

INEQUITIES IN THE NUMBER OF DAYS ASSIGNED TO GIRLS TO AN  
EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCE AS A FUNCTION OF  
ETHNICITY/RACE, ECONOMIC STATUS, AND AT-RISK STATUS OF TEXAS  
MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS: A MULTIYEAR, STATEWIDE INVESTIGATION

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Doctor of Education

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by

Margo Kelley

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my three sons and my mother. To my mother, who has always encouraged me to pursue my dreams and reach for the stars, you were a constant source of strength during this process. To my son Kyle- I love you dearly, and I hope I have been the example you needed to accomplish the academic pathway you choose for yourself in college. To my son Caleb, thank you for always bringing me snacks and checking on me when you thought I had studied far too long and needed a break, you have always been so kind-hearted. Lastly, to Kameron my oldest son, thank you for being a listening ear when I needed it and supporting me with encouragement and technical support because you are so computer-savvy. Thank you all, I love you.

## ABSTRACT

Kelley, Margo, *Inequities in the number of days assigned to girls to an exclusionary discipline consequence as a function of ethnicity/race, economic status, and at-risk status of Texas middle school girls: A multiyear, statewide investigation*. Doctor of Education (Educational Leadership), December 2022, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

### **Purpose**

The overall purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which inequities were present in exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to middle school girls. In the first study, the purpose was to determine the degree to which inequities existed in the assignment of exclusionary consequences to middle school girls by their ethnicity/race. In the second study, the purpose was to ascertain the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment of exclusionary consequences to middle school girls by their economic status. In the third study, the purpose was to determine the degree to which inequities existed in the assignment of exclusionary consequences to middle school girls by their at-risk status. For each article, the presence of trends was addressed across the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

### **Method**

A causal-comparative research design was used in this analysis (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Three independent variables were present: ethnicity/race, economic status, and at-risk status. Two dependent variables were present: assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence and the number of days assigned to that consequence. These data were archival data obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System.

## **Findings**

Inferential statistical procedures revealed the presence of statistically significant differences in the assignment to an exclusionary discipline consequence and to more days, on the average, by the ethnicity/race of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls. Black girls and Hispanic girls in all four school years were disproportionately assigned, in comparison to their enrollment and to White girls, to an in-school suspension. Moreover, when they were assigned to such a consequence, they were assigned to almost one day more than were White girls. High percentages of girls in poverty and girls who were at-risk were also assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence and to more days, on the average, to such consequences. The disparities documented in this journal-ready dissertation in both the rate at which girls of color were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence and in the number of days they were assigned undoubtedly contribute to the existing achievement gaps.

**KEYWORDS:** At-risk; Black; Hispanic; White; In-school suspension; Out-of-school suspension; Discipline consequence; Economic status; At-risk status; Middle school

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Well documented in the extant literature (e.g., Annamma et al., 2019; Eckford & Slate, 2016; Harkrider, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2013; Pohl & Slate, 2021; Riddle & Skiba et al., 2011; Texas Education Code, 2021) are clear inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to students by their ethnicity/race and economic status. Students of color have been assigned a disproportionate rate of school disciplinary actions for almost a half-decade, in contrast to White and Asian students (Eckford & Slate, 2016). Inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences have been documented to be a prevalent problem for Black girls; one that arises in elementary schools and continues through high school (Morris & Perry, 2017; Slate et al., 2016; Wun, 2016). In contrast to White and Hispanic girls, Black girls are assigned to many more exclusionary discipline consequences at school (Annamma et al., 2019; Blake et al., 2011; Morris & Perry, 2017). For instance, in a recent investigation conducted in Texas, Khan and Slate (2016) established that one in every six Black students were suspended at least one time, whereas only one in every 50 Asian students, one in every 20 White students, one in every 14 Hispanic students, and one in every 13 Native American students were suspended at least one time.

In an analysis of federal data including over 32 million students at 96,000 schools, Riddle and Sinclair (2019) documented the presence of discipline gaps between Black and White students across five different types of exclusionary discipline consequences related to county-level rates of racial bias. As reported by Crenshaw et al. (2015), girls

described zero-tolerance schools as being disorderly where school administrators concentrate on discipline rather than on educational achievement. To date, the majority of published research articles have been about the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to Black boys. More research investigations are warranted into understanding the effects of exclusionary discipline effects on Black girls (Annamma et al., 2019; Blake et al., 2011; Slate et al., 2016). In this journal-ready dissertation, three articles were generated regarding the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to Black girls.

### **Review of the Literature Regarding Exclusionary Discipline Consequences by Student Ethnicity/Race**

The overrepresentation of students of color assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences in the United States has been prevalent since the 1970's (Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Cholewaet al., 2018; Harkrider, 2020; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Slate et al., 2016). In a 1975 report by the Children's Defense Fund, clear evidence was present of disparities between Black and White students in that Black students were twice as likely as White students to be suspended from school (Morris & Perry, 2017). Moreover, school suspension assignment frequencies have doubled since the 1970s, with Black students being three times more likely to be suspended than students of other ethnic/racial backgrounds (Morris & Perry, 2017). According to the Office of Civil Rights (2021), of the 51 million students who were enrolled in public schools in the 2017-2018 school year, 2.6 million of them had been assigned to one or more in-school suspensions. In-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence by placing the student in a

separate classroom during the school day (Texas Education Code, 2021; Sec. 37.005). In-school suspensions occurred more often than any other exclusionary discipline consequence in the 2017-2018 school year (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). Of importance to this article is the presence of inequities in these exclusionary discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race.

Black boys have been the predominant ethnic/racial group of students who have been assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences, as well as being arrested by campus police officers (Fisher & Hennessy, 2016; MacSuga-Gage et al., 2021). However, the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to Black girls is in close proximity to the exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to Black boys (Annamma et al., 2019; Green et al., 2020; Slate et al., 2016). In multiple areas such as suspensions and law enforcement referrals, differences between White girls and Black girls supercede the documented differences between Black boys and White boys (Green et al., 2020). Exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to Black girls have consistently increased, and, in some instances, have surpassed the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to Black boys across the United States in the past decade (Annamma et al., 2019; Green et al., 2020; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Morris & Perry, 2017; Slate et al., 2016; United States Department of Education, (Office for Civil Rights, 2021).

Of the 51 million students previously mentioned, 24.7 million of them were girls. Of the 2.6 million students who were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence, almost one million of them were girls. In the 2017-2018 school year, Black girls were 7.4% of the total public school enrollment for girls, however, they were assigned to more than a third, 36.6%, of all of the in-school suspensions. A similar pattern was established

for Hispanic girls in that they constituted 13.3% of the total school enrollment for girls, yet, they were assigned to almost one fourth, 23.9%, of all in-school suspensions. Clearly established was that the in-school suspension rates of Black girls were statistically significantly higher than the in-school suspension rates of Hispanic girls and White girls (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). In the Office of Civil Rights (2021) report, Black girls were assigned approximately five times their total student enrollment percentage to an in-school suspension, whereas Hispanic girls were assigned approximately two times their total student enrollment to an in-school suspension.

Concerning the State of Texas, which is the relevant focus in this article, girls accounted for nearly 48.5% of all enrolled public school students in the 2017-2018 school year (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). With reference to ethnicity/race, Black girls were only 6.1% of the state enrollment in public schools. Of note here is that they accounted for almost one fourth, 24.9%, of all in-school suspension assignments in the 2017-2018 school year. Hispanic girls, despite being 25.7% of the total state enrollment, were assigned over half, 52.5% of the in-school suspensions of girls. Clearly evident were inequities in the assignment of Black girls to an in-school suspension as they were assigned to this consequence at a rate of four times their school enrollment percentage. Similarly, Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension to this consequence at a rate of two times their enrollment percentage (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

In a recent Texas study, Slate et al. (2016) analyzed discipline data on Black, White, and Hispanic girls in Grades 4-11. The exclusionary discipline consequences addressed were in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Discipline Alternative Education Program placements for the 2013-2014 school year. In regard to

ethnicity/race, the number of exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to girls nearly doubled from Grade 8 to Grade 9. The numbers of Grade 8 Black girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension increased from 13,400 to 23,714 in Grade 9. Similarly, the number of Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension increased from 31,421 to 61,180 in Grade 9. The numbers of Grade 8 White girls increased from 4,182 increased to 8,682 in Grade 9 . Notably in this study, a dramatic increase occurred in the frequency of exclusionary discipline consequences among high school girls wherein Grade 9 girls were assigned more than 60,000 in-school suspensions.

The assignment of in-school suspensions in the 2008-2009 school year between Black and White middle school students was addressed by Hilberth and Slate (2014). Statistically significant inequities were established for a total of 172,551 Grades 6, 7, and 8 students with the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences. Black students were assigned to an in-school suspension two times more than their peers. Although only 14.1% of the Grade 6 student enrollment were Black, they received 32.1% of the in-school suspensions. In contrast, Grade 6 White students comprised 34.7% of the student enrollment, but were only assigned 14.4% of the in-school suspension assignments. Although Grade 7 Black students were 14.2% of the student enrollment, they received 35.9% of the in-school assignments in the 2008-2009 school year. In contrast, Grade 7 White students were 35.2% of the total student enrollment, but they only received 16.2% of the in-school suspensions assigned that year. Finally, Grade 8 Black students were 14.4% of the student enrollment, but they were assigned to 36.4% of the in-school

suspensions. Grade 8 White students comprised 35.3% of the student enrollment, but received only 17.7% of the in-school suspension assignments (Hilberth & Slate, 2014).

In another Texas statewide investigation (Coleman, 2017), statistically significant differences were established in in-school suspension assignments to Grade 6 girls in the 2012-2013 school year. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to nearly four times as many in-school suspensions than White Grade 6 girls and two times as many as Hispanic girls (Coleman, 2017). Moreover, Coleman (2017) documented that Hispanic girls were assigned to nearly twice as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls. Similarly, in the 2014-2015 school year, Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to nearly four times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls and almost two times as many as Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned to almost twice as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls (Coleman, 2017). These statistics are clear evidence of inequities in the assignment of in-school suspension by student ethnicity/race.

Not only are disparities present in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race, additional researchers (Coleman, 2017; Harkrider, 2020; White, 2019) have conducted studies in the State of Texas in which they have documented the presence of statistically significant differences in the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences. White (2019) established that Grade 7 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension almost a day more than Grade 7 White girls and almost two-thirds more days than Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of one fourth more days than Grade 7 White girls. Grade 7 Black girls in the 2013-2014 school year were assigned in-school suspension almost one day more than Grade 7 White girls and almost

half a day more than Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Similarly, Hispanic Grade 7 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of one-half more days than Grade 7 White girls (White, 2019). White (2019) determined in the 2012-2013 school year that Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an average of more than half a day more to an in-school suspension than Grade 8 White girls and an average of half a day more than Grade 8 Hispanic girls. During the same school year, Grade 8 Hispanic girls and Grade 8 White girls were assigned a comparable number of in-school suspension days.

Moving from Texas statewide data to a local school district, in the 2017-2018 school year, the Humble Independent School District (ISD) near Houston, Texas reported civil rights data for the ethnicity/race of students assigned disciplinary actions. Black students represented only 20.7% of students enrolled in Humble ISD, however, they constituted 41.9% of the in-school suspensions that were assigned. White students were 37.8% of the student enrollment but constituted only 20.3% of the in-school suspension assignments (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). One of the Humble ISD middle schools, Atascocita Middle School had an ethnic/racial composition of 20.6% Black, 32.1% Hispanic, and 41.9% White. Girls within this middle school were 50.6% of the total enrollment. With respect to the assignment of in-school suspensions, Black girls had the highest percentage, 6.5%, followed by Hispanic girls, 4.95%, and White girls, 4.5% (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). These percentages are clear evidence of inequities in the assignment of in-school suspensions in this particular middle school; inequities that are congruent with the national statistics and previously discussed Texas statistics.

## **Review of the Literature Regarding Exclusionary Discipline Consequences and Student Economic Status**

Exclusionary discipline consequences are so prevalent in public schools in the United States that approximately 2.6 million students were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2017-2018 school year (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). In an in-school suspension, students are typically removed from their traditional classroom setting and relocated to another classroom. Although they still attend school, they are in a different school location other than their regular classroom for parts of a school day to the entire school day (Cholewa et al., 2018). Of the 2.6 million students who were assigned to an in-school suspension, 30% of them were girls. Important for this article is that nearly one-fifth of all of the in-school suspensions that occurred in the United States happened in Texas, the state of interest in this article (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

Documented disparities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences constituted the catalyst for the United States Department of Justice and the United States Department of Education (2021) to release a report about discriminatory disciplinary exclusionary consequences (Khan & Slate, 2016). Civil Rights data were provided from the U.S. Department of Education from 97,000 public schools in the United States for the 2011-2012 school year. In that report, Black students were determined to have been suspended from school at disproportionately higher rates than were White students. Moreover, Hispanic students and students in poverty were substantially more likely to be suspended from school (U.S. Department of Education, 2014, 2015) than their White peers and students who were not economically disadvantaged. Suspension rates have more than doubled from 3.7% in the 1973 school



year to 7.4% in the 2010 school year, resulting in students in poverty having the highest suspension rates (Khan & Slate, 2016) of all students.

Established in the research literature is the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to students in poverty (Annamma et al., 2019; Cholewa et al., 2018; Khan & Slate, 2016; Latimore et al., 2018; Mizel et al., 2016; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1997; Sullivan et al., 2013) White & Slate, 2017). Students in poverty are assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences such as in-school suspension at rates that are substantially higher than their peers who are not in poverty (Cholewa et al., 2018). In the 2011-2012 school year, of the 338,612 students who were assigned to one or more in-school suspensions, more than half of them, 55.02%, were economically disadvantaged (i.e., qualified for the federal free or reduced-price meals). More than a third of the students, 35.19%, who were assigned to an in-school suspension were girls (Cholewa et al., 2018). Mizel et al. (2016) established, in particular, the presence of inequities among parents' level of education as a measure of student poverty and a connection with suspension rates. Parents of students with less education were predicted to have greater punishment.

With respect to Texas, 5,371,586 students were enrolled in public schools in the 2020-2021 school year. Of this number, 2,624,722 of them were girls. In the 2018-2019 school year, more than half, 60%, of all Texas public school students were identified as being economically disadvantaged (Texas Education Agency, 2021a). Within the same school year, the number of students who were economically disadvantaged and who had been assigned to in-school-suspension was 363,806 students, which was 15.8% of the total student enrollment (Texas Education Agency, 2021b).

In a recent Texas statewide analysis, Coleman (2017) examined the relationship of student economic status to in-school suspension assignments. In the 2012-2013 school year, Grade 6 Black girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a substantially higher rate, 14.3 percentage points more, than Grade 6 Black girls who were not poor. Grade 6 Hispanic girls in poverty were assigned to an in-school suspension at substantially higher rates, slightly more than two times, than were Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were not in poverty. Moreover, in each school year from 2012-2013 through 2015-2016, both Grade 6 Black and Hispanic girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned at twice the rate to an in-school suspension than were Black and Hispanic girls who were not poor (Coleman, 2017). Similar results were documented for Grades 7 and 8 Black and Hispanic girls. In her investigation, poverty was clearly linked to disparities in the assignment to an in-school suspension for girls of color.

In another recent Texas investigation, Khan and Slate (2016) analyzed in-school suspension assignments of Grade 6 Black, Hispanic, and White students by their economic status in the 2011-2012 school year. Black students who were assigned to an in-school suspension and who were economically disadvantaged were assigned more than one and a half times more often to an in-school suspension than were Black students who were not economically disadvantaged (35.5% to 19.9%). Hispanic students who were assigned to an in-school suspension and who were economically disadvantaged were assigned almost two times more often to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic students who were not economically disadvantaged (20.2% to 12.0%). Similarly, White students who were assigned to an in-school suspension and who were economically

disadvantaged were assigned more than two times the rate of White students who were not economically disadvantaged (23.1% to 8.9%). Khan and Slate (2016) clearly supported the aforementioned literature regarding the overrepresentation of exclusionary disciplinary consequences for students in poverty.

In addition to inequities being present in the actual assignment to an in-school suspension by student economic status, disparities have also been documented in the number of days students are assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences. White and Slate (2017) established the presence of clear inequities in the number of days students were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status. Students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension a statistically higher number of days than were students who were not economically disadvantaged. Specifically, White (2019) determined that Grades 6, 7, and 8 students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 1.05, 1.09, and 0.87 more days, respectively, than were their peers who were not economically disadvantaged.

In a recent study, White (2019) analyzed multiple years of Texas statewide data (i.e., 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years) regarding the number of days Grades 6, 7, and 8 students were assigned to an in-school suspension in relation to their economic status. In all four school years, Grade 6 students who were in poverty accounted for 78% of the overall number of days assigned to in-school suspension. Grade 7 students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to 77% of the total number of days students were assigned to an in school suspension. Lastly, Grade 8 students who were in poverty were assigned to 74% of the total number

of days that Grade 8 students were assigned to an in-school suspension. At each grade level and for each school year, students who were in poverty were assigned to a substantially higher number of days to an in-school suspension than were their peers who were not poor.

As noted previously, in an in-school suspension, students are typically removed from their traditional classroom setting and relocated to another classroom. Although they still attend school, they are in a different location for parts of a school day up to the entire school day (Cholewa et al., 2018). In-school suspension is often regarded by many schools as a less punitive exclusionary discipline assignment than an out-of-school suspension, because students are able to remain in school. In lieu of an assignment to out-of-school suspension, several schools have begun assigning in-school suspensions as an alternative discipline consequence. Readers should note, however, that empirical support for the efficacy of in-school suspension is limited in the existing research literature (Cholewa et al., 2018). Negative effects have been documented for in-school suspension to students in poverty. These negative effects include a decreased likelihood of completing high school and decreased GPAs (Cholewa et al., 2018).

The disproportionate number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Black and Hispanic students who are in poverty contribute to the achievement gap among students of color and other ethnic/racial backgrounds (Khan & Slate, 2016). Only a limited number of research investigations could be located about the relationship of economic status of middle school girls and the number of days they had been assigned to in-school suspension. Additional literature is required to identify and address the disparities present so that additional support can be provided to students in poverty.

## **Review of the Literature Regarding Exclusionary Discipline Consequences and Student At-Risk Status**

Well documented in the existing research literature are disparities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences based upon student ethnicity/race (Annamma et al., 2019; Harkrider, 2020; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Morris & Perry, 2017; Skiba et al., 2002; Slate et al., 2016). For example, Black girls are six times more likely to be suspended than are White girls (Angton, 2020; Barnes et al., 2017). Also well-established are clear inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences based upon student economic status (Annamma et al., 2019; Cholewa et al., 2018; Khan & Slate, 2016; Latimore et al., 2018; Mizel et al., 2016; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1995; Sullivan et al., 2013). For example, Khan and Slate (2016) revealed that students in poverty had statistically significantly higher rates of being assigned to an in-school suspension, being expelled from school, being at-risk for not graduating from high school, and receiving fewer opportunities to be exposed to quality teaching than White students. These persistent disparities in exclusionary discipline consequences increase the chances for school dropouts and academic failure within elementary, middle, and high school grade levels (Harkrider, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; Smith et al., 2021). Limited research investigations, however, could be located about relationships between exclusionary discipline consequences and students determined to be at-risk.

The sample of students of interest for this article are students who have been labeled as being at-risk. Students designated as at-risk are identified as having a high probability of not completing high school (Texas Education Agency, 2021d). For more detailed information about the 13 indicators for at-risk status, readers are directed to the

Texas Education Agency website. Between October 2016 and October 2017, the number of 15- to 24-year-olds who dropped out of school prior to obtaining a high school degree was approximately 523,000. These dropouts accounted for 4.7% of the 11.1 million youth enrolled in Grades 10 through 12 in 2016 (United States Department of Education, 2020). In 2017, the dropout rate for Hispanic 15- to 24-year-olds was higher than the rate for White 15- to 24-year-olds (6.5 % vs. 3.9 %), and a 5.5% difference from the dropout rate for Black 15- to 24-year-olds (United States Department of Education, 2020).

Texas secondary school completion and dropout rates in Texas public schools in the 2012-2013 school year revealed the presence of 3,187 Grade 7-8 students who were at-risk as a result of dropping out of school prior to high school completion. Of these numbers, 30.3% were girls. Black students were 11.4% of student dropouts in the 2012-2013 school year, and Hispanic students were 72.5% of student dropouts. Notably, the average dropout rate of Hispanic students in Grade 7-8 was nearly 10 times higher than the average dropout rate of Black students (Texas Education Agency, 2014b).

In a recent 2019-2020 school year research analysis of secondary school completion and dropouts in Texas public schools, the Texas Education Agency (2021d) revealed statewide yearly dropout rates for Grade 7-8 students. An increase of Texas student dropout rates increased from 3,579 in the prior school year 2018-2019 to 4,295 in the 2019-2020 school year, a 20% increase. Of the 4,295 students who dropped out of Grade 7-8, 58.2% dropped out of Grade 8 and 1,827 were girls. Grade 7 girls who dropped out during 2018-2019 totaled 0.4%, and Grade 8 girls who dropped out was 0.5%. Programs indicative of at-risk indicators in this research analysis included Grade 7-8 At-risk (56.3%), Emergent Bilingual (26.9%), English Learner (28.6%), Foster Care

(0.7%), and Homeless (7.3%). These statistics may have been counted in more than one category.

A total of 2.6 million students were assigned to at least one in-school suspension in the 2017-2018 school year. Of that 2.6 million, girls comprised over 800,000 of the total of in-school suspension assignments (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). Of the over 800,000 girls assigned an in-school suspension in the United States, 1,563 were Grade 7-8 middle school girls who became dropouts in the 2017-2018 school year in Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2021c). In the 2017-2018 school year, a total of 27,710 (27.2%) girls who were identified as being at-risk were expelled from public schools in the United States (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). Of that 27%, 1,222 (4.4%) were Emergent Bilingual expelled girls.

Young girls who are identified as being at-risk are more likely to have higher numbers of suspensions and expulsions (Patrick & Chaudhry, 2017). Of particular relevance to the Patrick and Chaudhry (2017) report, 25% of students in the care of the state were suspended, in contrast to 10% of students not in the care of the state. Patrick and Chaudry (2017) documented that girls in foster care experience higher rates of exclusionary discipline consequences, have lower achievement performance, and lower graduation rates.

