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## **Inequities in Days Assigned to an Exclusionary Discipline Consequence by Ethnicity/Race of High School Boys**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*We examined the extent to which inequities were present in the number of days Texas Grade 9, 10, and 11 boys were assigned to either in-school suspension or to out-of-school suspension by their ethnicity/race for three school years. Inferential statistical procedures (i.e., Analysis of Variance) revealed statistically significant disparities in all three school years and at all three grade levels. At every grade level and school year, Black boys were assigned to more days in an in-school suspension than were Hispanic boys and White boys. For out-of-school suspensions across all three school years, Black boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension statistically significantly more days than Hispanic boys and White boys, and Hispanic boys were assigned statistically significantly more days than White boys.*

**Keywords:** Boys, Black, ethnicity/race, Hispanic, In-school suspension, High School, Out-of-school suspension,

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## INTRODUCTION

**D**isproportionality in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences is a problem at both the national and state level. According to the Office of Civil Rights (2016), approximately 50.4 million students were enrolled in public schools in the United States in the 2015-2016 school year. Of the over 50 million students enrolled in public schools in the United States for the 2015-2016 school year, approximately 2.7 million students had been assigned to an in-school suspension. In-school suspensions are the most common form of exclusionary discipline consequence used in public schools. The second most common exclusionary consequence used is out-of-school suspensions followed by expulsions (Office of Civil Rights, 2016). With respect to ethnicity/race of these students, Black students represented over 15% of the total student population, Hispanic students made up over 25% of the student population, and White students represented more than 48% of the student population. For students who were assigned to an in-school suspension in 2015-2016, Black students were assigned to 33% of the in-school suspensions, Hispanic students were assigned to 23% of all in-school suspensions, and White students were assigned 39% of all in-school suspensions. As such, Black students were assigned to an in-school suspension at twice their percentage in the student population whereas Hispanic and White students were assigned at a rate lower than their percentage of the student population.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

For the state of interest for this article, Texas, over 5 million students were enrolled in public schools in the 2015-2016 school year. In Texas, Black students made up 13% of the student population, Hispanic students represented 52% of the student population, and White students made up 29% of the student population. Of the over 5 million students, 500,529 were assigned to an in-school suspension. For in-school suspensions in 2015-2016, Black students were assigned to 24% of all in-school suspensions, Hispanic students were assigned to 50% of all in-school suspensions, and White students were assigned 23% of all in-school suspensions (Office of Civil Rights, 2016). As such, Black students were assigned to an in-school suspension about twice their percentage in the student population, Hispanic students were assigned in-school suspension at an equal rate to their percentage of

the student population, and White students were assigned at a rate lower than their percentage of the student population.

In the United States for the 2015-2016 school year, over two and a half million students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Out-of-school suspension assignments rank second behind in-school suspensions as an exclusionary discipline consequence (Office of Civil Rights, 2016). Black students were assigned to about 41% of the out-of-school suspensions. Hispanic students were assigned to 21% of the out-of-school suspensions and White students were assigned to 32% of the out-of-school suspensions. By total student population, Black students were assigned out-of-school suspensions more than twice the percentage of their population, Hispanic students were assigned out-of-school suspensions slightly less than equal to their percentage of the total student population, and White students were assigned out-of-school suspensions at a rate less than their total student population.

For the State of Texas in the 2015-2016 school year, 251,825 students were assigned one or more out-of-school suspensions. Of that total, Black students represented 33% of all students assigned one or more out-of-school suspensions, Hispanic students represented 50% of that total, and White students represented slightly less than 15% of that total (Office of Civil Rights, 2016). By total student population, Black students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension more than twice their percentage of their student population, Hispanic students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate almost equal to their percentage of the student population, and White students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate half of their total percentage of their student population.

