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# A Comparison of School Suspension Rates and Number of Days Suspended between African-American and Caucasian Males

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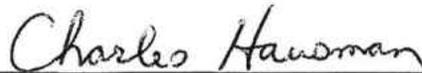
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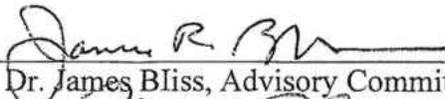
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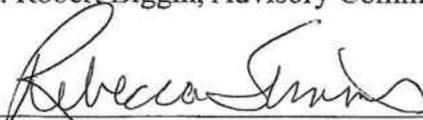
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Date March 30, 2016

A Comparison of School Suspension Rates and Numbers of Days Suspended between  
African American and Caucasian Males

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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## DEDICATION

I would like to thank my lord, and savior Jesus Christ for guiding me through this process and never leaving me. Without him, this would have not happened due to his love, kindness and direction. He has shown me the way. As I look back over my life and all you have done for me, I am truly blessed.

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## ABSTRACT

Racial discrimination plays a major role in out-of-school suspensions. Research shows that when students are suspended, they are removed from their learning environment, which can lead to poor academic achievement, lower graduation rates, and higher delinquency. The distribution of racial and ethnic minorities that are being suspended or expelled reveal disparities between the groups. Within the United States public school system, racial disparities have been documented over time to show African-American students are suspended from school at higher rates than any other race (Arcia, 2007; Bulter et al, 2012; Rocque, 2010; Skiba et al, 2002; Townsend, 2000).

School systems should be more proactive when dealing with student learning outcomes based on research and become more involved in student retention. Schools administrators should provide students with strong mentoring programs, family involvement activities and activities that build strong relationships with the parents and teachers of the students. The findings from the current study look at the impact out-of-school suspension has on African-American males and the outcomes for academic achievement. Since out-of-school suspension is increasing in many school districts across the United States, education leaders need to look at the effectiveness of suspension.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	Problem Statement.....	1
	Rationale for the Study .....	4
	Conceptual Framework for Outcomes of Suspension .....	5
II.	LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
	Overview of Suspension Trends.....	8
	Background Characteristics of Suspended Student .....	9
	Reasons for Suspension .....	15
	Outcomes for Students that are Suspended.....	21
III.	METHODOLGY.....	27
	District Information .....	28
	Sample.....	28
	Dependent Variables.....	28
	Independent Variables .....	29
	Data Collection .....	29
	Data Analysis .....	29
	Limitations of the Study.....	30
IV.	RESULTS.....	31
	Backgrounds of Suspended Students .....	31
V.	DISCUSSION .....	49
	Background of Suspended Students.....	50
	Suspension of Students by Grade Level .....	52
	Other Characteristics of Suspended Students .....	53
	Recommendations.....	57
	Closing.....	61
VI.	LIST OF REFERENCES .....	63
VII.	VITA .....	68

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
4.1. Suspensions of Grade Level.....	32
4.2. Students Suspended by Race/Ethnicity.....	33
4.3. Gender of Suspended Students.....	33
4.4. Eligibility for Free /Reduced Lunch of Suspended Students.....	34
4.5. Special Education Status of Suspended Students.....	34
4.6. English Language Learner.....	35
4.7. African-American Males.....	36
4.8. Grade Level of Suspended African American Males.....	36
4.9. Eligibility for Free/Reduced Lunch Status of Suspended African American Males.....	37
4.10. Special Education Status of Suspended African-American Males.....	38
4.11. English Language Proficiency of Suspended African-American Males.....	38
4.12. Total Number of Suspensions.....	39
4.13. Infractions Leading to First Suspension for African-American Males.....	39
4.14. Infraction Leading to First Suspension: African-American Males vs Others Crosstabulation.....	40
4.15. Independent Samples T-Test: Total Days Suspended for First Offense By African-American Males vs Other.....	44
4.16. Independent Samples T-Test: Total Days Suspended for Across All Offenses by African-American Males vs Others.....	45
4.17. Referred to Police for 1st Incident by African-American Males vs Others Crosstabulation.....	46
4.18. Referred to Court for 1st Incident by African-American Males vs Others Crosstabulation.....	47
4.19. Referred to a Special Program for 1st Incident by African-American Males vs Others Crosstabulation.....	48
4.20. Referred to Alternative School for 1st Incident by African-American Males vs. Others Crosstabulation.....	49
5.1. Students Suspended by Race/Ethnicity.....	52

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The educational system in the United States continues to struggle with the equality in education for all students regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status since the 1950's when desegregation began. School disciplinary practices often exclude students in the United States from the educational process and achieving academic success. Students receiving repeated out-of-school suspensions have a variety of negative outcomes such as academic failure, low graduation rates and high drop-out rates (Arcia, 2007; Hucks, 2011; Townsend, 2000). Most out-of-school suspensions are due to minor infractions such as class disruption, not reporting to after-school detention and defiance toward school authorities, as opposed to dangerous or violent acts (Arcia, 2007; Townsend, 2000). Within the plight of out-of-school suspensions, some research shows that when students are suspended they feel unwanted, have an increase chance of becoming delinquent, and are unable to move to the next grade level (Arcia, 2007; Rocque, 2010; Townsend, 2000).

### **Problem Statement**

*Brown v. Board of Education* (in 1954) prohibited desegregation is still a difficult subject of discussion and debate. Researchers continue to investigate the impact of the case, as well as the impact out-of-school suspensions on academic achievement, low socioeconomic status students, students with disabilities, and students from different ethnic backgrounds. Also, some researchers look through the lens of Critical Race Theory to better understand this issue. Critical Race Theory challenges racism as institutionalized and promotes equalitarianism. Critical Race Theory can be used to focus on many

different issues such as race, social justice and exploring issues of power in public schools. Zero tolerance policy is a policy that can be investigated by using Critical Race Theory. Nationwide implementation of zero tolerance policies have increased suspensions over time in many school districts. Specifically, suspension rates doubled in the United States, since the zero tolerance policy was implemented from 1.7 million in 1974 to 3.1 million in 2001 (Teske, 2011).

Zero tolerance policies are more common in predominantly African-American and Latino school districts compared to other districts. Research indicates during the 1996-1997 school year, these districts had more zero tolerance policies that address violence (85%), firearms (97%), drugs (92%) and other forms of weapons (94%) as compared to districts serving primarily Caucasian students. Additionally, in 2000, a survey conducted by the Office of Civil Rights, which included 97% of the nation's school districts found a total of 3,053,499 student suspensions and 97,177 expulsions (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace & Bachman, 2008). In 2008, it was reported that 3.3 million students were suspended in American schools (Christle, Nelson, & Jolivette, 2004; Lee, Gregory, & Fan, 2011).

Racial discrimination may play a major role in out-of-school suspensions. Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles (1982) define discrimination as a disciplinary practice that is favorable to one group and unfavorable to another group or unequal treatment of another behavior. However, Skiba & Knesting (2001) contend that overuse of suspension of African-American students is not necessarily racial bias, but disproportionality in discipline for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

The distributions of racial and ethnic minorities that are being suspended or expelled reveal racial disparities between the groups. Using survey data from the National Center for Educational Statistics, it is estimated that the percentage of African-American high school students that were suspended rose from 37% in 1999 to 49% in 2003 as compared to Caucasian students at 18.2% in 1999 to 17.7 % in 2007 (Hoffman, 2012).

Within the United States public school system, racial disparities have been documented over time to show African-American students are suspended from school at higher rates than any other race (Arcia, 2007; Bulter, Lewis, Moore, & Scott, 2012; Rocque, 2010; Skiba, Michael, Nardo & Peterson, 2002; Townsend, 2000). The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) was the first document to show a difference in the discipline gap. The two main points that emerged out of the CDF 1975 report were that use of suspension in public schools removed around one million students from the school district, and one in every eight African American students were suspended compared to one in every 16 Caucasian students. The findings from the CDF report provided a national platform for researchers and educators to study the link between racial discrimination and out-of-school suspensions.

The Children's Defense Fund was also the first study to show that African-American students are suspended at a rate of two to three times higher than Caucasian students at the elementary, middle and high school levels (Arcia,2007; Bulter et al., 2012; Ganao, Silvestre, & Glenn, 2013; Gregory and Weinstein, 2007; Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). In 2006, African-American students comprised only 17% of students in public schools, yet their suspension rates

were 37.4 % which was higher than any other ethnic group (Children's Defense Fund, 2011).

Skiba, Michael, Nardo & Peterson (2002) conducted a study with a sample of middle school students from a large, urban Midwestern public school district. The district is one of the 15 largest in the United States and serves a student population of over 50,000. There were 11,001 students in 19 middle schools in the district for the 1994-1995 school year. The results indicated that African-American students were overrepresented on all measures of school discipline (referrals, suspensions, and expulsions) while Caucasian students were underrepresented on all measures of school discipline. African-American students' statistics worsen as one moves from suspension to expulsion.

### **Rationale for the Study**

Out-of-school suspension is an important topic to consider when working with stakeholders and educators. When students are suspended from school, they are missing opportunities for learning which can lead to academic failure and low graduation rates. Lower education levels are correlated negatively with quality of life indicators such as career earnings. Students that are suspended from school potentially spend unsupervised time on the streets, which may lead to an increase in juvenile delinquency. This is supported by research indicating that adolescents from single-mother families, as compared to two-parent families, engage in high levels of delinquency due to lack of monitoring and supervision (Hines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013).

Research demonstrates that African-American, disabled, and students from low socioeconomic groups have higher suspension rates compared to their counterparts

(Arcia, 2007; Gregory and Weinstein, 2007; Skiba et al., 2002). This study will compare the suspension rates of African-American students to Caucasian students in one urban district. Furthermore, it will compare the infractions for which they are suspended and the number of days suspended for similar infractions.

