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ENTERING THE JUVENILE DETENTION SYSTEM

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Abstract

Students who are serviced under the umbrella of special education are disciplined more frequently and with more exclusionary methods compared to their general education peers. A higher numbers of minority students than represented in the general population are in special education, specifically, the Emotional and Behavior Disorder category. The differences in discipline and the disproportionate number of minority students in special education lead to a negative impact on learning and achievement, an increase in anti-social behavior, and ultimately a higher likelihood of entering the juvenile justice system. Systems such as an ecological approach to classroom management, tiered behavior support interventions, and social emotional learning can all be put in place to help combat these discrepancies in discipline, as well as help students successfully integrate back into school after exclusionary discipline and/or time spent in the juvenile justice system.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Overrepresentation of Minority Students in Special Education

There are 13 special education categories protected under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Autism, Deaf-Blindness, Deafness, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impaired, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairments, Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Visually Impaired. Overrepresentation of minority students occurs in the Learning Disabilities and Emotional and Behavioral Disorders categories. Students who fall in these two categories do not start their educational journey with an already diagnosed disability, rather they are referred to special education services based on their success or lack thereof and/or behavior within a general education classroom (O' Conner & Fernandez, 2006). Recent reports find that black students constituted 14.8% of the student population in America, however they represented 20.2% of the special education population and remained three-times more likely to be labeled as Emotionally or Behavioral Disabled (Conner & Ferri, 2005). Vallas (2009) states that it is not always the goal of statistics or of the researcher to condemn the educational system, instead she suggested that there are higher rates of identified disabilities in minority groups because of the higher rates of African-Americans living in poverty. There can be misunderstanding between educators and their students of color; this creates unpreparedness in educators to work effectively with students of color in schools. Often teachers do not have enough understanding of the cultural aspects of a student's behavior within school and what he or she brings into the classroom because of the differences between white culture and the different minority cultures. Cultural differences in behavior can challenge a student's ability to fit into the 'white way' within school and may in turn lead the educator to refer the child to

special education services. The lack of understanding related to cultural differences that lead to a special education referral can continue to contribute to the overrepresentation in special services and continue the lack of understanding for our students of color and students living in poverty (Vallas, 2009).

Discipline History and Zero Tolerance

Schools have faced many challenges over time in the area of discipline and behavior management. School violence itself is not a new phenomenon, records of violent behavior in schools have been traced back to early colonialism and juvenile violence was observed as early as the Medieval age (Adams, 2000). In the 1800s many schools used techniques similar to corporal punishment, and remnants of these practices have been used in classrooms for behavior management into the 1960s and 1970s. Corporal punishment began to lose its effectiveness with larger structured schools and the increase in school enrollment that occurred across America during the l970s and early 1980s. (Adams, 2000). In the late 1980s and 1990s fear was generated from media reports of young people, most commonly minorities, committing horrific crimes related to gang violence. The reports stigmatized students of color and further developed the negative perception of minority students in schools. There is also significant evidence that minority students are subject to exclusionary discipline, such as out-of-school suspension and expulsion, at much higher rates than white students (Nicholson-Crotty, Bicchmeier, & Valentine, 2009). The negative perceptions, as well as evidence regarding minority students and discipline, were particularly impactful on those students who were more of a challenge to manage, or those students of color labeled EBD.

Gun Free School Act

Juvenile crime and violence peaked in 1994 and in response Congress passed the Gun Free School Act (GFSA), which was aimed at curbing violence among juveniles that occurred in or near schools (Mallett, 2015). GFSA was a critical piece of legislation that forced school districts to adopt a zero tolerance policy to weapons. (Mallett, 2015). The intent of the zero tolerance policy was seemingly a good idea. The intent was to remove weapons from school and provide a safe haven for students who live in communities with high levels of violence and weapons and also to create an environment within school that was free of assaults, threats, and death (Mongon & Walker 2012). The law focused primarily on truly dangerous and criminal behavior by students, primarily gun possession on school property (McNeal & Dunbar, 2010). The punishment for gun possession on school property within the GFSA law requires a minimum of a one-year expulsion for students who bring firearms to school. With the passing of GFSA and the attempt to increase control within schools, the next step was to introduce zero tolerance policies within districts. Zero tolerance policies gave districts more power in their attempts to reduce violence.

Zero Tolerance

Zero tolerance was originally developed as a way to approach drug enforcement, however, now it is generally defined as a school district policy that mandates predetermined consequences or punishments for specific offences, regardless of circumstances, disciplinary history, or age of the students involved (Stader, 2004). The overall goal of the zero tolerance policy was to provide predetermined consequences for specific violations, especially for those students that potentially put themselves or others at risk (McNeal & Dunbar, 2010). In some states, these specific violations have been extended to include blades of more than three inches,

pocketknives, drugs, and can include acts of insubordination and disruption. Since the Zero Tolerance Policy was introduced, some of the best outcomes of the policy included an improvement in the sense of safety students have felt in and around school, as well as a decrease in the self-reported number of students who carried weapons on school grounds (Stader, 2004). However, concerns over the application of zero tolerance policies and how they are implemented to increase school safety has been questioned and continues to be challenged by many parents, teachers, school administrators, social workers, and lawyers. The ambiguity around what are expellable offenses and the confusion around specifically who this policy is protecting are the main questions being asked (McNeal & Dunbar, 2010). With the intent to remove students who were most disruptive and those who commit the most egregious acts against school safety, the number of expulsions and suspensions began to rise dramatically.

In one study conducted by McNeal and Dunbar (2010), students in an urban school were asked their thoughts regarding the zero tolerance policy and school discipline. The purpose of the study was to gather a better understanding of how students living in poverty, in this case, African American, students, felt toward zero tolerance. The participants were 90 students in grades 11 and 12 from 15 different urban high schools in the Midwest. Their ages ranged from 16 to 19 with 15% identifying as males and 85% identifying as female. The ethnic distribution was 99% African American and 1% Hispanic. All of the students were enrolled in college preparatory programs in high school; most planned to enroll in college in the near future. The students were asked a series of open-ended questions regarding their perception of zero tolerance. The responses and results highlighted the need for an improved system.

