

In-School Suspension and Number of Days Assigned by the Ethnicity-Race of Grades 4 and 5 Girls: A Texas, Multiyear Analysis

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Abstract

In this statewide, multiyear investigation, the extent to which student ethnicity/race was related to the rate and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was addressed. Separate analyses were conducted for each grade level and for each of the four school years. Established in this investigation was the clear presence of differences in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 school years. In both grade levels, Black and Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a statistically significantly higher rate than White girls. Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school suspension, followed by White girls and Hispanic girls. Implications and recommendations for future research were made.

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Introduction

The Children's Defense Fund (1975) published a report in which they documented an increase in the assignment of students to an out-of-school suspension across the United States and the resulting negative effects of these suspensions on student academic performance (Skiba et al., 2011). One alternative suggested in the report was the use of in-school centers that would alleviate classroom issues for teachers by removing students from the regular classroom while still providing students with access to the educational environment. Today, the assignment of students to an in-school suspension is the most common form of exclusionary discipline consequence used to address student misbehaviors in the school setting (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

In the 2017-2018 school year, more than 2.6 million students were assigned to at least one day in an in-school suspension, resulting in their removal from the regular educational environment. Of this 2.6 million students assigned to an in-school suspension, 802,852 of them were girls. Despite Black girls being only 7.4% of the total enrollment of girls in public schools in the 2017-2018 school year, they accounted for 36.6% of all assignments to an in-school suspension. A similar trend was established for Hispanic girls who, though only being 13.3% of the total school enrollment, accounted for 23.9% of in-school suspension assignments. As such, Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate five times higher than their enrollment percentage, whereas Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate over twice their enrollment percentage (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

Texas, the state of interest in this article, accounted for more than 18% of the total number of girls in the United States who were assigned to at least one day in an in-school suspension in the 2017-2018 school year. With regard to ethnicity/race, similar trends were documented in in-school suspension assignments. Despite Black girls being only 6.1% of girls enrolled in Texas public schools, they accounted for 24.9% of assignments to an in-school suspension. A similar trend was present for Hispanic girls who despite being 25.7% of girls enrolled in public schools, accounted for more than half, 52.5%, of assignments to an in-

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school suspension. Accordingly, Black girls in Texas are assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate nearly four times higher than the enrollment percentage, whereas Hispanic girls are assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate twice that of their enrollment percentage (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

In a Texas statewide analysis, Slate et al. (2016) investigated the presence of inequities in the assignment of girls to exclusionary disciplinary consequences in the 2013-2014 school year. For Grades 4 and 5 girls, who are of focus in this article, Slate et al. (2016) documented the presence of clear disparities in the rates at which girls were assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. Though Grade 4 Black girls comprised a small percentage of the overall student enrollment, they accounted for more than half, 54%, of assignments to an in-school suspension. The frequency at which Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension increased by a factor of nearly six in Grade 5 as they were assigned to 1,152 in-school suspensions, 955 more assignments than in Grade 4. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a frequency nearly 12 times higher as they were assigned to 848 in-school suspensions, 776 more than in Grade 4.

In addition to the presence of inequities in the assignment of girls to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race, researchers (Harkrider, 2020; Miller, 2021; White, 2019) have also documented the presence of inequities in the number of days that girls are assigned to an in-school suspension with respect to their ethnicity/race. That is, the inequities that are present in being assigned to an exclusionary consequence are further exacerbated by inequities in the number of days assigned to the consequence. The issue of existing disparities in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension is of concern because it contributes to a loss of instructional time in the regular educational environment (Chu & Ready, 2018). In a Texas statewide investigation, White (2019) established that for Grades 6, 7, and 8 girls, Black girls were assigned to a statistically significantly higher number of days in an in-school suspension than were White and Hispanic girls in the 2015-2016 school year. White (2019) documented that Black girls in Grade 6 were assigned to 0.87 days more to an in-school suspension than were White girls. Black girls in Grade 7 were assigned to 0.94 days more to an in-school suspension than were White girls. Black girls in Grade 8 were assigned to 0.72 days more in an in-school suspension than were White girls.

Despite being assigned an average of fewer days to an in-school suspension than Black girls, Hispanic girls were still assigned to a statistically significantly higher number of days than White girls during the 2015-2016 school year. In Grade 6, Hispanic girls were assigned to 0.48 days more in an in-school suspension than were White girls. In Grade 7, Hispanic girls were assigned to 0.40 days more in an in-school suspension than were White girls. In Grade 8, Hispanic girls were assigned to 0.17 days more in an in-school suspension than were White girls.

