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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEADERS' PRACTICES TO

PROVIDE EQUITABLE DISCIPLINE: DISPROPORTIONALITY ON THE RISE

by

BEVERLY FORD

(Under the Direction of Kymberly Harris)

ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods study was conducted to explore practices Elementary School Leaders report using to address discipline. The study target population was school administrators in the Northeast Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA). The participants were principals and assistant principals located within 13 school districts and are comprised of 64 elementary schools. In order to gain a deeper understanding of practices reportedly used, the research asked the following questions:

1. What practices do Elementary School Leaders report are most effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?

2. What practices do Elementary School Leaders report are used most frequently to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population?

3. What practices do Elementary School Leaders report are least effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?

4. What practices do Elementary School Leaders report are used least frequently to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population?

Data was collected using Qualtrics and disseminated via email. The survey was comprised of seven demographic multiple-choice questions, 41 discipline practices multiple choice questions, and two open-ended questions.

INDEX WORDS: Distributed leadership, Discipline, Disproportionality, Culturally relevant pedagogy, Restorative justice, Positive behavior interventions & supports**.**

ELEMENTARY LEADERS' REPORTED PRACTICES IN

PROVIDING EQUITABLE DISCIPLINE: DISPROPORTIONALITY ON THE RISE

by

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Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

ELEMENTARY LEADERS' REPORTED PRACTICES IN

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by

BEVERLY FORD

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DEDICATION

I lovingly dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Elvira Beverly Ford and Spencer Lee Ford, Sr. Thank you for continuously encouraging and supporting me to pursue my dreams. To my brother, Justin Ford, I am so blessed to have you in my life and appreciate you keeping a smile on my face. You are so appreciated and loved. To my family and friends, thank you for the prayers and encouragement through this process, I love you and I hope I have made you proud!

To my ancestors who instilled in me that education is important, although you are not physically here with me, I know your spirit is with me each and every day, and you are smiling down on me from heaven.

To my nieces, nephews, mentees, and students, it is my sincere hope that I serve as an example for you that you can pursue and accomplish any dream you may have.

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:5-6

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for guiding my path through this journey. Without Him, this would not have been possible. His grace and mercy gave me the ability to persist through this journey, and I am forever indebted.

I am so thankful to all who have inspired me while completing this significant accomplishment. First, I would like to give a special thank you to Dr. Kymberly Harris, chair of my committee, whose encouragement was empowering and invaluable in the completion of this dissertation. Dr. Harris, you are truly remarkable. I would also like to thank my committee members: Dr. Juliann McBrayer and Dr. Marlynn Griffin, for their guidance, time, and support to assist me with the completion of this journey.

Thank you to the participants who made this research possible. I appreciate you sharing your experiences with me. I am forever grateful to all of you for assisting me with making this study a reality.

I would also like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to Dr. Monifa Beverly, who supported me through this doctoral journey. I cannot thank you enough for listening to me, laughing with me, and supporting me with making it to the finish line.

I am so appreciative of my family, friends, church family, Athens sisters, Da Crew from NCCU, and my Change 4 Agents. Your continued prayers, support, love, and encouragement during this process has been amazing. Thank you for being a support system I could always count on.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

School climate and student discipline are important components of the educational

environment. The task of creating safe, supportive, and effective learning environments for

students is a complex and demanding mission for school professionals (Osher, Dwyer, Jimerson,

& Brown, 2012). Appropriate discipline maintains the school climate and protects teaching and

learning. As an administrator, it is important to reflect on the role as a disciplinarian because of

the potential implications of exclusionary discipline sanctions on students' educational outcomes

(Skiba & Rausch, 2006). However, a balance is needed to address school discipline and safety.

This is especially true since current indications of research regarding disproportionate

disciplinary outcomes for students in schools (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Noguera, 2003;

Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Exclusionary practices such as removal from classroom, suspension and

expulsion, are used as a disciplinary consequence aimed at creating a safe and orderly learning

environment in schools (Gregory et al., 2010; Noguera, 2003; Skiba & Peterson, 2000).

Regardless of intent to make schools safer with a more academic focused environment, research

has shown that reactive punitive consequences do not improve school climate or culture and can

have an unfavorable effect on improving student behavior and achievement (Sprague, 2014;

Skiba 2014).

An increase of discipline actions can potentially impact students' academic achievement

and subsequent graduation rates. According to Epstein, Atkins, Cullinan, Kutash, and Weaver

(2008), there is a clear relationship between academic performance and student behavior.

Suspensions lead to missed instructional time and repeated exposure to negative consequences,

potentially cementing a cycle of negative academic results, as students are denied access to

instruction due to in school or out-of-school suspension. In addition, discipline problems are associated with an increase in the risk of students being involved in the juvenile justice system. Students suspended from school have a greater chance of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system even though the school suspensions are for disobedience or minor infractions of school discipline protocols (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Blake, Perez, and Darensbourg (2010) stated these discipline practices are experienced disproportionately by African Americans and other students of color distancing them from learning by removing them from the educational environment and steering them towards the juvenile justice system. Policies and practices linked to school discipline and the juvenile justice system reduce the probability of success for children and increase the probability of negative life outcomes (Skiba et al., 2014). "The most direct way for students to enter the juvenile justice system is through school referrals" (Curtis, 2014, p.1258).

As early as 1975, the Children's Defense Fund declared that the suspension of children in schools across all levels had become a problem of national proportion. However, there is an overrepresentation of African American males suspended in comparison to other subgroups. Moreover, Caucasian male students receive more disciplinary referrals than girls, more African American male students are suspended from school for disruption than any other subgroup. According to Skiba, Michael, Nardo, and Peterson (2002), "minority overrepresentation in school punishment is by no means a new finding in school discipline research" (p. 318). This problem of practices continues to be present in today's schools.

This study explored which commonly reported practices are used to ensure discipline consequences are equitable and reduce exclusionary techniques such as out-of-school suspension and/or expulsion from school. The alarming evidence and preponderance of research highlights

the relevance of this study. It is relevant to the field of educational leadership because practices that provide equitable application of discipline across the student population are needed to assist elementary leaders in addressing discipline. According to Cuellar and Markowitz (2015), school leaders have many available practices to address problem behavior among students; however, one option increasingly used by schools and administrators is removing students from the educational setting through suspension.

Background

This section features a discussion of the history of discipline and research studies that provide information about disproportionate discipline of African American males. The background of the literature identified leadership approaches to enhance building leaders' practices when addressing discipline and the gaps in literature as it relates to school discipline. Distributed Leadership served as the theoretical framework for this study and is explained in this section as well.

Racial disparities in school discipline in schools in the United States have been studied and documented in research for decades (see McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Braden & Shaw, 1990; McFadden, Marsh, Prince, & Hwang, 1992; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002; O'Brennan & Leaf, 2010; Tobin & Vincent, 2011; Perry & Morris, 2014; Skiba, 2015 for examples). African American students tend to receive more harsh punishments and exclusionary discipline as disciplinary outcomes than their Caucasian counterparts. McFadden et al. (1992) and Wallace et al. (2008) found African American students were suspended more frequently and received more corporal punishment, while Caucasian students receive more in-school suspensions. Discipline disproportionality, in the school context, is examined by comparing the percentage of minority students who are

suspended and expelled to the percentage of enrollment for that minority group within a school (Fenning & Sharkey, 2012).

The state of Georgia measures disproportionately for discipline in two ways using events per student and duration and type. Both methods use in-school-suspension (ISS) and out-of-school suspension (OSS) and determine the likelihood of a student in a given demographic group to receive an office discipline referral. The risk ratio methodology with the threshold being greater than or equal to 3.0 for two consecutive years equals significant disproportionality. Events per student risk ratio by a demographic group is calculated by first dividing the number of discipline referrals for students in that group by the cumulative enrollment for the same racial/ethnic demographic group. To determine the event per student risk ratio for all other students the total number of disciplinary events resulting in a removal (ISS or OSS) for all other students is divided by the cumulative enrollment for all other students. The calculation of the overall risk ratio is to divide the event per students risk ratio for a demographic group by the event per student risk ration for all others.

McCarthy and Hoge (1987) reviewed literature from the 1960's through the 1980's that showed African American students being suspended from school or otherwise disciplined at rates more than three times that of Caucasian students. Findings from this study (Children's Defense Fund, 1975) indicated the following: the use of suspensions removed more than one million students from school districts during the 1972 - 1973 school year; and one in every eight African American students, compared to one in every sixteen Caucasian students, were suspended during the school year. This was an issue nearly 50 years ago, and yet the disproportionate discipline of African Americans continues to be an issue. In 1990 Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, and Leaf (2010) found African American students were significantly more likely than Caucasians to

receive office disciplinary referrals (ODRs). The study also found males were more likely to receive ODRs when examining gender gaps. For minority students, the use of exclusionary practices continues to increase across the nation (Losen & Skiba, 2010). In a recent study Anderson and Ritter (2017) found that race was the greatest predictor of discipline disparities across school citing that African American students were 2.3 times as likely to receive exclusionary discipline. Problems with exclusionary discipline techniques have been emphasized through decades of research documenting disproportionate racial/ethnic representation in school punishment (Skiba et al., 2002). According to Kayama, Haight, and Gibson (2016) 87% of students who received suspensions during the academic year were African American; however, only 45% of African American students made up the student population.

Today's administrators face many challenges as building leaders. They assume responsibility for ensuring student safety, providing teachers with instructional support, increasing student learning opportunities, and addressing discipline problems. The task of creating safe, supportive, and effective learning environments for students is a complex and demanding mission for school professionals (Osher et al., 2012). It is vital that administrators develop a safe, welcoming, and structured environment that meets the needs of students and teachers. School leaders influence school culture which impacts the school climate. Lingam and Lingam (2015) discussed that principals must promote a positive school culture through their actions, in which both students and teachers can achieve more success.

Procedures and policies must be in place to maintain the structure of a school; unfortunately, disciplinary consequences that physically remove students from class or school environment are sometimes necessary to ensure the safety of students and staff members (Fenning & Rose, 2007). Administrators must understand the practice of social justice leadership

and the focus of how to address equity issues in schools and communities. DeMatthews (2015) stated the practice of social justice leadership begins with an awareness of inequities and unequal circumstances confronted by marginalized groups. It is vital to examine the practices between teachers and leaders, school policies, and the culture of the students. In order to create a social justice change, administrators must critique their own practices while adapting school culture to meet the needs of students and families (Riehl, 2000).

Exclusionary discipline policies resulting in school exclusionary practices and policies that result in OSS and expulsion are common and growing in today's educational environments. Exclusionary discipline is defined as the process of removing misbehaving students from his or her educational setting (Perry & Morris, 2014). These outcomes include, but are not limited to, ISS, OSS, and expulsion. Losen, Hodson, Keith, Morrison, and Belway (2015) indicated that the African American-Caucasian gap in OSS was the largest at the secondary level at 16.4%. This disparity is alarming and requires educational leaders to address the social and educational inequality and inequity as it relates to discipline and disciplinary outcomes that create discipline gaps. These disparities do not just arise at a secondary level, but range across a variety of grades and settings, starting as early as preschool and indicates a problem with the structure of the system (Skiba, 2015). Researchers have emphasized the racial, economic and gender disparities in exclusionary school discipline outcomes and have proposed that race is a more significant predictor than poverty in describing the discipline gap among African American and Caucasian students (Perry & Morris, 2014; Skiba, 2015). Bradshaw et al. (2010) concluded that African American students, regardless of the school location (suburban, urban, and rural), had a 2.27% greater probability of obtaining an office referral compared to any other racial group.

Discipline practices and policies do not always yield an exclusionary result, such as OSS or expulsion, but prime the school-to-prison pipeline. Wilson (2014) defines the school to prison pipeline as the "educational exclusion and criminalization of youth" (p. 49). The school-to-prison pipeline describes how student behavior is criminalized by processing in-school incidents as penal code violations, as opposed to relying on other consequences to improve student behavior and outcomes. Suspended or expelled students are more likely to not reach academic achievement, to drop out of school, and to be caught in the grip of the juvenile justice system. Zero tolerance policies have been linked to the school-to-prison pipeline theories (Wilson, 2014). School discipline policies such as zero-tolerance policies impede student-learning opportunities and contribute to perpetuating social and educational inequalities. Zero tolerance policy requires the use of predetermined consequences that are usually severe and punitive, and they are applied regardless of the significance of behavior or situational context (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2013). Zero tolerance policies were initially developed in the 1990s in response to school shootings and general fears about crime. According to Skiba, Arredondo, and Williams (2014) zero-tolerance school discipline policies may be intricately linked to the inequality of educational opportunities, experiences and outcomes evidenced by the racial disparities in college enrollment and completion rates, and the school-to-prison pipeline. The school-to-prison pipeline funnels poor and minority students out of K-12 schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems (Headly, 2013). Since African American males are more likely to be disciplined through OSS, they are more likely to be in the school-to-prison pipeline.

Discipline practices such as out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and polices like zero tolerance assist in forming disproportionate discipline among student populations. African American students are disciplined at a higher rate than non-African American students.

Discipline practices that are preventive instead of reactive should be discussed and explored to assist in providing equitable discipline across student populations.

Statement of the Problem

The United States Department of Education (2014) guided elementary schools to address potential discriminatory practices in the way they respond to discipline. The release of that information was in response to discipline data, which showed discipline disproportionality of African American students in comparison to their non-African American peers. The problem of practice addressed in this study is the disproportionate discipline of elementary school-aged African American males who are suspended or expelled at a higher rate in comparison to other ethnic groups (Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Gregory, Skiba, Noguera, 2010; Losen & Skiba, 2010; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Skiba et al., 2011; United States Department of Education, 2014).The risk of exposure to exclusionary school discipline in American public schools increases if a student is African American and a male. School districts and administrators need to identify practices to address student discipline to avoid disproportionate discipline in the school environment. Therefore, this study was essential, as it may add to the body of research detailing how to address discipline in an elementary school environment.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore the practices elementary school leaders report using to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population of African American males. Discipline should help students accept responsibility for their behaviors, and provide students with practices to make better decisions. The findings of this study may assist school leaders in identifying and applying practices that address discipline actions and provide equitable application of discipline across the student population to reduce disproportionate

discipline.

Research Questions

The study examined elementary school leaders' practices to address discipline. African American male students are disciplined at a higher rate in comparison to their counterparts (including African American females) in other ethnic groups. To better understand this problem, it was essential to commence the research process by posing questions as possible solutions, in order to address the disproportionate discipline of African American male students in the elementary setting. Therefore, the research questions for this study were:

1. What practices do elementary school leaders report are most effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?

2. What practices do elementary school leaders report are used most frequently to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population?

3. What practices do elementary school leaders report are least effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?

4. What practices do elementary school leaders report are used least frequently to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population?

Significance of the Study

This study was designed to make a contribution to the professional literature about education, discipline, and cultural awareness. Identifying practices to address discipline at an elementary level would provide the opportunity for other school leaders to gain knowledge of practices used to address discipline in the elementary environment. Research has concluded that African American students are more likely than any other ethnic group to receive out-of-school suspensions and expulsions. The research discusses disproportionality, but there is a gap in the

research about practices that assist in addressing this disproportionality of elementary students. This study was completed to identify practices that support elementary school leaders to address discipline, which can correlate to reducing the rate of suspension. Educational leaders, policymakers, teachers, and other professionals may gain knowledge on practices that assist in decreasing discipline disproportionality of African American males. The study provided a framework for examining the discipline process and practices utilized to address the disproportionate discipline of African American males.

School discipline concerns continue to affect school districts each day. When students are suspended or expelled, they are unable to learn because they are absent from the educational environment. Improving teachers' and leaders' understanding and executing practices to assist in decreasing discipline disproportionately of African American male students may help to determine solutions to benefit students and contribute to lowering the suspension rates. When suspension rates decrease, students' academic performance and school improvement have the opportunity to increase. The findings can inform the educational community in evaluating their district and school discipline practices.

The historical and chronic disparities in exclusionary practices have been documented for decades and commonly refers to disparities as the discipline gap (Gregory et al., 2010; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Gregory & Thompson, 2010). If the discipline gap between African American students and their Caucasian peers decreases, the opportunity for increased instructional time and academic achievement for African American students is predicted to increase. Considering that principals serve as the key agent for setting the climate and direction of the school (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005) and form the foundation upon which the school is built (Cameron, 2006), examining principals' leadership style in maintaining an

effective learning environment and its influence on student behavioral outcomes is imperative. This information should provide educational leaders with the awareness and direction needed to decrease the discipline gap and promote positive learning environments and relationships among all stakeholders.

Procedures

The purpose of this study was to explore practices elementary school leaders report using to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population. The researcher also examined the frequency of reported practices that were most and least effective. The study took place in the Northeast Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) region of a southeastern state, which includes 13 school districts and is comprised of 64 elementary schools.

The participants in the study were selected based upon their designation as either a principal or assistant principal within the designated Northeast RESA. It is possible both administrators at a single school were included in the research study; however, the researcher is unaware since participants were anonymous. After the principal and assistant principal from each school were identified, their electronic mail addresses were obtained from a publicly available resource via Northeast RESA and district websites.

Prior to collecting data for the study, the researcher obtained permission to conduct research from the Institutional Review Board of Georgia Southern University (see Appendix A). The researcher emailed a letter of recruitment to the target population of 128 school administrators, requesting their participation in the study. The invitation informed the potential participant that the survey was anonymous and no school identifiers would be utilized in the study. Passive consent was utilized; that is by completing the survey, participants gave consent. The sample was drawn from all possible administrators totaling a population of 128. A follow-up

reminder notice for recruitment was sent to all participants who had not completed the survey two weeks following the initial email. Additional responses from participants were still needed following the notice, promoting an additional reminder email that was sent one week later. The researcher complied with Georgia Southern University, federal, state, and school district guidelines when conducting research. The researcher received permission from all involved parties and met the mandatory requirements of the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board approval for the designated study.