The primary concerns discovered by McNeal and Dunbar (2010) included the schools' lack of resources to maintain a proper discipline policy, and a lack of consistency between

students and standards within the school. Insufficient resources in many of the schools resulted in inadequate security (e.g., lack of metal detectors, security guards, and surveillance cameras). In addition, schools lacked the proper funds to employ quality security professionals; many guards were reported as being lazy, corrupt, or just bad at their jobs. Consistency was lacking among students because it was reported that favoritism was displayed on many occasions between staff and students. The favoritism, as observed by the students, would lend itself to certain students getting multiple second chances because they had good relationships with the teachers or staff, or because their parents had money or were well known within the community, or if the student was a star athlete on the school's athletic teams. The authors concluded that although zero tolerance was designed to promote safety in schools, many students felt a lack of safety in their schools that the schools were lacking resources, and certain students were given different consequence under the same policy. Thus the Zero Tolerance Policy had not produced the intended impact and needed to be reevaluated by districts.

Results from McNeal and Dunbar (2010) further cemented the notion that minority students, especially those living in poverty or labeled as EBD, are more challenging to manage in schools, and they are being more negatively impacted by zero tolerance policies, and these students, in particular, feel less safe at school. One could point to the academic success of the students interviewed by McNeal and Dunbar (2010) and argue that they do not represent the vast majority of students of color living in poverty. However, if academically successful and high achieving students feel less safe in schools, then one could make an educated guess that those who are in special education or struggle in school have similar, if not more extreme, feelings toward zero tolerance policies.

Disproportionately of Discipline in Schools

Characteristics of students, families, teachers, administrators, classroom environments, school climates, neighborhoods, district policies, and historical context all affect the way in which young people are disciplined (Anyon, et. al., 2014). Along with these characteristics, school discipline policies disproportionately impact students with disabilities and lead to consequences such as high dropout and incarceration rates (Parks & Barajas, 2008). However, through IDEA there are safeguards to ensure that students with disabilities are not unfairly disciplined. Parks and Barajas (2008) completed a review of the U.S Attorney General and U.S Department of Education Records for the 2004-2005 school year; they found that during that time more than 68,000 children with disabilities were expelled or suspended for more than ten days. Principals reported 15 incidents of serious misconduct for every 1,000 regular education students, compared to 50 incidents of serious misconduct for every 1,000 special education students. Fewer than half of the suspended special education students received services during their suspension, and overall, the most common reason for suspension was the disruption of student learning (Parks & Barajas, 2008). There were also higher rates of suspension and expulsion for students serviced in special education under the Emotional and Behavioral Disorder category. Upwards of 44% of students serviced under EBD criteria were suspended annually and that rate increased to 50% when those students became secondary students (Sullivan, Van Norman, & Klingbeil, 2014). There are safeguards and certain rights for students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Under IDEA a student may be disciplined for fewer than 10 days in the same manner as their non-disabled peers. Once a student with an IEP has met the 10-day non-consecutive school removal, or if a school wants to remove a student for more than 10 days, a manifestation determination meeting must occur to determine if the

behavior was a result of the student's disability, and if so, to outline proper education plans regarding the student's placement (Parks & Barajas, 2008). IDEA does not, however, protect students against the following infractions, bringing a weapon to school, knowingly processing and/or selling drugs on school property, or inflicting serious injury to another person. Even if these infractions are determined to have manifested from the student's disability, the school may still remove that student for up to 45 days with adequate educational planning (Parks & Barajas, 2008).

In addition to a greater number of disciplinary actions for special education students than regular education students, racial differences also exit when it comes to suspension and expulsion. According to the U.S. Department of Education (Kaufman, 1999), few racial or ethnic differences exist in the percentage of students who carry weapons anywhere on school property, yet students of color are more likely to be suspended than white students. In a study conducted by Sullivan, Van Norman, and Klingbeil (2014), the relationship between students' demographic differences and their risk of suspension was researched. Sullivan et al. used a large archival database derived from diverse school districts in the Midwest. The first variable was students who have been given out-of-school suspension; another variable was special education students in the disability category (EBD, SLD, OHD, DCD, and speech language), and a third variable was student ethnicity (White, Black, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Native American). These three variables were analyzed by the researchers to find trends and predictors for out-of-school suspension rates and risks.

The results of the Sullivan, et., al. (2014) study found that suspension is most problematic among students who are serviced under the EBD category. The overall suspension rate for this group of students was 47%, and more students with EBD than from any other

category were suspended more than once, which points to suspension being ineffective in changing their behavior. Students serviced under the speech/language category were at the lowest risk for suspension or expulsion; students serviced under specific learning disabilities and other health disabilities were consistently at a 18% to 22% rate of being suspended or expelled. Black students were three times more likely than white students to be suspended or expelled. The authors concluded that their results further agrees with previous studies regarding the increased risk for suspension for students who are serviced under the EBD category in school and for students of color (Sullivan et al., 2014).

Research continues to point to disproportionality and segregation when it comes to suspension and discipline in schools for students who are in the special education category of EBD. It also opens the door for questioning current discipline policies and whether they are effective for the most frequent offenders (i.e., those being suspended) in schools.

The disproportionality of school disciplinary referral and high incarceration rates experienced by EBD students, especially those of color, impact their school and life experience. This thesis will address the following questions. What is the impact of suspension and expulsion on EBD students? What is the impact for EBD students of entering the juvenile justice system? What is the reentry to school like for EBD students returning from the juvenile justice system? What supports can be put in place to better support EBD students in school?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The research for this study was conducted using the University of Minnesota and Bethel University library academic search tool and focused on databases such as Academic Search Premier, JSTOR, and PsychINFO. Only academic, peer-reviewed articles from 2007-2017 were used, and government reports were included for the purpose of obtaining educational statistics. Search terms used included: history of discipline, gun free schools act, zero-tolerance, special education, juvenile justice system, and emotional and behavioral disorders.

It became clear while reading the research articles that students serviced under the Emotional and Behavioral Disorder (EBD) category were suspended and expelled at a higher rate than any other demographic group in schools and this has a negative impact on their school and life experience. The task was then to determine the impact of suspension and expulsion on students, understand who the youth in the juvenile justice system are, and determine next steps and courses of action to reduce the overrepresentation of EBD in special education. Additional tasks included determining how best to maximize the success of reentry to school from detention centers, and what services could be put in place to better support students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Impact of Suspension and Expulsion on Youth

Suspension is problematic because it tends to be the most commonly used disciplinary practice in schools for policy violations and disruptive behavior and it is associated with a variety of negative educational and social outcomes (Sullivan, Van Norman, & Klingbeil, 2014). These unequal academic outcomes in childhood and adolescence can be linked to racial inequalities in adulthood in areas as diverse as employment, incarceration, and health. Three specific impacts of suspension will be discussed in this section; the impact of suspension on

learning and achievement, the impact that suspension has on anti-social behavior and delinquent behavior, and the impact that suspension has on entering the justice system.

