


# Ethnicity/race disparities in disciplinary consequences: A comparative analysis of White, Hispanic, and Black girls

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## Abstract

In this multiyear investigation, the most frequently committed student misbehaviors were determined, and then the most common disciplinary consequences that were assigned as a result were identified as Grade 6 White, Hispanic, and Black girls. Differences were evident in disciplinary consequences that were assigned by the ethnicity/race of girls. Grade 6 Black and Grade 6 Hispanic girls were more likely to be assigned exclusionary discipline consequences, such as In-School Suspension, than were Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned consequences that did not interrupt learning, such as Lunch Detention and Detention Before School, much more often than Grade 6 Hispanic and Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Saturday School more than twice as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls and almost 8 times as often as Grade 6 White girls.

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## Introduction

For over 25 years, in national, state, district, and campus-level data, Skiba et al. (2002) documented that students of color were suspended at rates two to three times that of other students. As such, they were consistently overrepresented in office referrals, corporal punishment, and school expulsion. U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2018) reported that 3.8 million Black girls (i.e., 7.4% of total school enrollment) were enrolled in public schools in the United States. With respect to Hispanic enrollment, 6.7 million Hispanic girls (i.e., 13.3% of total school enrollment) were enrolled in public schools. Regarding White student enrollment, 11.6 million White girls (i.e., 22.9% of total school enrollment) were enrolled in public schools. Concerning the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences in the 2017-2018 school year, 8,924,641 Black girls, or 38.2% of Black girls, were assigned to one or more out-of-school suspensions, whereas 525,545 Hispanic girls, or 21.7% of Hispanic girls, were assigned to one or more out-of-school suspensions and 794,790 White girls or 32.9% of White girls were assigned to one or more out-of-school suspensions. In the 2017-2018 school year, 24% of Black girls were assigned to one or more out-of-school suspensions, 6% of White girls were assigned to one or more out-of-school suspensions, and 8% of Hispanic girls were assigned to one or more out-of-school suspensions.

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Females of color are disproportionately at risk for exclusionary discipline consequences. Black girls are five times more likely to be assigned exclusionary discipline than White girls (Wallace et al., 2008). Hassan and Carter (2021) explored the discipline rates of Black and White girls in higher and lower-achieving states. They determined that in both higher and lower-performing schools, a disproportionate number of Black girls were assigned out-of-school suspensions when compared to White girls. For example, in New Jersey, a population of 13% Black girls were assigned to 50.8% of the out-of-school suspensions, compared to a population of 68% White girls who were assigned to only 17.8% of the out-of-school suspensions consequences. These statistics were supported by Blake et al. (2011), who determined that Black girls were four times as likely to be assigned to in-school suspension than White girls and two times more likely to be assigned to an out-of-school suspension than White girls.

With respect to the state of interest for this article, Texas, Slate et al. (2016) reviewed the frequencies and percentages of exclusionary disciplinary consequences assigned to Black, Hispanic, and White girls in Texas public schools. They established that in Grade 9, 27.1% of Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, 14.2% of Hispanic girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension, and 3.9% of White girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension. With regard to Grade 6 girls, Black girls were assigned 2,050 out-of-school suspensions, Hispanic girls were assigned 2,181 out-of-school suspensions, and White girls were assigned 23 out-of-school suspensions. The statistics are even more concerning when Disciplinary Alternative Education Program placements are examined. Slate et al. (2016) documented that in Grade 10, 64 Black girls were assigned to this consequence, compared to 30 Hispanic girls, and no White girls. Given that Black girls constitute a much lower percentage of school enrollment than either Hispanic or White girls, these statistics are evidence of clear disparities in the assignment of this exclusionary consequence. Slate et al. (2016) contended that Black girls in Texas schools in Grades 4 through 12 are exposed to persistent cycles of exclusionary discipline practices that contribute to the well-documented achievement gaps because of the loss of instructional time.

In a Texas investigation directly related to this article, Tiger (2016) analyzed discipline consequences for Grade 4 and Grade 5 students in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. Tiger (2016) documented that in the 2013-2014 school year, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to in-school suspension four times more often than Hispanic girls and three times more often than White girls. Similarly, in the 2014-2015 school year, Black girls were assigned four times more often to in-school suspension than were Hispanic girls and were assigned two times more often than White girls. With respect to Grade 5 girls, a similar trend was present. For the 2013-2014 school year, Black girls were assigned to in-school suspension at a rate that was four times higher than Hispanic girls and three times higher than White girls. In the 2014-2015 school year, Black girls continued to be assigned to in-school suspension much more often, three times more often, than Hispanic girls and White girls.

Tiger (2016) also addressed the relationship of ethnicity/race to out-of-school suspension assignments. For the 2013-2014 school year, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned seven times more often to an out-of-school suspension than were Hispanic girls and more than 10 times more often than White girls. In the 2014-2015 school year, Black girls were assigned 10 times more often to an out-of-school suspension than were Hispanic girls and White girls. With respect to Grade 5 girls, Black girls in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years were assigned five times more often to an out-of-school suspension than were Hispanic girls and more than 10 times more often than White girls.

