

Spring 5-2010

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The University of Southern Mississippi

DIFFERENCES IN STUDENT MISBEHAVIOR AFTER COMPLETING IN-SCHOOL
SUSPENSION BETWEEN RURAL HIGH SCHOOL AND SUBURBAN HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

Martin Ervind Welch

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

May 2010

ABSTRACT

DIFFERENCES IN STUDENT MISBEHAVIOR AFTER COMPLETING IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION BETWEEN RURAL HIGH SCHOOL AND SUBURBAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by Martin Ervind Welch

May 2010

This study investigated the differences that exist in rural and suburban high school student misbehavior after completing in-school suspension (ISS) in Alabama's Mobile County Public School System. The independent variables of rural or suburban, gender, and ethnicity were used to determine the differences of the various groups. The archival discipline data of students assigned to ISS during the 2008-2009 school year were analyzed. Out of the 821 students assigned to ISS, 146 (17.8%) were not referred to the office again during the school year. There was a statistically significant relationship between rural or suburban and office referral after attending ISS. Suburban students (21.8%) were less likely to be referred to the office again than rural students (13.9%). No statistical differences were discovered between gender and misbehavior. A statistically significant relationship was found between ethnicity and office referral. All of the Asian students were referred to the office after attending ISS while 37.5% of Hispanic students received no additional office referrals. Black and Caucasian students were referred to the office again at about the same rate of just over 80%.

Teacher demographic information and perceptions were gathered via questionnaire administered during the fall semester of 2009. Out of the combined total of

208 teachers at the two schools, 104 of them responded to the questionnaire. They were mostly middle-aged, Caucasian, and female with a master's degree. Teachers indicated that they supported ISS but believed it needed to be improved. They were unsure how to improve the alternative discipline program. The instructors were also uncertain as to whether parents supported ISS and if the amount of counseling and academic support provided to students in the program needed to be increased. The educators disagreed that ISS students should only be assigned to students once a year and that the program deterred student misbehavior.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As the first person in my traceable family's lineage to not only receive a college degree but also attain a doctorate, I am sincerely appreciative of my family's support, which made such a feat possible. My parents, Karen and Terry Welch, Sr., have provided me with the support needed in order to attain my education. Without my mother's love and care, I would not be the man I am today. She has always completed all of the tasks at home, allowing me to focus my time and energy on school and work. I also thank my grandparents, Marie and Dale Schjott, for the encouragement they also provided and how proud they always were to discuss with their friends my scholarly ambitions.

I thank the dissertation committee, Dr. Ronald Styron, Dr. J. T. Johnson, Dr. Gaylynn Parker, and Dr. David Lee, for taking the time to provide me with the guidance needed to complete the dissertation process. Dr. Styron deserves recognition for investing the time and effort required to promptly answer all of my questions and facilitating my progress throughout the dissertation journey. I am also especially grateful for Dr. Johnson's pragmatism and statistical expertise. Furthermore, I appreciate Dr. Lee for being eager and willing to serve on my committee before he had even met me. Finally, I would have never entered the doctoral program if it had not been for Dr. Parker. Her student-centered approach to education, willingness to always help, and kind spirit are characteristics I hope to emulate throughout my career.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

High school students commit behavior infractions on a daily basis, resulting in the need for some type of disciplinary action by a school administrator. Oftentimes, principals choose to suspend students from school in order to deal with the behavior violations. Administrators use suspension in order to remove misbehaving students from school until they have their behavior under control (Vavrus & Cole, 2002). Suspensions result in students being deprived of instruction over the course of their punishment, and students usually find this form of negative reinforcement to be a vacation from school instead of an undesirable experience that they would like to avoid in the future. Students often fall behind in their studies while suspended, and teachers are not required to allow students to make up work missed during this time. Many teachers assign zeros to students who are suspended, and students may fail their classes due to the punishment they received for their rule-breaking.

The punishment can result from the implementation of strict disciplinary policies. Skiba and Peterson (1999) explained zero tolerance policies as rules that provide harsh punishment for offenses that fall in targeted categories, regardless of the insignificance of the offense. Both major and minor violations under certain categories of behavior infractions receive similar punishment. The Navy first coined the term in 1983 while explaining the punishment meted out to 40 members of a submarine who were suspected of using drugs. A federal prosecutor in San Diego used the words to name a program he unveiled to confiscate sea-going vessels carrying drugs. Zero tolerance quickly became a national buzzword, and individuals entering the country with illegal drugs took the

chance of having passports and vehicles seized beginning in 1988 when United States Attorney General Edwin Meese incorporated the policy to fight the drug war (Skiba & Peterson, 1999).

The implementation of zero tolerance policies, according to Skiba and Peterson (1999), arrived at schoolhouse doors in Orange County, California, and Louisville, Kentucky, in 1989. These school districts required any student involved in a gang or possessing drugs to be expelled from school. The superintendent of New York's Yonkers public school system followed the aforementioned school districts' lead by instating a zero tolerance policy for any type of disruptive act happening on one of his campuses. School systems throughout the country began implementing zero tolerance policies by 1993, and offenses that the policies punished expanded to include tobacco violations, along with the other mentioned rule violations. The solidification of the national spread of zero tolerance policies occurred in 1994 when President William Jefferson Clinton signed into law the Gun-Free Schools Act. The law required students violating the law to be expelled from school for one year and processed through the criminal justice system (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). The zero tolerance policies began in this era led to a sharp increase in suspensions and expulsions (Wald & Losen, 2003).

The public school system in Knox County, Tennessee, created a very tough zero tolerance policy that resulted in harsh punishment for a variety of offenses (Black, 2004). A senior received an expulsion when a friend, unbeknownst to the driver, left a knife in his car. After receiving the punishment, the senior took his own life. The Sixth United States Circuit Court of Appeals overruled the expulsion since the student did not know the knife sat in his car. The school system decided to replace its zero tolerance policy

with a discipline policy that treated each disciplinary case individually without generically requiring extreme punishment or having rigid guidelines (Black, 2004).

Skiba and Peterson (1999) reported that public support for zero tolerance policies spread from the public's concern that drugs and violence had begun taking over America's schools. Although anecdotal evidence seems to support the public's apprehension, a survey of 1,234 school principals at the elementary, middle, and high school levels cited behavior issues like tardiness, absenteeism, and student altercations to constitute the bulk of their discipline issues while very few mentioned gangs, weapons, drugs, or teacher assaults to be significant problems. The majority of students violating zero tolerance policies did not pose a danger to the educational setting (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). After tracking school violence indicators for over 20 years, no evidence exists to support the belief that school violence has drastically increased in the nation's schools (Hyman & Perone, 1998).

Even though many teachers and principals support zero tolerance policies, the strict punishment guidelines do not increase school safety (Black, 2004; Skiba & Sprague, 2008). Instead of zero tolerance policies, a broad approach to increase school safety should be implemented. Components of such a program should include rigorous academic standards, fair and balanced discipline procedures, counseling services, alternative discipline programs, and improved school and community relations. School safety does not depend on zero tolerance policies since existing laws allow law enforcement officers to remove from schools students who possess weapons or drugs (Black, 2004).

Black (2004) detailed a report on zero tolerance policies commissioned by the Tennessee Office of Education Accountability in 2003. The findings revealed a 10.85% rise in zero tolerance offenses from 1999-2000 to 2002-2003, although Tennessee's student enrollment only increased 0.68% during the same time. Males represented 75% of the offenders, and Blacks and special education students represented a large percentage of the violators. Also, freshmen students offended more than three times as often as students in higher grades. The report recommended that a successful zero tolerance policy should result in offenses decreasing each year. The report additionally questioned whether or not educators used Tennessee's strict enforcement policy to suspend and expel students who were simply bothersome misbehavior problems (Black, 2004).

A study by the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and cited by Black (2004) showed that the harsh punishment, expulsions, and suspensions doled out by zero tolerance policies are "disproportionately applied to racial-minority and low-income students" (p. 28). White students are much less likely than minority students to receive a suspension or expulsion for their behavior infractions. Skiba, Michael, Nardo, and Peterson (2002) said that Black students not only receive more severe punishment than White students but also have more office referrals, indicating that race impacts the entire school discipline process. Some even claim that zero tolerance policies are based on racism and disproportionately punish non-White students for behavior void of violence (Black, 2004). African-American students received severe punishment such as corporal punishment and school exclusion much more often than their White counterparts who are often recipients of much lighter disciplinary measures for their behavior infractions (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Expulsions and suspensions have created

controversy due to the racial disparities that exist with their assignment (American Psychological Association, 2006).

A school suspended a 16-year-old Black male for an insubordinate act (Black, 2004). He received the punishment for his refusal to copy pages out of an outdated science book. Fortunately, his suspension resulted in his assignment to an alternative school operated by caring, compassionate teachers willing to help him achieve success. Oftentimes, an assignment to an alternative school begins the long journey toward prison for many Black male students. While zero tolerance policies receive significant political support, they oftentimes result in poor outcomes for students attempting to achieve an education (Black, 2004).

Skiba and Peterson (1999) referenced several school incidents which demonstrated extreme punishment delivered via zero tolerance policies. In Centralia, California, the school system expelled a 5-year-old student who brought a razor blade to the teacher after he had found it at his bus stop. A middle school honor student in Mount Airy, Maryland, lost eligibility to participate in extracurricular events after sharing her asthma inhaler with another student suffering from a breathing attack. A sophomore retrieved a skeet shooting gun from his car trunk and gave it to a high school senior for use after school in Phoenix, Arizona. Both students received expulsions from school and were arrested by police for firearm charges. While some school districts have reformed their zero tolerance policies after parents filed lawsuits, most systems refused to change constructionist interpretations of such policies or revamp the controversial rules altogether (Skiba and Peterson, 1999). Zero tolerance policies generically mete out harsh

behavior consequences and often disallow administrators to deliver less harsh alternatives for misbehavior (Maxwell, 2007).

According to Skiba and Peterson (1999), high school drop-outs have oftentimes been suspended before exiting school. Sophomores who dropped out of high school were suspended three times as much as their fellow classmates. Suspensions have been used to encourage some troublesome students to discontinue their education. School exclusion techniques may create problems for students in the criminal justice system by allowing them additional time during the day to associate with other misguided juvenile delinquents (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Urban students, particularly males, are especially hard hit by these disciplinary practices since these groups are more frequently impacted than their counterparts (Skiba & Rausch, 2006).

Suspensions and expulsions, argued Skiba and Sprague (2008), make up the most frequently used exclusionary tactics of school discipline. School administrators understandably turn to these old options in an effort to secure their schools and protect the educational environment. Although principals still use these measures quite often, research indicates that they negatively impact students' education and that the actual time students spend learning predicts academic achievement more accurately than any other factor (Skiba & Sprague). Students attending schools with large numbers of suspensions and expulsions score lower on standardized tests than schools that utilize these exclusionary methods less (Davis & Jordan, 1994; Skiba & Sprague). During the 2005-2006 academic year, 77% of students receiving suspensions were delivered no form of instruction while being punished (Maxwell, 2007).

“More educators are embracing strategies that do not exclude misbehaving students from school for offenses such as insubordination, disrespect, cutting class, tardiness, and bringing cell phones to campus” (Maxwell, 2007, p. 15). In order to address the problems that accompany suspensions, more effective options have been developed over the years in order to correct student misbehavior. Alternative discipline practices include Saturday School, detention, and in-school suspension (ISS). The type of suspension substitution this study addressed, ISS, allows pupils to continue their education while receiving punishment and counseling for their disciplinary problems. ISS students usually fall in the middle of the continuum with well-behaved students on one end and criminals on the other (Trojan, 2003). Instead of being allowed to choose what they are doing and when they are doing it like they do during suspension, these students with minor misbehavior problems must follow a schedule in a very structured environment while attending ISS and are under complete adult supervision the entire day.

According to data provided via electronic mail by a programmer analyst employed by the Alabama State Department of Education, 16,931 Alabama high school students were assigned to ISS during the 2008-2009 school year. Sixty-three percent were male. Fifty percent were Black, 46% were White, 3% were Hispanic, and the remaining 1% were Asian, Native American, and other. No data were currently available on the breakdown of English Language Learners (ELL) and special education students attending ISS during the targeted school year.

This study focused on two high schools in Alabama’s Mobile County Public School System that use ISS as their alternative discipline program. The program at each school is supervised by a paraprofessional who acts as the ISS teacher. ISS students are

separated from the rest of the school and receive instruction in a self-contained classroom. They are not allowed to interact with other students on campus, including those in ISS. Students are escorted in a single-file line to the bathroom and cafeteria in order to ensure interaction with others is kept at a minimal. While in the program, the ISS teacher collects work from each student's classroom teachers and ensures students complete the assignments. The students' regular teachers are required to check on students once each day and provide clarification and assistance to them if needed.