A pilot study of the survey was included in this study. The purpose of completing the pilot study was to provide information and reveal unanticipated problems with question wording and instructions of the survey. This helped to determine if the survey participants understood the question and provide correct responses. Three secondary administrators within the identified Northeast RESA were used in the pilot and were not included in the study or future research. Data were collected using a survey comprised of questions that asked about a variety of discipline practices used to address disproportionate discipline of African American males. The instrument used for the study was created by the researcher using a variety of different surveys. Respondents were asked to answer the survey, which was created using Qualtrics and sent by email. The survey could be completed within 30 minutes and was comprised of 50 questions associated with practices such as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice approaches to address disproportionate discipline of African American males. A computerized questionnaire is time-efficient, inexpensive, and provides data immediately. However, surveys can be overlooked in e-mail or ignored by responder.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the survey demographic data. The data collected from the survey were prepared and entered in the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) program. SPSS is a program that helps to organize and analyze data. Prior to completing statistical data analyses a report showing numbers of respondents to the survey was completed. Creswell (2014) stated creating a tool to present information describing respondents and nonrespondents would be useful as information is presented in steps. According to Creswell (2014), "In some quantitative projects, the analysis stops with descriptive analysis, especially if the number of participants is too small for more advanced, inferential analysis" (p. 163). Descriptive analysis is indicated by the means, standard deviations, and range of scores for variables (Creswell, 2014). The findings from the study were disseminated via tables and graphs. The tables and graphs represent the number of participants as related to the survey demographics and survey questions, mean and standard deviation related to the discipline practice of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice. Tables and figures were disseminated reflecting the question number, question, mean, and standard deviation.

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following key terms are defined:

Disciplinary disproportionality. Disciplinary disproportionality encompasses the disproportionately high rates at which students from certain racial/ethnic groups are subjected to office discipline referrals, suspensions, school arrests, and expulsion (Skiba, Shure, & Williams, 2012).

Discipline referral. A discipline referral is a written account of a student's inappropriate behavior. A staff member observes a student violating a school rule and submits

documentation of the event to the school's administrative leadership, who then delivers a

consequence to the student (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004).

Expulsion. Expulsion is an action taken by the local educational agency removing a child from

his/her regular school for disciplinary purposes for the remainder of the school year, or

longer, in accordance with local educational agency policy (Mahoney & Oregon

Department of Education, 2012).

Overrepresentation. Overrepresentation is a situation in which the proportion of a group

represented in a given category exceeds the proportion of that group in the school

population at the school, district, or national level (MacMillan & Reschly, 1998).

Suspension. Suspension is a disciplinary action that is administered as a consequence of a

student's inappropriate behavior requiring that he or she be absent from the classroom or

from the school for a specified period of time (Morrison & Skiba, 2001).

Exclusionary discipline. Exclusionary discipline is the process of removing misbehaving

students from his or her educational setting (Perry & Morris, 2014).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is a pedagogy that empowers

students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to

impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

is a non-curricular universal prevention strategy that aims to alter the school environment

by creating improved systems and procedures that promote positive change in staff and

student behaviors (Bevans, Bradshaw, Koth, Ialongo, & Leaf, 2008).

Restorative Justice. Restorative Justice is a process to involve, to the extent possible, those

who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms,

needs and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible (Zehr, 2002).

Chapter Summary

African American males in public schools are at increased risk for various harmful consequences, including academic failure, inclusion in special education, and exposure to exclusionary discipline practices, and violence (Ferguson, 2000). African American males continue to be suspended and expelled at a higher rate than other subgroups and school administrators must address the disproportionate representation of minorities in school disciplinary practices. If practices are not identified, implemented, and applied in an equitable manner across the student population, discipline problems will continue to occur. Using harsh consequences, such as suspensions and expulsion to discipline, should not be the primary solution to address behavior. According to Mitchell and Bradshaw (2013) an increased use of exclusionary discipline practices is associated with lower academic and discipline scores while increased use of classroom-based positive behavior supports is associated with higher academic and discipline scores and student-teacher relationship. A study focusing on implementation of Restorative Justice practices found a decrease in disruptive referrals and saw positive changes in student-student conflict and teacher-student conflict which reduced suspension and discipline gap for African American students.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the United States Supreme Court declared segregated schools were illegal, and that the United States system of education imposed unequal and disparate treatment on African Americans which reduced to an inferior status within the society. Adams, Bell, and Griffin (2016) indicated social justice in schools incorporates experiences and searches to verify all students have access to education regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual identity, or socioeconomic status. These injustices present themselves in forms of social and educational inequalities. Discipline practices continue to perpetuate social and educational inequalities in today's society. Although the 1954 decision in Brown vs. Board of Education declared segregated schools were illegal, still today schools are separated due to educational and social practices. Kozol (1992) examined class- and race-based disparities in education and identified de facto segregation. According to Kozol, (1992) de facto segregation is when races are separated not by any law, but by everyday practices such as the unequal distribution of funds to schools and development of private and charter schools. Therefore, school disparities in school discipline prolong inequality and form de facto segregation. Seidi (2007) stated although disparities have been apparent, it is simply easier to discuss cultural challenges then to act on that knowledge.

Researchers have shown disparities in discipline for African American males for over forty years. This was first documented by the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) in 1975 and found that one in every eight African American students, compared to one in every 16 Caucasian students was suspended. Butler, Lewis, Moore, and Scott (2012) stated in order to comprehend discipline inequities at the secondary level, there must be some investigation and resulting

consequences of exclusionary sanctions at the elementary level. Therefore, it is of importance to further explore the discipline disparities and practices to address disproportionate discipline of elementary African American males. Skiba, Shure, and Williams (2012) have defined disciplinary disproportionality as high rates at which students from certain racial/ethnic groups are subjected to office discipline referrals, suspensions, school arrests, and expulsion.

Alsubaie (2015) examined factors related to discipline issues of elementary aged children that covered topics like educational leadership, discipline issues, and how to address these topics. The purpose of the study was to identify techniques and structures appearing in the literature that are conducive towards fostering positive behavior among children in the classroom. Leadership of teachers and administration in schools, communication between students and teachers, collaboration between parents and teachers helped to create a trustful and positive learning environment that reduced student behavioral issues. Alsubaie used common discipline issues, practices relative to the discipline of elementary school children, and leadership as keywords for the search. The search yielded the use of 12 references, four denoted as journals. Alsubaie concluded there is a need for teacher and administrative training to develop techniques to address discipline and behavioral challenges around behavior. The purpose of this chapter is to outline literature that focus on practices which promotes inequitable school discipline practices and seek practices to remedy the disproportionate discipline of African American males to ensure equitable application of discipline practices is across the student population. In determining sources for this review of the literature, prominence was given to peer-reviewed studies dated 2012 to present discovered by these search practices.

Literature Search Process

The researcher gathered information from manual and electronic database searches to

identify appropriate literature for this review. Searches were made in the following databases: JSTOR (database for Arts and Sciences), ScienceDirect, EBSCOHost, Educational Research Information Clearinghouse (ERIC), and ProQuest (database for arts and humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences) using the online library system Discover at Georgia Southern University and Google Scholar. Search terms used to find articles were *school discipline*, *racial disparity*, *disproportionality*, out-*of-school suspension*, *Distributed Leadership, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*, *Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, Restorative Justice*, and *discipline disparity*. By using two known authors, Russell J. Skiba and Pedro A. Noguera in the keyword combinations, the researcher performed different and parallel searches to avoid leaving out relevant articles. The researcher focused on limiting the search to the last seven years, 2012 to present. However, the initial 1975 seminal article by the Children's Defense Fund first identified the disproportionate discipline of African American males. Articles were primarily obtained using the online library system, and books were obtained from the Georgia Southern University Library loan system, Athens Regional Public Library, or purchased via Amazon.

Organization of the Literature

This chapter presents a review of literature as it relates to practices and interventions implemented to address discipline which aligns to the researchers study. This chapter is divided into the following sections: framework, school discipline, disparities, disproportionality, outcomes associated with suspensions, and social justice considerations for elementary school discipline as alternatives to suspension.

School discipline will be discussed in the section following framework along with the subsection information about federal, state, district, and zero tolerance policies as they relate to suspensions. Racial and ethnic disparities will be discussed in the section following school

discipline. Disproportionate school disciplinary outcomes for students of color, particularly

African American students, are pervasive in the United States (Hoffman, 2014). Therefore, the

third section will focus on disproportionality. Race and socioeconomic subsections (SES) will be

serve as subsections in the disproportionality section. The next section covers outcomes

associated with out-of-school suspension such as decrease in student achievement, school

dropout rate, and the school-to-prison pipeline. According to Mahari de Silva, Gleditsch, Job,

Jesme, Urness, and Hunter (2018) the current-day educational systems in the U.S., both

segregated and integrated settings have endemically high proportions of low-achievement and

high drop-out rates among Black students. If equitable application of discipline across student

populations is not practiced the exclusionary practices such as out-of-school suspension can be

counterproductive for academic and life achievement among African American students

(Fenning et al., 2012; Gregory et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2014). The final section addresses

alternative practices to suspension and addresses the following subsections: Culturally Relevant

Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice practices.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this literature review, the theory used to support the structure of

research is distributed leadership. This theory assists in shaping school leaders educational

leadership experiences that impact the culture and climate of a school. According to Spillane

(2006), the development of the concept of a distributed leadership practice was intended to shift

the focus from one authoritative leader to how a leader and followers collaborate to achieve a

common goal. The term distributed leadership has been used synonymously with shared

leadership, shared governance, team leadership, participative leadership and democratic

leadership (Northouse, 2015). Distributed leadership has been described as "a form of collective

leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working together" (Harris, 2004). In this definition, each stakeholder shares the leadership responsibilities in a collaborative manner based on their area of expertise. This is relevant to this study because school leadership is not only the responsibility of the administrator, but the educational organization. Spillane (2006) states distributed leadership is used to understand how a variety of stakeholders in the organization enact leadership.

When this form of leadership is utilized there is a presence of a collaborative school culture with mutual support, decision-making, and a culture of shared responsibility. Fullan (2002) referred to the principal of the future--the Cultural Change Principal--as a person who must see the big picture and transform the organization through people and teams. Harris (2004) states distributed leadership theory suggests leadership occurs through many individuals across the organization. Fullan (2006) discussed the importance of an experienced school leader to lead the change process along with identifying strengths and weaknesses of the community are also imperative in school turnaround. Change theory can be vital in informing education reform practices. A culture of change consists less of strategies and more about strategizing (Fullan, 2001). This is important because in order to change the culture of a school surrounding discipline, administrator training and active involvement are elements in the change of a culture (Ashley, 2015).

Leadership promotes diversity, develops human resources, and honors the past to create a greater future (Fullan, 2006). King (2002) concluded distributed leadership is more than delegating tasks; it is having people within the school community take on roles, engage in acts of leadership, and share with others what they learn and know. Cultural and climate change requires stakeholders engage in reform that impacts social justice, equity and, narrowing gaps.

Researchers Elias and Tobias (1996) study indicated exclusionary practices promote a hostile school climate and encouraged student resentment instead of student accountability. These studies suggest the use of appropriate discipline practices can have a positive effect on school climate, teacher effectiveness, and student accountability (Anderson-Loy, 2015; Skiba et al., 2015). Fullan (2005) states a moral purpose in school change ought to focus on enhancing society through improving educational systems and the learning of all citizens. Spillane (2006) stated several individuals may take part in leadership activities to accomplish shared goals. It is an expectation that leaders run a school that is free from distraction; manage the health and safety of all stakeholders; create a school climate that supports innovation and is free of disappointments; connect with students, teachers, parents and community members; and deliver academic results for all students (Fullan, 2014). Supportive and invested administrators have an impact on school culture and play an important role in the process of promoting a positive school climate (Anderson-Loy, 2015). According to Gottfredson (1989) most frequent discipline problems occurred when teacher moral and cooperation were low and administrators did not agree with established rules in the school climate. This review will explore of the school climate and culture is impacted by proactive discipline practices and the implementation of distributed leadership to address what practices Elementary School Leaders report are most and least effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population.

School Climate and Culture

According to the Georgia Department of Education (2016), school climate is defined as a measure of student, teacher, and parent perceptions of a school's climate. The School Climate Star Rating provides school-level data on the following components: school climate, student discipline, safe and substance-free learning environment, and attendance. Therefore, the School

Climate Star Rating is a diagnostic tool to determine if a school is on the right path to school improvement (Georgia Department of Education, 2016).

The Georgia Department of Education (2016) states the School Climate Star Rating is calculated using data from the Georgia Student Health Survey 2.0, Georgia School Personnel Survey, Georgia Parent Survey, student discipline data and attendance records for students, teachers, staff and administrators. The surveys measure stakeholders' perceptions of a school's climate. Weighted suspension is utilized to measure student discipline. A school's safe and substance free learning environment is determined by using discipline incidents and student survey responses, and the presence of violence, bullying, and unsafe incidents within a school. Attendance of teachers, administrators, and staff members are also factored into the climate star rating (Georgia Department of Education, 2016).

In order to lead in a culture of change, a leader must have moral purpose (Fullan, 2001). This requires leaders to be intentional when making changes in a positive manner that affects students, teachers, parents, and the community. Fullan (2001) indicated moral purpose is comprised of constantly improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps. When completing the process of change, moral purpose must be present throughout the process. According to Fullan (2001) effective leaders work on developing relationships at all levels of the organization. Relationships help to establish a foundation to create a learning community and bond between stakeholders. As reported by Fullan (2008), "loving and investing in your employees in relation to a high-quality purpose is the bedrock of success" (p. 36). In order for distributed leadership to occur, traditional systematic and structural conditions must be modified and leadership capacity must be built among the individuals in the school and community.

School Discipline

School discipline is an important component of the educational environment. Appropriate discipline maintains the school climate and protects teaching and learning. However, a balance is needed to address school discipline and safety. Exclusionary practices such as removal from classroom, suspension and expulsion, are used as a disciplinary consequence aimed at creating safe and orderly learning environment schools (Gregory, Skiba & Noguera, 2010; Noguera, 2003; Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Any disciplinary action that occurs and requires student removal from the learning environment as a consequence for a disciplinary incident is known as *exclusionary discipline*. The use of exclusionary school discipline practices, such as in-school suspension (ISS), out-of-school suspension (OSS) and expulsion, is a growing concern among researchers and youth service providers (Anyon et al., 2014). These practices have been used to reduce disruption in the classroom and provide a better learning environment for the non-disruptive students, but the problem here is twofold: what happens to the student removed, and what message does it send to the students who remain. These practices do not do not assist in identifying the cause or function of the behavior. However, Walls (2018) described the implications of disruptive behavior by noting that the results of such behavior are indicative of lack of respect for school culture. As a result, Butler's et al. (2012) study found an African American student is more likely to receive interventions to shape behavior. Exclusionary sanction for acts of disobedience based on the given set of factors: race, gender, socioeconomic status, school level, and behavior role. Three of the five factors—gender, school level, and behavior role—were found to have significantly predicted the likelihood of suspension (Butler et al., 2012). A comparable study found that students attending schools with higher proportions of African American and Hispanic students were also at greater risk for school exclusion after

accounting for student-level demographics and behaviors (Anyon et al., 2014). Bryan, Day-Vines, Griffin and Moore Thomas' (2012) study examined students who were more likely to be referred to the school counselor for disruptive behavior by English and Math teacher using data from the Educational Longitudinal Study. Disproportionality is evident in schools nationwide in discipline referral, suspension, and expulsion rates. According to Bryan et al. (2012), students' gender was a predictor of both content teachers' referrals; however, race was only a predictor for English teacher referrals. African American and multiracial females were more likely to receive disciplinary referrals to the school counselor, but had 65% lower odds of being referred than did males. This study had racial disparities as African American students had 71% greater odds of being referred than did Caucasian students. The disproportionate representation of African American students in out-of-school suspension and expulsion appears to have increased in the last 30 years (Losen & Skiba, 2010). In a qualitative study in an urban school using school level data, Golann (2015) examined the experiences of students and teachers with highly structured disciplinary systems. Golann found the teachers pushed discipline and conformity on working class students whereas middle class students were encouraged to be creative and independent. The study also concluded that the schools discipline policies resulted in the forced assimilation to middle class values and correlations between students learning paths and socioeconomic classification. This suggests that discipline outcomes are impacted by school personnel such as teachers and administrators.

Discipline Policies

GaDOE (2016) defines discipline policies as an outline of consequences and punishments that will occur in response to specific unacceptable behaviors. In an effort to create a safer educational environment, the standardization of student discipline at both the federal and state

levels may have also—although unintentionally—affected disciplinary disparities across schools (Bekkerman & Gilpin, 2014). Although out-of school suspensions are sometimes necessary due to the severity, intensity or safety of the behavior incident, Haight and Gibson (2013) have argued that educators should carefully consider context and child development. According to Bekkerman and Gilpin (2014) consequences should be appropriate and in alignment with discipline policies to identify and analyze the potential dependencies marginal deterrence effects among different offense levels. Dyke (2016) examined connections between children who identify as African American and increased disciplinary referrals due to defiance and/or insubordination. Using referrals from an internal data system, Dyke's (2016) study found African American students were grossly overrepresented in both disciplinary referrals that resulted in ISS and exclusionary discipline such as OSS due to physical, sexual violence, and behavior deemed out-of-control. Research by Noguera (2003) supported that changing policies, creating new programs, and opening new opportunities will accomplish little if such efforts are not accompanied by strategies to actively engage African American males and their families in taking responsibility to improve student behavior. This is vital because a part of establishing school climate and culture through distributed leadership is ensuring stakeholders are involved and that everyone has accountability in the process of addressing discipline. "Parent involvement is positively associated with student success, higher attendance rates, and lower suspension rates" (Peterson & Skiba, 2001, p.157). In the same way, a study suggests that district policy reforms targeting administrative decision-making in the application of disciplinary consequences and interventions can reduce the use of exclusionary sanctions in schools (Anyon et al., 2014).

Zero Tolerance Policy

Rodriguez (2017) defined zero tolerance policies as "regulations that mandate specific

consequences in response to outlined student misbehaviors, typically without any consideration for the unique circumstances surrounding a given incident" (p. 808). The term" zero tolerance", originated from the war on drugs campaign initiated in the 1980s. According to Gregory et al. (2010), zero-tolerance policies were developed to keep students safe; however, they only serve to escalate referral, suspension, and expulsion rates, especially for male students and students of color. The policy was established to target illegal drugs and school shootings (Gregory & Cornell, 2009). Zero tolerance policies have punished students with suspension or expulsion if they brought weapons or drugs to school and were found in possession of such items (Mongan & Walker, 2012). Some schools have begun to implement zero tolerance policies for lower discipline infractions like insubordination and not just for weapon and/or drug infractions (Castilllo, 2015). Wilson (2014) also reported that zero tolerance policies have been associated with the school-to-prison pipeline.

