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Positive Alternatives to Exclusionary Discipline for Students in Kindergarten Through 12th Grade

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POSITIVE ALTERNATIVES TO EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE FOR STUDENTS IN

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Abstract

Schools across the country are utilizing exclusionary discipline (ED) at an alarming rate. Exclusionary discipline is suspension, expulsion, and other disciplinary actions leading to a student's removal from the typical educational setting. Exclusionary discipline rates have increased dramatically in the past decade. Past research has shown the negative effects of the use of ED including academic failure, high school drop out, grade retention, illegal substance abuse, and involvement in the juvenile justice system. School Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, restorative practices, in-school suspension, mentoring/counseling programs, and conflict resolution and social emotional learning programs have all proven to be positive alternatives to ED. Analyzing discipline data and additional professional development in behavior management and cultural competence are also proactive interventions to reduce the use of ED in schools.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

What is Exclusionary Discipline?

Exclusionary discipline (ED) is used around the country as a consequence for negative behavior from students in the school environment. In an article by Amity Noltemeyer and Caven Mcloughlin, they described exclusionary discipline as "suspension, expulsion and other disciplinary actions leading to a student's removal from the typical educational setting," (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, p. 27). Exclusionary discipline includes out-of-school suspension (OSS), in-school suspension (ISS), and expulsion. ED removes students from the classroom-learning environment. It has been a heavily researched topic throughout the past years; most commonly exploring disproportionality among different students as well as the negative impact ED has on students.

According to Noltemeyer and Mcloughlin, exclusionary discipline can lead to academic failure, high school dropout, grade retention, illegal substance abuse, and involvement in the juvenile justice system (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, p. 27). Despite the possibility of these negative effects on students, exclusionary discipline rates in schools continue to rise. Because of this, researchers have started to explore why ED practices vary based on schools and students. For example, it was found that 1 out of 6 schools in an Indiana school district accounted for 50-75% of all exclusionary discipline (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, p. 27). So why does the use of exclusionary discipline vary so widely in schools? What are factors that come into play that cause

such different use of ED practices in different types of schools and with different types

of students?

School Factors

Noltemeyer and Mcloughlin conducted a study to explore different school

factors that affect the use of exclusionary discipline. They found that ED rates were

more closely related to school factors versus students' actual negative behaviors

(Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, p. 27). They found that the following factors also

played a role in ED rates: School administration philosophy and beliefs, physical school

setting, per pupil spending, district socioeconomic status, and public versus private

schools (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, p. 27). They also found that 25% of 8th grade

teachers in urban schools reported spending at least one hour per week on maintaining

order and discipline compared to 13% in rural schools and 16% in suburban schools

(Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, p. 27). They found that major urban very high poverty

schools consistently had more disciplinary actions per 100 students than other school

types (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, p. 33).

Student Factors

Historically, male students have been overrepresented in ED practices compared

to female students. Noltemeyer and Mcloughlin found in their study that males were

overrepresented and were four times more likely to receive ED compared to females

(Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, p. 28). They also concluded that students receiving

free and reduced lunch were also more likely to receive ED (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin,

2010, p. 28). They found that middle school students were suspended at higher rates

compared with elementary and high school students. 24% of middle school students received ED compared to 3% of elementary students and 18% of high school students (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, p. 29).

In the study, Noltemeyer and Mcloughlin also found that African American students were 2-3 times more likely to receive ED compared to White students in all grade levels (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, p. 29). African American students were also found to be more likely to receive multiple suspensions and receive more office discipline referrals compared to other students (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, pp. 28-29). African American students had the highest disproportionality of ED in suburban areas and were 2.5 times more likely to get expelled compared to white students (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, p. 29). Hispanic students were 1.67 times more likely to be expelled versus white students in suburban districts (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010, p. 29).

In a study conducted by Claudia Vincent, Jeffery Sprague, and Tary Tobin, the authors found that students in special education were excluded more often and for longer periods of time when compared to non-special education students (Vincent, Sprague, & Tobin, 2012, p. 586). They also concluded that ED rates have been increasing over the last decade. For example, the authors looked at the out-of-school suspension rate in Chicago, IL. They found that OSS rates have quadrupled in the past decade (Vincent et al., 2012, p. 586). They also concluded that ED has less to do with the negative behavior exhibited by students and more to do with which type of schools they attend and the student's racial background (Vincent et al., 2012, p. 586). They found

that 44% of students who were expelled stated that they did not have access to alternative education options (Vincent et al., 2012, p. 587).

The authors also found that 45% of middle school students said suspension caused feelings of anger toward an adult and was not helpful in solving their problem (Vincent et al., p. 587). The authors found that African American students had the highest percentage of days lost due to exclusionary discipline followed by American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic students. White and Asian/Pacific Island students experienced the lowest percentage of lost days due to ED (Vincent et al., 2012, p. 592). African American students with disabilities experienced the highest percentage overall (Vincent et al., 2012, p. 593).

Reducing the Use of Exclusionary Discipline Practices

So what can be done to help decrease the use of exclusionary discipline and even the discipline gap between students of different backgrounds? Schools need to explore alternatives to suspension to implement in their schools to reduce the use of ED. They also need to utilize proactive interventions to reduce negative student behavior before the need to use exclusionary discipline. Alternatives to exclusionary discipline will be discussed more closely in the following chapters.

Thesis Question

The following question will be addressed in this thesis: What are some positive alternatives to exclusionary discipline for students with and without disabilities in Kindergarten through 8th grade? What are school wide and individual options for

reducing the use of exclusionary discipline as well as how to analyze discipline data to

effectively explore intervention options?

Abbreviations

ED – Exclusionary discipline

ISS – In- school suspension

OSS – Out-of-school suspension

RP – Restorative practices

RJ – Restorative justice

SEL – Social Emotional Learning

ODR – Office discipline referral

SWPBIS – School Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

Definitions of Terms

Exclusionary discipline – Suspension, expulsion, and other disciplinary actions leading to a student's removal from the typical educational setting.

Universal interventions – Interventions delivered universally to all students in an attempt to prevent problem behaviors before they start.

Selected interventions – Interventions that involve support from counselors, special educators, school psychologists, etc.

Targeted interventions – Intense, complex interventions that involve intense social skills training, behavior plans, parent collaboration, and sometimes multi-agency collaboration.

Normative Power – Holding a higher position in the culture or society.

Coercive Power – Forcing obedience after threatening punishment.

Interactively Established Contracts – Negotiating based on an implicit level of understanding between participants.

Charm – Using one's personality.

SWPBIS – A systems framework for schools to establish social and behavior supports to increase academic gains and reduce problem behavior across all students using evidence based practices. Main features include: prevention of problem behavior, teaching appropriate social behavior skills, acknowledging appropriate behavior, using a multi-tiered approach to instruction/intervention that matches behavior support to student needs, and data based problem solving.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Need for Alternatives to Suspension

Exclusionary discipline has been used for many years as a consequence for more serious student behavior infractions in the school setting. Throughout the years, there has been a great amount of research on exclusionary discipline and its effects on students. The negative effects range from poor academic success to dropping out of school. Throughout the years of research, one trend is obvious: there is a need for more research on the use of alternatives to suspension and how schools can implement these alternatives in their discipline policies and decrease their use of exclusionary discipline.

In a study conducted by Noltemeyer, Ward, and Mcloughlin, the authors researched the relationship between school suspension and student outcomes. The results suggested that there is a relationship between the type of suspension used and students' academic achievement, as well as overall suspension rate and dropout rate (Noltemeyer et al., 2015, p. 225). These results showed that suspension is not only ineffective for creating positive behavior changes, but also has an overall negative effect on student's learning. Their study also found that the more suspensions a student receives, the less engaged they are in their learning. Noltemeyer et al. also found through their research that many schools use suspensions for more minor behavior issues such as tardiness. The authors suggested that it is important for schools to advocate for alternatives to suspensions and that early intervention and prevention strategies are vital to helping students avoid exclusionary discipline and stay in school.

