

At the beginning of each interview, I assured the principal that his/her school's

participation in my study would remain confidential. However, there is always a possibility that

someone could identify which schools were included which would then reveal the participating

principals. This may have prevented the principals from divulging information that would be

looked upon as improper by the District. Including a larger sample size or asking the principals

to fill out a questionnaire instead of being interviewed may have given them a greater sense of

anonymity and therefore more straightforward responses.

Suggestions for Future Research

2013-2014 was the first year of implementation of the removal of "willful defiance" from

the District's discipline policy, which means that there are many areas in which research could

prove to be very informative.

Student perspective.

This study sought to understand the perspectives of principals and teachers regarding discipline practices. In the early planning stages, I had considered including students as part of this study. All of this work that is being done to help to reduce student suspensions with a goal of raising student achievement is being done through an adult perspective. The District could gain valuable insight if the perspectives of students were included in the research. There could be student interviews and focus groups based on ethnicity, school level, and discipline record to be able to concentrate on the needs of those specific groups and how to better meet them.

Teacher ethnicity.

As I studied this topic, I found there to be a dearth of information regarding the effect of teacher ethnicity on discipline practices. One might wonder if an African-American teacher would be more understanding and tolerant of his/her African-American students or a non-African-American to be less tolerant, but I was unable to find any research surrounding this topic. Although my questionnaire asked for teachers to identify their own ethnicity, only 65% designated one, which made any sort of analysis meaningless. I believe that having information like this may prove to be useful in determining effective discipline practices.

Rate of suspension disproportionality.

Fifty percent of the schools in my study saw an increase in their rate of disproportionality of suspensions of African-American students in the first year of the removal of "willful defiance." In the next few years, once the policy has been in effect for several years, and there is more widespread knowledge of the policy, a focus on schools' discipline practices as it relates to their rate of African-American suspension disproportionality may provide insight into successful methods that schools use to avoid suspending students.

Schools implementing Restorative Justice (RJ).

Studies show that RJ can be an effective discipline method for all students, which has led LAUSD to mandate its implementation at all schools by 2020. However, as discussed in Chapter Two, for it to be successful, schools need to want change and to be ready for it; be willing to improve the school's culture and recognize that behavioral issues may be addressed through restorative strategies that include the whole school (McCluskey et al., 2008). An analysis of the successes and areas of weakness in the implementation of RJ in the first round of schools prior to moving forward with the next groups of schools might help to ensure a more effective implementation of the program.

Comparison of suspension rates to student achievement.

The belief is that if students remain in class they will not miss out on instruction and that if they do not miss out on instruction, they will be more academically successful. Therefore, with the decrease in suspensions, any changes in student achievement should be evaluated. Research in this area could prove to be very informative; if a school's suspension rate decreased, but their student achievement as measured by factors such as standardized test scores, attendance rates and graduation rates did not increase, then the school may wish to either consider other factors or look more closely at the validity of their suspension rates.

Changes in suspension rates over time.

The District's goal is to reduce suspensions overall and they are in the process of implementing new policies and programs to support this goal. It is important that the District focus on the changes in suspension rates over time rather than year-to-year. Implementation of new methods takes time, so the change will likely be gradual.

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Another topic for future research is to understand what has changed at schools whose suspension rate has dropped dramatically. Have new programs been implemented? Is bad behavior being ignored? Are students being kicked out of school without documentation?

Reflection

During the two years I have spent researching, collecting data, and writing on this topic, I have reflected a great deal on student discipline and the way we treat students as a whole. I have also engaged in many informal conversations with people in various areas of education as well as parents regarding this topic. As one principal said to me, it is a very controversial topic.

As I conclude this process, my position in the District has changed to an elementary school Assistant Principal, which includes a great deal of student discipline. Unsurprisingly, a large percentage of the students who are sent to me are African-American boys. These are the repeat offenders who have built a reputation for themselves that will be difficult to erase in the eyes of teachers and fellow classmates, which can make changing their behavior more difficult – especially with teachers who have no patience and just want to get the kids out of their hair. Working on this study has really changed my way of thinking. My new perspective is "what is going on for this child and how can I help him change his behavior?" I spend a lot of time talking with each child to help him to understand why his behavior is not acceptable and how it affects others. If the child is capable, he writes a letter of apology to both the teacher as well as to the persons he "harmed" – my own version of Restorative Justice. Otherwise, it is a verbal conversation between the two with a focus on feelings, an apology, and acceptance or thanks for the apology. I no longer believe in removing the child from class or taking away his recess – he needs to be in class learning and at recess exerting energy.