A longitudinal database will be utilized for this study. The comprehensive database includes student demographics such as gender, disability, race, income level status and English proficiency. It is expected that this study will provide data to inform educators about practices and outcomes regarding out-of-school suspensions that will lead to a decrease in the use of out of school suspension and greater social and organizational justice.

### **Conceptual Framework for Outcomes of Suspension**

The conceptual framework around which this study will focus is provided in Figure 1.1 below.



*Figure 1.1: Framework of Suspension, Gender, disability, socioeconomic status, race, and number of days suspended.*

This diagram suggests the likelihood of suspension is directly influenced by race, gender, disability, and socioeconomic status. Further, it highlights they need to examine the possibility of additional inequities such as suspensions for lesser infractions and

longer suspensions for similar infractions. Regardless, out of school suspensions results in negative outcomes such as lower graduation rates Adding to the knowledge base surrounding suspension and its cause may influence future policies in a positive way and thus reduce the incident of suspensions.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do the rates of suspension of African-American students compare to Caucasian students?
2. For what infractions are African-American students getting suspended?
3. Are there differences in the number of days suspended for the same infractions between Caucasian and African-American students?

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This review focuses on the research the characteristics of students receiving out of school suspension. It further reviews the limited research on the consequences and number of days that students are suspended. There are two main purposes for this study. The first is to describe the different backgrounds of students that are suspended from school. The second is to analyze the infractions for which students are suspended and the consequences when students are suspended from school, both of which are disaggregated by student background. This study includes the following student background characteristics: race, gender, socioeconomic status (ie, eligibility for free or reduced lunch) and disability.

Three research questions guide this study:

#### **Research Questions**

1. How do the rates of suspension of African-American students compared to Caucasian students?
2. For what infractions are African-American students getting suspended?
3. Are there differences in the number of days suspended for the same infractions between Caucasian and African-American students?

The literature review begins by providing a historical overview and examining trends with out-of-school suspensions. The information regarding the historical overview and trends sheds light on the increase in suspension and how it has affected school districts across the United States. Student offenses leading to suspensions discussed next, including a focus on the characteristics of student groups and student outcomes. After examining the trends describing suspended students, the literature review examines the

research literature on student offenses. This section of the literature review describes various offenses that may contribute to student suspension. The influence of zero tolerance policies on suspension rates is discussed.

The last component of the literature review examines the consequences of students suspended from school. The consequences include impact on low academic achievement, low graduation rates, high drop-out rates, and juvenile delinquency. The findings from studies on the results of student suspensions are shared within this literature review.

### **Overview of Suspension Trends**

Out of school suspension is defined as a disciplinary sanction requiring the student to be excluded from the school building for a specified period of time not to exceed 10 school days (Gibson and Haight 2013; Mednez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002; Rose, 1988). When students are suspended from school, it is intended and perceived as a punishment for their actions. The primary goal of suspending students is to decrease the potential that a student will have multiple suspensions or be expelled. Christle et al, (2004) describe students who are typically suspended: (a) as male, (b) from low socioeconomic families, (c) of a minority ethnic background, and (d) identified as having a disability or low academic competence.

When students are suspended, they are removed from their learning environment, which can lead to poor academic achievement, lower graduation rates, and higher delinquency, and no supervision from adults in the educational system. African American students living in poverty are often victims of a failing society and school system due to inadequately prepared teachers and poor learning conditions. School administrators

sometimes use out-of- school suspensions as a way to drive students from school, which leads to higher dropout and expulsion rates.

Within racial and ethnic groups, suspension and school discipline over the years has increased. A study conducted by Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace & Bachman (2008) used data from University of Michigan's Monitoring the Future study, which originally employed a national sample of 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders from the 48 contiguous United States. The final sample for this study included only diverse students in 10<sup>th</sup> grade from 2001-2005. Results showed that African-American students had the highest suspension and expulsion rates compared to other ethnic groups. In addition, the results showed that when data were also disaggregated by gender, African-American males more were 330% (3.3 times) more likely than Caucasian students to be suspended or expelled from school.

### **Background Characteristics of Suspended Student**

#### *Gender*

Male students have higher rate of disciplinary sanctions and suspensions compared to female students. The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014) found that boys and girls represent all of the student population, but boys make up three-fourths (75%) of suspended students. Similarly, Skiba et al. (2002) found boys are four times likely as girls to be referred to the office.

Mendez and Knoff (2002) conducted a study on school suspensions in a school district in Florida that served 138,761 students. The school district is one out of 67 in Florida, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest school district in the United States. Schools in the district served higher percentages of inner city and rural students. These had higher suspension rates than schools in suburban areas in part due to low socioeconomic status of families

in the urban and rural area. The purpose of the study was to investigate which students were getting suspended and why. When the data were analyzed by gender, the researchers found that for more males experience at least one suspension compared to females. Furthermore, there appears to be a gender and race interaction that affects school suspension. As evidence, 26.28% of African-American males were suspended at least once compared to 11.95% of Caucasian males and 11.63% of Hispanic males. In addition, such inequalities were evident as early as elementary school during which black males were more than three times as likely to be suspended compared to Caucasian and Hispanic males.

Skiba and colleagues (2002) conducted a similar study that included all middle-school students in grades 6, 7 and 8, with four students listed as grade 9. The school district is one of the fifteen largest cities in the United States. The study utilized data from the school's disciplinary records for 11,001 students. Male students accounted for 51.8 % of the sample, and 48.2 % were females. In this study, 3,187 African-American males were suspended, compared to 2,398 Caucasian males.

Many studies have used the interaction between gender and race to study the effect of out of school suspensions on secondary students. Numerous researchers have shown that when gender is linked to race and suspension, African American males from high poverty environments are suspended more than any other group (Arcia, 2007; Bulter et al., 2012; Rocque, 2010; Skiba et al., 2002; Townsend, 2000).

## *Race*

Many studies have indicated that racial minority students are disproportionately suspended than Caucasian students. African American students are more likely than Caucasian students to be sent to the principal's office or be suspended. According to Mendez and Knoff (2003), in 1997, African-American students made up approximately 17% of students enrolled in public education, but they represented 32% of all students who were suspended. Across the United States, African-American students were suspended two to three times more than Caucasian students.

According to Fenning and Rose (2007), African-American students received 30% of all suspensions yet, only comprised 15% of the total school population. African-American males are suspended more frequently compared to their Caucasian male counterparts (Arcia, 2007; Bulter et al., 2012; Rocque, 2010; Skiba et al., 2002; Townsend, 2000). For example, African-American students were suspended or expelled 2 times more than white students (Mendez and Knoff, 2003). In another study, a study of over three years of suspension data in a Florida school district revealed that African-American students were four times as likely to be suspended as Asian students and twice as likely compared to White or Hispanic students (Arcia, 2007).

Several studies have indicated that corporal punishment rates are disproportionate as well. In a national survey, African-American males composed 8.23% of the total student population; however, they received corporal punishment, and were suspended at higher rates over three times their percentage in the population (Townsend, 2000).

McFadden and Marsh (1992) conducted a study using 4,391 discipline files from nine different schools in a south Florida district where corporal punishment is permitted

by law. The study used continuous data between August 1987 and April 1988. The purpose of the study was to compare race and gender difference in the occurrence and treatment of school children's. The study looked at the rates of referral, types of violations and types of punishments administered for those violations. They concluded that African-American students had a 36.7 % rate of disciplinary referrals which was lower than the 46.1% rate for Caucasian students. However, this difference was attributed to bias that existed in the decision to refer students. In addition, African-American students received higher rates of corporal punishment (54.1%) and suspension (43.9%), compared the rate of their Caucasian counterparts at 33.1% and 35.0%, respectively.

#### *Socioeconomic Status*

Some specific risk factors such as individual, peers, family, school and community have a significant influence on reasons students get suspended. Within specific communities, students from high inner city crime areas or low socioeconomic status have a greater risk of becoming suspended due to their social life and lack of parental involvement (Arcia,2007; Gregory & Weinstein, 2007; Krezmien et al., 2006; Skiba et al., 2002). Socioeconomic status has been demonstrated to be a factor associated with disciplinary action such as student suspension. For example, students that are from low income areas receive harsher consequences in many cases compared to, as students from high income areas (Hoffman, 2012). Students from low socioeconomic families may experience bias from a teacher, which impacts the expectations for students that were suspended.

School resources are limited for students that are living in high poverty urban

areas such areas have increased risk of suspension of students, especially those living in a single parent home. Wright and associates (2014) found that students living in a two parent household have greater access to quality educational resources which may reduce the odds of suspension. However, adolescents living apart from their fathers are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school. Students whose fathers did not have a full-time job were significantly more likely to be suspended than students whose fathers were employed (Skiba et al., 2002).

Researchers have used student eligibility for free or reduced lunch as a measure of poverty (Arcia, 2007; Skiba et al., 2002; Townsend, 2000). Geographic location of schools has a significant effect on students who receive free or reduced lunch. Mendez and Knoff (2003) conducted a study on a school district in Florida that served 138,761 students from inner-city and rural schools where 95% of the children received free or reduced lunch. The study reported that Black students accounted for 78% of those who received free or reduced lunch, a much higher rate than compared to Caucasian and Hispanic students.

Skiba, Micheal, Nardo and Peterson (2002) conducted a study of 11,001 students. Over Sixty-five point three percent were students that received free lunch, and 8.1% received reduced. Approximately 27% did not qualify for free or reduced lunch. The study found that out of the 2,476 students that were suspended, 81.6% received free or reduced lunch compared to the 18.4% eligibility rate of the students that were not suspended. Students within disadvantaged communities faced many problems such as low paying jobs, poor school performance, and family related stress (Arcia, 2007; Krezmien et al., 2006; Skiba et al., 2002).