In another related article, Hilberth and Slate (2014) analyzed data from discipline referrals of Black and White middle school students in Texas. In Grade 6, Black students made up 14.1% of the population yet were assigned 32% of the in-school suspension assignments and 19.4% of the out-of-school suspension assignments, whereas White students made up 32% of the population and were assigned 14.2% of in-school suspensions and 3.7% of out-of-school suspension assignments. In Grade 7, Black students made up 14.2% of the population yet were assigned 35.9% of the in-school suspension assignments and 22.6% of the out-of-school suspension assignments, whereas White students made up 35.2% of the population and were assigned 16.2% of in-school suspensions and 4.8% of out-of-school suspension assignments. In Grade 8, Black students made up 14.4% of the population yet were assigned 36.4% of the in-school suspension assignments and 23.2% of the out-of-school suspension assignments, whereas White students made up 35.3% of the population and were assigned 17.5% of in-school suspensions and 5.4% of out-of-school suspension assignments.

In a Texas investigation directly related to this article, Griffin (2022) examined exclusionary discipline consequences for Grade 4 and Grade 5 girls by their economic status in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. In the 2016-2017 school year, Griffin (2022) determined that Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate that was 22% higher than Hispanic girls and more than 41% higher than White girls. Grade 5 Black girls, in the same school year, were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate that was 8% higher than Hispanic girls and more than 37% higher than White girls. The largest discrepancy occurred during the 2019-2020 school year when Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate that was 30% higher than Hispanic girls and nearly 43% higher than White girls. Grade 5 Black girls, in the same school year, were assigned to an out-of-school suspension at a rate that was 6% higher than Hispanic girls and nearly 34% higher than White girls.

Skiba et al. (2014) contended that the use of repeated punitive and consistent racial disparities in school suspensions and expulsion leads to numerous negative outcomes. They concluded that the more students are excluded from instruction through suspension and expulsion, the less likely they are to graduate from high school. As students are removed from learning, they are more likely to fall behind academically because they lose a considerable amount of instructional time. Gregory et al. (2016) reported that each suspension lowers a student's chance of graduating from high school by about 20%. Skiba (2015) concluded that the disparities in exclusionary consequences for low-income and students of color students are fairly consistent across all settings and grade levels.

Blake et al. (2015) reported that when office referral data are disaggregated by ethnicity/race and gender, Black girls receive more exclusionary suspensions for infractions such as disrespect and excessive noise, along with dress and hairstyle code violations. Morris (2016) concluded that educators' negative perceptions of Black girls' femininity can lead to increased school suspensions. Hassan and Carter (2021) contended that many girls of color are removed from classrooms due to perceived behavior that is too aggressive, angry, or rude. In certain schools, girls of color are given disciplinary slips for violating the dress code, whereas White girls often receive an administrative conference. Wanjuki (2018) contended that classroom removals for violating strict dress codes are not applied equally to Black girls and White girls.

In recent years, however, researchers (e.g., George, 2015) have begun to emphasize the presence of harsher discipline and arrest outcomes for Black girls. Crenshaw (2012) documented that Black girls disproportionately experience harsh disciplinary actions in comparison to White girls. Annamma et al. (2020) revealed that school staff assigned more exclusionary discipline consequences to Black girls than to girls of other ethnic/racial backgrounds for detrimental behavior, disobedience, and fighting. Currently, more students enter juvenile justice systems for minor school-related offenses that, in the past, were addressed by school leaders (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). Hilberth and Slate (2014) determined that due to the disproportionate amount of discipline referrals that were assigned to Black students in Texas schools, they are excluded more often from learning opportunities than other ethnic/racial groups.

Not present in the existing research literature are the specific misbehaviors that girls commit for which they are assigned a disciplinary consequence. The question that arises from this void is about whether or not differential discipline consequences are assigned to the same misbehavior by student ethnicity/race or other demographic characteristics. Focused upon in this article was the extent to which inequities were present in the assignment of exclusionary discipline consequences to the same misbehavior by the ethnicity/race of girls.

### Current Research

In pre-Covid times, exclusionary discipline consequences created opportunity gaps between girls of color and their White peers. With the increased demands associated with the post-Covid world, exclusionary discipline consequences and their effects on female students of color must be addressed. Exclusionary discipline practices constitute a pressing national concern (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2018). Girls who are suspended or expelled from school are more likely to suffer from lost instructional time, lower academic achievement, and grade retention than students who do not receive exclusionary discipline sanctions (Losen et al., 2015). Researchers (e.g., Hilberth & Slate, 2014) have determined that a lack of evidence is present that students of color commit more misbehaviors at school. That is, students of color are assigned substantially more often to exclusionary discipline consequences without any evidence that they commit more misbehaviors. As such, investigations into the behaviors that are related to the assignment of discipline consequences are warranted.