Above, I mentioned the amount of time that I take with the children when they are sent to me for behavior issues. This is not a "luxury" that our teachers have when they are in a classroom full of students. That is why I truly believe in the importance of out-of-classroom personnel to work with our students in the area of discipline – teachers don't have the time it takes to effectively implement all of the interventions that are necessary to help some of our more frequent offenders. If the District wants to have lasting success in the area of positive behavior, they need to insure that each school has ample staff to work with the children. The instruction is important too, but if there is poor behavior, which often stems from issues in the home, then a child can't focus on learning in the first place.

I am fortunate that my methods have not received much resistance from the teachers. I believe that this is due to the culture that has been created at the school – we are there to help our students both educationally as well as behaviorally. We implement SWPBS and do not believe that suspension is the answer since the students will likely sit at home and play video games if not allowed to come to school. This will not teach them anything. School culture plays a very big role in the tolerance level of and willingness to change negative behavior. However, I am often disheartened at the lack of patience many of my teachers still seem to have with their problematic students.

Finally, this study has helped me to remember that we are talking about children – impressionable children – who learn from those around them. Their negative behaviors are often a reflection of what they see at home or on the streets – they don't always have positive role models to teach them appropriate behavior. I believe that it is our job as educators to help fulfill that role for them – not to punish them – regardless of how stressful our jobs may be or how frustrated we may get with them.

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Student Discipline & Expulsion Support Unit

MATRIX FOR STUDENT SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION RECOMMENDATION
(State Law: Applicable to School Principals)

Category I Student Offenses with <u>No</u> Principal Discretion (except as otherwise precluded by law)	Category II* Student Offenses with <u>Limited</u> Principal Discretion	Category III* Student Offenses with <u>Broad</u> Principal Discretion
Principal shall immediately suspend and recommend expulsion when the following occur at school or at a school activity off campus. (E.C. 48915[c])	Principal <u>must</u> recommend expulsion when the following occur at school or at a school activity off campus unless the principal determines that the expulsion is inappropriate. (E.C. 48915[a])	Principal <u>may</u> recommend expulsion when the following occur at any time, including, but not limited to, while on school grounds; while going to or coming from school; during the lunch period, whether on or off the campus; or during, or while going to or coming from, a school-sponsored activity. (E.C. 48915[b] and [e])
1. Possessing, selling, or furnishing a firearm. E.C. 48915(c)(1); 48900(b)	1. Causing serious physical injury to another person, except in self-defense. E.C. 48915(a)(1); 48900(a)(1), maybe also 48900(a)(2)	1. Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person. (Unless, in the case of "caused," the injury is serious. [See II.1]) E.C. 48900(a)(1); 48915(b) 2. First offense of possession of marijuana of not more than one ounce, or alcohol. E.C. 48900(c); 48915(b) 3. Sold, furnished, or offered a substitute substance represented as a controlled substance. E.C. 48900(d); 48915(b)
2. Brandishing a knife at another person. E.C. 48915(c)(2); 48900(a)(1) and 48900(b)	2. Possession of any knife, explosive, or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the pupil. E.C. 48915(a)(2); 48900(b)	4. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school or private property. E.C. 48900(f); 48915(e) 5. Stole or attempted to steal school or private property. E.C. 48900(g); 48915(e) 6. Possessed or used tobacco. E.C. 48900(h); 48915(e) 7. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity. E.C. 48900(i); 48915(e)
3. Unlawfully selling a controlled substance. E.C. 48915(c)(3); 48900(c)	3. Unlawful possession of any controlled substance (except for the first offense of no more than an ounce of marijuana, and over-the-counter and prescribed medication). E.C. 48915(a)(3); 48900(c)	8. Possessed, offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia. E.C. 48900(j); 48915(e) 9. Disrupted school activities (school-wide activities; issued only by an administrator) E.C. 48900(k); 48915(e) 10. Knowingly received stolen school or private property. E.C. 48900(l); 48915(e) 11. Possessed an imitation firearm. E.C. 48900(m); 48915(e) 12. Engaged in harassment, threats, or intimidation against a pupil or group of pupils or school district personnel. E.C. 48900.4**; 48915(e)
4. Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery (as defined in 48900[n]). E.C. 48915(c)(4); 48900(n)	4. Robbery or extortion. E.C. 48915(a)(4); 48900(e)	13. Engaged in sexual harassment. E.C. 48900.2**; 48915(e) 14. Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence. E.C. 48900.3**; 48915(e) 15. Made terrorist threats against school officials or school property, or both. E.C. 48900.7; 48915(e) 16. Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense. E.C. 48900(a)(2); 48915(b)
5. Possession of an explosive E.C. 48915(c)(5); 48900 (b)	5. Assault or battery upon any school employee. E.C. 48915(a)(5); 48900(a)(1) and 48900(a)(2)	17. Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a pupil who is a complaining witness or witness in a disciplinary action. E.C. 48900(o); 48915(e) 18. Any behavior listed in Category I or II that is related to school activity or school attendance but that did not occur on campus or at a school activity off campus. E.C. 48915(b) 19. Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma. E.C. 48900(p); 48915(e) 20. Engaged in, or attempted to engage in, hazing, as defined in Section 32050. E.C. 48900(q); 48915(e) 21. Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of electronic act directed specifically toward a pupil or school personnel. E.C. 48900(r); 48915(e) 22. Aided or abetted the infliction of physical injury to another person (suspension only). E.C. 48900(t); 48915(e)