Impact on Learning and Achievement

Racial disparities in educational achievement are some of the most important sources of American inequality (Morris & Perry, 2016). Two major influences for these disparities in educational achievement can be linked to disciplinary methods as well as to suspension in school. Based on the earlier discussed findings that school suspension is correlated with low academic performance and a higher risk for drop out, Morris and Perry (2016) researched whether racial-ethnic background and school suspension are associated with achievement in reading and math and whether racial differences in the likelihood of suspension rates explain a significant proportion of the racial achievement gap. The data for this study was collected from a previous study that looked at discipline within a Kentucky school system. Data was gathered from existing, school-records and from data routinely collected from parents in a large, urban public school district. All data on school discipline and test scores came directly from school records. For each student offense resulting in any disciplinary action (e.g. office referral, detention, suspension, expulsion, etc.), school personnel were required to complete an electronic form containing information about the offense, all students involved, and any response by school officials. The sample included 24,347 students in grades six through ten who were enrolled in a district public school over a three-year period, beginning in August 2008 and ending in June 2011. Of those students 65% were in grades six to eight (ages 11 to 13), and 35% were in grades nine to ten (ages 14 to 16). Approximately 49% of the students in the sample were girls and 51% were boys. The majority of students were either white (59%) or black (25%). Also, 48% of students received free and reduced lunches. Performance on state

tests in math and reading were used to assess achievement, and test scores are also drawn from official school records. Between 2008 and 2011, in the targeted school district, academic achievement was assessed using the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test across the state, it is a computerized adaptive test designed to help schools monitor academic growth in reading and math and make informed decisions about placement and needed services. These tests were not timed and were administered multiple times per year. MAP scores for reading and math were examined separately in this study.

The results of the study indicated that minority students were more likely to be suspended than their white counterparts, and that suspension was linked to student academic achievement. Students who had been suspended scored substantially lower on end-of-year academic progress tests than those who had not. Furthermore, students with a tendency to be suspended performed worse in years where they were suspended relative to the years when they were not suspended. For example, if a student was suspended in the 2016-2017 school year and not in the 2015-2016 school year, they would have performed better in the school year when they were not suspended. It was found that the effects of suspension were long lasting, setting into motion a trajectory of poor performance that continued in subsequent years. The results showed that academic growth dropped drastically after one suspension. The findings provided strong evidence that suspension was harmful to academic achievement. The most striking finding from this research was the association between suspension and patterns of achievement. The results supported the idea that school discipline is a major source of the racial achievement gap and educational inequality. Particularly for black students, the unequal suspension rate was one of the most important factors impacting academic progress and widening the racial gap in achievement.

In a second study conducted by Arcia (2006), she researched the impact of suspension on achievement outcomes, looking specifically at the difference between in-school and out-of-school suspensions. Data was collected during three consecutive years, 2001-2002, 2002-2003, and 2003-2004, from a large, urban school district where the student population was 58% Hispanic, 29% Black, 10% White, and 3% Other. The sample included students who had been suspended at least once during the three years when data was collected. The comparison sample was students who had not been suspended during the three-year period of data collection. The comparison group also matched the suspended students on grade, gender, race, and participation in the free and reduced lunch program. The data on reading achievement was collected based on the state's reading competency exam.

The results of the study concluded that suspended students had lower average reading achievement scores than did students not suspended, and the difference in scores between suspended and non-suspended students increased with additional days in suspension. In two years' time, the average difference on the state's reading competency exam between the scores of the students with no suspensions and the scores of the students who accumulated 21 or more days in suspension during the three-year period increased from 216 points to 264. Students without suspensions on average gained 198 points throughout the two-years, and students suspended in one of three years on average gained 176 points. Students suspended in two of three years gained, on average, 168 points, and students suspended in all three years gained, on average, 159 points (Arcia, 2006). Findings indicated a clear association between reading achievement and suspension rates. Students with lower achievement were subsequently suspended more than students with higher achievement. Results also indicated that the more

days a student spent in suspension, the less achievement the student gained in reading, thus supporting the idea that suspension has a negative impact on achievement and learning.

Impact on Anti-Social Behavior

Adolescent anti-social behavior is defined as any behavior that violates societal rules and conventions or personal rights: this includes violence, stealing, and truancy from school (Kazdin, 1987). An understanding of how anti-social behavior develops is crucial to inform prevention programs and policy development. A range of individual, peer, family, school and community influences on the development of antisocial behavior has been studied as factors that contribute to the development of adolescent anti-social behavior. School suspensions and adolescent arrests are also important potential influences on anti-social behavior Hemphill, Toumbourou, Herrenkohl, McMorris, and Cataalano, 2006.

One study completed by Hemphill, et al. (2006) researched the effects of school suspension and arrests on adolescent anti-social behavior in both Australia and the United States. The study participants were 4000 students aged 12-16; the students completed a self-care survey of behavior as well as risk and protective factors across the five domains (individual, family, peer, school, and community). Topics covered by the questions on the survey included attitudes toward anti-social behavior, attitudes towards drugs, beliefs in moral order, handling family conflict, attachment to mother and father, school grades, opportunities for pro-social engagement in school, and recognition for pro-social engagement in community. A regression analysis was used to investigate the effects of school suspension and arrests on anti-social behavior (violence and crime) while holding constant the domain factors. The results indicated that in the United States the use of suspensions for discipline showed an increased risk in the likelihood of anti-social behavior 12 months later for students who were

given suspensions. This prediction spanned all risk and protective factors. The risk factors found in this study were pre-existing anti-social behavior, association with antisocial peers, academic failure, and perceived availability of alcohol and drugs in the community. The authors concluded school suspensions might increase the likelihood of future anti-social behavior (Hemphill et al., 2006).

Impact on the Risk of Entering the Juvenile Justice System

Students who are suspended miss instruction time and opportunities to gain academic and social skills, which may continue to widen the achievement gap. These missed opportunities lead to a continued lag in school success, lower grades, and academic failure, all of which lead to increased risk for high school dropout. Together with academic failure and dropping out of high school (both of which are disproportionately high among students in special education), suspension also leads to increased risk for entering juvenile detention centers as youth, and later to incarceration as adults (Vallas, 2009).