### *Students with Disabilities*

According to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014), students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension (13%) than students without disabilities (6%). This study also indicated that students with disabilities represent a quarter of students arrested and referred to law enforcement, but comprise only about 12% of the student population. Achilles and Associates (2007) found that suspension rates for special education students were 20% versus 10% of the overall student population. The higher rates exist despite the protections for students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guides schools on consequences for disabled students who commit discipline infractions. The school districts can suspend or move a student with a disability for up to 10 days. However, before the student can be suspended, a special team is charged with determining whether the behavior was related to the learner's disability to ensure due process (Rose, 1988). Rose (1988) notes that with disabilities learners may be expelled in appropriate circumstances, if procedural guidelines have been followed, with two restrictions. First, the learner may not be expelled if the specialized team has determined that the punishable behavior is related to the learners disability, and (b) complete termination of educational services is not allowed during the exclusion period.

In the 2006-2007 academic year over 552,161 students with disabilities were excluded from school for violations of school safety policies for 10 days or less and 75,864 for more than 10 days (Losinski, Katsiyannis, Ryan & Baughan, 2014). Dickson

and Miller (2006) highlight that there is an exception to the 10-day rule. Specifically, because if a student with disabilities brings weapons or drugs to school, the school could move the students to an interim educational setting for 45 days. In the same report, the authors noted that schools are not required to provide educational services, but once the student reaches 10 cumulative suspension days in a year, the school must provide services for any subsequent suspensions days. Therefore, it is important to make sure the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is current and updated when dealing with disciplinary and behaviors.

Students with emotional and behavior disorder (EBD) and learning disabilities (LD) have a higher risk of suspension than students with any other disabilities (Achilles et.al., 2007; Goran and Gage, 2011; Krezmien et al., 2006). Achilles and associates (2007) found that adolescent suspension rates were among the highest for students in the LD (12%), EBD (44%), and other health impaired (OHI; 21%) categories. In the state of Kansas, students with behavioral disorders were eleven times more likely to be suspended or expelled from school compared to non-disabled students. Emotionally handicapped (EH) students in Florida were suspended in numbers that were more than twice those of the general student population (Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002). Therefore, students with EBD and LD are more likely have long term negative outcomes such as academic failure and increased drop-out rates as a result of suspensions.

## **Reasons for Suspension**

### *Student Behavior*

Educators, school administrators and policymakers need to focus their attention on equalities of school discipline to address the achievement gap between African-

American students and Caucasian students. School discipline can be administered in several different forms such as for minor actions like sending students to the principal's office or more severe sanctions like suspension and expulsion (Wallace et.al., 2008).

Fenning and Rose (2007) contented that school systems need to administrated more fair discipline to the students with the following suggestions: (a) the review of discipline data to determine what infractions result in suspension (e.g., whether minor nonviolent offenses result in suspension) and if certain groups are overrepresented in the most exclusionary discipline consequences; (b) the creation of a collaborative discipline team to create proactive discipline consequences that are fair to all; (c) the provision of school-wide professional development to help promote cultural competence, particularly around issues of classroom management and teacher-to-student interchanges; and (d) the development of more proactive school discipline policies based on models of positive behaviors support for all students. Suspension and expulsion are the most common responses in discipline policies that are not effective in meeting the needs of students.

Skiba, Peterson & Williams (1997) conducted a study of two different school systems to analyze the most common types of disciplinary referrals and consequences and the differences between these school districts. Group one data reprensted 11,001 students from 19 middle schools in a large, urban Midwestern public school. The district is among the fifteen largest within the United States and serve a 50% African-American population. The researchers found that 4,521 (41.1%) of these students had a record of 17,045 office referrals with a mean number of 1.5 referral per academic year. The majority (27.6%) of school suspensions were for disobedience followed by misconduct, disrespect, fighting and excess noise. Group two data included students from one medium

size middle school located in a Midwestern public school district approximately 600 miles from the group one. District two served about 6,770 students within nine schools. For group two, the researchers found that during the 1995-1996 academic school year, 846 students were referred to the office for a total of 1,421 different reasons. The majority (52%) of office referrals were due to lack of communication. The results from the study show students in middle schools tend to have problems with authority as compared to any other offenses.

Mendez and Knoff (2003) found similar results from a study conducted in a school district in Florida. The school district is one of 67 in Florida and the twelfth largest school district in the United States. Schools in the district were made-up from inner city and rural students at higher rates than those found schools in suburban areas. The researchers concluded that within the school district, fifteen infractions made up 90% of all out-of- school suspensions. Disobedience and insubordination (20%) were the main reasons why students were getting suspended. Disruption and fighting (13%) were tied for the next most frequent offenses leading to school suspensions. However, possession of a weapon made up less than 1% of the infractions of students suspended.

#### *Teacher behaviors and beliefs*

Teacher attitudes towards students sometimes leads to out-of-school suspension. Furthermore, teacher's expectations can impact students' academic and social outcomes. There has been a link between teacher's beliefs and students from different races relative to out -of -school suspensions. Most discipline referrals come from teachers and not

administrators. Most teachers think that students make the choice to be disruptive in class which can lead to school disciplinary action.

In a study of over 3,000 Australian teachers, they frequently stated that psychological dysfunction is the main source of discipline problems and often viewed students who were disciplined as trouble-makers (Gregory & Mosely, 2004). Moreover, teachers consistently rate African-American students lower in academic performance compared to their Caucasian counterparts and may treat them differently than any other race. According to Hinojosa (2008), African-American students have stated that they receive less academic support, less interaction, and feel picked on or singled out for disciplinary actions due to their race. African-American students felt teachers lowered their expectations based on cultural, linguistic and ethnic factors (Hinojosa, 2008). Teacher's bias toward African-American students is correlated with dropout rates.

Hinojosa (2008) conducted a study of 197 teachers within a large urban school district located in the midwestern United States. The school district was selected due to the large population of racial minority students. The researcher used an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) that indicated that African-American students scored higher ( $m=3.38$ ) compared to Caucasian students ( $m=3.33$ ) on teacher's ratings of their ( $m=3.02$ ) expectations of students. However, Caucasian students reported higher expectations of their teachers than African-American students at ( $m= 2.98$ ) due to perceived levels of teacher fairness and caring.

Gregory and Weinstien (2008) conducted research on the discipline gap in regards to African-American students. The research was conducted at a high school in a mid-size city in the United States. The research was split into to two different studies. Study one

looked at the patterns in disciplinary referrals, and study two looked at defiance and cooperation across classrooms. The racial diversity of the 2,882 students in the study was 30% African American, 37% Caucasian, 8% Asian, 12% Latino, 11% two or more races and 1% other. The researchers used a database that contained discipline referral records of the student's in school and out of school suspensions. The results showed that 67% of the referrals ( $n=1,207$ ) were due to defiance of adult authority. As noted above, African-American students comprised 30% of the student enrollment. However, they were 58% of student referrals for defiance. Therefore, student referrals can lead to higher suspension rates, much like zero tolerance policies within the school districts.

### *Zero Tolerance Policies*

Zero tolerance policies lead to high suspension rates, which affect outcomes for students such as denial of access to education and failure of the opportunity to improve student behavior. Hoffman (2012) defines zero tolerance as a school or district that mandates predetermined consequences or punishment for specific offenses. Therefore, student referrals can lead to suspension as well as larger levels of zero tolerance policies within the school districts.

Several studies indicate that zero tolerance policies were first mandated for drugs, fighting, and gang related activity; however, zero tolerance policies have been expanded to include lesser offense such as smoking and disruptions (Skiba & Knesting, 2001; Wald & Losen, 2003; Wallace et.al., 2008; Verdugo, 2002). In 1994, *The Gun-Free Schools Act* was passed into law. It was originally designed to reduce firearms in schools. Student bringing firearms to school were required to be expelled for one

academic year. Currently, some school districts have increased the zero tolerance policy to include major and minor offenses (e.g., homework completion and off campus activities) (Mendez, 2003; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Wallace et.al., 2008).

In the 1996-1997 school year, 94% of public schools in the United States had zero tolerance policies for firearms, 91% for other weapons, 88% for drugs and 87% for alcohol (Wallace et.al., 2008). According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2003), 49% of students in schools disciplined under a zero-tolerance clause were given out-of-school suspensions lasting five days or more. In a similar study, Arica (2006) found that 26% of suspended students accumulated 10 or more days from school under the same policy.

Zero tolerance policies affect African-American students more than Caucasian students, which can lead to racial disparities and may lead to bias. The zero tolerance policy is used more in urban areas, which can lead to more infractions for African-American students, since African-American students are more concentrated in urban schools (Wallace et. al., 2008). Using data from University of Michigan's Monitoring the Future study, the national sample included 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders from the 48 contiguous states in the U.S. The final sample size for this study used only 10<sup>th</sup> graders from 2001-2005 and included diverse students. The results of the study showed there is a difference between races when it comes to zero-tolerance policies violations (i.e. alcohol at school, marijuana or other drugs at school, guns to school). African-American male's suspension rates were 9.0% for alcohol violations and 10.0% for marijuana or other drug violations at school compared to Caucasian males at 7.2% and 8.4% for the same

offenses. African-American males were significantly more likely than Caucasian males to bring guns to school ( $p < .01$ ).

## **Outcomes for Students that are Suspended**

### *Academic Achievement*

Students that are suspended suffer academically due to not being in school. When students are suspended from school, they are missing out on important information in regards to their learning environment. In addition, students are missing homework which can lead to failing grades and retention. Wu, Pink, Crain and Moles (1982) found that students who are suspended from school are unable to complete or catch up with their classmates and become uninterested in school, which can impact their academic performance or achievement. The achievement gap in the United States has been documented as an important problem for approximately 50 years when it comes to African-American students. The underachievement of African-American adolescents remains one of the most discussed and studied phenomena in education (Cokley, McClain, Jones, & Johnson, 2011).