Throughout the United States substantial numbers of children have one or more at-risk indicators, indicators that are connected to maladaptive behavior (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2021; Parent et al., 2011). Middle school girls who are at-risk are subjected to a disproportionate number of challenges that contribute to increased levels of school failure and school behavioral concerns (Mann, 2013). Schools with high

exclusionary disciplinary consequences tend to have high dropout rates, analogous to high at-risk rates (Lee et al., 2011). Schools with larger percentages of students of color and students of low economic status also have higher dropout rates (Lee et al., 2011) than schools with lower percentages of these students.

In a recent study, Smith et al. (2021) addressed the degree to which in-school suspension was related to performance on the state-mandated assessment. Students who were assigned to just one in-school suspension had a 57% increase in anticipated number of state standardized test failures than students who had not been assigned to an in-school suspension (Smith et al., 2021). With each additional assignment to an in-school suspension, the possibility for exam failure increased. Students assigned to five or more in-school suspensions had a 120% higher anticipated number of standardized test failures than students without a single in-school suspension.

Also of interest for this article are students who are Emergent Bilingual, because they are coded as being at-risk by the TEC § 29.052 (Texas Education Agency, 2011). At-risk Emergent Bilingual girls who were assigned to one or more in-school suspension accounted for 51,240 or 6.3% of students (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). Noted in the Office of Civil Rights (2021) report was that 1,222 or 4.4% Emergent Bilingual girls were expelled from school in the 2017-2018 school year. Expulsions are an at-risk indicator that meet the standards for § TEC 37.007 during a proceeding or current school year (Texas Education Agency, 2011).

Within the State of Texas, the state of interest in this article, students who have been retained at least one year are also considered to be at-risk. Emergent Bilingual students are more than twice as likely as their peers to be retained, twice as likely to not



graduate from high school, and likely to have lower scores on State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) End-of-Course exams than their peers. All of the aforementioned categories including dropouts, retentions, and state-mandated exam failures are at-risk indicators (Texas Education Agency, 2014b).

In a recent investigation conducted in Texas, Pohl and Slate (2021) documented that almost 500 Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements occurred for Grade 8 Black girls who were in poverty. Grade 8 Black girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a substantially higher rate to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement than were Grade 8 Black girls who were not economically disadvantaged. As such, a clear lack of equity was established by student at-risk status, with respect to Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements. Of note, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements are one of the 13 at risk indicators which are of particular interest to this article. In a related investigation, Henkel (2015) established that Grade 6 White, Black, and Hispanic girls who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had statistically significantly lower reading test scores on the state-mandated assessment than did Grades 6, 7, and 8 White, Black, and Hispanic girls who had not been assigned to such an exclusionary discipline consequence.

In an extensive search of the existing literature, no published articles could be located in which the at-risk status of girls was examined in relation to the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences. Given the relationship between at-risk status and poor academic achievement and a similar relationship for exclusionary discipline consequence assignment and poor academic achievement, research studies are clearly

warranted. Accordingly, the gap that is present in the existing literature regarding at-risk status and assignment to an in-school suspension were addressed in this multiyear investigation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Well documented in the existing research literature (Khan & Slate, 2016; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2013; Skiba et al., 2011) are clear inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to students by their ethnicity/race and economic status. Students of color have been assigned a disproportionate rate of exclusionary discipline consequences, in comparison to White and Asian students (Eckford & Slate, 2016). The majority of these investigations have been about disparities in exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to boys. Only in the past two decades have researchers begun to address inequities in exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to girls. Efforts to address the inequities in exclusionary discipline consequences for girls need to be made (Smith & Harper, 2015).

Numerous researchers (Losen et al., 2015; Morgan & Wright, 2018; Skiba et al., 2014) have concluded that gaps in suspension rates for students of color are the result of poor classroom discipline, a lack of cultural awareness, and minimal diverse teaching staff. Negative effects that result from exclusionary discipline consequences are decreased test scores, an apathetic approach to school, and higher dropout rates (Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Pohl & Slate, 2021). These negative effects are directly related to increased percentages of girls who are determined to be at-risk. Jones et al., (2018) revealed that students who were assigned to exclusionary discipline consequence were more likely to drop out of school than were their peers who had not been assigned to

exclusionary discipline consequences. Students reported a desire to drop out of school as a result of not feeling accepted and being removed from school. Additionally, the continued interruptions of learning and the failure of schools to identify the underlying real problems students faced result in an increased at-risk status of students (National Education Association, 2018).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The overall purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which inequities were present in exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to middle school girls. In the first study, the purpose was to determine the degree to which inequities existed in the assignment of exclusionary consequences to middle school girls by their ethnicity/race. In the second study, the purpose was to ascertain the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment of exclusionary consequences to middle school girls by their economic status. In the third study, the purpose was to determine the degree to which inequities existed in the assignment of exclusionary consequences to middle school girls by their at-risk status. For each article, the presence of trends was addressed across the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

### **Significance of the Study**

Numerous research investigations (Annamma et al., 2019; Blake et al., 2011; MacSuga-Gage et al., 2019) have been conducted about the presence of inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to Black boys over the past 30 years. In contrast, the published research literature is much less prevalent regarding exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to Black girls. The likelihood of not graduating from high school increases when exclusionary discipline consequences are

routinely administered in public schools. Policymakers consistently fail to address the degree to which such exclusionary discipline policies differentially affect girls and boys. The risks that girls of color experience are only infrequently discussed in the research literature. This lack of awareness results in educators and community members being inadequately informed of the consequences of exclusionary discipline consequences and gender dynamics (Crenshaw et al., 2015).

With respect to the State of Texas, Khan and Slate (2016) documented the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to students in poverty. Grade 8 girls who were identified as being either at-risk or as economically disadvantaged had more than two-thirds more exclusionary consequence assignments than Grade 8 Black girls who were not at-risk or economically disadvantaged (Pohl & Slate, 2021). In this journal-ready dissertation, critical facts were gathered on the relationship of ethnicity/race, student economic status, and at-risk status for middle school girls with their assignment to exclusionary discipline consequences. Results from this study can expand the knowledge base of policymakers, campus administrators, district leaders, and researchers so reform can provide equitable disciplinary consequences for all students.

### **Definition of Terms**

The key terms used in this study are provided to aid the reader in comprehending this journal-ready dissertation.

#### **At-risk**

The Texas Education Agency (2011) defined at-risk as a student at-risk of dropping out of school, who is under age 21, and who meets one or more of the following

criteria: 1) was not advanced from one grade level to the next for one or more school years; 2) did not perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument administered to the student under Texas Education Code (TEC) Subchapter B, Chapter 39; 3) is pregnant or a parent; 4) has been placed in an alternative education program in accordance with TEC §37.006 during the preceding or current school year; 5) has been expelled in accordance with TEC §37.007 during the preceding or current school year; 6) is currently on parole, probation, deferred prosecution or other conditional release; 7) was previously reported through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) to have dropped out of school.

**Black**

The Texas Education Agency (2018a) defined Black as “a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups in Africa” (p. 4).

**Discipline Consequence**

A disciplinary consequence is an action taken by a teacher or school administrator that will teach children to appropriately respect authority, to follow rules, and to accept responsibility for their behavior (Center for Parenting Education, 2020 p. 1).

**Economically Disadvantaged**

A category of students in Texas who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program are categorized as being economically disadvantaged. Family income determines the eligibility for the program (Texas Education Agency, 2013).

**Ethnicity**

The term, ethnicity, is used to determine whether a person is of Hispanic origin or not (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

**Exclusionary Discipline Consequence**

Exclusionary discipline refers to disciplinary placements that remove a student from his or her regular classroom assignment (American Psychological Association, 2019)

**Hispanic**

Hispanic is defined as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Central American, or other Spanish culture of origin, regardless of race (Texas Education Agency, 2018a, p. 4).

**In-School Suspension**

In-school suspension refers to the removal of students from their regular education environment and placement in an alternative setting on campus during the school day (Texas Education Code, 2021).

**Middle School**

Grades 6 through 8 were designated as middle schools) in this journal-ready dissertation (Craig, 2006).

**Not Economically Disadvantaged**

The Texas Education Agency (2021a) does not consider students to be economically disadvantaged if they do not meet eligibility requirements for free or reduce-priced lunches through the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program. Students from families who have a household income that is more than 185% of the

federal poverty threshold are not eligible for the free or reduce-priced lunch program (Benefits.gov, 2021).

### **Out-of-School Suspension**

Out-of-school suspension refers to a disciplinary action that prohibits a student from attending school for a period not exceeding three consecutive days (Texas Education Code, 2021).

### **Public Education Information Management System**

The Public Education Information Management System encompasses all data requested and received by the Texas Education Agency about public education, including student demographic and academic performance, personnel, financial, and organizational information (Texas Education Agency, 2018b).

### **Race**

The Texas Education Agency (2020) defines race as a person's self-identification with one or more social groups. An individual can report as White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and o Pacific Islander, or some other race.

### **White**

The Texas Education Agency (2018a) defined White as "a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa" (p. 4).

## **Literature Review Search Procedures**

For the purpose of this journal-ready dissertation, the literature pertaining to inequities in the number of days assigned to girls to an exclusionary discipline consequence (i.e., in-school suspension) relating to ethnicity/race, economic status and

at-risk status were reviewed. The following words and phrases were used to search for appropriate literature: at-risk, middle school girls, exclusionary discipline consequences, economic disadvantage, in-school suspension, and ethnicity/race. Literature searches were conducted through the following databases: Google scholar, Educational Administration Abstracts, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), and the American Psychological Association (Psych NET).

### **Delimitations**

The three studies contained in this journal-ready dissertation were limited to quantitative data about exclusionary discipline consequences that were obtained from the Texas Education Agency. Data were requested from the Public Education Information Management System information for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years on the following variables: gender, ethnicity/race, economic status, at-risk status, assignment to an in-school suspension, and number of days students were assigned to an in-school-suspension. Data were not requested for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, the COVID-19 pandemic years, because discipline data, along with academic achievement data, would have been dramatically affected by this worldwide pandemic. A Public Information Request form was submitted to the Texas Education Agency to obtain these data. The specific exclusionary discipline consequence that was examined in this journal-ready dissertation was in-school suspension.

### **Limitations**

For the purpose of this journal-ready dissertation, only quantitative data on exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls were analyzed. The Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management



System will provide the archival data that were analyzed for girls enrolled in Texas middle schools. As such, no efforts were made to determine underlying reasons why these girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Data analyses were confined to only girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8. Hence, the extent to which findings based on middle school girls would be generalizable to students in other grade levels is not known.

### **Assumptions**

The major assumption in this journal-ready dissertation were that the data provided to the Texas Education Agency through the Public Education Information Management System are correctly reported. Any errors in the reporting of ethnicity/race, economic status, at-risk status, assignment to in-school suspension, and number of days assigned could adversely affect results.

### **Organization of the Study**

In this journal-ready dissertation, three manuscripts were generated. In the first article, the extent to which inequities might exist in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension to Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls as a function of their ethnicity/race for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years were determined. In the second article, the degree to which inequities might be present in the number of days assigned to in-school-suspension to Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls as a function of their economic status for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years were addressed. In the third article, the extent to which inequities might exist in the number of days assigned to in-school-suspension as a function of the at-risk status of Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years were ascertained.

This journal-ready dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter I contains the background of the study, theoretical framework, definition of terms, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of the three research investigations. Chapter II consists of the structure for the first journal-ready dissertation investigation regarding the presence of the inequities in the number of days assigned in-school-suspension as a function of the ethnicity/race of Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls. Chapter III consists of the second journal-ready dissertation concerning the presence of inequities in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension as a function of the economic status of Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls. Chapter IV is the third article regarding the presence of inequities in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension as a function of the at-risk status of Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls. Lastly, in Chapter V, the results of all three articles were discussed.

**CHAPTER II**

INEQUITIES IN THE NUMBER OF DAYS ASSIGNED TO AN EXCLUSIONARY  
DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCE AS A FUNCTION OF THE ETHNICITY/RACE OF  
TEXAS MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS: A MULTIYEAR STATEWIDE ANALYSIS

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This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

### **Abstract**

Examined in this study was the extent to which differences were present in the assignment to and in the number of days Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls in Texas were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence as a function of their ethnicity/race in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2020-2021 school years. Across all three grade levels, and all four school years, inequities were clearly established in the assignment of an in-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of girls. Statistically significantly higher percentages of Black girls in all three grade levels and in all four school years were assigned to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic and White girls. Similar results were present for Hispanic girls compared to White girls. Moreover, Black girls in all three grade levels and in all four school years were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic and White girls. Similarly, Hispanic girls in all three grade levels and in all four school years were assigned to a statistically significantly higher average number of days than were White girls. These inequities result in instructional time losses and in achievement gaps

*Keywords:* Black; Hispanic; White; In-school suspension; Out-of-school suspension; Discipline consequence; Middle school; Race; Ethnicity

INEQUITIES IN THE NUMBER OF DAYS ASSIGNED TO AN EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCE AS A FUNCTION OF THE ETHNICITY/RACE OF TEXAS MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS: A MULTIYEAR STATEWIDE ANALYSIS

The overrepresentation of students of color assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences in the United States has been prevalent since the 1970s (Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Cholewa, 2018; Harkrider, 2020; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Slate et al., 2016). In a 1975 report by the Children's Defense Fund, clear evidence was present of disparities between Black and White students in that Black students were twice as likely as White students to be suspended from school (Morris & Perry, 2017). Moreover, school suspension assignment frequencies have doubled since the 1970s, with Black students being three times more likely to be suspended than students of other ethnic/racial backgrounds (Morris & Perry, 2017). According to the Office of Civil Rights (2021), of the 51 million students who were enrolled in public schools in the 2017-2018 school year, 2.6 million of them had been assigned to one or more in-school suspensions. In-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from the regular classroom as a disciplinary consequence by placing the student in a separate classroom during the school day (Texas Education Agency, 2021; Sec. 37.005). In-school suspensions occurred more often than any other exclusionary discipline consequence in the 2017-2018 school year (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). Of importance to this article is the presence of inequities in these exclusionary discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race.

Black boys have been the predominant ethnic/racial group of students who have been assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences, as well as being arrested by

campus police officers (Fisher & Hennessy, 2016; MacSuga-Gage et al., 2021). However, the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to Black girls is in close proximity to the exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to Black boys (Annamma et al., 2019; Green et al., 2020; Slate et al., 2016). In multiple areas such as suspensions and law enforcement referrals, differences between White girls and Black girls supercede the documented differences between Black boys and White boys (Green et al., 2020). Exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to Black girls have consistently increased, and, in some instances, have surpassed the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to Black boys across the United States in the past decade (Annamma et al., 2019; Green et al., 2020; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Morris & Perry, 2017; Slate et al., 2016; United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2021).

Of the 51 million students previously mentioned, 24.7 million of them were girls. Of the 2.6 million students who were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence, almost one million of them were girls. In the 2017-2018 school year, Black girls were 7.4% of the total public school enrollment for girls, however, they were assigned to more than a third, 36.6%, of all of the in-school suspensions. A similar pattern was established for Hispanic girls in that they constituted 13.3% of the total school enrollment for girls, yet, they were assigned to almost one fourth, 23.9%, of all in-school suspensions. Clearly established was that the in-school suspension rates of Black girls were statistically significantly higher than the in-school suspension rates of Hispanic girls and White girls (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). In the Office of Civil Rights (2021) report, Black girls were assigned approximately five times their total student enrollment percentage to an in-

school suspension, whereas Hispanic girls were assigned approximately two times their total student enrollment to an in-school suspension.

Concerning the State of Texas, which is the relevant focus in this article, girls accounted for nearly 48.5% of all enrolled public school students in the 2017-2018 school year (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). With reference to ethnicity/race, Black girls were only 6.1% of the state enrollment in public schools. Of note here is that they accounted for almost one fourth, 24.9%, of all in-school suspension assignments in the 2017-2018 school year. Hispanic girls, despite being 25.7% of the total state enrollment, were assigned over half, 52.5% of the in-school suspensions of girls. Clearly evident were inequities in the assignment of Black girls to an in-school suspension as they were assigned to this consequence at a rate of four times their school enrollment percentage. Similarly, Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension to this consequence at a rate of two times their enrollment percentage (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

In a recent Texas study, Slate et al. (2016) analyzed discipline data on Black, White, and Hispanic girls in Grades 4-11. The exclusionary discipline consequences addressed were in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and Discipline Alternative Education Program placements for the 2013-2014 school year. In regard to ethnicity/race, the number of exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to girls nearly doubled from Grade 8 to Grade 9. The number of Grade 8 Black girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension increased from 13,400 increased to 23,714 in Grade 9. Similarly, the number of Grade 8 Hispanic girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension increased from 31,421 to 61,180 in Grade 9. The number of Grade 8 White girls increased from 4,182 increased to 8,682 in Grade 9 . Notably in this study, are

dramatic increase occurred in the frequency of exclusionary discipline consequences among high school girls wherein Grade 9 girls were assigned more than 60,000 in-school suspensions.

The assignment of in-school suspensions in the 2008-2009 school year between Black and White middle school students was addressed by Hilberth and Slate (2014). Statistically significant inequities were established for a total of 172,551 Grades 6, 7, and 8 students with the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences. Black students were assigned to an in-school suspension two times more than their peers. Although only 14.1% of the Grade 6 student enrollment were Black, they received 32.1% of the in-school suspensions. In contrast, Grade 6 White students comprised 34.7% of the student enrollment but were only assigned 14.4% of the in-school suspension assignments. Although Grade 7 Black students were 14.2% of the student enrollment, they received 35.9% of the in-school assignments in the 2008-2009 school year. In contrast, Grade 7 White students were 35.2% of the total student enrollment, but they only received 16.2% of the in-school suspensions assigned that year. Finally, Grade 8 Black students were 14.4% of the student enrollment, but they were assigned to 36.4% of the in-school suspensions. Grade 8 White students comprised 35.3% of the student enrollment, but received only 17.7% of the in-school suspension assignments (Hilberth & Slate, 2014).

In another Texas statewide investigation (Coleman, 2017), statistically significant differences were established in in-school suspension assignments to Grade 6 girls in the 2012-2013 school year. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to nearly four times as many in-school suspensions than White Grade 6 girls and two times as many as Hispanic girls (Coleman, 2017). Moreover, Coleman (2017) documented that Hispanic girls were



assigned to nearly twice as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls. Similarly, in the 2014-2015 school year, Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to nearly four times as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls and almost two times as many as Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned to almost twice as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls (Coleman, 2017). These statistics are clear evidence of inequities in the assignment of in-school suspension by student ethnicity/race.

Not only are disparities present in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences by student ethnicity/race, additional researchers (Coleman, 2017; Harkrider, 2020; White, 2019) have conducted studies in the State of Texas in which they have documented the presence of statistically significant differences in the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences. White (2019) established that Grade 7 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension almost a day more than Grade 7 White girls and almost two-thirds more days than Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of one fourth more days than Grade 7 White girls. Grade 7 Black girls in the 2013-2014 school year were assigned in-school suspension almost one day more than Grade 7 White girls and almost half a day more than Grade 7 Hispanic girls. Similarly, Hispanic Grade 7 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of one half more day than Grade 7 White girls (White, 2019). White (2019) determined in the 2012-2013 school year that Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an average of more than half a day more to an in-school suspension than Grade 8 White girls and an average of half a day more than Grade 8 Hispanic girls. During the same school year, Grade 8 Hispanic girls and Grade 8 White girls were assigned a comparable number of in-school suspension days.

Moving from Texas statewide data to a local school district, in the 2017-2018 school year, the Humble Independent School District (ISD) near Houston, Texas reported civil rights data for the ethnicity/race of students assigned disciplinary actions. Black students represented only 20.7% of students enrolled in Humble ISD, however, they constituted 41.9% of the in-school suspensions that were assigned. White students were 37.8% of the student enrollment, but constituted only 20.3% of the in-school suspension assignments (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). One of the Humble ISD middle schools, Atascocita Middle School had an ethnic/racial composition of 20.6% Black, 32.1% Hispanic, and 41.9% White. Girls within this middle school were 50.6% of the total enrollment. With respect to the assignment of in-school suspensions, Black girls had the highest percentage, 6.5%, followed by Hispanic girls, 4.95%, and White girls, 4.5% (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). These percentages are clear evidence of inequities in the assignment of in-school suspensions in this particular middle school; inequities that are congruent with the national statistics and previously discussed Texas statistics.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Minimal improvements have been made regarding disparities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences since a report in 1975 by the Children's Defense Fund about inequities between Black and White students (Morris & Perry, 2017). With the adoption of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, specified within the Act was that consistent disciplinary policies be implemented within schools (Allman & Slate, 2011). Allman and Slate (2011) reported that the intent of these disciplinary policies was to ensure the safety of students while in school; however, these disciplinary rules became the catalyst for zero-tolerance policies that resulted in substantial penalties for minor

misbehaviors. Consequently, once these structured disciplinary policies became prevalent within the United States, Black students were subjected to exclusionary discipline assignments at substantially higher rates than their White peers (Riddle & Sinclair, 2019).

The literature regarding Black girls and the assignment to exclusionary discipline consequences is limited (Crenshaw et al., 2015). The disproportionate exclusionary disciplinary consequences experienced by girls of color have resulted in missed classes, academic gaps, increased drop-out rates, increased exposure to school discipline officer referrals, and unfair biased surveillance (Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Jones, 2019; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013; Riddle & Sinclair, 2019; United States Department of Education, 2014; Wun, 2016). Fisher and Hennessy (2015) reported that students subjected to high rates of in-school and out-of-school suspension lack critical instruction, resulting in students falling behind and performing poorly on standardized tests. Moreover, excessive exclusionary consequences result in increased chances of contact with the juvenile justice system as well as elevated drop-out rates.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this article was to ascertain the extent to which inequities existed in the assignment to an in-school suspension for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls by their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, White). A second purpose was to determine the degree to which disparities were present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls by their ethnicity/race. The third purpose was to ascertain the presence of trends in the assignment to an in-school suspension and in the number of days assigned across the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study was to address the paucity of published research literature concerning the extent to which inequities might be present in the assignment of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls to an exclusionary discipline consequence. Outcomes of this multiyear investigation can assist in transforming the ability of school staff to engage all students in a fair and non-biased manner when assigning discipline consequences. Providing an awareness to school leaders can prompt the creation of frameworks and guidelines, to increase equity in school discipline and decrease biased discipline assignments of exclusionary consequences. Additionally, school leaders can use findings from this multiyear statement investigation to identify trends and patterns of differential treatment of specific ethnic/racial groups of exclusionary discipline assignments among middle school girls. Additional research results about girls in middle school may be helpful so educational leaders can realize the critical necessity to modify and evaluate discipline consequences assigned to middle school girls.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this investigation: (a) What is the difference in the number of days Grade 6 girls are assigned to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race?; (b) What is the difference in the number of days Grade 7 girls are assigned to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race?; (c) What is the difference in the number of days Grade 8 girls are assigned to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race?; and (d) What trend is present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of middle school girls from the 2016-2017 school year through the 2019-2020 school year?

