



POLICY ANALYSIS RESEARCH REPORT:
RESPONDING TO DISPROPORTIONATE
DISCIPLINARY ACTION WITH
CULTURALLY RELEVANT EDUCATION
STRATEGIES IN OREGON K-12 PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

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Executive Summary

Addressing racial/ethnic disproportionality in discipline involves applying culturally relevant practices as comprehensive strategic alternatives to exclusionary discipline. In 2013, nine grants part of a program entitled: The Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Practices Grant Program were distributed under House Bill 3233. The purpose of the grants was to fund culturally relevant projects in Oregon schools, school districts and training programs. Layan Ammouri, a graduate student of Public Policy at Portland State University through a partnership agreement with the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA) and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) conducted a quasi-experimental longitudinal study to begin to explore the relationship between the two factors. By analyzing two samples from the institutions who received culturally relevant grants, the researcher sampled eight Oregon public high schools considering the social dimensions of race, ethnicity, special program status and socioeconomic class. The purpose of the study was to describe if the eight schools that were awarded grants to institute Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) impacted the schools' proportion of disproportionate discipline. Findings from the study suggest, while investing in CRP professional development, the disproportionality of discipline incidents declined among total enrolled students and within racial and economically disadvantaged subgroups, remained highest among Black/ African American students compared to White, Latino and Multi Racial subgroups, And slightly increased in some ELL (English Language Learners), Special Education and White sub groups were in the final year of the grant, *(which suggests the importance of investigating the ongoing impact of CRP sustainability over time)*. Revealed in the analysis is a detailed literature review, the study design, findings, and implications, and policy recommendations grounded on the examination of best practices determined in the academic literature on culturally relevant curriculum and teaching methods.

Introduction

Key Definitions:

- **Culture:** learned behavior passed from one generation to another for the purpose of individual and societal survival adaptation, growth and development. Culture has both external (e.g. roles, institutions) and internal representations (e.g. values, attitudes), beliefs, cognitive, affective/sensory styles and consciousness patterns (Marsella, 1994)
- **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP):** Using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning more relevant and effective for them” (Gay, 2000).
- **Exclusionary Discipline.** Discipline imposed by school administrators that removes a student from classroom instruction or school. This study reports results for in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion (Regional Educational Laboratory at Education Northwest, 2014).
- **Discipline Disproportionality:** Over-representation of students of color in areas that impact their access to educational attainment including exclusionary discipline. This term is a statistical concept that actualizes the disparities across student groups (Oregon Equity Lens, 2016).
- **Institutional Racism** norms, policies and practices that are structured into political, societal and economic institutions that have the net effect of imposing oppressive conditions and denying rights, opportunity, and equality to identifiable groups based upon race or ethnicity (NEA Policy Statement on Discipline and the School to Prison Pipeline, 2016) *More detailed definitions can be found in the Literature Review.*

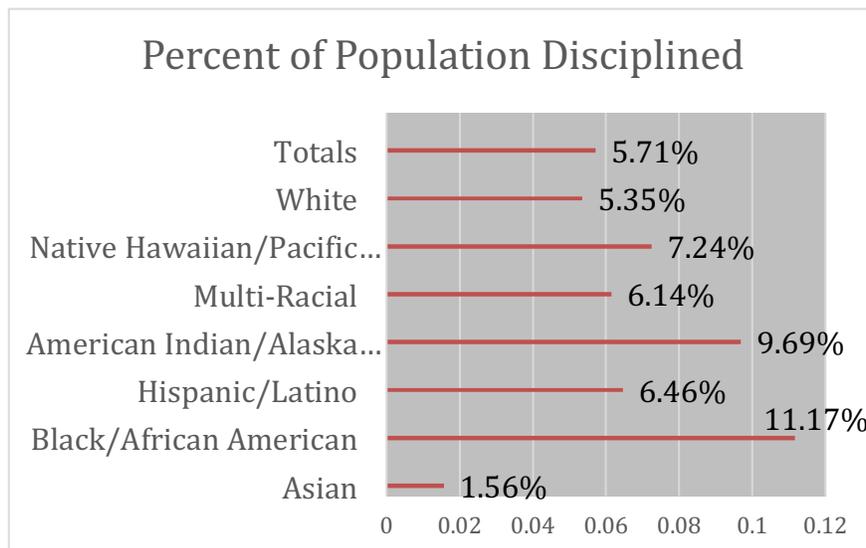
Background and Context

Racial and cultural diversity in Oregon has significantly increased in the last decade (Oregon State Report Card 2016-17). The variance in ethnicity, race and socioeconomic class of the student population has highlighted disparities among student groups. According to 2016-2017 Oregon State Discipline Data, as revealed in graph #1 and #2 below, students of color, particularly Native American/Alaska Native and Black/African American students, receive a proportionately higher rate of exclusionary discipline than their White or Asian peers. Graph #2 illustrates that the total number of students disciplined is highest among White students. However, the number of total students does not reflect the relative size of the population of

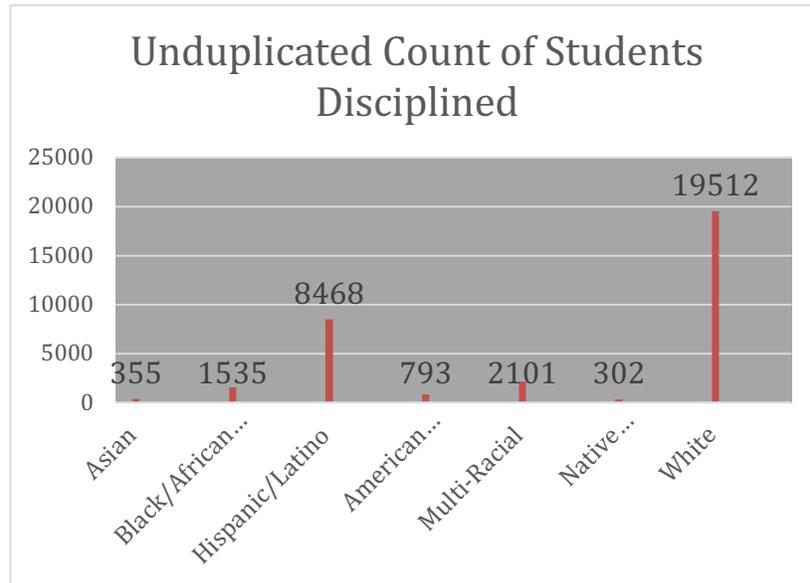
students experiencing discipline. When analyzing the proportionality of students, the data reveals students of color are being disciplined as much as two times the amount of White students.

Oregon has passed a variety of legislation and policy initiatives to attempt to remedy this issue, (*a complete discussion appears in the Legislative History, p. 5-19*) nevertheless, the data examined in this report demonstrates that discipline disproportionality continues to be an issue in Oregon student outcomes. The disproportionality in discipline data is a complex issue with multiple elements. The two primary focuses of this research are first, to illustrate the influence of a students' cultural identity on student success outcomes and second, to examine whether disproportionality in discipline improves in schools that engage in professional development focused on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.

Graph 1: Percent of Students Disciplined by Race



Source: Oregon Department of Education, Discipline Media File, 2016-2017

Graph 2: Number of Individual Students Disciplined

Source: Oregon Department of Education, Discipline Media File, 2016-17

Layan Ammouri a Graduate student of Public Policy at Portland State university researched and documented major themes and best practices of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) from the academic literature. Based on that research, a proposal was presented to the Department of Education and The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA) to request that the organizations work together to sponsor a quasi-experimental longitudinal study to determine if Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) has an impact on the rates of discipline disproportionality.

To investigate how the relationship between these two factors functions, the study used a grant awarded in 2013 entitled: The Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Practices Grant Program, distributed under House Bill 3233. The purpose of the grant was to fund culturally relevant projects in Oregon schools and/or school districts. The researcher analyzed two samples from the group to describe if there was evidence of change in discipline disproportionality after

instituting Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Practices over a timeframe of five years. This empirical work may serve to demonstrate if CRP curriculum and teaching methods influences which students receive exclusionary discipline.

Findings suggest that:

1. During the course of five years, while investing in CRP training disproportionality of discipline incidents declined among total enrolled students.
2. During the time of investment in CRP training discipline incidents within racial and economically disadvantaged subgroups declined.
3. Overall, Black/ African American discipline rates remained higher than Whites, Latinos, and Multi Racial categories.
4. A small increase in discipline incidents in some ELL, Special Education and White categories were noted in the final year of the grant. (*Suggesting the importance of investigating the ongoing impact of CRP sustainability over time*).