* For Categories II and III, the school must provide evidence of one or both of the following <u>*additional findings*</u>: (1) Other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct, (2) Due to the nature of the act, the student's presence causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the pupil or others.

** Grades 4 through 12 inclusive.

APPENDIX B

Teacher Questionnaire Protocol

Thank You For Your Willingness To Participate In My Study. Prior To Beginning This
Questionnaire, Please Read The Following Consent Form.

University of California, Los Angeles – CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The Early Effects of the Removal of Willful Defiance
From the Discipline Policy at Urban High Schools

Sara Lasnover, M.A., under the faculty sponsorship of Dr. Linda Rose, Ph.D., from the Graduate
School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles
(UCLA) is conducting a research study.

You were asked to be a possible participant in this study because you are a high school teacher at
one of the LAUSD high schools selected for the study. Your participation in this research is
voluntary.

Why is this study being done?
- With the District's recent policy change of the removal of willful defiance from the
  reasons for suspension, there will likely be changes that take place in discipline
  procedures at school sites. I am interested in learning about these early changes and the
  perspectives of school site staff regarding the change in policy.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?
- If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to fill out an
  anonymous questionnaire, which should take no more than 20-30 minutes to complete.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?
- You may be asked questions whose truthful answer is contrary to District policies and
  procedures. However your participation in this study is confidential and pseudonyms for
  schools will be used. Additionally, you are not required to answer questions that make
  you feel uncomfortable.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?
- You may benefit fro the study by being provided with an opportunity for you to share and
  discuss your own beliefs and practices related to suspensions.
- The results of the research may help to inform LAUSD and other school districts in the
  state of California as they move to remove "willful defiance" from their suspension
  policies.

Will I be paid for participating?
- Participants who fill out the questionnaire may submit their information to participate in a
  random drawing for a $50 gift card.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

- Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of providing a pseudonym for your school. All data will be maintained on my personal password-protected laptop and backed up on my password-protected Dropbox. Any hard copies will be locked up in my fireproof filing cabinet at my home when not in my immediate possession.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the research, you can talk to the Researcher (Sara Lasnover) or the Faculty Sponsor (Linda Rose). Please contact:

Sara Lasnover   Linda Rose, Ph.D.
sara.lasnover@ucla.edu   rose@gseis.ucla.edu
(213) 864-6988   (310) 206-1673

If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

1.
   - ○ I have read the consent form for this study and am in agreement with the terms. I also understand that my participation is completely voluntary and I may withdraw at any time.
   - ○ I have read the consent form for this study and DO NOT agree with the terms.

2. At what school do you currently work? _____

3. What is your current position at the school?
   - ○ Classroom Teacher
   - ○ Other (please specify) _____

4. What subject(s) do you currently teach?
   - ○ English
   - ○ Math
   - ○ Foreign Language
   - ○ Science
   - ○ History/Social Studies
   - ○ Physical Education
   - ○ Arts (Visual, Music, Drama, Dance, etc.)
   - ○ Other (please specify) _____

5. How many years have you been teaching? _____

6. How many years have you been a teacher in LAUSD? _____

7. How many years have you been teaching at [current school – from Q2]?_____

The next few questions are specifically about the discipline policy for LAUSD. Please answer to the best of your knowledge. Please remember that your answers will remain anonymous.

8. During the 2013-14 school year, have you been provided with any information regarding the District's "Discipline Foundation Policy?"
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No
   - ○ I don't know

9. As of July 1, 2013, the District no longer allows for suspensions based on "willful defiance." Are you aware of this recent change in policy?
   - ○ Yes
   - ○ No

10. How did you learn about the removal of "willful defiance" from the discipline policy?
    - ○ Staff meeting/professional development
    - ○ Watching the Board Meeting
    - ○ LAUSD.net
    - ○ From my colleagues
    - ○ Newspaper/TV
    - ○ I don't remember
    - ○ Other (please specify) _____

The next few questions are regarding your personal beliefs and practices with regard to student discipline.