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

In this multiyear statewide investigation, a causal comparative research design was present (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). When causal comparative research designs are present, the independent variables are categorical variables. The independent variable in this investigation was student ethnicity/race: Black, Hispanic, and White. These three ethnic/racial groups of girls had their discipline data analyzed in this study. The dependent variables in this article consisted of assignment to an in-school suspension and to the number of days girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Data were about Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls who were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Statewide archival data were examined once retrieved from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System.

### **Participants and Instrumentation**

Participants in this research investigation were Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, or 2019-2020 school years in the State of Texas. Absent from this study were data for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, the COVID-19 pandemic years, because discipline data, along with academic achievement data, would have been dramatically affected by this worldwide pandemic. Participants were derived from the three largest ethnic/racial groups of girls in Texas (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and White). As such, discipline data for Asian girls and for Native-American girls were not examined in this

study. Data were analyzed to determine the extent to which disparities were present in the number of days girls are assigned to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race.

The Texas Education Code §37 (2021) states the stipulations schools must adhere to when assigning an in-school or out-of-school suspension. In-school suspension is the removal of a student from the normal classroom setting as a disciplinary consequence by placing the student in a different and separate classroom during the school day (Texas Education Code, 2021). The discipline data were retrieved from the Public Education Information Management System that is submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

### **Results**

Prior to conducting inferential statistical procedures to answer the research questions previously discussed, their underlying assumptions were checked. With respect to the research questions involving assignment to an in-school suspension, Pearson chi-square procedures were performed. Regarding the research questions involving number of days assigned to an in-school suspension, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) procedures were calculated. The underlying assumptions of both inferential statistical procedures were met. Results will now be reported separately by grade level and by school year.

#### **Results for In-School Suspension for Ethnicity/Race and Grade 6 Girls**

In this research investigation, the assignment to and the number of days Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race were determined. Results will be presented for the first research question by the school year. Concerning the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 6 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 144.54, p < .001$ , with respect to their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below

small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). Hispanic girls had more than six times the number of in-school suspensions of White girls and twice the number of in-school suspensions of Black girls. Additionally, Black girls were assigned three times the number of in-school suspensions than were White girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned most often to an in-school suspension of the three groups of girls; followed by Black girls, and then White girls in the 2016-2017 school year. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 2.1.

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With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 6 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 173.95$ ,  $p < .001$ , by their ethnicity/race, a below small effect size, Cramer's V of .09 (Cohen, 1988). In this school year, Hispanic girls were two times more likely to be assigned to an in-school suspension than were Black Grade 6 girls and nearly seven times more likely than White girls. Table 2.1 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

With respect to the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 6 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 178.90$ ,  $p < .001$ , by their ethnicity/race, a below small effect size, Cramer's V of .08 (Cohen, 1988). Hispanic girls were assigned most often to an in-school suspension, followed by Black girls, and then by White girls. Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate 30% higher than Black girls and nearly 40% higher than White girls. Revealed in Table 2.1 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

For the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 6 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 145.26, p < .001$ , by their ethnicity/race, below small effect size, Cramer's V of .09 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a higher rate than were Black and White girls, 27.1% and 16.7%., respectively. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension 10% more frequently than White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 2.1.

### **Results for In-School Suspension for Ethnicity/Race and Grade 7 Girls**

In the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 7 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 171.09, p < .001$ , by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension most frequently, followed by Black girls, and then White girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate of 41% higher than White girls and 32% higher than Black girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 2.2.

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With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 7 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 150.98, p < .001$ , by their ethnicity/race, below small effect size, Cramer's V of .07 (Cohen, 1988). With respect to the three groups, Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a higher rate than Black and White girls. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were



assigned to an in-school suspension 42% higher than Grade 7 White girls, and 34% higher than Black girls. Delineated in Table 2.2 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

Regarding the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed in the assignment of Grade 7 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 178.90$ ,  $p < .001$ , by their ethnicity/race, below small effect size, Cramer's V of .08 (Cohen, 1988). Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate nearly 40% higher than White girls, and 32% higher than Black girls. Grade 7 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate of nearly 10% more than White girls. Table 2.2 contains descriptive statistics for this school year.

For the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of Grade 7 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 145.26$ ,  $p < .001$ , by their ethnicity/race, below small effect size, Cramer's V of .09 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned in-school suspension at a rate nearly 35% more frequently than Black girls and more than 42% more frequently than White girls. Grade 7 Black girls were 8.1% more likely to be assigned to an in-school suspension than were White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 2.2.

### **Results for In-School Suspension for Ethnicity/Race and Grade 8 Girls**

With respect to the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 8 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 159.71$ ,  $p < .001$ , by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, below was small, .08 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension most often; followed by Black girls, and then White girls. Hispanic girls were

assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate nearly 33% higher than were Black girls and 39% higher than were White girls. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension nearly 10% higher than White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 2.3.

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Concerning the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded in the assignment of Grade 8 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 152.73, p < .001$ , by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .07 (Cohen, 1988). Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school most frequently, followed by Black girls and then White girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a higher rate than were Black or White girls, 23.2% and 18.3% respectively. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are revealed in Table 2.3.

Regarding the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 8 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 165.41, p < .001$ , by their ethnicity/race, below small effect size, Cramer's V of .07 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate of nearly 33% more often than Black girls and 39% more often than White girls. Grade 8 Black girls were 5% more likely to be assigned to in-school suspension than were White girls. Delineated in Table 2.3 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

In the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 8 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(2) = 143.18, p < .001$ , by

their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's  $V$  of .08 (Cohen, 1988). Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension most frequently, followed by Black girls and then White girls. Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate more than 34% higher than were Black girls. The rate at which Grade 8 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was nearly 41% higher than Grade 8 White girls. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate 7% higher than White girls. Table 2.3 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Results for Number of Days Grade 6 Girls Were Assigned to an In-School Suspension**

With respect to the 2016-2017 school year and the number of days Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 16975) = 39.44, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .005$ , below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that all three pairwise comparisons were statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to an average of 3.93 days to an in-school suspension, compared to 3.38 days for Hispanic girls and 3.14 days to White girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic and White girls, 0.55 and 0.79 more successively. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned 0.24 more days than were Grade 6 White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are revealed in Table 2.4.

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Regarding the 2017-2018 school year and the number of days Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 16494) = 46.29, p = .007$ , partial  $n^2 = .006$ , below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that two pairwise comparisons were statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 6 White and Hispanic girls were assigned to a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to an average of 4.04 days to an in-school suspension, compared to 3.36 days for Hispanic girls and 3.27 days for White girls. Table 2.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

With respect to the 2018-2019 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 619,298) = 33.48, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .004$ , below small effect size, in the number of days Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that two pairwise comparisons were statistically significant. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to an average of 4.06 days to an in-school suspension, compared to 3.51 days for Hispanic girls and 3.36 days for White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 2.3.

Concerning the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $F(2, 323027) = 15.99, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .002$ , below small effect size. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed the presence of three statistically significant pairwise comparisons. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to an average of 3.43 days to an in-school suspension, compared to 3.14 days for Hispanic girls and 2.90 days for White girls. Descriptive statistics for this school year are revealed in Table 2.4.

## Results for Number of Days Grade 7 Girls Were Assigned to an In-School Suspension

With respect to the 2016-2017 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 773397) = 34.05, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .003$ , below small effect size, in the number of days Grade 7 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that three pairwise comparisons were statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to in-school suspension. Grade 7 Black girls were assigned to an average of 4.37 days to an in-school suspension, compared to 3.89 days for Hispanic girls and 3.54 days for White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are delineated in Table 2.5.

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Concerning the 2017-2018 school year and the number of days Grade 7 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $F(2,706155) = 41.90, p = .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .004$ , below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that all three pairwise comparisons were statistically significant: Grade 7 Black girls were assigned to an average of 4.30 days to an in-school suspension, compared to 3.75 days for Hispanic girls and 3.41 days for White girls. Table 2.5 contains descriptive statistics for this school year.

Regarding the 2018-2019 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 766298) = 66.85, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .006$ , below small effect size, in the number of days Grade 7 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension.

Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that two pairwise comparisons were statistically significant. Grade 7 Black girls were assigned to an average of 4.43 days to an in-school suspension, compared to 3.70 days for Hispanic girls and 3.17 days for White girls.

For the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $F(2, 2477) = 10.13, p < .001, \text{partial } n^2 = .008$ , below small effect size. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed three statistically significant pairwise comparisons. Grade 7 Black girls were assigned to an average of 3.60 days to an in-school suspension, compared to 3.33 days for Hispanic girls and 3.12 days for White girls. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 2.5.

### **Results for Number of Days Grade 8 Girls Were Assigned to an In-School Suspension**

With respect to the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $F(2, 660672) = 22.47, p < .001, \text{partial } n^2 = .002$ , below small effect size, in the number of days Grade 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that two pairwise comparisons were statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 8 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an in-school suspension, 3.65 and 3.47 respectively. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned to an average of 4.06 days to an in-school suspension, compared to 3.65 days for Hispanic girls and 3.47 days for White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are revealed in Table 2.6.

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Concerning the 2017-2018 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 628935) = 8.95, p = .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .001$ , below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that two pairwise comparisons was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned to an average of 3.88 days to an in-school suspension, compared to 3.65 days for Hispanic girls and 3.48 days for White girls. Table 2.6 contains descriptive statistics for this school year.

With respect to the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded,  $F(2, 771162) = 27.38, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .003$ , below small effect size, in the number of days Grade 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that two pairwise comparisons were statistically significant. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned to an average of 4.23 days to an in-school suspension, compared to 3.70 days for Hispanic girls and 3.61 days for White girls. Revealed in Table 2.6 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

For the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $F(2, 408902) = 4.79, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .001$ , below small effect size. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed one statistically significant pairwise comparison. Grade 8 Hispanic and White girls were assigned to a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Grade 8 Black girls were assigned to an average of 3.39 days to an in-school suspension, compared to 3.19 days for Hispanic girls and 3.20 days for White girls. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 2.6.

## Discussion

In this investigation, the degree to which disparities were present in the assignment to and the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls was investigated for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Inferential statistical procedures revealed the presence of statistically significant differences for all research questions.

With respect to all four school years, Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned to disproportionately higher rates of in-school suspension assignments than were Grade 6 Black and White girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned nearly 50% more often to an in-school suspension than were Black and White girls. Grade 6 Black girls also had disproportionately higher rates of in-school suspension than White girls. Clear inequities were established in the assignment to an in-school suspension of Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race. Depicted in Figure 2.1 are the rates of in-school suspension assignment for Grade 6 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

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Similarly, Grade 7 Hispanic girls were disproportionately overrepresented in the frequency of in-school suspension assignments. Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned nearly 50% more often to an in-school suspension than were Black and White girls. Grade 7 Black girls were also disproportionately assigned to an in-school suspension, in comparison to White girls. Inequities were clearly established in the assignment of Grade



7 girls to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race. Shown in Figure 2.2 are the average percentages of in-school suspension for Grade 7 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in all four school years.

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Insert Figure 2.2 about here

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Regarding Grade 8, Hispanic girls were assigned to a higher frequency of in-school suspension assignments. Grade 8 girls were assigned close to 50% more often to an in-school suspension than were Black and White girls. Additionally, Grade 8 Black girls were also disproportionately assigned to an in-school suspension, in comparison to White girls. Inequities were clearly established in the assignment of Grade 8 girls to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race. Illustrated in Figure 2.3 are the average percentages of in-school suspension for Grade 8 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in all four years.

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Insert Figure 2.3 about here

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With respect to the number of days girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, clear inequities were present by ethnicity/race. In each school year, Grade 6 Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school suspension, followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Depicted in Figure 2.4 is the average

number of days that Grade 6 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in each school year.

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Concerning Grade 7, Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school suspension, followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Illustrated in Figure 2.5 are the average number of days that Grade 7 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in each school year.

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Insert Figure 2.5 about here  
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Concerning Grade 8, Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school suspension, followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Depicted in Figure 2.6 are the average number of days that Grade 8 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in each school year.

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Insert Figure 2.6 about here  
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### **Connections with Existing Literature**

In this statewide multiyear Texas investigation, clear differences were yielded as a function of the ethnicity/race of middle school girls. Disparities were clearly established in the assignment and in the number of days that Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to

an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race were revealed. Similar findings have been documented by other researchers (e.g., Annamma et al., 2019; Eckford & Slate, 2016; Harkrider, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Pohl & Slate, 2021; Riddle et al., 2011) who have all documented the presence of statistically significant relationships between ethnicity/race and assignment to exclusionary discipline consequences. A limited number of researchers have established the presence of such differences among girls at the middle school level. The research results discussed in this article were commensurate with the findings reported by White (2019) who documented that Grade 7 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension for an average of one-half more days than Grade 7 White girls. Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. In this article, Hispanic girls, along with Black girls in both Grades 6, 7, and 8 were assigned to an in-school suspension at higher rates than were White girls. Of note, in all four school years and at all three grade levels in this statewide investigation, Black girls were assigned the greatest number of days in an in-school suspension, followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

School districts must create policy that cultivates an awareness of concern by having critical conversations with campuses and districts as a whole. This approach can provide needed conversations to occur to manifest change. Additionally, school leaders can use findings from this multiyear statewide investigation to identify trends and patterns of differential treatment of specific ethnic/racial groups of exclusionary discipline assignments among middle school girls.

The results of this study have pronounced implications for policymakers and the practices and procedures of school districts and administrators. Disparities in the assignment of in-school suspension as a function of ethnicity/race of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls must be addressed. Alternate practices to in-school suspension for Hispanic and Black girls must be framed to discontinue the continuance of this disparity. Administrators must be cognizant that the discipline infraction warrants an in-school suspension as a consequence and that subconscious biases may exist among the referring teacher and administrator. Outcomes of this multiyear investigation can assist in transforming the ability of school staff to engage all students in a fair and non-biased manner when assigning discipline consequences.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Determined from the results of this analysis, multiple recommendations for future research can be developed. First, a study to ascertain the relationship between the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness and End of Course failures and the number of days girls and boys have been assigned to in-school suspension void of classroom instruction from a content-certified teacher based on at-risk status. Secondly, researchers should conduct an analysis of Emergent Bilingual students and Non-Emergent Bilingual high school and middle school boys and girls to ascertain differences that may exist among the two groups as it relates to the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension framed from economic status. Thirdly, researchers should examine the relationship between assignment to an in-school suspension and special education students labeled with a learning disability and emotional disturbance by ethnicity/race.

Finally, researchers should investigate the relationship between students identified with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and the assignment to in-school suspension.

### **Conclusion**

In this multiyear, Texas statewide analysis, the degree to which inequities were present in the assignment to and the number of days Grades 5, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race was addressed for three school years: 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020. Statistically significant differences were revealed for all research questions. A consistent pattern emerged for each grade level and each year. Grades 6, 7, and 8 Hispanic girls were assigned to disproportionately higher rates to an in-school suspension than were their counterparts. Black girls were also assigned to higher rates than were White girls. In each of the four school years and in each grade level White girls were assigned least often to an in-school suspension, and when assigned, were assigned the fewest number of days. Black girls were assigned to an average of more days to an in-school suspension, followed by Hispanic girls and then White girls. Clear inequities were revealed in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension and the frequency of an in-school suspension assignment for Hispanic and Black girls.

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**Table 2.1**

*Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an In-School Suspension to Grade 6 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
2016-2017			
Black	1,157	32.7	26.8
Hispanic	2,079	58.8	57.4
White	302	8.5	15.8
2017-2018			
Black	1,232	32.4	27.3
Hispanic	2,234	58.8	55.5
White	334	8.8	17.2
2018-2019			
Black	1,326	31.1	26.9
Hispanic	2,558	60.0	56.0
White	382	9.0	17.1
2019-2020			
Black	1,017	32.7	27.1
Hispanic	1,827	58.8	56.1
White	263	8.5	16.7

**Table 2.2**

*Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an In-School Suspension to Grade 7 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
2016-2017			
Black	1,278	29.3	25.5
Hispanic	2,701	61.9	57.9
White	385	8.8	16.6
2017-2018			
Black	1,289	29.1	24.8
Hispanic	2,707	61.2	58.3
White	427	9.7	16.8
2018-2019			
Black	1,394	27.0	25.3
Hispanic	3,187	61.8	57.8
White	575	11.2	17.0
2019-2020			
Black	1,113	28.4	24.7
Hispanic	2,449	62.6	58.8
White	353	9.0	16.6

**Table 2.3**

*Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an In-School Suspension to Grade 8 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Year*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
2016-2017			
Black	1,388	29.4	24.5
Hispanic	2,814	59.5	57.1
White	527	11.1	18.4
2017-2018			
Black	1,446	28.7	23.2
Hispanic	3,008	59.6	58.5
White	590	11.7	18.3
2018-2019			
Black	1,569	27.1	24.0
Hispanic	3,557	61.5	57.6
White	655	11.3	18.4
2019-2020			
Black	1,391	29.5	24.6
Hispanic	2,812	58.0	58.3
White	505	10.7	17.5

**Table 2.4**

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 6 Girls as a Function of their Ethnicity/Race for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Black	4,541	3.93	4.51
Hispanic	9,751	3.38	4.03
White	2,683	3.14	3.60
2017-2018			
Black	4,509	4.04	4.93
Hispanic	9,149	3.36	3.84
White	2,836	3.27	3.71
2018-2019			
Black	5,067	4.06	4.92
Hispanic	10,551	3.51	4.35
White	3,217	3.36	3.85
2019-2020			
Black	3,712	3.43	3.94
Hispanic	7,673	3.14	3.70
White	2,289	2.90	3.09

**Table 2.5**

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 7 Girls as a Function of their Ethnicity/Race for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Black	5,208	4.37	5.31
Hispanic	11,816	3.89	4.62
White	3,381	3.54	3.99
2017-2018			
Black	4,941	4.30	5.18
Hispanic	11,604	3.75	4.43
White	3,346	3.41	3.99
2018-2019			
Black	5,539	4.43	5.24
Hispanic	12,655	3.70	4.31
White	3,715	3.17	3.74
2019-2020			
Black	4,347	3.60	4.25
Hispanic	10,353	3.33	3.98
White	2,918	3.12	3.47



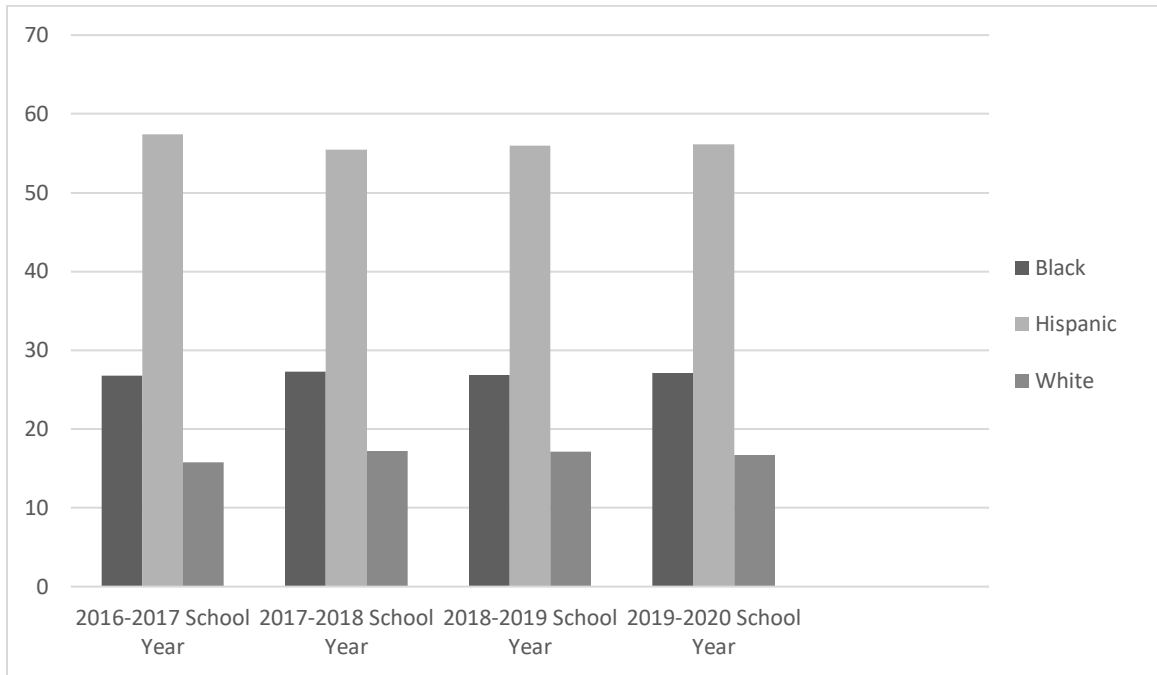
**Table 2.6**

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 8 Girls as a Function of their Ethnicity /Race for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Black	4,916	4.06	4.71
Hispanic	11,474	3.65	4.32
White	3,708	3.47	3.99
2017-2018			
Black	4,553	3.88	4.73
Hispanic	11,464	3.65	4.31
White	3,586	3.48	3.72
2018-2019			
Black	5,120	4.23	5.24
Hispanic	12,273	3.70	4.50
White	3,927	3.61	4.27
2019-2020			
Black	4,280	3.39	3.68
Hispanic	10,095	3.19	3.63
White	3,045	3.20	3.39