In Texas, a uniform system to identify and assign discipline consequences is in place. This system is located in Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code (TEC). Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) provides the rules and regulations governing student discipline policies and procedures for public schools in the state of Texas. The Texas 86th State Legislature in August 2019 was the last to update Chapter 37 of the TEC. Four forms of exclusionary discipline techniques, which can be used by campus and district leaders, are present in Chapter 37 TEC. Starting from the lowest level of exclusion to the highest level, these discipline consequences are (a) in-school suspension, (b) out-of-school suspension, (c) assignment to a Discipline Alternative Education Program, or (d) placement in a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program. By utilizing the policies and guidelines present in Chapter 37 TEC, district leaders are able to establish and maintain a safe and secure environment for students to learn. School districts in Texas must uniformly abide by the discipline code provided in Chapter 37 TEC. Because all school districts must uniformly abide by Chapter 37 of the TEC, the evidence of ethnic/racial inequalities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences is worth noting.

Several researchers (e.g., Henkel et al., 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Jones et al., 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Lopez & Slate, 2020; Miller & Slate, 2019; White & Slate, 2018) have conducted studies regarding disproportionalities in exclusionary disciplinary consequence assignments by student ethnicity/race in the State of Texas. Findings from their studies of ethnic/racial disparities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences were congruent with the studies at the national level. Of note, however, is that only two published articles by White and Slate (2018) and by Miller and Slate (2019) were identified in which disparities in the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence were addressed at the high school level.

White and Slate (2018) analyzed the extent to which the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension was associated with the ethnicity/race of Grade 9 and 10 Texas high school students for the 2013-2014 school year. They established that Grade 9 and 10 White boys were statistically significantly underrepresented in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension, Grade 9 Hispanic boys were aptly represented, and Grade 10 Hispanic boys were underrepresented. Important in their investigation was that Grade 9 and 10 Black boys were exceedingly overrepresented in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Grade 9 Hispanic boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension over two times as often as Grade 9 White boys, and Grade 9 Black boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension over three times as often as Grade 9 White boys. Grade 10 Black boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension over three times as often as Grade 10 White boys and over one and a half times more to an out-of-school suspension than Grade 10 Hispanic boys.

Examining statewide data for the 2015-2016 school year, Miller and Slate (2019) conducted a research study on inequalities of out-of-school suspensions as a function of ethnicity/race for Grade 9, 10, and 11, White, Hispanic, and Black boys in Texas. Miller and Slate (2019) documented that across all three grade levels, Hispanic boys were not only assigned more often to an out-of-school suspension than White boys, but also were assigned about a tenth of a day more per assignment to an out-of-school suspension. This same pattern existed with the comparison between White boys and Black boys. One key difference in this comparison was that Black boys were assigned up to two-tenths of a day more per assignment to an out-of-school suspension than White boys.

Analyzing both in-school suspension and out-of-school assignment data, Hilberth and Slate (2014) conducted a Texas statewide study on Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black students and White students in the 2008-2009 school year. For Grade 6, although Black students were only slightly more than 14% of the student enrollment, 32% of them were assigned to an in-school suspension. Though Grade 6 White students were almost 35% of the student enrollment, they were assigned only about 14% of the in-school suspensions. While Grade 7 Black students represented 14% of the student population, almost 36% of Black students were

assigned an in-school suspension. Grade 7 White students represented slightly more than 35% of the student population, but only represented a little more than 16% of in-school suspensions. These results were similar for Grade 8 Black and White students. Black students made up over 14% of the Grade 8 student population, yet over 36% were assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 8 White students made up over 35% of the student population, but approximately 18% were assigned to an in-school suspension. Over 19% of Grade 6 Black students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension compared to less than 4% for Grade 6 White students. Almost 23% of Grade 7 Black students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension compared to less than 5% for Grade 7 White students. Finally, over 23% of Grade 8 Black students were assigned to an out-of-school suspension compared to over 5% for Grade 8 White students.

The disparity in assignments of exclusionary discipline consequences is alarming in that researchers (e.g., Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2014; Gregory et al., 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Hwang, 2018) have established that students who are removed from the learning environment are at greater risk of falling behind academically, having their social development hindered, and having increased chances of dropping out altogether. Just for a single out-of-school suspension, Balfanz, Byrnes, and Fox (2015) determined that the likelihood of dropping out of school doubled, whereas the chance of graduating diminished by 20%.