There is an extensive amount of literature on the positive impact of culturally relevant pedagogy on student success outcomes (Banks, 1988; Banks et al., 2001; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Giroux, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2004, 2017). There is, however, a more limited amount of research on schools that incorporate CRP (in terms of their curriculum and teacher training) to measure its impact on disproportionate discipline outcomes. Addressing racial/ethnic disproportionality in discipline involves applying culturally relevant practices as comprehensive strategic alternatives to exclusionary discipline. The following research can be used as a resource to inform educators who want to incorporate CRP in their classroom, as well as for policy analysts aiming to incorporate social justice components in education policy.

The following paper provides:

- A literature review, which includes: Contextualization of social justice theory and a look at the effects of racially-driven US policy on student identity. A critical analysis of the influence of race/ethnicity and socioeconomic factors on student education outcomes. Leading themes and strategies identified in academic research on culturally relevant pedagogy. Oregon legislative history of policies and practices that have aimed to address cultural components in education and reduce disproportionate discipline.
- Oregon Department of Education 2016-2017 Discipline Incidents Data categorized by school, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES), special program status, and the number of students in each subgroup who received exclusionary discipline.
- An analysis of the aforementioned data over a period of five years (2012-2017), with a detailed description of findings, trends, and visuals available in Appendix B.
- Policy recommendations of how to address disproportionate discipline by incorporating culturally relevant education components in curriculum and teacher training methods.

Issue Description and Status

As there is a limited amount of information on the actual practice of incorporating culturally relevant teaching and learning mechanisms as a response to disproportionate discipline. The following body of work aims to shed light on the linkage between the two subjects. The primary objective of this research is to explore the ability of schools to adopt culturally appropriate curriculum and teacher training methods based on best practices in the academic literature when awarded grants to do so. The secondary objective is to determine whether or not implementing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy strategies have an impact on the

discipline incident break down disaggregated by race of the schools. CRP requires educators have the skills and knowledge to address students' diverse cultural experiences, while acknowledging the dominant cultural aspects of school and the "cultural mismatch" that results. A cultural mismatch occurs when cultural norms in mainstream institutions, such as school, do not match the norms prevalent among social groups who are underrepresented in those institutions (Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012; Stephens, Townsend, Markus, & Phillips, 2012). CRP "...recognizes, respects, and uses students' identities and backgrounds as meaningful sources for creating optimal learning environments" (Nieto, 2005), while simultaneously maintaining academic standards and high expectations for student achievement.

From a policy perspective, findings from this study may inform a policy that encourages comprehensive cultural awareness trainings; provides resources to school staff based on CRP strategies in the teacher credentialing process, and to include cultural awareness professional development program that effectively and comprehensively address the longstanding issue of racial disproportionality in discipline outcomes.

Law, Policy, and History of Oregon Legislation

There are numerous players with various roles to consider while navigating the education policy realm, including the Federal Department of Education, State Board of Education, State Department of Education, state agencies, school districts, school boards, school board and administrator associations, teacher unions, parent-teacher groups, and students. The interests of those stakeholders vary depending on the policies influence. A legislative history is illustrated below to demonstrate the efforts state and federal entities have taken to address the growing

number of culturally diverse students, the academic achievement gap and disproportionate discipline.

Oregon Responses to Diversity, Legal History

1991 The Minority Teacher Act

The Minority Teacher Act set a goal to raise the number of teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds in Oregon. The bill stated that the number of minority teachers, including administrators, employed by school districts and education service districts should be approximately proportionate to the number of minority children enrolled in the public schools in Oregon public schools by 2001. The Minority Teacher Act was amended in 2013 to add persons whose first language is not English to the definition of minority and requires biennial report from Oregon Education Investment Board. Then in 2015, the Minority Teacher Act of 1991 (ORS 342.443). become Senate Bill 755 Oregon Educator Equity Act.

1999 Senate Bill 103

Senate Bill 103 (SB 103) required the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Oregon to direct the Department of Education to take increase efforts to evaluate the distribution of ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds of Oregon's public school students and advance the use of demographic data for curriculum and program planning, examine strategies to inform school district boards, administrators, teachers, parents, and the public about multicultural and diversity laws and policies, identify and review exemplary multicultural curriculum for different grade levels based on the needs of Oregon's public school students, identify and review strategies to integrate multicultural curriculum with other education programs, and evaluate how current laws on diversity and multicultural education are being implemented and applied throughout the public school system (Senate Bill 103, 1999) . Following the passage of this bill Avel Gordly, a former member of the Oregon House of Representatives and Senate, wrote in Oregon's 2003

Cultural Competence Conference material her perspective on SB 103. Gordy explained that SB103 identified key issues and outlined necessary steps in moving forward with multicultural education but did not encompass all that must be done to address multicultural curriculum and diversity in Oregon. She stated that the 2001 and 2003 legislative sessions passed without a compliance report (an agreement to institute action) from the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The omission of the compliance report led supporters of the bill to conclude that multicultural curriculum and competency were on the back burner at the state level. Without strong compliance policies the foundation for the bill to have an impact at the school level was weak. Gordly also pointed to an absence of data to describe the actual demographics of each school district in response to the first objective of the bill, and that the multicultural curriculum that was available could have been used however a systematic plan was not created in order to deliver and execute the curriculum effectively, thus resulting in an absence of actual implementation (Gordly, 2004).

2013 House Bill 3233 (Legislation that created the grant analyzed in the study below)

The Oregon Department of Education created a new Education Equity Unit in 2013 committed to addressing equity issues in the state through policy and collaborative governance in line with the states aim the OEIB with a focus on “revitalization of the education profession and establishment of a Network of Quality Teaching and Learning” advocated for the passage of House Bill 3233(HB 3233). One aspect of HB 3233 was a series of grants totaling more than 1.3 million dollars that was aimed at promoting Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Practices (CRPP) across the State of Oregon. One of the important and technical challenges of this investment recognized by ODE staff, OCEE, and grant project leaders was evaluation. The partners engaged, targeted outcomes, theories of change, and locations of engagement within the

education system vary widely across each grantee. The complexity made it difficult to determine the impact of each grant and the investment overall.

2013 Senate Bill 739

Senate Bill 739 directed the Oregon Department of Education to develop academic content standards for Oregon Studies and prepare materials to support professional teacher development and classroom instruction. These standards were to include a balanced representation of the contribution to society by men and women of African American, Hispanic, Native American, Asian American, and other racial groups in Oregon.

2014 House Bill 2845, Oregon Educator Equity Advisory Group

In 2014 the Oregon Educator Equity Advisory Group was created; the group consisted of building administrators, district administrators, faculty from public and private non-profit Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs), representatives from communities of color, non-profits working in education reform, TSPC, ODE, Education Northwest appointed by the Chief Education Officer. The group's charge is to "assess, evaluate, and advocate for statewide educational policy with legislators, state organizations, schools, and communities on promising practices to prepare, recruit, and retain culturally and linguistically diverse educators who contribute to the continuing success of diverse students, teachers, families, and communities" (Oregon Educator Equity Plan, 2016).

2015 The Minority Teacher Act of 1991 becomes the Oregon Educator Equity Act

The changes to the Minority Teacher Act altered the set the state goal that, by July 1, 2015, the following shall be increased by 10 percent as compared to July 1, 2012: (1) The number of minority teachers and administrators employed by school districts and education service districts; and (2) The number of minority students enrolled in public teacher education programs. The bill requires annual Legislative Reports on progress and mandates public teacher

education programs submit plans to promote diverse educator preparation to be reviewed and approved by each institution's board of trustees and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

2016 House Bill 4033

HB 4033 specified that money may be distributed under the Network for Quality Teaching and Learning for purposes of advancing the Educators Equity Act, improving cultural competence of educators and ensuring educators are supported in developing in culturally relevant educational practices (ORS 342-950).