Previous researchers (Barnes et al., 2017; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017; White & Slate, 2017) have primarily focused on inequities in exclusionary discipline practices for middle and high school students. In a Texas statewide investigation about Grades 4 and 5 students, Tiger (2016) determined that Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate that was statistically significantly higher than the in-school suspension rates for White or Hispanic girls in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. In both school years, Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate three times higher than were White and Hispanic girls. Readers should note that the findings of Tiger's (2016) study were in contrast to other studies where Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a lower rate than White girls despite comprising a majority of the enrollment population.

Although in-school suspension is viewed as a way to provide students with a consequence for misbehaviors while limiting the negative effects on their educational performance, researchers (Chu & Ready, 2018; Hilberth, 2010; Skiba et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2020) have determined that the assignment of students to an in-school suspension can lead to an increased likelihood of poor academic outcomes. Smith et al. (2020) conducted a study of 380,826 students enrolled in Texas public schools to explore the effect of assignment to an in-school suspension on their standardized test performance. They established that assignment to just one in-school suspension was a strong predictor of poor performance in both reading

and mathematics. Poor academic performance as a function of an in-school suspension has been attributed to the loss of instructional time in the regular educational environment (Chu & Ready, 2018; Skiba et al. 2011).

In a similar Texas statewide investigation, Hilberth (2010) established that assignment to an in-school suspension had statistically significant relationships to performance on standardized tests in reading and mathematics. Black students who were assigned to at least one in-school suspension had reading scores that were statistically significantly lower than the reading test scores of Black students who had not been assigned to an in-school suspension. Similar results were documented for mathematics. Black students who had been assigned to an in-school suspension had mathematics scores that were statistically significantly lower than the mathematics test scores of Black students who had not been assigned to an in-school suspension. The documentation of such inequities in both the assignment to an in-school suspension and in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension are of concern because these factors may be contributing to achievement gaps between students of color and White students.

In a recent investigation, Ibrahim et al. (2020) established that for Black girls, assignment to an in-school suspension was associated with lower mathematics course-taking. More specifically, Black girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were statistically significantly less likely to take higher level mathematics courses than Black girls who were not assigned to an in-school suspension. Ibrahim et al. (2020) also documented that higher scores on standardized mathematics tests and positive teacher-student relationships were associated with enrollment in higher level mathematics courses for Black girls. Thus, Black girls who were assigned to an in-school suspension were less likely to enroll in higher level mathematics courses and to perceive poorer relationships with their teachers. The negative effects on course enrollment associated with assignment to an in-school suspension, and thus student-teacher relationships, are of concerns because they may further contribute to the issue of inequities in the assignment of Black girls to in-school suspensions and other exclusionary consequences, and the resulting effects on their academic achievement.

Statement of the Problem

The prevalence of school administrators using exclusionary discipline practices as a management technique to address student misbehaviors has been on the increase since the 1970's (Children's Defense Fund, 1975). Today, the assignment of students to an in-school suspension remains the most common exclusionary discipline consequence. In the 2017-2018 school year, more than 2.6 million students were assigned to at least one day in an in-school suspension. Girls comprised more than 800,000 of these assignments to an in-school suspension (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). With respect to ethnicity/race, clear inequities have been established in the frequency with which girls are assigned to an in-school suspension (Slate et al., 2016), as have inequities in the number of days girls are assigned to an in-school suspension (Harkrider, 2020; Miller, 2021; White, 2019).

These documented inequities are of concern because researchers (Chu & Ready, 2018; Hilberth, 2010; Skiba et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2020) have established the assignment of girls to an in-school suspension is related to poor academic and social outcomes. Hilberth (2010) and Smith et al. (2020) determined that girls who had been assigned to at least one day in an in-school suspension were statistically significantly more likely to have poorer standardized reading and mathematics test scores than girls who had not been assigned to an in-school suspension. Ibrahim et al. (2020) documented that Black girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension were statistically significantly less likely to enroll in higher level mathematics courses than Black girls who had not been assigned to such a consequence. Ibrahim et al. (2020) suggested that enrollment in higher level mathematics courses contributed to stronger school bonding, such as positive relationships with adults on campus. Accordingly, Black girls who are assigned to an in-school suspension may be less likely to form strong student-teacher relationships, further exacerbating both their overrepresentation in exclusionary discipline consequences and to their poor academic outcomes.