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which the ethnicity/race of girls was related to the assignment of discipline consequences. The most common misbehaviors committed by girls were examined, and then the specific discipline consequences that were assigned to them were addressed. These misbehaviors and discipline consequences were analyzed to ascertain whether inequities were present by the ethnicity/race of girls. These analyses were conducted for Grade 6 girls in a single Texas school district.

This study was conducted to address a lack of research evidence pertaining to discipline consequences that are assigned for specific misbehaviors committed by Black, Hispanic, and White girls. The information gathered on the awareness of potential bias in providing discipline consequences for students of color will assist in providing the support needed for staff members to address this concern. DeMatthews et al. (2017) contended that Black students are more likely to be suspended than their White peers despite any evidence suggesting that Black students commit more misbehaviors than are committed by White students.

Additionally, findings will inform campus and district leadership of discipline trends and consequences assigned by race/ethnicity. A sense of urgency for this work is due to the relationship between negative social outcomes that occur when students are assigned exclusionary discipline consequences (DeMatthews et al., 2017). Finally, the findings may provide school district leadership with an opportunity to confront biases with the disproportionate consequences assigned to students of color.

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) What are the most common misbehaviors committed by Grade 6 White, Black, and Hispanic girls in each available school year?; (b) For these most common misbehaviors, what are the most common discipline consequences assigned as a result?; and (c) What trends are present in discipline consequence assignments by student ethnicity/race across each available school year? The first two research questions were answered separately by school year, whereas the third research question involved data across all available school years of data.

## Method

### Research Design

A causal-comparative research design was presented in this article (Johnson & Christensen, 2024). Data on White, Black, and Hispanic girls who had been assigned a discipline consequence were analyzed. Data on Asian girls were not included because they are infrequently assigned to exclusionary discipline consequences. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the most common misbehaviors committed by Grade 6 girls. It is important to note that using a causal-comparative research design does not allow for definitive cause-and-effect relationships to be determined (Johnson & Christensen, 2024).

### Participants and Data Collection

Participants in this study were Grade 6 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in a suburban Houston school district who had been assigned a discipline consequence in the 2016 -2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. The five most common discipline consequences are administrative conference, lunch detention, after-school detention, in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspension. An administrative conference is a meeting with a student to discuss an incident in an effort to address discipline concerns. Lunch detention is the removal of a student from the original lunch setting and an assignment to a determined location where a student is permitted to each lunch without the social activities that typically occur during lunch. An after-school detention is the assignment of additional time that does not occur during the school day to address discipline concerns without impacting classroom instruction. In-school suspension is a disciplinary consequence that removes a student from the teacher's classroom and assigns a student to a designated classroom, allowing the student to remain on campus (Texas Education Agency, 2019). An out-of-school suspension is a consequence of discipline that removes a student from the school campus for a period of no longer than three consecutive days (Texas Education Agency, 2019).

### Data Analysis

Data analyzed were on Grade 6 Black, Hispanic, and White girls who had been assigned to a discipline consequence. The discipline data for this study were obtained from the Texas

Education Agency Public Education Information Management System. Data were then imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software program for analysis. The Texas Education Agency (2017) described the primary purpose of student discipline as to protect the safety and welfare of students.

## Results

To determine the most common misbehaviors committed by Grade 6 girls, descriptive statistics were calculated separately by ethnicity/race and by school year. Once the most common misbehaviors were identified, then descriptive statistics were generated for the most common disciplinary consequence that was assigned to each misbehavior. The results will now be described.

### Research Question One

The first research question was focused on the most common misbehaviors committed by Grade 6 White, Black, and Hispanic girls who had been enrolled in a northwest suburb in Houston, Texas, in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. In the 2016-2017 school year, Grade 6 Hispanic girls committed 227 tardy violations, a number that was almost five times the number of tardy violations committed by White girls. Grade 6 Black girls had 119 class disruptions, almost four times the number of class disruptions by White girls and 40 more disruptions than Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were absent without permission 69 times, more than four times as many times as Grade 6 White girls and more than two times as many times as Grade 6 Black girls. Delineated in Table 1 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

**Table 1.** Most frequently committed misbehaviors for Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race for the 2016-2017 school year

Misbehavior	Black		Hispanic		White	
	<i>n</i>	Rank	<i>n</i>	Rank	<i>n</i>	Rank
Tardy	205	1	227	1	51	1
Misconduct General	109	3	92	2	34	2
Disruption Class	119	2	75	3	30	3
Absent W/O Permission	28	7	69	4	13	5
Bus Inappropriate	25	10	35	6	29	4
Unauthorized Area	37	5	56	5	8	8
Failure to Attend Detention	49	4	34	7	3	15