Hoffman (2014) employed a quantitative approach to illustrate the effect of expanded zero tolerance policy on the proportion of days students were suspended. The study concluded expansion of zero tolerance policies did affect African American students the most with an expulsion increase from .3% to .5% was observed for Caucasian students, 0.8% to 1.0% for Hispanic students, and expulsion doubled from 2.2% to 4.5% for African American student occurred due to the expansion of zero tolerance policies. Equally important, Anyon et al. (2014) found that "zero tolerance" approaches that seek to deter misbehavior through harsh consequences for all types of misconduct are less effective than graduated discipline systems that increase consequences with the seriousness of student offenses (Anyon et al., 2014). Discipline consequences such as suspension and expulsion, which seek to punish students do not (a) deter future misbehavior nor do they, (b) make the student less likely to engage in the behavior again

nor do they, and (c) serve as an example for other students. Skbia (2014) found zero tolerance

policies have not deterred students from disobeying school rules, but increased students

possibility to engage in crime due to being separated from their learning environment. The

school climate and culture are affected when schools use policies that create a hostile learning

environment. Negative perceptions of school climate, school engagement, educational

opportunities, and likelihood of student dropout and failure to graduate are related to

exclusionary discipline practices like OSS and expulsion (Skiba, 2014).

Hoffman's (2014) study examined specific evidence about the effects of expanding zero

tolerance policy on school suspension and expulsion rates for both African American students

and Caucasian students. The study revealed that African American students in the district were

disproportionately affected, with an additional rate of 70 African American students per year

recommended for expulsion following the policy change (Hoffman, 2014). Therefore, the

proportion of days African American students were suspended compared to Caucasian students

increased following the policy change. The expanded zero tolerance policy affected the

population of African American students in a manner greater than any other race or ethnicity.

Skiba and Rausch (2006) indicated when zero tolerance policies are used communities, families,

students, staff, and the organization of the school are affected which is associated with poorer

school climate, lower student achievement, higher drop-out rates, and increased reliance on

suspension and expulsion. Maintaining the school climate and safety are then likely to exacerbate

racial disparities already present between African American and Caucasian students (Skiba &

Rausch, 2006). According to, Kayama et al. (2014) qualitative study of 31 youths, 28 caregivers

and 19 educators captured the perspectives of the participants and how African American

students were treated in comparison to Caucasian students during disciplinary problems.

According to the results, participants suggested a racial bias while educators found poverty might impact student school engagement. Hoffman (2014) stated zero tolerance disciplinary policies warrant particular scrutiny, both because of the disparate impact on students of color and because of questions regarding their effectiveness. Gibson et al. (2014) stated the zero tolerance policy should not be interpreted and practiced as "zero professional judgment." As reported in the Hoffman (2014) study, the concept of zero tolerance has since expanded to include the automatic suspension or expulsion of students for a list of offenses such as alcohol and drug violations, fighting, and criminal damage to property, physical assault, and committing multiple violations in the same school year. African American males appear to disproportionately suffer the consequences of zero tolerance policies, given that they experience increases in the allocation of discipline practices utilized when zero tolerance policies are broken (Blake et al., 2010). Most schools have zero tolerance policies that list predetermined consequences, such as suspensions, for various student misbehaviors do not always fit the individual behavior of the student (Gibson et al., 2014). School discipline zero-tolerance policies show a link to the inequality of educational opportunities, experiences, and outcomes evidenced by the racial disparities in college enrollment and completion rates and the school-to-prison pipeline (Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014). The zero-tolerance policy contributes to the link between school discipline and juvenile system outcomes which refers to how failure in school and exclusion from the learning environment can make certain groups of students more vulnerable than others (Wilson, 2014). As indicated by Wilson (2014) this is a causal link between educational exclusion and criminalization of youth.

Disparities

The term *disparities* is often used in collaboration with racial or ethnic. However, in this

literature review it has been used to discuss racial and discipline disparities. Researchers Gergory et al. (2010) indicated that racial and ethnic disparities in discipline outcomes are understudied and overlooked. According to Gregory et al. (2010) variables that contribute to racial and ethnic discipline disparities should be examined more comprehensively to identify patterns in school sanctions. Racial, gender, and economic disparities have been highlighted in exclusionary discipline outcomes. At the secondary level, rates of suspension and expulsion are high, but the greatest inconsistencies in rates are found at the elementary level among African American and Caucasian students. Skiba (2015) reported the discipline gap ranges across all settings, grades, starting as early as preschool and indicate a systematic problem. Racial and ethnic disparities remain prevalent in American education.

Racial Disparities

School discipline has gained recent attention in national reports issued by the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice (2018). Chapman (2013) stated interested-convergence is a result of No *Child Left Behind, which* was signed into law in 2002. Prior to NCLB the majority Caucasian districts with significant achievement gaps between Caucasian students and students of color were not concerned with racial disparities (Chapman, 2012). A qualitative study completed in Denver Public Schools grades K-12 by Anyon et al. (2014) examined the influence of multi-level risk and protective factors on exclusionary school discipline outcomes using race and student discipline data. Researchers measured risk and protective factors for exclusionary school discipline outcomes such as race, family socioeconomic status, special education status, and participation in in-school suspension. The study considered the influence of family poverty at the student-level, and examined the effect of race on students representing six federally defined racial categories. The findings suggested that ongoing attention to issues of racial

inequity in school discipline outcomes is necessary. Researchers Blake, Keith, Luo, Le, and

Salter (2017) examined the role of colorism in explaining suspension risk using a nationally

representative sample of adolescent females. A study by Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, and Pollock

(2016) identified disparities in educational outcomes such as graduation rates is evidence that

minority and low-income students have different educational opportunities. The study found

interventions such as supportive relationships, student and family acknowledgment, culturally

relevant and responsive curriculum, problem-based approaches, and rigorous academics could

reduce discipline disparities (Carter et al., 2016). To eliminate racial disparities, prevention

efforts that target differential selection for office disciplinary referrals at the classroom level, not

just differential processing for discipline sanctions at the administrative level is necessary

(Anyon et al., 2014). This reinforces disciplinary practices like Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice assist in providing

equitable discipline.

Discipline Disparities

The study of school disciplinary practices also revealed troubling and persistent pattern of

disparity (Anyon et al., 2014). According to Butler, Lewis, Moore, and Scott (2012),

disproportional trends in disciplinary practices should be analyzed while considering a student's

race, gender, SES, school level (elementary/secondary), and behavior role. Findings from

numerous studies indicated that racial disparities in discipline outcomes persist after accounting

for student behavior and confounding variables like poverty, disability, previous academic

achievement, school composition, district dynamics, and neighborhood context (Skiba et al.,

2015; Kayama et al., 2016). Researchers Forsyth, Biggar, Forsyth, and Howat (2015) examined

the differences between ethnic groups when school infractions were subjective/objective using

K-12 student school discipline incident data. The infraction categories analyzed were disobedience, violence, substance abuse, vandalism, theft, truancy, safety, and miscellaneous. These categories were classified as subjective or objective by a committee out of 32 possible infractions. Results indicated that only African American students exceeded the criteria with infractions having subjective definitions. This suggests that African American student's behavior infractions are not delivered in an equitable manner compared to than their counterparts.

Anyon et al. (2014) noted that school staff members' perceptions of student behavior problems are often racially biased and may worsen racial disparities in school discipline. In a qualitative study by Gibson and Haight (2013), the authors examined the culturally nuanced meanings of out-of-school suspensions for 30 lower income caregivers of African American children suspended from school. The research provided important clues to how families and schools can work together to effectively reduce racial disparities in out-of-school suspensions such as: (a) schools understanding the perspective of the caregiver, (b) social workers collaborating with families and schools, (c) establish common goals between families and teachers, and (d) non defensive and self-reflective mediation between educators and caregivers (Gibson and Haight, 2013). Bekkerman and Giplin (2014) investigated the potential unintended effects of state laws that seek to improve safety in U.S. public schools by mandating standardized student punishment. The study found disciplinary disparities can lead to long-term, sustained educational and economic inequality for individuals who are more persistently and more severely punished. Research by Bekkerman and Giplin (2014) supported that carefully designing and appropriate implementation of disciplinary guidelines can reduce punishment disparities and, in the case of education, reduce barriers to learning opportunities for students. A disciplinary guideline that is implemented supports the components of Positive Behavior

Interventions and Supports in establishing behavioral expectations and developing systems that support creating a positive learning environment.

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Disproportionality

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Disproportionality is a comprehensive construct that requires determinations for several different categories: 1) Significant Disproportionality, 2) Disproportionate Representation, and 3) Significant Discrepancy (Georgia Department of Education [GaDOE], 2016). According to GaDOE (2016), *significant disproportionality* focuses on identification, discipline, and/or placement, while the *disproportionate representations* analyzes over-identification of students, and *significant discrepancy* compares discipline of all students with disabilities (SWD) to SWD's by race and ethnicity. Georgia Department of Education (2016) has stated:

> Disproportionality occurs by comparing a district's discipline data in one ethnic/racial subgroup to all other ethnic/racial subgroups in the same district. Two measures: 1. Events per student – discipline events per student that result in a removal 2. Duration and type – discipline events that result in ISS or OSS; formula that adds a value based on duration of suspension.

Disproportionality and Race, SES, and Disability

School districts are concerned with the disproportionate discipline of African American student's however, this concern is not new. Research by Losen (2011) explained that African American males are overrepresented in school discipline and are often disciplined more harshly, at greater rates, and for more subjective infractions (e.g., willful defiance) than their Caucasian male counterparts. Similarly another study of students and research revealed (Anyon et al., 2014) found that African American, Hispanic, and Multiracial students were often punished more harshly than Caucasian students for the same offenses. In a recent study where researchers

controlled for socioeconomic status and prior discipline history, findings indicated that race, not type of behavioral infraction, was the most significant predictor of African American students' risk for suspension (Blake et al., 2017). These findings are similar to a study completed by Noguera (2003) where the researcher stated racially and ethnically diverse students are more likely to be disproportionately referred and suspended, severely punished for small offenses, stereotyped as unintelligent, and marginalized within schools.

A study conducted in a high poverty urban middle school examined individual student office disciplinary referral data and found that individual-level models consisting of student demographic characteristics such as race/ethnicity, gender, and grade level significantly predicted student disciplinary referrals after accounting for school-level variables of student-teacher ratio and racial/ethnic concentration at school (Martinez, McMahon, & Treger (2016). The study concluded a positive association between racial minorities and discipline referrals for aggressive behaviors. However, the disproportionality for African American students was evident, even within the minority and high poverty school.

Butler et al. (2012), using bivariate correlation analysis, examined race and socioeconomic status to determine if there is a possible correlation with the number of assigned out-of-school suspension (OSS) days in elementary school. Findings revealed that race, but not socioeconomic status, was significantly correlated with the number of assigned OSS days in elementary school, and the positive point biserial coefficient (rpb) suggested that a greater number of assigned OSS days was associated with African American elementary students than other races (Butler et. al. 2012). Although Butler et al. (2012) examined elementary, middle, and high school students with at least one discipline sanction researchers found race and socioeconomic status were not statistically significant predictors, those variables are important in

explaining the nuances surrounding who gets suspended and expelled. Skiba et al. (1997) argued one indicator of poverty, students who receive free and reduced lunch, shows that the poor are at increased risk for suspension. Furthermore, research suggested that students with a low socioeconomic students, minority, and students in special education appear to be at greater risk for receiving harsh disciplinary practices, including suspensions, expulsions, and corporal punishment (Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997).

Kayama, Haight, and Gibson (2016) discussed the racial disproportionality in out-of-school suspensions of African American students. The researchers examined perspectives of four black youths, their caregivers, and educators, which were captured through semi-structured face-to-face individual interviews. The study illustrated the following intersections: *race and disability*, *race and culture*, *race and gender*, and *race and income*. The study involved a sample size of 31 Black middle and high-school-aged students, 28 of their caregivers, and 19 educators involved in the disciplinary incidents. A multiple case study design was utilized to consider the diversity among Black students. These cases included events surrounding suspensions from the perspective of students, caregivers, and educators. Outcomes associated with suspensions were poor student achievement, school-to-prison pipeline, and school dropout.

Student Outcomes Associated With Suspension

A study conducted by the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014) shows that Black preschoolers make up almost half of all out-of-school suspensions for preschoolers. Losen, Hewitt, and Toldson (2014) stated one episode of suspension increases students' likelihood of repeating a grade, dropping out, and coming into contact with the juvenile justice system.

Student Achievement.

Exclusionary removals are disruptive to the academic environment and, when students are removed, they miss vital learning opportunities. The use of exclusionary practices by schools as a disciplinary intervention is commonly used as consequences for minorities and low achievers (Noguera, 2003). According to Tatum (2004), African American children who receive suspensions may miss academic content as well as other crucial educational and social opportunities, including interactions with educators who encourage their achievement. It was found in a study by Gregory, Skiba, and Noguera (2010) that suspensions are associated with lower educational achievement and have been implicated in the racial achievement gap. As a result, students may become less bonded to school, less invested in school rules and course work, and subsequently, less motivated to achieve academic success (Gregory et al., 2010). Allen and White-Smith (2015) completed a qualitative study of African American students in a secondary setting. The goal was to examine ideologies and practices of United State teachers. Data were obtained through field observations, interviews, and document collection. A purposive sampling of ten males were included in this study. The research found various and sometimes-discordant ways these teachers made sense of the factors that contributed to African American male academic and social success and failure. As a result, teachers demonstrated agency through suspended judgment, advocacy for African American males, and challenging student resistance perceived as self-defeating in success academic and social success. Similar to the actions of the teachers in this study, other educators might find ways to confront individual and systemic practices that lead to poor schooling outcomes for African American males (Allen, 2015). Research has found an increased risk of grade retention and dropping out associated with suspension and expulsion. Studies have also found a negative association between suspensions

and students' academic achievement. Perry and Morris (2014) examined indirect adverse effects on non-suspended students' reading and math achievement in a large urban school district. It was concluded that a higher level of exclusionary discipline practices overtime negatively affects academic achievement (Perry & Morris, 2014).

Student achievement outcomes for United States children are unequal. In fact, Quin (2015) indicated African American-Caucasian achievement gaps existed prior to students' schooling experiences. The student achievement gap in education refers to the disparity in academic performance between groups of students. These gaps can occur in grades, standardized-test scores, dropout rates, and graduation rates. Although test score gaps between African American and Caucasian students have narrowed, there remains a large math and reading gap (Quinn, 2015). Moreover, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Hill, 2017) regularly reports that Caucasian students' proficiency rates on math and reading exams are double or even triple those of African American and Hispanic students, and the size of gaps is similar when comparing students based on family income and parental education. There is a correlation between socioeconomic status and educational achievement. Gomora and An (2016) found that increases in the proportion of students on free or reduced price lunch restricted achievement growth. The gap in academic skills between Caucasian and historically disadvantaged racial/ethnic minority children exists at school entry and grows over time. Results suggest that schools with high levels of suspensions precipitate negative achievement outcomes for the entire student body (Perry & Morris, 2014).

School to Prison Pipeline.

The connection of exclusionary discipline with incarceration rates is known as the *school to prison pipeline* (Blake et al., 2010). The school-to-prison pipeline refers to the practice of

pushing students out of school, via zero tolerance policies, and into the criminal justice system (McNeal, 2016). A total of 3.5 million student suspensions yielded 290,600 student referrals to law enforcement (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2018). Annually approximately 92,000 students have transitioned from the school system into the juvenile justice system creating the school to prison pipeline. Skiba, Arredondo, and Williams (2014) suggested schools identify alternatives like school-based inventions, increased research, teacher development, and policy to replace exclusionary discipline. Researchers Blake et al. (2010) found that African American males have an increased risk for experiencing disciplinary practices and that these risks impede on the student's learning environment and may lead to involvement in the criminal justice system. Skiba and Peterson (2000) reported disproportionate minority suspension is related to the racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system, which lends support to the school-to-prison pipeline argument; that is, removing students from positive learning environments and criminalizing normative immaturity increases the risk of incarceration, which would perpetuate social and educational inequalities.

Anyon et al. (2014) found administrator characteristics associated with racial disproportionality in suspension and expulsion include a punitive orientation to discipline, believing that discipline problems stem from inadequacies in students' home life, and relying on school security guards or police officers to manage behavior problems. Only student-level factors increased youths' odds of being referred to law enforcement. Compared to Caucasian students, Hispanic and African American youth had significantly greater odds of police involvement in their disciplinary incidents, accounting for other demographic variables and the seriousness of their offenses (Anyon et al., 2014). Furthermore, the race-gendered discipline disparities African American males experience unnecessarily exposes them to the school to

prison pipeline (Noguera, 2003). Ceullar and Markoqitz (2012) reported there is a racial disproportionality in out-of-school suspensions, which is a persistent social justice issue. Using individual, semi-structured, and audio-recorded interviews. The researchers examined the use of criminal justice language in the personal narratives of out-of-school suspensions of 31 African American students. The results found that criminal justice and legal terms were spontaneously used 474 times by 59 out of 78 participants. Research on both the overuse of, and disproportionality in, punitive consequences in school discipline and juvenile justice have been identified under the rubric of the school-to-prison pipeline (Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010). Justice Center (2011) found students with repeated suspensions and expulsions had a significantly increased risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system. A qualitative study by Allen and White (2013) examined the school-to-prison pipeline and determined schools perpetuate inequality for African American males and impacts their life trajectory. The authors recommended that schools work to disassemble the prison pipeline for African American males which requires educational reform. According to McNeal (2016), the correlations between school discipline and the criminal justice system is supported by evidence, but little has been done to address reform. Researchers have provided an overview of the relationship between school exclusion and school-to-prison pipeline and noted these issues are systematic, they affect African American students at a disproportionate rate, and they have increased long-term negative outcomes for students (Skiba et al., 2014).

Social Justice Considerations for ES Discipline as Alternatives to Suspension

While effective alternatives to suspension and expulsion from school exist, it is in the best interests of school administrators to determine which programs are most plausible and appropriate for their local community and school (Butler et al., 2012). Identification of practices

are vital to address the disciplinary practices and policies that lend to exclusionary disciplines. Researchers Day-Vines and Terriquez (2008) suggested culturally relevant disciplinary programs are exemplified by a program designed to promote prosocial behavior and decrease suspensions and discipline referrals among African American and Hispanic students. This was substantiated by Bryan et al. (2012) where recommendations of implementation of culturally relevant disciplinary practices and interventions to inform teachers' skills on how to work and affirm ways to interact with ethnic minority students who display disruptive behavior. Another alternative to suspension is the practice of Restorative Justice which is used to address conflict and behavior, keep students in school, and hold them accountable for their actions.