Well established by researchers (Barnes et al., 2017; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017; White & Slate, 2017) have been the clear presence of inequities in the assignment of students to an in-school suspension in middle and high school settings. Existing literature on the presence of inequities in the assignment of elementary school students to an in-school suspension, however, is limited. Through a search of available literature, only one such study conducted by Tiger (2016) was located. Documented in her study was the presence of clear inequities in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an in-school suspension. In her investigation, Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate three times higher than the rate for White and Hispanic girls.

The first purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which ethnicity/race was related to the assignment of girls to an in-school suspension. Additionally, the extent to which ethnicity/race was related to the number of days that girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was investigated. Specifically examined were discipline data for Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls for the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. Accordingly, the extent to which trends were present in the assignment to an in-school suspension, as well as in the number of days assigned, was addressed.

This study was conducted to fill the void in the existing research literature regarding the presence of inequities in the assignment of elementary girls to an in-school suspension. Findings of this multiyear investigation can be used by educational leaders to review and to modify existing discipline policies and practices to lessen the presence of disparities in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to in-school suspension consequences. Further determining the presence of inequities in the assignment of elementary girls to exclusionary discipline consequences can justify future research investigations into alternative discipline practices for student misbehavior.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) For Grade 4 girls, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on assignment to an in-school suspension?; (b) For Grade 4 girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension?; (c) For Grade 5 girls, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on assignment to an in-school suspension?; (d) For Grade 5 girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension, what is the effect of their ethnicity/race on the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension?; (e) For Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls, to what extent are trends present in assignment to an in-school suspension?; and (f) For Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls, to what extent are trends present in the number of days assigned to an in-school suspension?

Method

Research Design

Present in this article was a causal-comparative research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Student ethnicity/race was the independent variable. Three racial/ethnic groups were present: (a) White, (b) Black, and (c) Hispanic. Two dependent variables were present in this study. The first dependent variable was the rate at which Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years. The second dependent variable was the number of days Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

Readers should note the presence of limitations in the use of a causal-comparative research design. Definitive cause and effect relationships cannot be determined through the use of such a research design (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). When using archival data, data cannot be manipulated or changed because these events have already occurred. As such, the degree to which generalizations can be made is limited.

Participants and Instrumentation

Participants in this study were Grades 4 and 5 girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and/or 2019-2020 school years. In-school suspension is a disciplinary consequence in which students are assigned to an alternative educational setting on their assigned campus (Texas Education Code, 2021). A Public Information Request was submitted to the Texas Education Agency Public Education Information Management System to obtain the disciplinary data for this study. Specifically requested were data about Black, Hispanic, and White Grades 4 and 5 girls who had been assigned to an in-school suspension and the number of days they were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020 school years. Data for Asian girls were not included in this study due to their very low numbers who are assigned to an exclusionary discipline consequence. Once received, the data were imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software program for statistical analyses.

Results

To ascertain whether differences were present in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 girls to an in-school suspension as a function of their ethnicity/race, Pearson chi-square analyses were conducted. The Pearson chi-square was the statistical procedure used because frequency data were present for the in-school suspension (i.e., assigned or not assigned). Accordingly, chi-squares are an optimal procedure when the independent and dependent variables are both categorical. (Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2011). With a large state-wide sample size, the available sample size per cell was met. Therefore, the assumptions for using Pearson chi-square procedures were met.

Results for in-school suspension and Grade 4 girls

In this section, results will first be presented for the first research question by school year. Also presented in this section will be results for the second research question by school year. Regarding the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 125.02, p < .001$, with respect to their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's *V*, was small, .17 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 4 Black girls were assigned most often to an in-school suspension of the three groups of girls; followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Of these three ethnic/racial groups of girls, Black girls had the lowest percent of student enrollment but the highest percentages of being assigned to an in-school suspension. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for Grade 4 girls

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
2016-2017			
Black	1,313	10.5	38.9
Hispanic	1,165	36.0	34.5
White	899	53.5	26.6
2017-2018			
Black	1,343	10.3	37.7
Hispanic	1,242	36.7	34.8
White	979	52.9	27.5
2018-2019			
Black	1,383	10.5	37.8
Hispanic	1,253	38.4	34.2
White	1,025	51.1	28.0
2019-2020			
Black	1,009	55.4	40.7
Hispanic	787	31.9	31.8
White	681	12.6	27.5

With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 132.79, p < .001$, with respect to their ethnicity/race, small

effect size, Cramer's V of .17 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 4 Black girls were assigned most often to an in-school suspension of the three groups of girls; followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Despite accounting for a small percentage of the total enrollment, Black girls had the highest percentages of being assigned to an in-school suspension. Table 1 contains the descriptive statistics for this school year.