In the 2017-2018 school year, Grade 6 Hispanic girls were tardy 364 times, more than five times the number of tardy violations of Grade 6 White girls and 130 more tardy violations than Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Black girls disrupted class 166 times, more than eight times as many disruptions committed by Grade 6 White girls, and almost two times as many disruptions committed by Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Black girls had 48 serious misconduct violations, which is 48 times as many as Grade 6 White girls and almost three times as many serious misconduct violations as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls committed 64 absence without permission violations, almost five times as many violations committed by Grade 6 White girls and 15 more violations than committed by Grade 6 Black girls. Table 2 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

**Table 2.** Most frequently committed misbehaviors for Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race for the 2017-2018 school year

Misbehavior	Black		Hispanic		White	
	<i>n</i>	Rank	<i>n</i>	Rank	<i>n</i>	Rank
Tardy	235	1	364	1	71	1
Misconduct General	95	3	77	3	20	3
Disruption Class	166	2	92	2	20	3
Absent W/O Permission	47	6	64	4	13	6
Serious Misconduct	48	5	17	10	1	20
Bus Inappropriate	56	4	27	7	34	2
Unauthorized Area	26	11	42	5	12	7
Disrespect School Personnel	30	10	22	8	15	5

In the 2018-2019 school year, Grade 6 Black girls committed 87 class disruptions, almost three times the number of class disruptions committed by Grade 6 White girls and 20 more disruptions than Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls committed 139 tardy violations, more than seven times the number of tardy violations as Grade 6 White girls and more than two times the number of tardy violations committed by Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were absent without permission 50 times, three and one-half times as many absences without permission violations as Grade 6 White girls and more than 16 times as many absences without permission violations as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned 53 general misconduct violations, which was almost two times as many general misconduct violations as Grade 6 Black girls. Table 3 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

**Table 3.** Most frequently committed misbehaviors for Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race for the 2018-2019 school year

Misbehavior	Black		Hispanic		White	
	<i>n</i>	Rank	<i>n</i>	Rank	<i>n</i>	Rank
Disruption Class	87	1	68	3	30	2
Tardy	63	2	139	1	19	3
Noncompliance	56	3	39	7	11	10
Disrespect School Personnel	46	4	36	8	19	3
Absent W/O Permission	3	5	50	6	14	7
Unauthorized Area	16	12	86	2	14	8
Misconduct General	32	6	61	4	53	1

In the 2019-2020 school year, discipline data were strongly affected by the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, Grade 6 Hispanic girls committed 108 tardy violations, six times the number of tardy violations committed by Grade 6 White girls and almost two times the number of tardy violations committed by Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were cited 49 times for fighting, which was 12 times the number of fights that Grade 6 White girls were cited for and 13 more fights than Grade 6 Black girls. Additionally, Grade 6 Hispanic girls were absent without permission 101 times, a number that was 10 times as many absences without permission violations as Grade 6 White girls and more than four times as many absences without permission violations as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were noncompliant 92 times, almost 20 times more often than Grade 6 White girls, and 13 times as many violations as Grade 6 Black girls. Table 4 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

**Table 4.** Most frequently committed misbehaviors for Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race for the 2019-2020 school year

Misbehavior	Black		Hispanic		White	
	<i>n</i>	Rank	<i>n</i>	Rank	<i>n</i>	Rank
Disrespect School Personnel	32	6	40	7	28	1
Tardy	57	2	108	1	18	3
Noncompliance	79	1	92	3	11	6
Absent W/O Permission	25	8	101	2	9	8
Bus Inappropriate	32	5	13	11	20	2
Unauthorized Area	41	3	72	4	7	10
Fighting – 2 offenders	36	4	49	5	4	11

Following the determinations of the most frequently committed student misbehaviors, analyses were conducted to ascertain the most frequent consequences that were assigned to these student misbehaviors. The misbehaviors that were most frequently committed by Grade 6 girls were Tardy, General Misconduct, Disruption of Class, Absent Without Permission, and Noncompliance.

Table 5 contains the descriptive statistics for Tardy violations for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. In the 2016-2017 school year, Grade 6 Black girls were assigned seven times the number of Administrative Conference as Grade 6 White girls and two times the number of Administrative Conference as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned Detention After School almost twice as often as Grade 6 White girls and 10% more often than Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Lunch Detention 54.9% of the time, which was more than two times as often as Grade 6 Black and Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to In-School Suspension more than five times as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Saturday School eight times as often as Grade 6 White girls and almost two times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls.

**Table 5.** Most frequently assigned consequences for tardy violations for Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years

School Year and Consequence	Black %	Hispanic %	White %
2016-2017			
Administrator Conference	7.4	3.1	0.0
Detention After School	40.2	50.2	33.3
Lunch Detention	23.5	26.4	54.9
In-School Suspension	11.3	9.7	2.0
Out-of-School Suspension	0.0	0.0	0.0
Detention Before School	4.4	4.8	5.9
Saturday School	8.3	5.3	0.0
Parent Conference	2.9	0.0	2.0
2017-2018			
Administrator Conference	13.6	15.1	70.4
Detention After School	30.6	26.9	11.3
Lunch Detention	40.0	48.6	14.1
In-School Suspension	2.1	1.9	1.4
Out-of-School Suspension	0.0	0.0	0.0
Detention Before School	3.8	3.0	2.8
Saturday School	9.8	4.1	0.0
Parent Conference	0.0	0.0	0.0



In the 2017-2018 school year, Grade 6 White girls were assigned Administrative Conference more than four times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic and Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Black Girls were assigned Detention After School almost three times as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned Lunch Detention more than three times as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to In-School Suspension almost twice as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Saturday School nine times as often as Grade 6 White girls and more than twice as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls.