Butler et al. (2012) proposed engaging administrators and teachers in the professional development that encourages administrators, teachers, and students to develop positive conflict resolution and de-escalation skills. This is distributed leadership perspective where individuals take part in activities to accomplish shared goals within a shared context such as discipline (Spillane, 2006). Stakeholders who are trained and use Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in their teachings help students succeed and create a positive classroom context (Howard, 2003). The use of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy can improve student coping strategies, establish better relationships with students, and develop alternatives to student suspension and expulsion (Butler et al., 2012). Restorative practices train staff in structured problem solving to identify contributors to conflict, offering a promising approach for reducing the discipline gap (Gonzalez, 2015).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Ladson-Billings (1995a) defines Culturally Relevant Pedagogy as that which addresses student achievement and helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while

developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate (p. 469). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy provides students the opportunity to meet the academic demands of school while maintaining cultural competence. As indicated by Seidi (2007) as schools become more culturally diverse teachers need exposure to culturally responsive pedagogy. According to Irvin et al. (2004) Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is also referred to as culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally appropriate teaching, culturally responsible teaching, and culturally compatible.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy was developed to empower African American students socially, emotionally, intellectually by using cultural references to convey skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 1994.) It creates connections between students' school experiences and home while using a variety of instructional strategies that are connected to the students cultural, and integrates multicultural resources into school curriculum (Gay, 2000). When students are exposed to culturally responsive pedagogy in becomes a part of the learning experience and students take ownership in learning (Frieberg, 1996). As indicated by Mahari de Silva et al. (2018) for African-American students to succeed, schools need to be truly integrated so that the curriculum and the teachers are reflective of African-American culture and values.

Ladson-Billings (1995b) argued that in Culturally Relevant Pedagogy or teaching, many educators are concerned with how to do the work, when the first thing they should consider is how one thinks about students. According to Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011), Culturally Relevant Pedagogy focuses on the importance of culture in schooling and is not focused on race and racism as they relate to the socio historical pattern of schooling in the U.S. Vincent, Randall, Cartledge, Tobin, and Swain-Bradway (2011) suggested s Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports framework that included culturally responsive and inclusive approach that would

increase positive outcomes for students of color. The six culturally responsive practices were cultural knowledge, cultural self-awareness, and validation of other's cultures, cultural relevance, cultural validity, and cultural equity. The practices would be integrated with Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports to change the trends of disciplinary sanctions such as office discipline referrals and suspension among African American males (Vincent et al., 2011). Frieberg (1996) stated when students are self-initiators of their learning experiences and become more engaged in activities, there are fewer disruptive behaviors during the class period. According to Ladson-Billings (2009) a culturally relevant approach to teaching helps students understand that there can be and should be learning connected to everyday problems of living in a society related to racial, ethnic, linguistic, economic, environmental, social, political, and cultural lines.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports is a proactive approach to address behavior in a positive manner and decrease student behavior that can lead to exclusionary discipline. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is a differentiated three-tiered program, which addresses the specific needs of students (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports utilizes behavior, social learning, and organizational behavioral principles to assist in shaping school climate, staff and student behaviors. A Tier I interventions such as timeout would be a component of a classroom management plan that provided students with expectations and interventions to address behaviors. According to the Georgia Department of Education (2019) a timeout is defined as a behavioral intervention in which the student is temporarily removed from the learning activity in which the student is not confined. Primary Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports interventions at Tier I include identifying and establishing behavioral expectations, explicitly teaching those expectations, providing recognition for

appropriate behaviors such as school store for compliance of expectations, utilizing effective

classroom management practices, developing systems that support these practices, and using data

to inform decision making (Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010). Positive Behavior Interventions

and Supports framework is designed to increase relationship building, improve school climate,

and create a safe and welcoming learning environment.

School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is a non-curricular universal

prevention strategy that aims to alter the school environment by creating improved systems and

procedures that promote positive change in staff and student behaviors (Bevans et al., 2008). An

examination of classroom and school-level data in schools implementing School-wide Positive

Behavioral Interventions and Supports provided different findings (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Biases were not only embedded in White teachers, but also potential cultural, contextual or

economical differences between Black students and Black teachers were identified (Bradshaw et

al., 2010). Skiba et al. (2014) suggested that classroom factors as well as school and beyond

school factors reflect biases and discriminatory practices and are mechanisms that contribute to

and assist with explaining the discipline gap. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is

proactive and positive framework to model and teach positive interactions between stakeholders.

According to Bevans et al. (2008), Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports aims to change

school environments by creating improved systems and procedures that promote positive change

in student behavior. A school's climate and learning environment have a significant impact on

student learning and behaviors. Therefore, it is important for interventions to be culturally

relevant so teachers and collaborative teams can implement Positive Behavior Interventions and

Supports (Bryan et al., 2012). As reported by Haight and Gibson (2013), many caregivers in

their study viewed suspensions as racially problematic and noted some caregivers explicitly

pointed to school staff members' lack of cultural understanding.

According to Walker and Shinn (2002) Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports secondary interventions target a small group of at-risk students who require more specific needs while tertiary level interventions are more individualized for students exhibiting a more severe behavior and normally lead to the student needing a functional behavior assessment. A secondary intervention used with in the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports framework is Check-in/Check-out (CICO) it is one of the most commonly utilized and well-established interventions (Horner et al., 2010). CICO is appropriate for students who continually engage low level disruptive behavior after primary supports have been implemented and who would benefit from extra structures and routines (Crone, Hawken, & Horner, 2010). CICO provides students the opportunity to check-in and check-out with an adult. According to Crone et al. (2010) CICO allows a student to meet with an adult at the beginning and end of the school day to evaluation the students daily performance while prompting positive and effective adult-student interactions, consistency, frequent feedback, and positive reinforcement. Effective adult-student interactions is a component of culturally relevant teaching and pedagogy.

Flannery, Fenning, Kato and McIntosh (2014) found a correlation between the implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports with fidelity and a decreased rate of office discipline referrals (Flannery et al., 2014). A school's climate and learning environment have a significant impact on student behaviors and academic achievement. Adams, Horner, and Sugai (2000) reported schools implementing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports with fidelity showed a 20% - 60% reduction in office discipline referrals. Skiba and Sprague (2006) also linked Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports with improved perceptions of school climate and academic outcomes.

Bryan et al. (2012) stated it is important that disciplinary interventions are undergirded with cultural competence on the part of teachers and collaborative teams that implement Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. If students receive an intervention practice like Restorative Justice after being referred to the office to manage discipline problems the student is less likely to experience an out-of-school suspension (Anyon et al., 2014). Administrators should consider these practices in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population to address the disproportionate discipline of African American males.

Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice is broadly defined as an approach to discipline that engages all parties in a balanced practice that brings together all people impacted by an issue or behavior (González, 2012). According to Zehr (2015), Restorative Justice practices focus on the development of values that include building and strengthening relationships, showing respect, taking responsibility, repairing harm, and restoration. Three questions are asked during the practice of restorative justice: what was the harm caused to both the individual and school community; who is responsible for causing them harm and making things right; and, how can the harm be repaired and relationships restored. Restorative Justice Programs offer alternatives to standard behavioral approaches in schools (Zehr, 2015). However, this practice requires dialogue between two or more individuals or a group. The Anyon et al. (2014) study yielded that restorative practices have potential as an inclusive strategy to improve school discipline outcomes without excluding students from the classroom.

Zehr (2015) suggested there are three pillars of Restorative Justice 1) Restorative Justice focuses on crime done to individuals and communities; 2) harm to victims, offenders, and the community are in need of healing; 3) wrongs and offenses to victims means that offenders must

be held accountable and responsible through restorative discipline alternatives. The Restorative Justice methods help to foster community, establish and renew relationships, and create a culture to improve academic achievement and school climate (Jain, Bassey, Brown, & Preety, 2014). Restorative Justice has three main goals of accountability, community safety, and competency development (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005). Restorative Justice practices provide opportunities for wrongdoers to be accountable to those they have harmed and enables them to repair the harm and be reintegrated back into the community.

According to Amstutz and Mullet (2005), Restorative Justice practices seek to address community concerns between and among people who experience harm and conflict. As Gonzales (2006) explained, Restorative Justice practices focus on establishing safe school environments via responsive, reintegrated, restorative approaches, and not punitive measures. Gonzales study concluded that there was an improvement in school attendance, punctuality, office referrals and OSS when implementation of a restorative program occurred. Moreover, Gonzalez (2012) found a 50% reduction in period absences, a 60% reduction in punctuality and a 90% reduction in OSS and office referrals. A correlation between restorative practices and academic outcomes was found (Gonzalez, 2012). Gonzalez (2012) also identified an improvement in school attendance, office referrals, punctuality, and OSS upon the implementation of the restorative program. A decrease in failing grades was noted following the implementation of restorative practices. Gonzalez (2012) reported 30% of the students enrolled in Restorative Justice Programs decreased their failing grades by more than half, and 31% experienced a 64% decrease in absences. A decrease in OSS and office referrals 20% of the sample experienced a decrease of 64% in office referrals and 13% had an 88% decrease in out-of-school suspensions (Gonzalez, 2015).

Restorative Justice practices in schools can decrease suspension rates and lower racially disproportionate discipline (Skiba & Peterson, 1999).

> When we rely on rules rather than relationships to guide our responses to harm, everyone loses. Families view the school as uncaring and may contribute less to the school. Victims feel helpless and abused and may invest less in their schoolwork. Bystanders are less likely to say what they saw because nothing changes in the end. Educators and administrators are frustrated because they feel they only have limited options. Wrongdoers blame their victims, and when someone eventually holds them accountable, they do not understand their responsibility or the need to be accountable. (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005, p. 42).

Participation of all stakeholders is required when addressing discipline using Restorative Justice practices. As stated by Zehr (2015), all involved work collaboratively to identify and address harms, needs, and obligations to heal and make things right as possible. Collaboration creates the opportunity for distributed leadership to occur between stakeholders to achieve the common goal of using Restorative Justice to address discipline.

Chapter Summary

The literature detailed within this chapter is an overview of the racial and ethnic disparities as they relate to the disproportionate discipline of African American males. Disproportionality is prevalent within the United State and research suggests that African American students receive disciplinary action more frequently than Caucasian peers. Implementing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and Restorative Justice approach can assist in addressing the disparities in school discipline of African American males. This would impact students, teachers, educational leaders, parents, and

other community stakeholders. It yields an opportunity to develop and create a school climate

that is positive to support the needs of students. With successful implementation, the possibility

of improved school culture, reduction in exclusionary discipline of students, and a decrease in

the discipline gap could possibly occur and interrupt the perpetuation of social and educational

inequalities within the school community. Non-exclusionary outcomes allow students to remain

in school and not miss instructional time (Steinberg & Lacoe, 2017). The next chapter will

describe these practices relative to the researchers study on the reported practices by school

leaders in providing equitable discipline across student populations.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

School discipline has garnered recent attention in national reports issued by the U.S.

Departments of Education and Justice (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). In 2014 the U.S.

Department of Education and Justice released a document in response to discipline data showing

that African American students were subject to more frequent and severe disciplinary actions

than other subgroups. This is a problem as out-of-school suspensions are associated with low

academic achievement, poor attendance and juvenile crime leading to what has been called the

"school-to-prison pipeline" (Darensbourg et al., 2010). Gregory, Skiba, and Noguera (2010)

found that suspensions are associated with lower educational achievement and have been

implicated in the racial achievement gap. Exclusionary discipline practices affect a variety of

school and student outcomes, including inequality of educational opportunities, experiences,

school climate, student engagement, as well as racial disparities in college enrollment and

completion rates (Gregory et al., 2010; Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams., 2014; Skiba, Chung, et

al., 2014) .

The disproportionate representation of African American students in out-of-school

suspension and expulsion appears to have increased in the last 30 years (Losen & Skiba, 2010).

Moreover, while boys receive more disciplinary actions than girls, more African American male

students are suspended from school for disruption than any other subgroup. According to Tatum

(2004), African American children who receive suspensions may miss academic content as well

as other crucial educational and social opportunities. Researchers have provided an overview of

the relationship between school exclusion and school-to-prison pipeline and noted these issues

are systemic, they affect African American students at a disproportionate rate, and they have increased long-term negative outcomes for students (Skiba et al., 2014).

The purpose of the study was to explore practices elementary school leaders report using to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population. It is anticipated that the results of this study may be used to inform future direction in addressing discipline of African American males at an elementary level regarding implementation of practices such as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Intervention Systems, and Restorative Justice practices. The researcher also examined the links between the reported disciplinary practices used and its effectiveness in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population.

Included in this chapter are descriptions of the research design, population, determination of the sample, and sampling of the schools studied. Instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and report of the findings are also provided.

Research Design

The researcher explored elementary school leaders' self-reported practices used to address discipline of African American males. A mixed-methods research design was used to complete this study using quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to Creswell (2014), quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship between variables. This study was conducted in rural school districts located in the Northeast region of Georgia. Data were collected to determine practices that are reported by elementary school leaders to address discipline and the correlations of the effectiveness of these strategies on discipline. As Leavy (2017) indicated surveys can be administered online, collect a wide range of data, provide participants with anonymity because they allow the participants to respond quickly

and confidentially, and provide the researcher the opportunity to collect and analyze data in a timely manner (Leavy, 2017).

Collection of data from open-ended questions is a qualitative method approach. According to Creswell (2014) qualitative data tend to be open-ended without predetermined responses while quantitative data usually include closed-ended responses such as found on questionnaires. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003), open-ended questions give participants an opportunity to respond freely. Open-ended questions collect detailed views from participants to help explain quantitative data. Collecting both closed-ended quantitative data and open-ended qualitative data proves advantageous (Creswell, 2014). Open-ended questions were utilized to provide participants the opportunity to share personal experiences about practices they believed were least or most effective in providing equitable discipline across student populations. The use of open-ended questions provided the researcher with an opportunity to gather additional data and identify themes based on the reported practices from elementary school leaders.

To better understand discipline practices used to address behavior, it is essential to begin research by posing questions to administrators that may provide insight about the types of strategies used to address disproportionate discipline of African American male students in the elementary school setting. Therefore, the research questions for this study were the following:

1. What practices do elementary school leaders report are most effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?

2. What practices do elementary school leaders report are used most frequently to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population?

3. What practices do elementary school leaders report are least effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?

4. What practices do elementary school leaders report are used least frequently to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population?

Population, Sample and Sampling

Participants in this study were selected from a list of elementary school leaders in the Northeast Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) region of a southeastern state, which includes 64 elementary schools. The participants were selected based upon their designation as either a principal or assistant principal. Both administrators at each elementary school in the target population were recruited to participate in the research study. After the principal and assistant principal from each school were identified, their electronic mail addresses were obtained from using the Northeast RESA and the schools websites. The researcher emailed a letter of recruitment to all school administrators and provided a letter of consent to eligible administrators to participate in the survey. The sample was drawn from the target population of 128 elementary school administrators.

As the researcher qualifies as an eligible participant, it is noted that she will not be included in the possible survey participants. For this investigation, a convenience sample of the Northeast (RESA) region was identified as the sampling approach. Convenience sampling is a technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher (Leavy, 2017). This sampling technique was selected due to the researcher's knowledge of discipline disproportionality in the Northeast RESA. The participants in this study are current elementary school leaders who abide by the Georgia Department of Education expectations of student discipline reporting.

To achieve a reasonable return rate, every elementary school located within the 13 districts in the Northeast RESA were included. School leaders whose job responsibilities are to

address discipline primarily were asked to respond to the survey. It should be noted that for this study, only public elementary school administrators were eligible to complete the survey.

Instrumentation

The instrument for this study was created by the researcher using the review of literature presented in chapter two, from which the researcher identified three recurring discipline practices. Modeling the format of the Effective Behavior Support Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) (Horner et al., 2004), Restorative Interventions School-Wide Implementation Staff School Climate Survey (Hendry, 2009), and School Self-Assessment for Culturally Responsive Practice (Artiles, Brown, Klingner, & Richard, 2005), the researcher created the survey to consist of 48 multiple choice questions and two open-ended questions for this study. The first open-ended question was, "List one practice you use with the most frequency when students are sent to you after a disciplinary event. How is this practice used differently for different students? How is it effective in providing equitable discipline?" The second open-ended question was, "Which current disciplinary framework do you use with the least frequency? Please provide one reason this is the practice you use with the least frequency." Respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire, which was created using Qualtrics and sent by email. The survey could be completed within 30 minutes and was comprised of 50 total questions. Web-based surveys are popular, can gather extensive data quickly, and allow effective and economical surveying of participants (Creswell, 2014). However, surveys can be overlooked in e-mail or ignored by potential respondents, resulting in low response rates from e-mail and web-based surveys (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, follow-up reminder notices for recruitment were sent to all participants who had not completed the survey two weeks following the initial email and additional reminders for a total of 5 reminders from July 11, 2019 through August 17, 2019.

The Effective Behavior Support SAS is a long-standing instrument for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports problem solving. According to Solomon, Schutte, and Tobin (2015) the SAS was developed for the purpose of measuring perceived Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports fidelity. The SAS is organized into four subscales totaling 46 questions: School-Wide Systems (SWS), Non Classroom Setting Systems (NCSS), Classroom Systems (CS), and Individual Student Systems (ISS). Horner et al. (2004) found the SAS has sound content validity and preliminary evidence for convergent criterion validity in measuring Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports fidelity. For the purpose of this study, the SAS number of question items were modified to only include School-Wide Systems feature items. These survey items selected directly correlated with measuring the School-Wide Systems of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports implementation. The researcher used 14 of the 18 SAS feature items that directly measured school-wide systems in place for students, teachers, and administrators. The SAS items that were not included focused on non-classroom settings, classroom settings, and individual student systems. Participants in the study were asked to respond to the 14 SWS feature items located in the survey. The researcher further adapted the survey by utilizing a different Likert scale. In order to ensure results could easily be quantified, the scale was adapted to reflect a four-point Likert scale where a "1" indicated that no such practices was used and a "4" indicated that the practice was almost always used. The results from these adaptations resulted in the 14-item version of the SAS instrument utilized during the study (see Appendix D).

Restorative Interventions School-Wide Implementation Staff School Climate Survey is an assessment that assists practitioners and schools to complete a more in-depth evaluation of the use of Restorative Practice in schools (Hendry, 2009). The Staff School Climate Survey (SSCS) is part of the Restorative Interventions Implementation Tool Kit and is comprised of a variety of

checklists, readiness assessments, and surveys. When considering surveys the researcher

determined the feature items on the staff school climate survey would be used for this study.