When a student is placed in special education they are more likely to rely on government benefits, have children early, and to be convicted of a felony (Vallas, 2009). This coupled with the statistics related to suspension, suggests bleak outcomes for many children in American schools. These outcomes become even more dismal when considering those students who are in Special Education under the EBD category. Not only are those students more likely to be suspended, but also one third of these students received multiple suspensions within one year (Vallas, 2009). Students who are black are 3.6 times more likely to be suspended compared to their peers, and students are more likely to be suspended if they received free and reduced lunch. Males are four times more likely to be suspended than females. Therefore, male students who are living in poverty, who are black, and are serviced under the Emotional and

Behavioral Disability category are most at risk for being suspended and in turn, more at risk for negative life outcomes which include the entry and involvement in the juvenile justice system (Vallas, 2009).

A study completed by Cuellar and Markowitz (2015) researched how school suspension interacts with and impacts juvenile justice data. The data was collected from two urban school districts from 2002 through 2009. The study includes 4665 students who were aged 13-17. The school data reviewed includes whether a youth received a disciplinary action and if so, the start and end dates and whether the suspension was in school or out of school.

In addition to suspension status, the school data also indicated a student's gender, their race or ethnicity, the date they enrolled in school, their primary language, and whether they were identified for English as a second language (ESL) instruction or special education. These characteristics were all included as covariates. The results showed that the students who receive a suspension at any time were predominantly male (65%); their ethnicities were ranked as white (37%) followed by Hispanic (24%), African American (22%) and Asian (14%): 18% received special education services. Of all youth in the study, 24.2% were referred to juvenile justice over the course of the study and 7.8% were arrested for a felony offense. All youth were suspended at least once during the study period, and among the suspensions 60% were for one day and 90% were for seven days or less. Of a total of 14,054 suspension events, 277 were for more than 30 days (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015). The results also showed that youth who were suspended out of school on days when school was in session had a statistically significantly higher probability of committing an offense than youth who were not. Males had higher probability of offending than females, as did African Americans and Asians relative to whites.

Students that received special education services were associated with a higher probability of offending than those not serviced in special education (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015).

In conclusion, the study showed that out-of-school suspension increased referrals to the juvenile justice system among youth with a history of offending behaviors. The results showed that being suspended out-of-school on a school day was associated with a more than doubling of the probability of offense. Further, the study found that the effect is more pronounced for African American students (Cuellar & Markowitz, 2015).

Youth in Juvenile Detention Centers

Juveniles accounted for 17% of all arrests, 15% of all violent crime arrests, representing 2.3 million young people under the age of 18 in the year 2001. Youth arrested before the age or 14 are three times more likely to become chronic adult offenders as compared to those arrested after age 14. These crimes impact not only the individual but also the family, the school, the community, and country at large (Alltucker, Close, & Yovanoff, 2006). A study conducted by Alltucker, et al. (2006) found that involvement in the juvenile justice system was associated with strong and negative residual effects for youth development and adaptation. The study was conducted in cooperation with the Transition Research on Adjudicated Youth in Community Settings study, (TRACES), which was a five-year study that followed 531 incarcerated juvenile offenders as they transitioned from correctional facilities back into their families and the community. Of the sample, 52% of participants were adjudicated prior to the age of 14 and were considered early start juvenile delinquents. Data collection consisted of demographic information, level of special education service, a social skills rating form, and interviews. Four different predictive variables were included in the study: foster care experience, familial felony conviction, special education participation, and SES. The results

of the study indicated that youth with foster care experience were four times more likely to be early start delinquents, and youth with a mother or father who was a convicted felon were twice as likely to be an early start delinquent. Alltucker et al. (2006) indicated that both foster care and familial felony convictions were the two biggest indicators of a risk for early start juvenile offender status. Interestingly, involvement in special education was not a large factor in predicting delinquent behavior. Alltucker et al. (2006) did suggest the need for further research regarding the link between special education and foster care as well as familial felony offenders.

This research helps educators identify the youth in Juvenile Detention Centers, and better understand their backgrounds. With this information school staff can service them more effectively at school when they return to the community.

Another study by Martin, et al., (2008) looked at which youth spent time in juvenile detention centers was competed by profiling incarcerated youth, and comparing male and female offenders. The purpose of the study was to see if juvenile offender status could be predicted before involvement in criminal activity. The participants were incarcerated youth from juvenile detention centers in urban Midwest cities. There were 363 juveniles; whose ages ranged from 10-16 years with the mean age of 14.6 years; 58% percent were African American, 34% percent Caucasian, 4% percent Hispanic, and 4% were another race. The number of youth differed between females and males as follows: The females were more likely to have two admissions or less and were the majority (71%) compared to the males (56%); the females were considerably less likely to have 3-12 admissions fewer (28%) than the males (43%). Regarding education levels, the highest percentage of females (30%) was in the ninth grade while the highest percentage of males (23%) was in the tenth grade. Only ten

of the participants had officially dropped out of school. The Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children (TSCC) was administered at the intake interview. TSCC is a self-report measure of post-traumatic stress and related psychological symptomatology in children ages 8-16 years who have experienced traumatic events (physical or sexual abuse, major loss, natural disaster, or witnessed violence). The intake interview also consisted of the following questions: Have you ever been physically abused? Have you ever been sexually abused? Have you ever physically abused another person? Have you ever sexually abused another person? Female offenders reported high rates of sexual and physical abuse and had elevated scores on the TSCC. Nearly 18% of males also reported being physically abused. Nearly 25% of the sample admitted to sometimes wanting to hurt others and nearly 15% of participants reported elevated depressive symptoms. Martin et al. (2008) concluded that there is a strong link between juvenile delinquent behavior, mental health problems, and traumatic experiences in life, and that the most serious offenders often entered the system with a history of abuse, witnessing violence, substance abuse, and emotional and behavioral issues. The results of the study indicated that males were more likely to be multiple offenders who would continually leave and re-enter the justice system. Many of the offenders had committed violent crimes, such as assault, and also carried weapons. They were truant from school and regularly missed probation (Martin et al., 2008).

Martin et al., (2008) further reiterated the belief that youth who experience trauma in their childhood and/or those who had an emotional and behavior disorder were more likely to enter the juvenile detention centers, and therefore face the risks associated with being an incarcerated youth, which included a negative impact on their success in and outside of school.