Revealed in Table 5 are the descriptive statistics for Tardy violations for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years. In the 2018-2019 school year, Grade 6 White girls were assigned almost 10 times the number of Administrative Conferences as Grade 6 Hispanic girls and 4% more Administrative Conferences as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned more than 13% more Lunch Detention than Grade 6 Black girls and more than 7% more Lunch Detention than Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned to In-School Suspension more than three times as often as Grade 6 White girls and more than twice as often as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Detention Before School more than twice as often as Grade 6 White girls and two times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Black girls were the only group who were assigned a Parent Conference for Tardy violations.

**Table 6.** Most frequently assigned consequences for tardy violations for Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years

School Year and Consequence	Black %	Hispanic %	White %
2018-2019			
Administrator Conference	6.3	1.4	10.5
Detention After School	33.3	33.1	31.6
Lunch Detention	34.9	40.3	47.4
In-School Suspension	6.3	16.5	5.3
Out-of-School Suspension	0.0	0.0	0.0
Detention Before School	12.7	6.5	5.3
Saturday School	0.0	0.0	0.0
Parent Conference	1.6	0.0	0.0
2019-2020			
Administrator Conference	0.0	2.8	0.0
Detention After School	54.4	58.3	72.2
Lunch Detention	14.0	7.4	11.1
In-School Suspension	10.5	13.0	11.1
Out-of-School Suspension	0.0	0.0	0.0
Detention Before School	15.8	16.7	5.6
Saturday School	0.0	0.0	0.0
Parent Conference	0.0	0.0	0.0

In the 2019-2020 school year, Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned an Administrative Conference more than twice as often as Grade 6 Black and Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Detention After School more than 18% more often than Grade 6 Black girls and 14% more often than Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Lunch Detention almost two times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned Detention Before School more than three times as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned to In-School Suspension almost 3% more often than Grade 6 Black girls and 2% more often than Grade 6 White girls.

The second student's misbehavior addressed was that of General Misconduct. Table 7 contains the descriptive statistics for the General Misconduct misbehavior of Grade 6 girls in the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. In the 2016-2017 school year, Grade 6 White girls were assigned almost three times as many Administrator Conference as Grade 6 Black and Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned more than two times the number of Detention After School as Grade 6 Black girls and almost twice as many Detention After School as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned more than 7% more Lunch Detention than Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Black and Hispanic girls were assigned three times the number of In-School Suspensions as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned more than four times the number of Out-of-School Suspension as Grade 6 Hispanic and Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned more than five times the number of Detention Before School as Grade 6 Black and Grade 6 Hispanic girls.

**Table 7.** Most frequently assigned consequences for general misconduct for Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years

School Year and Consequence	Black %	Hispanic %	White %
2016-2017			
Administrator Conference	7.3	7.6	20.6
Detention After School	11.0	15.2	26.5
Lunch Detention	15.6	22.8	20.6
In-School Suspension	36.7	32.6	11.8
Out-of-School Suspension	9.2	2.2	2.9
Detention Before School	0.9	0.0	5.9
Saturday School	1.8	1.1	0.0
Parent Conference	8.3	7.6	5.9
2017-2018			
Administrator Conference	10.5	9.1	15.0
Detention After School	9.5	13.0	15.0
Lunch Detention	16.8	22.1	20.0
In-School Suspension	34.7	23.4	30.0
Out-of-School Suspension	8.4	1.3	0.0
Detention Before School	2.1	2.6	0.0
Saturday School	1.1	5.2	0.0
Parent Conference	7.4	14.3	10.0

In the 2017-2018 school year, Grade 6 White girls were assigned 6% more Administrator Conference than Grade 6 Hispanic girls and 5% more than Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned 6% more Lunch Detention than Grade 6 Black girls and 2% more than Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned 11% more to In-School Suspension than Grade 6 Hispanic girls and almost 5% more In-School Suspensions than Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned more than eight times as many to an Out-of-School Suspension as Grade 6 Hispanic and Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned five times as many Saturday Schools as Grade 6 White and Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned twice as many Parent Conference as Grade 6 Black girls.

Revealed in Table 8 are the descriptive statistics for General Misconduct for the 2018-2019 school year. In 2018-2019, Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned 6% more Administrator

Conference than Grade 6 Black and Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned more than twice as many Detention After School assignments as Grade 6 Black girls and 6% more than Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned almost three times the number of Lunch Detention as Grade 6 Black and Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned 15% more to In-School Suspension than Grade 6 White girls and 13% more often to In-School Suspension than Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned more than six times as many Out-of-School Suspensions as Grade 6 White girls and more than four times as many as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned 12 times as many Detention Before School as Grade 6 Hispanic girls and more than four times as many as Grade 6 White girls.