Oregon Equity Policy Initiatives

2004 Oregon's Invitational Cultural Competency Summit

In 2004 Oregon's Invitational Cultural Competency Summit was held to engage the states leaders in education in a dialog regarding cultural competency. The Summit was sponsored by the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon University System, Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, Eugene School District LEAD Project and the Oregon State Action for Education Leadership Project and was supported by a grant from the Wallace Foundation. The Summit was held as a follow up to the direction of instituting efforts on the state level to incorporate cultural competency in the education system which included the Oregon University System national study of state policies on cultural competence requirements for K-12 educators in 2001 and the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) Cultural Competency Plan of Action which was proposed to its Commission in 2003. A primary objective of the summit was to craft a definition of cultural competency, identify indicators of cultural competency, delineating system expectations and needs, and identify the actions required to move from concept to implementation (Oregon Department of Education, Cultural Competency Summit Proceedings, 2004). ODE's current working definition of culture and cultural competency was

created at the Summit by the education stakeholders throughout the state who attended. The explanation of what “cultural competency” looks like in practice is explained as a developmental process occurring at individual and system levels that evolves and is sustained over time recognizing that individuals begin with specific lived experiences and biases. The final report of the summits proceedings asserts that become “culturally competent” individuals and organizations: a.) Have a defined set of values and principles, demonstrated behaviors, knowledge, skills, attitudes, policies, and structures that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally and b.) Demonstrate the capacity to, value diversity, engage in self-reflection, facilitate effectively the dynamics of difference, acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge, adapt to the diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities they serve and support actions which foster equity of opportunity and services. The Cultural Competency Summit Proceedings affirmed that the Summit allowed education sectors to develop a cross-functional definition for cultural competency that would allow for development and improvement among Oregon’s current and future workforce. Education leaders across the state of Oregon submitted their opinions to the Summit regarding the challenge of cultivating cultural proficiency and how to address it in Oregon school districts. The work notes illustrated that those participated were in consensus that cultural competence requires more than providing teachers access to knowledge and skills. Rather, the participants asserted that cultural competence entails challenging the status quo and advocating for equity and social justice. For example, one table noted the need to incorporate “institutionalized notions of power, privilege, and oppression” into the definition. Another table noted the need to “acknowledge power differences and silencing.” Thus, for many, cultural competence is transformative and political (Oregon’s 2004 Summit on Cultural Competency Proceedings, 2014).

2011 Oregon Equity Lens

In Governor Kitzhaber's third term as an elected official he established the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) to focus on district achievement compacts, replaced a state elected superintendent with an appointed Deputy Superintendent and established the 40-40-20 state performance target. The 40-40-20 was enacted in legislation (ORS 350.014) creating the attainment goal that by 2025 all Oregonians will hold a high school diploma or equivalent, 40% of them will have an associate degree or a meaningful postsecondary certificate, and 40% will hold a bachelor's degree or advanced degree. The Equity Lens was originally developed in 2011 by the formerly existing state organization OEIB which ceased to exist in 2014. The Equity Lens is a public policy statement with a primary focus on race and ethnicity. The statement committed Oregon to narrow the achievement and opportunity gaps for people of color. The plan explicitly called for an examination of Oregon education policies and practices with the intention of identifying institutional and systemic hurdles that may be considered discriminatory practices and address those issues. As stated in the report, the Equity Lens provided state-wide direction to "clearly articulate the shared investments we will need to make to reach our goal of an equitable educational system, and to create clear accountability structures to ensure that we are actively making progress and correcting instances in which there is no progress" (Oregon Equity Report, 2016).

2012 Oregon Equity Plan

The Oregon Equity Plan emerged in 2012 as the academic achievement of students of color still remained disproportionately lower than that of White students. The state addressed the issue by outlining a strategy to address teacher readiness and training as a strategy to improve the academic success of students of color and students living in poverty. The Oregon Equity Plan is to ensure that poor and minority children, and children attending low-performing schools, are not

taught at higher rates by inexperienced, unqualified and out-of-field teachers than other children. Oregon is committed to the goal that *all* students are able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college, work, and citizenship. High quality teaching in every classroom along with school and district leadership focused on raising student achievement is paramount to realizing this goal. A documented academic achievement gap persists between low-income or minority students and their peers. Nationally, low-income, minority, and special education students as well as students who are non-native English speakers tend to achieve at lower levels than students overall (Oregon State Report Card, 2017).

Addressing Discipline

1990's Zero-Tolerance Policies

Since the early 1990's, numerous U.S. schools have enacted "zero tolerance" policies (American Psychological Association, 2008). Zero-Tolerance Policy is a policy that affirms punishment for infractions of a stated rule, with the intention of eliminating undesirable conduct. "Zero-tolerance policies forbid persons in positions of authority from exercising discretion or changing punishments to fit the circumstances subjectively; they are required to impose a pre-determined punishment regardless of individual capability, extenuating circumstances, or history". The pre-determined punishment need not be severe, but the consequence should always be carried out (NEA Policy Statement on Discipline and the School to Prison Pipeline, 2016). Zero tolerance policies began in response to the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act, (a one-year mandatory expulsion policy for possession of a weapon). The Gun-Free Schools Act was originally developed by law enforcement to combat drug offenses. Zero tolerance policies as practiced in schools came to mean suspending or expelling students for specified offenses without regard to the student's age or the seriousness or context of the behavior (American

Psychological Association, 2008). Local school districts have broadened the mandate of zero tolerance beyond the federal mandates of weapons to drugs, alcohol, fighting threats.

2014 Mandatory Expulsion Government Direction-Memorandum

In 2014, ODE issued a memorandum to all school superintendents and special education directors summarizing the statutory requirement which placed limits on expulsions to particular circumstances and removing the mandatory expulsion language regarding weapons (Mandatory Expulsion Government Direction-Memorandum, 2014).

2015 Restorative Justice Techniques in Response to Disproportionate Discipline

Emerging from the ineffectiveness of zero tolerance policies (Eitle & Eitle, 2004 Raffaele Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002, Losen & Martinez, 2013 Steinberg, Allensworth, & Johnson, 2011), an alternative disciplinary response strategy known as Restorative Justice which used specific communication techniques to manage conflict was adopted by particular school districts. Restorative Justice practices aim to build healthy relationships and foster a sense of community as a way to prevent and address conflict. Restorative practices are increasingly being applied to address misbehavior and rule violations as a way to improve school climate and culture by humanizing student-to-student and student-to-educator relationships. These strategies allow individual students to take full responsibility for their behavior by directly addressing those affected. The process includes having the student take responsibility for the action committed and then communicating with those involved to understand how the behavior affected others, acknowledge that the behavior was harmful, take action to repair the harm, and make changes in order to avoid the behavior in the future (*NEA/AFT Restorative Practices Workgroup, 2014*). Accordingly, rather than punish (i.e., exclude) those who cause harm, restorative practices hold students accountable for their actions by creating controlled environments for face-to-face encounters between the offended and the offender. Strategies have been used by Multnomah

County trainings and in Portland Public Schools. Still, exclusionary discipline incidents disaggregated by race remain largely disproportionate as evidenced in Oregon Disciplinary Action data (Oregon State Report Card, 2016-2017).

2013-14 House Bill 2192

In 2013 House Bill 2192 (HB 2192) established new requirements for district policies related to discipline, suspension, and expulsion in Oregon. HB 2192 placed an affirmative obligation on each Oregon school district board to adopt and revise their policies on school discipline, and required that school districts develop student handbooks, codes of conduct, and/or other documents that align with the board policy to better administer disciplinary action. The law allowed school administrators substantial discretion in assessing school safety and gives school boards broad authority to suspend or expel any refractory student. It also reduces the use of expulsion and sets a priority on keeping students in school. The requires discipline policies to incorporate research-based approaches for reducing student misbehavior. Moreover, to institute that new discipline policies now consider a student's age and past behavior prior to assigning suspension or expulsion and requires that administrators impose discipline without bias (ORS 339.250)

2015 House Bill 2016

In 2015 House Bill 2016 compelled the formation of an advisory group that consisted of community members, education stakeholders, and representatives of the Early Learning Division, the Youth Development Division, and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to address disparities experienced by so-called 'plan students.' The bill defined a 'plan student' as a student enrolled in early childhood through post-secondary education who: (a) is black or African-American or a member of a student group that is not covered under an existing culturally

specific statewide education plan; and (b) has experienced disproportionate results in education due to historical practices, as identified by the State Board of Education (House Bill 2016, 2015)

2017 House Bill 2845

House Bill 2845 tasked an Advisory Group of 14 members to develop Ethnic Studies standards into a statewide social studies curriculum by year 2020. This bill provides an opportunity to address disproportionate disciplinary action (which has been long been on the state and national agenda with culturally relevant strategies) by acknowledging cultural influences (House Bill 2845, 2017)

2017 Oregon Educator Equity Report

The most recent report of the Education Equity Plan for the 2016-17 academic school year indicates a significant gap between students and teachers of color continues to exist at 37% students of color and 9.3% teachers of color, *See 2017 Oregon Educator Equity Report p. 37, Graph Appendix B for more information* (Oregon Department of Education Annual Membership Report and Staff Collection Report, 2017).