11. Please list some specific behaviors, if any, that you believe are legitimate reasons to remove a student from class.

    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____
    4. _____
    5. _____
    6. _____
    7. _____

12. Describe what the characteristics of "willful defiance" might look like with students at your school.

    [   ]

13. Have you ever referred a student for "willful defiance?"

    ○ Yes

    ○ No

14. Why have you NOT referred a student for "willful defiance?"

    [   ]

15. Before the removal of "willful defiance" from the reasons allowed for suspension, how often did you refer students for "willful defiance?"

    ○ Frequently (approximately once a week)

    ○ Often (approximately once a month)

    ○ Occasionally (every few months)

    ○ Rarely (approximately once or twice a year)

    ○ Never

16. For what specific behavior(s) have you referred a student for "willful defiance?"

    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____
    4. _____
    5. _____
    6. _____
    7. _____
    8. _____
    9. _____

17. Now that suspensions for "willful defiance" are no longer allowed, what changes have you personally made to your discipline practices? (Check all that apply.)

    ○ The change in policy DID NOT affect my practice.

    ○ I just don't bother to refer students anymore.

    ○ I find other categories to use for referring students who are "willfully defiant."

    ○ I have begun to/already implement Positive Behavior Support strategies.

    ○ Other (please specify)

18. In the last question you stated that you find other reasons/categories to use for referring students who are "willfully defiant." Please specify these reasons below.

    ○ Serious physical injury/not self-defense

    ○ Assaulted/battered school employee

    ○ Threatened/caused/attempted physical injury

    ○ Harassed/threatened/intimidated pupil or school personnel

    ○ Willful use of force/violence not self-defense

    ○ Caused physical injury to another person

    ○ Attempted to cause physical injury to another person

    ○ Threatened to cause physical injury to another person

    ○ Hazing

    ○ Bullying

    ○ Obscenity/Profanity/Vulgarity

    ○ Other (please specify) _____

The next three sets of questions are scenarios. Please read the scenario carefully and then consider how you would respond to the situation. Please be as detailed and honest with your answers as possible. Again, these responses are anonymous.

19. For purposes of randomization, please select the range in which the first letter of your last name appears.

   ○ A-I [questions 20-34]

   ○ J-R [questions 35-49]

   ○ S-Z [questions 50–64]

It's the first day of second semester and the students enter into your second period class. You have assigned seating, and your students are aware of this. When Connor comes in, rather than sit in his assigned seat in the front row, he sits at a desk in the back corner. As you sit at your desk, you point to his desk and remind him that his seat is "up here." His response is, "I don't want to sit there. I want to change my seat." You walk up to him and again quietly ask him to move to his assigned seat. He replies with, "No, I'm not moving." With a more serious tone in your voice you say, "Connor, this is the last time I am going to ask you to move to your assigned seat." This time he yells, "no, I'm not moving" and throws his book to the ground.

20. How much would Connor's behavior irritate you?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

21. How much would you ignore Connor's behavior?

Definitely would (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Definitely would not (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

22. How disruptive is Connor's behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Very (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

23. What is the likelihood that you would refer Connor to the office?

Not at all likely (1)	2	3	Somewhat likely (4)	5	6	Very likely (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

24. How much does Connor deserve to be disciplined for his behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)

○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

You are in the process of having a whole-class discussion regarding your current lesson when you see D'Shawn surreptitiously pull out his cell phone and begin to type into it. You stop the discussion and calmly ask D'Shawn to put his phone away. His response is, "there's a vocabulary word that I don't know so I am looking it up on Dictionary.com. Isn't that a resource you gave us to use?" There is a tone of attitude in his voice and he doesn't put the phone away. You respond with, "now is not the time to use your cell phone; please put it away." He slips the hone back into his pocket only to pull it out five minutes later. "This is the last warning, D'Shawn," you say, "put it away or it's mine. You know the rule." In a huff, he throws it back into his backpack. Minutes later, when the students are working on an assignment, you see D'Shawn with the phone in his hand yet again. This time you approach him and out stretch your hand while saying, "okay, hand it over." "Hell no," he says, and slips it into his pocket again.

25. How much would D'Shawn's behavior irritate you?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

26. How much would you ignore D'Shawn's behavior?

Definitely would (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Definitely would not (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

27. How disruptive is D'Shawn's behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Very (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

28. What is the likelihood that you would refer D'Shawn to the office?

Not at all likely (1)	2	3	Somewhat likely (4)	5	6	Very likely (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

29. How much does D'Shawn deserve to be disciplined for his behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

It's nutrition time and you are walking through the quad when you see your student, Fernanda, and a boy kissing passionately. There are other students in the area – some watching and others paying no attention. You approach the couple and quietly say, "okay guys, cool it; that's not appropriate." Fernanda looks at you and snaps back with "What do you care?" and goes back to kissing the boy. Again, you tell them to knock it off to no avail and Fernanda looks at you, rolls her eyes and says, "just leave us alone." They then start to walk off, hand-in-hand.

