SUSPENSION RATES FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR IN RELATION TO THE
PRESENCE OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS IN THREE PUBLIC SCHOOL
DISTRICTS IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

by

Tyrone McDonald

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Approved by:

_____
Dr. Claudia Flowers

_____
Dr. Cathy D. Howell

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Dr. Lisa R. Merriweather

_____
Dr. Lyndon P. Abrams

ABSTRACT

TYRONE MCDONALD. Suspension rates for students of color in relation to the presence of school resource officers in public schools in three public school districts in the southeastern United States. (Under the direction of DR. CLAUDIA FLOWERS and DR. CATHY HOWELL)

The purpose of this study was to examine the long-term and short-term suspension and expulsion rates for Black males, White males, Black females and White female students in grades K-12 in relation to the presence of school resource officers (SROs) in three large school districts located in the southeastern United States. Fourteen years of suspension and expulsion data, from 2004 to 2017, were analyzed to examine trends in the rates. The data were analyzed to determine any differences in the pattern of suspensions and expulsions before and after the full implementation of the SRO in 2006.

Results indicated that both short-term and long-term suspension rates in the three large school districts decreased starting in 2004; however, there was no indication of a significant increase or decrease, before and after, SROs were placed in the school systems. While all student groups' suspension rates decreased, Black males had the highest short- and long-term suspension rates across all years when compared to all other groups. Black males were expelled from school across all the years, but there was variability across the three districts studied, with one reporting almost no expulsion data for students.

Implications of this study suggested that school leaders need to understand the cause of the disproportionate suspension and expulsion rate for Black males. Future studies should focus on administrator attitudes and perspectives as well as intervention strategies that decrease the suspension and expulsion rates for all students.

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Finally, all that I am and all that I strive to be is due to my family and without them, nothing would have been possible. I would like to thank my mother Tilda, my grandmother Ilar Belle and my daughter Devon for all their continued love and support through thick and thin.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Educational research and policy are created without regard for the inequities that are experienced by minority groups and the impact that follows. There is a large body of research that documents that minorities are negatively impacted by disciplinary practices in K-12 education due to race (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995 & Noguera, 2001; Rose, 2007). The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Civil Rights Project report examined school suspensions for every school district in the nation and it revealed that six of every one hundred students, 3.5 million students, were suspended at least once in 2011-2012. Over half of those students were suspended more than once. According to the UCLA report, nearly 8,000 students in preschool ages three and four were suspended in 2011 for misconduct (Anderson, 2015). Krezmien, Leone, and Achilles (2006) noted suspension rates were two and three times higher for Black students than White students across elementary, middle, and high school. Research provides evidence that suspension rates are higher among African American students and that minorities bear the burden of most suspensions in American schools. African American males are issued more long-term suspensions, short-term suspensions and expulsions in the public school setting (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). Nationally, 1.2 million Black students were suspended from K-12 public schools in a single academic year and 55% of those suspensions occurred in 13 Southern states. Districts in the South were responsible for 50% of Black student expulsions from public schools in the United States (Gass, 2015). The average suspension for students in American public schools was over 3 days; however, Gregory, Skiba, and Noguera (2010)

report that suspensions can extend from an isolated class period to 10 or more days,

depending on the nature of the school violation.

UCLA's Civil Rights Project estimated that students lost over 18 million days of

instruction (Belway, Hodson, Keith, Losen & Morrison, 2015). This loss of school and

classroom engagement contributes to lowered academic performance, especially in

minority students who are disproportionately impacted by disciplinary suspensions

(Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). No Child Left Behind policies recommended a

reduction for the need of repeated suspensions and expulsions because when suspended

students miss school, the chances of dropping out increase (Arcia, 2006; Christie, Nelson

& Jolivette, 2004; No Child Left Behind, 2002). Suspensions as a disciplinary practice do

not deter misbehavior and at times a student may return and exhibit the same or worse

behaviors that are not responsive to school discipline (Atkins et al., 2002). The use of

suspensions therefore contributed to the problems for students and acts as a predictor for

more suspensions (Mendez, 2003).