In the United States, African-American adolescents disproportionately attend large, urban, comprehensive schools that have a high concentration of low-socioeconomic students (Cartwright & Henriksen, 2012; Hines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013; Martin et al. 2007). In addition, academic achievement and graduation rates in many of these schools are very low in comparison to national averages (Martin et al. 2007), and no other ethnic or racial group has received as much negative press about its educational struggles as African-American students (Cokley et al. 2011). For example, recent data indicate the average high school graduation rate for African-American

students is approximately 60% compared to 80% for their European American counterparts (Cokley et al. 2011).

Many contributing factors have been associated with the low academic achievement among these students, however, poverty has been overwhelmingly the most consistent. For example, one out of three African-American male adolescents is raised in a low-income household (Cokley et al. 2011; Hines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013). The National Center for Education Statics (2003) states that the 24% of adolescents attending urban schools represent the highest percentage of households that are below the poverty level.

#### *Retention and Drop-Out Rates*

Some studies have shown suspension is associated with dropping out of school (Christle, Jolivette & Nelson, 2007; Lee et.al., 2011). National studies report that students who are suspended more than three times have higher chances of dropping out of school compared to those who are not suspended. Christle, Jolivette & Nelson (2007) conducted a study on a sample of 20 schools with high dropout rates and compared these schools to a sample of 20 schools with low dropout rates. The data were from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) annual reports for two consecutive years. The researchers ran a correlation analysis on 12 school variables based on risk factors associated with students who drop out. There is a significant positive relationships between dropout rate and five school variables: retention rate, socioeconomic status, law violation rate, suspension rate and board violation rate. However, there was no correlation between dropout rate and academic achievement.

Suh and Suh (2007) conducted a study using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth database from the United States Department of Labor. There were approximately 9,000 youth that ranged from 12 to 16 years old. The data did exclude approximately 2,792 students who either were enrolled in high school or not enrolled but working toward a GED. The final sample consisted of 6,192 students which included 3,111 males and 3,081 females who either completed high or dropped out. The purpose of the study was to identify factors (i.e., low grade point average (GPA), low SES, and behavioral problems (suspension) that contribute to high school drop-out. The researchers conducted a regression on school dropout with the three risk factors. The results revealed a strong association between each risk factor and students dropping out. Socioeconomic risk and behaviors risk were significantly more powerful predictors of dropout than academic risk.

Graduation rates decline as more high school students drop-out. National standards for measuring high school graduation rates have revealed that the dropout problem is affecting approximately 1.3 million students each academic year (Cornell, Huang, Gregory & Fan, 2012). Students that are teased and bullied while at school are more likely to perform poorly academically and drop-out of school. Also, truancy has been linked to an increase in dropout rates and associated with behavioral problems.

The racial/ethnic background of students is associated with drop-out rates. For example, 35 percent of African-American males between grades seven and 12 were suspended. In 2000, while the National Center for Education Statistics (2007) reports that in the same year, 15 percent of African American males between grades 10 and 12 dropped out of high school (Hucks, 2011).

Lee, Cornell, Gregory & Fan (2011), conducted a similar study using a sample of schools from the Virginia High School districts. The schools were eligible to participate if they offered classes 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade, offered a high school diploma, and served students that were primarily eighteen years old and under. There were 314 eligible public schools, however, 296 schools (94%) participated in the study at the same level. The final sample for this study included 289 (92%) school with students from the dropout and suspension data base. The sample was made up of 60 % of Caucasian students and 26% African-American students. Schools ranged from 1% to 83% ( $M=30%$ ,  $SD=16%$ ) of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The researchers found that the African-American student dropout rate ranged 0% to 50% ( $M=4.3%$ ,  $SD=6.6%$ ) compared to 0% to 36.6% ( $M=2.3%$ ,  $SD=3.0%$ ) for Caucasian students. However, the correlation coefficients between African-American student dropout rates and suspension rates ( $r=.14$ ) was lower than the one for Caucasian students ( $r=.53$ ). Therefore, suspension and dropout rates are strongly associated for Caucasian students and to a lesser degree for African- American students. In addition, these schools served higher percentages of African-American students living in poverty compared to Caucasian students living in poverty.

### *Juvenile Delinquency*

Out-of-school suspension also has been associated with an increase in juvenile delinquency. The word juvenile delinquent was first used to describe children who broke the law, street kids, homeless children, or unwanted children (Bridges, Crutchfield, & Weis, 2001; Joseph, 1995). Today, a juvenile delinquent is anyone under the age of 18 who commits an offense or criminal act (Bridges et al., 2001; Joseph, 1995; Zimring,

2005). Over time, the definition of juvenile delinquents has changed to become an official term.

African-American male adolescents face biases within courts and detention centers. From 1989 to 1999, the percentage of Caucasian male juveniles detained was 15 %, while African-American male juveniles accounted for 33 %. Furthermore, African-American male juvenile's rate may have been even higher since some of them are processed in adult systems. African-American male adolescents are more often being processed as adults as opposed to juveniles due to more serious crimes. In 1996, African- American male juvenile delinquents had 46% of cases waived to criminal court (Roberts, 2004).

Within inner cities or areas of low socioeconomic status, the arrest rates are higher as the police may devote more time and resources to these areas (Joseph, 1995). When it comes to sentencing, African-American males are treated more harshly by police and the justice system, and Caucasian males are sentenced more leniently (Joseph, 1995; Zimring, 2005). Furthermore, many of the crimes committed by African-Americans male adolescents go unreported due to police officers or victims who are not willing to prosecute the offenders. In addition, prosecutors decide who is charged with what crime or degree of crime while the judge or jury decides if a juvenile is found guilty or innocent.

Numerous studies have found several differences between African-American male juveniles and Caucasian male juveniles in regards to serious offenses, arrest rates, drug offenses and felony charges. African-American male adolescents commit more serious offenses than Caucasian males at a two to three times higher rates (Bridges et al.,

2001; Bynum & Thompson, 2007; Carswell 2007; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). African-American male adolescents under the age of 18 account for over half of the arrests for murder, robbery, and gambling. In addition, African-American male adolescents have higher felony and drug offenses than Caucasian males. However, Caucasian male adolescents do commit more property crimes. In addition to these factors, African-American male adolescents also are lacking resources. For example, if their parent(s) cannot afford a good attorney, then they have to receive a court appointed attorney, who may not perform the job as well as a private attorney. In this context, delinquent behaviors by African-American male juveniles is a special concern to society due to their overrepresentation in juvenile detention centers and adult prisons (Bridges et al., 2001; Bynum & Thompson, 2007; Carswell 2007; Owens-Sabir, 2007; Pashcell et al., 2003). This study aims to assess whether the findings of more serious offenses and differential punishments of African-Americans in the juvenile systems also are found in an urban school district.

## **Chapter 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study focused on the gap in the research on disciplinary infractions and numbers of days students are suspended from school disaggregated by race. There were two main purposes for this study. The first purpose was to describe the different backgrounds of students that are suspended from school. The second purpose was to study the infractions and number of days students are suspended from school. This study included the following student background characteristics: race, gender, socioeconomic status, and disability. A final purpose was to investigate if there are different consequences for similar infractions committed by African American and Caucasian students.

This section presents the methods used to examine the relationship between student suspension and student characteristics. It also outlines the sample of the study, dependent variables, independent variables, data collection, data analysis and limitations of the study. Additionally, of this chapter will explain the methods that were used to examine out-of-school suspensions by student characteristics. Three research questions guided this study of student suspension.

#### **Research Questions**

1. How do the rates of suspension of African-American students compare to Caucasian students?
2. For what infractions are African-American students getting suspended?
3. Are there differences in the number of days suspended for the same infractions between Caucasian and African-American students?

## **District Information**

The school district is a Midwestern city with a population of roughly around 25, 0000 K-12 students and of 187,000 people. Within the school district 62.1% of the students are below poverty level and 36.7% are English Language Learners. The school district develops programs geared toward building families and community to develop and enhance educational services.

## **Sample**

The present study utilizes secondary data on a sample of elementary, middle and high school students from one urban district that have received at least one out of school suspension. The students were categorized as: 12 (1.1%) Asian American, 96 (8.9%) African-American, Caucasian 290 (26.9%), Hispanic 565 (52.4%), Native American 34 (3.2%) and Pacific Islander 82 (7.6%) with a combined total of 1,079 students. Male students accounted for 819 (75.9%) of the sample compared to 260 (24.1%) female students. The majority of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch, 924 (85.6%), compared to those who did not qualify 155 (14.4%). In addition, 349 English learners Comprised (32.3%) of the sample.

## **Dependent Variables**

The first dependent variables in this research was the total number of days a student was suspended within the school year. Number of days suspended ranged from 1-day to 20- days of suspension. The second dependent variable was the infraction that lead to the suspension (e.g., disruption, fighting). The final dependent variable is other punishments following the suspension (e.g., alternative school placement, court referral).

## **Independent Variables**

The independent variables used in this study include race, disability, gender, and socioeconomic status. Each of these variables were coded with either a 1 or 0. However, for the present study, African-American students were coded 1 and all other students were coded 0. Disability was coded as 1 with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 0 not having a disability. Gender was coded as male=1 and female 0. Socioeconomic status was coded as=1 if they received free or reduced lunch and 0 indicating no free or reduced lunch.

## **Data Collection**

The data was collected from an extant database. Data access was approved by the district's research committee. The student level data used in the present study included all students that were suspended out of school at least once within the academic school year of the study.

## **Data Analysis**

This study reports frequencies on the background characteristics of suspended students and the categories of infractions for which students were suspended. Independent samples T-test were conducted to compare the number of days African-American and Caucasian students were suspended overall for similar infractions as well as other penalties associates with the suspension. Also, a crosstabulations of infractions leading to first suspension was conducted as well.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study was only focused on African-American and Caucasian male students that had been suspended. It did not include students from other racial backgrounds. It also does not control for other variables that may differ between these groups such as socioeconomic status and disability. Third, the data are from one urban district, which limits generalizability of the findings. Finally, the low number of African-American students in the sample ( $n=96$ ) may limit the statistical power to find differences in the outcomes studied that actually exist.