**Table 8.** Most frequently assigned consequences for general misconduct for Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race for the 2018-2019 school year

Consequence	Black %	Hispanic %	White %
Administrator Conference	15.6	21.7	15.4
Detention After School	6.3	13.3	7.7
Lunch Detention	15.6	15.0	42.3
In-School Suspension	21.9	35.0	19.2
Out-of-School Suspension	12.5	3.3	1.9
Detention Before School	12.5	0.0	3.8
Saturday School	0.0	0.0	0.0
Parent Conference	3.1	0.0	0.0

The third misbehavior was the Disruption of Class. Table 9 contains the descriptive statistics for the Disruption of Class for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. In 2016-2017, Grade 6 White girls were assigned Administrator Conference almost three times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls and two times as often as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Lunch Detention 6% more often than Grade 6 White girls and 2% more often than Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Black and Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned In-School Suspension more than two times as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Detention Before School five times as often as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Hispanic Girls were assigned Saturday School four times as often as Grade 6 White girls and twice as often as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Parent Conference six times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls.

In the 2017-2018 school year, Grade 6 White girls were assigned Administrator Conference more than three times as often as Grade 6 Black girls and more than twice as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 White and Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned Lunch Detention 6% more often than Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned In-School Suspension more than 13% as often as Grade 6 White girls and 5% as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Out-of-School Suspension more than five times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic or Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Detention Before School more than three times as often as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Parent Conference more than twice as often as Grade 6 Black girls and 4% more often than Grade 6 Hispanic girls.

**Table 9.** Most frequently assigned consequences for disruption of class for Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years

School Year and Consequence	Black %	Hispanic %	White %
2016-2017			
Administrator Conference	15.4	12.0	30.0
Detention After School	8.5	10.7	13.3
Lunch Detention	16.2	14.7	10.0
In-School Suspension	34.2	34.7	16.7
Out-of-School Suspension	1.7	4.0	0.0
Detention Before School	1.7	5.3	6.7
In School Detention	8.5	5.3	13.3
Saturday School	2.6	4.0	0.0
Parent Conference	4.3	0.0	6.7
2017-2018			
Administrator Conference	7.2	12.1	25.0
Detention After School	8.4	8.8	5.0
Lunch Detention	18.1	24.2	25.0
In-School Suspension	33.7	28.6	20.0
Out-of-School Suspension	5.4	0.0	0.0
Detention Before School	1.8	4.4	5.0
In School Detention	1.2	2.2	5.0
Saturday School	1.2	1.1	0.0
Parent Conference	4.2	6.6	10.0

Revealed in Table 10 are the descriptive statistics for Disruption of Class for the 2018-2019 school year. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Administrator Conference almost three times as often as Grade 6 Black girls and almost twice as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic and Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Detention After School more than 19 times as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned In-School Suspension more than 8% as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Out-of-School Suspension more than twice as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls and almost twice as often as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Detention Before School more than three times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic or Grade 6 White girls.

**Table 10.** Most frequently assigned consequences for disruption of class for Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race for the 2018-2019 school year

Consequence	Black %	Hispanic %	White %
2018-2019			
Administrator Conference	9.2	13.2	24.1
Detention After School	19.5	20.6	0.0
Lunch Detention	21.8	19.1	17.2
In-School Suspension	39.1	36.8	31.0
Out-of-School Suspension	2.3	1.5	3.4
Detention Before School	3.4	0.0	0.0
Saturday School	0.0	0.0	0.0
Parent Conference	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 11 contains the descriptive statistics for Absent Without Permission for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. In 2016-2017, Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned Administrator Conference more than twice as often as Grade 6 Black or Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Detention After School more than five times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls and more than twice as often as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned

Lunch Detention more than seven times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic or Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned to an Out-of-School Suspension more than five times as often as Grade 6 Black girls and almost four times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned to In School Detention more than five times as often as Grade 6 Black girls and almost four times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Black and Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned Saturday School more than 30 times as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Parent Conference more than 15 times as often as Grade 6 Black girls and almost twice as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls.