According to McKenna and Pollock (2014) and the National Association of

School Resource Officers (NASROs), the first use of law enforcement officers was in the

1950s in Flint, Michigan. The term school resource officer (SROs) was coined by a

police chief in Miami, Florida in the 1960s (McKenna & Pollock, 2014). The aim of

officer presence was initially used to improve the relationship between police and youth,

while reducing crime and delinquency. Jackson (2002) asserted that the interaction

between students and the SRO could function as a barometer for how students could

expect other officers outside of school to interact with them. The SROs were to handle

criminal issues while school administrators continued to enforce school policies (McKenna & Pollock, 2014).

School disciplinary practices merged with law enforcement practices and involved the SRO (Finn, 2005). Typical student behaviors such as horseplay, which were previously referred to the principal's office, were deemed as disorderly conduct due to the presence of an SRO and resulted in a harsher school punishment (Na and Goffredson 2011; Theriot 2009).

Hirschfield (2008) argued that school-based disciplinary problems were being elevated to threats that required law enforcement. This linked to the phenomenon referred to as the "school-to-prison" pipeline. This socially constructed phenomenon disproportionately affected minorities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The overrepresentation of Black students who were caught in the pipeline had been studied and noted by many scholars (Barnes, & Motz, 2018; Heitzeg, 2009; Mallett, 2016; Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014; Wald, & Losen, 2003. Heitzeg (2009) stated that practices to criminalize disciplinary infractions by zero tolerance practices and police presence constituted initial contacts with law enforcement for youth, i.e., SROs, were the enforcement of zero tolerance policies such as suspensions and expulsions. The school-to-prison pipeline was further explained by Morris (2012) as the policies, practices, systems and processes that criminalize behaviors in the educational setting and by Langberg (2013) who contended that those practices were aimed to push students who were poor, disadvantaged, minority, and students with disabilities out of school and into the juvenile justice system. Racial minorities and students with disabilities were the most affected subgroups. Mallett (2017) contended that the pipeline affected students who

were impoverished, children of color, young children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, and those with identified and unidentified special education disabilities. The subgroups most impacted were racial minorities and students with disabilities. African American students specifically males bear the brunt of most disciplinary practices. To compound these staggering numbers, one in four Black males with a disability are suspended as compared to one in eleven White students with a disability (Mallet,2017)

Problem Statement

The problem of interest for this research was the limited understanding of the effectiveness of SROs and their impact on student reportable school incidents and rates of suspensions (The National Association of School Resource Officers, 2016). Steinberg and Lacoe (2017) conveyed a position that the need for a safe school environment was critical to student success and suggested that school disruptions in the form of disorder and violence had "adverse effects on all students" (p. 47). They further contended that minorities and students with disabilities received harsher punishments than peers for same offenses, particularly when suspensions were used for "lower-level, nonviolent student behavior" (p. 49). Steinberg and Lacoe (2017) concluded that the "spillover" (p. 52) effects for those disproportionately overrepresented in suspension rates were decreased attendance, lowered academic performance, and an overall unsafe learning environment. Their research offered a potential rationale for the ever-increasing need for the SROs within America's schools. This study sought to examine the intersection of suspensions and school incident rates with the presence of an SRO.

Current research showed that when an SRO was present that there were higher incidences of suspensions (Steinberg and Lacoe (2017)). Emily, Fisher and Hennessy (2015) suggested that schools relied heavily on the presence of the SRO for safety and order. However, their intended presence related to school safety frequently contributed to an increase in suspensions and expulsions. Merkwae (2015) noted that the "ubiquitous presence" of SROs was consistent with the assertion of a relationship that "harsher school discipline policies" contributed to increased incidences of disciplinary actions toward minority students and those with disabilities (p. 157). Merkwae (2015) aligned with the previous study by Krezmien, Mulcahy and Travers (2007) that suggested that prior to the presence of an SRO and the application of many zero tolerance policies, school disciplinary practices enabled flexibility in responding to disciplinary problems.

The catalyst for this study were data from the 2015-2016 school year for School District 2, which was one of the three districts researched in this study. The School District 2 class of 2015-2016 had 5754 students in its graduation cohort. In 2002-2003, this group was in Pre-K and in 2006-2007; they were in the 3rd grade. Based on the archival data from School District 2 from Pre-K to the 2nd grade (2002-2006), males from this class of students who had no previous suspensions suddenly and seemingly unexplainably were being suspended in 2006-2007 (3rd grade) at a disproportionate rate. A potential contributing factor to the increased use of suspension may be linked to the installation of SROs. District 2 began full utilization of SROs in the K-12 setting during the 2006 – 2007 academic year in the Pre-K-12 setting. SROs were present within the district in every elementary school (part-time shared with the closest middle school in

their feeder pattern), middle school (part-time shared with high school or full-time), and high school (full-time).