Nationwide Exclusionary Discipline Stats & The School to Prison Pipeline

The primary goal of enacting exclusionary discipline (in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion) policies as expressed by state and federal authorities is “to maintain safe and orderly schools” (Oregon State Report Card, 2016-2017). Although the number of discipline incidents have been increasing over the last four decades nationwide, there is no evidence that imposing exclusionary discipline has increased school safety, improved learning environments, or positively impacted the behavior of students (American Psychological Association, 2008).

On a National level the work of organizations such as The Government Accountability Office (GAO), National Education Association (NEA) and the American Civil Liberties Union

(ACLU) have placed a spotlight on the issue and placed in on the political agenda. The ACLU and NEA advocate for greater awareness and action to take place to address discipline disproportionality and its relation to the school to prison pipeline. The school-to-prison-pipeline refers to the practices, policies and actions in our nation's schools that have led to the disproportionate removal from school of students of color, including those who identify as LGBTQ, have disabilities, and/or are English Language Learners. These removals are invariably precipitated by formal school disciplinary action, such as a suspension or expulsion, which either directly or indirectly pushes these students permanently out of school and/or into the juvenile or criminal justice systems (NEA Policy Statement on Discipline and the School to Prison Pipeline, 2016).

Government Accountability Report Regarding Discipline on a National Level

The United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) an independent, nonpartisan agency that works for Congress conducted a report that revealed disparities in discipline disaggregated by race. The GAO analyzed Education data for school years 2000-01 to 2013-14 (most recent available); reviewed applicable federal laws, regulations, and agency documents; and interviewed federal officials, civil rights and academic subject matter specialists, and school district officials in three states, selected to provide geographic diversity and examples of actions to diversify to examine. The GOA report to the Congressional Requesters stated that the primary finding was “Black students, boys, and students with disabilities were disproportionately disciplined (e.g., suspensions and expulsions) in K-12 public schools across the country in 2013-14. These disparities were widespread and persisted regardless of the type of disciplinary action, level of school poverty, or type of public school attended.” The study used data collected by the U.S. Department of Education in the six categories of: (1) out-of-school suspensions, (2) in-

school suspensions, (3) referrals to law enforcement, (4) expulsions, (5) corporal punishment, and (6) school-related arrests. The GOA analyzed data by student demographics (e.g., race, sex, disability) and school type (e.g., magnet or charter). The report indicated that Black students were particularly overrepresented among students who were suspended from school, received corporal punishment, or had a school-related arrest. In comparison, the difference was significantly large between Black and White students. Although there were 17.4 million more White students than Black students attending K-12 public schools, 176,000 more Black students were suspended. This pattern emerged irrespective of whether there were high or low levels of school poverty at the school. The same pattern surfaced of disproportionate discipline for Black students, boys, and students with disabilities even when taking into consideration the level of school poverty. Additionally, irrespective if the public school was a charter, traditional, alternative or special education school, Black students, boys, and students with disabilities were disciplined at higher rates (GAO-18-258, 2014).

Federal Policy Recommendations for Disproportionate Discipline

The Government Accountability Offices recommendation to Department of Education was that the Secretary of Education should direct Education's Office for Civil Rights to more routinely analyze its Civil Rights Data Collection. They suggested that the analysis should be done by school groupings and types of schools across key elements to further explore and understand issues and patterns of disparities. The Department of Education responded by stating that it already analyzes its civil rights data in some ways recommended by the GOA when appropriate, to inform its internal civil rights investigations, and makes the data available to researchers and other stakeholders outside the agency when necessary. The GAO responded by emphasizing that those efforts are encouraging but that by using civil rights data across key data

more routinely to help it identify disparities and patterns among groups and types of schools. They asserted that this type of analysis could enhance the agency's current efforts and ultimately improve the agency's ability to target oversight and technical assistance to the schools that need it most. Education reported in December 2017, that this recommendation would be implemented by September 2018 (GAO-18-258, 2014).

The Government recommendations to Department of Justice were that the Attorney General of the United States should direct the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division to systematically track key information across its portfolio of open desegregation cases and use this data to inform its monitoring of these cases. The type of information the GOA was referring to would include significant dates actions were taken, or details of reports that were received. The Department of Justice (DOJ) responded by agreeing with the recommendation and the need for better tracking of case-related data tracking. The DOJ reported in 2016 that it was developing an electronic document management system that may allow more case-related information to be stored in electronic format by doing so the DOJ is taking steps to increase its case monitoring activities in desegregation cases and has proposed to continue those efforts. Still, the DOJ did not provide any details on what those steps are or if they are directly in line with the GAO's recommendations of increased monitoring. The GAO stated it shall consider closing this recommendation when the agency provides specific information on its systematic tracking of information on open cases and using this information to enhance enforcement. GAO did not receive an update on this recommendation from DOJ in 2017 (GAO-18-258, 2014).

Research has shown that students who experience discipline that removes them from the classroom are more likely to repeat a grade, drop out of school, and become involved in the

juvenile justice system. Studies have shown this can result in decreased earning potential and added costs to society, such as incarceration and lost tax revenue. Additionally, schools with a higher percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline have lower levels of academic achievement and environments less conducive to learning. Empirical evidence suggests experiencing disproportionate suspension and expulsion puts students at greater risk of disengagement and diminished educational opportunities. Because studies have shown that students of color ultimately pay the higher price of these educational outcomes the discipline policies further perpetuate the academic achievement gap (Eitle & Eitle, 2004 Raffaele Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002, Losen & Martinez, 2013; Steinberg, Allensworth, & Johnson, 2011).

On average categorized by school level, the leading reason students receive exclusionary discipline is for aggressive behavior in elementary school, disrespectful behavior in middle school, and unexcused absences or tardiness in high school (Burke & Nishioka, 2010; Kaufman, 2010; Spaulding, 2010). For each of these offenses, the percentage of students receiving discipline is higher for male students than for female students (Kaufman et al., 2010). Students who are suspended are more likely to repeat a grade, drop out, and become involved in the juvenile justice system, thus contributing to the “school to prison pipeline” (Lee, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2011; Fabelo et al., 2011). “The school-to-prison pipeline is a direct result of Institutional Racism and intolerance and is both an education and social justice issue. Zero-tolerance discipline policies, increased police presence in classrooms and hallways, insufficient services and support, and rising class sizes are pushing more and more students out of the public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. The school-to-prison pipeline disproportionately impacts students of color, including those who identify as LGBTQ, have disabilities, and/or are English Language Learners. (NEA Policy Statement on Discipline and the

School to Prison Pipeline, 2016). As a result, those students are consistently placed in contact with the criminal justice system and subjected to punishments that are harsher than those received by their White peers for the same minor school infractions and behavior. (Dinkes et al., 2007; Fenning & Rose, 2007; Losen & Skiba, 2010; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; McFadden et al., 1992; Rocque, 2010; Shaw & Braden, 1990; Skiba, 2002; Skiba, 2011). The NEA report illustrated that many students of color offered commonplace examples of disparate discipline in their schools, where a White student and a black student were both suspended after fighting, but the black student's suspension was two weeks longer. Students reported that when they confronted educators about those disparities, they were sometimes disciplined further, and the justification for this by administrators was that "different circumstances" exist for each individual student and the reasoning cannot be revealed due to student privacy rights. Experiences such as these leave students of color feeling that their discipline is arbitrary and unfair (NEA Policy Statement on Discipline and the School to Prison Pipeline, 2016).

The number of White students experiencing exclusionary discipline compared to that of a student of color has been evidenced as clearly disproportionate. The percentage has been demonstrated higher for Hispanic students than for White students despite similar rates of reported misbehavior (Peguero & Shekarkhar, 2011). Bradshaw shows in a study of 21 schools that Black students were more likely to be referred to the school office for an offense even after controlling for teacher ratings of student behavior (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Comparably, White students in urban schools generally receive exclusionary discipline for incidents that are non-subjective and observable such as smoking, vandalism, truancy, and using obscene language (Skiba et al., 2002). In contrast, Black students are most often referred for behaviors that require subjective judgments by school staff, such as being disrespectful, making excessive noise,

exhibiting threatening behavior, and loitering (Burke & Nishioka 2010). The academic literature agrees that school disciplinary measures should not be used to exclude students from school and if necessary should only be used as a last resort. (Burke & Nishioka, 2014).