Concerning the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 133.15$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .17 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 4 Black girls were assigned most often to an in-school suspension of the three groups of girls; followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. Although Black girls constituted a smaller portion of the total enrollment in comparison to White and Hispanic girls, they were assigned to the highest percentage of in-school suspensions. Presented in Table 1 are the descriptive statistics for this school year.

For the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 4 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 68.84$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .15 (Cohen, 1988). Despite comprising a smaller percentage of the total enrollment, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate 10% higher than Hispanic girls and nearly 13% higher than White girls. Revealed in Table 1 are the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Results for in-school suspension and Grade 5 girls

Regarding the 2016-2017 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 232070$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V , was small, .17 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension most often; followed by Black girls, and then White girls. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate nearly 10% higher than were Black girls and 20% higher than White girls. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate nearly 10% higher than White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for Grade 5 girls

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	% Not Assigned	% Assigned
2016-2017			
Black	2,052	47.8	33.4
Hispanic	2,587	43.2	42.1
White	1,502	9.0	24.5
2017-2018			
Black	2,108	9.4	33.7
Hispanic	2,666	47.2	42.6
White	1,485	52.9	23.7
2018-2019			
Black	2,073	40.7	32.1
Hispanic	2,806	48.9	43.4
White	1,589	10.4	24.6
2019-2020			
Black	1,560	45.7	33.5
Hispanic	1,979	43.3	42.5
White	1,115	11.0	24.0

In the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 173.92$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .15 (Cohen, 1988). Of the three groups, Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension most frequently; followed by Black girls, and then White girls. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a higher rate than were Black or Hispanic girls, 8.9% and 18.9%, respectively. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned to an in-school suspension 10% more frequently than were White girls. Table 2 contains descriptive statistics for this school year.

For the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 165.40$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .14 (Cohen, 1988). Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension most frequently, followed by Black girls and then White girls. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate more than 10% higher than were Black girls. The rate at which Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to such a consequence was nearly 20% higher than Grade 5 White girls. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned to such a consequence at a rate 8% higher than White girls. Delineated in Table 2 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Concerning the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was present in the assignment of Grade 5 girls to an in-school suspension, $\chi^2(2) = 107.10$, $p < .001$, by their ethnicity/race, small effect size, Cramer's V of .14 (Cohen, 1988). Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a rate nearly 10% more frequently than Black Girls and more than 18% more frequently than White girls. Grade 5 Black girls were more than 8% more likely to be assigned to in-school suspension than were White girls. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are present in Table 2.

Results for number of days Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension

Regarding the number of days Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension during the 2016-2017 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 3377) = 10.39$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .006$. The effect size for this finding was below small (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe' post hoc procedures revealed that all but one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension: Grade 4 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Grade 4 Black girls were assigned a statistically significant higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic and White girls, 0.36 and 0.25 more days, respectively. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are revealed in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for Grade 4 Black, Hispanic, and White girls

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Black	1,313	2.27	1.79
Hispanic	1,165	1.91	1.79
White	899	2.02	26.6
2017-2018			
Black	1,343	2.43	2.65
Hispanic	1,242	2.05	3.96
White	979	2.25	2.29
2018-2019			
Black	1,383	2.40	2.74
Hispanic	1,253	2.03	2.10
White	1,025	2.32	2.74
2019-2020			
Black	1,009	2.24	1.98
Hispanic	787	1.85	1.56
White	681	2.14	1.95

Concerning the 2017-2018 school year and the number of days Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 3564) = 5.03$, $p = .007$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe' post hoc procedures revealed that one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension: Grade 4 White and Hispanic girls were assigned to a similar number of days to an in-school suspension as were Grade 4 White girls and Black girls. Grade 4 Black girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days, 0.38 more days, to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic girls. Table 3 contains descriptive statistics for this school year.

With respect to the 2018-2019 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 3564) = 8.25$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .004$, below small effect size, in the number of days Grade 4 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that two pairwise comparisons were statistically significant. Grade 4 Black and White girls were assigned to a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Both Grade 4 Black and White girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic girls, 0.37 and 0.29 more days, respectively. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 3.