Suspension numbers for this cohort of students increased over four years from zero in grades Pre-K to 2nd grade to 208 suspensions for this same group of students at the end of their 3rd grade year. From Pre-K to 2nd grade (2002-2006) males received the following number of suspensions per grade level: Pre-K (21), Kindergarten (368 suspensions), 1st grade (335 suspensions), and 2nd grade (267 suspensions). The suspension numbers in 3rd grade was 26.4% lower than students in Pre-K to 2nd grades as compared to students in grades Pre-K to 2nd grade that had received any type of suspension prior to 3rd grade. During the four years of school from Pre-K to 3rd grade, there was a 100% gap (0 to 100) between students that had been suspended during the Pre-K to 3rd grade years when compared to students that had never been suspended. In just one school year (grade year) that gap decreased to only 26.4%. The data represented a change in suspensions from zero to a 26.4% lower rate than the students that received suspensions. This group began to be suspended at a very high rate. In 3rd grade there were 265 suspensions (male and female), which were approximately 7% higher than the overall school district average over four years and 26.4% higher than for students with no Pre-K suspension for the 3rd grade. There was a 26.4% gap between male students with no suspensions and students who were suspended at least once by the time they entered the 3rd grade. To summarize this complex data review, there were two groups of students: Pre-K to 2nd grade students that were never suspended and Pre-K to 2nd grade students that saw at least one suspension during the same identified years. When both of these groups of students entered the third grade the gap between suspensions rates for these

compared groups was only 26.4% which showed that the group of students that were never suspended suddenly began to be suspended at a high rate.

School archival data for females within District 2 from Pre-K to 2nd grade (2002-2006) showed no Pre-K to 2nd grade suspensions. Those female students were not suspended until 2006-2007. Note that this data is only for the students in grades Pre-K to 2nd grade but there were overall suspensions, which are shown in the overall data for District 2. The District 2 average over the four identified years increased from zero to 59 suspensions for the students in Pre-K through the 3rd grade. From Pre-K to 2nd grade (2002-2006) female received the following number of suspensions per grade level: Pre-K (8 suspensions), kindergarten (109 suspensions) 1st grade (82 suspensions) and 2nd grade (55 suspensions). This was a district average over four years of 64 suspensions per year. In 3rd grade with this cohort group there were 45 suspensions which was about 30% lower than the district average over four years and 28% lower than the students with no Pre-K suspensions for 3rd grade. The gap between female students who had no suspensions and students that were suspended at least once was only 28%. To say this a different way is that during the three years of school from Pre-K to 2nd grade there was a 100% gap (0 to 100) between students that had been suspended during the Pre-K to 2nd grade years and students that had never been suspended. In just one school year (Grade year), that gap decreased to only 28%. The data for this particular cohort group prompted the need for this study. Given the increase in suspensions for this cohort group indicated a need to explore the overall suspension and expulsion rates for this district and the other comparative groups used within the study.

Statement of Purpose

This study quantitatively examined the trend data between the overall suspension rates for African American males, White males, Black females and White female students in grades K-12 in relation to the presence of SROs in three large school districts in the Southeastern portion of the United States. The study focused on the number of short-term suspensions, long-term suspensions and expulsions within the three large school districts. The study did not intend to provide a direct relationship between the SRO and suspensions and expulsions but does seek to acknowledge the impact of the SRO within the schools and their possible influence on suspension and expulsion data. Data from 2003-2004 to 2016-2017 were obtained from three identified school districts in North Carolina using *North Carolina State Board Annual Report on School Crime and Violence*, *North Carolina State Board Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee Annual Study of Suspensions and Expulsions*, and the NCDPI Data and statistics portal.

This study employed the use of trend data to make inferences about the impact of SROs on suspension rates (short-term and long-term), expulsions graduation rates and illegal incidents reported to the SRO. Stevenson (2011) noted there were very few studies that utilized quantitative data to examine the actual impact of the SRO on school incident rates. Many studies targeted students, parents and school personnel to determine their perceptions of SROs (e.g., Theriot, 2009 & Ismaili, 2010). Johnson (1999) examined the perceptions of school staff, which included teachers and administrators, and students to assess the effectiveness of the SRO in a large urban school district. The study results purported that individuals perceived that the SRO was very effective. However, studies

suggested that despite the positive perceptions of SROs and SRO programs, there lacked

evidence to claim that schools were safer (Redding & Shalf, 2001; Theriot, 2009).