Impact of Absence from School on Entering Juvenile Detention Center

By now, the connection between race, special education, discipline, and suspension/expulsion is clear. How suspension and expulsion are related to entry into the juvenile detention system, and ultimately to chronic criminal activity is yet to be fully understood. Monahan, VanDerhei, Bechtold, and Cauffman (2014) wanted to better understand the connection between absence from school (due to suspension, expulsion, or otherwise), and the connection to delinquent behaviors and arrests of youth. The subjects of their study were 1,354 adolescents (1,170 males and 184 females) participating in the Pathways of Desistance study, a prospective study of serious juvenile offenders in two major metropolitan cities. The enrolled adolescents were between 14 and 17 years of age at the time of committing a serious felony offense for which they were arrested. The data consisted of assessments during months when the individuals were enrolled in school, collected between 2000 and 2006. The average age of participants was 16 years old and the individuals were from predominantly lower socioeconomic status households, with fewer than 6.3 % of the participants' parents holding a four year college degree and 33 % of participants' parents having less than a high-school education. The sample was primarily black (41.5 %), followed by Hispanic -American (33.5 %), non-Hispanic white (20.2 %), and other ethnicities (4.8 %). The data was collected by interviews immediately after consent was given and followed by interviews at six month intervals. Interviews were conducted in a facility (if the participant was confined), in the home, or in an agreed-upon location in the community. The main topics covered in the interviews were arrests, suspension, expulsion, and truancy, peer delinquency, school commitment, and parental monitoring.

Monahan et al. (2014) concluded that when students are suspended or expelled and are not in school they have more unsupervised hours during their day where delinquent behavior could lead to an arrest. The authors connected unsupervised time to the Routine Activity Theory, which stated three criteria for a crime to be committed: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and an absence of a capable guardian. With students being suspended from school this increased the likelihood of criminal activity because of the lack of a capable guardian. Students who had high levels of parental monitoring when suspended or expelled from school tended to have more successful outcomes post suspension or expulsion. However, not all students who were suspended or expelled had both a capable parent and one who could stay home with them when they were not in school.

Another risk factor for criminal activity determined by Monahan et al. (2014) included commitment and attachment to school. If a student did not feel connected to school they were more likely to be suspended or expelled from school. The individual choice to remove oneself from school (truancy) created a less likely chance to become involved in criminal activity as compared to a student's forceful removal from school (suspension or expulsion). The behaviors that led students to be at an increased risk for suspension and expulsion from school, and increased delinquent behavior and aggression and violence in school, were also similar to behaviors that put youth at risk for being arrested. Attending school was a protective factor for students, especially those at risk for entering the juvenile system, against anti-social behavior (Monahan et al., 2014).

Overall, characteristics of youth that make up the populations of juvenile detention centers include many of the same factors that increase their chances of suspension. Those include, child maltreatment, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and

involvement in foster care, all of which are associated with future violent behavior (Alltucker, Close, & Yovanoff, 2006). All of these factors also are associated with the risk of developing a mental illness as a child, which in turn is another risk factor for youth when it comes to entering the juvenile justice system (Espinosa, 2013).

Impact of Mental Health on Entry in Juvenile Justice System

Five percent of youth in the United States have experienced an emotional and or behavioral mental illness during at least one year of their developmental years (birth-age 18). Of that 5%, 2.5% have been diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder, most commonly a depression, anxiety, or behavioral disorder (Ghandour, Kogan, Blumberg, Jones, & James, 2012). Those youth diagnosed with a psychotic disorder have also been serviced in special education during their schooling years. When considering youth that are involved in the juvenile justice system, those that have at least one, but more often two or more co-morbid psychiatric disorders have experienced placement in the juvenile justice system during their developmental years (Espinosa, 2013). With the majority of youth in the juvenile justice system having a diagnosed psychiatric disorder, as well as the majority of youth in special education also having psychiatric disorder, there is a connection between mental illness, a student's placement in special education, and their risk of entering the juvenile justice system (Espinosa, 2013). Not only does having a mental illness increase your risk of entering the juvenile justice system, it also has been shown that the most common co-morbid diagnosis among school aged children are co-occurring depressive and anxiety disorders (Boots & Wareham, 2009) which have been shown to have strong association with delinquent behavior (Espinosa, 2013). With mental illness so strongly associated with students serviced for EBD in schools, the risk for delinquent behavior in students diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder, and the risk for

suspension because of delinquent behavior in schools (Sullivan, Van Norman, & Klingbeil, 2014).

Reentry to School from the Juvenile Justice System

Juvenile youth returning to school after a period of time spent in a detention center face many challenges. Many youth return to the same environment from which their behavior stemmed and ultimately resulted in their arrest. Many youth do not come back to school with the proper coping skills from their trauma at the detention center and many continue to display behavior patterns that are maladaptive resulting in their dropping out of school or being forced out by the educational system (Briscoe, 1974). They also may return to more hostile interactions with peers and school personnel who may have been directly linked to their arrest. It is no surprise that juvenile offender youth who return to school after time spend in a detention center return quickly to the system and become chronic offenders.

One of the ways that school staff can support students returning from the juvenile detention system in their classroom is to focus on the ecological approach to classroom management. This is a classroom management approach that schools can use to change the approach of discipline in schools, support students, and more fully address the underlying factors that contribute to suspension, expulsion, and entry into the juvenile justice system. Two universal approaches to school-wide discipline have emerged during the past decade: School-wide positive behavioral supports (SWPBS), which are school-wide systems to communicate and teach rules and reward students for following them, and social emotional learning (SEL), which incorporates approaches that emphasize self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making building on the connectedness of students and staff (Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010).

Ecological Approach to Classroom Management

The ecological approach to classroom management is an indirect approach to improving school discipline that is aimed at improving the quality of settings that students occupy rather than focusing on the students themselves. The teacher's core management task is to gain and maintain students' cooperation in classroom life. Teachers accomplish this by defining activity segments (what the students will be doing), introducing them into the environment, inviting and socializing students to participate, and monitoring and adjusting enactment over time. The teacher and students jointly create classroom order by allowing students to have a voice in the structure and routine of the classroom. The ecological approach deals with school discipline by increasing the strength and the quality of classroom activities. By allowing students to participate in well-managed classroom activities they are encouraged to maintain self-discipline through cooperation and coordinated action with others. In addition, it provides the essential conditions for caring, support, clear expectations, and guidance that foster healthy student development and motivation. (Osher, et al., 2010). The ecological approach to classroom management incorporates current behavior theory and ecological theory into a classroom based intervention for young children. The ultimate goal is to improve the classroom-learning environment for all children (Conroy, et al., 2009).

School-Wide Positive Behavioral System

School Wide Positive Behavioral System (SWPBS) is a comprehensive and preventive approach to discipline with the primary goal being to decrease problem behavior in schools and classrooms and to develop systems of support for students and adults at the school-wide, classroom, and individual student levels. The system is derived from the principles of applied behavioral analysis to establish a safe school environment and positive school culture (Chitiyo,

May, & Chitiyo, 2012). It is based on the hypothesis that when staff actively teach using modeling, role playing, and reward positive behaviors; academic effort, safe behaviors, and the proportion of students with mild to serious behavior problems will be reduced and the school's overall climate will improve.