30. How much would Fernanda's behavior irritate you?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

31. How much would you ignore Fernanda's behavior?

Definitely would (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Definitely would not (7)
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

32. How disruptive is Fernanda's behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Very (7)
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

33. What is the likelihood that you would refer Fernanda to the office?

Not at all likely (1)	2	3	Somewhat likely (4)	5	6	Very likely (7)
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

34. How much does Fernanda deserve to be disciplined for her behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

It's the first day of second semester and the students enter into your second period class. You have assigned seating, and your students are aware of this. When Fernanda comes in, rather than sit in her assigned seat in the front row, she sits at a desk in the back corner. As you sit at your desk, you point to her desk and remind her that her seat is "up here." Her response is, "I don't want to sit there. I want to change my seat." You walk up to her and again quietly ask her to move to her assigned seat. She replies with, "No, I'm not moving." With a more serious tone in your voice you say, "Fernanda, this is the last time I am going to ask you to move to your assigned seat." This time she yells, "no, I'm not moving" and throws her book to the ground.

35. How much would Fernanda's behavior irritate you?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

36. How much would you ignore Fernanda's behavior?

Definitely would (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Definitely would not (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

37. How disruptive is Fernanda's behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Very (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

38. What is the likelihood that you would refer Fernanda to the office?

Not at all likely (1)	2	3	Somewhat likely (4)	5	6	Very likely (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

39. How much does Fernanda deserve to be disciplined for her behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

You are in the process of having a whole-class discussion regarding your current lesson when you see Connor surreptitiously pull out his cell phone and begin to type into it. You stop the discussion and calmly ask Connor to put his phone away. His response is, "there's a vocabulary word that I don't know so I am looking it up on Dictionary.com. Isn't that a resource you gave us to use?" There is a tone of attitude in his voice and he doesn't put the phone away. You respond with, "now is not the time to use your cell phone; please put it away." He slips the phone back into his pocket only to pull it out five minutes later. "This is the last warning, Connor," you say, "put it away or it's mine. You know the rule." In a huff, he throws it back into his backpack. Minutes later, when the students are working on an assignment, you see Connor with the phone in his hand yet again. This time you approach him and out stretch your hand while saying, "okay, hand it over." "Hell no," he says, and slips it into his pocket again.

40.   How much would Connor's behavior irritate you?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

41.   How much would you ignore Connor's behavior?

Definitely would (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Definitely would not (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

42.   How disruptive is Connor's behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Very (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

43.   What is the likelihood that you would refer Connor to the office?

Not at all likely (1)	2	3	Somewhat likely (4)	5	6	Very likely (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

44.   How much does Connor deserve to be disciplined for his behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

It's nutrition time and you are walking through the quad when you see your student, D'Shawn, and a girl kissing passionately. There are other students in the area – some watching and others paying no attention. You approach the couple and quietly say, "okay guys, cool it; that's not appropriate." D'Shawn looks at you and snaps back with "What do you care?" and goes back to kissing the girl. Again, you tell them to knock it off to no avail and D'Shawn looks at you, rolls his eyes and says, "just leave us alone." They then start to walk off, hand-in-hand.

45.   How much would D'Shawn's behavior irritate you?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

46.   How much would you ignore D'Shawn's behavior?

Definitely would (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Definitely would not (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

47.   How disruptive is D'Shawn's behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Very (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

48.   What is the likelihood that you would refer D'Shawn to the office?

Not at all likely (1)	2	3	Somewhat likely (4)	5	6	Very likely (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

49.   How much does D'Shawn deserve to be disciplined for his behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

It's the first day of second semester and the students enter into your second period class. You have assigned seating, and your students are aware of this. When D'Shawn comes in, rather than sit in his assigned seat in the front row, he sits at a desk in the back corner. As you sit at your desk, you point to his desk and remind him that his seat is "up here." His response is, "I don't want to sit there. I want to change my seat." You walk up to him and again quietly ask him to move to his assigned seat. He replies with, "No, I'm not moving." With a more serious tone in your voice you say, "D'Shawn, this is the last time I am going to ask you to move to your assigned seat." This time he yells, "no, I'm not moving" and throws his book to the ground.