In understanding the purpose of this study, a distinction was needed to clearly

identify the role of SROs as law enforcement officers assigned to work in schools. These

uniformed individuals were authorized to make arrests and conduct investigations. SRO

presence was an intended deterrent of crime. Their role is compared with being a school

and community partner who in addition to functioning as a law enforcement officer, were

also law-related counselors and law-related educators. Survey results from the Center of

Safer Schools in North Carolina found that SROs were predominately male (77% male

and 23% female) and 79% of the respondents were White and 15% were Black (North

Carolina School Resource Officer Survey, 2018). This helps to contextualize SRO

presence and provide a common understanding of their role as also positioned with who

they are.

This study intended to help inform a larger issue that was beyond suspensions and

expulsions of minority students in K-12 settings, but to potentially serve as a contributor

to the differential effect in schools as it related to race and gender while positioned with

the presence of SROs. Jackson (2002) contended that police presence on school

campuses can provide a sense of security; however, school administrators must be aware

of obstacles that may impede effectiveness through integration of SROs due to public

perceptions related to their authoritative role, lack of sensitivity to the communities that

they serve, and the social-psychological component of students to officers in educational

settings. The roles and purposes of SROs has been clearly defined, but their presence also

aligned with data related to increased numbers of suspensions and expulsions particularly

with minority students, thus there were perceptions about disproportionate impact on students of color that parallels policing in the broader society.

<p style="text-align:center">Significance of the Study</p>

This study will examine the impact of the SRO on school disciplinary practices and policies and examine trend data that can be used to draw conclusions about the impact of the SRO on suspension rates and expulsions. The SRO's purpose was to secure the safety and minimize physical threats within a school; however, they have become more involved with dealing with student behaviors and school discipline and play a major role in school disciplinary practices, which include suspensions and expulsions. This study did not seek to imply a relationship between the role of SROs, suspension and expulsion data to that of school safety. Although, all of the data used in this study was not consistently reported by race, this research does assert that race is a factor associated with policing in schools. This study is significant for school leaders and for SROs in understanding school safety concerns and developing a common vision for how they work collaboratively to educate and protect students through effective strategies that include addressing underlying perceptions related to police presence, safety, and the need for an overall positive educational experience.

<p style="text-align:center">Research Questions</p>

The following research questions will be addressed:

1. How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White females overall short-term suspension rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers?

2. How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White females overall long-term suspension rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers?

3. How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White female's overall expulsion rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers?

Overview of the Methodology

Categorical and summative data were gathered from three large school districts located in the Southern portion of North Carolina from 2004 to 2017. Summative data were gathered for short-term suspensions rates, long-term suspension rates, and overall expulsions rates in the designated school districts.

The specific variables were short-term suspensions, long-term suspensions, and overall expulsions. The ethnic groups used were Black males, Black females, White males and White females. The data sets were transferred to Excel for collection and then into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) spreadsheet for basic statistical analysis to expose trends, patterns and change rates in relation to the presence of the SRO over time.

This was a descriptive-longitudinal study using archival data obtained from the NCDPI archived database. The type of study does not describe a behavior or type of subject and does not look for any specific relationships or correlate variables. The method used provided the opportunity to gather information through description. It is useful for

identifying and describing variables and hypothetical constructs, which can be further studied or investigated by other means. Longitudinal studies use multiple variables from different time periods that can possibly account for change (Menard, 2008). Goldstein (1968) explained that longitudinal studies included the use of the same individuals being repeatedly measured across time to determine a pattern of interest. Longitudinal studies focus on change between variables and comparisons between groups of individuals or examining the relationship between variables at one specified time to that of the same or different variables at a different time (Goldstein, 1968).