Alternative suggestions to suspension from the Noltemeyer, Ward, and Mcloughlin study included: The use of school wide initiatives such as school wide positive behavior supports, restorative justice, and the use of in-school suspension before the use of out-of-school suspension. The authors also suggested that staff members should receive professional development on ways to promote pro-social behavior and address misbehavior. Schools should create teams to analyze behavior trends by looking at their office discipline referrals at the school-wide and classroom level. They also suggested that schools be offered incentives based on their suspension rates in the future (Noltemeyer et al., 2015).

School safety is also a concern for schools. According to the national School Survey on Crime and Safety 95% of US high schools experienced at least one violent crime on 2005-2006 (Gregory et al., 2010, p. 483). Bullying and fighting, which are usually not considered in the count in crime statistics, are even more prevalent in schools (Gregory et al., 2010, p. 483). Based on readings, there is a definite need for safety and support in our schools.

Teachers reported that student's misbehavior interfered with their teaching and some even reported that they had experienced some form of physical injury. According to a study from Gregory et al, structure and support played a large role in reducing bullying and victimization and ultimately reducing the need for exclusionary discipline (Gregory et al., 2010). According to Gregory et al, structure is "the degree to which schools consistently and fairly enforce rules" (Gregory et al., 2010, p. 485). They describe support as "adolescent perceptions of their teachers as being caring and

supportive" (Gregory et al., 2010, p. 485). Their study found that when staff members use both structure and support, it contributed to overall school safety.

The study also found that students who had a stronger understanding of school rules and policies were linked to better behavior as well as student's perspective of school rules being fair. Results also found that students who had more positive relationships with teachers had lower behavior issues. In their study, alternatives to suspension had a positive effect of the amount of students who received a suspension. They suggested that when making efforts to reduce suspensions, schools should look at the attitudes and behaviors of staff as well as students (Gregory et al., 2010, p. 491).

In a study conducted by Anyon et al. in 2014, the authors looked at exclusionary discipline practices in the Denver Public School District. They looked at racial disparities in the discipline process as well as the effects of alternatives to suspension on students in the district. They found that two different alternatives had an effect on suspension. They found students had lower odds of out-of-school suspensions if they participated in a restorative approach to solve their discipline issue or participated in an in-school suspension (Anyon et al., 2014, p. 383).

Overall, the trend observed in research is that schools are in need of strategies to increase structure and support in their buildings. There is a need to explore alternatives to suspension and their effects on students' behaviors. Prevention and early intervention were important pieces to implement in schools to help support student's social learning and intervene early to prevent the need and use of exclusionary

discipline. Staff should receive professional development to support their ability to address student misbehavior.

Student, Caregiver, and Teacher's Perspectives

Research has been conducted in the area of exclusionary discipline and it has been widely discussed that exclusionary discipline is not an effective strategy to encourage more positive behavior and prevent additional behavior issues from occurring. But what do students, caregivers, and teachers think?

In a study conducted by Samia Michail in 2012, the author interviewed middle school students who had received a suspension to get their perspectives on the use of exclusionary discipline. Overall, the author found that students did not feel that suspension was effective and were often times confused as to why they were suspended (Michail, 2012, p. 3). Within the results, Michail was able to find four dynamics of student responses surrounding suspension: respect, voice, procedural fairness, and participation (Michail, 2012, p. 5).

Michail found that students often stated that they lacked respect from staff and sometimes would not show respect to adults due to it. Students reported they would respect their teachers if their teachers respected them. Throughout their responses, the students felt that either the staff member or themselves showed some type of disrespect, which occurred for a longer period of time (Michail, 2012, p. 5). Students also shared that they felt they had a lack of opportunities to discuss a difference in opinion with adults after an issue and that they desired to be respected (Michail, 2012, p. 5-6).

Students reported that they often times felt unheard by adults. They also reported feeling hurt, bullied, or that they experienced some sort of injustice which caused them to act out. Student's also felt that they were not offered an opportunity to explain themselves after an incident (Michail, 2012, p. 6).

The students struggled with the idea of fairness. They reported that their suspensions were often carried out differently than it was explained and interpreted by the student and they sometimes waited a full day to find out what their consequence would be. The students reported that there was a lack of communication with parents and some parents were not notified at all about their suspension. The students struggled with how staff members investigated situations and reported that many different staff members would make suspension decisions (Michail, 2012, p. 7).

Lastly, students reported that they had difficulty understanding their participation in events that led to suspension. They were often surprised by which actions led to suspensions and which did not. The students often reported that consistent supportive relationships with staff members could help improve their behaviors and they valued the availability of adult staff members. Students also shared that their suspension affects so many people in their lives including their parents (Michail, 2012, p. 7-8).

In a study conducted by Gibson and Haight in 2013, the authors interviewed caregivers of students on their perspectives of suspension. They found that caregivers truly valued school success, recognized their student's misbehavior, and supported appropriate consequences for their behavior (Gibson & Haight, 2013, pp. 265-266).

Caregivers also reported that they saw out-of-school suspension as "morally problematic" (Gibson & Haight, 2013, p. 266). Caregivers reported that they felt suspension was not appropriate in a situation where their student was defending themselves and were frustrated because they felt that their student's behavior wasn't taken into account based on the situation (Gibson & Haight, 2013, p. 266). Some caregivers even reported feeling as if suspension rewards their children's poor behavior and does not address the underlying problem of where the behavior is coming from (Gibson & Haight, 2013, pp. 267-268).

Caregivers also reported that they felt race was a factor in their student's suspension and that staff members lack cultural understanding. It was also clear that suspensions were emotional for all parties involved as they often used very emotional language during the interviews. Lastly, caregivers felt that suspensions can "contribute to the disengagement of African American families from school" (Gibson & Haight, 2013, p. 269).

Caregivers described a need for alternatives to suspension, need for staff members to understand caregiver's perspectives, seek common ground with families, and consider racial context (Gibson & Haight, 2013, pp. 270-271). In a study completed by Steven Sheldon and Joyce Epstein, the authors explored how family and community involvement positively affected student behavior and reduced behavior incidents and the use for exclusionary discipline. They found that the use of daily planners or assignment books to communicate with families, conducting orientations for families before the school year begins, and conducting workshops for parents on school goals

and expectations for student conduct were some of the most effective ways to involve families and the community to improve student behavior (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002).

In 2002, Faye Nelson conducted a study where she interviewed administrators, teachers, and parents in twenty schools in Tennessee. What she found was that administrators and teachers felts that parents were a key to success with their children and their behavior (Nelson, 2002, p. 51). They reported that a barrier they face is that parents would not keep appointments or meetings, which makes communication difficult. They also discussed that administrators and teachers carry out discipline policies but parents and students should have a voice in creating those policies (Nelson, 2002, p. 55). Teachers and administrators agreed that staff members should receive quality professional development to learn strategies for effective classroom and school discipline practices (Nelson, 2002, p. 2).

Administrators and teachers felt that rewarding students for positive behavior and consistent teamwork is important for successful strategies to avoid exclusionary discipline (Nelson, 2002, p. 55). Staff members felt that discipline policies and practices should be evaluated often and assessed for improvements. Staff reported that a lack of resources often made it difficult to utilize positive behavior strategies in their buildings (Nelson, 2002, p. 54).

Overall, teachers, students, and caregivers felt that suspension was an ineffective strategy to reduce children's negative behaviors. There was a cry for alternatives in all interviews conducted. Staff members also stressed how important it

was to review office disciplinary referrals to look for trends and patterns to constantly be improving policies and procedures as patterns arise.