The punishment aspects of ISS include students being separated from their friends, having to complete school work all day, and not being allowed to communicate with others, even those sitting next to them. The program counsels students via video and discussion with the ISS teacher and assists them with conflict resolution, following school rules, and making the right choices when being pressured by peers. Instead of receiving a suspension and going home, often unsupervised and receiving none of the aforementioned benefits of ISS, students are kept in school during the entire day.

Statement of the Problem

Students misbehave each day in schools across the United States of America. When students misbehave, they miss out on academic instruction and oftentimes disturb other students' learning in the process. Educational administrators continually search for ways to prevent and address misbehavior effectively. Rumberger and Larson (1998) argued that students who misbehave in school are more likely to drop out than students who do not have behavioral problems. If misbehavior is not adequately addressed, misbehaving students and their classmates will suffer from the disruptions caused to the learning environment. Additionally, deviant students will believe such behavior is

acceptable if educators do not provide a response, including punishment, counseling, academic support, and rehabilitation. Thus, alternative discipline techniques, such as in-school suspension, are utilized in school in order to prevent misbehavior and the negative consequences that accompany it.

Lewis (2004) recommended that other states beside Mississippi should have ISS programs examined in order to see how beneficial the alternative discipline strategy is in other areas. Also, the researcher wanted to see if there was a difference between the ISS program at a rural high school and a suburban high school. The focus was on whether students at one school misbehave less after being assigned to ISS than students at the other school. In addition, the researcher analyzed gender and ethnicity differences. The study also examined ISS to see which parts of the program needed improvement and if there were any areas that should be deleted from the alternative discipline strategy.

Purpose of the Study

The researcher desired to determine the impact of ISS on the misbehavior of rural and suburban students in the Mobile County Public School System. For the purposes of this study, a rural region is a sparsely populated, large geographic area inhabited by mostly blue-collar workers and consisting of large areas of farms and woodlands. A suburban region is a much more dense, smaller geographic area inhabited by mostly white-collar workers and consisting of large areas of residential (subdivisions) and commercial (retail, medical, and occupational) development.

Teachers were surveyed during the fall semester of the 2009-2010 school year about how they thought ISS impacted student behavior once students had completed the program as well as their overall thoughts on in-school suspension at their school.

Questionnaire results from the two schools were analyzed to see if teacher perceptions of ISS at one school were different from those at the other one. Student discipline data were analyzed to study the misbehavior of students after attending ISS and to determine if students in a rural high school setting misbehave less than suburban high school pupils after attending ISS. The researcher also focused on student gender and ethnicity. The Mobile County Public School System, the largest school system in Alabama, needed feedback on how its high school alternative discipline program impacts some of its students.

Research Questions

The research questions answered in this study are as follows:

1. What are teacher perceptions of ISS at two Mobile County, Alabama, high schools?
2. Do students at a rural high school commit less behavior infractions after attending ISS than students at a suburban high school?
3. Do students of a particular gender or ethnicity commit more behavior infractions after attending ISS than students of another gender or ethnicity?

Definition of Terms

Expulsion - “a more procedural removal of a student, for a longer period of time, typically involving a decision by the superintendent and school board” (Skiba & Sprague, 2008, p. 39).

In-school suspension (ISS) - an alternative discipline strategy where “a student may be assigned for a short period of time in lieu of out-of-school suspension (OSS)” (*In-school suspension*, 2009, p. 1).

Out-of-school suspension (OSS) - “the relatively short-term removal of students from school for a disciplinary infraction” (Skiba & Sprague, 2008, p. 39).

Delimitations

The study focused on male and female students of different ethnic backgrounds who had been assigned to ISS and attend school at either a rural or suburban high school. Thus, elementary and middle school pupils, urban students, and students not attending ISS were not involved in the study. Also, the size of the study was limited to the participants at two high schools.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed teachers responded honestly to all inquiries listed on the questionnaire and students at the rural and suburban high schools are representative samples of those two demographic settings.

Justification

The only alternative discipline strategy at all Mobile County Public School System high schools is ISS. Much effort and energy have been placed on the program, and the school system has employed a 12-month teacher at the central office to coordinate the program. Additionally, the program exists because of a desire to decrease suspensions, punish misbehavior, and rehabilitate students with disciplinary problems. Although ISS has been emphasized in Mobile County, no one has studied the program in order to see how it is impacting students. Henceforth, the researcher desired to discover

how the alternative discipline method works at two high schools—one rural and one suburban.

A potential benefit of the study was a discovery of how the program is impacting the two targeted schools. The researcher wished to ascertain whether or not changes should be made to the program and if students were benefitting more in one demographic area than the other while in ISS in addition to considering gender and ethnicity. The school system benefitted from acquiring data from the study and learning about the results of ISS at two of its high schools.

Over the past 3 decades, many articles have been written and some studies have been conducted focusing on alternative discipline strategies. This study contributes to the research in the educational leadership field by providing recent findings on a topic that has been less focused on in recent years. Also, the study added an Alabama perspective to a program utilized throughout the nation.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

School districts throughout the nation continue to search for solutions to adequately address misbehaving students. After all, academic accomplishments and student progression are maximized when students behave in schools (Andrews, Taylor, Martin, & Slate, 1998). According to Andrews et al., misbehaving students have poor attendance and struggle academically. Administrators have depended on suspensions and expulsions to deal with rule violators. Skiba and Peterson (1999) informed the readers that the use of such exclusionary methods has skyrocketed since the widespread incorporation of zero tolerance policies across the United States. “Increasingly broad interpretations of zero tolerance have resulted in a near epidemic of suspensions and expulsions for seemingly trivial events” (Skiba & Peterson, 1999, p. 374).

Schools need an alternative to punishment for non-violent offenses which focuses on excluding children from their right to an education. One such alternative that requires students to come to school each day, according to Boone (2006), while delivering instruction to them is in-school suspension (ISS). “ISS is designed to offset the negative effects of exclusion and external suspension from school” (Boone, p. v). The assignment of students to in-school suspension keeps them engaged in the educational process, deprives them of a vacation, and reassures parents that their children are being supervised by professionals.

The review of literature covers topics associated with in-school suspension, ranging from misbehavior, standard exclusionary discipline practices, educational law

topics, and the various aspects of the targeted alternative discipline approach. First, the theoretical framework that provides the theories behind disciplinary techniques laid the groundwork for in-school suspension. Next, suspensions and expulsions, along with their impact on academics and minorities and their subjective application, are discussed. Also, a list of school behavior expectations is provided. Legal issues, including due process, the freedoms of speech and expression, disciplinary policies, the rights of special education students, and ISS, are all discussed in detail. Finally, ISS is explained completely by focusing on the following four subheadings: ISS components, requirements, and commonalities; ISS models; variations of ISS; and ISS working effectively.

Theoretical Framework

Skinner (1980) argued that operant behavior is willful behavior. Reinforcement is instrumental in sustaining such behavior. Increased reinforcement results in higher success rates and levels of confidence. People feel like they can accomplish tasks they have successfully completed many times in the past. When reinforcement no longer exists, the confidence of people erodes and feelings of ineptness prevail (Skinner, 1980).

Students respond to the consequences they receive from educators and adjust their behavior accordingly. Skinner (1980) explained that reinforced behavior has an increased probability of happening repeatedly. The conditioning of human behavior involves both positive and negative reinforcement (Skinner, 1938). Ormrod (1995) discussed how positive reinforcement has a stimulus following a response, whereas negative reinforcement involves removing an unpleasant stimulus. “The cessation of a positive reinforcement acts as a negative, the cessation of a negative as a positive” (Skinner, 1938, p. 66). Ormrod said an unruly student who enjoys being noticed by an adult is positively

reinforced when he or she gets the teacher's attention while misbehaving. The teacher practices negative reinforcement when the misbehavior ceases after the student is screamed at during class (Ormrod, 1995).

Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004) explained negative reinforcement by using a football analogy. The coach requires his players to attend an early morning football practice the following morning if they perform poorly on the field during Saturday night's game. Thus, the players are motivated to put forth their maximum effort during each game in order to avoid the undesirable consequences the next day (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). Similarly, the two high schools in this study utilize ISS in order to encourage students to display their best behavior at all times. When students commit behavior infractions that can be punished without using suspension or expulsion, they are assigned to ISS. Students are reinforced to always follow school rules in order to avoid the unpleasant assignment to ISS.

In-school suspension also provides an example of Etzioni's (1975) compliance theory. The two types of compliance theory power that secondary schools use to ensure that students follow the rules are coercive and normative. Coercive powers use physical consequences, including limiting where one can go and what one can do, to encourage compliance while normative powers consist of "symbolic rewards and deprivations" (p. 5). "Educational organizations characteristically employ normative controls, with coercion as a secondary source of compliance" (Etzioni, p. 45).

The school administrations at the high schools in this study use Etzioni's (1975) coercive and normative powers when assigning a student to ISS. Coercive powers are exemplified when the student is not given a choice about the consequences of his or her

behavior but is instead assigned to ISS. The student receives orders as to what to do and where to go during the ISS experience. The normative powers are manifested by students being deprived of the regular school environment and their friends during their stay in ISS. While both coercive and normative controls are used with ISS, normative controls constitute the bulk of the consequences dealt out during ISS. Normative measures are, after all, used more than any other in secondary school settings (Etzioni, 1975).

Suspensions and Expulsions

Fuentes (2003) reported that over 3 million K-12 students are suspended and almost 100,000 others receive an expulsion from school each year throughout America. “Boys in general are the targets, with African-American males bearing a disproportionate brunt of suspensions and disciplinary actions” (p. 17). These suspensions and expulsions are often the result of tough zero tolerance policies, which target a cornucopia of behaviors. While school officials believe such policies increase school safety, research disagrees. Such harsh policies have been shown to increase drop-out rates and hinder academic performance. Professionals in law and education accuse zero tolerance policies of causing many students to end up in the criminal justice system, resulting in many students becoming prison inmates (Fuentes, 2003).

In 2000, the United States Department of Education released data on out-of-school suspensions and expulsions (Fuentes, 2003). The data indicated that Black students were disproportionately affected by such school exclusionary practices. Fuentes (2003) provided the following from the report:

African-American students are 17% of the entire public school population but account for 34% of all out-of-school suspensions and 30% of expulsions. White

students, by contrast, are 62% of the student population but account for 48% of out-of-school suspensions and 49% of expulsions. (p. 19)

Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, and Bachman (2008) studied the racial breakdown of students disciplined throughout the United States between 1991 and 2005. The researchers focused on the extent of racial differences in disciplinary practices, the degree to which the differences have changed, and if particular demographic identifiers impacted the different rates. Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students were disciplined more than White and Asian students. Black males were suspended or expelled more than three times more frequently than White males while Black girls received suspensions and expulsions more than five times more often than White girls. While disciplinary rates for most ethnicities began declining in the 1990s, the number for Black students increased. Differences have existed in discipline rates among the various ethnicities for at least 2 decades. The students most affected by this disproportionate pattern are African American and American Indian (Wallace et al., 2008).

Wallace et al. (2008) analyzed various possible causes for differences in discipline data. After controlling for “family structure,” “parental education,” and “urbanicity of residence,” the researchers were able to eliminate these independent variables as causes for the differences in discipline rates among ethnicities (p. 58). Although Hispanic students were found to use drugs more often than Whites and Blacks and American Indian students brought more weapons to school than their Caucasian counterparts, “the racial and ethnic differences in these particular behaviors are insufficient to account for the relatively large racial and ethnic differences in school discipline” (p. 58). In the end, no statistically significant finding explained the differences in discipline rates. While not

part of the study, the researchers questioned, based on anecdotal evidence, whether or not Black students and White teachers miscommunicate and misinterpret each other's actions, thus explaining why Blacks are referred to and disciplined through the office more than any other ethnic group targeted by the study (Wallace et al., 2008).

Christle, Nelson, and Jolivet (2004) listed four ways that schools with low suspension numbers help keep students from misbehaving. One way to prevent discipline problems is to have programs available that incentive good behavior. One school distributes privileges to students for good behavior via the Personal Responsibility in Daily Effort (PRIDE) program. A second strategy is to find an academic or extracurricular area of interest for each student. A school that was a focus of the study involved virtually every student in one of its sporting teams or 15 clubs. A third strategy one school used to reduce behavior infractions consisted of mentoring to students, including both one-on-one and small group intervention. Finally, some of the schools with the lowest suspension rates used a time-out room, which provided counseling and time to calm down, detention, and Saturday School (Christle et al., 2004)

Christle et al. (2004) discussed how schools with both high and low suspension rates cited a need for increased parent participation and beneficial staff development. Two productive ways to impact parental involvement is through parent/student school picnics and school postcards sent to parents focusing on positive aspects of their children's behavior. In order to decrease the number of student suspensions, schools should also create staff development that targets "behavior management," "engaging instruction," and "diversity and cultural issues" (p. 524). Both of these solutions require administrators and

teachers working together, which in itself allows for problem-solving to occur (Christle et al., 2004).