50. How much would D'Shawn's behavior irritate you?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

51. How much would you ignore D'Shawn's behavior?

Definitely would (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Definitely would not (7)
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

52. How disruptive is D'Shawn's behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Very (7)
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

53. What is the likelihood that you would refer D'Shawn to the office?

Not at all likely (1)	2	3	Somewhat likely (4)	5	6	Very likely (7)
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

54. How much does D'Shawn deserve to be disciplined for his behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

You are in the process of having a whole-class discussion regarding your current lesson when you see Fernanda surreptitiously pull out her cell phone and begin to type into it. You stop the discussion and calmly ask Fernanda to put her phone away. Her response is, "there's a vocabulary word that I don't know so I am looking it up on Dictionary.com. Isn't that a resource you gave us to use?" There is a tone of attitude in her voice and she doesn't put the phone away. You respond with, "now is not the time to use your cell phone; please put it away." She slips the phone back into her pocket only to pull it out five minutes later. "This is the last warning, Fernanda," you say, "put it away or it's mine. You know the rule." In a huff, she throws it back into her backpack. Minutes later, when the students are working on an assignment, you see Fernanda with the phone in her hand yet again. This time you approach her and out stretch your hand while saying, "okay, hand it over." "Hell no," she says, and slips it into her pocket again.

55. How much would Fernanda's behavior irritate you?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

56. How much would you ignore Fernanda's behavior?

Definitely would (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Definitely would not (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

57. How disruptive is Fernanda's behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Very (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

58. What is the likelihood that you would refer Fernanda to the office?

Not at all likely (1)	2	3	Somewhat likely (4)	5	6	Very likely (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

59. How much does Fernanda deserve to be disciplined for her behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

It's nutrition time and you are walking through the quad when you see your student, Connor, and a girl kissing passionately. There are other students in the area – some watching and others paying no attention. You approach the couple and quietly say, "okay guys, cool it; that's not appropriate." Connor looks at you and snaps back with "What do you care?" and goes back to kissing the girl. Again, you tell them to knock it off to no avail and Connor looks at you, rolls his eyes and says, "just leave us alone." They then start to walk off, hand-in-hand.

60. How much would Connor's behavior irritate you?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

61. How much would you ignore Connor's behavior?

Definitely would (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Definitely would not (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

62. How disruptive is Connor's behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	Very (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

63. What is the likelihood that you would refer Connor to the office?

Not at all likely (1)	2	3	Somewhat likely (4)	5	6	Very likely (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

64. How much does Connor deserve to be disciplined for his behavior?

Not at all (1)	2	3	Somewhat (4)	5	6	A whole lot (7)
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

65. Do you believe that removing "willful defiance" from the discipline policy will affect some student sub-groups more than others?

○ Yes, I believe it will affect some student sub-groups more than others.

○ No, I do not think it will have an effect.

66. Which sub-groups do you believe will be more affected by the removal of "willful defiance?"

- ○ Black or African-American
- ○ Hispanic or Latino
- ○ White
- ○ Other race/ethnicity
- ○ Socioeconomically disadvantaged
- ○ English learners
- ○ Students with disabilities
- ○ Other

67. How do you believe the removal of "willful defiance" will affect the sub-groups you indicated?

Black or African-American

_____

Hispanic or Latino

_____

White

_____

Other race/ethnicity

_____

Socioeconomically
Disadvantaged

_____

English Learners

_____

Students with disabilities

_____

Other

_____

68. The District has removed "willful defiance" for suspensions from the discipline policy in an effort to reduce the number of suspensions. What do you think is the most effective strategy to reduce "willful defiance" on campus? In the classroom?

On campus?

_____

_____

_____

In the classroom?

_____

_____

_____

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Now that you have shared about your own discipline practices, please think about those of the Administration as well as your fellow teachers when answering these next two questions.

69. What changes in discipline practices have you noticed with your school's ADMINISTRATION staff since the removal of "willful defiance" from the discipline policy?

   ○ I don't know if there have been any changes

   ○ I haven't noticed any changes

   ○ I have noticed the following changes:

   ┌───┐
   │   │
   │   │
   │   │
   │   │
   │   │
   └───┘

70. What changes in discipline practices have you noticed with your school's TEACHING staff since the removal of "willful defiance" from the discipline policy?

   ○ I don't know if there have been any changes

   ○ I haven't noticed any changes

   ○ I have noticed the following changes

   ┌───┐
   │   │
   │   │
   │   │
   │   │
   │   │
   └───┘

The next two questions are for statistical purposes only.

71. What is your gender?

   ○ Male

   ○ Female

   ○ Other

   ○ Prefer not to answer

72. What is your race/ethnicity? (Please select all that apply).

- ○ American Indian/Alaskan Native
- ○ Asian
- ○ African-American/Black
- ○ Hispanic/Latino
- ○ White
- ○ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- ○ Prefer not to answer

APPENDIX C

Principal Interview Protocol

1. How long have you been the principal at your current school?

2. How long have you worked for LAUSD?

3. How many classroom teachers do you currently have at your school?

4. How were your teachers notified about the change in discipline policy regarding the removal of "willful defiance?"

5. What are your beliefs about the purpose of suspensions?

6. For what reasons is it acceptable for a teacher to remove a student from class?

7. When students are removed for these behaviors, what steps should your staff take?

8. Now that "willful defiance" has been removed as a reason for suspension, when students use profanity or are otherwise disrespectful to a teacher, what are the expectations for discipline?