Survey items that were focused on bullying and teacher training were de-selected because they

were not directly related to school leaders or school climate. The number of question items were

modified to only include 13 of the 17 Likert feature items that directly measured school climate

on addressing discipline. Participants in the study were asked to respond to the 13 of the

Restorative Interventions School-Wide Implementation SSCS feature items located in the

survey. The researcher further adapted the survey to develop a new Likert scale. In order to

ensure results could easily be quantified, the scale was adapted to reflect a four-point Likert scale

where a "1" indicated that no such practices was used and a "4" indicated that the practice was

almost always used. The results from these adaptations resulted in the 13-item version of the

SSCS instrument utilized during the study (see Appendix D). During analysis of the data, it will

be important to note that three questions in the SSCS are reverse-scored, meaning that for some

questions the ideal response will reflect a four-point Likert scale where a "4" indicated that no

such practices was used and a "1" indicated that the practice was almost always used.

    The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt) has

framed a culturally responsive survey framework that is multi-dimensional. The self-assessment

guide provides a framework across five domains relevant to addressing the needs of culturally

and linguistically diverse backgrounds: School Governance, Organization Policy, and Climate,

Family Involvement, Curriculum, Organization of Leader, and Special Education Referral

Process and Programs. Because the original School Self-Assessment for Culturally Responsive

Practice survey contained five domains the researcher decreased the number of domains to use in

the study. The researcher modified the survey and used 14 questions located in the school

governance, organization, policy, and climate domain and organization of learning domain that pertained to school-wide culturally responsive practices. The question items focused on school leaders, school systems organization, and school climate. The de-selection of survey items that focused on Family Involvement, Curriculum, Organization of Leader, and Special Education Referral Process and Programs were not aligned to the school-wide system organization items. The researcher further adapted the survey to modify the Likert scale in order to ensure results could easily be quantified, the scale was adapted to reflect a four-point Likert scale where a "1" indicated that no such practices was used and a "4" indicated that the practice was almost always used. The results from these adaptations resulted in the 14-item version of the School Self-Assessment for Culturally Responsive Practice instrument utilized during the study (see Appendix D).

A pilot study of the survey was included in this study. The purpose of completing a pilot study is to provide information and reveal unanticipated problems with question wording and instructions of the survey. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) described a pilot study as a small-scale preliminary investigation in order to create and test the measures or procedures that will be used in a research study. This helps to determine if the survey participants understand the question and provide correct responses. These administrators were selected from three secondary administrators within one of the identified districts to complete the pilot study and were not included in the study. For each survey item, participants were asked to respond to each question but also specify whether or not each item should be retained, changed, or deleted and provide feedback about poorly worded questions, responses that do not make sense, or if the survey takes an excessive amount of time to complete the instrument. The recommendation from the principals were used to develop the final version of the survey instrument used for the

dissertation phase of this study, entitled *Discipline Practices Survey* (see Appendix E). The survey protocol was conducted with principals familiar with implementing practices to address discipline across student populations. Once completed, the principals concluded that the protocol was a valid format for measuring the reported frequency and effectiveness of practices used by elementary school leaders.

Validity and Reliability

A variety of practices used to address discipline were embedded in the research survey to increase accuracy of elementary school leaders' reported practices used to provide equitable discipline across student population. The researcher used fixed Likert choice responses in the survey. In order to maintain reliability in this research study, the survey protocol was followed when disseminating the survey. For the survey protocol to be relevant, it needed to generate information that provided answers to the research questions. To ensure this was possible, the survey protocol was carefully examined by a content specialist on the researcher's doctoral committee to establish content validity prior to its implementation.

Data were collected using a survey, open-ended questions, and review of district suspension data. To address validity, the researchers analyzed the opened-questions that were reported by participants to identify ideas, concepts, and themes from the data to be coded. The coding process is used to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis (Creswell, 2014). Conducting this process allowed the researcher to triangulate data sources to identify themes and validate findings in the study. Triangulation of data collection and analysis was used, which strengthens reliability as well as internal validity. It is described as the use of more than two methods of analyzing the same set of data for validation purposes (Leavy, 2017).

Procedures

The purpose of this study was to explore practices Elementary School Leaders' report using to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population. The researcher also examined the frequency of reported practices that were most and least effective. The study took place in the Northeast RESA region of a southeastern state, which includes 13 school districts and is comprised of 64 elementary schools.

The participants in the study were selected based upon their designation as either a principal or assistant principal within designated Northeast RESA. If appropriate, both administrators at a single school were invited to participate in the survey; however, the survey was designed to collect anonymous data. After the principal and assistant principal from each school were identified, their electronic mail addresses were obtained from a publicly available resource via Northeast RESA and district websites.

Prior to collecting data for the study, the researcher obtained permission to conduct research from the Institutional Review Board of Georgia Southern University (see Appendix A). The researcher emailed a letter of recruitment to the target population of 128 school administrators, requesting their participation in the study via Qualtrics. The invitation informed the potential participant that the survey was anonymous and no school identifiers would be utilized in the study. Passive consent was utilized; that is by completing the survey, participants gave consent. The sample was drawn from all possible administrators totaling a population of 128. A follow-up reminder notice for recruitment was sent to all participants who had not completed the survey two weeks following the initial email. Additional responses from participants were still needed following the notice, promoting an additional reminder email that was sent one week later. The researcher complied with Georgia Southern University, federal,

state, and school district guidelines when conducting research. The researcher received

permission from all involved parties and met the mandatory requirements of the Georgia

Southern University Institutional Review Board approval for the designated study.

Data Collection

The researcher submitted an application request for approval by the Institutional Review

Board of the Georgia Southern University. Prior to collecting data for the study, the researcher

obtained permission to conduct research from the Institutional Review Board of the sponsoring

university (see Appendix A). Following permission to begin research, the researcher invited

participants to participate in the study using an initial recruitment email (see Appendix B) and

obtained passive consent from participants (see Appendix C). The Northeast RESA and school

district website were utilized to obtain the email addresses of school leaders.

A cover letter detailing the purpose of the study was embedded into the survey which was

sent to building leaders via Qualtrics email. The passive consent informed the participant that the

survey was anonymous and no school identifiers such as: school name, race and ethnicity

demographics, and school gender demographics were recorded in the study. To assist in the

collection of data in this study, a survey protocol was developed prior to the implementation of

the study (see Appendix D). The survey protocol included a table of the questions related to

demographics, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and

Restorative Justice. The survey protocol was reviewed by a professor on the researcher's doctoral

committee to establish the content validity. A pilot test by the researcher was completed with

three secondary principals to receive recommendations on any necessary adjustments prior to the

data collection process. For each survey item, participants were asked to respond to each

question but also specify whether or not each item should be retained, changed, or deleted and

provide feedback about poorly worded questions, responses that do not make sense, or if the survey takes an excessive amount of time to complete the instrument. The recommendation from the principals were used to develop the final version of the survey instrument used for the dissertation phase of this study, entitled *Discipline Practices Survey* (see Appendix E). The survey would take approximately 30 minutes to answer seven demographic multiple choice questions, 41 discipline practices multiple choice questions, and two open-ended questions, and submit (see Appendix E).

In order to triangulate the data, a variety of sources were used: principal and assistant principals' surveys, review of district suspension data, and two open-ended questions. Data were collected using a survey comprised of questions about a variety of potential discipline practices that could be reported by principals and assistant principals as being most or least effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population. The varied data sources provided information aligned to the research questions guiding this study. The primary data source for this study was the survey and secondary data source was open ended questions. The open-ended questions in this study provided the participants the opportunity to share their experiences and use of practices to address discipline. Researchers tend to use open-ended questions so that the participants in the study can share their views (Creswell, 2014). Follow-up recruitment emails were sent two weeks and four weeks following the initial recruitment email (see Appendix F). Due to low response rates additional reminders were sent to participants during an eight-week period. Because participation in the survey was anonymous and sent via Qualtrics, reminders only went to individuals who had not completed the survey.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the survey demographic data. The data collected from the survey were prepared and entered in the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) program. SPSS is a program that helps to organize and analyze data. Prior to completing statistical data analyses a report showing numbers of respondents to the survey was completed. According to Creswell (2014), "In some quantitative projects, the analysis stops with descriptive analysis, especially if the number of participants is too small for more advanced, inferential analysis" (p. 163). Descriptive analysis is indicated by the means, standard deviations, and range of scores for variables (Creswell, 2014).

Descriptive survey data were entered into SPSS to identify and analyze the frequency and mean of questions related to administrative self-reported practices. The categories Restorative Justice, Culturally Relevant, and Positive Behavior Interventions and Support survey items were numerical ranked from greatest to least mean. A graphical representation of each category was created to represent the ranking order of survey items. The Likert scale ranking order of the survey items responses are the following: Almost Always (4), Frequently (3), Sometimes (2), and No Such Practice Used (1). However, three questions in the Restorative Justice category are in reverse order. The graphical representation of means provides data on the most and least frequently used practice, and how the practices are aligned to one another.

A thematic analysis of meaning regarding the open-ended questions in this study was utilized to analyze the data collected about the reported practices used by school leaders to be most or least effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population. Thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). This form of analysis allowed the

researcher to pinpoint, examine, and record themes within data. As noted by Creswell (2014) more general steps include organizing and preparing the data; an initial reading through the information; coding the data; developing from the codes a description and thematic analysis; using computer programs; representing the findings in tables and figures; and interpreting the findings.

The researcher analyzed the open-ended questions, looking at common practices and words used in participants responses. After studying the participant's responses and becoming familiar with the data, the researcher was able to generate codes and align those codes to themes. According to Creswell (2014) coding is the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text and assigning a word or phrase to the segment in order to develop a general sense of it. The process of coding can be completed by using a computer based data analysis program or by hand. Creswell (2014) noted that hand coding is a laborious and time consuming process, even for data from a few individuals. However, the researcher determined that hand coding would be appropriate for data analysis. Creating codes using the hand coding process provided a structure and smooth transition between the data coding and analysis phase.

Following the generation of codes that identified important features of the data, the researcher examined the codes to identify themes of meaning and its alignment to the research questions and literature. The coding process assisted in applying the theme to the data to determine if a narrative about the data answers the research questions. In qualitative research, the impact of this process is to aggregate data into a small number of themes, something like five to seven themes (Creswell, 2014). For this study the researcher found five themes to capture the data. Themes were identified across data sets, provided descriptions of a phenomenon, and were linked to specific research questions. This provided data on which practices Elementary School

Leaders' identify that are most effective and are least effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population. Table 1 reflects the research crosswalk between the research questions, type of questions, number of questions, and the survey item number. Additional tables of the data collected and the themes that emerged from the analysis can be found in Chapter 4.

Table 1

Research Cross Walk

Research Questions	Type of Question	Number of Questions	Survey Item Number
	Demographic Questions	7	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
1. What practices do Elementary School Leaders report are used most frequently to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population?	Restorative Justice Questions	13	8, 9, 10, 11, 23, 24, 31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 43, 44
2. What practices do Elementary School Leaders report are used least frequently to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population?	Culturally Relevant Questions	14	12, 13, 16, 17, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30, 40, 41, 42, 47, 48
	Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Questions	14	14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 33, 34, 38, 39, 45, 46
3. What practices do Elementary School Leaders report are most effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?	Open-ended Question	1	49
4. What practices do Elementary School Leaders report are least effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?	Open-ended Question	1	50

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this research study was to explore practices reportedly used by Elementary School Leaders' in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population. A quantitative design with a survey method was implemented for this research. Utilizing this method provided a better understanding of the research problem. This study was intended to provide practitioners with information that may prove useful to school administrators in identifying practices that have been reported to be most and least effective in providing equitable discipline across student populations. The data provided school leaders with information about practices and techniques they have or have not attempted in their practice to address discipline. This information can help to guide school leaders in next steps for professional development to grow in the area of non-exclusionary discipline practices. This chapter provides a discussion of the methodology used in this study. The researcher described the identification of the participants, sample, instrument, and the methods for data collection and analysis. Chapter four will summarize the results, and Chapter five will present conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

African American students are disproportionately suspended from school when compared to other ethnic groups, particularly their Caucasian counterparts (Butler et al., 2012; Noguera, 2003; Gregory, et al., 2010). Chapter four presents the findings of this mixed-method study of the practices reportedly used by elementary school leaders to provide equitable discipline across student populations. The chapter begins with an examination of the demographics of the participants and their reported practices to address discipline. Then a data analyses of the participants' responses are noted to address the study's four research questions.

Response Rate

The survey was electronically sent via Qualtrics to 128 elementary principals and assistant principals located in the Northeast RESA, whose contact information was retrieved within a public domain, between June 19, 2019 and August 17, 2019. The responses totaled 39, which resulted in an initial response rate of 30%. Fincham (2008) indicated e-mail response rates may only reach an approximate 25% to 30%. The survey data were screened by the researcher and determined that seven respondents' surveys were in progress and not completed and thus removed from the sample. A reminder email was sent to participants who had not completed the survey. After five follow-up emails were sent, seven participants had still not completed the survey and their partial responses were removed from consideration. Follow-up emails were sent from July 11, 2019 through August 17, 2019. Therefore, the final data set included 32/128 administrators resulting in a response rate of 25%.

Demographics

The first participants provided personal and school level demographic information in the first section of the survey. The demographic survey section included items related to gender, administrative roles, years of serving in administrative roles, school size, and school identification as being disproportionate in discipline the past three years. Descriptive analyses were conducted to examine the demographic information provided by the participants. Table 2 provides information regarding the administrative role and gender of the participants. Forty-seven percent (n=15) of the participants were principals and 53% (n=17) of the participants were assistant principals. Eighty-one percent identified (n=26) as female and 19% (n=6) of the participants identified as male.

Table 2

Frequency of Participants by Administrative Role and Gender (N=32)

	N	%
Administrative Role		
Principal	15	46.9
Assistant Principal	17	53.1
Total	32	100
Gender		
Male	6	18.8
Female	26	81.2
Total	32	100

Information related to the participants' years of administrative experience in education is presented in Table 3. Of the 32 participants, 38% (n=12) listed their years of experiences as five years or fewer. Thirty-one percent (n=10) of participants listed their years of experiences as six to ten years and 31% (n=10) were 11 or more years of administrative experience.

Table 3

Frequency of Participants by Years of Administrative Experience (N=32)

	N	%
Years of Administrative Experience		
0 - 5 years	12	37.5
6 - 10 years	10	31.2
11 or more years	10	31.2
Total	32	100

Table 4 provides information regarding the participants' school size. The majority of participants 90.6% (n= 29) were from medium-sized schools (351 to 550 students enrolled) and large-sized schools (551 or more students enrolled). The largest number of participants worked at medium schools (50.0%) followed by large schools (40.6%) and lastly small schools (9.4%). The data reflected that 50% of school leaders reported yes for the district having a disproportionate discipline status in the last three to five years and 12.5 % reported no disproportionate discipline status. However, school leaders (n=12) reporting indicated they were not aware of the school's disproportionate discipline status at 37.5%.

Table 4

Frequency of Participants School Size and Disproportionality (N=32)

		N	%
School Size			
Small (350 or fewer students enrolled)		3	9.4
Medium (351 to 550 students enrolled)		16	50.0
Large (551 or more students enrolled)		13	40.6
	Total	32	100
Schools in District Identified as Disproportionate in Discipline			
Yes		16	50
No		4	12.5
Not Aware		12	37.5
	Total	32	100

Note. Schools in a district were identified by survey respondents as disproportionate in the last three to five years. Schools were identified as disciplining African American males disproportionately compared to other race groups

Reported Practice Statistics

The researcher examined Elementary School Leaders reported practices used to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population. The research was guided by the following research questions:

1. What practices do elementary school leaders report are most effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?

2. What practices do elementary school leaders report are used most frequently to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population?

3. What practices do elementary school leaders report are least effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?

4. What practices do elementary school leaders report are used least frequently to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population?

Table 5 represents the ranked mean order of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, the mean scores ranged from 2.31 to 3.81. The greatest mean on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy was 3.81 with a standard deviation of 0.40; therefore, on average, respondents scored exemplifying a positive attitude towards the school, teachers, students, and families highest. The data also reflect numerous low average means of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy practices reportedly used to provide equitable discipline across student populations. This suggests that there is an inconsistency in the use of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy as 50% of the practices for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy had means of 2.90 or below. The standard deviation has a variation between 0.40 and 0.90 representing the standard deviation value dispersed over a wide range of mean values. This indicated the respondent's data was inconsistent in the use of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy to provide equitable discipline across student population.

Table 5

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Descriptive Statistics (in Descending Order)

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Survey Questions	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q13: Administration exemplifies a positive attitude towards the school, teachers, students, and families.	3.81	0.40
Q22: Administration instills an ethic of care, respect, and Responsibility.	3.66	0.60
Q21: Administration creates a school culture in which students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds feel they are listened to, their opinions valued, and they are involved in decision-making.	3.50	0.67
Q29: Administration works collaboratively with all the members of the school community to ensure equitable treatment for all students	3.22	0.61
Q41: Classroom rules and procedures are written and explained in a language that is clear to students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.	3.16	0.88
Q12: Administration, faculty, and support personnel remain informed about current school policies and reforms that impact the delivery of services to students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.	3.06	0.84
Q28: Administration, faculty, and support personnel are well informed of the influence of culture, language, and ethnicity on school achievement.	3.06	0.67
Q47: Administrators, teachers, and support personnel are knowledgeable about differences in cultural practices that might impact student behavior.	2.97	0.90
Q40: Administrators, teachers, and support personnel discipline students with a sensitivity towards students' cultural and linguistic differences.	2.91	0.89
Q17: Students are taught school-sanctioned behaviors, particularly as they might conflict with culturally specific behaviors.	2.84	0.88
Q30: Administration provides opportunities for professional development of faculty and support personnel on issues of cultural, language, and ethnic diversity.	2.72	0.81

Q48: Teachers are knowledgeable about certain behaviors that are consistent with students' cultural background so as not to consider them deviant.	2.66	0.75
Q16: Teachers utilize resource persons belonging to or familiar with a students' cultural and linguistic background to assist in planning behavioral interventions.	2.56	0.98
Q42: Students are made aware of behaviors that might be culturally specific so they can learn how to interact appropriately with students from cultures other than their own.	2.31	0.86

Note: 1=No such practice used, 2 =Sometimes, 3=Frequently, 4=Almost always

For Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, the mean scores ranged from 2.81 to 3.88 (see Table 6). The greatest mean was 3.88 with a standard deviation of 0.42; therefore, on average, respondents reported school administrators are an active participant on the behavior support team. This Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports practice is promising since 83% of the schools have participated in some form of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports training and identifies as using Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports strategies. However, the standard deviations for the ranked mean values have a high variability of 1.05.