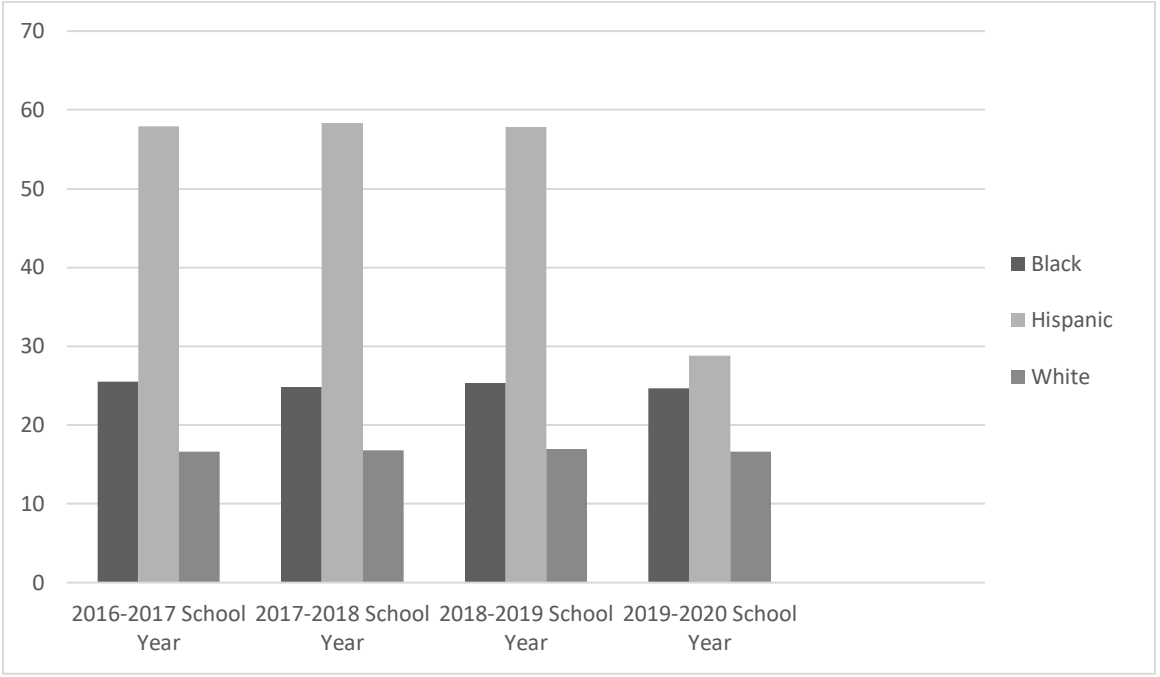
**Figure 2.1**

*Rate of In-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 6 Girls by Their Ethnicity/Race for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



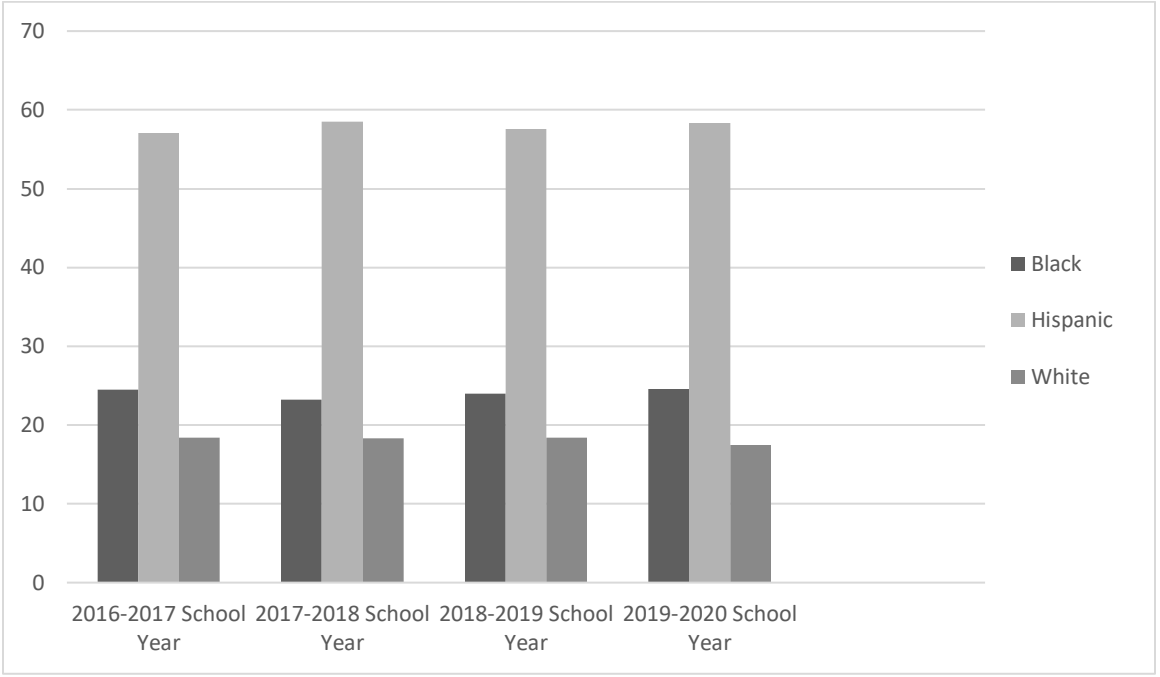
**Figure 2.2**

*Rate of In-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 7 Girls by Their Ethnicity/Race for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



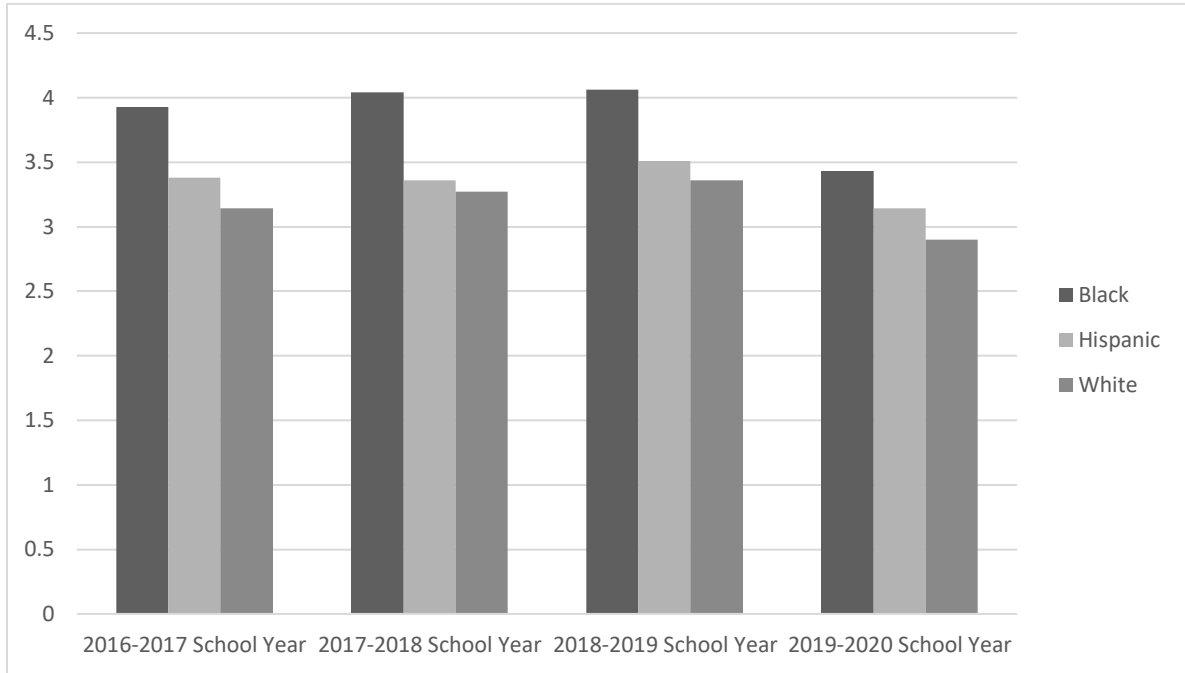
**Figure 2.3**

*Rate of In-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 8 Girls by Their Ethnicity/Race for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



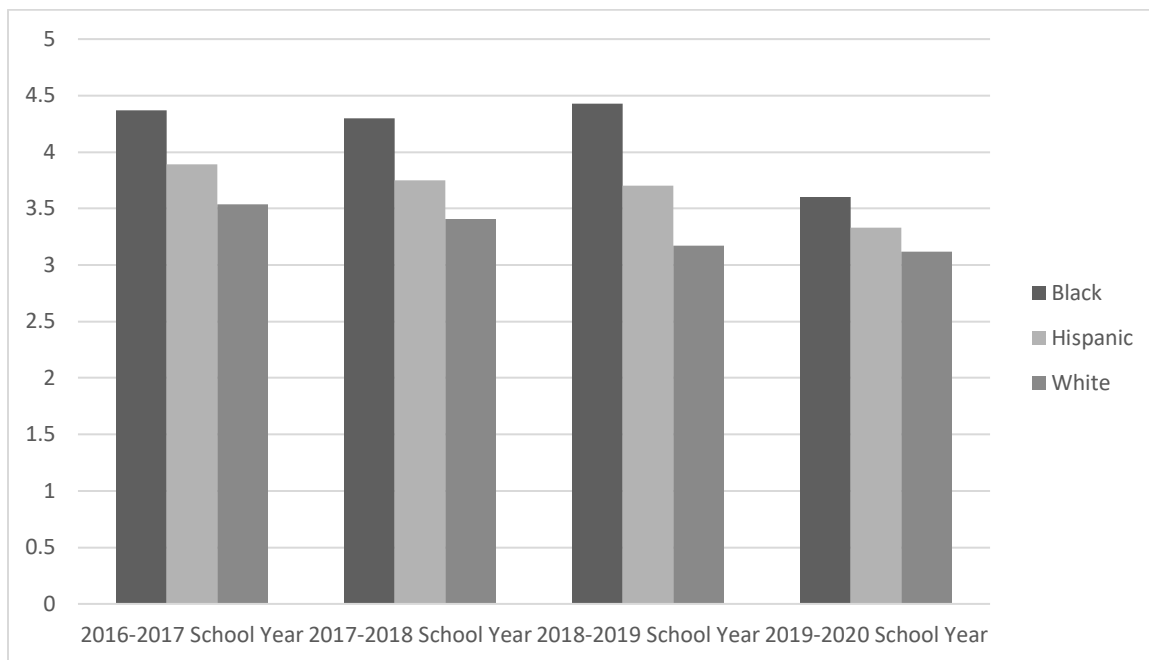
**Figure 2.4**

*Average Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 6 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



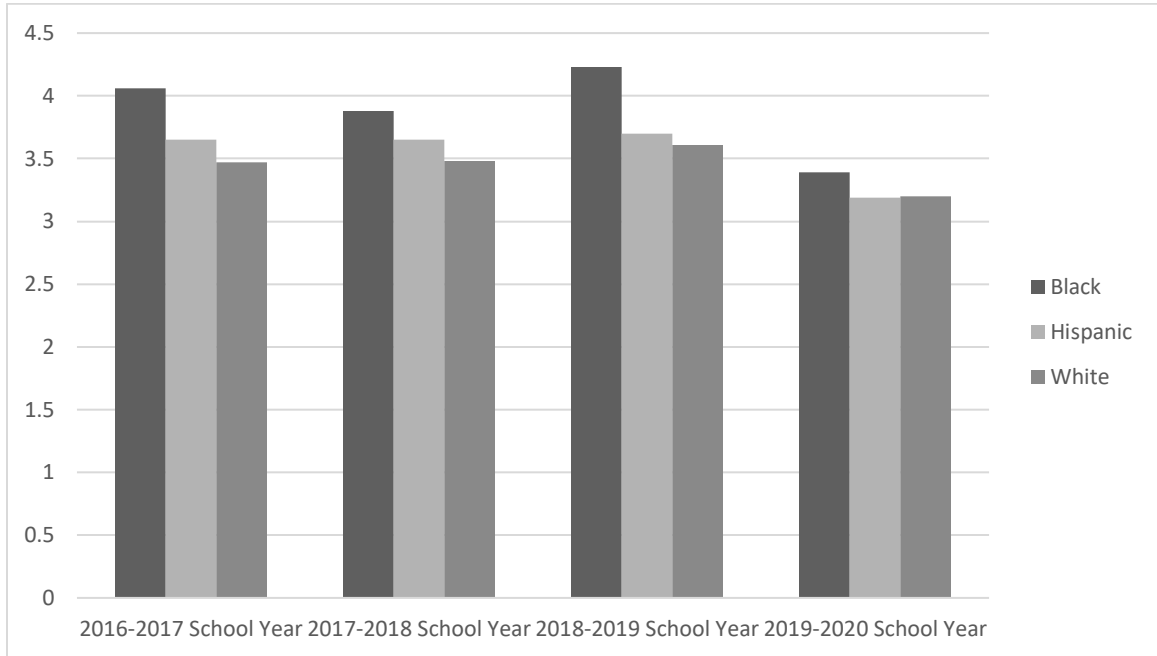
**Figure 2.5**

*Average Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 7 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



**Figure 2.6**

*Average Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 8 Black, Hispanic, and White Girls for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



**CHAPTER III**

INEQUITIES IN THE NUMBER OF DAYS ASSIGNED TO AN EXCLUSIONARY  
DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCE AS A FUNCTION OF THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF  
TEXAS MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS: A MULTIYEAR STATEWIDE ANALYSIS

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This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.



### **Abstract**

Examined in this study was the extent to which differences existed in the assignment to and in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls in Texas as a function of their economic status in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2020-2021 school years. Across all three grade levels, and all four school years, disparities were established in the average number of days assigned by student economic status. Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls who were economically disadvantaged had statistically significantly higher average number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension. As such, clear evidence was provided of a strong link between poverty and inequities in being assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence.

*Keywords:* In-school suspension; Discipline consequence; Economically disadvantaged; Middle school

INEQUITIES IN THE NUMBER OF DAYS ASSIGNED TO AN EXCLUSIONARY  
DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCE AS A FUNCTION OF THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF  
TEXAS MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS: A MULTIYEAR STATEWIDE ANALYSIS

Exclusionary discipline consequences are so prevalent in public schools in the United States that approximately 2.6 million students were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2017-2018 school year (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). In an in-school suspension, students are typically removed from their traditional classroom setting and relocated to another classroom. Although they still attend school, they are in a different school location other than their regular classroom for parts of a school day to the entire school day (Cholewa et al., 2018). Of the 2.6 million students who were assigned to an in-school suspension, 30% of them were girls. Important for this article is that nearly one-fifth of all of the in-school suspensions that occurred in the United States happened in Texas, the state of interest in this article (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

Documented disparities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences constituted the catalyst for the United States Department of Justice and the United States Department of Education (2021) to release a report about discriminatory disciplinary exclusionary consequences (Khan & Slate, 2016). Civil Rights data were provided from the U.S. Department of Education from 97,000 public schools in the United States for the 2011-2012 school year. In that report, Black students were determined to have been suspended from school at disproportionately higher rates than were White students. Moreover, Hispanic students and students in poverty were substantially more likely to be suspended from school (U.S. Department of Education, 2014, 2015) than their White peers and students who were not economically

disadvantaged. Suspension rates have more than doubled from 3.7% in the 1973 school year to 7.4% in the 2010 school year, resulting in students in poverty having the highest suspension rates (Khan & Slate, 2016) of all students.

Established in the research literature is the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to students in poverty (Annamma et al., 2019; Cholewa et al., 2018; Khan & Slate, 2016; Latimore et al., 2018; Mizel et al., 2016; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1997; Sullivan et al., 2013; White & Slate, 2017). Students in poverty are assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences such as in-school suspension at rates that are substantially higher than their peers who are not in poverty (Cholewa et al., 2018). In the 2011-2012 school year, of the 338,612 students who were assigned to one or more in-school suspensions, more than half of them, 55.02%, were economically disadvantaged (i.e., qualified for the federal free or reduced-price meals). More than a third of the students, 35.19%, who were assigned to an in-school suspension were girls (Cholewa et al., 2018). Mizel et al. (2016) established, in particular, the presence of inequities among parents' level of education as a measure of student poverty and a connection with suspension rates. Parents of students with less education were predicted to have greater punishment.

With respect to Texas, 5,371,586 students were enrolled in public schools in the 2020-2021 school year. Of this number, 2,624,722 of them were girls. In the 2018-2019 school year, more than half, 60%, of all Texas public school students were identified as being economically disadvantaged (Texas Education Agency, 2021a). Within the same school year, the number of students who were economically disadvantaged and who had

been assigned to in-school-suspension was 363,806 students, which was 15.8% of the total student enrollment (Texas Education Agency, 2021b).

In a recent Texas statewide analysis, Coleman (2017) examined the relationship of student economic status to in-school suspension assignments. In the 2012-2013 school year, Grade 6 Black girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a substantially higher rate, 14.3% percentage points more, than Grade 6 Black girls who were not poor. Grade 6 Hispanic girls in poverty were assigned to an in-school suspension at substantially higher rates, slightly more than two times, than were Grade 6 Hispanic girls who were not in poverty. Moreover, in each school year from 2012-2013 through 2015-2016, both Grade 6 Black and Hispanic girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned at twice the rate to an in-school suspension than were Black and Hispanic girls who were not poor (Coleman, 2017). Similar results were documented for Grades 7 and 8 Black and Hispanic girls. In her investigation, poverty was clearly linked to disparities in the assignment to an in-school suspension for girls of color.

In another recent Texas investigation, Khan and Slate (2016) analyzed in-school suspension assignments of Grade 6 Black, Hispanic, and White students by their economic status in the 2011-2012 school year. Black students who were assigned to an in-school suspension and who were economically disadvantaged were assigned more than one and a half times more often to an in-school suspension than were Black students who were not economically disadvantaged (35.5% to 19.9%). Hispanic students who were assigned to an in-school suspension and who were economically disadvantaged were assigned almost two times more often to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic

students who were not economically disadvantaged (20.2% to 12.0%). Similarly, White students who were assigned to an in-school suspension and who were economically disadvantaged were assigned more than two times the rate of White students who were not economically disadvantaged (23.1% to 8.9%). Khan and Slate (2016) clearly supported the aforementioned literature regarding the overrepresentation of exclusionary disciplinary consequences for students in poverty.

In addition to inequities being present in the actual assignment to an in-school suspension by student economic status, disparities have also been documented in the number of days students are assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences. White and Slate (2017) established the presence of clear inequities in the number of days students were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status. Students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension a statistically higher number of days than were students who were not economically disadvantaged. Specifically, White (2019) determined that Grades 6, 7, and 8 students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 1.05, 1.09, and 0.87 more days, respectively, than were their peers who were not economically disadvantaged.

In a recent study, White (2019) analyzed multiple years of Texas statewide data (i.e., 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016 school years) regarding the number of days Grades 6, 7, and 8 students were assigned to an in-school suspension in relation to their economic status. In all four school years, Grade 6 students who were in poverty accounted for 78% of the overall number of days assigned to in-school suspension. Grade 7 students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to

77% of the total number of days students were assigned to an in school suspension. Lastly, Grade 8 students who were in poverty were assigned to 74% of the total number of days that Grade 8 students were assigned to an in-school suspension. At each grade level and for each school year, students who were in poverty were assigned to a substantially higher number of days to an in-school suspension than were their peers who were not poor.

As noted previously, in an in-school suspension, students are typically removed from their traditional classroom setting and relocated to another classroom. Although they still attend school, they are in a different location for parts of a school day up to the entire school day (Cholewa et al., 2018). In-school suspension is often regarded by many schools as a less punitive exclusionary discipline assignment than an out-of-school suspension, because students are able to remain in school. In lieu of an assignment to out-of-school suspension, several schools have begun assigning in-school suspensions as an alternative discipline consequence. Readers should note, however, that empirical support for the efficacy of in-school suspension is limited in the existing research literature (Cholewa et al., 2018). Negative effects have been documented for in-school suspension to students in poverty. These negative effects include a decreased likelihood of completing high school and decreased GPAs (Cholewa et al., 2018).

The disproportionate number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Black and Hispanic students who are in poverty contributes to the achievement gap among students of color and other ethnic/racial backgrounds (Khan & Slate, 2016). Only a limited number of research investigations could be located about the relationship between the economic status of middle school girls and the number of days they had been

assigned to in-school suspension. Additional literature is required to identify and address the disparities present so that additional support can be provided to students in poverty.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In-school suspensions are the most frequently assigned exclusionary discipline consequences according to national statistics. Texas Education Agency, 2021a).

Approximately 2.6 million students were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2017-2018 school year. Of the 2.6 million students, girls constituted over 802,000 assignments of in-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). The majority of students in Texas (60.6%) were eligible to receive free or reduced lunch in the school year 2020-2021, 8.3 percentage points higher than the national average (52.3%) (Texas Education Agency, 2021a).

Ibrahim et al. (2021) documented disparities between student economic status and their overrepresentation in assignments to an in-school suspension from economically disadvantaged urban schools with high rates of poverty, resulting in strong negative effects on mathematics achievements. Assignment to an in-school suspension reduces the opportunity for students to receive instruction in the traditional classroom setting and reduces critical instructional time. As such, assignment to exclusionary discipline consequences is directly related to achievement gaps between students of color and students in poverty and their White peers (Hilberth, 2010; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Ibrahim, 2021). Cholewa et al. (2018) revealed the negative effects of assignment to an in-school suspension on students in poverty. These negative effects include a decreased likelihood of completing high school and decreased GPAs.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this article was to determine the extent to which inequities existed in the assignment to an in-school suspension for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls by their economic status (i.e., economically disadvantaged and not economically disadvantaged). A second purpose was to ascertain the degree to which disparities were present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls by their economic status. The third purpose was to discover whether trends were present in the assignment to an in-school suspension and in the number of days assigned across the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years.

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study was to address the void of published research literature concerning the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls to an exclusionary discipline consequence by their economic status. Outcomes of this multiyear investigation can assist in transforming the ability of school personnel to engage all students in a fair and non-biased manner when assigning discipline consequences. Providing an awareness to school leaders can prompt the creation of frameworks and guidelines, to increase equity in school discipline and decrease biased discipline assignments of exclusionary consequences. Additionally, school leaders can use findings from this multiyear statement investigation to identify trends and patterns of differential treatment by student economic status in exclusionary discipline assignments among middle school girls. Additional research results about girls in middle school may be helpful so educational leaders can realize the critical necessity to modify and evaluate discipline consequences assigned to middle school girls.



## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this investigation: (a) What is the difference in the number of days Grade 6 girls are assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status?; (b) What is the difference in the number of days Grade 7 girls are assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status?; (c) What is the difference in the number of days Grade 8 girls are assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status?; and (d) What trend is present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status of middle school girls from the 2016-2017 school year through the 2019-2020 school year?

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

A causal-comparative research design was present in this article (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). A single independent variable, student economic status, was present. Two economic status groups were present: (a) girls who meet the requirements for the free/reduced lunch program (i.e., economically disadvantaged) and (b) girls who do not meet the requirements for the free/reduced lunch program (not economically disadvantaged). The first dependent variable was the rate at which Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. The second dependent variable was the number of days Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

## **Participants and Instrumentation**

Participants in this research investigation were Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years in the State of Texas. Data were analyzed to determine the extent to which disparities were present in the number of days girls are assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status. The Texas Education Code §37 (2021) states the stipulations schools must adhere to when assigning an in-school or out-of-school suspension. A category of students in Texas who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program are categorized as being economically disadvantaged. Family income determines the eligibility for the program (Texas Education Agency, 2013). The discipline data were retrieved from the Public Information Management System that is submitted to the Texas Education Agency. The data received from the Texas Education Agency were imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software program for statistical analysis.

## **Results**

To answer the research questions regarding assignment of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls to an out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race, Pearson chi-square analyses were conducted. This statistical procedure was used because dichotomous data were present for out-of-school suspension (i.e., assigned or not assigned) and for economic status (i.e., economically disadvantaged, not economically disadvantaged). Accordingly, chi-squares are appropriate to use when variables are nominal (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). With a large statewide sample size, the available sample size per cell was met. The assumptions for using Pearson chi-square procedures were met.

### Results for In-School Suspension by Economic Status and Grade 6 Girls

In this research investigation, the assignment to and the number of days Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status were determined. Results will now be presented for the first research question by school year. Concerning the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 6 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 23.94, p < .001$ , with respect to their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .04 (Cohen, 1988). The percentages of Grade 6 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 3.5% of each other, regardless of their economic status. Table 3.1 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

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 Insert Table 3.1 about here  
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With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present in the assignment of Grade 6 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 5.03, p = .025$ , with respect to their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). The percentage of Grade 6 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension in this school year was within 2%, regardless of their economic status. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 3.1.

For the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present,  $\chi^2(1) = 15.52, p < .001$ , with respect to their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .03 (Cohen, 1988). The percentage of Grade 6

girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 2.6% of each other, regardless of their economic status Revealed in Table 3.1 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With respect to the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.02, p = .89$ . Similar percentages of Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, regardless of their economic status. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 3.1.

### **Results for In-School Suspension by Economic Status and Grade 7 Girls**

Concerning the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 7 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.33, p = .01$ , with respect to their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). The percentages of Grade 7 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 1.5% of each other, regardless of their economic status. Descriptive statistics for this school year are revealed in Table 3.2.

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With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present,  $\chi^2(1) = 1.93, p = .165$ . The percentage of Grade 7 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension was within 1%, regardless of their economic status. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 3.2.

For the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.79, p = .009$ , Cramer's V of .02, a below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). The

percentage of Grade 7 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 1.5% of each other, regardless of their economic status. Table 3.2 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

Concerning the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was present,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.82, p = .03$ , with respect to their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). The percentages of Grade 7 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 1.5% of each other, regardless of their economic status. Presented in Table 3.2 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

### **Results for In-School Suspension by Economic Status and Grade 8 Girls**

Regarding the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present,  $\chi^2(1) = 19.86, p < .001$ , with respect to their economic status. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was below small, .03 (Cohen, 1988). The percentages of Grade 8 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 3% of each other, regardless of their economic status. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 3.3.

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With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.43, p = .51$ . Similar percentages of Grade 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, regardless of their economic status. Table 3.3 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Concerning the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present,  $\chi^2(1) = 8.75, p = .003$ , Cramer's  $V$  of .02, a below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). The percentage of Grade 8 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 2% of each other, regardless of their economic status. Revealed in Table 3.3 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded,  $\chi^2(1) = 2.14, p = .14$ . The percentages of Grade 8 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were similar, within 1% of each other, regardless of their economic status. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 3.3.

### **Results for Number of Days Grade 6 Girls Were Assigned to an In-School Suspension**

Regarding the number of days Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(6361.73) = -13.73, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.22$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 girls who were Poor were assigned an average of almost one more day to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 girls who were Not Poor. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are revealed in Table 3.4.

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 Insert Table 3.4 about here  
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With respect to the number of days Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(4865.56) = -12.66, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.23$ , a small effect size (Cohen,

1988). Grade 6 girls who were Poor were assigned an average of almost one more day to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2017-2018 school year.

Concerning the number of days Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(6727.23) = -12.64, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.20$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 girls who were Poor were assigned an average of almost one more day to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 girls who were Not Poor. Presented in Table 3.4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2018-2019 school year.

With respect to the number of days Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(4414.02) = -11.38, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.22$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 girls who were Poor were assigned an average of 0.75 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 girls who were Not Poor Table 3.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2019-2020 school year.

### **Results for Number of Days Grade 7 Girls Were Assigned to an In-School Suspension**

With respect to the number of days Grade 7 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(8359.98) = -13.63, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.20$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 girls who were Poor were assigned an average of almost one more day to an in-school suspension than were Grade 7 girls who were Not Poor. Revealed in Table 3.5 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2016-2017 school year.

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Insert Table 3.5 about here  
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Concerning the number of days Grade 7 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(7889.50) = -14.74, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.22$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 girls who were Poor were assigned an average of one more day to an in-school suspension than were Grade 7 girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.5 contains the descriptive statistics for the 2017-2018 school year.

With respect to the number of days Grade 7 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(8969.75) = -14.98, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.22$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 girls who were Poor were assigned an average of almost one day more to an in-school suspension than were Grade 7 girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 3.5 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2018-2019 school year.

With respect to the number of days Grade 7 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(5531.31) = -8.19, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.15$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 girls who were Poor were assigned an average of more than one half of a day to an in-school suspension than were Grade 7 girls who were Not Poor. Revealed in Table 3.5 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2019-2020 school year.



## Results for Number of Days Grade 8 Girls Were Assigned to an In-School Suspension

With respect to the number of days Grade 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(10668.33) = -14.12, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.20$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 girls who were Poor were assigned an average of almost one more day to an in-school suspension than were Grade 8 girls who were Not Poor. Revealed in Table 3.6 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2016-2017 school year.

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With respect to the number of days Grade 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(8193.23) = -10.88, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.17$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 girls who were Poor were assigned an average of three quarters of a day more to an in-school suspension than were Grade 8 girls who were Not Poor. Delineated in Table 3.6 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2017-2018 school year.

Concerning the number of days Grade 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(9822.99) = -11.01, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.16$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 girls who were Poor were assigned an average of 0.75 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 8 girls who were Not Poor. Table 3.6 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2018-2019 school year.

With respect to the number of days Grade 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(7217.97) = -9.27, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.16$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 girls who were Poor were assigned an average of a half day more to an in-school suspension than were Grade 8 girls who were Not Poor. Revealed in Table 3.6 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2019-2020 school year.

### **Discussion**

In this multiyear investigation, the degree to which differences were present in the assignment to and in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension by the economic status of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls was investigated for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Similar percentages of girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, regardless of their economic status. Of note, however, is that in each school year and at each grade level, girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than girls who were not economically disadvantaged.

### **Connections with Existing Literature**

In this multiyear investigation, the rate and number of days that Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension by their economic status were established. Similar findings have been documented by other researchers (e.g., Annamma et al., 2019; Cholewa et al., 2018; Khan & Slate, 2016; Latimore et al., 2018; Mizel et al., 2016; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1997; Sullivan et al., 2013; White & Slate, 2017) who established the presence of statistically significant relationships among economic status and assignment to in-school suspension. Multiple researchers (e.g., Khan & Slate, 2016;

Latimore et al., 2018; Mizel et al., 2016; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al.) have established the presence of such differences among girls at the middle school level. The findings of this study are congruent with the research results of Coleman (2017) that Grade 6 Black and Hispanic girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned at twice the rate of an in-school suspension than were Black and Hispanic girls who were not poor. Of note, in all four school years and at all three grade levels in this statewide investigation, girls in poverty were assigned the highest number of days in an in-school suspension.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

Major implications for policy can be established as a result of the findings of this study. Campus administrators, school boards, and superintendents, and district leaders must enact policy that disaggregates data and encourages campus leaders to assign alternative discipline assignments, as excessive assignments of specific demographic populations will trigger the Texas Education Association to mandate changes. Additionally, all forms of restorative discipline should be implemented with school districts as well as social and emotional learning practices that are now found within districts led by directors. Providing an awareness of the concern and having critical conversations with campuses and districts as a whole can provide the needed conversation to manifest change. Additionally, school leaders can use findings from this multiyear statewide investigation to identify trends and patterns of differential treatment of students in poverty in their in-school suspension assignments among middle school girls.

The results of this study have pronounced implications for the practices of Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls who are economically disadvantaged. Practices that should be proposed

based on the research provided in this study must include alternative approaches to in-school suspension for girls who are economically disadvantaged by determining the validity of an in-school suspension once referred to an administrator. Secondly, Administrators must be cognizant that the discipline infraction warrants an in-school suspension as a consequence and that subconscious biases may exist among the referring teacher and administrator. Data from teachers who write referrals and data from administrators who assign in-school suspensions should be analyzed for specific patterns and trends with a specific focus on rates assigned to in-school suspension and the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for students who are economically disadvantaged. Outcomes of this multiyear investigation can assist in transforming the ability of school staff to engage all students in a fair and non-biased manner when assigning discipline consequences. Lastly, the effects of Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls should be evaluated to determine if the number of days and the frequency at which in-school suspension is assigned affect the outcome of state assessments.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Determined from the results of this analysis, a connection was established for middle school girls. Several recommendations for future research can be constructed based on the research results of this study. First, a study to determine the relationship with Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls who are economically disadvantaged and are assigned out-of-school suspensions should be administered. Secondly, this study should be repeated to determine differences among Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls who are economically disadvantaged who attend charter schools based on the frequency and number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Data ascertained from Grade 6, 7, and 8 boys who are economically

disadvantaged should be assessed. This study should be replicated with the inclusion of Grade 9 girls. Finally, this study should be duplicated within another state to determine the outcome of the research and if the results are similar at nationally.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this Texas statewide multiyear study was to address the extent to which a relationship was present in the economic status of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls and their assignment to and in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. In Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a similar rate as girls who were not economically disadvantaged in all four school years. With respect to the average number of days assigned, however, clear disparities were evident. Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls in poverty were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls who were not economically disadvantaged.

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**Table 3.1**

*Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an In-School Suspension for Grade 6 as a Function of Economic Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
<b>2016-2017</b>			
Not Poor	3,492	13.4	86.6
Poor	15,058	16.8	83.2
<b>2017-2018</b>			
Not Poor	3,163	15.5	84.5
Poor	15,111	17.1	82.9
<b>2018-2019</b>			
Not Poor	3,900	14.5	85.5
Poor	16,515	17.1	82.9
<b>2019-2020</b>			
Not Poor	2,632	17.9	82.1
Poor	11,969	18.0	82.0

**Table 3.2**

*Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an In-School Suspension for Grade 7 as a Function of Economic Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
<b>2016-2017</b>			
Not Poor	4,727	15.2	84.8
Poor	18,108	16.7	83.3
<b>2017-2018</b>			
Not Poor	4,381	15.8	84.2
Poor	17,466	16.7	83.3
<b>2018-2019</b>			
Not Poor	4,933	16.2	83.86
Poor	18,990	17.7	82.3
<b>2019-2020</b>			
Not Poor	3,732	15.1	84.9
Poor	15,181	16.6	83.4

**Table 3.3**

*Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an In-School Suspension for Grade 8 as a Function of Economic Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and Economic Status	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
<b>2016-2017</b>			
Not Poor	5,342	15.6	84.4
Poor	17,565	18.3	81.7
<b>2017-2018</b>			
Not Poor	4,979	18.3	81.7
Poor	17,393	18.7	81.3
<b>2018-2019</b>			
Not Poor	5,514	18.0	82.0
Poor	18,563	19.8	80.2
<b>2019-2020</b>			
Not Poor	4,355	18.6	81.4
Poor	15,169	19.5	80.5

**Table 3.4**

*Descriptive Statistics for In-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grade 6 Girls as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Not Poor	3,023	2.76	3.03
Poor	12,526	3.68	4.32
2017-2018			
Not Poor	4,066	2.79	3.33
Poor	14,132	3.75	4.38
2018-2019			
Not Poor	3,336	2.93	3.45
Poor	13,696	3.85	4.72
2019-2020			
Not Poor	2,190	2.55	2.70
Poor	9,946	3.34	3.86

**Table 3.5**

*Descriptive Statistics for In-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grade 7 Girls as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Not Poor	4,010	3.22	3.68
Poor	15,086	4.18	4.99
2017-2018			
Not Poor	3,689	3.06	3.43
Poor	14,555	4.08	4.86
2018-2019			
Not Poor	4,136	3.11	3.39
Poor	15,622	4.09	4.78
2019-2020			
Not Poor	3,169	2.94	3.58
Poor	12,666	3.54	4.17

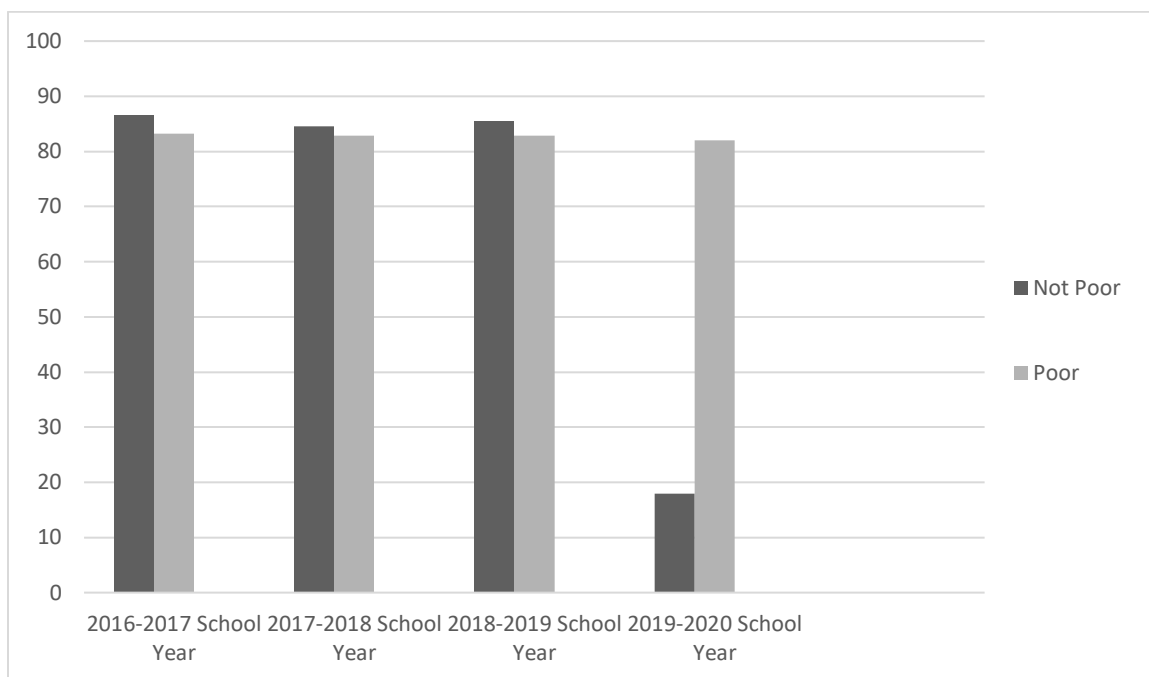
**Table 3.6**

*Descriptive Statistics for In-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grade 8 Girls as a Function of their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Not Poor	4,507	3.06	3.27
Poor	14,353	3.94	4.64
2017-2018			
Not Poor	4,066	3.14	3.61
Poor	14,132	3.88	4.57
2018-2019			
Not Poor	4,521	3.25	3.72
Poor	14,887	4.00	4.95
2019-2020			
Not Poor	3,547	2.84	3.00
Poor	12,204	3.40	3.83

**Figure 3.1**

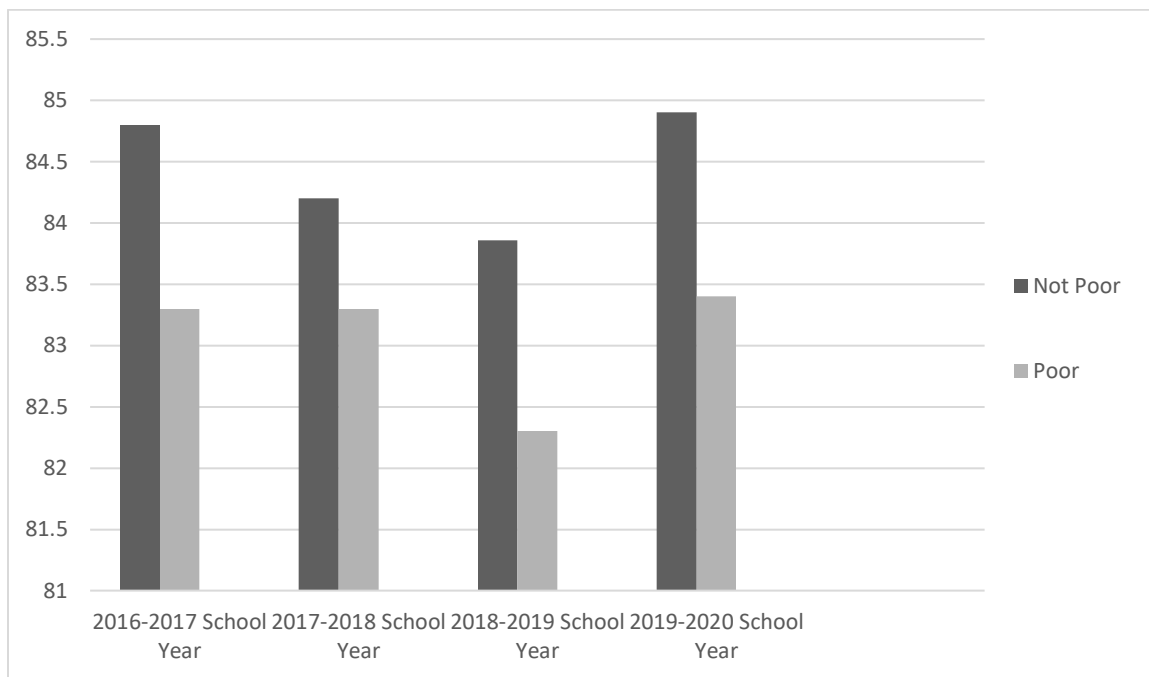
*Rate of In-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 6 Girls by Their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*





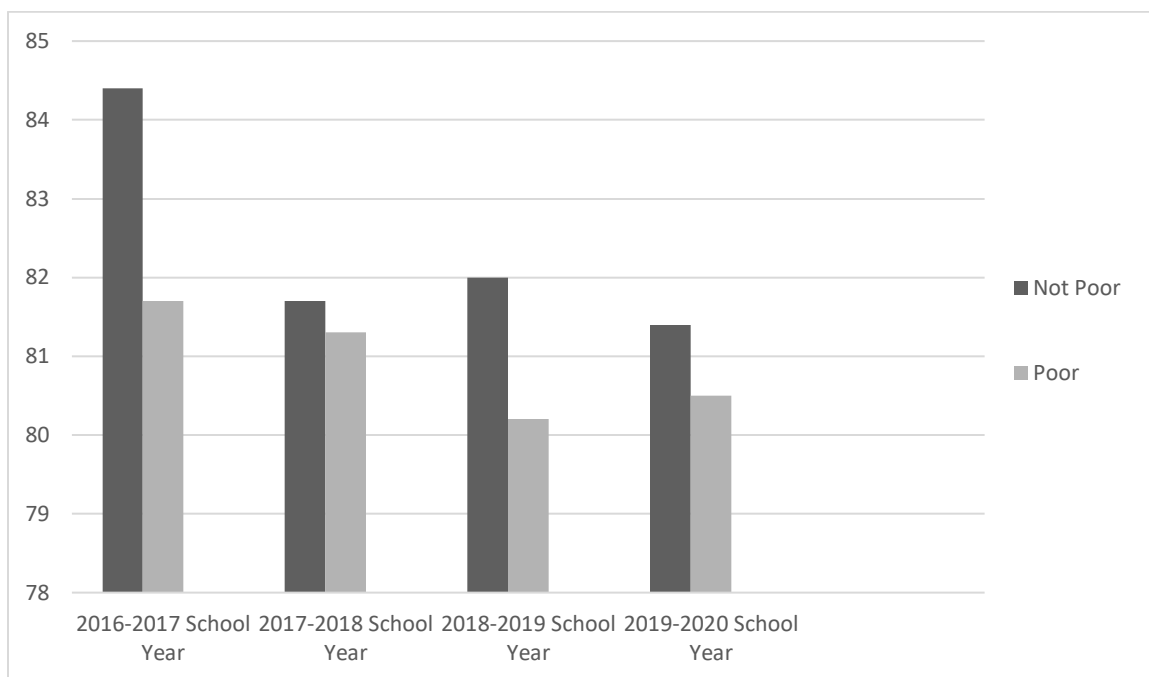
**Figure 3.2**

*Rate of In-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 7 Girls by Their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