Administrator and teacher attitudes, as well as the school building's appearance and "the academic and behavioral programs" available, impacted school suspension rates (Christle et al., 2004, p. 522). The emphasis by administrators on certain types of discipline and their punishment philosophies affects suspension rates greatly. Student perceptions of the way faculty and staff feel about the school's leadership may also impact suspension numbers. Also, teacher practices and attitudes in the classroom may increase or decrease the number of suspensions at a school. Schools with low suspension rates had campuses that were "cleaner, brighter, and had a more relaxed decor (e.g., restaurant style cafeterias, artistic displays) that mirrors life outside of school" as opposed to schools with high suspension rates whose campuses "tended to have more institutional environments" (p. 522). Finally, schools that had very few suspensions set very high academic expectations for students and took precautionary and preemptive measures to stop misbehavior before it occurred as opposed to using instruments of punishment (Christle et al., 2004).

Christle et al. (2004) explained that schools with more discipline referrals had higher rates of suspensions. Fifty-two percent of the students suspended received two or more suspensions during the 2001-2002 academic year. Six relationships were identified in connection with student suspension rates. Christle et al. (2004) listed the following areas related to suspensions:

1. The socioeconomic background of the students was positively related to suspension rates.

2. The number of reported student law violations showed a positive relationship to suspension rate in this study.
3. A positive relationship was found between retention rate and suspension rate in the correlation analysis.
4. Attendance rate was negatively related to suspension rate.
5. Academic achievement was negatively related to suspension rate, a finding corroborated by several other researchers.
6. Annual amount of spending per student was significantly related to suspension rate. (pp. 520-521)

Christle et al. (2004) elaborated on the aforementioned points, providing additional insight about the specific effects of the relationships on suspension rates. Adults may respond to students negatively based on their socioeconomic background. Consequently, the schools with high suspension numbers had lower percentages of White students. Schools with high arrest rates had high suspension rates, and both are attributed to tough zero tolerance policies. Students who are retained not only have a higher incidence of suspensions but are also more apt to drop out of school. Schools with higher attendance rates had a tendency to involve students in school policy-making and social and athletic groups. Suspension was shown to adversely impact academic achievement. Last but not least, school funding was \$5,637.90 per pupil on average at schools with low suspension rates as opposed to \$4,188.65 for students at high suspension rate schools. Since schools receive funding based on average daily attendance, suspensions can prove to be a costly discipline option. Over a period of 2 years, the state of Kentucky lost more

than 3.5 million dollars of funding due to students missing school due to suspensions (Christle et al., 2004).

Christle et al. (2004) said that delinquent students often have a history of suspensions. Schools should take three actions in order to ensure students avoid behavior infractions that lead to suspensions. First, they should create an academic atmosphere conducive to learning that accentuates the positive aspects of students. Secondly, schools should have rigorous academic and social standards that students can achieve. Finally, teachers and administrators should provide students with the skills and tools needed to reach their goals and experience success (Christle et al., 2004).

Vavrus and Cole (2002) discussed how students simply communicating with the teacher can often result in the student being suspended from class, especially if the teacher is White and the students are Black or Hispanic. The researchers concluded that policies of zero tolerance “disproportionately affect students of color for their misbehavior in school” (p. 87). Students removed from the classroom for discipline issues are often targets of arbitrary decisions by teachers based on race or gender differences. Social and cultural differences between students and teachers can result in students being suspended from schools for nonviolent behavior that is void of verbal abuse (Vavrus & Cole, 2002).

The reasons for suspensions, according to Vavrus and Cole (2002), should be analyzed in addition to the actual length of the punishment. Administrators suspend students who have not violated specific discipline policies. Oftentimes, a suspension is handed out to one student when many students are engaging in the same disruptive classroom behavior. The teacher will become distracted from the lesson by numerous

students asking questions or making comments without first being officially recognized. Then, after a series of students have been ignored or verbally reprimanded for the distractions, the last student to speak will often receive the bulk of the punishment. Thus, although many students may be talking out of turn, the teacher, who feels he or she has lost control of the class, will focus on one student to write up for an office referral. The researchers, who studied two freshman science classes in an urban high school during the fall semester of 1997, found that the students in trouble were often Black or Hispanic females. The two teachers, a rookie and a veteran, both responded in similar ways when they had lost control of class, singling out a specific student on which to release his or her wrath. The “disruptions appear to be highly contextualized social interactions whose interpretation depends on the sociocultural contexts in which potentially disruptive events occur” (Vavrus & Cole, 2002, p. 90).

Depending on the teacher and the make-up of the class, the interpretation of what constitutes disruptive behavior may vary (Vavrus & Cole, 2002). Violations of vague rules such as “repeated classroom disruption” often result in suspension although the “violations of these unspoken and unwritten rules of linguistic conduct” are not specifically defined by schools and are not uniformly interpreted by all students and teachers (p. 95). Henceforth, subjectivity often provides the foundation for the suspensions that result for such rule violations. Code of conduct breaches that result in suspensions during one episode may not even receive a verbal reprimand when occurring on another day or in another context (Vavrus & Cole, 2002).

Skiba and Sprague (2008) explained that school disciplinarians apply suspension and expulsion unevenly throughout school systems. Classroom management, teacher

characteristics, and administrator subjectivity appear to impact whether or not these exclusionary practices accompany a behavior infraction more than the actual rule violation. Actually, severe disciplinary issues that place others in harm's way make up only a small minority of total school suspensions and expulsions. "The quality of school governance, demographics, and staff attitudes all play roles in determining the rates of school disciplinary actions" (Skiba & Sprague, 2008, p. 40). School administrators who favor zero tolerance policies suspend and expel students more frequently than those who disagree with such inflexible disciplinary policies (Skiba & Rausch, 2006).

Education Law

Due Process

Regardless of disciplinarians' philosophies and methods of disciplinary action, due process must precede the meting out of punishment. Alexander and Alexander (1992) explained that due process requirements existed even in the Magna Carta, and common law, or case law derived throughout the years from various legislative bodies, has required a fair hearing in order to ensure the execution of justice throughout America's history. Procedural due process protects against bias and ensures each individual will not receive punishment until he or she has had an opportunity to provide a defense. In a school setting, students are required to be informed of the charges brought against them, have a chance to defend themselves by stating their version of the situation that occurred, and be allowed to provide any evidence they have to strengthen their defense (Alexander & Alexander, 2002).

Although the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution also ensured Americans would receive due process during court proceedings, the same rights did not

extend to the school setting until the ruling of *Dixon v. Alabama* (1961), according to Alexander and Alexander (1992). Before the ruling handed down in this case, schools cited *in loco parentis* since educators were in charge of and responsible for students during the school day and, thus, did not have to extend legal rights to students as afforded through the judicial system. *Dixon* (1961) disagreed and extended the procedural due process rights to students. Students had a right to present their cases and defend themselves against allegations with which they disagreed (Imber & Geel, 2000). “Dixon established that procedural due process does manifestly apply to schools and other governmental agencies, and that deviations from minimal fairness in disciplinary action, depending on the magnitude and severity, may well deny the student a constitutional interest” (Alexander & Alexander, 1992, p. 301).

As detailed by Alexander and Alexander (1992), students were expelled for demonstrating at a Montgomery County courthouse eatery and some other unspecified locations. The letter of expulsion from Dr. Trenholm, college president, gave no specific reason for removing the students from the institution. Additionally, Alabama’s State Superintendent Steward did not specifically detail why students were denied the right to an education when he “voted for expulsion because the students had broken rules and regulations pertaining to all of the State institutions” (p. 302). Governor Patterson, continuing the vagueness, testified that student behavior may have escalated into more serious harm and mayhem if they had not been removed from the educational institution (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

Although the college had a history of allowing students to defend themselves via a hearing before they were expelled, the institution did not afford this opportunity to the

plaintiffs in this case (Alexander & Alexander, 1992). The court held that “when a governmental body acts so as to injure an individual, the Constitution requires that the act be consonant with due process of law” (p. 303). Thus, students who were being denied the right to continue their college experience deserved a hearing before the board or body wishing to expel them. Furthermore, the seriousness of the expulsion was recognized by the court when it voiced concern over whether or not another institution of higher learning would be interested in taking a student who had been expelled from a college. The students would be in danger of not being able to fulfill their goals of a college education at any institution (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

Alexander and Alexander (1992) continued to discuss how court involvement in schools evolved further via other court decisions. *Soglin v. Kauffman* (1969) ruled that the legality of discipline deserves review if the suspension extended long enough to deprive a student from obtaining credit for a class. Although courts always require disciplinarians to use due process, the extent of the punishment and its results must also be reasonable and fair (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

Goss v. Lopez (1975) extended the fairness of due process to also apply to shorter periods of suspension (Alexander & Alexander, 1992). The principal suspended students for a period of less than 10 days for misbehavior committed at school without providing students with due process. The school system did not afford the students a hearing before or after the suspension was handed out. The court ruled the suspension invalid since the pupils did not receive due process (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

Imber and Geel (2000) purported that similar to the *Dixon* (1961) ruling, the United States Supreme Court found in the *Goss* (1975) case that due process applies to

any suspension, regardless of the number of days it lasts. Nine students of the Columbus, Ohio, Public School System committed various behavior violations and each received 10-day suspensions. The students did not get the luxury of a hearing, so they were not given the opportunity to state their case before the disciplinarian. “The Fourteenth Amendment forbids the State to deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law” (p. 165). Education is a property right and even denial of that right for a day without due process violates the Fourteenth Amendment. Also significant, suspensions have the potential of tarnishing a student’s reputation with both peers and adults and may have an adverse impact on his or her life for many years to come (Imber & Geel, 2000).

According to Imber and Geel (2000), the Supreme Court justices opined that short-term suspensions did require due process, but the due process could immediately follow the removal of a child from school if the student was an impending danger to others. The due process hearing does not have to be elaborate or courtroom-like. The opportunity for defendants to be heard after they are informed of the charges brought against them must occur in a timely manner. The justices upheld the district court’s ruling, finding “each of the suspensions involved here to have occurred without a hearing either before or after the suspension, and that each suspension was therefore invalid and the statute unconstitutional insofar as it permits such suspensions without notice or hearing” (Imber & Geel, 2000, p. 168).

Freedoms of Speech and Expression

The fairness of punishment delivered by administrators is also often argued in courtrooms throughout the country. Alexander and Alexander (1992) explained how the Supreme Court of the United States in *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community*

School District (1969) found suspending students for wearing black armbands in protest of the Vietnam War was both unfair and unconstitutional. Simply protesting by wearing armbands did not disrupt the orderly educational environment. Furthermore, schools may not suspend students just because their freedom of speech may make some others uncomfortable. The Supreme Court did conclude that freedom of speech can be limited if it causes a significant disruption, hindering the education of other students (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

The *Tinker* case, as stated by Alexander and Alexander (1992), began with students meeting at a classmate's house to plan on wearing black armbands and fasting one day in opposition to the Vietnam War. When school principals learned about the planned opposition, they immediately met and banned students from wearing black armbands. Two and 3 days after the ban, which plaintiffs were aware of, three students wore the armbands in silent protest and received suspensions as forewarned. The students were not allowed to return to school until they agreed not to wear the armbands. Although some students in the school system had worn political buttons and Nazi insignias, only students wearing black armbands were prohibited from attending school (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

The court concluded that "it can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom at the schoolhouse gate" (Alexander & Alexander, 1992, p. 320). Additionally, there was no evidence that the educational process was disrupted and no harm resulted in the wearing of the armbands. The simple fact that school administrators worried that a disruption would occur due to the unpopular viewpoint of the students wearing the black symbols does not justify the freedom of one's

expression to be denied. School officials had no basis in which to become afraid the armbands would cause disorder at the schools. “Clearly, the prohibition of expression of one particular opinion, at least without evidence that is necessary to avoid material and substantial interference with schoolwork or discipline, is not constitutionally permissible” (Alexander & Alexander, 1992, p. 320). Thus, the Supreme Court overturned the lower court’s ruling and sided with the students, allowing armbands to be worn (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

The court provided further clarification of this decision in *Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser* (1986) by drawing “a line between the ‘political message’ of *Tinker* (1969) and other content that is less compelling subject to First Amendment protection” (Alexander & Alexander, 1992, p. 317). In the *Bethel* case, a student received a suspension for a sexually charged speech. The court upheld the suspension and ruled that “students’ lewd and indecent speech is not protected by the First Amendment” (Alexander & Alexander, p. 327).