For the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 2477) = 10.13$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .008$, below small effect size. Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed two statistically significant pairwise comparisons. Grade 4 Black and White girls were assigned to a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Both Grade 4 Black and White girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic girls, 0.39 and 0.29 more days, respectively. Descriptive statistics for this school year are delineated in Table 3.

Results for number of days Grade 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension

Regarding the number of days Grade 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017 school year, the ANOVA yielded a statistically significant difference, $F(2, 6141) = 26.88$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that all but one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned a statistically significant higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic and White girls, 0.59 and 0.43 more days, respectively. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are revealed in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2016-2017			
Black	2,052	2.89	3.26
Hispanic	2,587	2.30	2.36
White	1,502	2.46	2.55
2017-2018			
Black	2,108	2.72	3.11
Hispanic	2,666	2.32	2.53
White	1,485	2.28	2.10
2018-2019			
Black	2,073	2.90	3.89
Hispanic	2,806	2.32	2.40
White	1,589	2.48	2.95
2019-2020			
Black	1,560	2.63	2.93
Hispanic	1,979	2.22	2.56
White	1,115	2.21	2.29

With respect to the 2017-2018 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 6259) = 17.04$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that all but one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned a statistically significant higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic and White girls, 0.40 and 0.44 more days, respectively. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are presented in Table 4.

Concerning the 2018-2019 school year, a statistically significant difference was revealed, $F(2, 6468) = 21.42$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .007$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe` post hoc procedures revealed that

all but one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned a statistically significant higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic and White girls, 0.58 and 0.42 more days, respectively. Table 4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

With respect to the 2019-2020 school year, a statistically significant difference was yielded, $F(2, 4654) = 12.44$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$, below small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Scheffe's post hoc procedures revealed that all but one pairwise comparison was statistically significant in the average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Hispanic and White girls were assigned a similar number of days to an in-school suspension. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned a statistically significant higher average number of days to an in-school suspension than were Hispanic and White girls, 0.41 and 0.42 more days, respectively. Delineated in Table 4 are descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Discussion

In this multiyear, Texas statewide analysis, the extent to which differences were present in the frequency and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school year was addressed. For all four school years and for both grade levels, the rates at which Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension were determined. Moreover, the average number of days Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was calculated for each school year.

In each school year, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned the highest total number of days to an in-school suspension followed by Hispanic girls, and then White girls. In the 2016-2017 school year through the 2019-2020 school year, Black girls were assigned an average of 2,956 days to an in-school suspension. Hispanic and White girls were assigned to an average of 2,193 days and 1,963 days, respectively. Therefore, during the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 school years, Black girls were assigned an average of more than 750 more days to an in-school suspension each year than were Hispanic girls and nearly 1,000 more days than White girls. Presented in Table 5 are summary statistics for the total number of days assigned to Grades 4 Black, Hispanic, and White girls for each school year.

Table 5. Summary of the total number of in-school suspension days assigned to Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls

School Year and Ethnicity/Race	Grade 4	Grade 5
2016-2017		
Black	2,981	5,930
Hispanic	2,225	5,950
White	1,815	3,695
2017-2018		
Black	3,263	5,734
Hispanic	2,546	6,185
White	2,202	3,386
2018-2019		
Black	3,319	6,012
Hispanic	2,544	6,510
White	2,378	3,940
2019-2020		
Black	2,260	4,103
Hispanic	1,455	4,393
White	1,457	2,464

In each school year present, Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned the highest total number of days to an in-school suspension followed by Black girls, and then White girls. During the four school years present, Hispanic girls were assigned an average of 5,760 days to an in-school suspension. In comparison, Black and White girls were assigned to an average of 5,445 days and 3,371 days, respectively. Therefore, during the

2016-2017 through 2019-2020 school years, Hispanic and Black girls were assigned an average of more than 2,000 more days to an in-school suspension each year than were White girls. Presented in Table 2.5 are summary statistics for the total number of days assigned to Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls for each school year.

With respect to differences between grade levels during the 2016-2017 through 2019-2020 school years, Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned a higher average number of days to an in-school suspension in Grade 5 than were Black, Hispanic, and White girls in Grade 4. Grade 5 Black girls were assigned an average of 2,489 more days to an in-school suspension than were Black girls in Grade 4. Grade 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to an average of 3,567 more days than were Hispanic girls in Grade 4. Grade 5 White girls were assigned an average of 1,408 more days than were White girls in Grade 4.