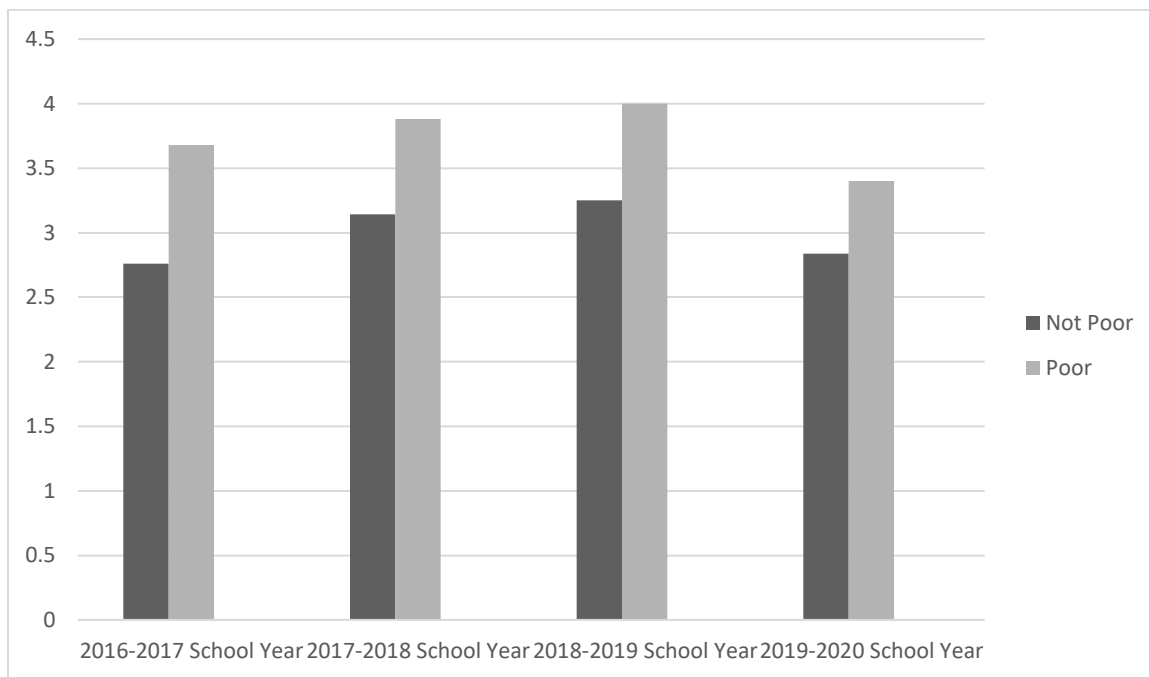
**Figure 3.3**

*Rate of In-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 8 Girls by Their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



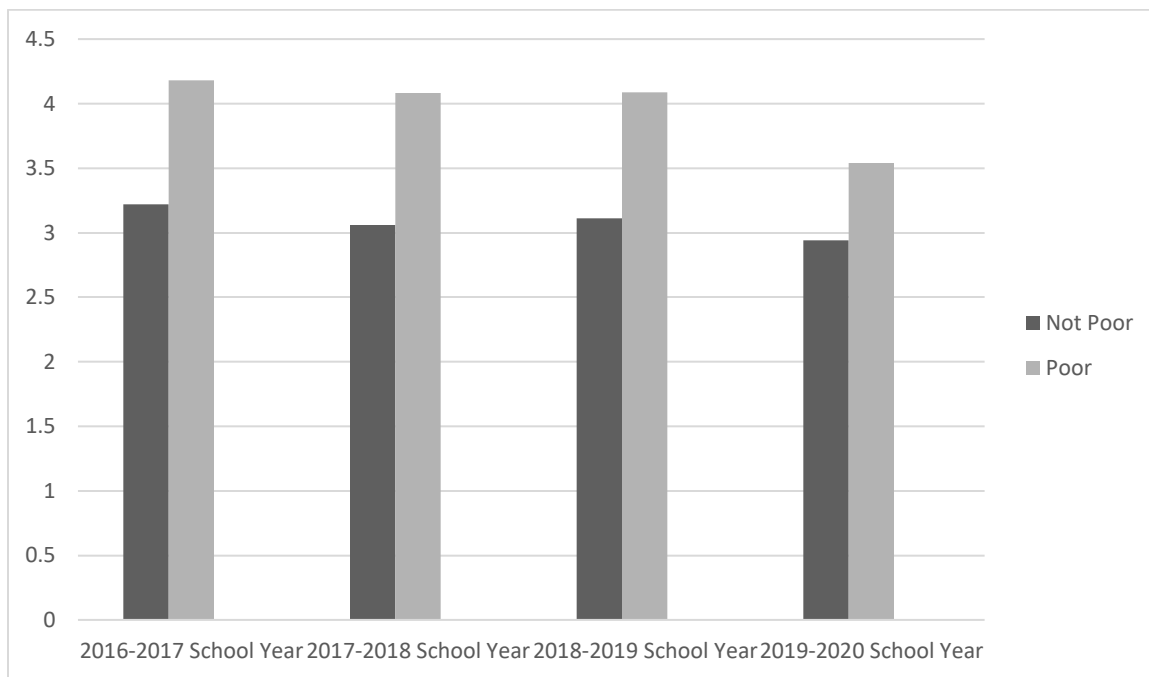
**Figure 3.4**

*Average Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 6 Girls by Their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



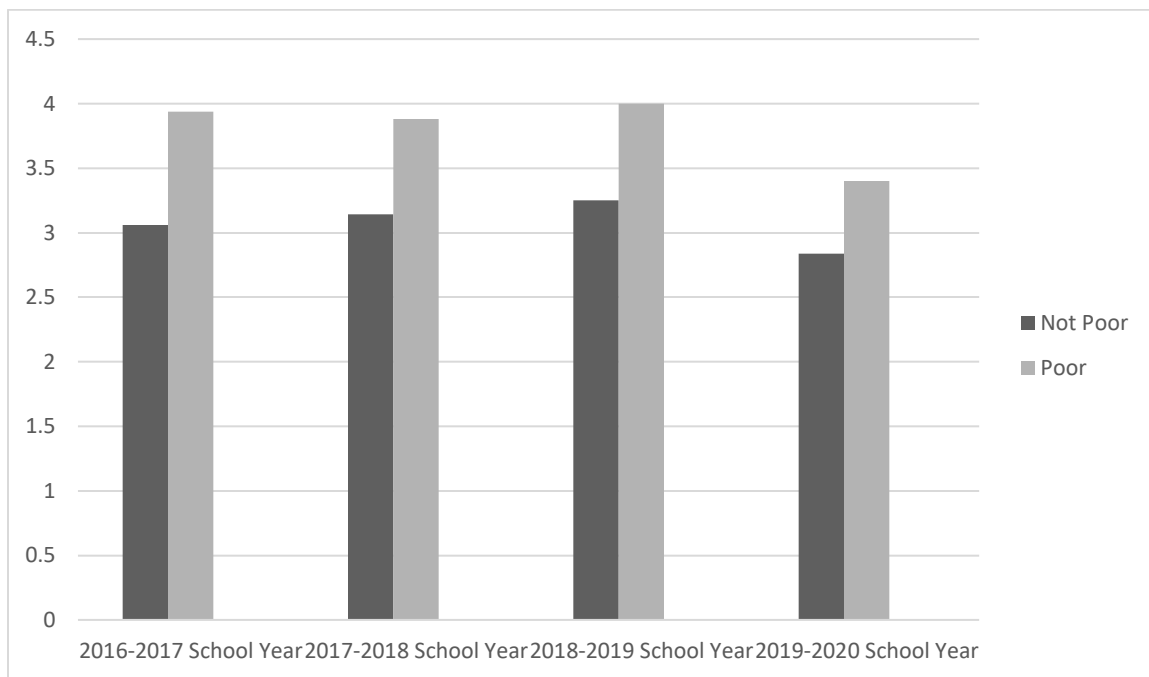
**Figure 3.5**

*Average Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 7 Girls by Their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



**Figure 3.6**

*Average Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 8 Girls by Their Economic Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



**CHAPTER IV****INEQUITIES IN THE NUMBER OF DAYS ASSIGNED TO AN EXCLUSIONARY  
DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCE AS A FUNCTION OF THE AT-RISK STATUS OF  
TEXAS MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS: A MULTIYEAR STATEWIDE ANALYSIS**

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This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

### **Abstract**

Examined in this study was the extent to which differences occurred in the assignment to and in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls in the State of Texas as a function of their at-risk status in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2020-2021 school years. Similar percentages of girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, regardless of their at-risk status. Across all three grade levels and all four school years, however, clear inequities were documented in the average number of days girls who were at-risk were assigned to an in-school suspension. Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls who were at-risk were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls who were not at-risk. Implications of these findings and recommendations for future research were discussed.

*Keywords:* At-Risk; Girls; In-school suspension; Discipline consequence; Middle school

INEQUITIES IN THE NUMBER OF DAYS ASSIGNED TO AN EXCLUSIONARY  
DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCE AS A FUNCTION OF THE AT-RISK STATUS OF  
TEXAS MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS: A MULTIYEAR STATEWIDE ANALYSIS

Well documented in the existing research literature are disparities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences based upon student ethnicity/race (Annamma et al., 2019; Harkrider, 2020; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Morris & Perry, 2017; Skiba et al., 2002; Slate et al., 2016). For example, Black girls are six times more likely to be suspended than are White girls (Angton, 2020; Barnes et al., 2017). Also well-established are clear inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences based upon student economic status (Annamma et al., 2019; Cholewa et al., 2018; Khan & Slate, 2016; Latimore et al., 2018; Mizel et al., 2016; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1997; Sullivan et al., 2013). For example, Khan and Slate (2016) revealed that students in poverty had statistically significantly higher rates of being assigned to an in-school suspension, being expelled from school, being at-risk for not graduating from high school, and receiving fewer opportunities to be exposed to quality teaching than White students. These persistent disparities in exclusionary discipline consequences increase the chances for school dropouts and academic failure within elementary, middle, and high school grade levels (Harkrider, 2020; Khan & Slate, 2016; Smith et al., 2021). Limited research investigations, however, could be located about relationships between exclusionary discipline consequences and students determined to be at-risk.

The sample of students of interest for this article are students who have been labeled as being at-risk. Students designated as at-risk are identified as having a high probability of not completing high school (Texas Education Agency, 2021d). For more



detailed information about the 13 indicators for at-risk status, readers are directed to the Texas Education Agency website. Between October 2016 and October 2017, the number of 15- to 24-year-olds who dropped out of school prior to obtaining a high school degree was approximately 523,000. These dropouts accounted for 4.7% of the 11.1 million youth enrolled in Grades 10 through 12 in 2016 (United States Department of Education, 2020). In 2017, the dropout rate for Hispanic 15- to 24-year-olds was higher than the rate for White 15- to 24-year-olds (6.5 % vs. 3.9 %), and a 5.5% difference from the dropout rate for Black 15- to 24-year-olds (United States Department of Education, 2020).

Texas secondary school completion and dropout rates in Texas public schools in the 2012-2013 school year revealed the presence of 3,187 Grade 7-8 students who were at-risk as a result of dropping out of school prior to high school completion. Of these numbers, 30.3% were girls. Black students were 11.4% of student dropouts in the 2012-2013 school year, and Hispanic students were 72.5% of student dropouts. Notably, the average dropout rate of Hispanic students in Grade 7-8 was nearly 10 times higher than the average dropout rate of Black students (Texas Education Agency, 2014b).

In a recent 2019-2020 school year research analysis of secondary school completion and dropouts in Texas public schools, the Texas Education Agency (2021d) revealed statewide yearly dropout rates for Grade 7-8 students. An increase of Texas student dropout rates increased from 3,579 in the prior school year 2018-2019 to 4,295 in the 2019-2020 school year, a 20% increase. Of the 4,295 students who dropped out of Grade 7-8, 58.2% dropped out of Grade 8 and 1,827 were girls. Grade 7 girls who dropped out during 2018-2019 totaled 0.4%, and Grade 8 girls who dropped out was 0.5%. Programs indicative of at-risk indicators in this research analysis included Grade

7-8 At-risk 56.3% Emergent Bilingual (26.9%), English Learner (28.6%), Foster Care (0.7%), and Homeless (7.3%). These statistics may have been counted in more than one category.

A total of 2.6 million students were assigned to at least one in-school suspension in the 2017-2018 school year. Of that 2.6 million, girls comprised over 800,000 of the total of in-school suspension assignments (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). Of the over 800,000 girls assigned an in-school suspension in the United States, 1,563 were Grade 7-8 middle school girls who became dropouts in the 2017-2018 school year in Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2021c). In the 2017-2018 school year, a total of 27,710 (27.2%) girls who were identified as being at-risk were expelled from public schools in the United States (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). Of that 27%, 1,222 (4.4%) were Emergent Bilingual expelled girls.

Young girls who are identified as being at-risk are more likely to have higher numbers of suspensions and expulsions (Patrick & Chaudhry, 2017). Of particular relevance to the Patrick and Chaudhry (2017) report, 25% of students in the care of the state were suspended, in contrast to 10% of students not in the care of the state. Patrick and Chaudry (2017) documented that girls in foster care experience higher rates of exclusionary discipline consequences, have lower achievement performance, and lower graduation rates.

Throughout the United States substantial numbers of children have one or more at-risk indicators, indicators that are connected to maladaptive behavior (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2021; Parent et al., 2011). Middle school girls who are at-risk are subjected to a disproportionate number of challenges that contribute to increased levels of

school failure and school behavioral concerns (Mann, 2013). Schools with high exclusionary disciplinary consequences tend to have high dropout rates, analogous to high at-risk rates (Lee et al., 2011). Schools with larger percentages of students of color and students of low economic status also have higher dropout rates (Lee et al., 2011) than schools with lower percentages of these students.

In a recent study, Smith et al. (2021) addressed the degree to which in-school suspension was related to performance on the state-mandated assessment. Students who were assigned to just one in-school suspension had a 57% increase in anticipated number of state standardized test failures than students who had not been assigned to an in-school suspension (Smith et al., 2021). With each additional assignment to an in-school suspension, the possibility for exam failure increased. Students assigned to five or more in-school suspensions had a 120% higher anticipated number of standardized test failures than students without a single in-school suspension.

Also of interest for this article are students who are Emergent Bilingual, because they are coded as being at-risk by the TEC § 29.052 (Texas Education Agency, 2011). At-risk Emergent Bilingual girls who were assigned to one or more in-school suspension accounted for 51,240 or 6.3% of students (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). Noted in the Office of Civil Rights (2021) report was that 1,222 or 4.4% Emergent Bilingual girls were expelled from school in the 2017-2018 school year. Expulsions are an at-risk indicator that meet the standards for § TEC 37.007 during a proceeding or current school year (Texas Education Agency, 2011).

Within the State of Texas, the state of interest in this article, students who have been retained at least one year are also considered to be at-risk. Emergent Bilingual

students are more than twice as likely as their peers to be retained, twice as likely to not graduate from high school, and likely to have lower scores on State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) End-of-Course exams than their peers. All of the aforementioned categories including dropouts, retentions, and state-mandated exam failures are at-risk indicators (Texas Education Agency, 2014b).

In a recent investigation conducted in Texas, Pohl and Slate (2021) documented that almost 500 Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements occurred for Grade 8 Black girls who were in poverty. Grade 8 Black girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a substantially higher rate to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement than were Grade 8 Black girls who were not economically disadvantaged. As such, a clear lack of equity was established by student at-risk status, with respect to Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements. Of note, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements are one of the 13 at risk indicators which are of particular interest to this article. In a related investigation, Henkel (2015) established that Grade 6 White, Black, and Hispanic girls who were assigned to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement had statistically significantly lower reading test scores on the state-mandated assessment than did Grades 6, 7, and 8 White, Black, and Hispanic girls who had not been assigned to such an exclusionary discipline consequence.

In an extensive search of the existing literature, no published articles could be located in which the at-risk status of girls was examined in relation to the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences. Given the relationship between at-risk status and poor academic achievement and a similar relationship for exclusionary discipline

consequence assignment and poor academic achievement, research studies are clearly warranted. Accordingly, the gap that is present in the existing literature regarding at-risk status and assignment to an in-school suspension were addressed in this multiyear investigation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Excursionary disciplinary consequences have been investigated on the basis of ethnicity/race and economic status by numerous researchers (Skiba et al., 2011; Slate et al., 2016; White, 2019; White & Slate, 2017). Few published articles could be located in which researchers addressed whether differences were present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension based on middle school girl at-risk status. Emergent Bilingual students are more than two times as likely as their classmates to remain in the same grade again, two times as likely to dropout prior to graduating from high school, and highly likely to have lower scores on state exams than their peers. All of the aforementioned categories including dropouts, retentions, and state mandated exam failures are at-risk indicators (Texas Education Agency, 2014b). Failure to graduate from high school has negative consequences for individual students, their immediate family, and society (Lynch et al., 2014). Students who fail to graduate from high school have been shown to have higher rates of illness, substance abuse, and an inability to interact with others well through feelings thoughts, and behaviors. Moreover, students who remain at-risk and dropout of school place themselves at a higher chance of being unemployed, or if they are employed, to earn less money than students not at risk or that graduate from high school (Lynch et al., 2014). Lynch et al. (2014) revealed approximately 1.3 million high school dropouts in 2010 cost the United States more than \$336 million in lost wages and

taxes. The culmination of these specific concerns emphasizes the need for resolution for the problems. With respect to assignments to exclusionary discipline consequences for girls and their performance on Texas state-mandated assessments, Grades 6 and 7 girls have historically had poor academic performance than their peers who were not assigned to such a discipline consequence.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this article was to determine the extent to which inequities existed in the assignment to an in-school suspension for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls by their at-risk status (e.g., Emergent Bilingual, retention, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placement, failure to perform satisfactorily on an assessment under TEC Subchapter B and Chapter 39, and failure to maintain an average of 70 or more in a core class). A second purpose was to ascertain the degree to which disparities were present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls by their at-risk status. The third purpose was to discover whether trends were present in the assignment to an in-school suspension and in the number of days assigned across the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years.

### **Significance of the Study**

Only a few published articles could be located about students who were at risk and their assignment to an in-school suspension. No published articles could be located regarding the number of days students who were at-risk were assigned to an in-school suspension. However, it is clear school administrators use exclusionary consequences in an inequitable and disproportionate manner to provide consequences for student misbehaviors. As a result, for more than 30 years, the use of in-school suspensions has

increased in public schools in the United States (Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Cholewa, 2018; Harkrider, 2020; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Slate et al., 2016). Given the already documented inequities of ethnicity/race and economic status, a need exists to determine whether inequities are also present by at-risk status. Pohl and Slate (2021) have contributed to the existing research literature by analyzing exclusionary consequence assignment by the economic status of Black students who were at-risk. This study was conducted to extend the existing limited research literature regarding the assignment of middle school girls to in-school suspensions by their at-risk status.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this investigation: (a) What is the difference in the number of days Grade 6 girls are assigned to an in-school suspension by their at-risk status?; (b) What is the difference in the number of days Grade 7 girls are assigned to an in-school suspension by their at-risk status?; (c) What is the difference in the number of days Grade 8 girls are assigned to an in-school suspension by their at-risk status?; and (d) What trend is present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension by the at-risk status of middle school girls from the 2016-2017 school year through the 2019-2020 school year?

### **Method**

#### **Research Design**

A causal-comparative research design was present in this article (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). A single independent variable, student at-risk status, was present. Two groups were present: (a) At-Risk and (b) Not At-Risk. The first dependent variable

was the rate at which Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. The second dependent variable was the number of days Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

### **Participants and Instrumentation**

Participants in this research investigation were Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years in the State of Texas. Participants were derived from the three largest ethnic/racial groups of girls in Texas (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and White) who were identified as being at-risk. As such, discipline data for Asian girls and for Native-American girls who were at-risk were not examined in this study. Data were analyzed to determine the extent to which disparities were present in the number of days girls were assigned to an in-school suspension by their at-risk status.

Students designated as at-risk are identified as having a high probability of not completing high school (Texas Education Agency, 2021d). The Texas Education Code §37 (2021) states the stipulations schools must adhere to when assigning an in-school or out-of-school suspension. In-school suspension is the removal of a student from the normal classroom setting as a disciplinary consequence by placing the student in a different and separate classroom during the school day (Texas Education Code, 2021). The discipline data were retrieved from the Public Education Information Management System that is submitted to the Texas Education Agency.



## Results

To answer the research questions regarding assignment of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls to an in-school suspension by their at-risk status, Pearson chi-square analyses were conducted. This statistical procedure was used because dichotomous data were present for in-school suspension (i.e., assigned or not assigned) and for at-risk status (i.e., at-risk or not at-risk). As such, chi-squares are appropriate to use when variables are nominal in nature (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). With a large statewide sample size, the available sample size per cell was met. The assumptions for using Pearson chi-square procedures were met.

### **Results for In-School Suspension for At-Risk Status and Grade 6 Girls**

In this research investigation, the assignment to and the number of days Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension by their at-risk status were determined. Results will be presented for the first research question by the school year. Concerning the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present in the assignment of Grade 6 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 2.46, p = .12$ , with respect to their at-risk status. In this school year, similar percentages, within 1%, of Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, regardless of their at-risk status. Table 4.1 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

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Insert Table 4.1 about here  
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With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 6 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.13, p$

= .01, by their at-risk status, a below small effect size, Cramer's V of .02 (Cohen, 1988). In this school year, the percentages of Grade 6 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 1.5% of each other, regardless of their at-risk status. Descriptive statistics for this school year are presented in Table 4.1.

Regarding the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present in the assignment of Grade 6 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.32, p = .57$ . Similar percentages of Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, regardless of their at-risk status. Revealed in Table 4.1 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

For the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 6 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 5.11, p = .02$ , by their at-risk status, below small effect size, Cramer's V of .02 (Cohen, 1988). In this school year, the percentages of Grade 6 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 1.5% of each other, regardless of their at-risk status. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 4.1.

### **Results for In-School Suspension for At-Risk Status and Grade 7 Girls**

In the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 7 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 11.89, p < .001$ , with respect to their at-risk status. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .02 (Cohen, 1988). In this school year, the percentage of Grade 7 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 2% of each other, regardless of their at-risk status. Table 4.2 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

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With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 7 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.25$ ,  $p = .01$ , by their at-risk status, a below small effect size, Cramer's V of .02 (Cohen, 1988). In this school year, the percentage of Grade 7 girls who assigned to an in-school suspension were within 1.5% of each other, regardless of their at-risk status. Revealed in Table 4.2 are descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2017-2018 school year.

Concerning the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 7 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.36$ ,  $p = .04$ , by their at-risk status, a below small effect size, Cramer's V of .01 (Cohen, 1988). The percentages of Grade 7 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 1% of each other, regardless of their at-risk status. Table 4.2 contains the descriptive statistics for this 2018-2019 school year.

For the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was not yielded present in the assignment of Grade 7 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 1.68$ ,  $p = .19$ . Similar percentages of Grade 7 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, regardless of their at-risk status. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 4.2.

### **Results for In-School Suspension for At-Risk Status and Grade 8 Girls**

Regarding the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 8 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 17.30$ ,  $p <$

.01, with respect to their at-risk status. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .03 (Cohen, 1988). In this school year, the percentage of Grade 8 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 3% of each other, regardless of their at-risk status.