Connecting Cultural Diversity to Oregon Policy and Practice

In Oregon in 2010, Arthur Burke and Vicki Nishioka at Education Northwest conducted a study on six diverse school districts in Oregon on student suspension and expulsion. Their findings illustrated that disproportionality in the percentages of White students as compared to racial/ethnic minority students who receive discipline has widened in the last decade. According to Oregon Discipline Incidents Data collected from 2015 to 2017, behavioral issues make up the average majority of student discipline offenses in the state. Behavioral actions are highly subjective offenses interpreted by the educator (Oregon Discipline Incidents Data, 2017). The majority of offenses can be attributed to males and students of color. According to Oregon Discipline Data students of color in undergo discipline consequences for behavioral issues approximately twice as much as their White peers (Oregon State Report Card, 2017)

The disproportionality in discipline data is a complex issue with multiple elements. The two primary focuses of this research are first, to illustrate the influence of a students' cultural identity and second, to determine if implementing CRP in the classroom impacts discipline disproportionality. Cultural pressures like low SES, lack of cultural capital, and inaccessibility to resources etc. begin to have an impact in early childhood. Many of these influences be attributed to consequences of historically racialized policy (*see literature review p. 50-100*). Cultural and racial identity differences between students and teachers may influence student-teacher relations. Unawareness to the influence of cultural identity and the particular subgroup norms impacted by

that culture may cause misinterpretation and negatively impact the academic success of students of color (Booth & Crouter, 2008; Delpit, 2006; Gay & Howard, n.d.; Lin & Harris, 2008)

The racial and cultural diversity in Oregon has significantly increased in the last decade. The variance in ethnicity, race and socioeconomic class of the student population has highlighted disparities among student groups. Oregon state data illustrates that Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students have higher dropout rates, lower graduation rates, and experience more severe consequences for committing discipline incidents than White and Asian students (Oregon Department of Education Report Card, 2016-2017). Research shows that a student's cultural, racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic identity has a significant influence on their overall educational experience and academic success (Banks, 1988; Banks et al., 2001; Gay, 2010; Gay & Howard, n.d.; Nieto, 2004; Sleeter & Grant, 1987). Multiple attempts have been made at the state and national level to address and attempt to remedy the academic achievement gap that exists between students of color and their White peers. Notably, while the state's student population grows more diverse, the teaching force in Oregon remains largely White at 90.7% (Oregon Report Card, 2017). This disparity between the homogeneity of White teachers and the relative racial diversity of students exists in nearly every school district in which more than 40 percent of the student population identify as students of color. Four Oregon school districts have a gap of more than 60 percentage points between the racial/ethnic diversity of students and that of teachers. The lowest disparities among high-diversity districts are in Portland at 25%, Forest Grove and Tigard-Tualatin at 30%, Dayton at 32%, Phoenix-Talent at 33%, Gresham-Barlow at 34%, Beaverton at 38%, Salem-Keizer at 38%, and North Wasco County at 39%, (Oregon Educator Equity Report, 2016). This is significant, because research shows that a teacher's ability to identify, respond appropriately,

and recognize cultural identity in the classroom can contribute to increasing student success. Research has also shown that students with teachers of the same racial/ethnic background who see members of their racial/ethnic background reflected in school curriculum and resources experience the same positive impact.

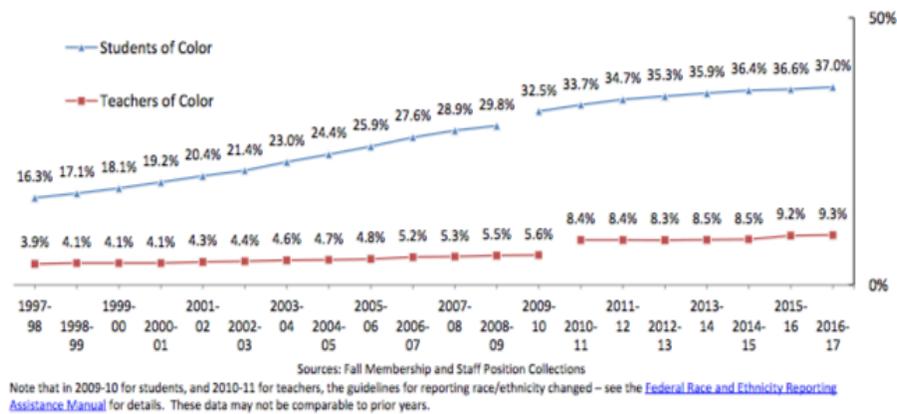
As mentioned above in the Legislative history, in 2013 House Bill 3233 established a Network of Quality Teaching and Learning. The Network provided grant funding for a comprehensive system of support for educators that aimed to create a culture of leadership, professionalism, and improvement for teachers and educational leaders across the P-20 system. One of the purposes of the network was to distribute funding to school districts and post-secondary institutions for the purpose of closing achievement gaps. The grant was to be used to improve the effectiveness of professional development, implement data-driven decision making and culturally competent practices, support communities, and prepare culturally responsive educators. The aim of the grant is to support school districts, post-secondary institutions, and nonprofit organizations in closing opportunity gaps for the increasing number of culturally and/or linguistically diverse learners. Through the training, mentoring, and study of culturally responsive pedagogy best practices the grant hoped to equip current and future educators with the skills necessary to implement culturally relevant strategies. As shown in Graph 1, The student population continues to outgrow the hiring and retention rates of ethnically diverse teachers. Students of color make of 37% of the student population, one third of Oregon's K-12 population. Graph 3 illustrates that Student ethnic diversity has grown more rapidly than teacher diversity over the last twenty years. The largest growth in diversity in the last six years has occurred among Hispanic students and students who identify as Multi Racial. Table 1 displays student suspensions and expulsions disaggregated for the Oregon 2016-17 academic school year.

Demonstrated in the table, males and students of color are far more likely to experience suspension and/or expulsion than females or White and Asian students. Low-income students and students in special education are far more likely to experience exclusionary discipline than other sub categories of students.

Graph 3: Comparison of Students and Teachers of Color, Oregon 19970-1988-2016-2017

Students and Teachers of Color

Oregon has made some progress in hiring and retaining a more racially and ethnically diverse set of teachers, but this progress has not kept pace with the increasing diversity of Oregon's student population. Students of color now make up more than one-third of Oregon's K-12 population.

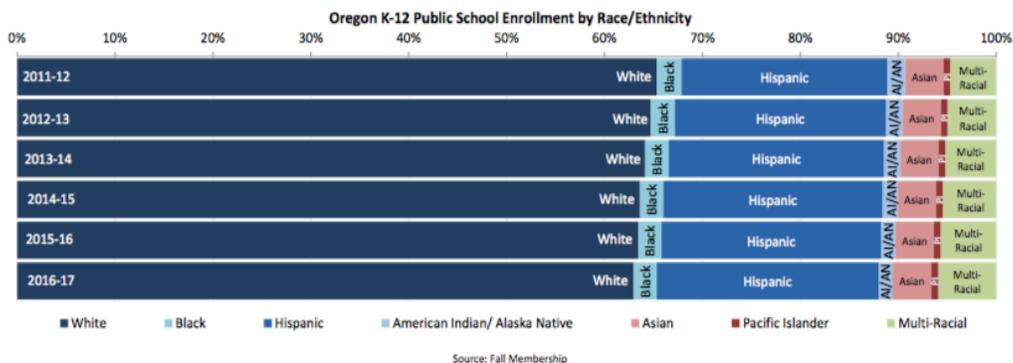


Source: Oregon 2016-2017 State Report Card

Graph 4: Student Enrollment Categorized by Racial Make Up, 2011-2012-2016-2017

Diverse Student Populations

In 2016-17, there were 578,947 K-12 students enrolled in Oregon's public schools. Of these students, 214,366 (37.03%) were students of color. This represents less than a 1 percentage point increase from last year's rate of 36.57%.