The Use of Office Discipline Referrals to Evaluate Discipline Policy

Based on previous research, it was found that exclusionary discipline was not an effective consequence for students. But what can schools use as alternatives to exclusionary discipline and where do schools start in this process? Schools can start by evaluating their discipline policies. Schools can gather information by collecting their office discipline referrals. Often times, there is a large amount of information in those referrals. Office discipline referrals (ODR) are often used in schools as a way to manage and monitor negative behaviors. ODRs typically include the name of the student and what behavior they were exhibiting, the location in the school building where the behavior occurred, staff member who observed the behavior, and a consequence. These discipline referrals can shed light on the consistency and quality of discipline policies in schools. According to a study conducted by Jeffery Sprague, George Sugai, Robert Horner, and Hill M. Walker, schools can look at their office discipline referrals to prevent the use of exclusionary discipline by creating additional interventions in need areas (Sprague et al., 1999, p. 7).

In their study, they talked about the importance of having discipline interventions at three levels: Universal interventions, selected interventions, and targeted interventions (Sprague et al., 1999, p. 9). Universal interventions are "delivered universally (to all students) in an attempt to prevent problem behaviors before they start" (Sprague et al., 1999, p. 7). Interventions at this level may include social skills

training and instruction on school rules. Selected interventions "involve support from counselors, special educators, school psychologists, and so on" (Sprague et al., 1999, p. 10). At this level, interventions include extra academic support, mentors, scheduling changes, and rewards. Targeted interventions are intended for the three to five percent of students who did not benefit from universal or selected interventions. Targeted interventions are intense and complex and involve intense social skills training, behavior plans, parent collaboration, and sometimes multi-agency collaboration (Sprague et al., 1999, p. 10).

In the study, the authors collected data from eleven elementary schools and nine middle schools across seven school districts (Sprague et al., 1999, p. 11). The data was used to determine where schools needed to focus school discipline reform efforts (universal interventions, selected interventions, or targeted interventions). Universal interventions are needed if: the total referrals per year are high, the average number of referrals per day is high, or the number of students with at least one referral is high. Selected interventions are needed if the number of students with at least one or fewer referral is low but the number of students with two to ten referrals is high. Targeted interventions are needed if there are students who receive ten or more referrals during the school year and/or the five percent of students with the most referrals account for a high percentage of all referrals (Sprague et al., 1999, p. 11).

One school in the study tracked their discipline referrals for two years and recorded more than 300 ODRs per year. The school chose to implement a school wide social skills teaching program that involved teaching school rules and higher order

thinking skills including anger management and problem solving. They also

implemented a token economy where students could be "caught" following school rules

and rewarded. A team of staff members also met regularly to review ODRs and make

any changes as needed. Their total number of discipline referrals decreased from 300 to

233 and continued to decrease in the following years (Sprague et al., 1999, p. 14).

According to the authors, there is no perfect intervention for improving school

discipline (Sprague et al., 1999, p. 10). Instead, schools should have interventions at

each level to help improve behavior and safety in their schools and avoid the use of

exclusionary discipline. The authors also concluded that prevention-based approaches

were the most successful in management of student behavior and reducing future

behavior issues (Sprague et al., 1999, p. 14). They also concluded that a well-functioning

school-wide behavior system can also improve the effectiveness of interventions in the

classroom and individually (Sprague et al., 1999, p. 17).

Robert Putnam, James Luiselli, Marcie Handler, and Gretchen Jefferson

completed another study involving the collection of data from office discipline referrals

and how to utilize that data to improve discipline policies and avoid the use of

exclusionary discipline. They collected discipline referrals from an elementary school

grades kindergarten through sixth grade in Massachusetts (Putnam, Luiselli, Handler, &

Jefferson, 2003, p. 507). These authors completed two studies. The first study

demonstrated how to use office referral data to evaluate student discipline practices.

Study one found the types of discipline problems in different settings, referral patterns

by teachers, and referral patterns among groups of students. Study two targeted one

classroom that had the highest number of office referrals and helped to develop a classroom wide and individual student plans to decrease discipline problems, office referrals, and ultimately, the use of exclusionary discipline (Putnam et al., 2003, p. 507).

The authors looked at the following things when collecting ODR data: frequency of occurrence by type of discipline problem, distribution of ODRs by grade level, frequency of distribution of ODRs by teacher, and the frequency of distribution of ODRs by student (Putnam et al., 2003, p. 509). The authors concluded that the most common problem behaviors were disruptive, defiant, and harassment behaviors. Inappropriate language and fighting were also noted (Putnam et al., 2003, p. 510). Another finding was that the number of ODRs increased with grade level. Also, the majority of teachers did not make frequent referrals. However, there were specific teachers who made more referrals than others (Putnam et al., 2003, p. 511).

Overall, the data showed the need for behavior support strategies school wide (universal interventions) as discipline referrals were common among many classrooms. The data also showed a need for interventions in specific classrooms where the classroom teacher made more referrals than others. Lastly, the data collected identified a group of students who would benefit from targeted interventions based on the number of their ODRs (Putnam et al., 2003, pp. 512-514). Study one indicated where there was a need for intervention and additional strategies in classrooms and for individual students. Study two looked at a way to design classroom and student-specific interventions to decrease ODRs and avoid the use of exclusionary discipline.

Study two focused on one fifth grade classroom and teacher in the school used in study one. ODRs per month from this specific teacher were explored (Putnam et al., 2003, p. 514). The authors collected baseline data before implementing a three month classroom intervention plan which included increasing visual monitoring during activities, adding a list of classroom rules stated in a positive way which was reviewed weekly, adding a system of positive reinforcement, and teacher training on how to present instructions effectively. Student specific behavior plans were also introduced to students with the most referrals from the classroom (Putnam et al., 2003, pp. 515-516).

During the baseline data collection, the teacher was writing about three referrals each week. After interventions were in place, that number decreased to about one each week. When specific behavior plans were implemented, the number of referrals decreased further to about one referral every 3-4 weeks. Based on data collected, the teacher was responsible for 18% of the school's office referrals. When classroom interventions were in place, she accounted for about 9%, and 2% when specific behavior plans were implemented (Putnam et al., 2003, p. 517).

This study shows that office discipline referrals can be a great source of data to evaluate and use to implement additional interventions in need areas to help decrease the number of referrals and ultimately the need for the use of exclusionary discipline (Putnam et al., 2003, p. 517).

Another study was conducted to find if alternatives to suspension (behavior contracts, restorative approaches, and in-school suspension) protected students from out-of-school suspension (Anyon et al., 2014, p. 381). The authors collected discipline

data from the Denver Public School District during one academic school year in 2011-2012 (Anyon et al., 2014, p. 381).

What the authors found was that students' risk of out-of-school suspension increased with the severity of their behavior. They found that students' risk of receiving a suspension actually increased with the use of behavior contracts. However, students had lower odds of receiving an out-of-school suspension when they participated in restorative approaches to solving their discipline issue or received an in-school suspension. This data held true even when accounting for the student's demographics. This study also concluded that interventions that targeted adults perceptions and preconceived ideas about students' misbehavior were also helpful in decreasing office discipline referrals and ultimately needing the use of exclusionary discipline (Anyon et al., 2014, p. 383). This is just another study that points to the importance of the use of proactive discipline strategies to avoid the use of exclusionary discipline.

Classroom Interactions and Exclusionary Discipline

There are ways that classroom teachers can use their power to either avoid or support the used of exclusionary discipline. Culture can play a role in interactions between students and teachers and the use of disciplinary action and how teachers may single out certain students based on that. In a study conducted by Debra Mayes Pane, Tonette Rocco, Lynne Miller, and Angela Salmon, they explored relationships between classroom interactions and exclusionary discipline across four classrooms in a disciplinary alternative school in Miami-Dade County Public Schools in Florida (Pane, Rocco, Miller, & Salmon, 2014, p. 302).