## **Chapter 4**

### **RESULTS**

This study was quantitative in nature and compared the suspension rates, infractions leading to the suspensions, and the punishments for the suspension of African-American and Caucasian students. This study intended to address gaps in the research on consequences and numbers of days students of different races are suspended. The first purpose was to describe the different backgrounds of students suspended students with an emphasis on African-Americans. The second purpose was to compare the infractions of African-American and Caucasian students. A final purpose was to investigate if there are different consequences for similar infractions committed by African American and Caucasian students.

#### **Research Questions**

1. How do the rates of suspension of African-American students compared to Caucasian students?
2. For what infractions are African-American students getting suspended?
3. Are there differences in the number of days suspended for the same infractions between Caucasian and African-American students?

This chapter presents results from an urban school district in a Western part of the United States. Data were collected by school district personnel. The sample includes all students that had been suspended at least once within the academic school year studied.

#### **Backgrounds of Suspended Students**

Tables 4.1.- 4.6 represent an overview of the demographics of students that had received out-of-school suspensions during one academic year in the urban district studied.

Table 4.1. Suspensions by Grade Level

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	k	11	1.0	1.0
	1st	30	2.8	3.8
	2nd	46	4.3	8.1
	3rd	59	5.5	13.5
	4th	67	6.2	19.7
	5th	73	6.8	26.5
	6th	137	12.7	39.2
	7th	106	9.8	49.0
	8th	134	12.4	61.4
	9th	152	14.1	75.5
	10th	119	11.0	86.6
	11th	94	8.7	95.3
	12th	51	4.7	100.0
	Total	1079	100.0	

Table 4.1 presents the grade levels of suspended students. Students in the sample were between kindergarten through twelfth grade level. There were 286 elementary students which included kindergarten-fifth grade, 377 middle school students between grades sixth-eight, and 416 high school students between grades ninth- twelve, for a total of (n=1,079). Somewhat surprisingly, 26.5% of these suspended students were in grades K-5, with half of those in grades K-3.

Table 4.2. Students Suspended by Race/Ethnicity

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Asian	12	1.1
	Black/African American	96	8.9
	Caucasian/White	290	26.9
	Hispanic/Latino	565	52.4
	Native American	34	3.2
	Pacific Islander	82	7.6
	Total	1079	100.0

The majority of students suspended were Hispanic/Latino (52.4%), followed by Caucasian (26.9%), African American (8.9%), Pacific Islander (7.6%), Native American (3.2%) and Asian (1.1%) students. However, it is important to emphasize that the percentage of race for the whole district was: Asian 3.9%, Black/African American 5.0%, Caucasian 44.5%, Hispanic 39.0%, Native American 2.4%, and Pacific Islander 7.6%.

Table 4.3. Gender of Suspended Students

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Female	260	24.1
	Male	819	75.9
	Total	1079	100.0

In the present sample, there were 819 males (75.9%) and 260 females (24.1%) that were suspended. Therefore, males are roughly three times as likely to be suspended as females.

Table 4.4. Eligibility for Free/Reduced Lunch of Suspended Students

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No	155	14.4
	Yes	924	85.6
Total		1079	100.0

Table 4.4 displays that, 924 students (85.6%) who were suspended received free or reduced lunch. Low-income students make up 62.0% of the district population that receive free or reduced lunch. Thus, low income students are over-represented among suspended students.

Table 4.5. Special Education Status of Suspended Students

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No	819	75.9
	Yes	260	24.1
Total		1079	100.0

As displayed in Table 4.5, 260 students (24.1%) that were suspended had some type of disability compared to 819 students (75.9%) that were served in regular education programs. Students with disabilities made up 14.7% of the district population. Therefore, despite the protections in IDEA, students with disabilities were twice as likely to be suspended as their regular education peers.

Table 4.6. English Language Learner

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No	730	67.7
	Yes	349	32.3
Total		1079	100.0

Table 4.6 reports suspension rates by English Proficiency. There were 349 English language learners suspended from school (32.3%), compared to 730 (67.7%) of English proficient students, who were not English Language Learners. English language learners make up 35.9% of the entire school district. Therefore, English language learners are suspended at a percentage that roughly matches their percentage of the total student enrollment.

**African-American Males Suspended Students**

Given research demonstrating the interaction of race and gender and the disproportionate number of African-American males suspended, this section reports data on suspensions by race and gender together. Tables 4.7. - 4.13 represent an overview of the out-of-school suspension data on African-American male students that were collected by the district.

Table 4.7 African-American Males

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No	1010	93.6
	Yes	69	6.4
Total		1079	100.0

As noted in Table 4.7, out of 1079 students that were suspended, only 6.4% were African-American male. However, African-Americans make up only 5.0% of the district, and half of the 5% are likely female. Therefore, African-American males (6.4%) are 2.56 times over-represented among suspended students.

Table 4.8. Grade Level of Suspended African-American Males

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid k	1	1.4	1.4	1.4
2nd	2	2.9	2.9	4.3
3rd	4	5.8	5.8	10.1
4th	5	7.2	7.2	17.4
5th	6	8.7	8.7	26.1
6th	7	10.1	10.1	36.2
7th	5	7.2	7.2	43.5
8th	5	7.2	7.2	50.7
9th	9	13.0	13.0	63.8
10th	10	14.5	14.5	78.3
11th	10	14.5	14.5	92.8
12th	5	7.2	7.2	100.0
Tot	69	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.8 reports suspension rates of African-American males by grade level.

African-American males were suspended at a higher rate in high school compared to

elementary and middle school. In fact, 21.7% of all African-American males were suspended during their junior or senior year, while 49.2% were suspended during high school.

Table 4.9. Eligibility for Free/Reduced Lunch Status of Suspended African-American Males

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No	9	13.0
	Yes	60	87.0
Total		69	100.0

Sixty of the African-American males (87.0%) that were suspended were eligible for free or reduced lunch as compared to 13.0% that were not (see Table 4.9). Of all African-American males in the district, 81% are eligible to receive free or reduced lunch.

Table 4.10. Special Education Status of Suspended African American Males

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No	51	73.9
	Yes	18	26.1
Total		69	100.0

Table 4.10 reveals that out of the 69 African-American male students that were suspended, 26.1% were identified as having a disability. African-American males make up 17.4% of the whole district. Of all suspended students in the district 24.1% have a disability. Furthermore, 14.7% of all students in the district have a disability.

Table 4.11 English Language Proficiency of Suspended African-American Males

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	No	36	52.2
	Yes	33	47.8
	Total	69	100.0

As depicted in Table 4.11, 47.8% of suspended African-American males were English Language Learners. By comparison, 35.9% of the district students were English Language learners and 32.3% of all suspended students were English Language learners.

Table 4.12. Total Number of Suspensions of African-American Males

# of Suspensions		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	47	68.1	68.1
	2	14	20.3	88.4
	3	5	7.2	95.7
	4	3	4.3	100.0
	Total	69	100.0	

Table 4.12 highlights that 31.9% of all African-American males that were suspended more than once within the same school year. Over 11% were suspended 3 or 4 times.

## Infractions for African-American Males

In this section of the paper, the focus shifts to infractions committed by African-American males. Tables 4.13. and 4.14 provide an overview of the infractions that lead to suspension of African-American male students in the urban districts studied.

Table 4.13 Infractions Leading to First Suspension for African-American Males

	Frequency	Percent
Valid    Controlled Substance	2	2.9
Disruption	4	5.8
Fighting (mutual altercation)	18	26.1
Harassment, non-sexual (physical, verbal, psychological)	7	10.1
Harassment, sexual (unwelcomed sexual assault)	5	7.2
Look Alike	1	1.4
Marijuana	2	2.9
Other	14	20.3
Other Object Used as a Weapon	1	1.4
Physical Assault	2	2.9
Robbery	8	11.6
Sexual Assault	2	2.9
Threat/Intimidation (causing fear or harm)	2	2.9
Uncontrolled Substance	1	1.4
Total	69	100.0

Three key findings emerge from Table 4.13. First African-American male were suspended most frequently for fighting 26.1%. Secondly, 36.1% of the infraction are in the categories of other (20.3%), harassment non-sexual (10.1%), and disruption (5.8%). Third, with the exception of robbery, the percentage of African-American males being suspended for more severe offenses is relatively low.

Table 4.14 Infraction Leading to First Suspension: African-American Males vs Others Crosstabulation

			African American Male		Total
			No	Yes	
Infraction Leading to First Suspension	Alcohol	Count	14	0	14
		% within African American Male	1.40%	0.00%	1.30%
	Bullying (as per LEA policy)	Count	25	0	25
		% within African American Male	2.50%	0.00%	2.30%
	Controlled Substance	Count	31	2	33
		% within African American Male	3.10%	2.90%	3.10%
	Disruption	Count	31	4	35
		% within African American Male	3.10%	5.80%	3.20%
	Distribution	Count	4	0	4
		% within African American Male	0.40%	0.00%	0.40%
Fighting (mutual altercation)	Count	218	18	236	
	% within African American Male	21.60%	26.10%	21.90%	
Handgun	Count	1	0	1	
	% within African American Male	0.10%	0.00%	0.10%	
Harassment, non-sexual	Count	157	7	164	
	% within African American Male	15.60%	8.80%	15.70%	

Table 4.14 (continued)