SWPBS procedures are organized around three main themes: prevention, multi-tiered support, and data driven decision-making. Prevention involves defining and teaching a common set of positive behavioral expectations, acknowledging and rewarding expected behavior, and establishing and using consistent consequences for problem behavior (including teaching or re-teaching alternative behaviors). The goal is to establish a positive school and classroom climate, where expectations for students are predictable, directly taught, consistently acknowledged, and actively monitored. Programs for students at risk of antisocial behavior follow a three-tier approach, operating at either tier 1 (school-wide) tier 2 (students who are at risk), and tier 3 (students who are the most chronically at risk) levels. The greater the student's need, the more intense and detailed that support will be. SWPBS schools also provide regularly scheduled instruction in desired social behaviors to enable students to acquire the necessary skills for the desired behavior change. These schools also offer effective motivational systems to encourage students to behave appropriately. SWPBS classrooms in SWPBS schools have the same set of common school expectations posted, and teachers develop classroom-level rules and reinforcement systems consistent with the school-wide plan. In addition, classroom-handled versus administrator-handled behavioral problems are clearly defined, and data on patterns of problem behavior are regularly summarized and presented at faculty meetings to support decision making and practice consistency (Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010).

Metzler, Biglan, Rusby, and Sprague (2001) researched whether a SWBPS system implemented in a school would reduce the overall problematic behaviors, especially physical and verbal aggression and increase students' perceptions of school safety. The research was embedded in a larger study called the CommunityBuilders. Over two years, data was collected regarding schools behavior management techniques, student behaviors, and student reports of school climate. After the baseline data was collected (one month for student surveys and two years for school data) the interventions were put in place. The participants were 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students at two different school districts in Oregon. The first school district had one middle school with an enrollment of 645, 6-8th grade students and 54% of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch. At the second district there were 346 total middle school students grades 6-8th with 52% of the students receiving free and reduced lunch. The first school did not have any SWPBS in place and the second school had some SWPBS in place but it was not very extensive and was not followed with great fidelity.

The interventions that were put in place for the schools involved in the study consisted of defining a set of clear rules and expectations, teaching the expected behavior to students, providing increased levels of praise and rewards for appropriate social behaviors, monitoring student behavior to provide consistent enforcement of the rules, and utilizing frequent data to evaluate progress and further develop intervention plans. A team was also developed that consisted of three teachers, two school counselors, and two assistant principals. These teams discussed progress, evaluated data, and made any changes or improvements necessary for the intervention. The researchers tracked the reinforcements for positive behaviors, the number of discipline referrals and the reasons for the referrals, and student reports of perceived safety and being the target of harassment.

The results of this study showed that students had an increase of 20% for being reinforced and praised for positive behavior, there was a 28% reduction in discipline referrals, and there was as 20% decrease in students reporting that they felt they were the target of harassment. Overall, the researchers concluded that SWPBS was effective in increasing the recognition and praise for students showing expected positive behavior and it had an impact on students' socially aggressive behavior as evidenced by the decrease in discipline referrals. This study supports the idea that implementing a School Wide Positive Behavior Support is a way that teachers could increase positive behavior in school, decrease discipline referrals, and decrease anti-social aggressive behaviors that could lead to arrests and entry into the juvenile detention system. It could also help support students and positive behavior when they return from a juvenile detention center.

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-Emotional Learning focuses on developing individual qualities, strengths, and assets related to social, emotional, cognitive, and moral development and positive mental health. Typically, most students do not learn alone, but rather in collaboration with their teachers, in the company of their peers, and with the encouragement of their families. These social interactions along with a student's individual emotions can facilitate or impede children's academic engagement, work ethic, commitment, and ultimate school success (Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Weissberg, & Schellinger, 2011). Because these relationships and emotions impact so much of what a student does, it is important for school to utilize and recognize the power of Social Emotional Learning.

The goals of SEL programs are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making, which, in terms of discipline, provide a

foundation for more positive social behaviors, fewer conduct problems and improved academic performance (Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010). SEL helps develop the social and emotional capacities that enable students to realize responsible decision making grounded in moral reasoning and the capacity to exhibit such qualities as respect, resilience, bonding with others, resolving conflicts appropriately, caring, and self-understanding. When implemented in schools, nearly all SEL programs share several common features, such as lessons designed to teach social skills and foster social, emotional, and moral development. Planned opportunities are provided for students to apply, practice, and further develop social, emotional, and moral competencies. These may include service learning, class meetings, and cooperative learning activities. Another common feature is an authoritative approach to classroom management and school-wide discipline characterized by much greater emphasis on supportive teacher–student relations and student responsibility than on the use of rewards and punishment in preventing and correcting behavior problems (Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010).

One study conducted by Frey, Nolen, Edstrom, and Hirschstein (2005) evaluated the effects of Second Step, a universal social-emotional intervention on students' behavior, social cognitions and affect. The program is based on the understanding that behaviors are influenced by goals, beliefs, and emotions, as well as information processing and performance skills. It is designed to both decrease aggressive behavior and increase empathic, socially responsible behavior. The program does this by fostering children's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral skills, reducing maladaptive beliefs about aggression and promotes positive social goals and values. The Second Step program consists of curriculum, professional staff training, and staff training materials. Lessons last 25–40 minutes and are presented by classroom teachers. Children practice specific self-regulatory strategies and behavioral skills with role-playing and

other activities. There are three key points in the program: Empathy Training, Impulse Control and Problem Solving, and Anger Management. Empathy lessons teach children to notice and interpret relevant contextual and expressive cues. Emotional understanding, prediction, and communication are taught as core skills. In the second unit, children repeatedly practice generating and evaluating solutions to social problems. Positive goals such as safety, fairness, efficacy, and the social–emotional benefits of mutually rewarding interaction are stressed and practiced. Discussions help identify the behaviors that help children sustain enjoyable play and those that interfere. The Anger Management unit emphasizes cognitive-behavioral techniques such as self-talk and attention control. In all three units, children practice specific behavioral skills that are meant to serve as building blocks for social problem solving (e.g., resisting negative peer pressure, apologizing, showing appreciation).

Fifteen elementary schools (seven K-5th grade and eight K-6th grade) from three cities in Washington were recruited to participate in the study. The schools were located in urban districts of two moderately sized cities, two suburban districts contiguous to the urban districts, and a small city adjacent to a naval base. The school populations averaged from 70% Caucasian, 18% Asian and 12% African-American. The beliefs and behaviors that were monitored were the student's goals, satisfactions, hostile beliefs and behaviors, and impact on group goals, beliefs, and behaviors. The results of the study indicated students that participated in the Second Step program did show decreased aggression compared to those in the control group. The students in the Second Step program used higher-level negotiation techniques such as persuasion, using concessions, and critically thinking as opposed to corrosion and had better school adjustment. The findings showed teacher reported decreases in antisocial behavior among children initially rated as highly antisocial.