Regarding the rates of in-school suspension assignment for Grade 4 girls, ethnic/racial inequities were clearly evident. In all four school years, Grade 4 Black girls had the highest rates of being assigned to an in-school suspension. Not only were Grade 4 Black girls overrepresented based on their enrollment percentage, they were also disproportionately assigned to such a consequence when compared to Hispanic and White girls. Depicted in Figure 1 are the rates of in-school suspension assignment for Grade 4 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 school years.

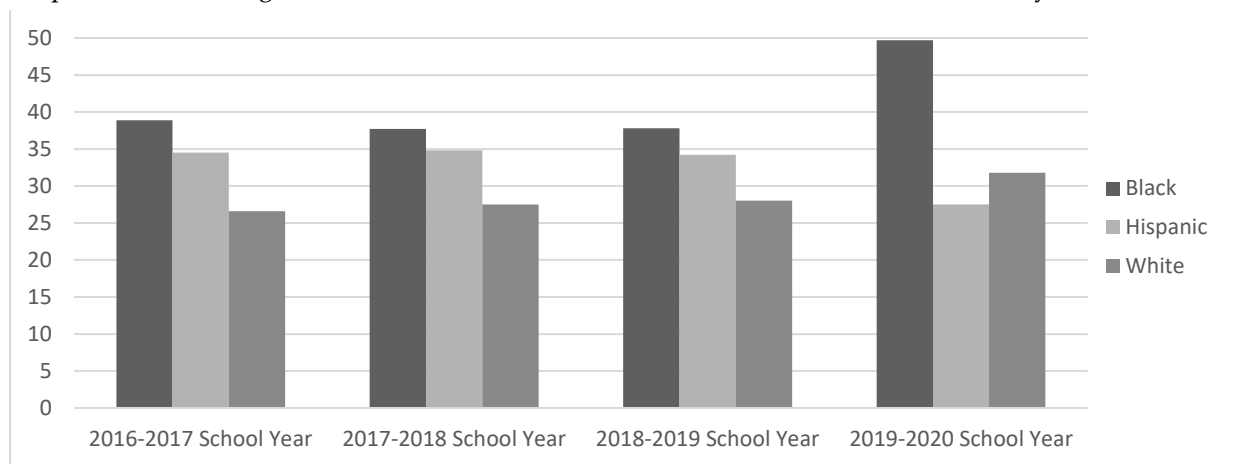


Figure 1. Rate of in-school suspension assignments to Grade 4 girls by ethnicity/race

A similar trend was present for Hispanic girls in Grade 5. In all four school years, Grade 5 Hispanic girls had the highest rates of assignment to an in-school suspension, followed by Black girls and then White girls. Despite being assigned to an in-school suspension less frequently than Hispanic girls, Grade 5 Black girls were the most overrepresented group based on their enrollment percentages. In-school suspension assignment frequencies for Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls in all four school years are displayed in Figure 2.