**Table 11.** Most frequently assigned consequences for absent without permission for Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years

School Year and Consequence	Black %	Hispanic %	White %
2016-2017			
Administrator Conference	0.0	1.4	0.0
Detention After School	3.6	1.4	7.7
Lunch Detention	7.1	0.0	0.0
In-School Suspension	46.4	47.8	46.2
Out-of-School Suspension	3.6	4.3	15.4
In School Detention	3.6	4.3	15.4
Saturday School	35.7	31.9	0.0
Parent Conference	0.0	8.7	15.4
2017-2018			
Administrator Conference	6.5	1.6	15.4
Detention After School	10.9	20.3	23.1
Lunch Detention	23.9	14.1	46.2
In-School Suspension	28.3	31.3	0.0
Out-of-School Suspension	2.2	1.6	0.0
Detention Before School	0.0	4.7	0.0
In School Detention	4.3	0.0	0.0
Saturday School	8.7	18.8	7.7
Parent Conference	8.7	4.7	7.7

In the 2017-2018 school year, Grade 6 White girls were assigned Administrator Conference more than 10 times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls and more than twice as often as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Hispanic and Grade 6 White girls were assigned Detention After School more than twice as often as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned Lunch Detention more than 30 times as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Lunch Detention more than 25 times as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to an Out-of-School suspension more than twice as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned Detention Before School more than four times as often as Grade 6 Black or Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned Saturday School almost three times as often as Grade 6 White girls and almost two times as often as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Black and Grade 6 White girls were assigned Parent Conference almost twice as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls.

Revealed in Table 12 are the descriptive statistics for Absent Without Permission for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years. In the 2018-2019 school year, Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Administrator Conference more than eighteen times as often as Grade 6 White girls and more than twice as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned

Detention After School more than two times as often as Grade 6 Black girls and almost two times as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned Lunch Detention more than eight times as often as Grade 6 White girls and almost three times as often as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned In-School Suspension more than five times as often as Grade 6 White girls and twice as often as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Out-of-School Suspension more than six times as often as Grade 6 White girls and three times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Detention Before School almost four times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls.

**Table 12.** Most frequently assigned consequences for absent without permission for Grade 6 girls by their ethnicity/race for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years

School Year and Consequence	Black %	Hispanic %	White %
2018-2019			
Administrator Conference	18.2	8.0	0.0
Detention After School	15.2	38.0	21.4
Lunch Detention	3.0	8.0	0.0
In-School Suspension	18.2	36.0	7.1
Out-of-School Suspension	6.1	2.0	
Detention Before School	6.1	2.0	7.4
Saturday School	0.0	0.0	0.0
Parent Conference	0.0	0.0	0.0
2019-2020			
Administrator Conference	12.5	8.0	11.1
Detention After School	20.8	23.0	11.1
Lunch Detention	20.8	4.0	11.1
In-School Suspension	25.0	43.0	22.2
Out-of-School Suspension	0.0	10.0	0.0
Detention Before School	8.3	1.0	0.0
In School Detention	4.2	3.0	11.1
Saturday School	0.0	0.0	0.0
Parent Conference	0.0	0.0	11.1

In the 2019-2020 school year, Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Administrative Conference more than 4% as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned Detention After School more than twice as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Lunch Detention more than five times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls and almost twice as often as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned to In-School Suspension almost twice as often as Grade 6 White girls and Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned to an Out-of-School Suspension more than ten times as often as Grade 6 Black or Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned Detention Before School more than eight times as often as Grade 6 White girls and more than seven times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned to In School Detention almost four times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic girls and almost three times as often as Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Parent Conference eleven times as often as Grade 6 Black or Grade 6 Hispanic girls. To determine the most common misbehaviors committed by Grade 6 girls, descriptive statistics were calculated separately by ethnicity/race and by school year. Once the most common misbehaviors were identified, then descriptive statistics were generated for the most common disciplinary consequence that was assigned to each misbehavior. The results will now be described.

## Discussion

In this multiyear article, the degree to which disparities existed between consequences assigned to specific misbehaviors was addressed for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Descriptive statistics were calculated to ascertain the most frequently committed student misbehaviors. Once identified, follow-up descriptive statistics were calculated to identify the most common disciplinary consequences that were assigned to each misbehavior. These analyses were conducted separately to answer the research questions by student ethnicity/race in each of the four school years.

The most common misbehaviors for Grade 6 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were Tardy, General Misconduct, Disruption of Class, and Absent Without Permission. In the 2016-2017 school year, the most common discipline consequences for Grade 6 Black girls were In-School Suspension, Lunch Detention, and Detention After School. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned In-School Suspension more than three times as often for Tardy, General Misconduct, and Disruption of Class as Grade 6 White girls. Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned Lunch Detention, Detention After School, and In-School Suspension most often. Lunch Detention was assigned to Grade 6 Hispanic girls at least 10% as often as it was assigned to Grade 6 Black girls. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Administrative Conference, Detention Before School, and Detention After School most often. Administrative Conference was assigned to Grade 6 White girls at least twice as often but, in most cases, three times as often as it was assigned to Grade 6 Black or Grade 6 Hispanic students. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Out-of-School Suspension for Absent Without Permission more than four times as often as either Grade 6 Black or Grade 6 Hispanic girls.