		African American Male		Total
		No	Yes	
(physical, verbal, psychological)	% within African American Male	15.50%	10.10%	15.20%
Harassment, sexual (unwelcomed sexual assault)	Count	11	5	16
	% within African American Male	1.10%	7.20%	1.50%
Knife or Other Sharp Object	Count	41	0	41
	% within African American Male	4.10%	0.00%	3.80%
Look Alike	Count	12	1	13
	% within African American Male	1.20%	1.40%	1.20%
Marijuana	Count	80	2	82
	% within African American Male	7.90%	2.90%	7.60%
Other	Count	182	14	196
	% within African American Male	18.00%	20.30%	18.20%
Other Explosive Device	Count	2	0	2
	% within African American Male	0.20%	0.00%	0.20%
Other Object Used as a Weapon	Count	15	1	16
	% within African American Male	1.50%	1.40%	1.50%
Physical Assault	Count	39	2	41
	% within African American Male	3.90%	2.90%	3.80%
Robbery	Count	63	8	71
	% within African American Male	6.20%	11.60%	6.60%
Sexual Assault	Count	3	2	5
	% within African American Male	0.30%	2.90%	0.50%
	Count	1	0	1

Table 4.14 (continued)

		African American Male		Total
		No	Yes	
Terroristic Threat	% within African American Male	0.10%	0.00%	0.10%
	Count	57	2	59
Threat/Intimidation (causing fear or harm)	% within African American Male	5.60%	2.90%	5.50%
	Count	2	0	2
Tobacco	% within African American Male	0.20%	0.00%	0.20%
	Count	21	1	22
Uncontrolled Substance	% within African American Male	2.10%	1.40%	2.00%
	Count	1010	69	1079
Total	% within African American Male	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

As highlighted in Table 4.13, out of 269 total African American male students that were suspended, 18 were suspended (26.1%) for fighting/ mutual altercation of all other suspended students. 218 (21.6%) were suspended. While this is a relatively small difference (4.5%), the only larger difference in percentage of African-American male students compared to all other student was for robbery (4.9%). Collectively, the results presented in Table 4.13 indicate African-American males were suspended in comparable percentages across almost all infractions compared to all other suspended students. In fact, African-American males were less likely than other students to be suspended for non-sexual harassment (5.4%) and only slightly more likely to be suspended for disruption (3.2%) and other (2.3%), the three most subjective infractions categories. In addition, other infractions was the second highest out of 196 students and only 14

students were suspended (20.3%) on the first infraction, compared to 182 students (18.0%) that weren't suspended. African American male students weren't suspended for following terroristic threat, explosive device, and bringing handguns to school compared to other ethnicities.

### The Intensity of the Suspension Punishment

Tables 4.15-4.20 address research question three and report the results of Independent T-Tests for comparing five measures of the severity of the punishment related to the suspension of African-American males to all other students.

Table 4.15 Independent Samples T-Test: Total Days Suspended for First Offense By African-American Males vs Others

African American Male		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
NUMBER_OF_DAYS1	No	1010	1.97	1.219	.038
	Yes	69	1.99	1.182	.142

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
		F	Sig.	t	df
NUMBER_OF_DAYS1	Equal variances assumed	.214	.643	-.114	1077

		t-test for Equality of Means	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
NUMBER_OF_DAYS1	Equal variances assumed	.910	-.017

In order to examine the difference in number of days suspended for the first offense between African- American males suspended and all other suspended students, an independent samples t-test was conducted. The results of this test indicated that there was not a significant difference in number of days suspended between these two groups  $t(1077) = -1.14, p = .910$ . On average, for their first suspension, African-American males were suspended 1.99 days while all other students were suspended for a mean of 1.97 days.

Table 4.16 Independent Samples T-Test: Total Days Suspended for Across All Offenses by African-American Males vs Others

African American Male		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total_Number Days	No	1010	2.52	1.841	.058
	Yes	69	3.04	2.552	.307

		t-test for Equality of Means			
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Total_Number_Days	Equal variances not assumed	-1.688	72.916	.096	-.528

The results of an independent t-test comparing the total of number of days suspended across all offences by African-American Males vs others,  $t(73) = -1.69, p = .096$  was insignificant. African-American males ( $N=69$ ) were suspended  $M=3.04$  days ( $SD=2.55$ ) across all offences while all other students were suspended mean total of 2.52 across all offenses.

Table 4.17 Referred to Police for 1st Incident by African-American Males vs Others Crosstabulation

			African American Male		Total
			No	Yes	
Referred to Police	No	Count	731	54	785
		% within African American Male	72.4%	78.3%	72.8%
	Yes	Count	279	15	294
		% within African American Male	27.6%	21.7%	27.2%
Total		Count	1010	69	1079
		% within African American Male	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As noted in table 4.17, 27.6% males were referred to the police as part of their first suspendable incident compared to 21.7% of all other suspended students.

Table 4.18 Referred to Court for 1st Incident by African-American Males vs Others  
Crosstabulation

			African American Male		Total
			No	Yes	
Referred to Court	No	Count	998	69	1067
		% within African American Male	98.8%	100.0%	98.9%
	Yes	Count	12	0	12
		% within African American Male	1.2%	0.0%	1.1%
Total		Count	1010	69	1079
		% within African American Male	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Despite 27.6% of suspended African-American males being reported to the police for their first time offense, none of them were referred to the court system. Coeffectively, referrals to the police and court system are important because of concerns with a disproportionate number of African-American males moving through the “school to prison pipeline”. Only 100.00% of the total number of African-American males students (N=69) were referred to court on their first incident or suspension. There were 98.8% of students that weren’t referred to the courts.

Table 4.19 Referred to a Special Program for 1st Incident by African-American Males vs Others Crosstabulation

			African American Male		Total
			No	Yes	
Referred to a Special Program	No	Count	932	66	998
		% within African American Male	92.3%	95.7%	92.5%
	Yes	Count	78	3	81
		% within African American Male	7.7%	4.3%	7.5%
Total		Count	1010	69	1079
		% within African American Male	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Finally, as displayed in table 4.19, only 4.3% of the suspended African-American males students were referred to special programs after their first suspension. This compares to 7.7% of all other suspended students being referred to special programs.

Table 4.20 Referred to Alternative School for 1st Incident by African-American Males vs Others Crosstabulation

			African American Male		Total
			No	Yes	
Alternative Placement	No	Count	1010	69	1079
		% within African American Male	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	1010	69	1079
		% within African American Male	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In the current study, out of 69 African-American male students, all 69 were referred to alternative school on their first incident or suspension.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

Across the nation, out-of-school suspension is used as a disciplinary measure which may unintentionally lead to high dropout rates, achievement gaps and poor academic outcomes. Previous studies have mainly focused on the demographics of students being suspended from school. The majority of data from such studies indicates that there is a disproportionate number of students from low-socioeconomic status, male students, students with disabilities, and racial/ethnic minority students who are receiving out-of-school suspension as compared to other students (Arcia, 2007; Gregory & Weinstein, 2007; Skiba et al., 2002). The present study examined the demographics of students being suspended and went one step further by examining the number of days suspended and other consequences for comparable infractions.

#### Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed:

1. How do the rates of suspension of African-American students compare to other groups of students?
2. For what infractions are African-American students getting suspended?
3. Are there differences in the number of days suspended for the same infractions between Caucasian and African-American students?

Question one relied on descriptive statistics and explored the rates of suspension between African-American students compared to other groups of students. Question two analyzed the different infractions for which African-American students were being suspended. Question three used an independent samples t-test to compare the difference in days suspended between Caucasian and African-American students.

Conclusions, implications and recommendations resulting from the findings in this study are discussed in this chapter. Critical Race Theory is discussed as it pertains to the findings in this study.

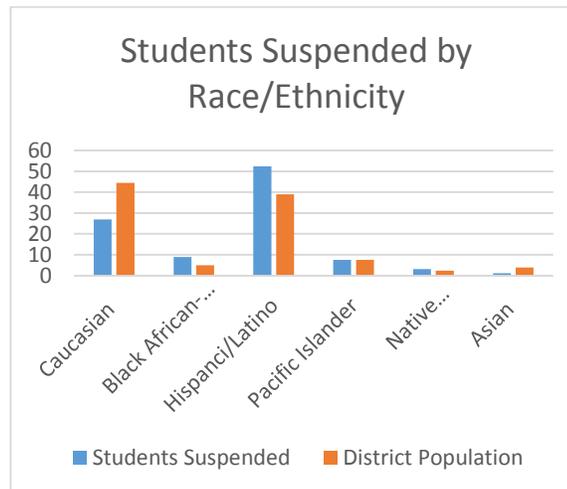
### **Background of Suspended Students**

Previous studies have investigated and found that students who are most frequently suspended are male, racial minority students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Arcia, 2007; Balfanz, Byrnes & Horning Fox, 2015; Butler et al., 2012; Rocque, 2010; Skiba et al., 2002, Townsend, 2000). Additionally, previous literature indicates that students with disabilities and students that are English Language Learners are disproportionately suspended (Mendez et al., 2002, Townsend, 2000). The presence of school security guards is associated with increased suspension and increased black-white racial disparities in the total number of suspensions mainly due to the fact that African-American male students can become violent or disrespectful to the school officers. Moreover, most out-of-school suspensions are in high inner city crimes areas, where students are more likely to have a negative outlook on education.

Research reveals that African-American students have significantly higher suspension rates than Caucasian students or any other minority group (Arcia, 2007; Balfanz, Byrnes & Horning Fox, 2015; Butler et al., 2012; Rocque, 2010; Skiba et al., 2002, Townsend, 2000). The data in the current study are consistent with previous studies that indicate that out-of-school suspension are higher for African-American students as well as for students that are in grades nine through twelve as compared to elementary or middle school students.

The graph below shows the proportions of students that are being suspended by race. For this study, African-Americans have the highest rate of suspension. However, on a positive note, African-American students are only 1.51 times more likely than Caucasians to be suspended, which is about one-half as likely as the disproportionate rates found in other urban districts. These findings may be attributable to three factors in this district. First, the district regularly reports disaggregated suspension rates to school personnel. Second, they have an Office of Educational Equality that makes recommendations for improved services for diverse students. Finally, they have language and culture coaches that provide professional development on cultural competence and teachers' habits of mind.