The authors used surveys, questionnaires, and interviews to explore how four classroom teachers used exclusionary discipline based on the numbers of discipline referrals from their classroom (Pane et al., 2014, p. 304). The authors made sure to choose two teachers who frequently used exclusionary discipline and two teachers who rarely used exclusionary discipline (Pane et al., 2014, p. 305).

The authors looked at four types of power: normative power, coercive power, interactively established contracts, and charm. Normative power was defined as "holding a higher position in the culture or society", coercive power was defined as " forcing obedience after threatening punishment", interactively established contracts were defined as "negotiating based on an implicit level of understanding between participants", and charm was defined as "using one's personality" (Pane at al., 2014, p. 321).

In classrooms where exclusionary discipline was rarely used, the teacher rarely used coercion, consistently used normative power, used interactively established contracts, and charm (Pane et al., 2014, p. 321). The authors noted that cultural power was observed less in classrooms where teachers decided beforehand to prevent suspension by not relying on office discipline referrals and students often shared the same goal of avoiding being suspended (Pane et al., 2014, pp. 320-321).

When teachers had the goal of avoiding the use of exclusionary discipline, they combined types of power that helped them avoid suspension. The authors found that when classroom relationship expectations were not agreed on by students, teachers would write more referrals and use types of power that support the use of exclusionary

discipline. The authors concluded that providing professional development for teachers to help them "rethink" their discipline goals might reduce the need for teachers to rely on exclusionary discipline (Pane et al., 2014, p. 322).

During the study, the authors found that ideology influenced all teachers' classroom relationships with their students. They concluded that the use of exclusionary discipline varied by how power was used in the classroom. Teachers would occasionally single out students based on their perceived loss of control versus the actual behavior exhibited by the student (Pane et al., 2014, p. 322). Teachers had preconceived notions of student's abilities and identities. It was found that teachers who rarely wrote discipline referrals to avoid the use of exclusionary discipline believed students deserved a chance to succeed versus teachers who frequently wrote discipline referrals who believed the students could never change (Pane et al., 2014, pp. 322-323).

In a study conducted by Russell Skiba, Robert Michael, Abra Carroll Nardo, and Reece Peterson, the authors looked at sources of racial and gender disproportionality in school punishments (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002, p. 323). Results indicated that disproportionality was due to the rate of referrals to the office (Skiba et al., 2002, p. 333). Based on this data, it is important that we focus on why students are receiving office discipline referrals and implement interventions to avoid the use of ODRs and ultimately the use of exclusionary discipline.

Because of this, the authors suggested that schools routinely monitor their use of exclusionary discipline and specifically look at the extent of disproportionality (Skiba et al., 2002, p. 338). They also suggested that the disproportionality is due to teacher

bias and that teachers would benefit from training on effective and culturally competent methods of classroom behavior management (Skiba et al., 2002, p. 338).

The results from these studies indicated that there is a need to explore teacher bias in the use of office discipline referrals and the use of exclusionary discipline. Schools can use data from their ODRs to find need areas and implement additional interventions to decrease the use of exclusionary discipline by school, classroom, and targeted interventions for specific students. It was found that teachers who had a goal of avoiding suspension often combined types of power in the classroom to reach that goal. Students also shared that goal with teachers. It was also found that teachers who believed their students could be successful relied less on ODRs and exclusionary discipline. It was also noted that teachers may sometimes act on bias or their perceived loss of control when writing ODRs and therefore would benefit from additional training on effective and culturally competent behavior management strategies to avoid ODRs and the use of exclusionary discipline at disproportionate rates.

In School Suspension

A common alternative used for out-of-school suspension (OSS) is in-school suspension (ISS). ISS is described as "the temporary removal of a student from his or her regular classroom for disciplinary purposes. The student remains under the direct supervision of school personnel," (Rahynes, 2015, p. 8). Many argue that this is a positive intervention for the reduction of negative student behaviors. Most argue that it is a more effective consequence because ISS keeps the students in a learning

environment versus sending them home for a specified amount of time for an out-of-school suspension.

Ward Billings and John Enger conducted a study and examined Missouri principals' perception of the effectiveness of their ISS programs in their schools (Billings & Enger, 1995, p. 1). The authors used surveys to collect their data.

Results showed that 88% of Missouri high schools utilized ISS and perceived it as the most effective intervention for serious discipline incidents involving disruptions in the school environment that were not serious enough for the use of OSS (Billings & Enger, 1995, p. 2).

Rahynes conducted a study in a middle school in South Carolina. The author explored if ISS was an effective method to reduce negative student behaviors (Rahynes, 2015, p. 5). The author looked at ISS data from the school during that school year.

Results indicated that 18% of students received ISS one time. 18.8% students were given ISS a second time for repeated negative behaviors (Rahynes, 2015, p. 20). This shows that ISS is not affecting the student's behaviors. With those numbers being almost exactly the same, it shows that receiving ISS did not deter these students from repeating their negative behaviors. 322 students were assigned ISS for one day. 27 students were assigned ISS for 2 days. Two students were assigned ISS for 3 days and one student was assigned ISS more than 3 consecutive days (Rahynes, 2015, p. 23). The majority of students receive ISS for only one day. However, there are a small number of students who are assigned ISS for more than 3 consecutive days.

ISS does have potential to be a positive intervention against the use of exclusionary discipline. However, the program needs to operate as a program versus a "holding room" for students who exhibit negative behaviors.

Another study was conducted at the Berkeley County School District near Charleston, SC. The author looked at Berkeley County School's ISS programs and their effectiveness (Siskind & Others, 1993, p. 2).

When looking at the ISS programs district-wide, there was always at least one adult monitor in the ISS room. The authors found that only three of the ISS monitors at the high school are certified teachers and only one of the middle school monitors had a college degree (Siskind & Others, 1993, p. 3). All administrators reported providing training for their staff working in ISS rooms, however, they all reported that more training was needed (Siskind & Others, 1993, p. 3). Administrators also reported that they hired ISS monitors based on their ability to discipline first, and their ability to counsel, their certification, experience with children, and energy second (Siskind & Others, 1993, p. 3).

The authors found that all ISS rooms were located separate from other classrooms and most rooms isolate the students. All schools separated ISS students from regular students during lunch (Siskind & Others, 1993, p. 3). In all the middle schools where data was collected, students were placed in the ISS room the day after a behavior incident occurred. Two schools based the student's placement in ISS on the availability of space in the room (Siskind & Others, 1993, p. 4).

The main type of counseling provided to students in ISS was one-on-one and group counseling with the ISS monitor or a guest speaker. However, this was provided on an inconsistent basis (Siskind & Others, 1993, p. 4). Three of the high schools and one of the middle schools provided no resources for the students in the ISS room (Siskind & Others, 1993, p. 4). All schools reported that the minimum assignment to ISS was one day. The maximum days assigned to ISS ranged from 1 to 5 days with 3 to 5 days being the most common (Siskind & Others, 1993, p. 4). Two high schools reported that they limited the total amount of days a student spent is ISS throughout the year. However, none of the middle schools limited the total number of days (Siskind & Others, 1993, p. 4). Throughout all the schools in the district, some schools made monthly reports about students assigned ISS, some made yearly reports, some made quarterly reports, and some schools only provided reports upon request (Siskind & Others, 1993, p. 4).

Overall, the study showed that there is little consistency throughout ISS programs in the district. Results also showed that these programs operate as more punitive forms of discipline that therapeutic. It was also concluded that these programs are rarely evaluated and reported on (Siskind & Others, 1993, p. 8).