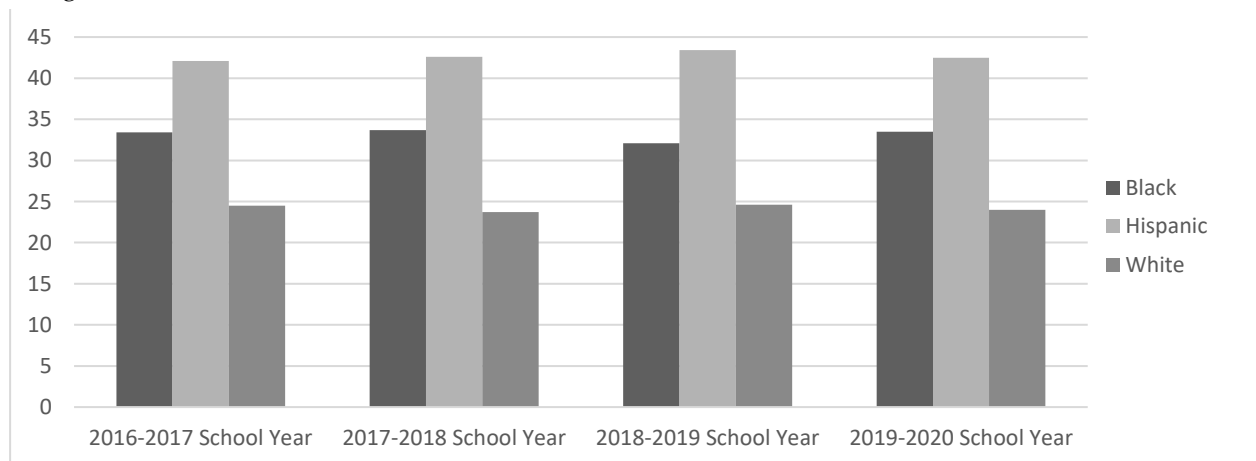


Figure 2. Rate of in-school suspension assignments to Grade 5 girls by ethnicity/race

Concerning the number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension, clear inequities were present by ethnicity/race. In each school year, Grade 4 Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school suspension, followed by White girls, and then Hispanic girls. Hispanic girls were assigned the lowest average number of days to an in-school suspension, despite accounting for the highest percentage of the total student enrollment. Illustrated in Figure 3 are the average number of days that Grade 4 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in each school year.

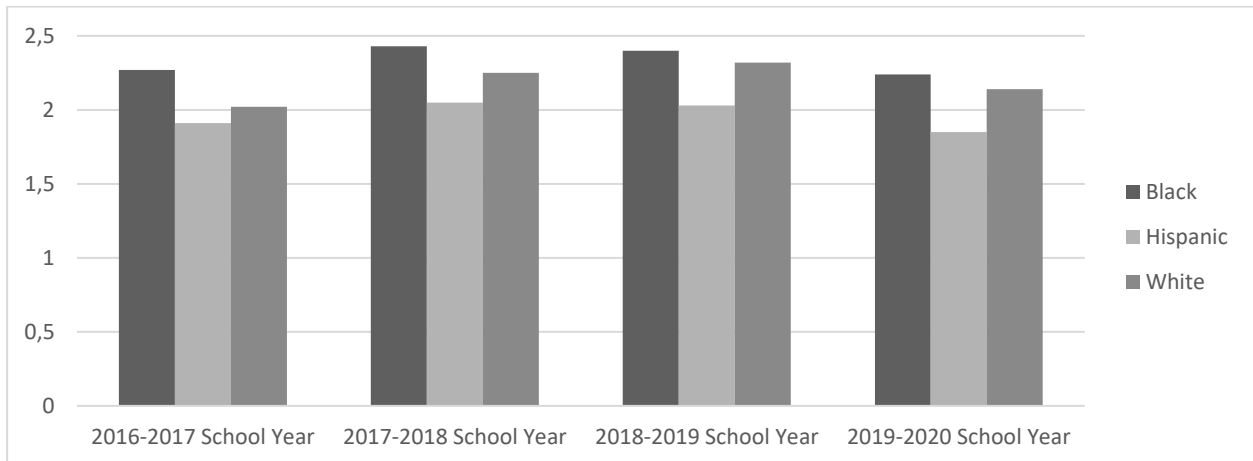


Figure 3. Average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grade 4 Black, Hispanic, and White girls

Disparities in the average number of days that Grade 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension were also determined. In all four school years, Grade 5 Black girls were assigned the highest average number of days to an in-school suspension, followed by White girls, and then by Hispanic girls. Despite comprising the highest percentage of the total enrollment, Hispanic girls were assigned the lowest average number of days to an in-school suspension. Depicted in Figure 4 are the average number of days that Grade 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension in each school year.