To determine whether assignments to exclusionary discipline consequences were related to academic performance, Hilbreth (2010) conducted a Texas statewide investigation. She specifically analyzed the relationship of exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to Black and White middle school students with their reading and mathematics achievement. In her investigation, Grade 6, 7, and 8 Black students and White students who were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence had statistically significantly lower reading and mathematics performance on the Texas state-mandated assessments than their peers who were not assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence. Black and White middle school students who had 10 or more exclusionary discipline assignments had even lower reading and mathematics performance than their peers who were assigned between 1 and 10 exclusionary discipline assignments.

The disparity in assignments of exclusionary discipline consequences is alarming in that researchers (e.g., Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2014; Gregory et al., 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Hwang, 2018) have established that students who are removed from the learning environment are at greater risk of falling behind academically, having their social development hindered, and having increased chances of dropping out altogether. Balfanz, Byrnes, and Fox (2015) determined that for the first out-of-school suspension, the likelihood of dropping out of school doubled, while the chance of graduating diminished by 20%.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The detrimental effects of exclusionary discipline consequences on students based on ethnicity/race have been addressed (e.g., Barnes & Slate, 2016; Barnes, Slate, Moore, & Martinez-Garcia, 2017; Coleman & Slate, 2016; Eckford & Slate, 2016; Miller & Slate, 2019; Skiba et al., 2011; White & Slate, 2018). Students of color who receive an inequitable amount of exclusionary discipline consequences are more likely to fail coursework, drop out of school, or end up incarcerated (Fasching-Varner et al., 2014; Skiba et al., 2011; Skiba et al., 2014). Two published articles (i.e., Miller & Slate, 2019; White & Slate, 2018) were located where the researchers addressed the number of days students were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence at the high school level. Harkrider and Slate (2020) examined the number of days middle school students were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence. Miller and Slate (2019) addressed the relationship between student ethnicity/race and the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence at the high school level. Black and Hispanic students are assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence at statistically significantly higher rates than their White counterparts (Eckford, 2017; Lopez, 2017; Ryan & Goodram, 2013; White & Slate, 2017), examining the number of days assigned to such a consequence is needed at the high school level to determine the level to which inequities might also exist in the time spent in an exclusionary discipline consequence. With these data, educators will be more aware of where inequities exist and employ more impartial behavior management techniques for all students.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which the number of days that Texas Grade 9, 10, and 11 students were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence (i.e. in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension) differed by their ethnicity/race (i.e. White, Hispanic, and Black) for three school years (i.e., 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018). A second purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which trends were present between the number of days boys were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence and their ethnicity/race. By performing these analyses, the extent to which inequities were present in days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence based on the ethnicity/race of Texas high school boys was determined.

## **Significance of the Study**

The information from this multiyear, statewide research investigation can be used by educational leaders and practitioners to change school policies at the

district and campus levels to reduce disparities in the use of exclusionary discipline consequences for Grade 9, 10, and 11 boys in Texas high schools. Researchers can use findings from this analysis to modify the curriculum used to train current and future educators to better prepare them to deal with students in the fields of cultural awareness, child development, and behavior modification techniques. By analyzing the data in this study state legislators can make informative decisions in either eliminating or creating laws which aid in reducing or eliminating the use of exclusionary discipline consequences that are statistically significantly higher for students of color or from low economic backgrounds.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) For Grade 9 boys who were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension), what is the effect of their ethnicity/race (i.e., Black, Hispanic, and White) on the number of days they were assigned each of these consequences?; (b) For Grade 10 boys who were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on the number of days they were assigned each of these consequences?; (c) For Grade 11 boys who were assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on the number of days they were assigned each of these consequences?; (d) For Grade 9 boys, what trend is present in the relationship between student ethnicity/race and number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension?; (e) For Grade 10 boys, what trend is present in the relationship between student ethnicity/race and number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension?; and (f) For Grade 11 boys, what trend is present in the relationship between student ethnicity/race and number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension? The first three research questions were examined for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years whereas the last three research questions involved comparisons of data across the three school years.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