Matthew Fraser, a high school senior and focus of the *Bethel* (1986) case, delivered a vulgar speech to about 600 fellow high school students as young as 14 (Imber & Geel, 2000). Many teachers and students found the speech to be offensive and inappropriate while some students mocked the speech with sexually explicit gestures. Before receiving a 3-day suspension for his acts, which blatantly violated the school district’s rules against foul language that disrupts the educational environment, Fraser admitted to delivering the speech the preceding day (Imber & Geel, 2000).

Imber and Geel (2000) explained that the United States Supreme Court believes “a democratic society requires consideration for the personal sensibilities of the other

participants and audiences” (p. 128). Also, the court contends that students do not have “the same latitude” as adults when it comes to freedom of expression (p. 129). Schools have the right and responsibility to ensure inappropriate and obscene language be disallowed on their campuses. The court ruled in favor of Washington’s Bethel School District, contending tht the school acted within its right in punishing the student via suspension for Fraser’s offensive speech. The court simultaneously declared that the student’s argument that he was unaware of the potential punishment that would accompany such a speech was unmerited. Both the school disciplinary code and warnings given to Fraser by two teachers gave him ample warning that his actions may result in adverse behavior consequences (Imber & Geel, 2000).

Disciplinary Policies

Brady (2002) detailed the results of *Fuller v. Decatur Public School Board of Education School District* (2000), which focuses on the expulsion of students for violating zero tolerance policies in Decatur, Illinois. Six Black students received a 2-year expulsion after engaging in a brawl at a Friday night football game at MacArthur High School on September 17, 1999. Less than halfway into the third quarter of the game, a fight began in the bleachers, causing spectators to flee to escape harm’s way. A videotape of the last few minutes of the 10-minute fight revealed students “punching and kicking each other, with no regard for the safety of individuals seated in the stands watching the game” (Brady, 2002, p. 185). Ed Boehm, MacArthur High School’s principal, stated in his testimony that the fight was the worst one he had seen in his 27-year tenure as an educator in the system (Brady, 2002).

According to Brady (2002), administrators at all three high schools that the students attended began an official investigation of the violent engagement. The principals immediately suspended the fighters for 10 days. They also recommended to the superintendent that the students be expelled from school for 2 years. Kenneth Arndt, the Decatur Public School Board of Education School District superintendent, notified the parents via mail that a disciplinary hearing would be held to determine if their children would be expelled from the school district. The letter included the behavior infractions the students had allegedly committed, including the following: “gang-like activities,” “physical confrontation/physical violence with staff or students,” and “any other acts that endanger the well-being of students, teachers, and any school employee(s)” (Brady, 2002, p. 186).

Brady (2002) explained that the United States of America’s District Court Judge Michael McCuskey ruled in favor of the Decatur school board on January 11, 2000, and its decision to expel the students for 2 years without offering them an alternative school option. Jesse Jackson met with Illinois Governor George Ryan after the ruling to voice his concern about the harsh punishment meted out to the African-American students. The governor said that the inconsistency with zero tolerance policies between various school districts posed problems. Not long after the meeting, the school district reduced the expulsion to a 1-year punishment for the perpetrators (Brady, 2002).

As stated by Brady (2002), Judge McCuskey rejected all four of the students’ arguments. First, the students did not have their due process rights violated because they did receive a hearing by an independent individual and the school board. Secondly, the students’ claims that their rights as guaranteed under the Fourteenth Amendment and

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act were violated were also rejected, along with their argument that the school system discriminates against Black students based on Blacks receiving more suspensions than Whites. Thirdly, the judge ruled that the school system had a zero tolerance “position” and not a “policy” (p. 188). Finally, while the students argued that the gang activity violation was too vague, Judge McCuskey ruled that the other two charges against the students were clear and sufficient enough to warrant their punishment (Brady, 2002).

Brady (2002) discussed that the *Fuller* (2000) ruling demonstrates “the reality that courts give considerable deference to local school board disciplinary decisions” (p. 188). Even though the courts often side with school systems in student disciplinary disputes, schools should be wary of blanket zero tolerance policies that address code of conduct violations not involving weapons. While the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 supported zero tolerance policies against guns on campus, it did not discuss other behavior violations. Schools must ensure that zero tolerance policies do not deprive students of their due process rights (Brady, 2002).

A list provided by Brady (2002) contains questions school systems should answer when implementing zero tolerance policies:

1. Does the school really need a zero tolerance policy that allows for no exceptions? Schools can impose consistent and stiff disciplinary penalties for serious student misconduct, such as fighting, which gives students constitutional due process without creating a zero tolerance policy.
2. Was the offense in question knowing and intentional?
3. Is the offense covered by the school policy adequately defined?

4. Is there a reasonable relationship between the punishment and the age and nature of the offense?
5. Does the zero tolerance policy allow any flexibility? Can the school board and superintendent change the penalty if necessary?
6. Is the school policy consistent with applicable state statutes and regulations?
7. If the policy is strictly designed to be a zero tolerance policy, is it applied in a nondiscriminatory manner (i.e., not only along such traditional characteristics as race and gender, but to so-called 'good' and 'bad' kids?
(p. 189)

Brady (2002) mentions three areas schools should focus on in order to avoid abusing disciplinary policies. The courts should be open to the idea that due process rights are sometimes violated and school punishment occasionally does not fit the behavior violation. Statistics from the school systems' data records should be analyzed to see if racial minorities are being disproportionately punished. Finally, "the collection and dissemination procedures" must be modernized and more "uniform" instead of varying from one school system to another (p. 191). Educational leaders, social activists, and community members should work together to make sure zero tolerance policies are not abused and unnecessarily denying students a right to due process or to an education (Brady, 2002).

Another case, as noted by Imber and Geel (2000) and Brady (2002), *Alex v. Allen* (1976), exemplifies once again how the court has a tendency to uphold school disciplinary policies. The student, who faced a suspension of 30 days, complained to the

court that the discipline rules were vague and ambiguous. The plaintiff also argued that the rules were overreaching. The court rejected the pupil's arguments, saying "schools should have more flexibility in making rules than legislatures do in writing criminal statutes" (Imber & Geel, 2000, p. 144).

The Rights of Special Education Students

Federal legislation like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures special needs students certain educational rights and dictates how they can be disciplined, especially concerning changing their educational placement (Imber & Geel, 2000). Alexander and Alexander (1992) said that *Honig v. Doe* (1988) "prohibits school authorities from unilaterally excluding disabled students from classrooms for dangerous conduct growing out of (their) disability" (p. 395). The court did allow for the suspension of disabled students for up to 10 days until an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting can be held to determine if the students need to have their educational placement changed (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

The San Francisco Unified School District expelled a couple of emotionally conflicted students for acts of violence and other misbehavior stemming from their disabilities (Alexander & Alexander, 1992). One 17-year-old student, Doe, had violent verbal outbursts when agitated. He had "physical abnormalities, speech difficulties, and poor grooming habits," along with problems socializing (Alexander & Alexander, 1992, p. 395). As predicted in his IEP, he violently responded to another child's ridiculing by choking the child with such strength as to leave markings on the neck of the victim and kicked the glass out of a window while being delivered to the administrator's office. Doe

received a 5-day suspension and subsequent expulsion for his actions (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

Alexander and Alexander (1992) explicated the other plaintiff, Jack Smith, also had a history of emotional and psychological problems. He had been abused as a child and had a difficult time interacting appropriately with others. One professional noticed that the child masked his “extreme hyperactivity and low self-esteem” by violent verbal attacks toward both peers and adults (p. 396). The San Francisco Unified School District decided to change Smith from a half-day to a full-day educational program. Shortly after being placed in the all-day program, the pupil began violating discipline policies. The grandparents met with school officials twice and agreed to transfer him back to the half-day program but did not receive information about their right to appeal the decision as guaranteed to the student under the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA). Before leaving the school, grandparents received notification that their grandson would be recommended for expulsion if he continued the following: “stealing, extorting money from fellow students, and making sexual comments to female classmates” (p. 396). One month later school officials expelled the child for further behavior infractions (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

In both cases, according to Alexander and Alexander (1992), the district judge sided with the students. The judge ordered that tutoring at home be provided to Doe by the district and then ordered the school to accept him back as a student. The court in the Smith case decided that students could not be denied a right to an education due to behavior manifested by their disability. The court went on to rule that the district could not suspend students more than 5 days for actions relating to their disabilities. Also, the

court ruled that EHA guidelines must be followed when disciplining handicapped students and that an alternative education be provided for students when a regular setting was not a viable option (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

The Supreme Court, as described by Alexander and Alexander (1992), sided with the students in its ruling by saying that disabled students could not be denied an education. However, the court did say dangerous students, regardless of their disabilities, may be suspended for up to 10 days per incident. If schools require more than 10 days to change the child's IEP and educational setting or if parents object to the change, "the school district may request an injunction to either keep the child out of school or temporarily place the child until an appropriate placement may be formulated" (Alexander & Alexander, 1992, p. 399).

ISS Litigated

Although less litigated than other forms of standard punishment, the legality of in-school suspension (ISS) has been argued in the courts also, according to Imber and Geel (2000). The court ruled that a hearing must be held before students are deprived of instruction as they were in *Cole v. Newton Special Municipal Separate School District* (1988) (Imber & Geel, 2000). While due process must also be followed when using alternative discipline strategies, ISS may allow resolution of discipline issues and disagreements between parents and schools by allowing students to continue to receive an education at school, unlike suspensions which deprive students of instruction and sometimes end up with judicial intervention as in some of the aforementioned court cases (Alexander & Alexander, 1992). Courts may still intervene when students are assigned in-school suspension if due process is defined. Even though students are required to stay

in school during ISS, according to the Advantage Press (2001), they are not allowed to remain in the regular classroom while receiving their behavior consequences. Students do not receive the luxury of a vacation by way of suspension but instead must serve their time in an area of isolation (Advantage Press, 2001).

Behavior Expectations

Dickinson and Miller (2006) believed administrators depend increasingly upon ISS in order to avoid the attendance issues that accompany regular school suspension. The program will be used more and more with special education students since their exceptionalities often impact their behavior in a negative way. Although educators will continue to use ISS and other forms of discipline, no program will be as effective as possible until educators appropriately address student behavioral issues (Dickinson & Miller, 2006).

Cotton (1990) analyzed 60 studies, reviews, and reports in order to understand the relationship between discipline and behavior. In order for schools to have well-disciplined students, educators should adhere to several guidelines. The Cotton (1990) research revealed that in order for schools to decrease student misbehavior, the following should occur:

At the School Level:

1. Engage school- and community-wide commitment to establishing and maintaining appropriate student behavior in school and at school-sponsored events.
2. Establish and communicate high expectations for student behavior.

3. With input from students develop clear behavioral rules and procedures and make these known to all stakeholders in the school, including parents and community.
4. Work on getting to know students as individuals; take an interest in their plans and activities.
5. Work to improve communication with and involvement of parents and community members in instruction, extracurricular activities, and governance.
6. If commercial, packaged discipline programs are used, modify their components to meet your unique school situation and delete those components which are not congruent with research.

For the Principal:

7. Increase your visibility and informal involvement in the everyday life of the school; increase personal interactions with students.
8. Encourage teachers to handle all classroom discipline problems that they reasonably can; support their decisions.
9. Enhance teachers' skills as classroom managers and disciplinarians by arranging for appropriate staff development activities.

At the Classroom Level:

10. Hold and communicate high behavioral expectations.
11. Establish clear rules and procedures and instruct students in how to follow them; give primary-level children and low-SES children, in particular, a great deal of instruction practice, and reminding.

12. Make clear to students the consequences of misbehavior.
13. Enforce classroom rules promptly, consistently, and equitably from the very first day of school.
14. Work to instill a sense of self-discipline in students; devote time to teaching self-monitoring skills.
15. Maintain a brisk instructional pace and smooth transitions between activities.
16. Monitor classroom activities and give students feedback and reinforcement regarding their behavior.
17. Create opportunities for students (particularly those with behavioral problems) to experience success in their learning and social behavior.
18. Identify those students who seem to lack a sense of personal efficacy and work to help them achieve an internal locus of control.
19. Make use of cooperative learning groups, as appropriate.
20. Make use of humor, when suitable, to stimulate student interest or reduce classroom tensions.
21. Remove distracting materials (athletic equipment, art materials, etc.) from view when instruction is in progress.