<div align="center">Theoretical Framework</div>

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was the theoretical framework used to understand this study. CRT was developed to bring rationalization to the racism that occurs within the legal systems and processes as well as policies that systemically target people of color (Hiraldo, 2010). CRT evolved from legal studies in the mid-1970s due to the stress and slow pace of racial reform in America when it appeared that the civil rights movement's momentum had stalled and many of the gains secured by Civil Rights legislation were losing ground (Bell, 1980; Delgado, 1995; Taylor, 2009). CRT allowed for analysis of the role of race and racism when exploring inequities and disparities created between dominant and marginalized groups (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT does not subscribe to the belief that racism is abnormal or unusual. The premise was that racism is imbedded in the societal fabric of society and education. The core of CRT was to reject the concept of colorblindness, which says that formal structures for equality overlook the disadvantages associated with being a racial minority (Harris, 1995).

CRT scholars suggested that racism does not typically operate in explicit and overt forms such as overt displays of White power, but rather operates through hidden strategies within socio-political structures of our society (Ignatiev, 1997; Leonardo, 2004). CRT functions to insert color consciousness into the framework of society to make a change (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Critical Race theorists move away from a narrow focus on affirmative action policies and how it is used to protect the rights and property of Whites. Another concept was that society was founded on property rights and not human rights and the framers of the Constitution all had a fear of losing their property. However, Critical Race Theory focuses on the how power and influence are used to create inequitable practices that disproportionately impact students of color. These inequitable practices within the study are manifested in school suspensions and expulsions. Critical Race theorists reject the ideas of meritocracy and liberalism and the idea of liberal rights. Researchers agree that the idea of rights whether moral or legal can sometimes do more harm than good. In the American justice system, rights can be more procedural such as due process, rather than substantive such as the right to food, housing, or education (Delgado &Stefancic, 2012; UCLA School of Public Affairs, 2010).

CRT has faced criticisms regarding the lack of remedies that are presented but there has been a push for people of color to challenge dominant pedagogy and practices of school reform in public schools as well as larger institutions of learning (Su, 2007). CRT brought attention to the changes in racial climate and provided a platform to examine the fears that emerged from race and education. The views presented by CRT cause uneasiness in the traditional White power structure. A major focus of CRT was on

giving voices to the oppressed. These voices caused fear within traditional White power structures (Brown, 2007).

The model of CRT includes: 1) the "centrality of race and racism" (pg. 17) and how they intersect with other forms of subordination in education, 2) the challenging of the dominant culture around school failure (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ormelas & Solorzano, 2004). There was a focus on the separations of discourse on race, gender and class by bringing out the social constructs that interest and impact students of color, 3) the firm commitment to social justice in education which helps us focus on race, gender and class, 4) the "centrality" (pg. 17) of experiential knowledge and the narrative of the story which focuses emphasis on race, gender and class when looking at discrimination and 5) the foundational knowledge of the base of ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history and the law to gain a better understanding of the many forms of discrimination (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Ormelas & Solorzano, 2004).

Limitations of the Study

The study cannot be used determine patterns within a cohort group because there cannot be an assumption that the students within each group remain the same from year to year. There cannot be a true relationship examined, but trends in the data can be summarized. Other limitations include the fact that the sample population used does not represent all schools in the United States (U.S.) or Southern U.S. and other security measures might also influence the effectiveness of the SRO. The significance of the study is to look at the relationship between the presence of an SRO, rates of suspension and

exclusion but not drawing related conclusions about their role in making schools safer or inferring a direct relationship between their presence and their impact on the data.

Definition of Terms

Dropout: A dropout was defined by the North Carolina State Board policy (GCS-Q-001) as "any student who leaves school for any reason before graduation or completion of a program of studies without transferring to another elementary or secondary school."

Disproportionality: A phenomenon in which students' relative to their proportion in the population experience overrepresentation or underrepresentation along a particular data point.

Critical Race Theory (CRT): CRT was developed to bring rationalization to the racism which occurs within the legal systems and processes as well as policies that systemically target people of color (Hiraldo, 2010).

Zero Tolerance Policies: Policies which levy harsh consequences for marginal student offenses.

School Resource Officer (SRO): The SRO is a police officer placed within a school to a secure the safety of all stakeholders and to enforce the law.

Short-term suspensions: A suspension of ten days or less.

Long-term Suspensions: A suspension of eleven days or more.

Expulsions: When a student is expelled from school, the student cannot return to the home school or any other school within the Local Educational Agency.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 examined the problem of interest and that there were few studies that provided insight as the effectiveness and impact of SROs in relation to student

suspension and expulsion rates. The chapter provides the statement of purpose and significance of the study as well as the research questions. The chapter provided the statement of purpose and significance of the study as well as the research questions. Chapter 1 provided the methodology and the theoretical framework as well as the limitations, delimitations and definitions. Chapter 2 provides the review of the literature in order to examine the impact of the SRO on school disciplinary practices and policies and examine trend data that can be used to draw conclusions about the impact of the SRO on school safety, suspension rates, expulsions and graduation rates. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology and trend data as well as the research procedures used.