Source: Oregon 2016-2017 State Report Card

Table 1: Student Suspensions and Expulsions Disaggregated, Oregon 2016-17 Academic School Year

Student Group	Percent of Students enrolled on May 1, 2017 with One or More Discipline Incidents in the 2016-17 School Year
Total	5.2%
Gender	
Male	7.4%
Female	2.8%
Ethnicity	
Asian	1.4%
Black/African American	9.9%
Hispanic/Latino	5.9%
American Indian/Alaska Native	8.7%
Multi-Racial	5.5%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	6.7%
White	4.8%
Other Student Groups	
Economically Disadvantaged	7.0%
Not Economically Disadvantaged	2.9%
TAG	2.1%
Not TAG	5.4%
English Learners ¹	4.4%
Not English Learners	5.3%
Special Education	9.9%
Not Special Education	4.4%

Source: Oregon 2016-2017 State Report Card

Exploratory Study Methodology

In accordance with the Education Northwest report findings in 2010, Oregon State Discipline Data for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 showed that the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression or for insubordination/disruption was higher for racial/ethnic minority students (excluding Asian students), than for White students. Additionally, the percentage of incidents was also higher for economically disadvantaged and special education students.

Problem Statement

Nationwide and state-specific school year discipline incidents data illustrates that a disproportionate number of students of color are being disciplined in schools and are experiencing a disproportionate severity of discipline compared to White and Asian students. Statewide, physical and verbal aggression and insubordination/disruption were the most common reasons why students were suspended or expelled (2016-2017 Oregon Student Discipline Data, Burke & Nishioka 2010). Oregon Student Discipline Incidents Data illustrates that 43.74% of discipline offenses attributed to the 36.6% of students of color in 2015-2016 and 38.1% of discipline incidents were attributed to the 37% of students of color in 2016-2017. Both the positive impacts of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy as well as the longstanding issue of racial disproportionality in discipline numbers have been researched and identified as critical subjects in the academic literature. However, there is a more limited amount of research on the connection between the influence of culture on discipline incidents (Banks et al., 2001; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Gay, 2010; Nieto, 2004 et al.).

Primary Research Statement

This body of work links the subject matters of cultural relevance in education to disproportionality in discipline incidents disaggregated by race, socioeconomic class and special program status. In studying discipline incident trends among eight schools from two large urban school districts in Portland, Oregon Metropolitan Region. given grants to implement culturally relevant practices, the study aimed to determine whether the implementation had an influence on discipline disproportionality.

Research Questions

- 1) What percentage of students were removed from regular classroom instruction for exclusionary discipline and how did the percentage vary by student demographic?

- 2) Did implementing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy at the school level have an impact on student incident discipline disproportionality disaggregated by student race/ethnicity, income status, special education and English as a first language program enrollment, over the academic years of 2012-12 to 2016-17?

The research purpose of the study is to describe the relationship between culturally relevant pedagogy and disproportionate discipline and begin to explore how the relationship functions. The first question indicates a purpose of description. The second question asks data analysis to describe the proportions of discipline and relationships within the data. Additionally, it raises issues of explanation between CRP and rates of discipline. While the latter design is not a full explanation, the purposefulness of the study is to move toward a full explanation of the relationship between the two factors.

Data

Oregon Student Discipline Incident Data for the years 2012-2017 were obtained through a data-sharing agreement with the Oregon Department of Education. The student-level data collection includes enrollment, demographic characteristics, special program status, and district and school information for students enrolled in Oregon public schools. These data were de-identified by suppressing student names and identification numbers; cell sizes six or smaller were suppressed. The data collection includes information on, race/ethnicity, special program status such as enrollment in special education English as a first language programs and the socioeconomic status of students who received exclusionary discipline. Appendix A included the data definitions of each of the terms used to categorize the data. Exclusionary discipline involves incidents of out-of-school suspension and expulsion. In addition to the raw data, the criteria outlined for eligibility by the Department of Education for the participating samples who

received the Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Practices Grant outlined in House Bill 3233 were also used.

Study Design

The research was conducted using a quasi-experimental design over a longitudinal period. The study selected as described below, eight schools that received CRP grant and the data recorded during the time period of five years to describe how CRP is related to disproportionate discipline. The independent variable of CRP was deemed the driving force to incite change on discipline rates, the dependent variable. These indicators were used to determine if a possible relationship or correlation exists between the two variables. At this time no control group was selected

Experimental Design: X O1T, O2T, O3T, O4T, O5T, O6T, O7T, O8T

The study examined two different Grant recipients in which grants could be linked to Oregon Public High Schools. Samples A and B together consist of 8 high schools grade span from 9th through 12th grade. Sample A included 3 schools and Sample B, 5 schools. The groups were in two different school districts with parallel defining characteristics.

Sample Characteristics

Sample A: Sample A includes approximately 3,410 students enrolled across three Oregon public high schools. Data averages of these schools from the 2016-2017 academic school year show an enrolled student population with a racial distribution of approximately 13% African American/Black, 20% Hispanic Latino, 10% Multi Racial, and 47% White, as well as a socioeconomic distribution of approximately 81% economically disadvantaged, 18% special education, and 15% English language learners.

Sample B: Sample B includes approximately 10454 students enrolled across five Oregon public high schools. Data averages of these schools from the 2016-2017 academic school year

show an enrolled student population with a racial distribution of approximately 3% African American/ Black students, 24% Hispanic/ Latino, 7% Multi Racial and 51% White, as well as a socioeconomic distribution of approximately 45% economically disadvantaged students, 18% special education, 14% English language learners.

Research Strategy and Methods Applied

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all students by grade span (9–12 high school) and by student subgroup. Rate ratios were calculated comparing the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline between a subgroup and a reference group. Using the total students who received exclusionary discipline for all calculations titled “TD” (Total Disciplined) and all students enrolled in the subgroup as a reference for all calculations entitled “WS” (Within Subgroup). Rate ratios were calculated comparing the percentages of students in each of the following subgroups: African American/ Black, Latino, Multi Racial and White students, students in special education, English Language Learners and economically disadvantaged students as individual groups compared to the total number of students disciplined. Additionally, averages were also determined to determine the rates of change between those experiencing disproportionate discipline in the subgroup to the total number of students enrolled in that subgroup.

Table 2: Student Enrollment Sorted by School Number and Racial Make Up

Sample A: School #	Total Student Enrollment	Total Students with a Discipline Incident	Enrolled African American/Black "N"		Enrolled Hispanic/Latino		Enrolled Multi Racial		Enrolled White	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	869	46	153	18%	337	39%	55	6%	245	28%
2	1471	30	119	8%	101	7%	170	12%	999	68%
3	1070	44	175	16%	261	24%	99	9%	359	34%
Sample B: School #	Total Enrollment	Total Students with a Discipline Incident	Enrolled African American/Black		Enrolled Hispanic/Latino		Enrolled Multi Racial		Enrolled White	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
4	1660	43	40	2%	271	16%	155	9%	969	58%
5	1832	80	54	3%	555	30%	115	6%	970	53%
6	2300	86	49	2%	423	18%	152	7%	1258	55%
7	2671	67	103	4%	479	18%	171	6%	1215	45%
8	1991	132	99	5%	746	37%	112	6%	877	44%

Note: These student enrollment totals apply to all future charts used in the study

Table 3: Sample Enrollment Characteristics Categorized by School Number and Percentage of Students Enrolled in Special Education, English Language Learning and Economically Disadvantaged

Sample A: School #	Total Enrollment	Enrolled Economically Disadvantaged		Enrolled Special Education		Enrolled English Language Learner	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	869	1145	132%	238	27%	258	30%
2	1471	264	18%	144	10%	18	1%
3	1070	1338	125%	225	21%	245	23%
Sample B: School #	Total Enrollment	Enrolled Economically Disadvantaged		Enrolled Special Education		Enrolled English Language Learner	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
4	1660	540	33%	238	14%	161	10%
5	1832	1078	59%	378	21%	364	20%
6	2300	743	32%	333	14%	306	13%
7	2671	887	33%	393	15%	307	11%
8	1991	1491	75%	489	25%	287	14%

Note: These student enrollment totals apply to all future charts used in the study

Data Analysis Approach

Data analysis was conducted to determine the percentage of students who were disciplined in each subgroup. The subgroups used for the purposes of this analysis were for example, the total number of African American/Black students who were disciplined out of the total number of students who were disciplined. This percentage was calculated for the subgroups of Race (African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, White, and Multi Racial), Economically Disadvantaged Students, English Language Learners and Special Education Students. This calculation is entitled “TD” for Total Disciplined. The other measure used was to determine the percentage of students who experienced discipline each subgroup in the total number of students in that subgroup. For example, how many African American/Black students experienced discipline out of the total number of African/Black students enrolled.

Findings

Upon receiving funds to institute culturally relevant strategies, the study’s samples exhibited the following results (Refer to Appendices B for visual reference).