Table 4.3 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

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Insert Figure 4.3 about here  
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With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 8 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.34$ ,  $p = .01$ , with respect to their at-risk status. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .03 (Cohen, 1988). In this school year, the percentage of Grade 8 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 1.5% of each other, regardless of their at-risk status. Revealed in Table 4.3 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

For the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was not present in the assignment of Grade 8 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 3.06$ ,  $p = .08$ , with respect to their at-risk status. In this school year, the percentage of Grade 8 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were within 1.1% of each other, regardless of their at-risk status. Table 4.3 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

With respect to the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 8 girls to an in-school suspension,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.00$ ,  $p = .045$ , with respect to their at-risk status. The effect size, Cramer's V, was below small, .01 (Cohen, 1988). In this school year, the percentage of Grade 8 girls who were assigned

to an in-school suspension were within 1.4% of each other, regardless of their at-risk status. Table 4.3 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

### **Results for Number of Days Grade 6 Girls Were Assigned to an In-School Suspension**

With respect to the number of days Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(12686.10) = -13.19, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.20$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 girls who were at-risk were assigned an average of 0.80 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 girls who were not at-risk. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 4.4.

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Concerning the number of days Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(13757.92) = -11.69, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.18$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 girls who were at-risk were assigned an average of almost 0.72 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 girls who were not at-risk. Revealed in Table 4.4 are descriptive statistics for the 2017-2018 school year.

Regarding Grade 6 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(16404.27) = 14.17, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.20$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 girls who were at-risk were assigned an average of 0.87 more days to an in-school suspension than

were Grade 6 girls who were not at-risk. Table 4.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2018-2019 school year.

With respect to Grade 6 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(11626.60) = 9.95, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.16$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 6 girls who were at-risk were assigned an average of 0.60 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 6 girls who were not at-risk. Table 4.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2019-2020 school year.

### **Results for Number of Days Grade 7 Girls Were Assigned to an In-School Suspension**

With respect to the number of days Grade 7 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(13540.24) = -15.94, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.22$ , a small size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 girls who were at-risk were assigned an average of 1.02 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 7 girls who were not at-risk. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 4.5.

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Concerning the number of days Grade 7 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(13538.24) = -15.17, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.21$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 girls who were at-risk were assigned an average of almost one more day

to an in-school suspension than were Grade 7 girls who were not at-risk. Revealed in Table 4.5 are descriptive statistics for the 2017-2018 school year.

Regarding Grade 7 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(16725.27) = 18.16, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.23$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 girls who were at-risk were assigned an average of more than one day to an in-school suspension than were Grade 7 girls who were not at-risk. Table 4.5 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2018-2019 school year.

With respect to Grade 7 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(12816.47) = 13.42, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.19$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 7 girls who were at-risk were assigned an average of 0.76 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 7 girls who were not at-risk. Table 4.5 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2019-2020 school year.

### **Results for Number of Days Grade 8 Girls Were Assigned to an In-School Suspension**

With respect to the number of days Grade 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(12222.03) = -15.29, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.22$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 girls who were at-risk were assigned an average of 0.93 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 8 girls who were not at-risk. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 4.6.

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Insert Figure 4.6 about here  
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Concerning the number of days Grade 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(13863.52) = -17.76, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.24$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 girls who were at-risk were assigned an average of more than one day to an in-school suspension than were Grade 8 girls who were not at-risk. Revealed in Table 4.6 are descriptive statistics for the 2017-2018 school year.

Regarding Grade 8 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(15405.61) = 15.19, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.20$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 girls who were at-risk were assigned an average of 0.91 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 8 girls who were not at-risk. Table 4.6 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis for the 2018-2019 school year.

With respect to Grade 8 girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed,  $t(12279.13) = 16.33, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.23$ , a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Grade 8 girls who were at-risk were assigned an average of 0.83 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 8 girls who were not at-risk. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are delineated in Table 4.6.



## **Discussion**

In this multiyear investigation, the degree to which differences were present in the assignment to and in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension by the at-risk status of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls was investigated for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Inferential statistical procedures revealed that similar percentages of girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, regardless of their at-risk status. Concerning the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls who were at-risk were assigned to in-school suspension, girls who were at-risk were assigned to a statistically significantly higher average of days to an in-school suspension at each grade level and in each school year than girls who were not at-risk.

### **Connections with Existing Literature**

In this investigation, the extent to which student at-risk status was related to the assignment to and in the number of days assigned was addressed for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls. Few published articles could be located in which researchers had examined the number of days students were assigned to an in-school suspension. Emergent Bilingual students are more than two times as likely as their classmates to remain in the same grade again, two times as likely to dropout prior to graduating from high school, and highly likely to have lower scores on state exams than their peers. All of the aforementioned categories including drop-outs, retentions, and state mandated exam failures are at-risk indicators (Texas Education Agency, 2014b).

With respect to the number of days, White (2019) determined in the 2012-2013 school year that Grade 8 Black girls were assigned an average of more than half a day more to an in-school suspension than Grade 8 White girls and an average of half a day

more than Grade 8 Hispanic girls. In all four school years and at all three grade levels in this statewide investigation, girls who were at-risks were assigned the greatest number of days in an in-school suspension, followed by girls who were not at-risk. Black girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.89 more days to an in-school suspension than were Black girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Hispanic girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.57 more days to an in-school suspension in comparison to Hispanic girls who were not economically disadvantaged. White girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned an average of 0.44 more days to an in-school suspension than were White girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Although the aforementioned researchers investigated different exclusionary consequences among different categories for ethnicity/race, economic status, grade levels, and gender than this study, clear connections are present to the increased number of days assigned to students as a function of ethnicity/race and economic status.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

The results of this research study should be considered as support to promote policy change. School districts should analyze policy that exists to determine what might be altered to ensure the greatest number of students are able to graduate each year. Committees should be formed to discuss the data surrounding the frequency and number of days students who are at-risk are assigned to in-school suspension and create a bulleted list of ways to curtail the concern. School districts would benefit themselves to eradicate the overrepresentation of at-risk students prior to state sanctions.

Findings from this multiyear investigation have implications for practices within school districts and administrators. School administrators should ensure students who are among special population such as at-risk students, are provided with all discipline alternatives available prior to assigning an exclusionary consequence to a student demographic who are at risk of not graduating. Campus leaders should inform all teachers of at-risk indicators and how important it is to promote the success of at-risk students. Additionally, campus administrators should discuss in regular administrative campus meetings their personal discipline data of at-risk students and percentages in excess of 10% should warrant a discussion among other administrators and a discussion to mitigate the practice.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

From the findings of this multiyear analysis, several recommendations for future research studies can be made. First, researchers are encouraged to extend this investigation to other demographic characteristics. That is, the relationship between the economic status of girls with assignment to exclusionary discipline consequences should be addressed. Second, the extent to which the ethnicity/race of girls is related to their assignment to exclusionary discipline consequences should be determined. Third, the data analyzed in this study were only on Texas middle school girls. Researchers are encouraged to extend this investigation to other states so that the generalizability of the results previously discussed can be determined. A final recommendation would be for a qualitative study to be conducted to address the reasons underlying the disparities that were documented to be present.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this Texas statewide multiyear study was to address the extent to which a relationship was present by the at-risk status of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls with the assignment to and in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Similar percentages of girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, regardless of their at-risk status. With respect to the number of days assigned, however, statistically significant differences were yielded. Girls who were at-risk were assigned more days on average to an in-school suspension in all four school years and in all three grade levels. Clear inequities were revealed in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension by the at-risk status of these girls. Days removed from the regular classroom environment results in a loss of instructional time and contributes to well-established achievement gaps.

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**Table 4.1**

*Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an In-School Suspension to Grade 6 Girls by Their At-Risk Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and At-Risk Status	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
<b>2016-2017</b>			
Not At-Risk	6,189	16.3	83.7
At-Risk	14,621	17.2	82.8
<b>2017-2018</b>			
Not At-Risk	6,619	17.5	82.5
At-Risk	14,005	18.9	81.1
<b>2018-2019</b>			
Not At-Risk	7,738	18.4	81.9
At-Risk	15,838	18.1	81.6
<b>2019-2020</b>			
Not At-Risk	5,505	17.3	82.7
At-Risk	11,664	18.8	81.2

**Table 4.2**

*Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an In-School Suspension to Grade 7 Girls by Their At-Risk Status for the for 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and At-Risk Status	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
<b>2016-2017</b>			
Not At-Risk	6,648	15.9	84.1
At-Risk	18,447	17.8	82.2
<b>2017-2018</b>			
Not At-Risk	6,791	17.1	82.9
At-Risk	17,820	18.4	81.6
<b>2018-2019</b>			
Not At-Risk	7,895	18.0	82.0
At-Risk	19,585	19.15	80.9
<b>2019-2020</b>			
Not At-Risk	6,186	17.3	82.7
At-Risk	15,699	18.1	81.9

**Table 4.3**

*Descriptive Statistics for Assignment to an In-School Suspension to Grade 8 Girls by Their At-Risk Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and At-Risk Status	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
<b>2016-2017</b>			
Not At-Risk	6,425	17.0	83.0
At-Risk	18,583	19.4	80.6
<b>2017-2018</b>			
Not At-Risk	6,453	19.0	81.0
At-Risk	18,487	20.5	79.5
<b>2018-2019</b>			
Not At-Risk	7,657	20.4	79.6
At-Risk	19,912	21.4	78.6
<b>2019-2020</b>			
Not At-Risk	5,950	19.9	80.1
At-Risk	16,479	21.2	78.8

**Table 4.4**

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 6 Girls as a Function of Their At-Risk Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Not At-Risk	5,178	2.92	3.31
At-Risk	12,102	3.72	4.35
2017-2018			
Not At-Risk	5,460	3.04	3.36
At-Risk	11,352	3.76	4.43
2018-2019			
Not At-Risk	6,341	3.04	3.55
At-Risk	12,931	3.91	4.82
2019-2020			
Not-At Risk	4,551	2.77	2.97
At-Risk	9,476	3.37	3.97

**Table 4.5**

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 7 Girls as a Function of Their At-Risk Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and At-Risk Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Not At-Risk	5,591	3.20	3.66
At-Risk	15,170	4.21	5.00
2017-2018			
Not At-Risk	5,633	3.13	3.66
At-Risk	14,537	4.09	4.86
2018-2019			
Not At-Risk	6,474	3.10	3.43
At-Risk	15,847	4.15	4.83
2019-2020			
Not At-Risk	5,113	2.80	3.06
At-Risk	12,859	3.56	4.23



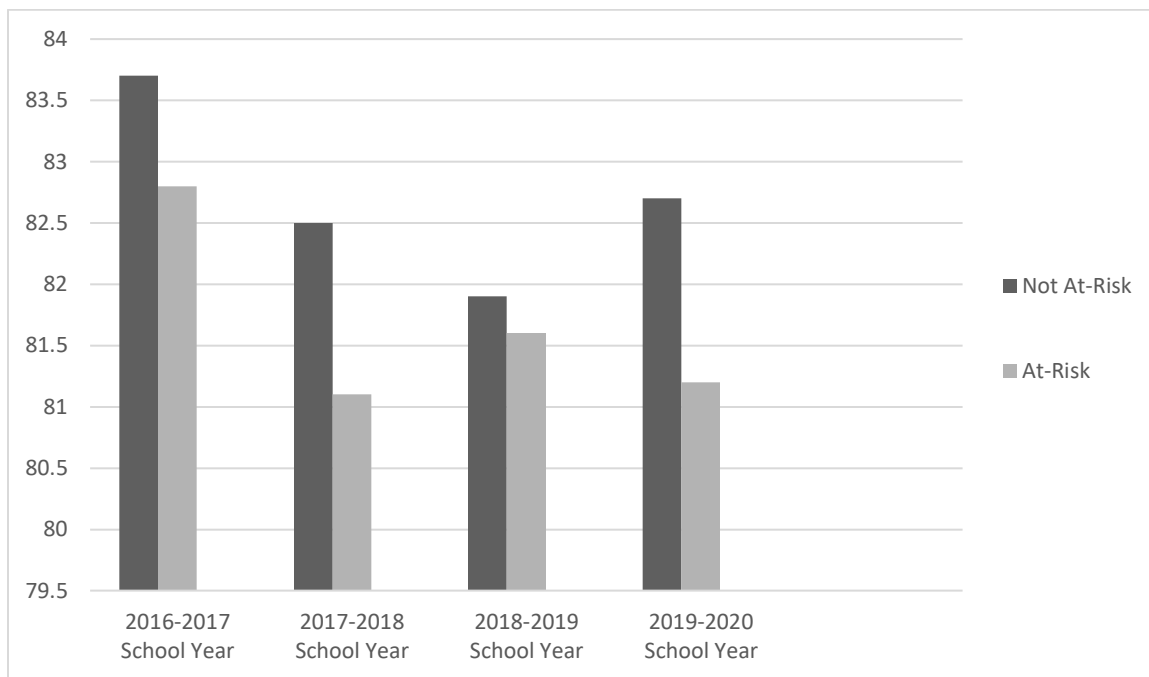
**Table 4.6**

*Descriptive Statistics for Number of Days Assigned to In-School Suspension for Grade 8 Girls as a Function of Their At-Risk Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*

School Year and At-Risk Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Not At-Risk	5,332	3.03	3.51
At-Risk	14,985	3.96	4.60
2017-2018			
Not At-Risk	5,227	2.91	3.08
At-Risk	14,705	3.93	4.65
2018-2019			
Not At-Risk	5,120	3.14	5.24
At-Risk	15,651	4.06	3.53
2019-2020			
Not At-Risk	6,092	3.14	3.54
At-Risk	15,651	4.06	4.95

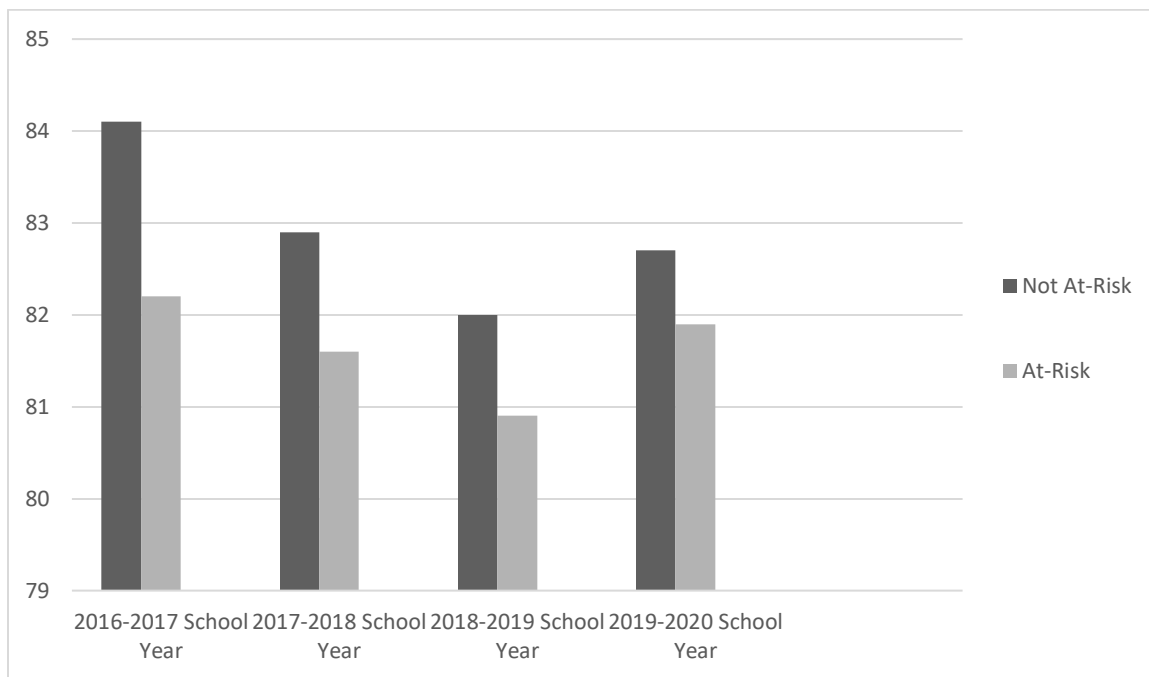
**Figure 4.1**

*Rate of In-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 6 Girls by Their At-Risk Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



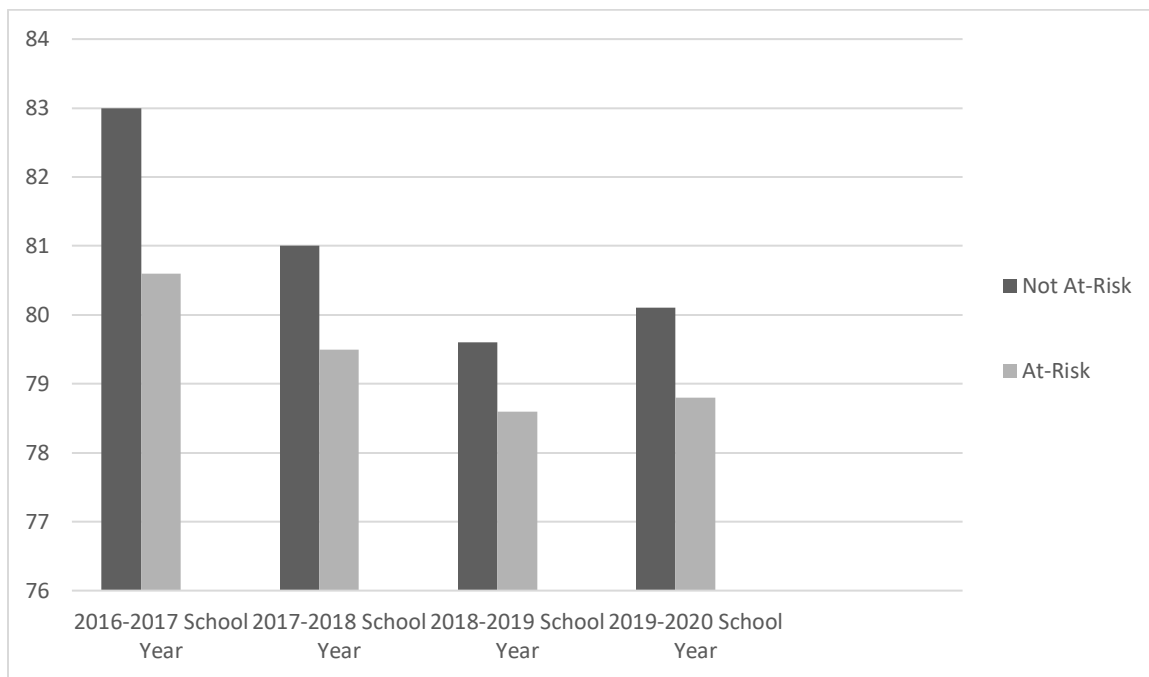
**Figure 4.2**

*Rate of In-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 7 Girls by Their At-Risk Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



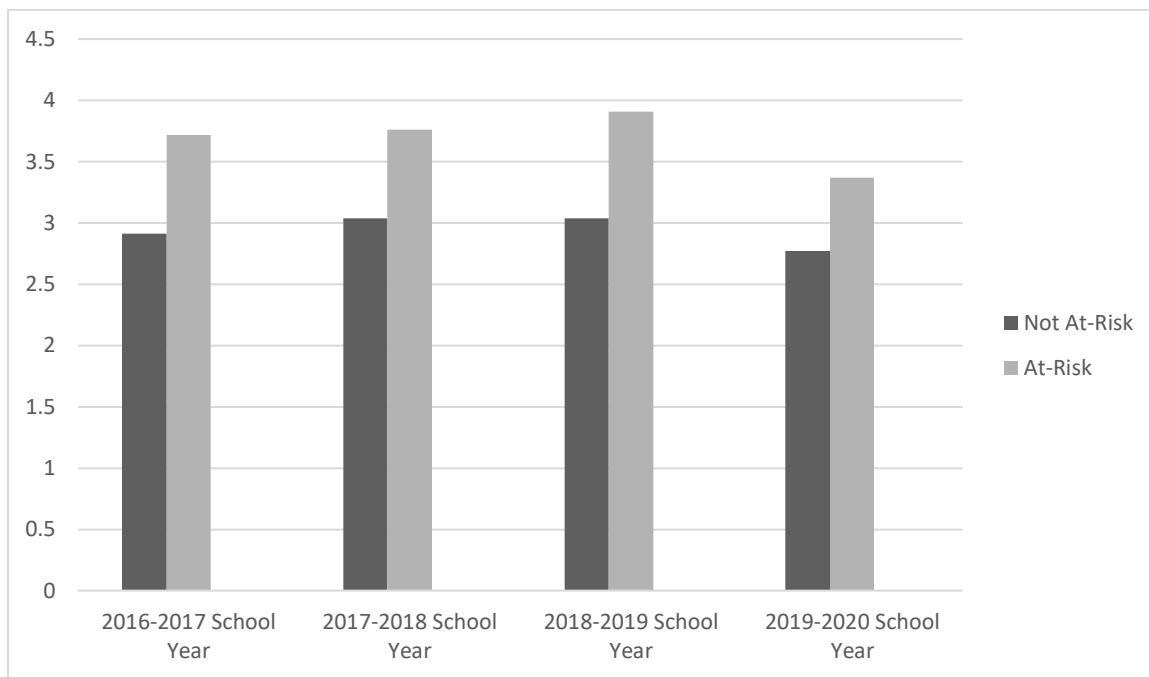
**Figure 4.3**

*Rate of In-School Suspension Assignments to Grade 8 Girls by Their At-Risk Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