The results were presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 provides the outcomes, and recommendations and implications for further study.

Summary

Chapter 1 outlined the relationship of the SRO and their impact on suspensions, expulsions and reported criminal acts. The chapter discussed the need for current research that provides information regarding the effectiveness of the SRO in public schools. The research questions for this study were informed by the Chapter 2 literature review.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical instruction time is missed because of suspensions and expulsions from K-12 school settings. Broadly, the lack of discipline causes disruptions in the classroom and school environment that interfere with learning. Remediation practices to provide safety and order in educational settings were important, but so were strategies to prevent common interruptions that may have origins with student development and concerns of who is being punished and how (Cotton, 1990). This quantitative study examined data associated with overall suspension rates across race and gender in grades K-12 in relation to the presence of SROs in three large school districts in North Carolina. The study focused on the number of short-term suspensions, long-term suspensions and expulsions within the three large school districts. The review of literature was organized to explore research findings associated with understanding disciplinary actions such as suspensions and expulsions, race and gender, the role of SROs, and disproportionality created between Black males and the other identified subgroups within the study.

Disciplinary Outcomes

The review of the literature showed that our youth bring their experiences, memories, and violent behavior with them to school. Aggression in American schools manifests itself in attacks on teachers and students, vandalism, and property damage and has been offered as a rationale for the disciplinary outcomes of suspensions and expulsions. Over three million assorted crimes, about 11% of all crimes, occur each year in America's 85,000 public schools. A school crime is taking place every six seconds. Every hour, on school campuses, more than 2,000 students and about 40 teachers are physically attacked. Each day some 100,000 children take guns to school. Every hour, on

school campuses, nearly 900 teachers are threatened (American Institute for Research, 2015).

Many reportable crimes saw increases from 2014-15 to 2015-16. There was an increase of almost 5% in assaults on school personnel. The number of firearms confiscated in N. C. schools increased over 37% and robbery with a dangerous weapon increases a staggering 800%. There was one death at school by natural causes. The state did see some decreases in reportable crimes. The most notable decreases included an almost 22% decrease in reported sexual assaults with a 43 % decrease in sexual offenses. Assaults resulting in serious injuries decreased by 33% while assaults using a weapon went down 21%. There was also an 11.5 % decrease in bomb threats. In addition, the possession of weapons excluding firearms saw a decrease of 10% (NCDPI, 2017). The National School Board Association in 1993 reported that 82% of schools saw some type of violence (Kopka, 1997).

Elementary, middle, and high schools differ in the types of crimes most frequently reported. Crimes most frequently reported in elementary school were 1) possession of a weapon excluding firearms, 2) possession of a controlled substance, and 3) assault on school personnel. In middle school the order was 1) possession of a controlled substance, 2) possession of a weapon excluding firearms, and 3) assault on school personnel. In high school the order was 1) possession of a controlled substance, 2) possession of a weapon excluding firearms, and 3) possession of an alcoholic beverage.

Suspension plays a major role in discourses about school violence. Earlier researchers saw disruptions and suspensions as examples of social practice (Erickson, 1986; Erickson & Schultz, 1981; Mehan, 1979). It was also speculated that not all

administrators reported each incident of violence to make their campuses appear safe

(Devine, 1996). Further it was believed that students did not report acts of violence

against them in fear of retaliation (Elliot, Hamburg, & Williams, 1998).

Disciplinary Outcomes Types

There are three primary disciplinary outcome types discussed in this study: Short-

term suspensions, long-term suspensions, and expulsions. Suspension is the temporary

removal of a student from school for a disciplinary infraction that could range from

simple misbehavior to fighting to having a weapon on campus (Noguera, 1995). Many

school personnel and policy makers feel that stiff policies and procedures needed to be in

place to increase academic achievement and to keep all schools free from disruption.