When Discipline Problems Arise:

22. Intervene quickly; do not allow behavior that violates school or classroom rules to go unchecked.
23. As appropriate, develop reinforcement schedules and use these with misbehaving students.

24. Instruct students with behavior problems in self-control skills; teach them how to observe their own behavior, talk themselves through appropriate behavior patterns, and reinforce themselves for succeeding.
25. Teach misbehaving students general prosocial skills—self-awareness, cooperation, and helping.
26. Place misbehaving students in peer tutoring arrangements; have them serve either as tutors or tutees, as appropriate.
27. Make use of punishments which are reasonable for the infraction committed; provide support to help students improve their behavior.
28. Make use of counseling services for students with behavior problems; counseling should seek the cause of the misconduct and assist students in developing needed skills to behave appropriately.
29. Make use of in-school suspension programs, which include guidance, support, planning for change, and skill building.
30. Collaborate with misbehaving students on developing and signing contingency contracts to help stimulate behavioral change; follow through on terms of contracts.
31. Make use of home-based reinforcement to increase the effectiveness of school-based agreements and directives.
32. In schools that are troubled with severe discipline problems and negative climates, a broad-based organizational development approach may be needed to bring about meaningful change; community involvement and support are critical to the success of such efforts.

Ineffective Discipline Practices:

33. Avoid the use of vague or unenforceable rules.
34. Do not ignore student behavior which violates school or classroom rules; it will not go away.
35. Avoid ambiguous or inconsistent treatment of misbehavior.
36. Avoid draconian punishments and punishments delivered without accompanying support.
37. Avoid corporal punishment.
38. Avoid out-of-school suspension whenever possible. Reserve the use of suspension for serious misconduct only. (pp. 25-27)

In-school Suspension

ISS Components, Requirements, and Commonalities

According to Dickinson and Miller (2006), there are three components necessary for an ISS program to be successful for special needs students. The first item of importance centers around the staff of ISS and their ability to deliver individualized, differentiated instruction to the students. Secondly, ISS should be designed to help students transition back into the regular classroom. The transitional period should incorporate the use of counselors and any other professionals needed to help students readjust to their normal school setting without committing additional behavior infractions. Finally, the school system must ensure its ISS programs meet all of the special education guidelines set by federal legislation in order to avoid violating the rights of students with disabilities. Principals should stay abreast of any changes in federal law concerning the education of special needs children in order to ensure ISS meets all of the

guidelines put in place to protect the rights of students with learning disabilities (Dickinson & Miller, 2006).

Sanders (2001) worked extensively with students who had behavior problems in order to help them improve academically and behaviorally. He developed a list of requirements needed in order to make an ISS program successful. Sanders recommended that the program have the following: (a) a program statement focusing on its purpose, (b) a detailed outline of how students are actually assigned to the program along with the identification of the parties responsible for the assignment, (c) the expected behavior of ISS students, (d) a detailed academic component for all program participants that allows them to keep up with their peers in the regular classroom setting, (e) the accountability of the students' teachers provided by requiring educators to issue work to students, (f) counseling provided to all participants, (g) a parental involvement component, and (h) continued student monitoring once pupils have left ISS and returned to the regular classroom setting (Sanders, 2001).

Morris and Howard (2003) discussed five essential commonalities of effective in-school suspension programs. First, educators forbid communication between pupils. Secondly, students eat lunch in the cafeteria after all other students have left. The third shared characteristic consists of an ISS average stay per student of 3 to 5 days. The fourth requirement limits privileges. Finally, teachers send work daily to their ISS students (Morris & Howard, 2003).

ISS Models

Four categories of in-school suspension exist, according to Morris and Howard (2003). The four models are as follows: punitive, academic, therapeutic, and individual.

Each model differs in how ISS students experience their stay during the alternative discipline assignment (Morris & Howard, 2003).

Morris and Howard (2003) explicated the punitive model as the most common form of ISS used in schools today and its design functions as a means to punish misbehaving students in order to prevent future misbehavior. Schools that utilize the punitive model assign students to ISS for a period of 2 to 10 days. Students may not talk and have very limited bathroom privileges. During their ISS sentence, students must alternate between doing school work and manual labor around campus (Morris & Howard, 2003).

Another type of ISS, the academic model, focuses on helping students struggling to learn since the assumption of this model focuses on the belief that students who do not understand school work have a tendency to act up in class (Morris & Howard, 2003). In the academic version of ISS, diagnostic tests are administered and learning problems are identified and addressed. Students receive instruction focusing on fundamental learning skills. Finally, the instructor of the ISS program has received training in how to help learners who are academically challenged (Morris & Howard, 2003).

Morris and Howard (2003) detailed how the therapeutic model also exists in some schools that utilize ISS as an alternative discipline strategy. This model assumes that students misbehave because of problems they are experiencing that have not been addressed. Students talk about their problems, acknowledge their wrongdoing, and write about their issues in hopes of refraining from committing behavior infractions again. During the therapeutic ISS program, students improve their self-esteem and learn how to deal with conflict. A variety of counseling techniques, including one-on-one and group

therapy, applies to each student. Professional development for teachers that targets student counseling and support for parents reinforces ISS. Lastly, students are not only assisted with behavior issues during ISS but are also monitored after returning to the regular classroom (Morris & Howard, 2003).

Morris and Howard (2003) explained how the final model, the individual model, originally received recognition by Sheets (1996). The individual model recognizes that various students commit behaviors infractions for different reasons and require a combination of aforementioned ISS techniques in order to meet each student's needs. Students receive thorough evaluations once they are entered into the program in order to ascertain which ISS method best suits their needs. Thus, the individual model of ISS requires the staff to work individually with students in accordance with the root of their misbehavior (Morris & Howard, 2003; Sheets, 1996).

Variations of ISS

Winborne (1980) explained the therapeutic model of in-school suspension used in Virginia's King William County public school system. The high school alternative discipline program, also called the Alternative Citizenship Program, focuses on academic and behavior modification. The program, funded by a \$26,500 grant from the federal government, allows the school to punish students for misbehavior while intervening with academic and behavioral support services (Winborne, 1980).

After receiving a discipline referral from a teacher and conferencing with a student, Winborne (1980) discussed how the principal decides the severity of the punishment doled out to the pupil. If the principal believes the behavior infraction can be handled via placement in the in-school suspension program, he or she sends out a letter

notifying the parent, in-school suspension coordinator, guidance counselor, and student's classroom teacher (in addition to the teacher who submitted the referral if he or she does not teach the child) and places the student in the program the next morning if a slot is available. A copy of the student's disciplinary records, as well as the number of days assigned to the program, is also provided to the in-school suspension coordinator (Winborne, 1980).

According to Winborne (1980), punishment is accomplished through isolation. In-school suspension students remain all day in a windowless room with five student stations. The room has its own bathroom facilities and water fountain, and students consume their lunches in the isolated class. A teacher and three paraprofessionals staff the classroom, ensuring the disallowance of student interaction while providing one-on-one tutoring and counseling to program participants. Students dislike not having the ability to experience the socialization aspects of school while in the in-school suspension program (Winborne, 1980).

Winborne (1980) detailed the four phases of the in-school suspension program in King William County. During the average 3 to 4 day stay in the program, students experience Phase I—Assessment and Evaluation, Phase II—Remediation, Phase III—Continuation of Current Educational Objectives, and Phase IV—Counseling. Phase I consists of both a personality test and diagnostic reading and math tests. The second phase targets the remediation of students' academic weaknesses via math and reading intervention programs. Phase III focuses on the current class work students' peers are completing in the regular classroom in order to ensure students receiving the alternative discipline strategy do not fall behind academically. Finally, the last phase focuses on

counseling students to help them with their problems and attempts to ensure misbehavior is minimized in the future (Winborne, 1980).

Winborne (1980) provided some descriptive statistics that indicate the in-school suspension program possibly contributed to a decreased suspension rate. Only 21 students were suspended during the first semester of the first year of the in-school suspension program compared to 53 the year before. Many students who would have previously been suspended received assignment to the in-school suspension program. Forty-nine students accounted for 72 placements in the in-school suspension program during the first semester of the program. Thirty-four male students and 15 female students represented the gender of the total participants during the semester studied (Winborne, 1980).

According to Haley and Watson (2000), one school uses its in-school suspension program to focus on both academics and behavior. Behaviors, including fighting, smoking, and general misbehavior, result in students attending in-school suspension. Many of these students not only have behavioral issues but also struggle academically. The ISS program uses writing in order to both improve writing skills and address behavioral problems. Students discuss their misbehavior via writing, and the ISS instructor helps students improve their writing ability while learning how to cope with deviant behavior and conflict resolution. The vast majority of students (59%) were Black, and 150 out of the 220 students were male. Thus, mostly male students and African-American pupils populate ISS (Haley & Watson, 2000).

Morrison, Anthony, Storino, and Dillon (2001) studied the ISS program at a school in California. Eighty-five students participated in the alternative discipline strategy during the school year. Student ethnicity was broken down into two groups—Latino

(47.6%) and non-Latino (52.4%). Males made up 78% of the program's population. A total of 51.2% of ISS students had been processed through the office on prior occasions for discipline problems while 27.4% of them had been suspended in the past (Morrison et al., 2001).

Morrison et al. (2001) pointed out that the participants in the study on average did not have attendance problems and had an overall C average for the school year. Students who had been disciplined previously during the school year had below a C average. Student behavior improved more for students who had not been previously referred to the office than for students who had committed prior behavior infractions. "Additionally, students who were less susceptible to peer pressure, more optimistic, and more socially responsible were rated as showing improved behavior by the end of the academic year during which they attended the in-school suspension program" (Morrison et al., 2001, p. 288).

Morrison et al. (2001) discussed how ISS focused on counseling and instruction, helping students improve communication, constructively deal with problems, and discuss appropriate behavior in a school setting. The program's goals were to demonstrate to students how their actions were responsible for their problems, to determine how to find solutions for their problems, and to find positive plans and ideas to focus on in the future. The instructor, who had both a teaching and counseling background, required students to create productive goals before exiting ISS (Morrison et al., 2001). In-school suspension programs should consist of counseling, along with punishment, in order to address the underlying behavior problems and emotional issues that lead students to commit the deviant acts that result in their placement in alternative discipline programs. "Counseling

on the significance of everyday behavioral decisions could have a profound impact on students' responsiveness to discipline" (Troyan, 2003, p. 1669).

Morrison et al. (2001) explained that students were removed from the rest of the student body and transported to a nearby junior college campus while in ISS. Students toured the college campus and ate lunch there during the program. Participants in the program expressed appreciation for being able to get a first-hand view of life at a college campus (Morrison et al., 2001).

Dilling (1979) explained how one public school in Salina, Kansas, used an in-school suspension program to not only increase academic achievement but also improve school and community relations with the cooperation of administrators, counselors, teachers, and parents. Counselors and administrators collaborate to create an alternative to suspensions. Parents became hostile toward school officials when their children were sent home, and students were rewarded with a vacation for committing prohibited acts at school. The school's solution was the implementation of an in-school suspension program that provided rigorous academic work, counseling, and isolation from the rest of the school. Parents were required to come to school at least once during each week their child was in the program in order to work with the student and counselor to discuss "behaviors displayed, home conduct, goals of education expected by the home, feelings about school, achievements of the student, what the school expects of the student, and what the school is doing for the student" (Dilling, 1979, p. 473). Counselors agreed to meet parents after school and on weekends if their schedules did not allow for them to come during school hours (Dilling, 1979).

Students are not allowed at school before the take-in bell and must depart immediately after the program is over, according to Dilling (1979). Bus transportation is denied to students in the program, and school officials suggest parents drive students to school in the morning and back home in the afternoon in order to curtail any problems they may encounter on the way to and from school. Students receive individual and small group counseling before they begin ISS, during their stay in ISS, and after their release from ISS. The program appears to be working based on school data that indicate 23 students who would have been suspended without the ISS program attended 142 days of school that they would have otherwise missed (Dilling, 1979).

Dilling (1979) found six key elements that make the targeted ISS program successful. The first element is the student sees the parent and school staff working together as a team for his or her own benefit. Secondly, parent-student-counselor sessions provide parents and students with strategies that positively impact the home environment. Thirdly, students return to class ahead of where they would have been if they had stayed in the regular classroom because of the intense one-on-one instruction they receive in ISS. The fourth key element is the teacher expectations for the students in ISS evolve to become more realistic, considering their individual needs and circumstances. The fifth element is that the school staff becomes more familiar with parents, students, and their home environments and is able to educate the child more holistically. Finally, all parties interested in the well-being of the child are working together while the student is in the ISS program instead of the school employees and parents being at odds as they so often are when a student is suspended (Dilling, 1979).