The results of this study indicated that teaching social-emotional learning in schools can decrease aggressive behavior as well as decrease anti-social behaviors, two of the behaviors that lead students to having an increased risk of entering the juvenile detention system. Social-Emotional Teaching is also a powerful support to have in schools for when a student may return to school from a juvenile detention center.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary

This literature review set out to examine the disproportionality of school disciplinary referral and high incarceration rates experienced by EBD students, especially those of color, and how this impacts their school and life experience. This thesis addressed the following questions: What is the impact of suspension and expulsion on EBD students? What is the impact for EBD students of entering the juvenile justice system? What is the reentry to school like for EBD students returning from the juvenile justice system? What supports can be put in place to better support EBD students in school? Many studies have addressed these questions with massive amounts of information that will prove helpful for professionals within the field of education.

The research was overwhelmingly unanimous that there is a distinct overrepresentation within Special Education, especially among students serviced under the EBD category. The research also supported the idea that suspensions and expulsions are not useful means of discipline in schools; increased numbers of suspensions and expulsions place a student at risk for entering the juvenile detention system. Entering the juvenile detention systems proves challenging for students, leading to more negative education and life outcomes. However, support systems like an ecological approach to the classroom, positive school wide behavior systems, and social-emotional learning can provide a more welcoming and less punitive school environment that can may ultimately lead to a decreased number of students being arrested. These systems may also allow for better transition back into school from a juvenile detention setting.

With initial placement into special education, Conner and Ferr (2005) found that black students constitute 14.8% of the student population in America; however, they represent 20.2% of the special education population and remain three-times more likely to be labeled as emotionally or behavioral disabled. There tends to be a misunderstanding and unpreparedness of educators to work with students of color in schools. Often teachers do not have enough understanding of cultural aspects of a student's behavior within school and what he or she brings into the classroom because of the differences between white culture and the different student minority cultures (Vallas 2009). The overrepresentation does not stop at placement in special education. Regarding school discipline there is a drastic difference between minority and white students. Minority students, especially those living in poverty and those who are more challenging to manage in school, are being more negatively impacted by policies, such as zero tolerance and the Gun Free School Act enacted in schools. As a result, these students are at times actually feeling unwelcomed and less safe at school (McNeal & Dunbar, 2010). Research provided clarity showing students serviced under the emotional and behavioral disorder category were suspended and expelled at higher rates than any other demographic in schools. This had a negative impact on school and life experience. It became crucial to better understand and determine the impact of suspension and expulsion on students, understand who the youth in the juvenile justice system are, and learn how best to maximize the success of reentry to school from detention centers.

Suspension and expulsion are associated with three specific negative educational and social outcomes: the impact on learning and achievement, the impact on anti-social behavior and delinquent behavior, and the impact on entering the justice system (Sullivan, Van Norman, & Klingbeil, 2014). Morris and Perry (2016) concluded that students who have been suspended

score substantially lower on end-of-year academic progress tests than those who have not been suspended. It was also found that the effects of suspension were long lasting, setting into motion a trajectory of poor performance that continued into subsequent years, even if a student was not suspended again. The results showed that academic growth drops drastically after just one suspension. Along with educational achievement, Hemphill, Toumbourou, Herrenkohl, McMorris and Cataalano (2006) researched the impact of suspension on anti-social and delinquent behavior. They concluded that suspensions showed an increased risk in the likelihood of anti-social behavior 12 months after the suspension. This prediction spanned all risk and protective factors. The author's conclusion was that school suspensions might increase the likelihood of future anti-social behavior. Together with academic failure (which increases with suspension), becoming a high school dropout, and suspension, there is an increased risk for entering and the juvenile detention centers as youth and later for incarceration as adults. Vallas (2009) found that when a student is placed in special education they are more likely to rely heavily on government benefits, have children early, and be convicted of a felony. Students serviced under the EBD category are not only more likely to be suspended, but one-third of those students received multiple suspensions within one year. This put them at significant risk for academic failure, high school dropout, and entering the juvenile detention system (Vallas 2009).

Understanding youth who are in the juvenile detention centers was crucial to answer the main questions of this thesis. A study conducted by Monahan et al. (2014) pointed to three specific factors related to entry into the juvenile justice system, the first being that adolescents without early problem behaviors were more likely to be arrested than adolescents with early problem behaviors. Secondly, the importance of proper parental monitoring was emphasized.

Lastly the difference between truancy and suspension/explosion was examined. With so many youth in the juvenile detention system, the rate at which they are returning to inadequate and unprepared schools is very high. Many youth return to the same environment from which their behavior stemmed and ultimately resulted in their arrest. They returned to school after time spent in a detention center and become chronic offenders because they did not come back to school with the proper coping skills related to their trauma of the detention center. Many students continued to display behavior patterns that were maladaptive and resulted in their dropping out of school or being forced out by the educational system (Briscoe, 1974).

　　　With students entering and returning from the juvenile detention centers, there are three ways that administrators, teachers, and school personnel can be prepared for the reentry of youth from juvenile detention centers. First, have an ecological approach to the classroom environment. This is an indirect approach to improving school discipline that is aimed at improving the quality of the settings that the students occupy rather than focusing on the students themselves. It provides the essential conditions for caring, support, clear expectations, and guidance that foster healthy student development and motivation. (Osher, et al., 2010). Secondly, schools can implement a School-Wide Positive Behavioral System. SWPBS is a comprehensive and preventive approach to discipline with the primary goal being to decrease problem behavior in schools and classrooms and to develop systems of support for students and adults at the school-wide, classroom, and individual student levels. Metzler et al., (2001) researched the effectiveness and found that SWPBS allows for teachers to increase positive behavior in school, decrease discipline referrals, and decrease anti-social aggressive behaviors through common behavioral expectations, multi-tiered support, and data driven decision-making. Lastly, schools can include in their curriculum social and emotional education. Social-

Emotional Learning focuses on developing individual qualities, strengths, and assets related to social, emotional, cognitive, and moral development and positive mental health The goal is to bring about self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making, which, in terms of discipline, provides a foundation for more positive social behaviors and fewer conduct problems and improved academic performance which was established a study conducted by (Frey, et al., 2005).