In this empirical statewide analysis, a causal comparative research design was employed (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). In causal, non-experimental research investigations, no variables are controlled. Accordingly, the degree to which cause-and-effect relationships could be established was limited. Statewide archival data that were earlier obtained from the Texas Education Agency Public Education

Information Management System were analyzed. Accordingly, the dependent and independent variables had already occurred and cannot be manipulated. The data included Grade 9, 10, and 11 boys by their ethnicity/race, assignment to an in-school suspension, assignment to an out-of-school suspension, and the number of days assigned to each exclusionary discipline consequence. In this investigation, ethnicity/race for boys consisted of three groups: (a) Black, (b) Hispanic, and (c) White. For each school year (i.e., 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018), the dependent variables were the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension and to an out-of-school suspension.

## **Participants and Instrumentation**

Participants in this article were Black, Hispanic, and White Grade 9, 10, and 11 boys in the State of Texas who had been assigned to either an in-school suspension or to an out-of-school suspension in the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. These two exclusionary discipline consequences are the two most commonly assigned discipline consequences in schools in the United States. In the State of Texas, the Texas Education Code includes all laws and rules passed by the Texas State Legislature. It is Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code that pertains to discipline (Texas Education Agency, 2019c).

Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code §37.001 (2019) specifies the conditions and outlines the circumstances for using in-school and out-of-school suspensions. Texas Education Code §37.002 pertains to in-school suspension. A teacher may remove a student from their assigned classroom, and the campus behavior coordinator or administrator can assign the student to in-school suspension. Texas Education Code §37.005 pertains to out-of-school suspension. An out-of-school suspension is a discipline consequence that removes a student from the school campus for a period of no longer than three consecutive days. School districts must submit data to the Public Education Information Management System for both in-school suspension and out-of-school each school year. 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, 2019d).

## **RESULTS**

### **Data Analysis**

In this study, the extent to which the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence related to the ethnicity/race of boys was examined. Data were analyzed for Texas Grade 9, 10, and 11 White, Hispanic,

and Black boys who had been assigned to an in-school suspension or to an out-of-school suspension in the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. Separate statistical analyses were conducted for in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension at each grade level and for each school year. Prior to conducting inferential statistical procedures to answer the research questions, checks for normality of data and for homogeneity of variance were conducted (Slate, 2023). Although some of the underlying assumptions of a parametric Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were not met, Field (2018) contends that it is sufficiently robust to withstand violations of its underlying assumptions. Starting with Grade 9, results are listed by ascending order of punishment severity (i.e., in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension) for Black, Hispanic, and White boys, beginning with the 2015-2016 school year and through the end of the 2017-2018 school year. Results are then repeated for Grade 10 and Grade 11 boys.

**Results for Grade 9 Boys and In-School Suspension**

Regarding the 2015-2016 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 47239) = 78.71, p < .001, \text{partial } n^2 = .003$ , in the number of days Black, Hispanic, and White Grade 9 boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. The effect size for this finding was below small (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe's post hoc procedures revealed that comparisons between all three ethnic/racial groups were statistically significantly different. Grade 9 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.83 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 9 White boys and an average of 0.79 more days than Grade 9 Hispanic boys. Grade 9 Hispanic boys were assigned to an in-school suspension for an average of 0.04 more days than were Grade 9 White boys. Table 1 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

**Table 1**  
*Descriptive Statistics for In-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grade 9 Black, Hispanic, and White Boys for 2015-2016 through 2017-2018*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2015-2016			
Black	10,251	5.49	6.56
Hispanic	26,843	4.70	5.56
White	10,148	4.66	5.18
2016-2017			
Black	10,119	5.18	5.83
Hispanic	26,249	4.60	5.35
White	9,931	4.50	4.78

2017-2018			
Black	9,156	4.98	6.51
Hispanic	24,446	4.42	5.17
White	9,945	4.44	4.83