Educators used suspensions and expulsions (exclusionary practices) to address student

discipline problems even though these practices have consistently not deterred unwanted

behaviors, but instead have increased academic failure, dropout rates and family

disruption (Achilles, Croninger, & McLaughlin, 2007). Principals usually make decisions

about the duration of suspensions as well as whether to suspend a student in-school or

short-term out-of-school. In-school suspensions were usually served in an in-school

suspension classroom. When a school does not have an in-school suspension program or

when offenses were more serious or chronic, they may be dealt with through short-term,

out-of-school suspensions. Short-term suspension rates increased in 2015-16 for all

racial/ethnic groups except American Indian students. Short-term suspension numbers are

gathered yearly by the state for every grade level. Data may include multiple suspensions

of the same student. Short-term suspension data were gathered by race/ethnicity and

gender per grade level, per school and per school district.

Long-term suspension numbers were gathered yearly by the state for every grade level. The data reflected may include multiple suspensions of the same student. Long-term suspension data were gathered by race/ethnicity and gender per grade level, per school and per school district. A serious offense may employ a long-term suspension as a consequence. Long-term suspensions last from eleven days up to the remainder of the school year. When a student is suspended long-term, the student may not return to his or her regular school for the duration of the suspension. Usually superintendents and/or local boards of education, upon recommendation of principals, make decisions on a case-by-case basis about long-term suspensions (including 365-day suspensions), the length of those suspensions, and whether an ALP placement is provided. Districts may allow long-term suspended students to attend an alternative learning program (ALP) or alternative school during their long-term suspensions. For reporting purposes, students were not considered suspended while attending an ALP or alternative school.

Expulsions are usually reserved for cases where the student is at least 14 years of age and presents a clear threat of danger to self or others. The acts do not have to occur on school premises for the superintendent or school board to expel a student. As with long-term suspensions, the superintendent and/or the local board of education, upon the recommendation of the principal, make decisions about student expulsions on a case-by-case basis. Some districts allow expelled students to apply for readmission after a specified period. The students may apply in another district, charter school or be placed in an alternative setting. When a student is expelled from school, the student cannot return to the home school or any other school within the Local Education Agency (LEA).

Expulsion data is gathered each yearly by race/ethnicity and gender per grade level, per school and per school district.

Some very serious offenses resulted in the student not being allowed to enroll in any school or program for the remainder of the school year or being suspended for an entire calendar year (365-day suspension). The concern for suspensions and expulsions have consistently shown that disproportionality was an ongoing issue that was applied to only certain groups of students particularly minorities and the poor. This disproportionality is at the forefront due to the impact on the social, emotional and academic outcomes that arise (Skiba, 2002).

Disproportionality and Disciplinary Outcomes

Klingbeil, Norman and Sullivan (2011) indicated that there were many studies that attempt to examine the predictors of disciplinary outcomes. Most of those studies relied on correlations or single level regression models focusing on both in-school and out of school suspensions. Early research suggested that suspensions disproportionally impacted minority students even if SES factors such as age, gender, home situations, and academic achievement were accounted for (Fantuzzo & Pearlman, 2007; Raffaele Méndez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002; Skiba, 2011; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982). Findings determined that students with special needs, older students, home structures, home placements (foster care) and parental status (single or married families) were a significant indicator of suspension (Achilles, 2007; Goran & Gage, 2011; Klingbeil, Norman, & Sullivan, 2013; Zhang, Katsiyannis, & Herbst, 2004).

Bal and Sutton (2013) referenced a study conducted by faculty at the University of Minnesota that addressed the disproportionality in school discipline. The purpose was

to examine the impact of sociodemographic characteristics and indicators of school policy issues such as retention rates and special education statistics that lead to high rates of suspensions. The data used consisted of archival data and school provided data from 18,000 students spanning grades K-12 in 39 Midwestern schools. A multilevel logistic multinomial logistic regression model for identifying risk was used to provide an estimate of a student's chance of receiving one or more suspensions. The results of the study showed that gender, race, disability and socioeconomic status were all significant indicators related to the risk of suspension. The study also found that school variables such as school demographics, school performance and the characteristics of the teachers did not impact the likelihood of suspension (Klingbeil, Norman, & Sullivan, 2013).