Stallworth, Frechtling, and Frankel (1981) studied the pilot in-school suspension program in Maryland's Montgomery County Public Schools. The researchers focused on why and how often students were assigned to ISS, how long the students spent in ISS, student ethnicity, and the degree of disruption to the learning environment. The program's major goal was to discipline misbehaving students while still delivering instruction to students. The study was also conducted to determine how ISS could be improved in order to better assist future students during the disciplining and rehabilitation process (Stallworth et al., 1981).

As stated by Stallworth et al. (1981), 69% of all students suspended (in-school and out-of-school) received an assignment to ISS at least once. A sharp increase in the suspension rate accompanied the implementation of ISS, indicating that administrators are more likely to use some type of suspension if one suspension option allows students to stay in school. Additionally, White students attended ISS at a much higher rate than students of other ethnicities. The difference in assignment to ISS between White and non-White students could not be explained by recidivism or because one group had more severe discipline problems than the other group (Stallworth et al., 1981).

Stallworth et al. (1981) explained that the program was evaluated via the following: (a) comments from students and teachers about ISS effectiveness, (b) student disciplinary recidivism (ISS and OSS), and (c) impact of suspensions on academic attainment. The surveyed sample indicated that ISS deterred minor misbehavior. While students who have been suspended one or no times and teachers both agreed that ISS was an effective alternative discipline strategy, students with extensive discipline records said that ISS had no impact on deterring student misbehavior. Students, overall, preferred OSS

to ISS since being sent home allowed them a vacation from school. Also, students did not feel stigmatized or harassed by peers because of being assigned to ISS. Students were more likely to get suspended again if they were first disciplined through ISS. The researchers explained this phenomenon by both the fact that OSS is immediate punishment and the parental response students receive from getting sent home is very much more undesirable than if they are sent to the ISS program. Finally, students had a greater tendency to finish their assignments in ISS as opposed to OSS. Forty-three percent of students completed their work in ISS while only 23% of pupils assigned to OSS completed their work (Stallworth et al., 1981).

Stallworth et al. (1981) supported the use of ISS as an alternative discipline strategy. They did, however, recommend the following be evaluated: (a) the rate of class work completion while in ISS, (b) increased involvement of parents, (c) the change in suspension numbers, (d) racial disparities, and (e) ISS recidivism. Any problems found with the ISS programs must be immediately addressed in order to maximize the impact of ISS on misbehavior (Stallworth et al., 1981).

ISS Working Effectively

Gootman (1998) believed that ISS can be used effectively to reduce student misbehavior and help pupils productively deal with the many challenges they face on a daily basis. While ISS prevents many students from misbehaving again, students with severe discipline problems are rarely helped by most ISS programs because the counseling and rehabilitation portions of an effective ISS setting are often missing. Students from troubled family backgrounds are often frequently disciplined through the office. An effective ISS program should have three components in order to help students

with their problems. First, ISS should provide students with an adult who communicates to them their importance. Secondly, students should understand that their feelings matter. Finally, the education professional should communicate to students that they are in control of their own lives (Gootman, 1998).

Gootman (1998) discussed how the educator in charge of students in ISS should focus on “immediate intervention and long-term prevention” (p. 39). The intervention should include listening to students as they discuss their problems, helping them work through solving problems, and brainstorming ways to prevent problems in the future. In order to help students with severe disciplinary issues over a long period of time, the educator should build a positive relationship with the student and check up on each pupil periodically throughout the school year in order to ensure the student continues to succeed in the learning environment. The educator should also serve as an advocate for troubled students in order to diffuse any negative perceptions the regular classroom teachers have about pupils with disciplinary histories. When educators who are equipped with the skills and have the desire to help students head ISS programs, students who are behaviorally challenged usually benefit significantly from the assistance and guidance they receive during their disciplinary experience and the additional support they garner from the various ISS professionals throughout the remainder of the academic year (Gootman, 1998).

Summary

Schools currently operate in the age of accountability and are driven by the test score and attendance requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Thus, schools must not continue excluding students from school while still meeting the rigorous requirements

of the aforementioned federal legislation. ISS provides school systems with “an effective alternative to OSS” and other exclusionary practices (Boone, 2006, p. 144). In order to make sure educational law via court precedence is not violated, schools must ensure due process occurs and the rights of special needs children are met when any punishment is administered (Alexander & Alexander, 1992; Imber & Geel, 2001).

In-school suspension, of course, should be more than just a punishment. It should include instruction by an educational professional, counseling and rehabilitative services, and parental involvement (Dilling, 1979; Haley & Watson, 2000; Morrison et al., 2001; Winborne, 1980). If educators work with students one-on-one and help students deal with their problems while completing the in-school suspension program, Gootman (1998) found that students can benefit from the alternative discipline experience throughout the remainder of the school year. Henceforth, in-school suspension may provide an effective alternative to removing students from school, continue to allow instruction to occur, and prepare students to be the productive members of society this country needs to remain the leader of the free world.

This study on in-school suspension analyzed the differences of in-school suspension between a suburban high school and a rural high school. Archival data from the school system data base were evaluated to determine if in-school suspension students continue to misbehave after completing the program and whether or not students in one setting misbehave less after in-school suspension than students in another. Additionally, teachers were surveyed in order for the researcher to understand their perspectives on the results of the in-school suspension program. The study provided the Mobile County Public School System with information on its high school alternative discipline program

and added to the limited research available on in-school suspension so that other researchers may benefit from the information it provided.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The subjects of this causal comparative study were teachers and students at a rural high school and a suburban high school in Alabama's Mobile County Public School System. The researcher wished to determine if after attending ISS students appear to get in trouble less at a rural high school as opposed to those at a suburban high school while also looking for differences in gender and ethnicity. The study also addressed whether or not students are disciplined again during the school year after attending ISS. Teachers' opinions of the impact of ISS at their schools were also important to the study.

Research Design

The independent variables were ethnicity, gender, and rural or suburban. The dependent variable was misbehavior. Student ethnicity, gender, and whether or not a student is from a rural or suburban school were analyzed to determine who the attendees of ISS were and how they responded to the program. Demographic information was also collected from teachers who completed the questionnaire.

Participants

The rural high school consists of 1,482 students and 89 teachers. There are 761 male students and 721 female students. Student ethnicity is as follows: 77% White, 14% Black, 8% Asian, less than 1% Hispanic, and less than 1% other.

The suburban high school contains 2,005 students and 119 teachers. There are 1,021 male students and 984 female students. Student ethnicity is as follows: 71% White, 24% Black, 2% Asian, 2% Hispanic, and 1% other.

All students who attended ISS during the 2008-2009 school year (approximately less than 1,500 total) had their discipline records analyzed to see if behavior infractions were curtailed after completing ISS. Every teacher was asked to complete a questionnaire. Although the researcher raffled off \$10.00 Wal-Mart gift cards (three cards per school) to teachers who participated, it was realistic to expect a total of less than 100 teachers to return a completed questionnaire. The sample intended to represent students and teachers at suburban and rural high schools in Mobile County, Alabama.

Instrumentation

A combination of student archival data and teacher survey results assisted in answering the research question. A chi square analysis was used to determine the correlation of the results of student behavior after attending ISS. The dependent variable, misbehavior, is dichotomous. Student behavior is categorized as having additional office referrals or not having additional office referrals. Descriptive statistics were also analyzed during the course of the study.

The researcher developed a questionnaire (Appendix A) for teachers to respond to concerning teacher demographic data and their opinions about ISS. Questions 1 through 10 focused on teacher demographic data. A Likert scale of 1 through 5 (1 - *Strongly Disagree*; 2 = *Disagree*; 3 = *Not Sure*; 4 = *Agree*; and 5 = *Strongly Agree*) was used to collect responses to Questions 11 through 35. The questionnaire was first examined by a group of experts. These five teachers from a Mobile County high school with both a rural and suburban student population provided the researcher with feedback on the functionality and readability of the questionnaire. After correcting the grammatical

problems found with the instrument, the researcher asked 15 other teachers at that same school to pilot test the questionnaire.

Procedures

The researcher received approval from The University of Southern Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB) in order to collect the data used in the study (Appendix B). Teachers participated in convenience sampling by completing a questionnaire in order to determine their attitudes toward and perceptions of ISS at their school. The teachers were notified on the questionnaire that their participation was voluntary. Attached to the questionnaire was a cover letter explaining informed consent and the purpose of the study, along with the researcher's contact information (Appendix C). The researcher presented the questionnaires to teachers during a Monday afternoon faculty meeting. Teachers choosing to participate returned the questionnaire to the principal's secretary, along with a separate piece of paper that was anonymously placed in a container in order to be entered into a raffle for a Wal-Mart gift card. The researcher collected all surveys and conducted the raffle on the Friday following the faculty meeting.

Intact sampling was used in gathering the archival student data, and the records were gathered from the school system's central office for the 2008-2009 school year. The student data listed how many students were assigned to ISS during the school year and the number who were disciplined again through the office during that same year. The principals from both schools were required to provide consent via letter before any data were collected by the researcher (Appendix D).

Limitations

The only problem the researcher experienced was getting all teachers to fill out the surveys. Even though gift cards were used as incentives, all teachers did not participate in the survey. Teacher participation was important in order to accurately make conclusions about what they think about ISS.

Data Analysis

The researcher used a chi square analysis in order to determine if students were or were not referred to the office after attending ISS. Misbehavior is the dichotomous dependent variable. Students either were disciplined again through the office after attending ISS or they were not disciplined again through the office during the remainder of the academic year. The alpha value is .05. The gender and ethnicity of students were discussed through descriptive statistics.

Perceptions of teachers about ISS were determined via the answers provided on the questionnaire. They were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The number of responses, means, and standard deviations were provided.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The study had three purposes. The first purpose was to ascertain teacher perceptions of ISS at two Mobile County, Alabama, high schools. The second purpose was to determine if students at a rural high school commit less behavior infractions after attending ISS than students at a suburban high school. The third purpose was to determine if students of a particular gender or ethnicity commit more behavior infractions after attending ISS than students of another gender or ethnicity.

Teachers at two Mobile County Public School System high schools (one rural and one suburban) were administered questionnaires in the fall semester of 2009-2010 school year. The questionnaires contained questions focusing on both teacher demographic information and their perceptions of the ISS program at their schools. Although the two schools have a combined total of 208 teachers, only 104 of them participated in the questionnaire.

Student archival discipline data from the 2008-2009 school year were analyzed. The researcher only gathered discipline data on students who had been assigned to ISS at least once during the school year. The data were then divided into two groups: students who were referred to the office again after attending ISS and those who were not. Out of the 3,487 students who attended the two schools targeted in the study, only 821 students (the number who attended ISS at least once) were the focus of the study.

Data

The demographic details varied among the teachers participating in the questionnaire. The largest percentage of respondents were between the ages of 31 and 60 while very few were 21 to 30 or over 60. The vast majority of teachers were Caucasian; less than 15% made up other ethnic categories. Most of the teachers in the study were female. Table 1 contains detailed information of teacher age, ethnicity, and gender.

Teachers' years of experience, years at their current school, and which subjects they taught were also analyzed. Teacher experience was fairly evenly spread out among the first three categories of years of experience. The least number of teachers indicated they had 16 to 20 years of experience (the fourth category) while most teachers indicated they belonged in the fifth category with 21 or more years of experience. The vast majority of teachers have been at their school 1 to 5 years while a significant minority have been there 6 to 15 years. A fairly even number of teachers taught one of the four core subjects (English, math, science, or social studies) while almost one-third of the teachers taught a non-core subject. Table 2 details teacher total years of experience, number of years at current school, and subjects taught.

The researcher then analyzed the highest degrees held by teachers, the grades teachers taught, and the type of school at which they taught. The highest degree for the majority of teachers responding to the questionnaire was a master's degree. Over one-third of the teachers listed a bachelor's degree as their highest degree. The most frequent grade taught was 10th grade, followed by 9th and then 11th. Slightly more than half of the teachers taught at a rural high school while the rest taught at a suburban high school. Table 3 details the questionnaire results concerning the degrees teachers have, the grade

Table 1

Age, Ethnicity, and Gender

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
21-30	14	13.5
31-40	29	27.9
41-50	24	23.1
51-60	29	27.9
Over 60	8	7.7
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	90	86.5
Black	9	8.7
Hispanic	3	2.9
Asian	1	1.0
Other	1	1.0
Gender		
Male	31	29.8
Female	73	70.2

Table 2

Experience, School, and Subject

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Experience		
1-5	21	20.2
6-10	23	22.1
11-15	18	17.3
16-20	14	13.5
21 or more	28	26.9
School		
1-5	52	50.0
6-10	19	18.3
11-15	23	22.1
16-20	2	1.9
21 or more	6	5.8
Missing Data	2	1.9
Subject		
English	18	17.3
Math	15	14.4
Science	18	17.3
Social Studies	15	14.4
Other	34	32.7
Missing Data	4	3.8

teachers teach a majority of the day, and whether they work at a rural high school or a suburban high school.