In the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years, similar trends emerged. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Administrative Conference on average at least three times as often as were Grade 6 Black or Grade 6 Hispanic Girls. Lunch Detention was also assigned to Grade 6 White girls more often than it was assigned to Grade 6 Black or Grade 6 Hispanic girls. Grade 6 Black girls were assigned In-School Suspension for Tardy, General Misconduct, and Disruption of Class more than three times as often as Grade 6 White girls and, in many cases, two times as often as Grade 6 Hispanic Girls. In-School Suspension was assigned to Grade 6 Hispanic girls for Absent Without Permission more than twice as often as it was assigned to Grade 6 Black girls and at least three times as often as Grade 6 White girls.

### Connections to Existing Literature

In this multiyear analysis, differences in the type of disciplinary consequences by ethnicity/race were established. The results previously discussed were congruent with the findings of numerous previous researchers (e.g., Hassan & Carter, 2021; Slate et al., 2016; Tiger, 2016). The findings from their studies were that disparities clearly exist between consequences assigned to girls by their ethnicity/race. In a review of discipline rates of Black and White girls, Hassan and Carter (2021) documented that in both higher and lower-performing schools, a disproportionate number of Black girls were assigned to an Out-of-School Suspension than were White girls.

In a study conducted in Texas, Slate et al. (2016) analyzed the frequencies and percentages of exclusionary discipline consequences assigned to Black, Hispanic, and White girls. They established that Grade 6 Black girls were assigned to almost twice the number of Out-of-School Suspensions than Grade 6 Hispanic girls and nine times the number of Out-of-School

Suspensions as Grade 6 White girls. In another investigation also conducted in Texas, Tiger (2016) documented that Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to In-School Suspension four times more often than were Grade 4 Hispanic girls and three times more often than Grade 4 White girls. The evidence of inequities discussed in this study is commensurate with the existing research literature that Black and Hispanic girls are more likely to be assigned exclusionary discipline than White girls.

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

Numerous implications for policy and practice can be determined by reviewing the results of this analysis. First, with respect to discipline policies, local school districts need to review current discipline policies to ensure that the policies are not written in a way that targets individuals by their ethnicity/race or by their economic status. Additionally, local policies on the number of days students can be assigned to a consequence could be adjusted to ensure that the discipline consequence achieves the desired outcome. Secondly, it is imperative that school district leaders and campus administrators take an intentional look at discipline statistics in regard to girls. A common theme when reviewing discipline is to make the assumption that boys and girls are similar, but statistics in this study dispute that. As school district and campus leaders review discipline data, themes will emerge and must be analyzed. Targeted professional development should be developed to address specific misbehaviors committed by each ethnicity/race. A one-size-fits-all strategy will likely not be successful as data do not support this type of strategy. Especially with the negative effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on student behavior, it is crucial for school leaders to prepare their staff members to address student behavior needs proactively.

Finally, it is critical for a school district to create effective partnerships with parents and the community. The school district must take the lead in organizing an effort to ensure that intentional strategies are promoted to ensure the success of girls in the system. Findings from this multiyear investigation provide insight into a concern with discipline consequence assignment for Grade 6 Black and Hispanic girls. A strategic plan should be developed to utilize the community to positively influence the experience that girls have in the public education system. The greater community can play an important part in the educational and social development of girls.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the results of this multiyear analysis, several recommendations can be made for future research. First, in this investigation, only data on Grade 6 girls were analyzed. As such, researchers are encouraged to extend this investigation to girls at other grade levels. Second, data on only girls in a single Texas school district were analyzed herein. Accordingly, researchers should analyze data from other school districts in Texas. The degree to which the findings delineated in this article are generalizable to other school districts in Texas is not known. Third, data from discipline consequences were analyzed only from the State of Texas. Whether the results discussed in this study are generalizable to other states is also not known. Researchers are encouraged to extend and replicate this investigation to other states. Fourth, other demographic characteristics should be addressed to ascertain the extent to which they might be related to inequities in discipline consequence assignment. Such characteristics might include ethnicity/race, gender, economic status, at-risk status, and Emergent Bilingual status. A final recommendation for future research would be to conduct qualitative investigations into the reasons for the disparities in disciplinary consequence assignments.



## Conclusion

In this multiyear investigation, the most common student misbehaviors committed by Grade 6 girls were identified. Then, the most common disciplinary consequence assigned a result was determined. Four years of data (i.e., 2016-2017 through 2019-2020) from a Texas suburban school district were analyzed. Results showed were that the most frequent misbehaviors across all four years were Tardy, General Misconduct, Disruption of Class, and Absent Without Permission. Grade 6 girls were assigned Administrative Conference, Lunch Detention, Detention Before After School, and In-School Suspension most often. Grade 6 White girls were assigned Administrative Conference more often than Grade 6 Black or Grade 6 Hispanic girls. In-School Suspension was assigned to Grade 6 Black and Grade 6 Hispanic girls more than twice as often as it was assigned to Grade 6 White girls. A larger discrepancy occurred with the assignment of Out-of-School Suspension. Grade 6 Black and Grade 6 Hispanic girls were assigned Out-of-School Suspension at least three times as often as Grade 6 White girls.

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