The debate over the effectiveness of ISS programs in schools continues. Based on the few studies collected, ISS does have the potential to be an effective intervention for negative student behaviors. However, often times it is used as punitive discipline versus therapeutic discipline. ISS rooms often operate as "holding rooms" for students versus a place where students can work on social and emotional skills as well as conflict resolution skills. Schools need to take a look at their ISS programs and evaluate their

effectiveness. They also need to look at their ISS programs and make sure they are offering students counseling and skills training to help prevent their negative behaviors from reoccurring to make ISS an effective intervention.

School Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS)

Another alternative to exclusionary discipline is for schools to implement school wide positive behavior interventions and supports. In a study done by Karen Elfner Childs, Don Kincaid, Heather Peshak George, and Nicholas Gage, they define SWPBIS as "a systems framework for schools to establish social and behavior supports to increase academic gains and reduce problem behavior across all students using evidence based practices" (Childs, Kincaid, George, & Gage, 2016, p. 89). They describe the main features of SWPBIS to include the following: prevention of problem behavior, teaching appropriate social behavior skills, acknowledging appropriate behavior, using a multi-tiered approach to instruction/intervention that matches behavior support to student needs, data based problem solving, and investing in a system that supports evidence based practices (Childs et al., 2016, pp. 89-90).

The authors conducted a study to determine if SWPBIS decreased the frequency of exclusionary discipline outcomes. They looked at four years of data from 1,122 elementary, middle, and high schools in Florida between 2010-2011 and 2013-2014 (Childs et al., 2016, p. 91).

The authors found that SWPBIS decreased behavior issues, referrals, and the use of exclusionary discipline. SWPBIS reduced the use of office discipline referrals by 6 per year. The use of in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension also decreased

when schools were implementing SWPBIS (Childs et al., 2016, p. 94). The authors found

that higher implementing schools had a more significant decrease in the use of

exclusionary discipline than lower implementing schools. They noted that there was an

immediate decrease in discipline issues when SWPBIS is implemented and that remains

consistent over time (Childs et al., 2016, p. 95). However, if SWPBIS is not implemented

consistently in all classrooms, school-wide, the school will not achieve the decrease in

behavior issues (Childs et al., 2016, p. 97). It is important for all staff members to be

aware of the program expectations and to carry it out consistently in their classrooms

for it to have a positive effect on decreasing behavior issues and therefore, reducing the

need to use exclusionary discipline.

Another study by James Luiselli, Robert Putnam, Marcie Handler, and Adam

Fienberg explored the effects of SWPBIS on discipline problems and academic

performance during three different stages over a three year period: pre-intervention

stage, intervention stage, and follow up stage (Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg,

2005, pp. 187-188). During the pre-intervention stage, the school did not have a clearly

identified discipline program. During the intervention stage, teachers and administrators

developed a whole-school intervention with consultation from outside agencies. They

also received training on SWPBIS, looked at school discipline data, revised their

discipline policy in their handbooks, and created a token economy system (Luiselli et al.,

2005, pp. 187-188). In the follow up stage, the whole-school intervention continued

with less consultation from outside agencies (Luiselli et al., 2005, pp. 187-188).

The authors found that office discipline referrals decreased during the initial three months of the intervention phase but occurred less frequently during the last two months of the schools year. However, the decrease was maintained in the third school year. The decrease in suspension was not as consistent. Suspension did not change during the first five months of intervention. At the start of the second school year, suspensions were low but increased steadily with the highest amount at the end of the school year. In the third school year, suspensions were low for five months then increased to average levels during pre-intervention (Luiselli et al., 2005, p. 189). Academic scores on state standardized tests did improve after implementing SWPBIS. Scores in reading improved by 18% and scores in math improved by 25% from the pre-intervention stage (Luiselli et al., 2005, p. 189).

The authors concluded that discipline issues decreased and academic scores increased after the implementation of SWPBIS. SWPBIS reduced office discipline referrals and suspensions. The authors concluded that SWPBIS is an effective intervention to improve students' academic performance. Teachers also felt that SWPBIS was an effective intervention to help improve learning in their classrooms (Luiselli et al., 2005, p. 192). Overall, reducing behavior issues should increase students' time for learning in their classrooms and, in turn, increase academic performance.

The authors estimated that students lost about twenty minutes of instructional time per office visit. ODRs decreased after implementing SWPBIS, which they calculated to be a gain of 29.5 days per school year for a student over a two-year period. They calculated that one day of suspension was a loss of six hours of instructional time. With

the implementation of SWPBIS, a student could possibly gain 50 school days of attendance at school over a two-year period (Luiselli et al., 2005, p. 193).

Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, and Feinberg found SWPBIS to be a great alternative to exclusionary discipline. They found that it reduces behavior issues, which increases the time students spend learning in their classroom. When negative behavior is decreased, instructional time is increased and academic performance is improved.

Safe and Civil Schools' (SCS) Foundations: Establishing Positive Discipline Policies is a program that was designed to help schools implement SWPBIS and improve the chances that the program is implemented with fidelity to increase the effects of SWPBIS implementation over time (Smolkowski, Strycker, & Ward, 2016, p. 340). Keith Smolkowski, Lisa Strycker, and Bryce Ward studied the effectiveness of the SCS Foundations program. They looked at how SCS Foundations is implemented and how is can lead to improvements in school discipline. They also looked at the effects of the intervention and how long those effects lasted past the initial implementation stage (Smolkowski et al., 2016, p. 341).

The study was completed in a large urban school district. The authors collected data from 74 regular public schools at the elementary, middle, and high schools levels (Smolkowski et al., 2016, p. 341). All schools involved in the study received two years of training and created leadership teams (Smolkowski et al., 2016, p. 345).

Results indicated that after SCS Foundations implementation, student disrespect, defiance, and bullying was significantly reduced by about 50% in all levels of schools (Smolkowski et al., 2016, p. 351). Suspensions were also reduced after implementation.

In one cohort involved in the study, suspensions decreased from 1.28 suspensions per

1,000 days to 0.97 per 1,000 school days after SCS Foundations implementation

(Smolkowski et al., 2016, p. 352). The authors reported that in all schools involved in the

study, the suspension rates were steadily increasing. However, after the

implementation of SCS Foundations program, suspension rates went from increasing by

4% each year to decreasing 17% each year (Smolkowski et al., 2016, p. 353).

Results supported that the SCS Foundations program was an effective

intervention to reduce behavior issues and therefore, reduce the need for exclusionary

discipline (Smolkowski et al., 2016, p. 354). Again, the results of this study, much like

other studies involving SWPBIS implementation, showed that a SWPBIS is an effective

intervention as an alternative to exclusionary discipline.

But how do teachers and staff perceive the impact of SWPBIS in their schools? In

a study conducted by Gary Houchens, Jie Zhang, Kelly Davis, Chunling Niu, Kyong Hee

Chon, and Stephen Miller, they evaluated to see if there was a difference in perceptions

between SWPBIS implementing schools and non-implementing schools. They also

looked at teachers' perceptions in low, medium, and high implementing schools as well

as if SWPBIS has an effect on academic outcomes. They looked at 150 Kentucky schools

and collected behavior data as well as conducted surveys (Houchens et al., 2017, p.

170).

When looking at the data, the authors found that teachers in SWPBIS schools

reported higher levels of student and staff understanding of expectations, policies, and

procedures as well as missions and visions for their schools. Teachers in SWPBIS

implementing schools also reported higher concern about the use of time in school
(Houchens et al., 2017, p. 173). The authors also found that there was a very clear
difference of perceptions between high, medium, and low implementing schools when
it came to understanding behavior expectations and student conduct and safety.
Teachers in high implementing schools reported positive perceptions of parent and
teacher communication and community support. They also reported a more positive
perception of leadership opportunities and roles that teachers had. Lastly, higher
implementing schools had significantly higher achievement scores that low
implementing schools (Houchens et al., 2017, p. 174).