9. What are the expectations for discipline if a student repeatedly breaks rules such as using a cell phone or chewing gum in class?

10. How do you believe that the removal of "willful defiance" for suspensions has affected your teachers' discipline practices?

11. Do you believe that the removal of "willful defiance" will affect some student sub-groups more than others? If yes, which one(s) and why?

12. The suspension rate at your school has decreased by _____% over the past _____ years. To what do you attribute that reduction?

APPENDIX D

Enrollment and Suspension Data 2008-2014
Green Schools
CORNELL

School Year	# of Students Enrolled	# AA of Students Enrolled	% of Enrolled Students Who Are AA	% of Students Suspended	% of Suspended Students Who Are AA	Disproportionality % AA among all Enrolled vs. %AA students among all suspended
2008-2009	3,200	1,100	33.0%	8.0%	56.0%	23.0%
2009-2010	2,900	950	32.0%	12.0%	55.0%	22.0%
2010-2011	2,400	650	27.0%	8.0%	52.0%	26.0%
2011-2012	1,900	500	25.0%	5.0%	53.0%	28.0%
2012-2013	1,800	400	24.0%	4.0%	63.0%	39.0%
2013-2014	1,700	400	24.0%	4.0%	74.0%	50.0%

STANFORD

School Year	# of Students Enrolled	# AA of Students Enrolled	% of Enrolled Students Who Are AA	% of Students Suspended	% of Suspended Students Who Are AA	Disproportionality % AA among all Enrolled vs. %AA students among all suspended
2008-2009	3,200	1,000	31.0%	9.0%	54.0%	23.0%
2009-2010	3,100	900	28.0%	7.0%	48.0%	20.0%
2010-2011	3,000	850	27.0%	6.0%	48.0%	21.0%
2011-2012	3,100	800	26.0%	2.0%	58.0%	33.0%
2012-2013	3,100	850	27.0%	2.0%	46.0%	19.0%
2013-2014	3,100	850	27.0%	1.0%	70.0%	42.0%

YALE

School Year	# of Students Enrolled	# AA of Students Enrolled	% of Enrolled Students Who Are AA	% of Students Suspended	% of Suspended Students Who Are AA	Disproportionality % AA among all Enrolled vs. %AA students among all suspended
2008-2009	2,400	1,300	53.0%	6.0%	75.0%	23.0%
2009-2010	2,200	1,150	51.0%	18.0%	61.0%	10.0%
2010-2011	1,900	1,000	51.0%	8.0%	54.0%	3.0%
2011-2012	1,900	1,000	52.0%	3.0%	80.0%	28.0%
2012-2013	1,600	850	55.0%	2.0%	80.0%	24.0%
2013-2014	1,400	750	53.0%	1.0%	65.0%	12.0%

Note: All data have been rounded to conceal the identity of the schools.

Enrollment and Suspension Data 2008-2014
Red Schools
POMONA

School Year	# of Students Enrolled	# AA of Students Enrolled	% of Enrolled Students Who Are AA	% of Students Suspended	% of Suspended Students Who Are AA	Disproportionality % AA among all Enrolled vs. %AA students among all suspended
2008-2009	2,900	100	4.0%	11.0%	13.0%	9.0%
2009-2010	2,800	100	3.0%	12.0%	10.0%	7.0%
2010-2011	2,800	100	3.0%	11.0%	7.0%	4.0%
2011-2012	2,600	100	3.0%	8.0%	9.0%	5.0%
2012-2013	2,600	100	4.0%	2.0%	16.0%	12.0%
2013-2014	2,600	100	4.0%	0.0%	50.0%	46.0%

REED

School Year	# of Students Enrolled	# AA of Students Enrolled	% of Enrolled Students Who Are AA	% of Students Suspended	% of Suspended Students Who Are AA	Disproportionality % AA among all Enrolled vs. %AA students among all suspended
2008-2009	3,700	300	8.0%	7.0%	11.0%	3.0%
2009-2010	3,300	250	7.0%	5.0%	16.50%	9.0%
2010-2011	3,000	200	7.0%	5.0%	17.50%	11.0%
2011-2012	2,200	150	6.0%	5.0%	24.0%	17.0%
2012-2013	1,900	100	6.0%	2.0%	34.0%	28.0%
2013-2014	1,900	100	6.0%	1.0%	18.50%	13.0%