Table 6

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Descriptive Statistics (in Descending Order)

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Survey Questions	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q38: School administrator is an active participant on the behavior support team.	3.88	0.42
Q18: A small number (e.g. 3-5) of positively & clearly stated student expectations or rules are defined.	3.69	0.74
Q46: A team exists for behavior support planning & problem solving.	3.66	0.70
Q33: School has formal strategies for informing families about expected student behaviors at school.	3.59	0.71
Q45: Options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs.	3.56	0.56
Q14: All staff are involved directly and/or indirectly in school-wide interventions.	3.41	0.98
Q25: Problem behaviors (failure to meet expected student behaviors) are defined clearly.	3.38	0.94
Q27: Distinctions between office v. classroom managed problem behaviors are clear.	3.38	0.75
Q19: Expected student behaviors are taught directly.	3.38	0.79
Q39: Data on problem behavior patterns are collected, summarized, and reported to teams and faculty for active decision-making on a regular basis (e.g. monthly).	3.19	1.03
Q20: Expected student behaviors are rewarded regularly.	3.19	0.78
Q26: Consequences for problem behaviors are defined clearly.	3.03	0.90
Q34 School-wide behavior support team has a budget for (a) teaching students, (b) on-going rewards, and (c) annual staff planning.	2.94	1.05
Q15: The school team has access to on-going training and support from district personnel.	2.81	0.90

Note: 1=No such practice used, 2 =Sometimes, 3=Frequently, 4=Almost always

The data in Table 7 represents the mean ranked scores of the reported use of Restorative Justice practice in providing equitable discipline. Respondents of this study reportedly used Restorative Justice practices at more consistent frequency than Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports or Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. The greatest mean identified for Restorative Justice was 3.81. The variability of the standard deviation values ranged from 0.40 through 0.92.

Table 7

Restorative Justice Descriptive Statistics (in Descending Order)

Restorative Justice Survey Questions	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q35: It is important that the person who has caused harm is given support to change their behavior.	3.81	0.40
Q11: Administrators are allowed to contribute to solving school-based behavioral problems that affect them	3.75	0.44
Q36: When someone causes harm, they should be allowed to make amends.	3.72	0.46
Q44: Students and staff communicate to each other in a respectful way.	3.53	0.51
Q32: When students, staff and/or parents are in conflict, everyone's views are listened to.	3.50	0.57
Q31: Within this school, disagreements are normally resolved effectively.	3.44	0.50
Q43: Students are given opportunities to make amends if they are responsible for causing harm.	3.34	0.75
Q37: The students and their parents/caregivers are invited to contribute to resolving school-based behavioral problems that affect them.	3.28	0.73
Q24: When someone does something harmful, those involved help to decide how similar incidents could be avoided in the future.	3.06	0.84
Q23: When a student causes harm, the main response by the school is a sanction or punishment	2.53	0.92

Note: 1=No such practice used, 2 =Sometimes, 3=Frequently, 4=Almost always

Table 8 portrays negatively stated Restorative Justice items which inverted the Likert response order.

Table 8

Inverse Restorative Justice Questions - Descriptive Statistics (in Descending Order)

Restorative Justice Negatively Stated Questions:	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q8: During behavioral meetings with students there is no place for emotions and feelings.	3.22	0.94
Q9: It is best that students who are harmed do not meet with the individual who harmed them.	3.03	0.74
Q10: Students who cause harm to others should be punished.	1.97	0.90

Note: 1= Almost always, 2 = Frequently, 3= Sometimes, 4= No such practice used Restorative Justice

In the next two figures (Figures 1 and 2) the researcher listed questions associated with each category - Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice, - in order of mean scores from the survey on the left side of the graph and the item number across the bottom of the graph.

The data shown in figure 1 below represents the mean response for all survey items and captures the overall Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice practices reportedly used to provide equitable discipline across student populations. The mean of the survey items were plotted to show the most and least frequently used practices reported by elementary leaders where a "4" indicated that the practices were almost always used, "3" indicated that the practices were frequently used, "2" indicated that the practice was sometimes used, and "1" indicated that no such practices was used. The graph reflects error bars, and they represent the standard deviation in Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice reported practices.

In Figure 1 mean and standard deviation data is represented for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and Restorative Justice

(RJ) practices. The Culturally Relevant Pedagogy data shows that leaders report using Culturally Relevant Pedagogy practices at an inconsistent frequency to provide equitable discipline across student population. However, the most frequent practices of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy that was reportedly used is identified as "exemplifying a positive attitude towards the school, teachers, students, and families" with a mean of 3.81 and standard deviation of 0.40. There was a low standard deviation which means most of the participants responses were close to the mean. The mean Likert scores for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy ranged from a low of 2.53 to a high of 3.81. School leaders reportedly used Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports strategies at a more consistent frequency. The most frequent strategy reportedly used of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports has a mean of 3.88 and standard deviation of 0.42. The low standard deviation means most of the participants responses were close to the mean. This strategy was identified as "options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs." The mean Likert scores for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports ranged from a low of 2.81 to a high of 3.88. School leaders reported using Restorative Justice most frequently in providing equitable discipline. The highest mean score of 3.81 with a standard deviation of 0.40 for Restorative Justice practice read as follows: "It is important that the person who has caused harm is given support to change their behavior." There was a low standard deviation which means most of the participants responses were close to the mean. The mean Likert scores for Restorative Justice ranged from a low of 2.53 to a high of 3.81.
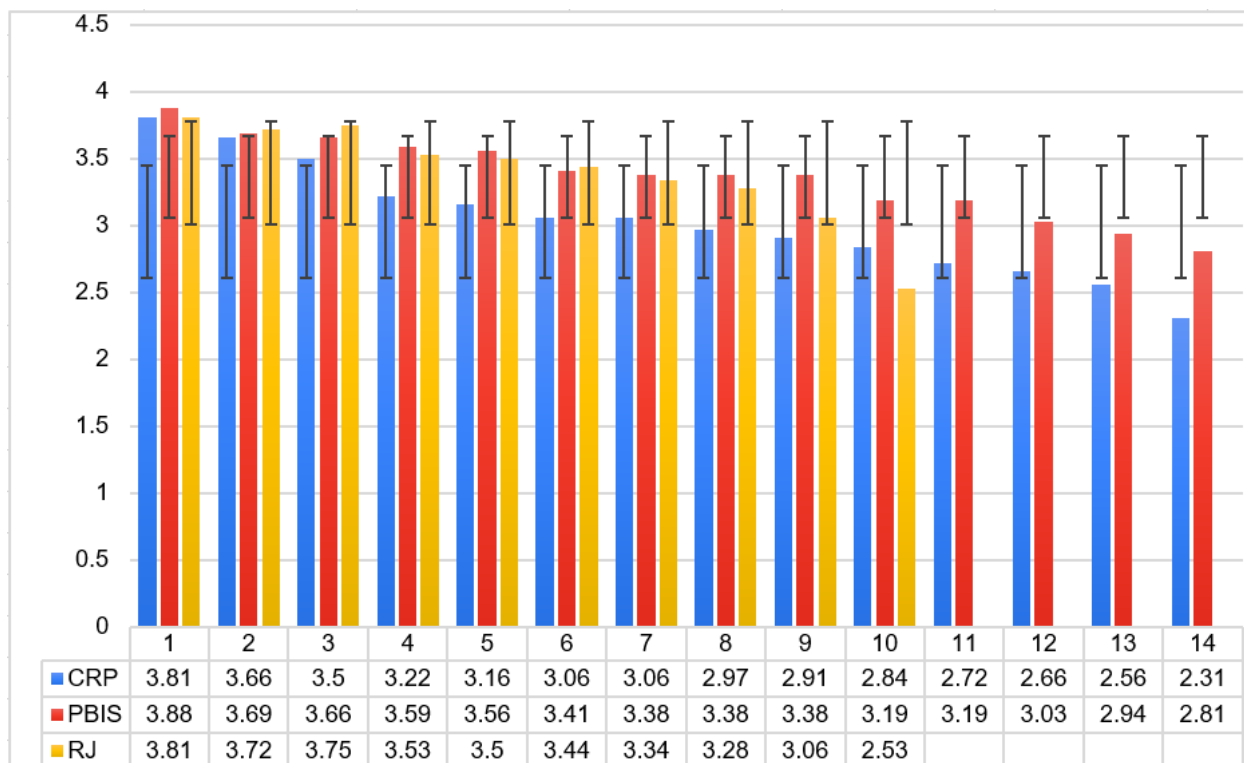
Figure 1. Mean of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice based on respondent's use of reported practices. Error bars represent standard deviation.

The data in figure 2 portrays the mean response of the negatively stated Restorative Justice (RJ) items which inverted the Likert response order where a "1" indicated that the practices were almost always used, "2" indicated that the practices were frequently used, "3" indicated that the practice was sometimes used, and "4" indicates that no such practices was used. The most frequent practices of Restorative Justice that was reportedly used is identified as "students who cause harm to others should be punished" with a mean of 1.97 and standard deviation of 0.90. The high standard deviation means that the participant's responses were more spread out across the mean. This is a big component of Restorative Justice practice that school leaders are not reportedly using. The mean Likert scores for Inverse Restorative Justice ranged from a low of 1.97 to a high of 3.22.
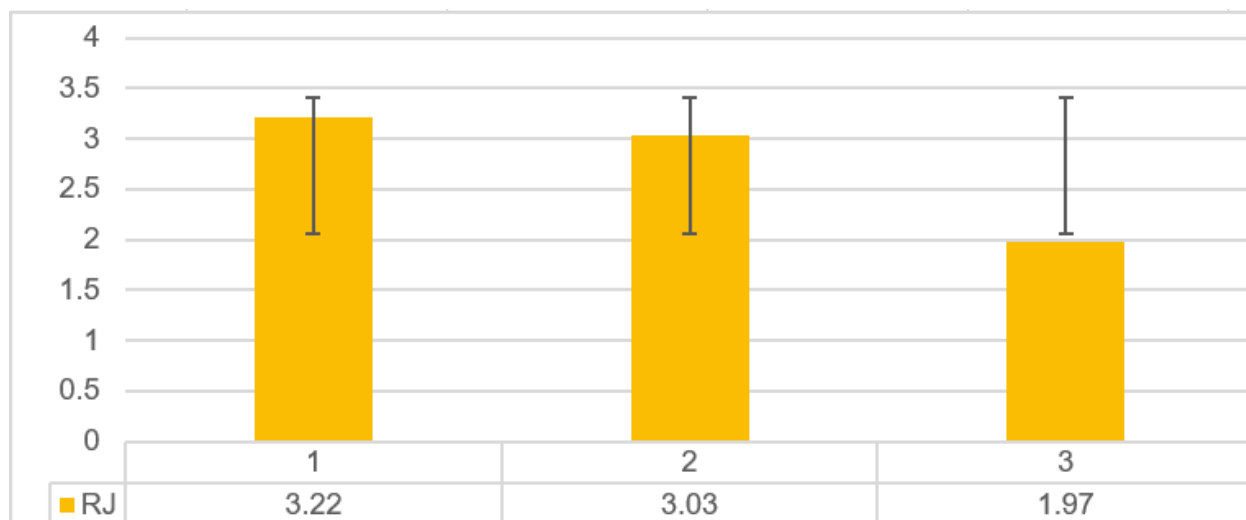
Figure 2. Mean of Inverse Restorative Justice based on respondent's use of reported practices. Error bars represent standard deviation.

As evident in Table 9, leaders' responses to the survey items about Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice revealed there was no great difference in overall mean between the years of experience in an administrative role as it relates to reported practices used to provide equitable discipline across student populations. The mean for administrators with 0-5 years of experience compared to administrators with more than 11 years of experience did have a 0.18 difference between means and 0.32 difference between means for administrators with 6 - 10 years of experience and 11 or more years of experience when reporting usage Culturally Relevant Pedagogy practices.

Table 9

Mean Comparison Data by Years of Experiences

		CRP		PBIS		RJ	
Years of Experience	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
0 - 5 years of experience	12	3.04		3.42		3.40	
6 - 10 years of experience	10	3.19		3.20		3.40	
11 or more years of experience	10	2.86		3.70		3.42	

Note. CRP=Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, PBIS= Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports, RJ=Restorative Justice

Open-Ended Questions

Administrators reported practices used most and least frequently in response to the researcher's open-ended questions. The preliminary phase of thematic data analysis of the open-ended responses required the researcher to code the data. Coding can be done by hand or using computer-assisted software and is comprised of organizing, classifying, and making sense of the data. According to Creswell (2014), the coding process allows the researcher to reduce and classify data by assigning a word or phrase to segments of data. The use of coding allowed the researcher to arrange and link data to find themes among the data. In order to code and interpret the data the researcher identified similar words, topics, and phrases that each respondent stated in their open-ended questions. Using the electronic word journal the researcher noted both the frequency distribution of each word and phrase reportedly used by the respondent. This information was then placed into categories to allow themes to emerge from the data. The researcher linked the initial themes to categories that assisted in answering the open-ended questions. During the next phase the researcher cross-referenced the categories and themes to narrow the theme to eight major emerging themes for both open-ended questions.

The following four themes emerged from the first open-ended question; Communication, Reflection, Time Out, and Teach (see Table 10). These themes emerged from the following questions: "List one practice you use with the most frequency when students are sent to you after a disciplinary event. How is this practice used differently for different students?; and How is it effective in providing equitable discipline?". The themes below are ordered according to the most frequently reported practice first identified through the thematic analysis process.

Table 10

Key Themes of Administrators Most Frequent Disciplinary Practices

	Key Themes (KT)	Abbreviation	Themes
1	Communication	COM	Conference with student Conversation with student Speak with student Talk with student Meet with student Student explains what happened Student explains their actions Due process Student express themselves
2	Reflection	REF	Journaling Write Drawing
3	Time Out	TO	Timeout in office Timeout in another room Cool down
4	Teach	TEA	Modeling Reteach

Respondents indicated that the discipline practices used varied in response to students' age, grade, and severity of incident (see Table 11). The frequency distribution yielded that respondents reported that these practices are effective in providing equitable discipline due to

student reflection of behavior so students can understand what to do next time. These data does not provide a great insight on how it relates to the most frequent practices used after a disciplinary event due to inconsistency of respondents responding to the third part of the first open ended question.

Table 11

Frequency Distribution for Differently Used Disciplinary Practices

Differences	Abbreviation	Frequency
Age/Grade	AG	5
Incident/Severity	IS	10
Reflect	REF	7

The following four themes emerged from the second open-ended question, "Which current disciplinary framework do you use with the least frequency? Please provide one reason this is the practice you use with the least frequency." Suspension, Timeouts/Removals, Corporal Punishment/Paddling, and Conferences with students together (see Table 12). The first theme was out of school suspensions, followed by timeouts, then the use of corporal punishment which included paddling, and lastly conferencing with students together. These themes emerged from the reported practices used least frequently by school leaders. The frequency distribution across the participants responses were suspension (n=16), timeouts and removals (n=3), corporal punishment (n=2), and conferencing with students together (n=2).

Table 12

Key Themes of Administrators Least Frequent Disciplinary Practices

	Key Themes (KT)	Abbreviation	Frequency
1	Suspension	SUS	16
2	Timeouts/Removals	TIM	3
3	Corporal Punishment/ Paddling	COR	2
4	Conferences with students together	STC	2

In Table 13 presents the reasons why practices were used least frequently. The emerging

themes were suspension does not work, students need to be at school, and interrupts class. The

frequency distribution across the participant's responses were suspension does not work (n=6),

students need to be at school (n=5), and interrupts class (n=2).

Table 13

Reasons for Not Using Disciplinary Practices

Reasons	Abbreviation	Frequency
Suspension does not work	SDW	6
Student need to be at school	ATS	5
Interrupts class	ITC	2

Table 14 represents the Northeast RESA suspension trend data over the past five years.

The average suspension rates for the 13 districts over the past five years show an inconsistent

trend pattern although respondents in the study reported suspension as the least frequently used

practice to provide equitable discipline. However, school leader's reported the reasoning on why

the practices of suspension is used the least frequent is because suspension does not work,

students need to be at school, and suspension interrupts the classroom. District E has a dramatic

decrease in suspension rate in 2014 of 14.1% 5.4% in 2017, but showed an increase in to 7.7% in

2018. While other districts suspension rates fluctuates from high to low or low to high.

Table 14

Northeast RESA School Districts Rate of Suspensions: 5-Year Trend

Location	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
District A	4.4%	4.9%	3.9%	4.2%	3.5%
District B	8.6%	8.0%	10.2%	9.3%	9.3%
District C	4.1%	4.5%	4.6%	4.1%	3.0%
District D	5.2%	4.8%	4.1%	4.4%	4.2%
District E	14.1%	9.2%	8.7%	5.4%	7.7%
District F	4.5%	5.0%	4.4%	4.7%	3.6%
District G	8.9%	8.1%	7.9%	6.6%	5.4%
District H	5.6%	5.0%	6.0%	5.2%	6.4%
District I	5.6%	6.2%	5.7%	4.7%	6.1%
District J	1.6%	2.4%	2.3%	1.8%	2.0%
District K	6.1%	5.8%	4.2%	5.4%	4.5%
District L	7.7%	6.4%	7.1%	3.1%	4.0%
District M	5.7%	6.1%	5.5%	5.7%	5.3%
Average of Northeast Georgia RESA Schools Suspension Rates	6.3%	5.9%	5.7%	5.0%	5.0%

Note. Data retrieved from Georgia Appleseed Center for Law & Justice
(https://gaappleseed.org/)

Chapter Summary

The results of this study show there is a range in practices reportedly used by school leaders in providing equitable discipline across student populations. The survey results in conjunction with the open-ended questions allowed certain themes to emerge that are discussed in more depth in Chapter 5. Data analysis revealed there is some variation in the reported frequency of use among Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice in providing equitable discipline. However, little variation in reported practices used based on years of experience in a leadership role.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a summary of the study and conclusions drawn from the data

presented in Chapter 4. It provides a discussion of findings, implications, limitations, and

recommendations for further research. The research approach utilized was mixed-methods and

explored the practices of elementary school leaders use of equitable application of discipline

across the student population. The respondents were administrators at schools that included a

variety of demographics, size, and from a wide range of schools which contained students

enrolled in Pre-K through fifth grade. This study addressed the researcher's concern of the

disproportionate discipline of African American males who are suspended or expelled at a higher

rate than other ethnic counterparts (Butler et al., 2012; Gregory, et al., 2010; Noguera, 2003;

Skiba, et al., 2014). As a result, the research sought to ask administrators questions that

addressed specific types of disciplinary practices they used when students were referred. She

included questions that were linked to current contemporary practices to determine if 1) the

administrators recognized these practices as best practice and 2) indicated that they used these

practices. The survey contained questions that specifically addressed Culturally Relevant

Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support, and Restorative Justice practices in

order to determine if school leaders would select the frequency of these particular categories in

their own common practices when disciplining students who engaged in a discipline infraction in

their schools. Also of interest to the researcher was evidence that might be inferred from the

responses that illustrated whether the administrators referenced distributive leadership when

citing discipline practices. While not explicit in the survey questions there was the opportunity

for respondents to answer survey questions that discussed working with teams of teachers,

community members, and parents to review, analyze, and discuss discipline along with two open-ended questions about the most and least effective discipline practices used in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population. This research used a quantitative and qualitative approach, to identify reported discipline practices by school leaders. The study relied on 7 demographic questions, Likert scale responses to the 41 survey questions and two open-ended questions. The quantitative questions responses used a four-point Likert scale where a "4" indicated that the practices were almost always used, "3" indicated that the practices were frequently used, "2" indicated that the practice was sometimes used, and "1" indicated that no such practices was used. While the three negatively stated questions in the Restorative Justice category were in reverse order and used a four-point Likert scale where a "1" indicated that the practices were almost always used, "2" indicated that the practices were frequently used, "3" indicated that the practice was sometimes used, and "4" indicates that no such practices was used. The first open-ended questions: "List one practice you use with the most frequency when students are sent to you after a disciplinary event. How is this practice used differently for different students?; and How is it effective in providing equitable discipline?". The second open-ended question, "Which current disciplinary framework do you use with the least frequency? Please provide one reason this is the practice you use with the least frequency." A total of 32 participants responded to the survey items and open-ended questions for a response rate of 25%.