The results of this study support the use of SWPBIS in schools. SWPBIS seems to
have a very positive effect on student behavior and academic achievement, especially
when implemented at a high level, and can lead to pretty substantial changes in school-
wide discipline practices, including the use of exclusionary discipline. The results also
support the fact that teachers at implementing schools have more positive perceptions
of teaching conditions and shared expectations between teachers and students versus
non-implementing schools (Houchens et al., 2017, p. 175). Teachers in SWPBIS schools
also reported that they felt more satisfied with student conduct, staff unity, community
investment, and teacher empowerment than non-implementing schools (Houchens et
al., 2017, p. 177). This study concluded, "as schools improve their implementation of
SWPBIS, teacher perceptions of many aspects of student behavior management steadily
improve" (Houchens et al., 2017, p. 177).

In a study conducted by Laura Feuerborn and Ashli Tyre, they also explored staff perspectives to SWPBIS at different stages of implementation (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2016, p. 53). The authors gathered data from schools in both the planning and implementing stages of SWPBIS. They collected discipline data as well as surveys from staff. They worked with fourteen public schools in four school districts in Western Washington. There were seven schools in the planning phase and seven schools in the implementing stage (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2016, p. 54).

Results from the study indicated that primary implementing schools had a much more positive perspective on SWPBIS than secondary implementing schools. Results also revealed that primary implementing schools reported significantly more positive perspectives on behavior and discipline than secondary implementing schools (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2016, p. 56). Staff members in planning schools reported more barriers to change and more negative views of discipline compared to staff in implementing schools (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2016, p. 57).

Overall, primary schools in both the planning and implementing phases had much more positive perspectives than secondary schools in either stage. The authors found a large difference in knowledge and support of staff in planning and implementing stages. However, most staff at schools in both stages reported that they agreed with SWPBIS but more staff in implementing schools planned to be more involved in the implementation (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2016, p. 57).

With any change to policy and procedure in schools, staff members will have mixed perceptions. The results of this study show that there were many perceptual

differences between planning schools and implementing schools. Based on that conclusion, schools in the planning stage may need more support to move into the implementing stage. During that stage, staff's perceptions were consistently positive and in support of SWPBIS which research has shown to be a great alternative to exclusionary discipline in schools.

Restorative Practices

In a study conducted by Anne Gregory, Kathleen Clawson, Alycia Davis, and Jennifer Gerewitz, they explored the effect of restorative practices (RP) on student-teacher relationships as well as how restorative practices help level the playing field in school discipline. According to their article, restorative practices uses prevention and intervention to change how students and staff members interact which in turn will create a more positive school environment (Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2016, p. 326). They state "RP attempts to strengthen social connection and responsibility for one another by increasing opportunities for affective communication" (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 328).

The authors note that there is a 2-year whole school program as well as a 3-year program that has already been implemented in schools around the United States. According to their data, when RP was implemented in schools, there was a decrease in the use of punitive discipline (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 326). In a school made up of primarily African American students, violent acts and serious incidents were reduced by 52% compared to the previous school year. In a rural high school, suspensions were reduced by 50%. In an urban school, disrespect to teachers and classroom disruption

was reduced by 70% after implementing RP for one school year (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 326).

Schools have also implemented restorative justice (RJ) practices. The authors describe RJ practices as "those affected by an infraction or crime come together to identify how people were affected by the incident" (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 327). Together, they come up with a way to repair the harm that was done after the infraction occurred (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 327).

Teachers and students both take part in proactive circles throughout the RP process. In these circles, they learn about each other, which increases the idea of shared ownership of the classroom and increased accountability. Together, they create classroom rules as well as discuss incidents that occur to come up with solutions and restore community in their classrooms (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 329).

In the study, the authors explored if RP was associated with higher student-teacher respect as well as if RP was associated with lower discipline referral rates for Latino, African American, Asian, and White students (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 331). They collected data from two diverse high schools on the East Coast during their first year implementing RP. They conducted training for staff as well as observed at the school and collected surveys. (Gregory et al., 2016, pp. 332-333).

Their results surrounding student-teacher relationships indicated that Latino, African American, Asian, and White students all experienced the effects of RP in similar ways (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 336). Results also indicated that the higher the student rated the implementation of RP was associated with more teacher respect as well as

less discipline referrals for Latino, African American, Asian, and White students (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 339). It was also noted that the more a teacher reported a student to be cooperative, the more the student perceived that teacher as respectful (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 340). Results of the study in this area indicated that implementation of RP can create more respectful relationships between teachers and students and therefore, decrease the number of discipline referrals written and decrease the need for the use of exclusionary discipline.

The results on the use of discipline referrals when RP was in place indicated that higher implementation of RP was associated with less referrals for misconduct and defiance (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 341). Results also indicated that RP implementation decreased the racial discipline gap but did not completely decrease the gap in referral patterns (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 342). The authors noted that higher implementation of RP increased teacher respect. In turn, teachers who were perceived as implementing more elements of RP were found to have less differences in the number of referrals for Asian and White students compared with Latino and African American students suggesting that RP may be a good strategy to use to decrease the racial discipline gap in schools (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 342). Lastly, the authors noted that RP implementation is fairly easy and can be integrated into every day classroom instruction which means less instructional time will be lost which in turn may increase teachers' interest to implement the program (Gregory et al., 2016, p. 343).

In another study conducted by Yolanda Anyon and colleagues, the authors looked at the effects of RP implementation. They refer to restorative practices and

restorative interventions (RI). They describe RI where "harmful acts need to be acknowledged and that it is worthwhile to harness the power of the collective for resolution and repair" (Anyon et al., 2016, p. 1666). They note that RI has two core features: that those affected by an incident need to find how people were impacted by it and problem solve together to find actions that will repair what was done (Anyon et al., 2016, p. 1666).

The authors conducted a study to research if a student's participation in RI decreased the odds of them receiving an office discipline referral and/or out-of-school suspension (Anyon et al., 2016, p. 1670). The researchers collected data from the Denver Public Schools. They collected discipline records and offered staff training on implementation of RI (Anyon et al., 2016, p. 1679).

Their results indicated that students who received RI after an incident in the first semester had a lower chance of receiving another office discipline referral in the second semester (Anyon et al., 2016, p. 1679). These results were similar across different student racial backgrounds for office discipline referrals (ODR) and out-of-school suspension (OSS) during the second semester (Anyon et al., 2016, p. 1679). Results also showed that students who received RI had lower odds of receiving an ODR in schools that implemented RI school-wide. This shows that schools that implement RI school-wide reduce students' chances of receiving an ODR (Anyon et al., 2016, p. 1681). Students who did not receive RI during the first semester had a 72% higher chance of receiving one or more ODRs in the second semester compared to a student who did receive RI, which had a 28% chance of receiving an ODR in the second semester (Anyon

et al., 2016, p. 1681). A student who received RI and also attended a school who implemented RI school-wide had an even lower chance of receiving an ODR in the second semester at 18% (Anyon et al., 2016, p. 1683).

Overall, this study indicated that restorative interventions could be a positive alternative to exclusionary discipline. RI and RP use a proactive approach that may decrease the need for the use of exclusionary discipline altogether. The more exposure a student had to RI and RP, the more their chances of additional ODRs and OSS decreased over time. School-wide implementation of RI and RP showed to be the most effective way to implement the interventions and decrease discipline issues which in turn decreased the need for the use of exclusionary discipline.

Mentoring and Counseling Programs

Mentoring and counseling programs also stood out as possible alternatives to exclusionary discipline. Mentoring and counseling programs can be used as a proactive or reactive intervention to avoid suspension for children with behavior issues.