With respect to the 2016-2017 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 46296) = 52.63, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .002$ , in the number of days Black, Hispanic, and White Grade 9 boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. The effect size for this finding was below small (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that comparisons between all three ethnic/racial groups were statistically significant different. Grade 9 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.68 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 9 White boys and an average of 0.58 more days than Grade 9 Hispanic boys. Grade 9 Hispanic boys were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.10 more days than were Grade 9 White boys. Presented in Table 1 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Concerning the 2017-2018 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 43544) = 38.00, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .002$ , below small effect size (Cohen, 1988), in the number of days Black, Hispanic, and White boys. Comparisons between all three ethnic/racial groups were statistically significantly different. Grade 9 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.54 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 9 White boys and an average of 0.56 more days than Grade 9 Hispanic boys. Grade 9 Hispanic boys were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.02 less days than were Grade 9 White boys. Revealed in Table 1 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Results for Grade 10 Boys and In-School Suspension**

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 35112) = 38.18, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .002$ , below small effect size (Cohen, 1988), in the number of days Black, Hispanic, and White Grade 10 boys were assigned to an in-school suspension. Comparisons between all three ethnic/racial groups were statistically significantly different. Grade 10 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.35 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 10 White boys and an average of 0.57 more days than Grade 10 Hispanic boys. Grade 10 Hispanic boys were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.22 less days than were Grade 10 White boys. Presented in Table 2 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics for In-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grade 10 Black, Hispanic, and White Boys for 2015-2016 through 2017-2018*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2015-2016			
Black	7,501	4.59	5.29
Hispanic	18,854	4.02	4.70
White	8,760	4.24	4.73
2016-2017			
Black	7,246	4.49	5.27
Hispanic	18,154	3.98	4.66
White	8,278	4.16	4.47
2017-2018			
Black	6,693	4.40	5.20
Hispanic	17,747	3.83	4.49
White	8,665	4.05	4.29

Concerning the 2016-2017 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 33675) = 30.58, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .002$ , below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Comparisons between all three ethnic/racial groups were statistically significantly different. Grade 10 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.33 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 10 White boys and an average of 0.51 more days than Grade 10 Hispanic boys. Grade 10 Hispanic boys were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.18 less days than were Grade 10 White boys. Table 2 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the 2017-2018 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 33092) = 38.34, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .002$ , below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Comparisons between all three ethnic/racial groups were different. Grade 10 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.35 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 10 White boys and an average of 0.57 more days than Grade 10 Hispanic boys. Grade 10 Hispanic boys were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.22 less days than were Grade 10 White boys. Delineated in Table 2 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### **Results for Grade 11 Boys and In-School Suspension**

Concerning the 2015-2016 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 25655) = 32.12, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .002$ , below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Comparisons between all three ethnic/racial

groups were different. Grade 11 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.36 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 11 White boys and an average of 0.56 more days than Grade 11 Hispanic boys. Grade 11 Hispanic boys were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.20 less days than were Grade 11 White boys. Presented in Table 3 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics for In-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grade 11 Black, Hispanic, and White Boys for 2015-2016 through 2017-2018*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2015-2016			
Black	5,366	4.13	4.73
Hispanic	13,246	3.57	4.32
White	7,046	3.77	4.07
2016-2017			
Black	5,315	4.05	4.65
Hispanic	12,952	3.57	4.30
White	6,913	3.68	3.87
2017-2018			
Black	5,017	3.92	4.99
Hispanic	12,723	3.38	3.94
White	7,044	3.79	4.05

With respect the 2016-2017 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 25177) = 24.82, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .002$ , below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Comparisons between all three ethnic/racial groups were different. Grade 11 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.37 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 11 White boys and an average of 0.48 more days than Grade 11 Hispanic boys. Grade 11 Hispanic boys were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.11 less days than were Grade 11 White boys. Revealed in Table 3 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the 2017-2018 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 33092) = 38.34, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .002$ , below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Comparisons between all three ethnic/racial groups were different. Grade 11 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.35 more days to an in-school suspension than were Grade 11 White boys and an average of 0.57 more days than Grade 11 Hispanic boys. Grade 11 Hispanic boys were assigned to an in-school suspension an average of 0.22 less days than were Grade 11 White boys. Table 3 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