Table 5.1 Students Suspended by Race/Ethnicity



## **Suspension of Students by Grade Level**

### *Suspension Information of African-American Males*

In a sample of 181,897 students, more than (27%) of ninth grade students received an out-of-school suspension at least once (Balfanz et al., 2015), which is consistent with the current study. In the school district for this study, freshmen were more likely to be suspended than students at any other grade level. It should come as no surprise that more students dropout during their freshman year, almost certainly influenced by higher suspension rates. Higher dropout rates are consistent with the aptly named school to prison pipeline.

### *Suspension of Students by Socioeconomic Status*

Additionally, researchers have found that living in high poverty areas is a strong factor related to higher suspension rates. In this study, of all students suspended, 62 % were low income. Table 4.4 showed that 85.6% of students suspended were eligible for free or reduced lunch. Low income students were 3.63 times more likely to be suspended than students not eligible for free or reduced lunch. The higher suspension rate of low income students could be associated with the conditions of the communities in which they live. Students living in these areas are not afforded the same access to a quality education. Higher education levels are correlated with opportunities throughout the student's life.

### *Starting Early*

In the current study, 26.5% of students suspended were elementary school K-5 students. This shows that students are being suspended at early ages. In fact, 13.5% of all

suspended students were K-3 students. The discrepancies found by student's background were comparable at the elementary levels, so the negative consequences in terms of educational outcomes start early for traditionally underserved students. As importantly, one must ask how severe the infractions are committed by K-3 students and whether there are more appropriate punishments than suspensions.

### **Other Characteristics of Suspended Students**

A comparative study of students who were suspended focused on students with and without disabilities (Fasko et al., 1997). Results of this current study did support those findings in that disabled students were over-represented in suspensions, male students were punished more than female students, and students in middle and high school were suspended more than students in elementary (Fasko et al., 1997).

### *Suspendable Infractions and Number of Suspensions*

In this study, there were multiple infractions that caused many African-American male students to be suspended such as fighting, physical assault, and disruption to name a few. The current study findings for first time infractions for African-American males were consistent with other studies (McFadden & Marsh, 1992; Skiba et al, 1997; Butler et al, 2012). McFadden and Marsh (1992) conducted a study of 4,302 discipline records from nine schools and concluded that African-American students (46.1%) were suspended more for fighting than Hispanic (13.8%) or Caucasian (39.1%) students. Of all suspensions of African-American males in this district, 26.1% were for fighting. Although this percentage was lower than the one found in the McFadden and Marsh (1992) study, it was more than double the percent of the next most frequent offense.

The data show that only 19.3 % of non-African-American male students were suspended more than one time. By comparison, 31.9% of African- American males that were suspended were suspended more than once. Therefore, multiple infractions may cause increased disproportionality in the suspension of African-American male students, but teacher behaviors and positive school environments may play a part as well. Table 4.12 shows that 31.9% of African-American males suspended were suspended 2-4 times in the same year. This finding provides ample evidence that suspensions are not solving the perceived behavioral problem.

Although African-American males are most often suspended for fighting, additional frequent reasons for suspension include other (20.3%), harassment (7.2%) and disruption (5.8%). These offenses are more subjectively assessed and therefore leave room for more bias in educator interpretation. However, no differences were found between the extent to which these were used to describe suspendable offenses for African-American males compared to other students.

#### *Consequences Attached to Suspensions*

The fact that African-American males receive harsher penalties than others in the judicial system is well documented (Joseph, 1995; Zimring, 2005). With that in mind, this study evaluated whether African-American males received more severe suspensions for similar infractions than students from other categories. Discrepancies were suspected since African-American male students are more likely to be suspended and suspended more times than other students. Somewhat surprisingly, they were not suspended for more total days in this study. Moreover, they were no more likely to be referred to a

special program, the police or the court system. The low percentage of referral to special programs (4.3%) could be interpreted positively or negatively. From a negative perspective, African-American males who are suspended may not be receiving special services they need. However, from a positive perspective, they are not being moved out to alternative schools by principals who simply want to get them out of their school. Collectively, these findings would be inconsistent with African-American males being disproportionately forced into the “school to prison pipeline” within this district. However, this finding should not minimize the negative consequences associated with African-American males being disproportionality suspended and suspended more times than other suspended students.

The findings in this study support the practice of improving services for diverse populations, such as utilizing language and culture coaches that provide professional development for teachers to improve their cultural competence, as the school district in this study did. The teachers in this district also were required to participate in the REACH (Respecting Ethic and Cultural Heritage) program. The program is designed so that the participants will have the opportunity to learn how to create an atmosphere that is inclusive and accepting for all diverse students, learn effective educational strategies for students with different learning styles and gain an understanding of different teaching techniques.

As mentioned previously, research shows the negative outcomes that are associated with out-of-school suspensions of African-American male students. Suspensions have severe consequences for African-American students, specifically in areas of academic achievement, retention and graduation rates, as well as drop-out rates,

which leads to reduced options for their future success. With these discrepancies in mind, the findings of this study can be viewed through the lens of Critical Race Theory, which explains differential racialization and that different processes and experiences can exist between two different groups or society.

Critical Race Theory is used as a theory to uncover racial subordination and marginalization of people of color. Traditionally, education research has marginalized groups by not addressing root cause of racial problems and has relied heavily on blaming the larger society on the racial issues associated with African Americans. This often leads to the argument that problems minority students experience in schools can be understood via class or gender analyses without taking into consideration race and culture. Some of the main goals of Critical Race Theory are to understand race and racism, as well as eradicating racial subjugation while recognizing that race is a social construct that can impact people's lives and challenge ideologies while working towards social justice and reducing racial oppression.

Critical Race Theory also is used to explain unequal treatment of people. In education, all students should have access to quality schools and the same opportunity to receive a high quality education and access to support services (tutoring, counseling, computers, and qualified teachers) to become successful. If they are suspended from school more frequently, they obviously have less access to a quality education. Educational leaders shoulder the responsibility to remove barriers facing diverse students in schools in order to create equal educational opportunities. Racism may be a part of our school system because of racial classification.

School educators should focus on educating students and parents on what it means to be a member of human race and focus less on racial labels that facilitate the segregation of our social institutions.

## **Recommendations**

### *Implications for Practice and Policy*

From this study, there are recommendations for educators and policy changes that should be made to improve the future education of all students, especially those who have been traditionally underserved. Ensuring high quality instruction is provided and highly qualified teachers are hired is the first recommendation. Teachers should be sensitive to students' needs and must care about all student's education and long-term futures.

Teachers should be required to stay current on all information and trained to serve all types of diverse student populations. Teachers' training should be focused on variables that impact learning such as poverty, multiculturalism, cultural competency, communication, caring, student engagement, interventions, and alternate forms of behavioral management.

Schools in rural and urban areas often have a hard time retaining highly qualified teachers due to the lack of resources the schools and communities have to offer. Salaries of school teachers in many areas often are not sufficient to attract the best teachers. Policymakers at the state level can play a vital role in ensuring that state support for schools, particularly in low-income areas, is sufficient to attract highly qualified, effective teachers. Furthermore, they should offer incentives to retain teachers in these hard-to-staff schools, thereby reducing the negative consequences associated with high teacher turnover.

School systems should be more proactive when dealing with student learning outcomes and become more involved in student retention. Providing students with access to more effective mentoring programs, offering family involvement activities and building strong relationships between parents and teachers should be supported. Implementing academic interventions also can lower the rates of student suspension since such interventions enhance student success and result in fewer infractions being committed by students feeling little hope of graduating. In addition, school administrators and teachers need to conduct evaluations as a tool for developing practices and policies to prevent student suspensions. Such evaluations should include hard data on suspensions and their consequences.

Additionally, school systems should more frequently focus on restorative justice discipline policies. Restorative justice discipline policies are used to seek positive and healthy outcomes for students which is a different type of discipline and may cause students to be less likely to be suspended. Restorative justice focuses on people and relationships rather than on punishment and retribution. Basically, restorative justice can be described using five key principles: (a) invites full participation and consensus from students, parents and teachers, (b) seeks to heal what is broken, (c), holds the offender fully and directly accountable, (d) reunites what has been divided, and (e) seeks to strengthen the community in order to prevent further harm (Varnham, 2005).

Mullet (2014) stated that there were five different stages when using a restorative justice approach. Stage one gives voice and power to those harmed by the misbehavior. Stage two heals or repairs relationships that have been harmed. Stage three encourages accountability through personal reflection and a collaborative decision-making process

with the harmer and the harmed. Stage four reintegrate the student who harmed into the community, and stage five creates caring climates that prevent harm through individual, group, and structural changes. New Zealand school systems use peer mediation as a part of a restorative justice approach. Peer mediation allows positive involvement of trained students acting as mediators between other students (Varnham, 2005). In the United States, some schools use a peer mediation approach, which can serve to offer students a chance to see conflict as a positive opportunity, provide a structure for students to handle conflicts, teach acceptance of responsibility, reduce discipline referrals, and increase teaching time (Varnham, 2005).

Many schools lack funding to provide resources such as reliable internet access, updated technology for the classroom, and tutoring services to help students become successful academically. Inadequate resources are most common in low-income communities in which schools have the highest suspension rates as well as the most disproportionate suspension rates. The public must make education a funding priority if the nation is to make gains in student outcomes. Policy makers and school districts need to continually review and update all policies in regards to zero tolerance, bullying, and suspension to ensure teachers and school administrators are using them appropriately. Policies related to suspension, especially zero tolerance policies, have led to higher suspension rates. Education boards should review the cost and benefits of implementing alternative security measures instead of having school resource officers and police officers in the schools. Out-of-school suspensions have negative educational consequences for students, and school security officers are often ineffective at correcting student behavior.

Therefore, out-of-school suspensions should be used as a last resort for students, and effective alternatives using principles of restorative justice should be used more frequently. Schools and districts should ensure the disciplinary actions administrators use are equitable for all groups of students. Subjective infractions such as other, disrespect, and harassment need to be defined as clearly as possible, and teachers should be trained well on cultural differences to minimize human bias.