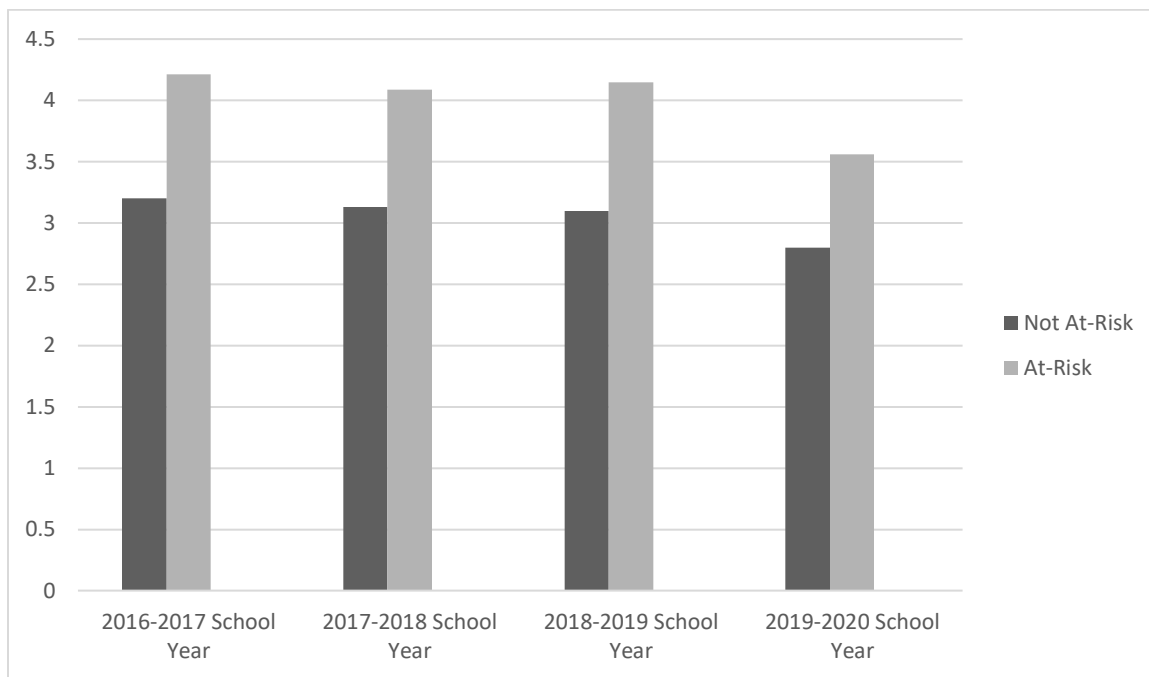
**Figure 4.4**

*Average Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 6 Girls by Their At-Risk Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



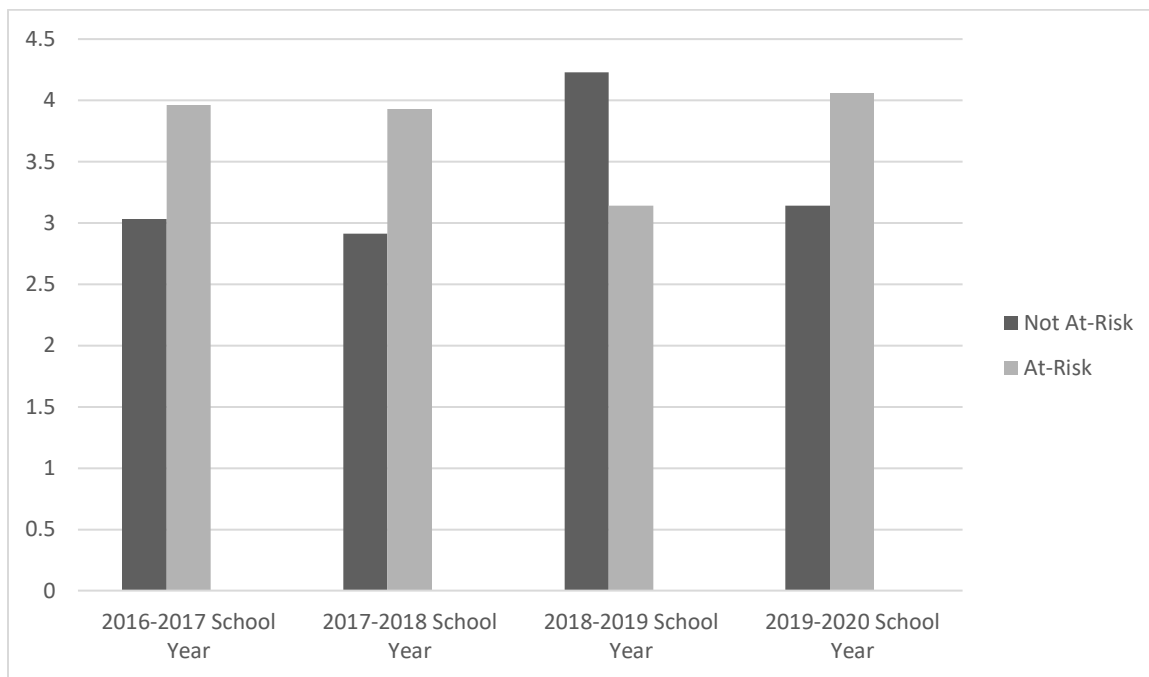
**Figure 4.5**

*Average Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 7 Girls by Their At-Risk Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



**Figure 4.6**

*Average Number of Days Assigned to an In-School Suspension for Grade 8 Girls by Their At-Risk Status for the 2016-2017 Through the 2019-2020 School Years*



## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

The overall purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the extent to which inequities were present in exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to middle school girls. In the first study, the purpose was to determine the degree to which the frequency and number of days that Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls were to an in-school suspension was determined by their ethnicity/race. In the second study, the purpose was to ascertain the extent to which the frequency and number of days that Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension a by their economic status. In the third study, the purpose was to determine the degree the frequency and number of days that Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with regard to their at-risk status. For each article, the presence of trends was addressed across the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years for the frequency and number of days that Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to ethnicity/race, economic and at-risk status. In this chapter, the results of each study will be discussed and summarized for each article. Implications for policy and for practice will be provided in addition to recommendations for future research.

#### **Summary of Results for Study One**

In the first investigation, the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment to and in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension as a function of ethnicity/race of Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls during the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 school years was addressed. Data from the Public Education Information Management System were analyzed with respect to ethnicity/race for four school years.



Statistically significant differences were revealed in the assignment to an in-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls.

In all four years and all three grade levels, Hispanic girls were assigned the highest rate of in-school suspensions, followed by Black girls. White girls were assigned the lowest rate to an in-school suspension. Statistically significant differences were also yielded in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension by the ethnicity/race of Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls. In all four years and in all three grade levels, Black girls were assigned the greatest number of days to an in-school suspension, followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Presented in Table 5.1 are summary statistics for the assignment of Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls to an in-school suspension with respect to ethnicity/race.

**Table 5.1**

*Summary of the Frequency of Assignment of Grades 6, 7, and 8 Girls to an In-school Suspension by Their Ethnicity/Race*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	Effect Size	Most Frequently Assigned
<b>Grade 6</b>			
2016-2017	Yes	Below Small	Hispanic
2017-2018	Yes	Below Small	Hispanic
2018-2019	Yes	Below Small	Hispanic
2019-2020	Yes	Below Small	Hispanic
<b>Grade 7</b>			
2016-2017	Yes	Below Small	Hispanic
2017-2018	Yes	Below Small	Hispanic
2018-2019	Yes	Below Small	Hispanic
2019-2020	Yes	Below Small	Hispanic
<b>Grade 8</b>			
2016-2017	Yes	Below Small	Hispanic
2017-2018	Yes	Below Small	Hispanic
2018-2019	Yes	Below Small	Hispanic
2019-2020	Yes	Below Small	Hispanic

Concerning the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, statistically significant differences occurred. In each school year, Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black girls were assigned the greatest number of days to an in-school suspension, followed by Hispanic girls and then White girls. Summary statistics for the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race are delineated in Table 5.2

**Table 5.2**

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to an In-school Suspension for Grades 6, 7, and 8 Girls by Their Ethnicity/Race*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	Most Days Assigned	Average Number of Days
<b>Grade 6</b>			
2016-2017	Yes	Black	3.93
2017-2018	Yes	Black	4.04
2018-2019	Yes	Black	4.06
2019-2020	Yes	Black	3.43
<b>Grade 7</b>			
2016-2017	Yes	Black	4.37
2017-2018	Yes	Black	4.30
2018-2019	Yes	Black	4.43
2019-2020	Yes	Black	3.60
<b>Grade 8</b>			
2016-2017	Yes	Black	4.06
2017-2018	Yes	Black	3.88
2018-2019	Yes	Black	4.23
2019-2020	Yes	Black	3.39

### **Summary of Results for Study Two**

In the second investigation, the degree to which inequities were present in the assignment to and in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension was addressed by student economic status. Archival data from the Public Education Information

Management System for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls in the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 school years were analyzed.

In all four school years and in all grade levels, similar rates of girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, regardless of their economic status. High percentages of girls in both economic status groups were assigned to an in-school suspension. With respect to the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension, the economic status of girls was clearly related. In all four school years and all three grade levels, girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a greater number of days to an in-school suspension than were girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Presented in Table 5.3 are summary statistics for the number of days Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls are assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to economic status.

**Table 5.3**

*Summary of the Frequency of Assignment of Grades 6, 7, and 8 Girls to an In-school Suspension by Their Economic Status*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	Effect Size	Most Frequently Assigned
<b>Grade 6</b>			
2016-2017	Yes	Below Small	Poor
2017-2018	Yes	Below Small	Poor
2018-2019	Yes	Below Small	Poor
2019-2020	No	N/A	Poor
<b>Grade 7</b>			
2016-2017	Yes	Below Small	Poor
2017-2018	No	N/A	Poor
2018-2019	Yes	Below Small	Poor
2019-2020	Yes	Below Small	Poor
<b>Grade 8</b>			
2016-2017	Yes	Below Small	Poor
2017-2018	No	N/A	Poor
2018-2019	Yes	Below Small	Poor
2019-2020	No	N/A	Poor

Regarding the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, statistically significant differences occurred. In each school year, Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned the greatest number of days to an in-school suspension, followed by girls who were not economically disadvantaged. In each school year present Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension at a frequency statistically significantly higher than were girls who were not economically disadvantaged. Delineated in Table 5.4 are summary statistics for the number of days Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status.

**Table 5.4**

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to an In-school Suspension for Grades 6, 7, and 8 Girls by Their Economic Status*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	Most Days Assigned	Average Number of Days
Grade 6			
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	3.68
2017-2018	Yes	Poor	3.88
2018-2019	Yes	Poor	4.00
2019-2020	No	Poor	3.40
Grade 7			
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	4.18
2017-2018	No	Poor	4.08
2018-2019	Yes	Poor	4.09
2019-2020	Yes	Poor	3.54
Grade 8			
2016-2017	Yes	Poor	3.94
2017-2018	No	Poor	3.88
2018-2019	Yes	Poor	4.00
2019-2020	No	Poor	3.40

### **Summary of Results for Study Three**

In the third investigation, the extent to which disparities were present in the assignment to and in the number of days assigned to in-school suspension by student at-risk status of Texas Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls during the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 school years was addressed. Data from the Public Education Information Management System were analyzed with respect to at-risk status and in-school suspension.

In all four school years and in all three grade levels, similar percentages of girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, regardless of their at-risk status. With respect to the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension, the at-risk status of girls was clearly related to the number of days assigned to in-school suspension. In all four school years and all three grade levels, girls who were at-risk were assigned a greater number of days to an in-school suspension than were girls who were not at-risk. Summary statistics for the number of days Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their at-risk status are delineated in Table 5.5.

**Table 5.5**

*Summary of the Frequency of Assignment of Grades 6, 7, and 8 Girls to an In-school Suspension by At-Risk Status*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	Cramer's V	Most Frequently Assigned
<b>Grade 6</b>			
2016-2017	No	N/A	At-Risk
2017-2018	Yes	Below Small	At-Risk
2018-2019	No	N/A	At-Risk
2019-2020	Yes	Below Small	At-Risk
<b>Grade 7</b>			
2016-2017	Yes	Below Small	At-Risk
2017-2018	Yes	Below Small	At-Risk
2018-2019	Yes	Below Small	At-Risk
2019-2020	No	N/A	At-Risk
<b>Grade 8</b>			
2016-2017	Yes	Below Small	At-Risk
2017-2018	Yes	Below Small	At-Risk
2018-2019	No	N/A	At-Risk
2019-2020	Yes	Below Small	At-Risk

With respect to the number of days that Grade 6 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, statistically significant differences were not present with the exception for the 2017-2018 school year. In the 2016-2017, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years, Grade 6 girls who were at-risk were assigned to a higher average number of days to an in-school school suspension than were girls who were not economically disadvantaged. A statistically significant result was not produced for the 2016-2017, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years, only the 2017-2018 school year was statistically significant. Similar differences were present in Grades 7 and 8. In all four school years, Grade 7 and 8 girls who were at-risk were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school suspension with Grade 8, year 2018-2019 being the exception with girls who were not at-risk being assigned the highest number. Presented in Table 5.6 are summary

statistics for the number of days Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their economic status.

**Table 5.6**

*Summary of the Number of Days Assigned to an In-school Suspension for Grades 6, 7, and 8 Girls by Their At-Risk Status*

Grade Level and School Year	Statistically Significant	Most Days Assigned	Average Number of Days
<b>Grade 6</b>			
2016-2017	No	At-Risk	3.72
2017-2018	Yes	At-Risk	3.76
2018-2019	No	At-Risk	3.91
2019-2020	No	At-Risk	3.37
<b>Grade 7</b>			
2016-2017	Yes	At-Risk	4.21
2017-2018	Yes	At-Risk	4.09
2018-2019	Yes	At-Risk	4.15
2019-2020	No	At-Risk	3.56
<b>Grade 8</b>			
2016-2017	Yes	At-Risk	3.96
2017-2018	Yes	At-Risk	3.93
2018-2019	No	Not At-Risk	3.14
2019-2020	No	At-Risk	4.06

### **Connections with Existing Literature**

In the three multiyear investigations in this journal-ready dissertation, disparities were established both in the assignment to and in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls. Researchers (e.g., Cholewa, 2018; Harkrider, 2020; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Slate et al., 2016) have established the presence of differences in the consequences assigned to middle school students and the overrepresentation of students of color. Morris and Perry (2017) documented that school suspension assignment frequencies had doubled since the 1970s, with Black students being three times more likely to be suspended than students of other

ethnic/racial backgrounds. In another study regarding the suspension of girls, White and Black girls exceeded the documented differences between White boys and Black boys with suspension and law enforcement studies (Green et al., 2020). State et al. (2016) analyzed discipline data on Black, White, and Hispanic girls in Grades 4-11. In regard to ethnicity/race, the number of in-school suspension assignments nearly doubled for Black and Hispanic girls from Grade 8 to Grade 9. Moreover, Coleman (2017) documented that Hispanic girls were assigned to nearly twice as many in-school suspensions as Grade 6 White girls. Lastly, Hilberth and Slate (2014) established the presence of statistically significant inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to a total of 172,551 Grades 6, 7, and 8 students. Black students were assigned to an in-school suspension two times more than their peers.

In the second article, congruent with the existing research literature (Annamma et al., 2019; Cholewa et al., 2018; Khan & Slate, 2016; Latimore et al., 2018; Mizel et al., 2016; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1997; Sullivan et al., 2013; White & Slate, 2017), were clear inequities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to students by their economic status. Students in poverty are assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences such as in-school suspension at substantially higher rates than their peers who are not in poverty (Cholewa et al., 2018). White (2019) determined that Grades 6, 7, and 8 students who were economically disadvantaged were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 1.05, 1.09, and 0.87 more days, respectively, than were their peers who were not economically disadvantaged. The disproportionate number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Black and Hispanic students who are in



poverty contribute to the achievement gap among students of color and other ethnic/racial backgrounds (Khan & Slate, 2016).

Finally, in the third article, the relationship of at-risk status was addressed with respect to the assignment to and in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls was determined. Young girls identified as being at-risk are more likely to have higher numbers of suspensions and expulsions (Patrick & Chaudhry, 2017). Of particular relevance to the Patrick and Chaudhry (2017) report, 25% of students in the care of the state were suspended, in contrast to 10% of students not in the care of the state. Patrick and Chaudry (2017) documented that girls in foster care experience higher rates of exclusionary discipline consequences, have lower achievement performance, and lower graduation rates. Also, of interest for this third article were students who are Emergent Bilingual, because they are coded as being at-risk by the TEC § 29.052 (Texas Education Agency, 2011). Emergent Bilingual girls who were at-risk and who were assigned to one or more in-school suspension accounted for 51,240 or 6.3% of students (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). Noted in the Office of Civil Rights (2021) report was that 1,222 or 4.4% Emergent Bilingual girls were expelled from school in the 2017-2018 school year. Expulsions are an at-risk indicator that meet the standards for § TEC 37.007 during a proceeding or current school year (Texas Education Agency, 2011).

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

With respect to policy, school administrators are recommended to incorporate district wide efforts to utilize and implement alternative consequences for minor discipline infractions. Teachers who write discipline referrals should review their

referrals regularly to inspect for bias or alternative in-class consequences that could have been implemented. Lastly, diversity training and unconscious bias professional development should be an annual occurrence.

In the findings from the three studies conducted in this journal-ready dissertation, implications can be generated with regard to practice. First, school administrators should be intentionally cognizant of the discipline action and the consequence to ensure alternative measures might not be more appropriate than an in-school suspension assignment. School administrators should obtain data to analyze and disaggregate the students they encounter by ethnicity/race, economic status, and at-risk status to determine if bias may be present. If inequities are determined to be present, then campus leaders can address protocols to eliminate such differences among demographic groups.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In this journal-ready dissertation, the disparities in the assignment of in-school suspension was disconcerting. Determined from the results of the three studies conducted herein, several multiple recommendations for future research can be developed. First, a study to determine the relationship between the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness and End of Course failures and the number of days girls and boys have been assigned to in-school suspension void of classroom instruction from a content-certified teacher based on at-risk status. Secondly, researchers should conduct an analysis of Emergent Bilingual students and Non-Emergent Bilingual high school and middle school boys and girls to ascertain differences that may exist among the two groups as it relates to the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension framed from economic status. Thirdly, researchers should examine the relationship between assignment to an in-school

suspension and special education students labeled with a learning disability and emotional disturbance by ethnicity/race. Finally, researchers should investigate the relationship between students identified with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and the assignment to in-school suspension.

### **Conclusion**

In this multiyear investigation, the degree to which inequities in the number of days assigned to girls to an exclusionary discipline consequence as a function of ethnicity/race, economic status, and at-risk status of Grade 6, 7, and 8 girls was addressed. Specifically analyzed were the ethnic/racial groups of Black, Hispanic, and White girls during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years assigned to in-school suspension. In all four years and grade levels Hispanic girls were assigned the highest rate of in-school suspensions, followed by Black, and then White girls. With respect to the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension, a difference in the distribution was determined. In all four years and in all three grade levels Black girls were assigned the greatest number of days to an in-school suspension, followed by Hispanic and then White girls.

A separate analysis was conducted for the economic status of students who were economically disadvantaged and students who were not economically disadvantaged. In all four school years and in all grade levels girls who were not economically disadvantaged were assigned to in-school suspension at a higher rate. Girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned at a lower rate, but rates were similar. From this analysis, a consistent trend for girls who were not economically disadvantaged and girls who were economically disadvantaged, were their similarities in percentages of

frequency. In all four school years and grade levels for an assignment to an in-school suspension, girls who were economically disadvantaged were assigned a greater number of days to an in-school suspension than were girls who were not economically disadvantaged.

The final investigation was conducted for the at-risk status of students who were at-risk of not completing high school or who were not at-risk of completing high school. In all four school years and in all grade levels girls who were not at-risk were assigned to in-school suspension at a higher rate. Girls who were at-risk were assigned at a lower rate, of note, percentages were similar to one another. In all four school years and grade levels for an assignment to an in-school suspension, girls who were at-risk were assigned a greater number of days to an in-school suspension than were girls who were not at-risk. These inequities only increase the gaps in education that exist, students' lack of instructional time with a content specialized teacher, it could be said student's rights to a public education are being taken away.

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<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1084890>

## APPENDIX



Date: Jul 14, 2022 5:32:19 PM CDT

TO: Margo Kelley John Slate

FROM: SHSU IRB

PROJECT TITLE: Inequities in the Number of Days Assigned to Girls to an Exclusionary Discipline Consequence as a Function of Ethnicity/Race, Economic Status, and At-Risk Status of Texas Middle School Girls: A Multiyear, Statewide Investigation

PROTOCOL #: IRB-2022-150

SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial

ACTION: No Human Subjects Research

DECISION DATE: July 14, 2022

**OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK:** To access the survey, click [here](#). It only takes 10 minutes of your time and is voluntary. The results will be used internally to make improvements to the IRB application and/or process. Your feedback will be most appreciated.

Greetings,

In accordance with applicable federal law governing the use of human subjects in research the SHSU Institutional Review Board (“IRB”) has reviewed your proposed project entitled "Inequities in the Number of Days Assigned to Girls to an Exclusionary Discipline Consequence as a Function of Ethnicity/Race, Economic Status, and At-Risk Status of Texas Middle School Girls: A Multiyear, Statewide Investigation" and determined that this project does not meet the definition of human subjects research as defined in Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 46 et al (also known as the “Common Rule”) - specifically, secondary data analysis of a public dataset. Therefore, this project is not subject to further SHSU IRB oversight. Even so, please remember that you are responsible for ensuring that your study is conducted in an ethical manner and in accordance with applicable law and SHSU policies and procedures. You may initiate your project. Please contact the IRB office at [irb@shsu.edu](mailto:irb@shsu.edu) or [REDACTED] if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

SHSU Institutional Review Board

## VITA

**Margo Kelley**

### EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

Doctorate of Education- Educational Leadership, December 2022

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas

Dissertation: Inequities in the Number of days Assigned to Girls to an Exclusionary Discipline Consequence as a Function of Ethnicity/Race, Economic Status, and At-Risk Status of Texas Middle School Girls: A Multiyear, Statewide Investigation

Master of Educational Administration, May 2002

Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas

Bachelor of Science, Interdisciplinary Studies, December, 1996

Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Associate Principal of Curriculum and Instruction, North Shore Senior High School, Galena Park Independent School District August, 2022-present

Lead Assistant Principal, Galena Park Middle School, Galena Park Independent School District, August 2012-2022

Principal, Drew Intermediate, Crosby Independent School District, August 2011- June 2012

Assistant Principal, Galena Park Independent School District, August 2008-May 2011

Assistant Principal, Spring Branch Independent School District, August 2005-August 2008

Teacher Klentman Intermediate, Alief Independent School District, August 2002- May 2005

Teacher Dobie Middle School, Austin Independent School District, January 1997-May 2002

### RECOGNITIONS

Teacher of the Year 2006

Southwest Educational Research Association 45th Annual Conference Presenter