Key findings:

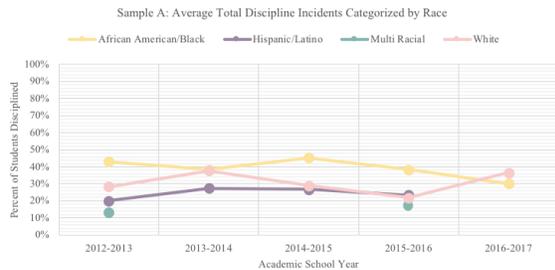
1. During the course of five years, while investing in CRP training disproportionality of discipline incidents declined among total enrolled students.
2. During the time of investment in CRP training discipline incidents within racial and economically disadvantaged subgroups declined.
3. Overall, Black/ African American discipline rates remained higher than Whites, Latinos and Multi Racial categories.
4. A small increase in discipline incidents in some ELL, Special Education and White categories were noted in the final year of the grant. (*Suggesting the importance of investigating the ongoing impact of CRP sustainability over time*).

In line with other studies on disproportionate discipline (Burk & Nishioka, 2010, GAO-18-258, 2014), Oregon Student Discipline Incidents Data shows that on average the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline is higher for African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Multi Racial students and lower for Asian and White students. Additionally, the percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged and in special education is higher than that of students who are not. Analysis of Sample A and Sample B findings demonstrate that (a) both economically disadvantaged students and racial minority subgroups show downward trends in the number of discipline incidents after receiving the CRP grant in 2012-13, and a moderate decline occurred when comparing discipline incidents within a subgroup versus the total number of students enrolled.

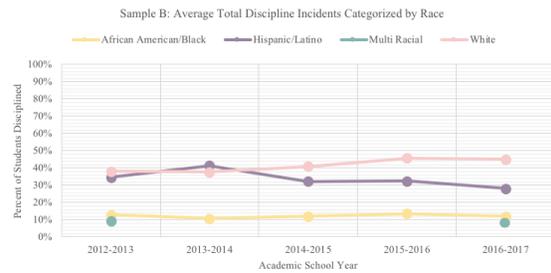
The data reveals that key change occurred within the racial category of “within subgroups” The within subgroup analysis looks at the percentage of students within racial categories who experienced discipline. Examining the total number of students enrolled in that particular group showed more revealing results than analyzing the total students enrolled who received exclusionary discipline. There was a significant decline in discipline incidents in the racial category and for economically disadvantaged students in the WS analysis. The analysis suggests that the investment in CRP positively impacted the discipline rates of students, thereby reducing disproportionality among racial groups. This trend may also indicate that the gains made by instituting CRP decline over time as the number of incidents rose in some instances in the last year reflecting possible reductions in concentrated professional development. Sample A data suggests that some students in the within subgroup category are receiving more frequent discipline and being counted multiple times, whereas the total group TD each disciplined student is counted only once. This matter requires more careful examination, data available in this study

did not include individual student data which would make it possible to dig further into this inquiry.

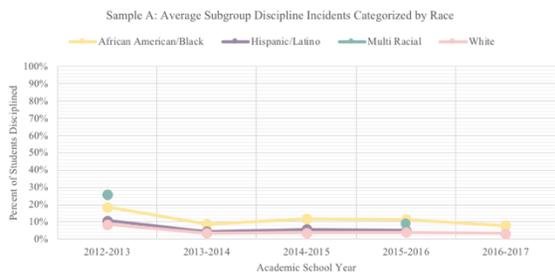
Graph 5: Sample A, Average Total Discipline Incidents Categorized by Race



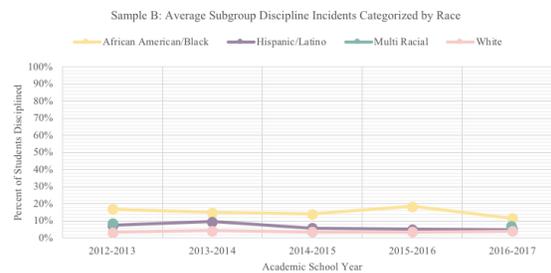
Graph 6: Sample B, Average Total Discipline Incidents Categorized by Race



Graph 7: Sample A, Average Subgroup Discipline Incidents Categorized by Race



Graph 8: Sample B, Average Subgroup Discipline Incidents Categorized by Race



Sample A Total Discipline (TD) Analysis

Race TD: The overall trend showed a moderate decline in discipline rates categorized by race. School #1 White students showed a decline then increase. Blacks and Latino discipline rates remained high. School. #2 Blacks had a decline by the 2016-17 Academic Year, Whites increased by the 2016-17 Academic Year. School #3 Blacks had a moderate decline Latinos remained flat and Whites declined. **Economically Disadvantaged TD:** The overall analysis showed that A high percentage of students who receive consequences for discipline are economically disadvantaged. School #2 displayed a moderate percentage of economically disadvantaged students who were discipline and showed a decline in discipline rates by 2016-17.

School #1 and #3 exhibited that a very high percentage of economically disadvantaged students experienced exclusionary discipline. **Special Education TD:** The trend revealed little change in discipline incident rates of special education students. School #1 declined indiscipline rates over a three-year period then increased in year four. School #2 and School #3 showed little change in special education students discipline rates. **English Language Learners TD:** Trends were deemed inconclusive. School #1/ School #2/ School #3 had limited data.

Sample A Total Discipline Averages (TDA) Analysis

Race TDA showed a decline in Black, Latino, and White student discipline incident rates. **Economically Disadvantaged TDA and English Language Learners TDA** displayed an initial decline followed by an incline in 2016-17. **Special Education TDA** showed an initial decline and subsequently remained flat for the last two years.

Sample A Within Subgroup (WS) Analysis

Race WS: Overall decrease in subgroup discipline incidents rates. School #1 Decrease for Blacks, Latinos and Whites. School #2 Whites remain flat decrease for Blacks. School #3 All race groups decline. **Economically Disadvantaged WS:** Sample A: Economically Disadvantaged Within Subgroup Data shows a trend of a moderate decrease in student incidents. School #1 Significant decline in incident rates for all groups. School #2 Flat for first three years then slight increase in incidents rate by the last year 2016-17. School #3 Slight decrease in incident rates. **Special Education WS:** Sample A: Special Education Within Subgroup data shows a moderate decrease in student discipline incidents. School #1 Significant decline in incident rates. School #2 Moderate decline in all groups. School #3 moderate decline in all groups. **English Language Learners WS:** as data for English Language Learners was

insufficient due to a combination of cell size suppression, required by law to protect the identity of students; and a lack of discipline rate data on this particular group of students in this sample.

Sample A Within Subgroup Averages (WSA)

Race WSA showed a decline in Black, Latino, and White student discipline incidents. **Economically Disadvantaged WSA and English Language Learners WSA** displayed a moderate decline in student discipline incidents; and **Special Education WSA** a moderate decline in student discipline incident rates then remained flat for the last year.

Sample B Total Discipline (TD) Analysis

Race TD: The overall trend demonstrated a slight decline within the majority. School #4 showed a decline in Whites student discipline incidents, Latino's remained flat; School #5 a decline in Whites and Latinos; School #6 a decline in Latino and Whites, while mixed race students initially declined then increased. School #7 and #8 displayed a decline in Latino and Blacks incidents while Whites remained flat. **Economically Disadvantaged TD:** School #4, #5, and #8 illustrated a slight decline in discipline incidents, School #6 showed a significant decline and School #7 a moderate decline. **Special Education TD:** School #4 showed a slight increase in discipline incidents; School #5 and #8 a moderate decrease then a slight increase in the last year 2016-17; School #6 decrease overall all five years and School #7 remained flat. **English Language Learner TD.** The overall trend for English Language Learners was a decline significant decline. School #4 and #5 illustrated a moderate decline in discipline incidents then slightly increased; School #6 showed a moderate decline; School #7 a slight decline; School #8 a significant decline

Sample B: TD Averages (TDA)

Race TDA showed a moderate decline in Latino incident rates while Whites increased, and Blacks remain flat. **Economically Disadvantaged TDA** displayed a significant decline; **English Language Learner TDA** a moderate decline; and **Special Education Averages** discipline incidents remained flat.