For nearly 45 years, literature has documented the disproportionate discipline of African American students and school administrators using exclusionary practices such as in-school suspension, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions. Disproportionate disciplinary consequences such as: in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion similar to

those indicated in the Children's Defense Fund report published in 1975, continue to persist

today (Skiba et al., 2014) and suspension of African American students have magnified rising

from 6% in 1973 to 25% in 2016 (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2018).

The implementation of discipline practices by school leaders that can assist in providing

equitable discipline are Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and

Supports, and Restorative Justice which is vital in ensuring all students remain in school.

Literature in this study confirmed that African American students' out-of-school suspension rates

were approximately 3.5 times more than that of their Caucasian student counterparts with the

outcome being discipline disproportionality (Losen & Gillespie, 2012). However, the use of

these practices by administrators and educators on students will impact and keep the

disproportionate number of African American students who are losing learning opportunities

because of suspension and other practices that remove them out of the learning environment in

school.

Discussion of Findings

Although the majority of the respondents from the study were women (n=26) a balance

between the role of assistant principal (n=17) and principal (n=15) were found. A third of the

participants reported years of administrative experience as 0 - 5 years, but there was no reported

difference in discipline practices used to provide equitable discipline based on years of

experience. As a researcher it was expected that administrators who were only beginning their

administrative careers with 0 - 5 years of experience would have reported at a higher frequency

the use of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and

Restorative Justice. The researcher expected that administrators who were beginning their

administrative careers would have participated in educational programs and professional

development opportunities that focused on a variety of topics which would have included

trending educational topics like Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions

and Supports, and Restorative Justice in preparation of serving in the role of an administrative.

However, the mean comparison data by years of experience suggested that there was no

significant difference in the discipline practices reportedly used between administrators with 0 -

5 years of experience, 6 - 10 years of experiences, and 11 years or more years of experience.

School leaders were asked to indicate the most effective and frequent practices they use

in providing equitable discipline across student population. The respondents were provided with

a survey about discipline practices related Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior

Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice. Responses from the respondents using the

Likert scale indicated that practices are used almost always, frequently, sometimes, or not used at

all. The Culturally Relevant Pedagogy responses that had a high mean focused on the role of

administration, how administration established a collaborative environment that was equitable

for all students, and how administration exhibited a positive attitude towards stakeholders

instilling an ethic of care, respect and responsibility. In a distributed leadership approach, it is

important to examine how leadership practice takes shape in the interactions between followers

and leaders (Spillane, 2006). However, the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy practices which are not

used very often such as making students aware of behaviors that might be culturally specific,

utilizing resource persons belonging to or familiar with the student cultural to assist in planning

behavioral interventions, knowledge about certain behaviors that are consistent with the students'

cultural background, and providing opportunities for professional development of faculty and

personnel on issues of cultural, language, and ethnic diversity. This information, coupled with

the wide mean range from 3.81 to 2.31 and the standard deviation variability ranging from 0.90

to 0.40, seems to indicate that there is a lack of understanding of Culturally Relevant

Pedagogy. Data suggest school leaders may not understand the elements of Culturally Relevant

Pedagogy and the importance of knowing a student's cultural. Stakeholders who are trained and

use Culturally Relevant Pedagogy help students succeed, improve student coping strategies,

establish better relationships with students, create a positive classroom, and develop alternatives

to student suspension and expulsion (Butler et al., 2012; Howard, 2003).

The respondents rated the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports practices being

used with some frequency (12 of the 14 questions were ranked at a 3 or above) where a "3"

indicated that the practices were frequently used. A theme that emerged from the Positive

Behavior Interventions and Supports survey responses aligned to participation in behavior

support team, planning and problem solving, clearly identifying behaviors, and collaborating

with families and staff about student's behaviors and interventions. The Northeast RESA from

where the respondents were chosen is located near a research one university and schools in the

RESA have participated in some form of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports training.

The findings from this study were unexpected as identified school populations in the study have

participated in state-level training for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. The

researcher expected to find that schools in these districts would have reported using Positive

Behavior Interventions and Supports almost always and frequently to provide equitable

discipline across student populations. It was also expected that because of the proximity to the

Research One University that school leaders would be proficient in the use of these practices

because of the opportunity of professional development offered frequently by the Research One

University.

The Georgia Department of Education recognizes 83% of elementary schools in this study as supporting positive school climate through the implementation of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports framework. This percentage is very high but is not consistent with the mean data found in this study for the use of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports practices to provide equitable discipline. It seems that the schools have been trained in the practice, but the administrators do not report using all the components of the practice of such as clearly identifying consequences, utilizing a support team that has a budget for teaching students, on-going student rewards, staff planning, and school team opportunities for on-going training and support from district with any consistency.

Although participants in this study reported Restorative Justice practices as effective, the mean and standard deviation variation suggest participants' understanding of Restorative Justice practices vary. Having such a large standard deviation indicates that some of the respondents ranked the practices very high, while some ranked them low. This leads to the assumption that the knowledge of restorative justice is well versed by some administrations and not very strong in others. The most frequent category within this practice were students and staff communicate with each other and provide an opportunity for individuals to discuss conflict while contributing to solving behavior problems. However, the response that had the lowest mean was one of the basic tenets of Restorative Justice: if a student causes harm, the main response by the school is a sanction or punishment. Restorative Justice practices focuses on the development of values that include building and strengthening relationships, showing respect, taking responsibility, repairing harm, establishing safe school environments via responsive, reintegrated, restorative approaches, and not punitive measures (Gonzales, 2006; Zehr, 2015). The negatively stated restorative justice items discussed behavioral meetings and individual students who are harmed

this is one of the foundational principles of Restorative Justice. As indicated by Zehr (2015), all involved in the incident work collaboratively to identify and address harms, needs, and obligations to heal and make things right as possible, but the data suggests respondents do not have a consistent understanding of Restorative Justice practices. Additionally, there was a high rate of variability in the standard deviation ranging from 0.74 to 0.94 in allowing students who have caused the harm and who have been harmed to engage in a meeting and share emotions and feelings indicating that respondents variability was not in close range to the mean scores and respondents are not utilizing all of the elements of Restorative Justice practices consistently.

When asked the open ended questions at the end of the survey about the practices used the most often, administrators provided responses that were categorized into four themes: Communication, Reflection, Time Out, and Teach. The first theme, Communication, yielded responses such as speaking or talking with a student, and having a conference, conversation, or meeting with a student to allow them to explain what happened, their actions, to express themselves, and due process being provided to a student that fit into the theme of communication. The researcher interpreted that the school leaders reporting the use of due process has established a set of procedures that are followed to ensure an equitable opportunity for the accused individual to share their perspective of behavior events to administration. The accused and accuser are provided the opportunity to explain their perspective of the incident, what transpired leading up and following the incident. Though these responses supported the theme of communication, no mention of collaborative strategies during this communication, or following a disciplinary procedure that might include these communication processes was noted. The next theme was the use of Timeout in the office, another classroom, or a cool down area. Timeout was identified as being used as a practice that is effective in providing equitable

discipline. This was not surprising due to timeout being using as a part of discipline flowcharts to address behavior in providing students the opportunity to be removed temporarily from a learning activity. However, this practice has been shown to be ineffective, and detrimental to their learning as research indicates that removing students from their learning activities impacts the learning environment by interrupting instruction, ostracizing and targeting students, removing the possibility to receive peer support, the opportunity to be an active member of the classroom community, and student's academic achievement. The relationship between students and teachers is an important factor in increasing student engagement and academic motivation. There is a clear relationship between academic performance and student behavior (Epstein et al., 2008). Lastly, the next theme reportedly used most frequently was teaching of desired behaviors through modeling and reteaching. Responses indicated that improvements are needed to building school leaders' ability to employ additional practice to address discipline. Respondents gaining more information and training in restorative justice may be beneficial and support the theme of communication and reflection. This would present an opportunity for distributed leadership and collaboration between stakeholders to address the behavior through modeling, reteaching, and communication. In fact, Zehr (2002) indicated that those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, must meet to collaborate, in order to heal and put things as right as possible..

During the study school leaders considered a range of information when determining what disciplinary practice to apply for different students. The study respondents reported that age, grade, incident, severity of event, and reflection were considered. This is not an organized manner to determine consequences for behavior. The Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports data reflected by the respondents were that a team exist for behavior support planning

and problem solving, but the consequences for problem behaviors are not defined clearly. Consequences act to create boundaries for students and clarity of behavioral expectations. The creation and implementation of team to review behavior incidents and an organized behavior flowchart to determine appropriate consequences would reduce disproportionate discipline of students. One of the practices of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is for administrators, teachers, and support personnel discipline students with a sensitivity towards students' cultural and linguistic differences. This becomes challenging if those stakeholders are not knowledgeable about the students cultural and linguistic. Therefore stakeholders careful designing and appropriate implementation of disciplinary guidelines can reduce punishment disparities and, in the case of education, reduce barriers to learning opportunities for students (Bekkerman & Giplin, 2014). Although out-of-school suspensions are sometimes necessary due to the severity, intensity or safety of the behavior incident, Haight and Gibson (2013) have argued that educators should carefully consider context and child development. However, no mention of collaborative practices such as establishing common goals, establishing communication between stakeholders, creating groups for problem solving and critical thinking skills or any responses related to referring to other administrators, academic or behavioral coaches, or district personnel that is a necessary component of the practice of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, as well as one of the cornerstones of distributive leadership.

School leaders reported the least used and effective disciplinary frameworks were suspension, timeouts, removals, corporal punishment, paddling, and conferences with students together. Suspension was the first theme that emerged as the least effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population followed by timeouts and corporal punishment which included paddling, and then conferring with students together.

Respondents report that suspension does not work, but Table 14 data illustrates that the district does in fact use suspension, if somewhat inconsistently across schools in the district. Is the inconsistency due to implementation of discipline practices or under reporting of discipline? The reasoning for the inconsistent trend patterns are unknown. The overall suspension rates for the schools in the Northeast RESA show a decrease in suspension rate which indicates that the responses that the administrators gave regarding the use of suspension does seem to be supported in the district data. Although school leaders report suspension does not work, data shows schools leaders are still using suspension to discipline students.

Losen et al. (2014) stated one suspension increases students' likelihood of repeating a grade, dropping out, and coming into contact with the juvenile justice system. Although timeout was reported as being least effective, it is not consistent with the data found in this study as school leaders also reported timeout as an effective discipline practice. Respondents in this study reported the timeout intervention as both the most and least effective in providing equitable discipline. Without a clear picture of whether school administrators are using data based decisions coupled with input from other stakeholders, it is difficult to determine if any best practices regarding the decision-making process are being used. Horner et al. (2010), suggest developing systems that support discipline practices, and using data to inform decision making. The development of systems and procedures with stakeholders to review data and make decisions about discipline practices to change the school environment is better practice. A component of a prevention strategy like Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports aims to alter the school environment by creating improved systems and procedures that promote positive change in staff and student behaviors (Bevans et al., 2008). Leaders should work closely with students, parents, and community members to build relationships and identify discipline

practices that promote a positive learning environment and school culture. "Parent involvement is positively associated with student success, higher attendance rates, and lower suspension rates" (Peterson & Skiba, 2001, p.157).

The respondents stated the reason for not using punitive disciplinary practices were because suspension does not work, students need to be at school, and interruption of class time outs. Although school leaders reported ineffectiveness of the use exclusionary practices. School discipline practices, such as in-school suspension (ISS), out-of-school suspension (OSS) and expulsion, is a growing concern among researchers and youth service providers (Anyon et al., 2014). The theme practice of not conferencing with students together suggest that the respondents (n=2) may not be aware of Restorative Justice that engages all parties in a balanced practice that brings together all people impacted by an issue or behavior (González, 2012). The individual who has been harmed and the individual who did the harm are to engage in dialogue to rebuild the relationship and community. Restorative Justice practices seek to address community concerns between and among people who experience harm and conflict (Amstutz and Mullet, 2005).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice discipline practices have a common theme of wanting to establish a culture and climate of community that builds relationships with students, families, and as a community. Peterson and Skiba (2001) defined culture as the feelings that students and staff have about the school environment. This is vital because a part of establishing school climate and culture through distributed leadership is ensuring stakeholders are involved and that everyone has accountability in the process of addressing discipline. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice are preventive practices instead of

reactive practices such as suspension or expulsion that should be utilized in providing equitable discipline across student populations. Researchers have shown that reactive punitive practices do not improve school climate or culture and can have an unfavorable effect on improving student behavior and achievement (Skiba 2014; Sprague, 2014). However, the findings for the practices are inconsistent in this study when reported by school leaders.

The removal of students from the positive learning environment continues to be utilized and creates disproportionate discipline between African American and non-African American students. According to Skiba and Peterson (2000), removing students from positive learning environments and criminalizing normative immaturity increases the risk of incarceration, which would perpetuate social and educational inequalities. The review of discipline practices and data by school leaders is important for appropriate decision-making on next steps to improve school culture and climate as it relates to the disproportionate discipline among students. Schools identification of alternative practices like school-based inventions, increased research, teacher development, and policy to replace exclusionary discipline is recommended (Skiba et al., 2014). This would suggest that distributed leadership supports the collaboration of stakeholders. The goal of implementation of disciplinary practices is to reduce disproportionate discipline. This requires the support and collaboration of all stakeholders. Administrators serve as the key agent for setting the climate and direction of the school (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005) and form the foundation upon which the school is built (Cameron, 2006), examining principals' leadership style in maintaining an effective learning environment and its influence on student behavioral outcomes is imperative. According to Harris and Spillane (2008) the work of leadership in today's schools require diverse types of expertise to meet the demands and challenges. This is

why the use of distributed leadership is important when shaping the climate and culture of an environment.

Implications

Discipline infractions in schools continue to be an area of concern for educators. If school leaders in conjunction with stakeholders identify effective practices, collaborate, and implement discipline practices that provide an equitable opportunity for all students then discipline disparities would decrease. The findings through this study provide implications that impact school leaders, schools, and stakeholders. This section overviews the implications as determined by the researcher for those seeking to implement discipline practices that provide equitable discipline across student populations.

In order for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice practices to be implemented school leaders must be aware of these practices. Providing school leaders with professional learning on the negative impacts of exclusionary practices as well as how to manage behaviors could assist leaders in making the most appropriate and equitable discipline decision. However, ongoing professional development designed to build the capacity among school leaders and staff to engage in preventative practices that address discipline is important. School leaders provide the foundation in setting the school climate and culture of the school. However, distributed leadership should be utilized among stakeholders which include and are not limited to school leaders, staff members, parents, students and community members to ensure collaboration towards the common goal is achieved.

School leaders' awareness of discipline disparities within their building allows them to have essential information to provide the necessary supports to change disproportionate discipline. In order to develop a positive school learning environment school discipline must be a

focus. Therefore, school leaders should create opportunities for professional learning communities and allow stakeholders especially staff members the opportunity to participate in professional development. Professional development should focus on building stakeholder capacity to address discipline which could potentially decrease student behavioral infractions within the learning environment. Decisions to remove disruptive students from the learning environment or leave the student in the environment and negatively impact the educational opportunities of all students is a decision made by school leaders (Gregory et al., 2010).

A component of professional development implementation is for school leaders to know and understand school discipline data. Data should constantly be reviewed and analyzed to identify trends that may disclose whether one group of students is being disproportionately discipline as compared to other groups of students. Furnished with this information, school leaders can then determine the needs of the students and school to incorporate the discipline practices like Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, Restorative Justice practices and reduce the use of exclusionary practices like in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion.

Following the implementation of a discipline practice stakeholders should also analyze and evaluate the data to determine the effectiveness of implemented discipline practices. When data is analyzed practices can be modified to meet the individual needs of students and the school environment. The use of distributed leadership encourages stakeholders to be committed to a common goal to ensure stakeholders capacity in providing equitable discipline across student populations. Results from this study provided information about the frequency of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports practices used in providing equitable discipline. An implication for leaders from these findings related to inconsistencies with regard to the school

team having access to on-going training and support from district personnel and the school-wide

behavior support team having a budget to teach students, implement on-going rewards, and have

annual staff planning. The development of a school-wide behavior support teams should be

established prior to the implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. The

results of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports data should encourage school leaders

to refocus on the basic practices incorporated into Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

ensuring that all stakeholders are involved directly and/or indirectly in the school-wide

intervention.

Components of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and Restorative Justice

practices focus on stakeholder involvement in minimizing disruptive behavior. In the study

respondents reported schools have formal strategies for informing families about expected

student behaviors at school and when students, staff, and/or parents are in conflict their

perspectives are heard. Partnering among stakeholders is a component of Culturally Relevant

Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice that

demonstrates a commitment to collaboration and cooperation between staff, students, parents,

and community members. Collaboration is a component of distributed leadership and requires

having people within the school community take on roles and share with others what they learn

and know (King, 2002). The commonality between the data reported for Culturally Relevant

Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice by

administration revealed that there is a level of positive attitude toward the school, teachers,

students, and families to work collaboratively. More partnerships between school leaders,

students, parents and community involvement is needed to promote effective distributed

leadership. Establishment of more time to allow stakeholders to collaborate, participate in

targeted professional development on distributed leadership, and increase knowledge of discipline practices is essential to help create opportunities that provide equitable discipline across student populations.