Finally, teachers indicated on the questionnaire their average class size and the number of referrals they write each year. The majority of teachers had classes consisting of 20 to 29 students. Very few teachers reported having classes with over 40 pupils. The vast majority of teachers indicated that they refer 10 or less students per year to the office. No teacher reported referring 31 to 40 students per year. Table 4 details teacher responses to class size and number of referrals.

Research question 1 is as follow: What are teacher perceptions of ISS at two Mobile County, Alabama, high schools? Teachers gave responses in order to provide the researcher with answers to that question. The following questions indicated that teachers felt positively about certain aspects of ISS, which was demonstrated with means of over 4: teacher notification, teacher support, provides paperwork, student supervision, and administrator usage. Means of around 3 indicated teachers were uncertain about aspects of ISS like needs more counseling, students do ISS work, ISS needs more academic support, parents support ISS, and don't improve ISS. Teachers indicated they disagreed with the following questions regarding ISS: ISS only once a year, ISS helps attendance, ISS helps grades, and no referrals after ISS. Thus, teachers support the program but they feel it is not working as well as it should. They are unsure about how to improve the program. Table 5, which is in descending order (1 = low and 5 = high), provides information gathered from the questionnaire concerning teacher responses to ISS.

Research question 2 is as follows: Do students at a rural high school commit less behavior infractions after attending ISS than students at a suburban high school? There is

Table 3

Degree, Grade, and Rural or Suburban School

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Degree		
Bachelor's	35	33.7
Master's	58	55.8
Specialist	6	5.8
Doctoral	1	1.0
Other	1	1.0
Missing Data	3	2.9
Grade		
9 th	26	25.0
10 th	32	30.8
11 th	20	19.2
12 th	14	13.5
Missing Data	12	11.5
Rural or Suburban School		
Rural	54	51.9
Suburban	50	48.1

Table 4

Class Size and Referrals

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Class Size		
Less than 20	20	19.2
20-29	55	52.9
30-39	22	21.2
40 or more	3	2.9
Missing Data	4	3.8
Referrals		
0-10	77	74.0
11-20	17	16.3
21-30	4	3.8
31-40	0	0.0
Over 40	2	1.9
Missing Data	4	3.8

Table 5

Teacher Responses Concerning ISS (In Order of Importance)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
13. Teacher notification	4.30	1.00
11. Teacher support	4.21	.86
14. Provides work	4.21	.98
23. Student supervision	4.21	.78
12. Administrator usage	4.05	.89
32. Academically struggle	3.70	.92
34. Students dislike ISS	3.67	.90
15. Effectiveness of ISS	3.63	.98
24. Students view ISS as punishment	3.61	1.07
26. Well-behaved in ISS	3.55	.82
27. Several ISS students a year	3.54	1.18
16. ISS over suspension	3.51	1.19
30. Needs more counseling	3.45	1.08
25. Students choose ISS over suspension	3.33	1.14
22. Students do ISS work	3.25	1.12
31. ISS needs more academic support	3.25	1.06
19. Parents support ISS	3.22	.67
17. ISS positive impact	3.16	1.08
18. Use ISS more	3.13	.91
29. ISS needs certified staff	2.95	1.11
33. Replace ISS	2.87	1.22
35. Don't improve ISS	2.84	1.05
20. ISS improved behavior	2.80	1.03
28. ISS only once a year	2.47	1.26
37. ISS helps attendance	2.44	.94
36. ISS helps grades	2.35	.86
21. No referrals after ISS	2.26	.89

a significant relationship between rural or suburban and whether a student is referred to the office again after attending ISS. Suburban students are less likely to get referred to the office after attending ISS than rural students. While 21.8% of students who were assigned to ISS at the suburban high school did not get referred to the office again, only 13.9% of the students at the rural high school did not receive another office referral during the 2008-2009 school year. The results are $\chi^2(N = 821, df = 1) = 8.893, p = .003$. Table 6 shows the relationship between rural or suburban and referrals after attending ISS.

Research question 3 is as follows: Do students of a particular gender or ethnicity commit more behavior infractions after attending ISS than students of another gender or ethnicity? There is not a significant relationship between gender and subsequent referrals. The results are $\chi^2(N = 821, df = 1) = .387, p = .534$. Table 7 shows the relationship of gender and office referral after attending ISS. There is a significant relationship between ethnicity and referrals received after attending ISS. The results are $\chi^2(N = 821, df = 4) = 16.75, p = .002$. All of the Asian students were referred to the office again after attending ISS, and just under two-thirds of the Hispanic students were referred again. Over 80% of Caucasian and Black students were referred to the office after attending ISS. Table 8 shows the relationship of ethnicity and referral after attending ISS.

Summary

The questionnaire provided the researcher with both demographic information about the teachers at the two schools who responded to the questions and their perceptions about ISS. While the teachers come from a variety of backgrounds, most of them are middle-aged, White females with a master's degree and have only been at their current school for 1 to 5 years. They have 20 to 29 students in their classes, and most of

Table 6

Relationship of Rural/Suburban and Referral after ISS

Variable	Referral		No Referral		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Rural/Suburban						
Rural	360	86.1	58	13.9	418	100
Suburban	315	78.2	88	21.8	403	100
Total	675	82.2	146	17.8	821	100

Table 7

Relationship of Gender and Referral after ISS

Variable	Referral		No Referral		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Gender						
Male	416	81.6	94	18.4	510	100
Female	259	83.3	52	16.7	311	100
Total	675	82.2	146	17.8	821	100

Table 8

Relationship of Ethnicity and Referral after ISS

Variable	Referral		No Referral		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Ethnicity						
Caucasian	398	81.1	93	18.9	491	100
Black	213	83.2	43	16.8	256	100
Asian	45	100	0	0	45	100
Hispanic	15	62.5	9	37.5	24	100
Other	4	80	4	20	8	100
Total	675	82.2	146	17.8	821	100

these teachers write 10 or less referrals a year. Slightly less than two-thirds of them teach a core subject. Over half of the educators have 15 or less years of teaching experience.

The questionnaire also revealed that the teachers support ISS but believe it is not as effective as it should be. They are unsure of what can be done to fix the program. The teachers are not interested in replacing ISS at this time with another alternative discipline program.

Archival discipline data from the 2008-2009 school year were also analyzed. No significant relationship was found between a student's gender and whether he or she was referred to the office after attending ISS. A significant difference was discovered in the relationship of student ethnicity and referrals. Asian students were more likely and Hispanic students less likely to be referred to the office again after attending ISS once than Caucasian and Black students. A significant difference was also found between rural or suburban students and referrals. Suburban students were less likely to be referred to the office again after attending ISS than rural students.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The researcher studied ISS at one rural high school and one suburban high school in Alabama's Mobile County Public School System. The study focused on whether or not students who attended ISS were referred to the office again during the school year.

Archival discipline data from the two schools for the 2008-2009 academic year were analyzed. Only discipline data of students attending ISS at least once during the school year were reviewed. Students were then divided into the following two groups: students referred to the office again and students not referred to the office again after attending ISS. The independent variables of rural/suburban, gender, and ethnicity were analyzed. During the fall of 2009, teachers at the two aforementioned high schools were given a questionnaire to determine their perceptions of the ISS program at their schools. The questionnaire focused on the following two areas: teacher demographic data and teacher perceptions of ISS.

Conclusions and Discussion

In the previous chapter, the researcher presented the data gathered from the archival discipline data from the 2008-2009 school year and the teacher questionnaire results collected during the fall of 2009. The study focused on three research questions regarding ISS at a rural high school and a suburban high school in order to determine the differences that exist between ISS at the two different environments. The research questions focused on teacher perceptions of ISS, differences between rural and suburban students attending ISS, and the impact of gender and ethnicity on ISS students.

The first research question was as follows: What are teacher perceptions of ISS at two Mobile County, Alabama, high schools? The results of the questionnaire revealed that teachers support ISS at their schools. Teachers indicated they were notified when their students were assigned to ISS, provided school work for students in the program, believed students were adequately supervised while in ISS, and agreed with how their administrators used ISS. Teachers were unsure about the need for more counseling, academic help, and parent support for ISS. They were also unsure about whether or not students completed all of their work during ISS. While the educators support ISS, they believe the program should be improved but do not know how to do so. Teachers disagreed that ISS helps grades and attendance, should only be used once a year, and decreases student referrals. Although Morrison et al. (2001) and Winborne (1980) indicated how important a strong counseling component is to the ISS program, teachers in this study do not strongly support such intervention. Unlike the teachers in the Stallworth et al. (1981) study who believed ISS effectively deterred misbehavior, the educators who participated in this study's questionnaire indicated improvement was needed in order to increase the effectiveness of ISS. Morris and Howard (2003) listed teachers sending work to students as one of the five effective ISS commonalities, and the questionnaire revealed that teachers strongly agreed that they supplied their students with school work while in ISS.

The second research question was the following: Do students at a rural high school commit less behavior infractions after attending ISS than students at a suburban high school? The study found a significant difference in whether students attended a rural or suburban high school and additional office referrals. Students at the rural high school

were more likely to get referred to the office again than students at the suburban high school.

The third research question was: Do students of a particular gender or ethnicity commit more behavior infractions after attending ISS than students of another gender or ethnicity? Although Skiba and Rausch (2006) indicated that males are disciplined more frequently than females, no relationship was found between gender and office referrals after attending ISS. The study indicated that there is a significant relationship between additional office referrals and ethnicity. There is no significant difference between Blacks and Whites and office referrals after attending ISS. The significant relationship exists between additional office referrals for students who are Asian or Hispanic. All Asian students and almost two-thirds of the Hispanic students referred to ISS were referred again during the school year. While Wallace et al. (2008) argued Black and Hispanic students received more referrals than Asian and White students, this study indicates that the relationship between being disciplined after attending ISS is strongest between Hispanic and Asian students. Office referrals after attending ISS are about the same for Black and White students. No examination was made between ethnicity and first time office referrals.

Evidence via teacher questionnaire responses and archival discipline data indicate ISS does not effectively deter misbehavior. Teachers disagreed that ISS keeps students from committing behavior infractions once they had completed the program. The archival discipline data indicated that an average of 82.2% of pupils received an office referral after attending ISS. Many of the 18.8% who did not get referred to the office again after ISS were not assigned to the program until April or May, so they may have committed

additional school rule violations if they had been tracked as long as the students who were first assigned to ISS at the beginning of the school year.

Thus, teachers support ISS but believe improvements should be made in order to make the alternative discipline program more effective. While they are supportive of changes to the program, they are uncertain as to which changes need to be made. Gender did not appear to significantly impact students who attended ISS, but ethnicity and a rural or suburban setting did. ISS did not appear to positively impact the behavior of Asian or rural students as much as Hispanic or suburban students.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Teachers were neutral on whether or not more counseling and academic support was needed in the ISS program at their schools. Since research indicates such measures should be included in an effective ISS program (Dilling, 1979; Haley & Watson, 2000; Morrison et al., 2001; Winborne, 1980) and the teachers at the targeted schools do not oppose increasing the counseling and academic support services of ISS, steps should be taken to improve the instructional and counseling aspects of ISS. Certainly no harm should occur by having a counselor working more closely with pupils to meet their behavioral and emotional needs. Behavior infractions after attending ISS may very well decrease if the reason behind the misbehavior can be more adequately addressed.

Schools that allow for cameras in the classroom may be able to connect ISS students to their regular classrooms via live video. Incorporating technology in such a way would allow students in ISS to continue to receive regular instruction while being separated from the classroom. Students would not miss out on their daily educational

opportunities while receiving their punishment, and they would be disallowed from disrupting other students in the regular classroom.

Teacher behavior should be monitored to ensure they are following the appropriate discipline steps like verbal warnings and contacting parents before referring students to the office. Fewer students may be assigned to ISS if teachers work with students and parents first in order to address misbehavior. Oftentimes, teachers refer students to an administrator before communicating with the pupils and parents about the undesirable behavior being exhibited in class. Classroom teachers must understand that it is their responsibility to provide documentation illustrating they have attempted to end student misbehavior before involving an administrator.

The Dilling (1979) model illustrated the effectiveness of requiring parents to meet with the counselor and student in order to discuss the child's problems and model appropriate behavior. Parents began responding much more positively to administrators once their children were no longer being sent home (Dilling, 1979). The teachers in this study indicated they were not sure as to how much parents actually supported ISS. ISS in the Mobile County Public School System may be improved by requiring similar meetings with parents of students in ISS. If parents are required to attend a meeting with the counselor and student, the parent may gain the information and tools necessary to help target the child's problem at home. If parents will reinforce the message being sent to their children by educators, students may make greater efforts to positively respond to difficult situations in the future. Thus, students may avoid additional behavior infractions.