SMITH

School Year	# of Students Enrolled	# AA of Students Enrolled	% of Enrolled Students Who Are AA	% of Students Suspended	% of Suspended Students Who Are AA	Disproportionality % AA among all Enrolled vs. %AA students among all suspended
2008-2009	2,800	300	10.0%	9.0%	23.0%	14.0%
2009-2010	2,700	250	9.0%	8.0%	24.0%	14.0%
2010-2011	2,700	250	10.0%	7.0%	15.0%	6.0%
2011-2012	2,300	200	9.0%	5.0%	20.0%	11.0%
2012-2013	2,100	200	9.0%	3.0%	24.0%	15.0%
2013-2014	2,200	250	11.0%	0.0%	17.0%	6.0%

Note: All data have been rounded to conceal the identity of the schools.

APPENDIX E

Category III Suspensions Used for African-American (AA) Students 2008 to 2014

		Green Schools					Red Schools				
		2008-2013		2013-2014		Change	2008-2013		2013-2014		Change
Suspension Code		# of All AA Suspensions	% of Total Suspensions	# of All AA Suspensions	% of Total AA Suspensions	2008-2013 to 2013-2014	# of All AA Suspensions	% of Total Suspensions	# of All AA Suspensions	% of Total AA Suspensions	2008-2013 to 2013-2014
		1899	100%	99	100%	-	644	100%	9	100%	-
3.09 -	Disrupted School-Activities (Issued By An Administrator)*	-	-	7	7.07%	7.07%	-	-	1	11.11%	11.11%
3.1 -	Threatened/Caused/ Attempted Physical Injury†	646	34.04%	-	-	-	128	19.94%	-	-	-
3.1a -	Caused physical injury to another person*	-	-	39	39.39%	-	-	-	0	0.00%	-
3.1b -	Attempted to cause physical injury to another person*	-	-	17	17.17%	-	-	-	0	0.00%	-
3.1c -	Threatened to cause physical injury to another person*	-	-	8	8.08%	-	-	-	0	0.00%	-
3.2 -	Marijuana Possession For 1st Offense Of Less Than 1 Oz	46	2.44%	0	0.00%	-2.44%	5	0.79%	0	0.00%	-0.79%
3.3 -	Substitute Of A Controlled Substance	7	0.37%	0	0.00%	-0.37%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
3.4 -	Damaged/Attempted To Damage School Or Private Property	24	1.27%	3	3.03%	1.76%	18	2.85%	0	0.00%	-2.85%
3.5 -	Stole Or Attempted To Steal School Or Private Property	38	2.01%	3	3.03%	1.02%	14	2.22%	0	0.00%	-2.22%
3.6 -	Possessed Or Used Tobacco	63	3.34%	0	0.00%	-3.34%	11	1.73%	0	0.00%	-1.73%
3.7 -	Obscenity/Profanity/ Vulgarity	65	3.44%	3	3.03%	-0.41%	43	6.65%	1	11.11%	4.46%
3.8 -	Drug Paraphernalia	21	1.11%	1	1.01%	-0.10%	23	3.50%	0	0.00%	-3.50%
3.9 -	Disruption/Willful Defiance†	721	37.98%	-	-	-	235	36.43%	-	-	-
3.10 -	Received Stolen School or Private Property	20	1.06%	1	1.01%	-0.05%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
3.11 -	Imitation Firearm	1	0.05%	0	0.00%	-0.05%	1	0.16%	0	0.00%	-0.16%
3.12 -	Harassed/Threatened/ Intimidated Pupil Or School Personnel (Gr 4-12) †	11	0.58%	-	-	-	6	0.95%	-	-	-
3.12c	Harassed/threatened pupil based on other factors (grade 4-12)*	-	-	2	2.02%	-	-	-	1	11.11%	-
3.13 -	Sexual Harassment (Gr 4-12)	14	0.74%	1	1.01%	0.27%	4	0.64%	0	0.00%	-0.64%
3.15 -	Terrorist Threat (Threat To Cause Death, Great Bodily Injury)	8	0.42%	0	0.00%	-0.42%	3	0.48%	0	0.00%	-0.48%
3.16 -	Willful Use of Force/Violence Not Self-Defense	86	4.50%	4	4.04%	-0.46%	77	11.97%	3	33.33%	21.37%
3.17 -	Harassed/Threatened Intimidated Witness	0	0.00%	1	1.01%	1.01%	4	0.64%	0	0.00%	-0.64%
3.21 -	Bullying/Cyber†	0	0.00%	-	-	-	0	0.00%	-	-	-
3.21d	Bullying/cyber toward a pupil based on other factors*	-	-	0	0.00%	-	-	-	1	11.11%	-

† Removed as a reason for suspension beginning 2013-2014

* Added as a reason for suspension in 2013-2014

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