Limitations

This study was restricted by the following limitations. First, the study was limited to the participants' perceptions in the study when identifying discipline practices such as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice. Second, the data summarized are only generalizable to the participants in the study; however, this limitation was permissible, as this is a dissertation in practice. The study may be dependent on the ability of participants to be familiar with and aware of school practices to address discipline. Limitations of this study also included varying expectations, rules, and procedures to address certain types of student behaviors.

A delimitation of this study was the focus was only on elementary schools. The school leaders were from one Northeast region in Georgia. It is the assumption that data from the research was recorded properly and aligned with the research questions. It was also assumed that an adequate number of school leaders participated in the study to provide enough information for the researcher to determine what practices are most and least effective in providing an equitable application of discipline across the student population.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study focused on reported discipline practices that are most and least effective in providing equitable discipline across student populations. The research was conducted using a sample (n = 32) of elementary school leaders located within rural school districts. The researcher recommends an expansion of the study to increase the samples including more elementary school

leaders in Georgia that are located in diverse districts. Additional quantitative and qualitative research should be conducted to identify practices that could be used in providing equitable discipline across student populations. The researchers should also consider including questions to see if a school is implementing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice. A comparative analysis could be completed regarding the participants' years of experience, knowledge of disciplinary practices, and report of implementation of discipline practices. Other researchers may consider expanding the study to include teachers, interviews of teachers, interviews of school leaders, and focus groups. Interviewing these stakeholders would provide more perspective on the various discipline practices used and examine the effects of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice practices when implemented. Further research should also obtain the perspective of students and parents on effective discipline practices implemented to decrease discipline infractions.

It is also recommended to gather data to identify if there is any relationship between distributed leadership, school climate, school culture, and discipline practices when addressing teachers, interviews of school leaders, and focus groups. Interviewing these stakeholders would provide more perspective on the various discipline practices used and examine the effects of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice when implemented. Further research should also obtain the perspective of students and parents on effective discipline practices implemented to decrease discipline infractions.

District leaders should consider this research and give schools time to develop their practices supporting the work of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice. According to Harris (2004) distributing leadership equates

with maximizing the human capacity within the organization. Therefore administrators and teachers must engage in learning opportunities to develop and implement practices that provide equitable application of discipline across the student population. It is recommended to implement ongoing professional learning communities and development designed to build the capacity of leaders and staff to increase knowledge of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and utilize culturally relevant discipline practices; engage staff reorganizing the school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports program and raise awareness of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports practices; and develop an understanding of Restorative Justice practices to grow in the area of preventative behavior management practices. These efforts will assist in improving the school climate and culture.

As indicated by Harris and Spillane (2006) engaging others in the work of building a collaborative environment and trusting relationships is important. Collaborative efforts among the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Committees, school-based staff, and school administrators should focus on identifying and implementing Culturally Relevant pedagogy practices, defining Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports program goals and procedures, and utilize Restorative Justice practices to support structures for targeted students and/or identified behaviors. The Restorative Justice method helps to foster community, establish and renew relationships, and create a culture to improve academic achievement and school climate (Jain, Bassey, Brown, & Preety, 2014).

Constant review of data, discourse around Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports training, monitoring of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports implementation, and use of Restorative Justice practices should be established and reinforced through professional learning communities. To develop a positive learning

environment and employ a change in discipline stakeholder's reflection on school policies, discipline practices, and staff perspectives should be intentional and focused on addressing the disproportionality in discipline. Distributed leadership focuses on collaborative interactions toward a shared goal (Spillane, 2006). As stated earlier Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports framework is designed to increase relationship building, improve school climate, and create a safe and welcoming learning environment. It is important for interventions to be culturally relevant so teachers and collaborative teams can implement Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (Bryan et al., 2012).

Identifying and implementing practices for culturally relevant pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and restorative justice will assist in providing equitable discipline across the student population to decrease exclusionary practices that negatively impact students. Using these practices would encourage a positive and collaborative learning environment where all students can attain academic and social-emotional achievement while building relationships with teachers, other students, and creating a positive school community. The study's framework could also be enhanced by the application of Critical Race Theory as a framework to examine the racial disparities and provide a review of race, racism, diversity, education, and educational experiences of Caucasian and African American students.

Conclusion

As an educator I believe it is my responsibility to ensure students acquire academic and social emotional knowledge and skills. I am an advocate for students who are underserved and considered a marginalized group. It is important to focus and build on students' strengths, skills, to ensure they have a sense of belonging. It is my belief that all students have the skills and knowledge that can be transferred into the classroom and our community. Due to the use of

exclusionary practices such as out-of-school suspension and expulsion African American students are removed from the learning environment for prolonged periods of timed at a disproportionate rate, I felt the need to conduct this research. It was my goal to explore what discipline practices do school leaders report using to provide equitable discipline across student populations. As an educator and school leader it is my mission to identify positive alternative discipline practices such as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, Restorative Justice to use versus traditional punitive school discipline practices like suspension and expulsion. However, this mission cannot be done alone and requires the collaboration of stakeholders like students, parents, teachers, and community members as they all play a role in the discipline process. This is why it is important to practice distributed leadership so there is a collective group working as one with a common goal in mind.

The integration of culturally relevant and responsive practices with Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports would decrease disproportionate discipline. As Vincent et al. (2011) found, implementation of a culturally responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports framework challenged disproportionately and reserved the trends of disciplinary infractions among African American males. In addition, Skiba and Petterson (1999) reported Restorative Justice practices in schools can decrease suspension rates and lower racially disproportionate discipline. Schools should implement Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Restorative Justice practices with fidelity to support and reinforce the social and academic development of students. Careful implementation and evaluation of these discipline practices will provide data to stakeholders to determine the practices effectiveness or ineffectiveness on decreasing the discipline gap among African American students and their non-African American peers. Harris and Spillane (2006) indicated a

relationship between distributed leadership, professional learning, and student achievement. Quality professional learning communities that promote professional development and stakeholder involvement will assist in successful implementation of these practices. According to researchers such as Hallinger (1999), professional development was necessary and contributed to the expanding knowledge base of practicing school leaders. As a school leader my why is to inspire, encourage, and lead so that students, staff, parents and the community are positively changed.

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APPENDIX A

GEORGIA SOUTHERN INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

	Georgia Southern University	
	Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs	
	Institutional Review Board (IRB)	
Phone: 912-478-5465		Veazey Hall 3000
		PO Box 8005
Fax: 912-478-0719	IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Ford, Beverly Laurell; Harris, Kymberly

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees (IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Approval Date: 6/14/2019

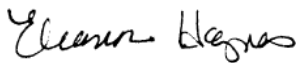**Subject:** Institutional Review Board Exemption Determination - Limited Review

After a review of your proposed research project numbered **H19470,** titled **"Elementary Leaders' Reported Practices in Providing Equitable Discipline: Dispro on the Rise,"** it appears that your research involves activities that do not require full approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) according to federal guidelines.

According to the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46, your research protocol is determined to be exempt from full review under the following exemption category(s):

Exemption 2   Research involving only the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, if: Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human participants cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to them. Please visit our FAQ's for more information on anonymous survey platforms; Any disclosure of the human participant's responses outside the research could not reasonably place the participant at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the participant's financial standing, employ-ability or reputation; Survey or interview research does not involve children; The research project does not include any form of intervention.

Any alteration in the terms or conditions of your involvement may alter this approval. *Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that your research, as submitted, is exempt from IRB approval.   You will be asked to notify the IRB upon project completion. If you alter the project, it is your responsibility to notify the IRB and acquire a new determination of exemption.*

Sincerely,

Eleanor Haynes

Eleanor Haynes
Research Integrity Officer

APPENDIX B

INITIAL RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Principal _____ or Assistant Principal _____,

      I am writing to you to request your participation in a brief survey. The purpose of this study is to explore practices Elementary School Leaders report using to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population. The survey is designed to collect anonymous data with no personal identifiers. Participants email address were obtained from a publicly available resource via Northeast RESA and district websites. Your participation will take approximately 30 minutes.

      ● Research question 1: What practices do Elementary School Leaders report are most effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?

      ● Research question 2: What practices do Elementary School Leaders report are least effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?

Survey link: Discipline Practices Survey

 Thank you very much for your time and participation in this study.

Beverly Ford,

Primary Investigator

APPENDIX C

PASSIVE CONSENT

My name is Beverly Ford and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership at Georgia Southern University. I am also an Elementary School Assistant Principal in Clarke County (GA). I invite you to participate in a research entitled, *Elementary Leaders' Reported Practices in Providing Equitable Discipline: Disproportionality on the Rise.* The study will examine practices Elementary School Leaders report using to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population. The research study and the results will be used to partially fulfill the requirements for the Ed. D degree in P-12 Educational Leadership.

Participation in the survey is voluntary. Participants will be asked to complete an electronic survey. Qualtrics will be used to disseminate the survey. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes to answer 48 multiple choice questions, 7 demographic questions, 41 discipline practices questions, 2 open-ended questions, and submit.

The survey data will be collected anonymously with no personal identifiers. Individual responses will not be attached to an IP address or name of participant. Participants' school district of employment and work location will not be collected. This study involves no greater risks than those associated with daily life experiences. There are no explicit benefits to individuals who choose to participate in this study.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. There is no penalty for deciding not to participate in the study; you may decide at any time that you do not want to participate further and may withdraw without penalty or retribution.

Your participation in this study is important and will make a contribution to the understanding of practices used to provide equitable discipline across student populations. As an educational leader, you have vital insights into this subject matter. Your consideration of this request is appreciated.

As a participant you have the right to ask questions. If you have questions about this study, please contact the principal investigator identified below. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant they can contact the Institutional Review Board at (912) 478-5465 or irb@georgiasouthern.edu.

Please print this page if you would like a record of the consent document. This project has been reviewed and approved by the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board under tracking number H19470."

By clicking the survey button below, you give passive consent and acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary.

Principal Investigator: Beverly Ford, M.A.; Ed.S.

Email: bf02447@georgiasouthern.edu   Phone: 706-503-1390

Georgia Southern University - College of Education Department of Educational Leadership

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Kymberly Harris, Ph.D.

Email: kharris@georgiasouthern.edu   Phone: 912-478-5041

APPENDIX D

SURVEY PROTOCOL

- The researcher will collect Northeast RESA Elementary Leader's from public listserv.
- An initial email will be sent to recruit participation in the survey. The email will contain a link to the survey.
- At week two following the initial email, a follow-up email will be sent out to remind the participants of the availability of the survey..
- At week four following the initial email, a follow-up email will be sent out to remind the participants of the availability of the survey.
- An email will be sent to participants to provide them with information about the research.
- The survey will be attached to the email sent to Elementary Leader's in the Northeast RESA. Qualtrics will be used to disseminate the survey.
- Passive consent will be embedded into the survey.
- Participants will complete the survey independently.
- Schedule 30 minutes to complete the survey.
- Base your responses on your individual experiences in the school.
- The purpose of the survey is to assess practices used to provide equitable discipline across student populations, first evaluate each order response option (i.e. almost always, frequently, sometimes, practice not used). Next, examine each survey item.
  - "What is the <u>current status</u> of the survey item (i.e. almost always, frequently, sometimes, no such practice used)?"
- A Likert-scale survey is used to gather data. This scale has multiple categories from which respondents choose to indicate their feelings, attitudes, or opinions about a particular issue. Data collected through the Likert-scale survey can be gathered relatively quickly from large numbers of respondents and used to compare and contrast responses. For the purpose of this study a 4 point Likert-scale will be used to gather data.

Questions	
Demographic Questions (7)	Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Restorative Justice Questions (13)	Questions 8, 9, 10, 11, 23, 24, 31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 43, 44
Culturally Relevant Questions (14)	Questions 12, 13, 16, 17, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30, 40, 41, 42, 47, 48
Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Questions (14)	Questions 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 33, 34, 38, 39, 45, 46
Open-ended Questions (2)	Questions 49 - 50

APPENDIX E

DISCIPLINE PRACTICES SURVEY

This survey examines the practices used to provide an equitable application of discipline across the student population. The survey data will be collected anonymously with no personal identifiers. Individual responses will not be attached to an IP address or name of participant. Participants' school district of employment and work location will not be collected.

Your participation in this study is important and will make a contribution to the understanding of practices used to provide equitable discipline across student populations. As an educational leader, you have vital insights into this subject matter.

By clicking the survey button below, you give passive consent and acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary.

Demographics (7 questions)

1. What position do you hold?
   ○ Principal
   ○ Assistant Principal

2. What is your gender?
   ○ Female
   ○ Male
   ○ Prefer not to respond

3. What size is your school?
   ○ Small (350 or fewer students enrolled)
   ○ Medium (351 to 550 students enrolled)
   ○ Large (551 or more students enrolled)
   ○ Prefer not to respond

4. How long have you served in an administrative role?
   ○ 0 - 5 years
   ○ 6 - 10 years
   ○ 11 or more years
   ○ Prefer not to respond

5. As an administrator how highly does student discipline and behavior management rank as a concern in your building?
   ○ Major concern
   ○ Moderate concern
   ○ Little concern
   ○ Not a concern

6. As an administrator how concerned are you whether disciplinary policies and practices affect racial and ethnic student populations differently?
   ○ Major concern
   ○ Moderate concern
   ○ Little concern
   ○ Not a concern

7. During the last 3 - 5 years schools in my district have been identified as disciplining African American males disproportionately over their counterparts.
   ○ Yes
   ○ No
   ○ Not aware

Please rate the following statements relative to your use of practices as an administrator as well as your school when considering effective and ineffective discipline practices.

8. During behavioral meetings with students there is no place for emotions and feelings.
   ○ Almost Always
   ○ Frequently
   ○ Sometimes
   ○ No such practice used

9. It is best that students who are harmed do not meet with the individual who harmed them.
   ○ Almost Always
   ○ Frequently
   ○ Sometimes
   ○ No such practice used

10. Students who cause harm to others should be punished.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

11. Administrators are allowed to contribute to solving school-based behavioral problems that affect them.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

12. Administration, faculty, and support personnel remain informed about current school policies and reforms that impact the delivery of services to students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

13. Administration exemplifies a positive attitude towards the school, teachers, students, and families.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

14. All staff are involved directly and/or indirectly in school-wide interventions.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

15. The school team has access to on-going training and support from district personnel.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

16. Teachers utilize resource persons belonging to or familiar with a students' cultural and linguistic background to assist in planning behavioral interventions.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice use

17. Students are taught school-sanctioned behaviors, particularly as they might conflict with culturally specific behaviors.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

18. A small number (e.g. 3-5) of positively & clearly stated student expectations or rules are defined.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

19. Expected student behaviors are taught directly.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

20. Expected student behaviors are rewarded regularly.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

21. Administration creates a school culture in which students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds feel they are listened to, their opinions valued, and they are involved in decision-making.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

22. Administration instills an ethic of care, respect, and responsibility.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

23. When a student causes harm, the main response by the school is a sanction or punishment.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

24. When someone does something harmful, those involved help to decide how similar incidents could be avoided in the future.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

25. Problem behaviors (failure to meet expected student behaviors) are defined clearly.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

26. Consequences for problem behaviors are defined clearly.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

27. Distinctions between office v. classroom managed problem behaviors are clear.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

28. Administration, faculty, and support personnel are well informed of the influence of culture, language, and ethnicity on school achievement.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

29. Administration works collaboratively with all the members of the school community to ensure equitable treatment for all students.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

30. Administration provides opportunities for professional development of faculty and support personnel on issues of cultural, language, and ethnic diversity.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

31. Within this school, disagreements are normally resolved effectively.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

32. When students, staff and/or parents are in conflict, everyone's views are listened to.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

33. School has formal strategies for informing families about expected student behaviors at school.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

34. School-wide behavior support team has a budget for (a) teaching students, (b) on-going rewards, and (c) annual staff planning.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

35. It is important that the person who has caused harm is given support to change their behavior.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

36. When someone causes harm, they should be allowed to make amends.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

37. The students and their parents/caregivers are invited to contribute to resolving school-based behavioral problems that affect them.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

38. School administrator is an active participant on the behavior support team.
    - ○ Almost Always
    - ○ Frequently
    - ○ Sometimes
    - ○ No such practice used

39. Data on problem behavior patterns are collected, summarized, and reported to teams and faculty for active decision-making on a regular basis (e.g. monthly).
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

40. Administrators, teachers, and support personnel discipline students with a sensitivity towards students' cultural and linguistic differences.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

41. Classroom rules and procedures are written and explained in a language that is clear to students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

42. Students are made aware of behaviors that might be culturally specific so they can learn how to interact appropriately with students from cultures other than their own.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

43. Students are given opportunities to make amends if they are responsible for causing harm.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

44. Students and staff communicate to each other in a respectful way.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

45. Options exist to allow classroom instruction to continue when problem behavior occurs
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

46. A team exists for behavior support planning & problem solving.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

47. Administrators, teachers, and support personnel are knowledgeable about differences in cultural practices that might impact student behavior.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

48. Teachers are knowledgeable about certain behaviors that are consistent with students' cultural background so as not to consider them deviant.
    ○ Almost Always
    ○ Frequently
    ○ Sometimes
    ○ No such practice used

Open ended questions

49. List one practice you use with the most frequency when students are sent to you after a disciplinary event. How is this practices used differently for different students? How is it effective in providing equitable discipline?

50. Which current disciplinary framework do you use with the least frequency? Please provide one reason this is the practice you use with the least frequency.

APPENDIX F

FOLLOW-UP RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Principal _____ or Assistant Principal _____,

Recently, I sent a request for your participation in a survey to help me gather data for completion of my dissertation research. If you have already participated in the survey thank you. If you have not, please consider completing this survey as your reported experiences will be helpful in determining the current state of discipline practices.

The purpose of this study is to explore practices Elementary School Leaders report using to provide equitable application of discipline across the student population. The survey is designed to collect anonymous data with no personal identifiers. Participants email address were obtained from a publicly available resource via Northeast RESA and district websites. Your participation will take approximately 30 minutes.

● Research question 1: What practices do Elementary School Leaders report are most effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?

● Research question 2: What practices do Elementary School Leaders report are least effective in providing equitable application of discipline across the student population?

Survey link: Discipline Practices Survey

Thank you very much for your time and participation in this study.

Beverly Ford,

Primary Investigator