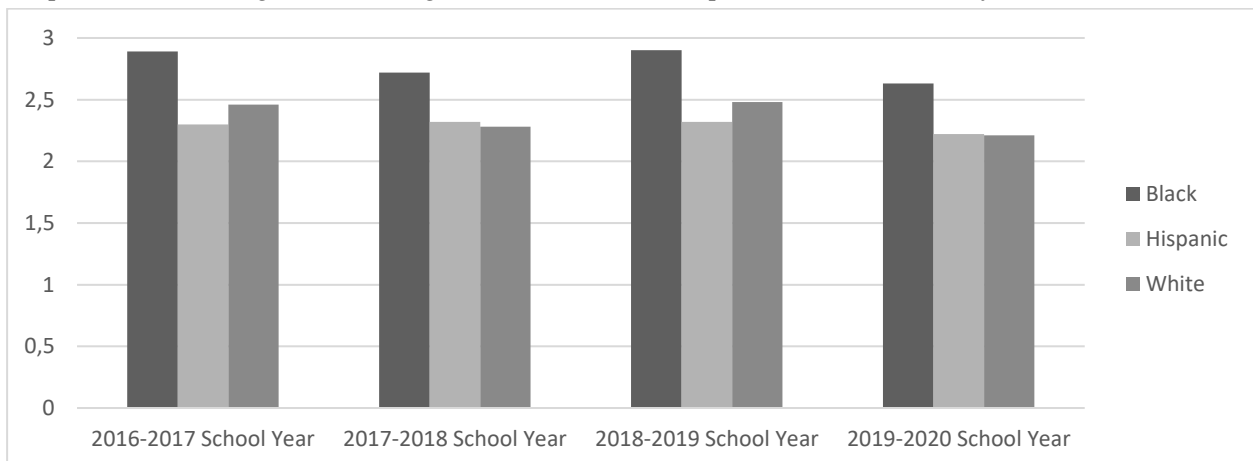


Figure 4. Average number of days assigned to an in-school suspension for Grades 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls

Discussion

Established in this multiyear, statewide investigation was the presence of differences in the rates and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 girls were assigned to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race. Though disparities have been well documented by researchers (e.g., Barnes et al., 2017a; Hilberth & Slate, 2014; Miller, 2021; Morris & Perry, 2017; White & Slate, 2017) at the middle and high school level, few

researchers have established the presence of such differences at the elementary school level. In a previous Texas investigation, Tiger (2016) documented the presence of differences in the assignment of Grades 4 and 5 students to an in-school suspension by their ethnicity/race. In both Grades 4 and 5, Black students were assigned to an in-school suspension at statistically significantly higher rates than were White students. In her study, Tiger (2016) determined that Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension less frequently than were Black girls or White girls. For this article, Hispanic girls, along with Black girls in both Grades 4 and 5, were assigned to an in-school suspension at higher rates than were White girls. Of note in this investigation is that Grades 4 and 5 Hispanic girls were assigned to a lower average number of days in an in-school suspension.

Conclusion

In this Texas multiyear investigation, the extent to which student ethnicity/race was related to the rate and number of days that Grades 4 and 5 Black, Hispanic, and White girls were assigned to an in-school suspension was addressed. Separate analyses were conducted for each grade level and for each of the four school years. In all four school years, Grades 4 and 5 Black and Hispanic girls were assigned to an in-school suspension at a statistically significantly higher rate than White girls. Black girls in both Grades 4 and 5 were assigned to an in-school suspension at the highest rate, despite comprising the small percentage of the total enrollment. In each of the four school years, Grades 4 and 5 Black and White girls were assigned a statistically significantly higher number of days in an in-school suspension than Hispanic girls. In each of the of the four school years, and for both grade levels, Black girls were assigned to the highest number days in an in-school suspension.

Implications and Recommendations

As a result of the findings of this study, implications for practice can be made. School district and campus administrators are encouraged to analyze discipline data for their school district or campus. They are specifically encouraged to focus on the rate and number of days that girls in elementary schools are being assigned to an in-school suspension as a method of managing behavior. These administrators should evaluate their behavior management practices in an effort to minimize the use of exclusionary discipline techniques. Campus level administrators should also consider the well documented effects that assignment to an in-school suspension has on students' academic achievement as a result of lost instructional time. Campus leaders should analyze student achievement data to determine if exclusionary consequence use is negatively influencing student academic performance.

The results of this study could also be used as evidence to support policy changes. School districts and school boards should examine existing policy to determine if changes can be made to lessen the frequency at which exclusionary discipline measures are utilized. More specifically, the development of a district wide behavioral management plan that includes clear goals and action steps for the reduction of such disparities may be effective in reducing the differences in exclusionary discipline assignment. This plan may include a focus on the use of discipline management techniques that better preserve instructional time while effectively managing behavior.

In this multiyear, statewide study, a relationship between assignment to an in-school suspension by ethnicity/race was established for elementary school girls. Based on the results of this study, several recommendations for future research studies can be made. First, an investigation to determine the extent to which assignment to an in-school suspension in Grades 4 and 5 is related to student ethnicity/race is warranted. Secondly, researchers should examine the relationship between assignment to an in-school suspension and student economic status. Additionally, these studies should be replicated for boys enrolled in elementary schools. Finally, researchers are encouraged to replicate this investigation in other states to determine the extent to which the results discussed herein are generalizable to other states.

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