Sample B Within Subgroup (WS) Analysis

Race WS: School #4 Groups remained flat. School #5 Incident rates of Latino and White students declined. School #6 Latino rates declined while White student rates remained flat. School #7 Decline in Black Latino incident rates, while student rates remained flat. School #8 Decline in rates of Black, Latino and Multi Racial students. **Economically Disadvantaged WS:** School #4 showed a decline in student discipline incidents; School #5 Remained flat; School #6 Remained flat; School #7 Slight decline; and School #8 Remained flat. **Special Education WS:** School #4 showed a slight decline in discipline incident rates; School #5 slight decline; School #6 and School #7 a 3-point decline and School #8 remained flat. **English Language Learners WS:** School #4 showed a slight increase in discipline rates. School #5 remained flat; School #6 incidents declined; School #7 remained flat and School #8 showed a significant decline in incident rates

Sample B: Within Subgroup Averages (WSA)

Race Averages WSA illustrated a moderate decline for all race groups Blacks, Latinos, Mixed Race and Whites. **Economically Disadvantaged Averages WSA and English Language Learner Averages WSA** showed a moderate decline in all discipline incidents and **Special Education Averages WSA** a slight decline in all discipline incidents.

Implications

Implications in the data reveal that when teachers experienced CRP training a reduction in discipline incidents occurred. There is some indication that by increasing teacher's knowledge of the impact of race and culture in education their understanding of their students and teaching practices may change, therefore altering their relationship with their students. Suggestions for further research includes an investigation into the causal factors of that reduction and an examination into what specific methods were used at the personal classroom level to incite that change. Given the dip in the last year in the categories of ELL, Special Education and White students in the last year of the grant, for future research attention should be given to the sustainability of instructional improvement to maintain results.

Limitations

The depth of data analysis was restricted by the inaccessibility to engage with the grant recipients and evaluate the specific CRP practices and methods the grant recipients used. Time restrictions kept the researcher from conducting interviews with school staff about what methods they used that incited change at the classroom level as well as acquire feedback they may have about the measures each school used to satisfy the grant's culturally-conscious requirements. An important technical challenge of the ODE grant investment that was recognized by ODE and grant project leaders was evaluation methods. The partners engaged, targeted outcomes, theories of change, and locations of engagement within the education system vary widely across each grantee. The complexity made it difficult to determine the impact of each grant and the investment overall. The quasi experimental design lack of a control group suggests a possible relationship and or correlation, however, cannot be deemed causal at this point. The researcher recommends further investigation of the magnitude of the relationship between the two factors.

Discussion and Policy Recommendations

- Ensure that the credential process includes a detailed, targeted and interactive teacher cultural awareness training as part of the teaching and administrative licensure.
- Increase comprehensive cultural awareness professional development based on the multicultural framework and identified best practices in culturally relevant response models.
- Develop statewide criteria for incorporating a multicultural framework in all content areas in the teaching curriculum, providing easily accessible resources with strategies for all districts to access and apply the practices at the classroom level.
- Assess the impact of CRP on other indicators such as, student achievement, graduation rates, etc.

Addressing racial/ethnic disproportionality in discipline involves applying culturally relevant practices as comprehensive strategic alternatives to exclusionary discipline. Add to- Executive summary and intro and presentation. A comprehensive approach must include a district-wide program focused on student learning and behavioral needs, an effective district leadership administration, and ongoing training and professional development for teachers and other school staff. This response is influenced by the fact that there is no evidence that exclusionary discipline reduces the number of discipline incidents; and the consequent loss of instruction time that occurs negatively impacts student success. Evidence has shown that exclusionary discipline fails to improve learning environments and is associated with poorer outcomes for students (Burke & Nioshiba, 2010). Policy action at the state and district level should be taken to reshape discipline response policies. Moreover, the benefits of incorporating culturally relevant strategies in curriculum and teaching methods on student success has been

thoroughly researched and documented. (Banks, 1988; Banks et al., 2001; Gay, 2010; Gay & Howard, 2010, Nieto 2002, Nieto, 2004; Sleeter & Grant, 1987).

The connection between using culturally relevant practices as a response to disproportionate discipline is seldom mentioned in the current response models. A fresh strategic approach may begin by acknowledging the subjective perceptions of behavioral influenced by culture. Teacher training can be focused more directly on cultural awareness in order to create a more engaging classroom environment. The absence of cultural awareness professional development leaves teachers unequipped to handle and appropriately respond to their culturally diverse population of students (Gay & Howard, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2002).

Teachers are required to earn a certain number of continuing education (CE) credits after they begin teaching in order to maintain their credential license. CE classes are wide-ranging and can consist of varied topics, but teachers are not required to take specific courses. As a result, cultural awareness training is only available to teachers if the class is offered and if the teacher selects that particular course. As stated by Gay and Howard (2010), “We cannot wait until all members of college of education faculties are sufficiently skilled (relative to attitudes, knowledge, and teaching techniques regarding infusion) to proceed aggressively with preparation for multicultural teaching.” Research informing this study suggests that cultural awareness training should be a mandatory requirement, including hands-on approaches based on best practices in the academic literature. Numerous scholars agree that teachers are more likely to incorporate multicultural education when they know how to link it “*systematically* and *routinely*” to the subjects and skills they teach. Programs should be developed so that the participants can gain cultural awareness by recognizing the impact of culture on student identity

and the implicit bias they hold as a result of socialization. By bringing these matters to the surface, acknowledging the presence of cultural diversity and its impacts, student-teacher relations and student success outcomes may improve (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2004). Particularly in the current controversial political climate, without meaningful comprehensive training in culturally appropriate practices, teachers will remain threatened by cultural diversity. Teachers will continue to feel uncertain around how to relate and teach their ethnically diverse students. “We must break this vicious cycle by ensuring that all college of education students are thoroughly prepared to do high quality multicultural teaching, regardless of where and whom they teach. This is the teacher education mandate for the 21st century” (Gay & Howard, 2010).

Conclusion

Due to the current political climate the influence of race and ethnicity has been magnified. Cornell West (2004) emphasizes the influence of race when describing it as “America’s most explosive issue and most difficult dilemma” (p. 1). In consensus with McLaren and Sleeter’s assertions, the new conservative agenda has been projecting a concept of democracy that engrosses it with nationhood. They argue that the political right’s attempts to further the White, capitalistic patriarchal agenda has proven inhospitable to the struggle for social and racial justice (McLaren & Sleeter 1995). Howard (2008) states that the failure to critically examine race and its influence on society over time has contributed to fostering tension, discrimination, and hostility along racial lines. Public school systems have historically been influenced by the dominant culture norms of the larger society. It is widely recognized that the classroom mirrors the broader social and cultural context of the community (Gay, 2010; Ladson-

Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2004). Perceptions of gender, racial and ethno-cultural differences, socioeconomic status, as well, as dominant ideologies and conditions of privilege are reflected in the school environment. Schooling plays an important role in teaching, legitimizing and analyzing a society's ideology. In order to address or question the dominant ideology, diverse perspectives must be introduced into the curriculum. A classroom climate that supports questioning the beliefs and values of the dominant ideology, helps students develop critical thinking skills. Inquiries about injustice past and present cannot be raised when critical thinking skills are absent, and the curriculum is narrow, leaving out the histories of minority ethnic groups.

The objective of this research is to explore the ability of schools to adopt culturally appropriate curriculum and teacher training methods based on best practices in the academic literature. As previously explained, research shows that, not only in Oregon, but nationwide, exclusionary school discipline practices have a disproportionate effect on students of color. Decreasing the amount of unnecessary suspensions and expulsions in Oregon public schools is vital and integral to closing the achievement gap. As communication across cultures is better navigated, understood and managed, incidents fueled by misinterpretation may be remedied by strategies more conducive to student learning. The long-term vision for this policy document is to inform the creation of an implementable framework that can ultimately provide systematic district resources for teachers and staff that reflect the academic research and models of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Practices and professional development that includes implicit bias training.

Using the knowledge of the aforementioned bodies of work to respond to disproportionate discipline with culturally relevant approaches requires a strategic plan and

accountability mechanisms. The implementation framework should include flexibility to respond to local school district needs and be adjustable over time. The goal is to provide meaningful resources and training to educators and school staff that encourage deeper understanding and accountability in order to avoid recidivism and to insure receptive implementation practices. These resources should be user friendly and accessible to various professionals, ranging from legislators, education and policy leaders to all school staff. Addressing this issue with direct action is in line with the Chief Education Office's 2017 Equity Report, the 2016 Oregon Educator Equity Plan, and the state's 40-40-20 goal. Instituting culturally relevant practices is a developmental process for both individuals and systems. Both must be sustained and improved over time to create a more inclusionary education environment.

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