## Results for Grade 9 Boys and Out-of-School Suspension

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 24862) = 102.80, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .008$ , below small effect size (Cohen, 1988), in the number of days Black, Hispanic, and White Grade 9 boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Comparisons between all three ethnic/racial groups were different. Grade 9 Black boys were assigned an average of 1.23 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 9 White boys and an average of 0.59 more days than Grade 9 Hispanic boys. Grade 9 Hispanic boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension an average of 0.64 more days than were Grade 9 White boys. Delineated in Table 4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

**Table 4**

*Descriptive Statistics for Out-of-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grade 9 Black, Hispanic, and White Boys for 2015-2016 through 2017-2018*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2015-2016			
Black	6,932	4.87	4.91
Hispanic	13,936	4.28	4.36
White	3,997	3.64	3.40
2016-2017			
Black	6,617	4.87	4.94
Hispanic	13,751	4.16	4.24
White	3,903	3.53	3.37
2017-2018			
Black	6,339	4.73	4.57
Hispanic	13,335	4.00	3.96
White	4,186	3.50	3.05

Concerning the 2016-2017 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 24268) = 125.12, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .01$ , small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Comparisons between all three groups were different. Grade 9 Black boys were assigned an average of 1.34 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 9 White boys and an average of 0.71 more days than Grade 9 Hispanic boys. Grade 9 Hispanic boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension an average of 0.63 more days than were Grade 9 White boys. Table 4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the 2017-2018 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 23857) = 129.63, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .011$ ,

small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Comparisons between all three groups were different. Grade 9 Black boys were assigned an average of 1.23 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 9 White boys and an average of 0.73 more days than Grade 9 Hispanic boys. Grade 9 Hispanic boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension an average of 0.50 more days than were Grade 9 White boys. Revealed in Table 4 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### Results for Grade 10 Boys and Out-of-School Suspension

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 16394) = 71.24, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .009$ , below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Comparisons between all three groups were different. Grade 10 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.87 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 10 White boys and an average of 0.61 more days than Grade 10 Hispanic boys. Grade 10 Hispanic boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension an average of 0.26 more days than were Grade 10 White boys. Table 5 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

**Table 5**

*Descriptive Statistics for Out-of-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grade 10 Black, Hispanic, and White Boys for 2015-2016 through 2017-2018*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2015-2016			
Black	4,642	4.15	3.93
Hispanic	8,617	3.54	3.37
White	3,138	3.28	2.90
2016-2017			
Black	4,490	3.70	6.51
Hispanic	8,226	3.17	5.17
White	2,917	2.50	4.83
2017-2018			
Black	4,449	4.00	3.50
Hispanic	8,422	3.41	2.99
White	3,152	3.15	2.61

Concerning the 2016-2017 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 15630) = 87.95, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .011$ , small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Comparisons between all three groups were different. Grade 10 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.94 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 10 White boys and an average of 0.62

more days than Grade 10 Hispanic boys. Grade 10 Hispanic boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension an average of 0.32 more days than were Grade 10 White boys. Presented in Table 5 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the 2017-2018 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 16020) = 83.11, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .01$ , small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Comparisons between all three groups were different. Grade 10 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.85 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 10 White boys and an average of 0.59 more days than Grade 10 Hispanic boys. Grade 10 Hispanic boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension an average of 0.26 more days than were Grade 10 White boys. Delineated in Table 5 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

### Results for Grade 11 Boys and Out-of-School Suspension

With respect to the 2015-2016 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 10823) = 70.85, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .013$ , small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Comparisons between all three groups were different. Grade 11 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.90 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 11 White boys and an average of 0.65 more days than Grade 11 Hispanic boys. Grade 11 Hispanic boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension an average of 0.25 more days than were Grade 11 White boys. Table 6 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

**Table 6**

*Descriptive Statistics for Out-of-School Suspension Days Assigned to Grade 11 Black, Hispanic, and White Boys for 2015-2016 through 2017-2018*

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2015-2016			
Black	3,233	3.84	3.59
Hispanic	5,345	3.19	2.78
White	2,258	2.94	2.55
2016-2017			
Black	3,074	3.78	3.41
Hispanic	5,225	3.09	2.68
White	2,279	2.97	2.25
2017-2018			
Black	3,116	3.63	3.06
Hispanic	5,360	3.05	2.44
White	2,347	2.85	2.03