In a study conducted by Alice Frost, she explored the effectiveness of implementing three programs in a middle school to reduce the use of out of school suspension. The three programs she examined were a bully prevention program, peer mediation program, and conflict resolution program. Frost defined bully prevention programs as "any program that addresses the three domains of physical, emotional, and social bullying behaviors," (Frost, 2012, p. 19). Peer mediation programs are "training programs that selects students from a cross section of the population and provides minimum 10-15 hours of training," (Frost, 2012, p. 22). Conflict resolution programs are

defined as a "school wide program that teaches students to problem solve disputes or disagreements between two or more people," (Frost, 2012, p. 25).

She implemented these programs in 231 middle schools in Kansas. She did not use a specific curriculum but instead focused on the type of programming, the number of lessons being taught, administration, counselor to student ratio, and interaction effects (Frost, 2012, p. 31). Results revealed that schools with counselors with a ratio of 1:500 reported significantly less out of school suspensions that schools with a higher student to counselor ratio (Frost, 2012, p. 43).

In a study conducted by Robert Rosado, he explored the idea of using mentoring and counseling programs to reduce suspensions for children exhibiting behaviors in school. He explored this strategy at an elementary school where the administration was voicing concern about the growing number of suspensions in their building (Rosado, 1991, p. 26). In the intervention, students who have exhibited behavior problems in school learned strategies to use to keep them from exhibiting the behavior or being physically aggressive. The students also learned conflict resolution strategies (Rosado, 1991, p. 26). During the intervention, students used role-playing, implemented conflict resolution strategies, and also implemented a positive behavior reward system. The intervention took place over a 12-week period (Rosado, 1991, p. 27).

The results indicated that after the intervention was in place, students improved their ability to identify which of their behaviors caused them problems as well as the situation that led to their behaviors. Students were also able to discuss how they could handle a situation in a more positive way. After students learned new conflict resolution

strategies, the author found that suspensions decreased 60% as compared to the previous school year (Rosado, 1991, pp. 44-45). It was also noted that after the intervention started, teachers were more likely to refer students to the counselor's office versus the administrator's office after a behavior incident (Rosado, 1991, p. 47). When reward systems were added, it only increased the students' positive behavior (Rosado, 1991, p. 50).

Pamela Cambell-Peralta conducted another study examining mentoring and counseling programs. She examined the effects of these programs in a junior high school in an urban area in the southeastern part of the United States (Campbell-Peralta, 1995, p. 1). She expected that there would be a reduction of referrals and out-of-school suspensions when the programs were implemented (Campbell-Peralta, 1995, p. 4). The school implemented an intensive program that hoped to improve problem solving skills, conflict resolution strategies, effective communication skills, improved motivation, and tools for students (Campbell-Peralta, 1995, p. 13).

78% of students indicated on a survey that they achieved their goals, learned conflict resolution strategies, used conflict resolution strategies, enjoyed having a mentor, and helped them control their anger (Campbell-Peralta, 1995, p. 48). The students also noted that after participating in the intervention, they improved their communication skills with peers and adults, felt successful, improved their attitudes, and were proud of the things they were able to accomplish (Campbell-Peralta, 1995, p. 48). 90% of mentors reported that they felt the program was successful (Campbell-

Peralta, 1995, p. 49). 80% of parents reported that they felt the program was successful

for their student (Campbell-Peralta, 1995, p. 50).

Another study was conducted to explore the effects of the Eclipse Program.

David Smith, David Pare, and Francine Gravelle conducted this study. The Eclipse

Program is "an aggression-prevention program for at-risk youth" (Smith, Pare, &

Gravelle, 2002, p. 6). This program utilizes group counseling, improves communication

skills, introduced emotional self-monitoring and responsible decision-making, and

incorporates judo training (Smith et al., 2002, p. 6). The goals of the program are to

reduce aggressive behaviors, maintain appropriate behaviors, and give students a sense

of self-control and increase self-esteem. The program also involves school staff, parents,

and youth serving agencies (Smith et al., 2002, p. 6).

Results indicated that students with high levels of aggression showed a

significant reduction in their aggression after participating in the program (Smith et al.,

2002, p. 9). Overall, these studies show that mentoring and counseling programs can be

an effective alternative to the use of exclusionary discipline.

Conflict Resolution Training and Social Emotional Learning Programs

Some of the previously mention studies talked about their use of conflict

resolution training to increase student's skills in handling conflicts and ultimately reduce

the need for exclusionary discipline.

A group of authors from Northwestern University conducted a study to explore

the effects of a conflict resolution program that was offered as an alternative to out-of-

school suspension (Breunlin, Cimmarusti, Bryant-Edwards, & Hetherington, 2002, p. 349). They collected data at a high school in Chicago.

They describe their conflict resolution training as a program "designed to provide violent adolescents and their parents with skills to reduce the risk of further violence," (Breunlin et al., 2002, p. 351). They state that the goal of conflict resolution strategies is to find a solution to the problem where everyone involved gets what they want and avoids violence in the process (Breunlin et al., 2002, p. 351).

Results indicate that students who did not participate in the conflict resolution training were suspended and re-suspended twice as many times as students who did participate in the training (Breunlin et al., 2002, p. 355). These results indicated that conflict resolution training could be a positive alternative to the use of exclusionary discipline.

Authors from Loyola University in Chicago, IL explored a social emotional learning program called Building Bridges. The program is described as an intervention program and involved restorative justice as well as social emotional skills. The purpose of this program is to help students gain better social emotional skills, which will in turn reduce discipline referrals as well as suspensions. The authors implemented this program in a therapeutic school specifically for students with disabilities (Hernandez-Melis, Fenning, & Lawrence, 2016, p. 254).

Students participated in the Building Bridges after their first referral. Results indicated that students who participated in the intervention after their first referral took significantly longer to receive a second referral than students who did not participate in

the intervention (Hernandez-Melis et al., 2016, p. 256). Results also indicated that 100%
of students who did not participate in the intervention received a third referral
compared to 67% of students who did participate in the intervention (Hernandez-Melis
et al., 2016, p. 256). Overall, this intervention reduced the number of additional
referrals a student received after their first referral. This program proves to be another
positive alternative to the use of exclusionary discipline.

In another study, a social emotional learning program was implemented in a
middle school. A Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Program was defined as "a process for
helping children develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness. SEL teaches the
skills we all need to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work effectively and
ethically," (McBride, Chung, & Robertson, 2016, p. 370). SEL also includes recognizing
and managing emotions, developing concern for others, establishing positive
relationships, making responsible decisions, and positively handling difficult situations
(McBride et al., 2016, p. 370).

Results indicated that students who participated in the SEL program were less
likely to partake in behaviors that were related to poor academic outcome (McBride et
al., 2016, p. 373). These students reduced their negative behaviors, which increased
their academic success. This intervention proved to be a positive alternative to the use
of exclusionary discipline.

After reviewing literature on alternatives to suspension, SWPBIS, restorative
practices, mentoring and counseling, conflict resolution training, and SEL programs
seem to be effective interventions to improve student behavior and reduce the need for

exclusionary discipline. ISS can also be an effective intervention in designed as a more therapeutic discipline versus a punitive form of discipline. The main trend in all the research collected was proactive interventions were the most successful in reducing negative student behavior and the need for exclusionary discipline.

Schools should be evaluating their discipline data and policies on a regular basis to identify patterns and make changes as needed. ODRs are great sources of data that can help identify need areas, classrooms, and individual students for additional intervention. Caregivers, teachers, and students all agreed that exclusionary discipline is not effective in intervening and improving negative student behavior. Alternatives to suspension are greatly needed in our schools to help students remain in the classroom and learning.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Literature

Through all the articles reviewed for this thesis, it is evident that there is a need

for alternatives to exclusionary discipline and closing the discipline gap. Research shows

that there are positive alternatives to exclusionary discipline. The use of School Wide

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) had a positive effect on students'

behaviors and decreased the use of exclusionary discipline in the schools studied.