Professional Application

Through this research I sought to find interventions that could be implemented to help students in the school that I currently serve, which is an urban Federal IV Emotional, and Behavioral Intermediate School. The implications for professional application, many of which are system-wide, are encouraging and hopeful.

The research pointed first to understanding and accepting the overrepresentation of students of color in special education and in the EBD world. One must realize that there is a bias against certain students and how they are disciplined within schools. Disciplinary practices can do more harm than help when working with minority students and students in the EBD special education category (Vallas 2009). It is clear that we need to reevaluate how to approach discipline in the schools. Suspension was shown by Sullivan, et al., (2014) to be associated with a variety of negative educational and social outcomes. This is not helpful when considering that increased levels of suspension and removal from school led to increased risk that students will enter the juvenile detention system (Vallas, 2009).

Administrators and teachers need to be able to adapt their methods in order to better accommodate all students. Districts and administrators should be training and promoting an ecological approach in classrooms to better support the needs of all students. On a larger scale,

districts and schools should implement a School Wide Positive Behavioral System (SWPBS) that allows for consistent and clear behavior expectations within the school as a whole, and also within each individual classroom. SWPBS is data-driven and multi-tiered, giving schools the most unbiased, objective information to work with and a way to service all students (not just those serviced EBD and/or Special Education) but every single student learning and growing within the school.

Metzler, et al., (2001) found SWPBS to be extremely effective in reducing aggressive and anti-social behaviors, behaviors that plague many of the students I serve daily in my current school, especially those returning from the juvenile detention system. Lastly, schools need to understand the importance of social and emotional learning. Incorporating programs such as Second Step into a school curriculum has been shown by Frey, Nolen, Edstrom, Hirschstein (2005) to develop individual qualities, strengths, and assets related to social, emotional, cognitive, and moral development, and positive mental health. These qualities are crucial for all students but are especially crucial for students who have a disability that impacts their social and emotional health. It is the job of educators and advocates for students to push school districts and administrators to understand the importance of interventions such as School Wide Positive Behavioral Systems and social emotional learning. These programs not only help every single student in the school, but they specifically target those students that would benefit greatly from such education and systems within their schools.

Within my school and classroom, I feel that there are ways that I can incorporate the research and findings into my own practice. Most importantly, and how I feel I could most easily facilitate change in my classroom, is to consider findings about the ecological approach to classroom management which emphasizes that students have a voice in their classroom and

their classroom activities. I will do this within my classroom by allowing the students to provide their insight and ideas surrounding our classrooms expectations. At my school we have a student conduct handbook based on four school-wide expectations; Show Respect, Ownership, Achievement, Responsibility (SOAR). Within each classroom teachers set up their own expectations based on the SOAR model. This upcoming year I will have students work together to name and define our classroom expectations. This will follow the ecological approach to classroom management by including the cooperation between teacher and student regarding expectations and discipline.

As a member of my schools Positive Behavior Intervention System Team, I will be able to bring forward the research surrounding School Wide Positive Behavioral Systems, especially when considering the ways in which discipline is managed within this school wide system. One way that I will do this is by leading discussion based on the research surrounding suspension. Last year we had a significant number of suspensions within our school. Research findings that suspensions have a negative impact on learning and achievement, an increase in suspensions is a risk factor for anti-social behavior, and suspensions are a risk factor for entering the juvenile justice system need to be more considered. I hope to stimulate conversations about alternatives to suspensions for our students this year and in the upcoming years.

Lastly, when thinking about the Social, Emotional Learning research reviewed, I feel that I can facilitate this type of learning in my morning homeroom through the teaching of social skills. I can do this by focusing first on lessons that focus on students' understanding and ability to recognize their own emotions in the moment. I started this last year and hope to continue to facilitate lessons about the naming of emotions and the ability to accurately perceive emotions within one's self. Although there may not be a curriculum provided by my

school, being aware of how important social and emotional learning is can direct my lessons and the skills taught during homeroom.

There are definite barriers when it comes to implementation of different research supported ideas. The biggest barrier is that many of the systems, interventions, and results presented in this research were based upon whole school participation and administrator support. The students in my school rotate classrooms and have many teachers during their day. Although my efforts will hopefully not go without some benefit to the students, a larger more school wide shift would be the most beneficial and could be the most impactful for our students. This shift can start from my participation on my schools Positive Behavior Intervention System Team. Being able to be a voice on this team and stimulate conversation about different topics, like an ecological approach to classroom or the importance of a social and emotional learning curriculum, I could be an influential factor in involving more of the school. I can also plant the seed with my administrators about how these different research proven approaches to discipline, classrooms expectations, and school wide behavior can significantly, positively impact our specific population of students.

Limitations and Implications of Research

The current research on this subject is not without limitations. Each study had its own set of individual limitations, but some common limitations were noted. Many studies were found to not be representative of all students within the state or representative of the make-up of all students within the United States. This makes it hard to apply findings to all students and schools in this country. Another limitation was the endogenous factors that could be driving associations, conclusions, and results. Many of these factors are both unknown as well as difficult to truly understand. For example, family size, whether a father is present in the home,

and parental education levels are all factors that impact students. Vallas (2009) pointed out that a causal link between their findings could not be truly identified because of the unknown factors that could be influencing results for the study. Another common limitation was the inability for many schools to implement the findings due to the fact that mental health services and additional teacher trainings are necessary for a quality intervention and system change. This requires money and resources that many districts do not have, thus leading to interventions that may prove challenging to realistically implement.

The implications for further research highlights the need to gather more data from a wider array of schools that more fully represent all the students in the United States. Osher, et al., (2010) mentioned that many times rural communities or communities that have parents with a disassociation regarding school are not included in research. This is an area where further research could be conducted to better understand all students in the United States and the impact of things like suspension and involvement in the juvenile detention system.

Conclusion

It is critical that schools understand the overrepresentation of minority students in special education, especially within the emotional and behavioral category. It is also critical that schools be made aware of what the most current and commonly used disciplinary practices are, how they impact student learning and achievement, and the implications for entry into the juvenile detention system. Schools need to be prepared with system-wide and classroom behavior supports, as well as social and emotional learning to support students who are struggling with aggressive behavior and/or anti-social behavior, or those who are returning from the juvenile detention system. All students deserve the right to a free and proper education, this includes students of the minority, students serviced under the emotional and

behavioral disability category, students who are more frequently suspended, and students returning from the juvenile detention system. Schools should, continually adjust, change, improve, and implement systems and interventions to best support the growing, changing, and diversifying student population in America as it grows, changes, and diversifies.

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