Concerning the 2016-2017 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 10575) = 73.58, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .014$ , small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Comparisons between all three groups were different. Grade 11 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.81 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 11 White boys and an average of 0.69 more days than Grade 11 Hispanic boys. Grade 11 Hispanic boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension an average of 0.12 more days than were Grade 10 White boys. Delineated in Table 6 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Regarding the 2017-2018 school year, the parametric ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 10847) = 73.53, p < .001$ , partial  $n^2 = .013$ , small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Comparisons between all three groups were different. Grade 11 Black boys were assigned an average of 0.78 more days to an out-of-school suspension than were Grade 11 White boys and an average of 0.58 more days than Grade 11 Hispanic boys. Grade 11 Hispanic boys were assigned to an out-of-school suspension an average of 0.20 more days than were Grade 11 White boys. Revealed in Table 6 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

In this study, the degree to which disparities were present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension and an out-of-school suspension based on the ethnicity/race of Grade 9, 10, and 11 boys during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years was addressed. Inferential statistical procedures were used to answer the research questions. Results are reviewed by grade level. Spanning all three school years in this study, the ethnicity/race of Grade 9 boys was statistically significantly related to a greater number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension. In all investigations, Black boys were assigned the highest number of days to an in-school suspension. Hispanic boys were assigned the next highest number of days, with the exception of the 2017-2018 school year, where Grade 9 White boys were assigned slightly more days to an in-school suspension than Grade 9 Hispanic boys.

Across the three school years, the ethnicity/race of Grade 10 boys was statistically significantly related to the number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension. In all investigations for all three school years, Grade 10 Black boys were assigned to the highest number of days followed by White boys, and then by Hispanic boys. Similar to Grade 9, Black boys had the highest average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 10 White boys had the next highest average number of days assigned to an in-school-suspension followed by Grade 10 Hispanic boys with the lowest number of days assigned. With respect to all three school years the ethnicity/race of Grade 11 boys was statistically significantly related to the number of days they were assigned to an in-school

suspension. For all analyses, Grade 11 Black boys were assigned to the highest number of days followed by White boys, and then by Hispanic boys.

In regard to all three school years, the ethnicity/race of Grade 9 boys was statistically significantly related to the number of days they were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Grade 9 Black boys were assigned to the highest number of days of out-of-school suspensions, followed by Hispanic boys, and then by White boys. Concerning all three school years, the ethnicity/race of Grade 10 boys was statistically significantly related to the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Black boys were assigned to the highest number of days, followed by Hispanic boys, and then by White boys. With respect to all three school years, the ethnicity/race Grade 11 boys was statistically significantly related to the number of days they were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Concerning all analyses, Black boys were assigned the highest number of days, followed by Hispanic boys, and then by White boys.

### **Connections with Existing Literature**

In this multiyear, statewide investigation, differences in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension for Grade 9, 10, and 11 boys by their ethnicity/race were established. These differences have been well documented in the extant literature. Several researchers (e.g., Henkel, Slate, & Martinez-Garcia, 2016; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Jones, Slate, & Martinez-Garcia, 2014; Khan & Slate, 2016; Lopez & Slate, 2020; Miller & Slate, 2019; White & Slate, 2018) have conducted empirical investigations in which they have established the presence of inequities in exclusionary disciplinary consequence assignments by student ethnicity/race in the State of Texas. Findings from their studies of ethnic/racial disparities in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences were congruent with the studies at the national level. Only two articles by White and Slate (2018) and by Miller and Slate (2019) were identified in which inequalities in the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence were addressed at the high school level.