Authors found that the higher the implementation rate of SWPBIS, the more positive

effect is had on students' behavior. It helped to decrease student's negative behaviors

and, in turn, increased the amount of time they remained in the classroom learning.

With the increased amount of time spent in the classroom learning, academic scores

increased.

Staff members also expressed their positive feelings about implementing

SWPBIS. Staff members reported that they felt discipline issues were being addressed

consistently. They also noted that when SWPBIS was implemented, there was an

immediate effect on the use of ED. The use of ED decreased immediately after

implementation, which is a positive for schools wanting to implement this intervention.

They will be able to see the results immediately. Staff members also had more positive

perceptions of teaching conditions and shared expectations.

Another positive alternative to exclusionary discipline was Restorative Practices.

Restorative Practices help teach students to fix the situation with whoever or whatever

they harmed. Studies showed that when RP was implemented, there was a decreased

use of exclusionary discipline. It was also found that RP effected students of different racial backgrounds in the same way, which would point to a positive way to begin closing the discipline gap. Authors found that RP also increase teacher-student respect in the classroom. Studies showed that students who participated in RP had lower chances of receiving additional office discipline referrals versus students who did not participate in RP. RP showed to be another positive alternative to the use of exclusionary discipline.

In-school suspension (ISS) also had potential to be a positive alternative to exclusionary discipline. However, studies shows that ISS programs were not consistent between schools throughout school districts. Results indicated that if ISS programs were operating as a more therapeutic intervention versus a punitive intervention, there is potential for ISS to be a positive alternative to ED. ISS does keep the student in school and learning which avoids a loss of educational time. ISS rooms should operate as a place for students to work on social/emotional skills as well as conflict resolution skills versus a "holding room" for students exhibiting negative behaviors.

Mentoring and counseling programs also proved to be a positive alternative to exclusionary discipline. Results showed that when these types of programs are implemented, students increased their ability to identify their problem behaviors as well as which situations caused their problem behaviors. Also, results indicated that when these programs were in place in schools, teachers would often refer the student to the counselor versus writing and office discipline referral. These programs operate as a

proactive intervention and when in place, teachers would choose to use the proactive, therapeutic option versus a more punitive option.

Similar to mentoring and counseling programs, conflict resolution training and social emotional learning (SEL) programs are also a positive alternative to exclusionary discipline. These programs are designed to teach students about conflict resolution skills that they can implement in their day-to-day lives to reduce their negative behavior. Results indicated that students who did not participate in conflict resolution training or SEL were suspended two times more than students who did participate. Students also reported that they felt they were better prepared to handle their negative behaviors after participating in these programs.

Articles reviewed also discussed the need for additional professional development for school staff members. Often times, authors noted that office discipline referrals were written for students due to their teacher's perceived loss of control versus the student's actual behavior. Staff members would benefit for additional training in behavior management, how to promote pro-social behavior, and cultural competence. This additional training is a proactive way to reduce ODRs and ultimately, the need for the use of exclusionary discipline.

The articles reviewed also discussed how schools should create teams to analyze discipline and behavior trends. These teams can examine patterns and find need areas. When examining discipline data, teams can explore grade levels with the most ODRs, classrooms with the most ODRs, and even groups of students with the most ODRs. From

there, teams can implement specific interventions to target those need areas and

decrease the ODRs and ultimately the use of exclusionary discipline.

Overall, SWPBIS, Restorative Practices, in-school suspension,

mentoring/counseling programs, and conflict resolution/social emotional learning

programs are all positive alternatives to exclusionary discipline. Those interventions

combined with additional professional development and teams to analyze discipline

data can all operate as positive alternatives to exclusionary discipline for special

education students and non-special education students in grades kindergarten through

8th grade. These interventions could also expand and be used at the high school level.

Professional Application

The topic of exclusionary discipline has been a popular topic around the country

for years. Schools around the United States often grapple with the appropriate time to

use exclusionary discipline for negative student behavior. Personally, it has been

something the school I work at has been working on for quite some time. Exclusionary

discipline is something our school deals with on a regular basis. We have also received

mixed messages about the use of exclusionary discipline from leadership throughout the

years.

In recent years, we have tried implementing more alternatives to suspension

before using exclusionary discipline. We have also implemented a "3 strikes" rule before

discussing the use of exclusionary discipline. This has greatly decreased our use of out-

of-school suspension. Also, in our building, we do not have the personnel or the space

to operate an in-school suspension area so it is never utilized as an option. That has

increased our use of exclusionary discipline even more and challenged us to utilize alternatives to suspension in hopes of keeping students in their classrooms learning.

Our school recently implemented a SWPBIS program. We are in our second year of implementation. SWPBIS has decreased our use of exclusionary discipline. During the 2016-2017 school year, there were 82 total suspensions. 7 were for assault, 14 were for disruptive/disorderly behavior, 55 were for fighting, 3 were for threats/intimidation, 2 were for verbal abuse, and 1 for other. Of the 82 total suspensions, 50.5 were special education students. Of those special education students who were suspended, 28.5 of the suspensions were for students with an emotional behavior disorder. At this point in this school year, we have suspended a total of 10 students. Of those students, 5 were special education students. Of the 5 special education students, 1 student was receiving services for an emotional behavior disorder. Our data shows that implementing SWPBIS decreased our use of exclusionary discipline.

Schools around the country can use this information on positive alternatives to exclusionary discipline in their schools. With restrictions on how often students in special education can be suspended and the research showing that exclusionary discipline does not improve negative behaviors, schools across Minnesota, as well and the United States should research positive alternatives to ED to implement in their buildings and decrease their use of ED. Schools can create teams to analyze discipline data and create specific interventions in their need areas to start working on proactive interventions as well as positive alternatives to exclusionary discipline.

Limitations of Research

I focused my research on students in grades kindergarten through 8th grade. However, often times, studies were conducted in whole school districts and would include high school aged students in their results. I limited my research to grades kindergarten through 8th grade because those are the students I have the most experience working with and are the grade levels we serve in our building. A lot of the research focused on interventions for elementary and middle school aged students. More research needs to be conducted on positive alternatives to exclusionary discipline at the high school level.

I would have also liked to find more studies that focused specifically on positive alternatives to ED for students in special education. There was limited research that focused specifically on special educations students. Some studies mentioned the consistency of teachers writing office discipline referrals. I would be curious to see the results of studies that explored that topic and many articles suggested the use of that data to plan interventions. Lastly, I would like to see research on the training and resources needed from districts to implement these positive interventions that were discussed.

Implications for Future Research

Future research should continue to explore positive alternatives to exclusionary discipline. In future years, departments of education may exclude schools' use of exclusionary discipline altogether and schools will need to utilize alternatives to suspension. I would also like to see more research on specific positive interventions that

are successful with African American students. I feel this area of research is important

due to the overrepresentation of that population in exclusionary discipline.

I would also like to see research on what types of ED and the frequency of ED for

different student populations as well as intervention ideas for students who consistently

experience ED. Lastly, I would like more research that looks at in-school suspension

programs and how to make them a more effective and positive alternative to

exclusionary discipline.

Conclusion

In conclusion, exclusionary discipline rates seem to continue to rise across the

United States. With the current research stating the negative effects that ED has on

students, more schools need to explore and implement positive alternatives to

exclusionary discipline. Positive alternatives to exclusionary discipline decrease negative

student behavior, increase learning time in the classroom, increase academic scores,

and create a more respectful and safe environment for students and staff. They can also

provide students with tools to improve their social and emotional skills.

More and more schools are choosing to implement positive alternatives to

suspension and have experienced great results. More schools need to analyze their

discipline data and create interventions that support students and increase learning

time in the classroom.

Schools should be a safe and educational environment for students that create

learning opportunities that will help students be successful in the future and not create

negative experiences that can lead to drop out and involvement in the justice system.

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