Students who are not referred to the office for a period of one year after attending ISS should be asked to fill out a questionnaire in order to see if commonalities exist that

kept them from misbehaving again. The results may help explain why students do not misbehave after attending ISS. Since such a small minority of students do not get referred to the office again after ISS, it may be beneficial to administrators to discover what actually keeps students from committing behavior infractions. Particular attention should be paid to suburban and Hispanic students who were less likely to get referred to the office again and Asian and rural students who were more likely to get an office referral.

After completing ISS, students should be periodically contacted by an assigned educator in order to ensure they are behaving appropriately in the regular classroom. Students should also be required to meet with the counselor within 3 days of returning to the regular classroom in order to discuss the ISS experience and the lessons learned from this discipline method. Administrators may also consider requiring students to write about what they learned in ISS and the appropriate decisions they will make in the future in order to avoid future office referrals.

Finally, ISS should be utilized more often by administrators. Students should be allowed to attend ISS up to three times each school year in order to avoid over-utilization of suspensions. Principals rely heavily on suspensions at the targeted schools in order to address behavior infractions. While suspended, students do not receive any counseling or instruction. Oftentimes, they also are home alone and unsupervised. If students are assigned to ISS instead of being excluded from school, they may have an opportunity to receive the counseling and academic support they need in order to avoid future misbehavior as was the focus of the Stallworth et al. (1981) study.

Limitations

The study focused on one suburban high school and one rural high school in an Alabama public school system. Thus, the results of the study may not be applicable to all rural and suburban high schools throughout the United States. Also, it is possible that teacher perception results would have been different if the sample would have been larger. Unfortunately, only half of the teachers at the two schools participated in the questionnaire. Finally, the researcher noticed that a large number of students assigned to ISS for the first time occurred in the months of April and May. Henceforth, those students did not have as much time to commit another behavior infraction as students who were assigned to ISS at the beginning of the school year. The short amount of time remaining in the school year could explain why they were not referred to the office after attending ISS.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies could focus on ISS programs in entire school systems in various regions of the country. Not only would such an approach allow for a much broader sample, it would also allow for a more accurate understanding of ISS results throughout the nation. Urban schools, as well as rural and suburban institutions, would be included in order to compare the differences in all types of demographic settings. Also, various regions of the country would allow for more accurate generalizations of the results instead of focusing on two high schools in an Alabama public school system.

A larger sample would also give the reader a better understanding of how teachers throughout the country feel about ISS. Teachers from various regions at schools using different ISS programs could participate in the questionnaire. As Morris and Howard

(2003) and Sheets (1996) indicated, there are four types of ISS models used in schools. In a future study, the type of ISS model used could be an independent variable. Thus, the researcher could see if one model positively impacts future office referrals more than another one.

A future study could also focus on a 2-year period. Such a study would follow students assigned to ISS for the first time in April and May the following year to see if ISS really influenced their behavior. The cut-off time for following a student's discipline record could be one year. Such an approach would allow students who received ISS in May the same amount of time to commit another behavior infraction as a student who was first assigned to the alternative discipline program in September. The researcher would, of course, have to control for seniors who graduated at the end of the first year of the study.

A researcher may consider analyzing student grades before and after being assigned to ISS. Comparing student grades before attending ISS with their grades after they have completed ISS would possibly indicate the impact of the alternative discipline strategy on academics. Such findings may lead to changes that need to be made in order to improve the program's impact on student learning.

Lastly, a study could focus on whether or not a referral received after completing ISS impacts student behavior. The number of additional office referrals after attending ISS and their impact on student discipline are not known. A researcher could discover if a relationship exists between misbehavior and office referrals after attending ISS. Also, an analysis should be completed on how ISS specifically impacts student behavior. Archival

data, questionnaires, and interviews may all contribute to revealing how office referrals and ISS affect student discipline.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

1 of 5

**Title: Differences in Student Misbehavior after Completing In-School Suspension
Between Rural High School and Suburban High School Students**

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION QUESTIONNAIRE

Your participation in the following questionnaire is voluntary, and your responses are anonymous and confidential. The questionnaire takes about ten minutes to complete. You may discontinue participating in the questionnaire at any time. Completed questionnaires will be statistically analyzed and destroyed once the analyses are completed. The questionnaire is part of my Doctor of Education program at The University of Southern Mississippi.

Directions: Please circle the letter of the response that most appropriately answers the question. Choose only one answer per question.

1. What is your age?
 - A. 21-30 years
 - B. 31-40 years
 - C. 41-50 years
 - D. 51-60 years
 - E. Over 60 years

2. What is your ethnicity?
 - A. Caucasian
 - B. Black
 - C. Hispanic
 - D. Asian
 - E. Other

3. What is your gender?
 - A. Male
 - B. Female

4. How many years have you been a teacher?
 - A. 1-5 years
 - B. 6-10 years
 - C. 11-15 years
 - D. 16-20 years
 - E. 21 or more years

2 of 5

5. How many years have you been at your current school?
- A. 1-5 years
 - B. 6-10 years
 - C. 11-15 years
 - D. 16-20 years
 - E. 21 or more years
6. Which subject do you teach the majority of the day?
- A. English
 - B. Mathematics
 - C. Science
 - D. Social Studies
 - E. Other
7. What is your highest level of education?
- A. Bachelors Degree
 - B. Masters Degree
 - C. Specialist Degree
 - D. Doctoral Degree
 - E. Other
8. In which grade level is the majority of your students?
- A. 9th
 - B. 10th
 - C. 11th
 - D. 12th
9. What is your average class size?
- A. Less than 20
 - B. 20-29
 - C. 30-39
 - D. 40 or more
10. What is the average number of discipline referrals you write each year?
- A. 0-10
 - B. 11-20
 - C. 21-30
 - D. 31-40
 - E. Over 40

3 of 5

Please circle the number that best represents your response to each statement. The following terms correspond with the numbers: Strongly Agree (SA = 5); Agree (A = 4); Not Sure (NS = 3); Disagree (D = 2); & Strongly Disagree (SD = 1).

	SA	A	NS	D	SD
11. I support the in-school suspension program at my school.	5	4	3	2	1
12. The administrators at my school utilize in-school suspension appropriately.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I am notified when my students are assigned to in-school suspension.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I provide work for all of my students that are assigned to in-school suspension.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I feel that in-school suspension is an effective form of discipline.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I would rather for my students to be assigned to in-school suspension than be suspended.	5	4	3	2	1
17. In-school suspension has a more positive impact on student misbehavior than suspension.	5	4	3	2	1
18. In-school suspension should be utilized more at my school.	5	4	3	2	1
19. Parents are supportive of in-school suspension.	5	4	3	2	1
20. Students' behavior improves after they return from in-school suspension.	5	4	3	2	1
21. Students usually do not get referred to the office again after completing the in-school suspension program.	5	4	3	2	1
22. Students complete and return all of their work while assigned to in-school suspension.	5	4	3	2	1

		SA	A	NS	D	4 of 5 SD
23.	Students receive adequate supervision while assigned to in-school suspension.	5	4	3	2	1
24.	Students regard in-school suspension as punishment.	5	4	3	2	1
25.	Students would rather be assigned to in-school suspension than get suspended.	5	4	3	2	1
26.	Students are well-behaved while attending in-school suspension.	5	4	3	2	1
27.	I have several students attending in-school suspension each year.	5	4	3	2	1
28.	Students should only be assigned to in-school suspension once each year.	5	4	3	2	1
29.	I would prefer that a certified teacher staff in-school suspension.	5	4	3	2	1
30.	My school's in-school suspension program should provide students with more counseling and behavioral rehabilitation.	5	4	3	2	1
31.	My school's in-school suspension program should provide more academic support services to students.	5	4	3	2	1
32.	Students assigned to in-school suspension usually struggle academically.	5	4	3	2	1
33.	I would like to see in-school suspension replaced with another type of alternative discipline program, such as detention or Saturday School.	5	4	3	2	1
34.	Students dislike in-school suspension.	5	4	3	2	1
35.	No improvement is needed in my school's in-school suspension program.	5	4	3	2	1

		SA	A	NS	D	5 of 5 SD
36.	Student grades improve after attending ISS.	5	4	3	2	1
37.	Student attendance improves after attending ISS.	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX B

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW FORM

1 of 2



Institutional Review Board

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

118 College Drive #5147
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
 Tel: 601.266.6820
 Fax: 601.266.5509
www.usm.edu/irb

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
 NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
 Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 29072801

PROJECT TITLE: Differences in Student Misbehavior After Completing In-School Suspension Between Rural High School and Suburban High School Students

PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 08/01/09 to 02/28/10

PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation or Thesis

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Martin Ervind Welch

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology

DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership & Research

FUNDING AGENCY: N/A

HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 09/17/09 to 09/15/10

Lawrence A. Hosman
 Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
 HSPRC Chair

9-21-09
 Date

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW FORM
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
(SUBMIT THIS FORM IN DUPLICATE)

Protocol # 029072801
(office use only)

Name Martin Ervind Welch Phone 251-610-5161

E-Mail Address Mewelch76@yahoo.com

Mailing Address P.O. Box 532 Bayou La Batre, Alabama 36509
(address to receive information regarding this application)

College/Division Education and Psychology Dept Educational Leadership and Research

Department Box # _____ Phone _____

Proposed Project Dates: From 8/2009 To 2/2010
(specify month, day and year of the beginning and ending dates of full project, not just data collection)

Title Differences in Student Misbehavior after Completing Individual
Suspension Between Rural High School and Suburban High School Students

Funding Agencies or Research Sponsors N/A

Grant Number (when applicable) N/A

- New Project
- Dissertation or Thesis
- Renewal or Continuation: Protocol # _____
- Change in Previously Approved Project: Protocol # _____

Principal Investigator Martin Ervind Welch Date 7-27-09

Adviser [Signature] Date 7/27/09

Department Chair [Signature] Date 7/27/09

_____ Date _____

RECOMMENDATION OF HSPRC MEMBER

Category I, Exempt under Subpart A, Section 46.101 () (), 45CFR46.

Category II, Expedited Review, Subpart A, Section 46.110 and Subparagraph (1).

Category III, Full Committee Review.

[Signature] DATE 9-16-09

HSPRC College/Division Member DATE 9-21-09

HSPRC Chair DATE _____

APPENDIX C
APPROVAL LETTERS

1 of 2

8901 Airport Boulevard
Mobile, AL 36608
July 1, 2009

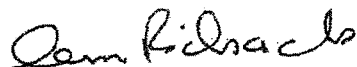
Re: Discipline Data and Teacher Questionnaires

Institutional Review Board
118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Dear Institutional Review Board:

This letter serves to notify you that Martin E. Welch has permission to use this school's student discipline data from the 2008-2009 school year and administer a questionnaire to its teachers during the fall semester of the 2009-2010 school year for his dissertation on in-school suspension.

Sincerely,



Clem Richardson, Principal
Baker High School

2 of 2

14001 Hurricane Blvd
Irvington, AL 36544
July 1, 2009

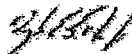
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Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Dear Institutional Review Board:

This letter serves to notify you that Martin E. Welch has permission to use this school's student discipline data from the 2008-2009 school year and administer a questionnaire to its teachers during the fall semester of the 2009-2010 school year for his dissertation on in-school suspension.

Sincerely,



Doug Estle, Principal Alma
Bryant High School

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

The University of Southern Mississippi

Dear Potential Participant:

I am gathering data on in-school suspension in the Mobile County Public School System for my Doctor of Education degree at the University of Southern Mississippi. My study is entitled, *Differences in Student Misbehavior after Completing In-School Suspension Between Rural High School and Suburban High School Students*. You are being asked to provide both demographic data about yourself and responses to statements regarding in-school suspension. The data will be used to help determine the perceptions of teachers regarding the alternative discipline program. The information collected from the 37 item questionnaire will be analyzed and used in this study.

Your participation in the following questionnaire is voluntary, and your responses are anonymous and confidential. Please do not write your name on the questionnaire. The questionnaire takes about ten minutes to complete. You may discontinue participating in the questionnaire at any time without penalty or prejudice. By returning the attached questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in this study. Completed questionnaires will be statistically analyzed and destroyed once the analyses are completed.

Please feel free to contact the researcher, Martin Welch, at 251-824-3213 or mwelch@mcpsss.com if you have any questions. "This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820."

Thank you,

Martin E. Welch, Ed.S.

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