White and Slate (2018) analyzed the extent to which the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension was associated with the ethnicity/race of Grade 9 and 10 Texas high school students for the 2013-2014 school year. They established that Grade 9 and 10 White boys were statistically significantly underrepresented in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension, Grade 9 Hispanic boys were aptly represented, and Grade 10 Hispanic boys were underrepresented. Important in their investigation was that Grade 9 and 10 Black boys were exceedingly overrepresented in the number of days assigned to an out-of-school suspension. Miller and Slate (2019) examined statewide data for the 2015-2016 school year and conducted a research study on inequalities of out-of-school suspensions as a function of ethnicity/race for Grade 9, 10, and 11, White,

Hispanic, and Black boys in Texas. Miller and Slate (2019) documented that across all three grade levels, Hispanic boys not only were assigned more often to an out-of-school suspension than White boys, but also were assigned about one tenth of a day more per assignment to an out-of-school suspension. This same pattern occurred with the comparison between White boys and Black boys. Black boys were assigned up to two tenths of a day more per assignment to an of out-of-school suspension than White boys.

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

Several implications for policy and for practice can be made from the results of this investigation. First, with respect to policy, the Texas State legislature needs to evaluate the data provided by researchers in the area of inequities exclusionary discipline consequences. Legislators can create laws to reduce the number of days allowed in in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension for each academic school year, as well as reduce the use of out-of-school suspensions for less than egregious discipline infractions.

Secondly, district and campus administrators need to implement programs to modify behavior outside the realm of disciplinary consequences, primarily exclusionary discipline consequences. Educational leaders need to implement professional development programs for staff and teachers that instill the skills necessary to build relationships with students which involve and implement cultural relevancy and student psychological development. Implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports or Social Emotional Learning should be explored to determine if these programs can reduce disparity in exclusionary discipline consequences.

With regard to practices and the implication of practices, campus and district administrators need to examine discipline data periodically throughout the year and disseminate the data to staff members to help them identify what specific behaviors lead to discipline consequences, which groups of students receive a disproportionate amount of discipline consequences, and to offer behavior modification tools which keep students in class and on campus while reducing or eliminating inequities in assignments to exclusionary discipline consequences.

Finally, outreach programs which build ties and cooperation with the community to which schools serve, need to be strongly established. Public educators need to conduct more home visits, volunteer in the community, and seek volunteers from the community to assist where needed on campuses. Both communities and school districts must work together for the successful education and future endeavors of the child.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

In this multiyear, statewide study, the relationship between student ethnicity/race and the number of days assigned to in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension for boys in Grades 9, 10, and 11 was examined. As such, a number of recommendations for future research can be made. First, an investigation is warranted to ascertain whether inequities in the number of days assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences also exist for Texas high school girls based on their ethnicity/race. Performing such a study would reveal the extent to which the results delineated in this investigation on boys would be generalizable to high school girls. Second, another recommendation is for researchers to extend this research to Texas high school boys based on their economic status. Due to the fact that Black boys in Texas high schools are assigned a greater number of days to an in-school suspension and an out-of-school suspension, a third recommendation is for researchers to expand this study into the elementary and middle school levels as well. Determining if differences in exclusionary discipline consequences are present at the elementary and middle school level could make available useful information on the development of solutions to the reduction and elimination of discipline disparities for these students. Fourth, researchers should broaden this study to more stringent exclusionary discipline consequences, such as Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements. Fifth, further research beyond Texas needs to be conducted to determine if the inequities documented herein in the assignment of exclusionary consequences as a function of ethnicity/race and economic status also occur in other states. If inequities in assignments to exclusionary discipline consequences are determined to exist beyond the borders of Texas, then a national dialogue to address and eliminate these disparities can begin.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which inequities existed in the number of days assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence for Texas high school boys as a function of their ethnicity/race. Three years of archival data were acquired from the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System for statewide data on all Grade 9, 10, and 11 Black, Hispanic, and White boys for the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 school years. In all three grades across all three school years, Black boys were assigned to the highest number of days in an in-school suspension, followed by White boys, and then by Hispanic boys, with the exception of the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years where Grade 9 Hispanic boys were assigned more days of in-school suspension than Grade 9 White boys. For all three grade levels across

the three school years, Black boys were assigned the most days of out-of-school suspensions, followed by Hispanic boys, then White boys. Findings of this study were consistent with findings of other researchers (Miller & Slate, 2019; White & Slate, 2018) in regard to the existence of inequities in the number of days students were assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences at the high school level.

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