Implementing restorative justice systems to develop policies and best practices for schools can be used as an alternative to suspension. Restorative justice relies heavily on accountability, problem solving, contracts between students and school administrators, and equal satisfaction, which can contribute to the social capital of the school community. One of the most importance outcomes of restorative justice is that it can be used as a tool to lower the discipline gap between African-Americans and other student groups.

Racial biases and racial inequities in school districts must be addressed, and all students should be treated equitably. Educators should track disciplinary referrals among all groups and look at the different discipline measures used for each, as well as their consequences. Equity training departments as well as the language and culture coaches utilized in the district within this study assure such a focus and also ensure that teachers are learning from their peers to reflect on their level of cultural competence, differentiated instruction and habits of mind.

### *Implications for Future Research*

The findings from the current study shed light on the out-of-school suspension of African-American males. Since out-of-school suspension is increasing in many school districts across the United States, educational leaders need to examine the long-term effects of suspension. This requires longitudinal studies that follow suspended students throughout their schooling as well as after they exit secondary schools, especially dropouts.

Also, studies should be conducted on suspensions in schools and districts with different policies to identify the precise effect of various policies as well as best practices. Such findings should be disseminated to enhance greater organizational justice in schools and districts. This study found that African-American males are suspended more times but not for different infractions or more total days. Furthermore, they were no more likely to be referred to alternative schools, the police or the courts. These latter findings are positive in light of concerns with the school to prison pipeline, and reasons leading to these findings deserve further attention. Research also should be conducted on the impact that cultural training for teachers has on the number of suspensions and alternative methods of addressing student infractions. Finally, qualitative studies need to be conducted to better understand why educators are suspending students and the outcomes they expect.

### **Closing**

This study utilized existing data on suspended students by background, the infractions they received and the consequences associated with the suspensions. It is hoped that the findings will be utilized to reduce the rates of suspension, facilitate

discussions on who is being suspended, and discussions of the consequences. The ultimate objective is to increase the organizational justice of schools' particularly for African-American males. In addition to the above call for qualitative research providing rich information on why administrators choose to suspend students, the voices of suspended students should be heard as well.

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Wald., J & Losen, D. (2003). Defining and redirecting a school-to-prison pipeline. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 99, 9-15.

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**VITA**  
**Jeffrey D. Herron**

**EDUCATION**

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EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY– RICHMOND, KY

**Ed.D. Educational Leadership & Policy Studies (May, 2016)**

Dissertation Title: *A Comparison of School Suspension Rates and Number of Days Suspended between African American and Caucasian Males*

Chair: Dr. Charles Hausman

MIAMI UNIVERSITY – OXFORD, OH

**M.S. Family and Child Studies**

Thesis Title: *The Effects of Non-Residential Fathers on Family Environmental Risks among Court-Involved Male Adolescents*

Chair: Dr. Ji-Young Lim

EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY – RICHMOND, KY

**B.S. Child and Family Studies**

**CERTIFICATION**

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- Early Care and Education Trainer’s Credential
  - Credential Number- 71781 (Level 5)
  - Expires- 2/2017

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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**Bluegrass Community and Technical College (Adjunct Instructor) 2012-Present**

*Courses Taught*

- FYE 105: Achieving Academic Success
- IEC 102: Foundations in Early Childhood Education
- IEC 130: Early Childhood Development
- IEC 210: Family and Communities in Early Childhood Education

**Miami University (Teaching Assistant) August, 2006- May, 2008**

- FSW 281: Child Development in Diverse Families
- FSW 481: Adolescent Development in Diverse Families

## **PUBLICATIONS**

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### Under Review

**Herron, J. & Johnson, W.** (under review). The effects of absent fathers on African American adolescents.

### Unpublished Master's Thesis

**Herron, J.D. (2008).** *The effects of non-residential fathers on family environmental risks among court-involved male adolescents.* Unpublished master's thesis, Miami University Department of Family Studies and Social Work, Oxford, OH.

## **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

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### National

**Herron, J.** (2014). *The effects of absent fathers on African American adolescents.* Paper presented at Black Doctoral Network Annual Conference, Philadelphia, PA.

**Herron, J.** (2014). *First year experience: Moving toward the future at Bluegrass Community and Technical College.* Paper presented at National Academic Advising Association Annual Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Foley-Ripley, J., & **Herron, J.** (2013). *Dynamics of a shared advising model: Maintaining consistency amid constant change.* Paper presented at the National Academic Advising Association Annual Regional 3 Conference, Greenville, SC.

**Herron, J., & Lim, J.** (2008). *The effects of fathers status on family environmental risks among court-involved male adolescents.* Paper presented at the 20<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of Human Development, Indianapolis, IN.

**Herron, J., & Ware, M.** (2006). *Forging community alliances through intergenerational partnerships: Service learning in family and consumer sciences.* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, Charlotte, NC.

### Regional/Other

**Herron, J., Puckett, C., Rine, C., & Wheeler, G.** (2015). *Appy days!* Paper presented at Changing Classroom Cultures Annual Conference, Lexington, KY.

Akey, A., Denton, A., & **Herron, J.** (2014). *Using advising syllabus and student success plan to increase the 2-year completion rate at a community college.* Paper presented at Kentucky Academic Advising Association Annual Conference, Bowling Green, KY.

Foley-Riley, J., **Herron, J.**, & Owsley, A. (2012). *Evolution of Shared Advising Model*. Session presented at the Kentucky Academic Advising Association Annual Conference, Covington, KY

### **Invited Talks**

**Herron, J.**, & Worth, B. (2012). *Advisortrac Training*. Session presented at 5<sup>th</sup> Friday: Making Progress through Change at Bluegrass Community and Technical College, Lexington, KY

**Herron, J.** (2011). *Graduate School Panel*. Eastern Kentucky University, Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program, Richmond, KY.

**Herron, J.** (2008). *Quantitative Thesis Presentation*. Miami University, FSW 395: Research and Evaluation in Social Work and Family Studies Department, Oxford, OH.

**Herron, J.** (2007) *Experience as an African-American Graduate Student on a White Campus*. Miami University, Department of Graduate School, Oxford, OH.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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### **Associate Director: July, 2011 – Present**

Academic Advising and Assessment Center, Bluegrass Community and Technical College- Lexington, KY

- Oversee academic advising and assessment centers at Leestown and Newtown Campuses
- Oversee non-recurring budget
- Oversee Perkins Grant
- Supervise academic advisors at Leestown, Newtown and Regional Campuses
- COMPASS test administrator
- Provide leadership in developing and promoting advising initiative for students
- Collect monthly data from advisors
- Assists with implementation of First Year Experience orientations (advising and student self-service)
- Assist the Dean of Students with Student Conduct (Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities)
- Coordinate training for new professional advisors
- Coordinate training for support staff for COMPASS testing
- Assigned 50 African American first year students participating in a retention project
- Serve as a distance learning advisor (Office of Distance Learning)
- Use PeopleSoft Software, Microsoft Office Suite, Advisortrac, Appointment-Plus, Starfish and Blackboard

**Acting Director: November, 2011- March, 2012**

Academic Advising and Assessment Center, Bluegrass Community and Technical College-Lexington, KY

- Supervised fourteen academic advisors and two administrative assistants
- Overseen all advising budgets

**Academic Advisor: July, 2008-July, 2011**

Academic Resource Center, Spalding University-Louisville, KY

- Provided academic advising services to undergraduate students
- Advised students on academic probation to help identify academic strategies
- Supervised summer intern graduate student
- Proctored national test MAPP and Accuplacer
- Trained new advisors on policies and procedures
- Used Datatel Colleague and Microsoft Office

**Interim Director of Housing and Residence Life: September, 2008- May, 2010**

Office of Student Development and Campus Life, Spalding University- Louisville, KY

- Developed written communications related to university housing
- Supervised three professional staff members, four resident advisors and twenty-five student employees
- Coordinated the university’s guest housing program
- Assisted with residential student account billing and reconciliation
- Created graduate assistant resident director position
- Collected data for residence life programs
- Conducted the interview, selection, and training of resident advisors

**Research Assistant: May, 2007- August 2007**

Bulter County Success Program, Miami University- Oxford, OH

- Conducted surveys and focus groups with parents
- Transcribed taped interviews and entered data

**ACADEMIC AWARDS**

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Krister Harnack Scholarship	2015
Krister Harnack Scholarship	2014
BCTC, Leadership Academy	2013

Krister Harnack Scholarship	2012
Harold and Lucy Fox Scholarship	2013
Citizen's Leadership Academy Grant	2012
Graduate Student Teaching Enhancement Program	2007
Jane and Dessie Graduate Scholarship Award	2007
Charles F. Weaver Achievement Award	2006
Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program	2005

### **PROFESSIONAL CAMPUS INVLOVEMENT**

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College Readiness Committee	2015-Present
Faculty Advisor-BCTC IEC KAECE Chapter	2013-Present
President's Administrative Planning Team	2013-Present
Graduation Committee Member	2011-Present
Professional Development and Innovation Grants Committee Member	2012-2014
Accelerating Opportunity Leadership Team	2011-2014
Student Advising Committee	2011-2014
Retention Committee Member	2011-2013

### **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

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National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	2013-present
Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA)	2013-present
Kentucky Association for Early Childhood Education (KAECE)	2013-present
National Association Developmental Education (NADE)	2010-present
Kentucky Association Developmental Education (KADE)	2010-present
Kentucky Academic Advising Association (KACADA)	2009-present
Kentucky Association of Blacks in Higher Education (KABHE)	2009-present

National Academic Advising Association (NACADA)	2008-present
National Council on Family Relations (NCFR)	2006-present
American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS)	2006-present
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated	2006-present
American College Personnel Association (ACPA)	2009-2011
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)	2008-2011
Habitat for Humanity-Madison and Clark Counties	2012-2014