Further studies explored the classroom and school factors that contributed to disproportionality between white and minority students which included enrollment and racial demographics of a school, retention and graduation rates, teacher characteristics, the academic performance of the school and the demographics of the surrounding community (Achilles & Arcia, 2007; Bruns, Moore, Stephan, Pruitt, & West, 2005; Christie, Nelson, & Jolivett, 2004: Raffaele, 2002 & Wu, 2002). The studies showed that ethnic males were more likely to be suspended than females. Students of color with disabilities were more likely to be suspended than White students with disabilities. Other student predictors and characteristics included age and home structure. Older students were more likely to receive longer suspensions and face expulsion versus younger students. In addition, students that were placed in foster care or other out-of-home placements were more likely to be suspended (Sullivan, Klingbell and Van Norman, 2013). Studies found that within one school most suspensions may come from a

particular group of teachers. Teachers that perceived students to be bullies, violent or display anti-social attitudes, in their opinion, were more likely to be referred to the office. Teachers that were aware of students with minor or even severe emotional disabilities as well as students that were subjected to abuse, neglect or disrupted family situations were still more likely to refer these students to the office and encourage removal or suspensions. Studies showed that teachers that had to spend less time on discipline and that engaged in higher time-on-task academic activities with low teacher to student ratios were less likely to refer students to the office versus their counterparts with multiple disciplinary problems in the classroom, high student numbers and less time on task for quality academic delivery (Knesting & Skiba, 2001).

Skiba et al. (2002) suggested that minority overrepresentation in school discipline research had been extensively studied to include racial, socioeconomic, and gender disproportionality; however, the meaning of those data remained unclear. What was known was that when considering race, Black students were more likely to be suspended or excluded and for longer periods of time than their White peers. Findings indicated that Black students were suspended more for lesser infractions. Males across all racial and ethnic groups were more likely than females to be disciplined or suspended and for longer periods of time than females (Raffaele Méndez & Knoff, 2003; Vavrus & Cole, 2002). Skiba et al. (2002) suggested that there exists consistent evidence that boys received more disciplinary sanctions than girls. While there was an incongruence of findings between studies that systematically explored plausible explanations for disciplinary disproportionality, there was clear evidence of disproportionality.

The differential pattern associated with school disciplinary infractions suggested interpretative subjectivity (Skiba et al., 2002). White students typically were referred for school punishment for smoking, leaving without permission, obscene language, and vandalism. Conversely, Black students were referred for disrespect, excessive noise, threats, and loitering (Skiba et al., 2002). The rationales for referring Black students seemed to be more subjective and perceptual by the referring agent rather than based on objectivity of an event, such as for White students (Skiba et al., 2002). The differential selection explained in part why students of color were more likely to be singled out for school discipline. The "differential selection" suggested that ethnic minorities were more likely to be punished or arrested than other ethnic groups for similar infractions (Piquero, 2008; Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). This was concurred by George (2015) that underlying the intersection of school discipline, race, and gender is cultural belief related to perceived inherent behavioral defects for African Americans norms need social correction. Through that understanding it has permitted school administrators in arbitrary decision making to allow for implicit and explicit biases to thrive with minimal intervention. This was exemplified in SRO decision making and their unconscious judgements relative to student race, gender, and age to arrest or to issue a warning (Merkwae, 2015). However, caution must be used as the differences may be related to the schools that the students attend rather than race (Steinberg & Lacoe (2017).

Historical Context of Suspensions and Disproportionality

School discipline had been the subject of study over many years. The goal for the study of disciplinary practices was not to increase consequences, but to provide better outcomes for how students are provided the support and services that they need. The increased usage of zero tolerance policies, which levy harsh consequences for marginal student offenses have made discipline a one-for-all program. For example, a superintendent accepted the recommendation of a two-year expulsion for seven African-American students due to brawl at a football game in Decatur, Illinois (Skiba et al., 2002). After protests and litigation, the school board's decision was upheld. This contributed to the national dialogue related to zero-tolerance policies and the overrepresentation of minorities in school discipline (Skiba et al., 2002). These policies quickly lead to the decline of improvement in student behaviors and an increase in discipline infractions (Stonemeier, Trader, & Wisnauskas, 2014).

Over the past three decades students of color were disproportionately suspended in relation to their White peers (Butler, Lewis, Moore III, & Scott, 2012). Edelman, Beck, and Smith (1975) developed the Children's Defense Fund report that examined the impact and effectiveness of suspensions. This was one of the first reports to bring attention to the disproportionate amount of suspensions imposed on black students. During the early 1980s Thornton and Trent (1988) focused on early desegregation practices and integration of Blacks into White public high schools and the conflicts caused due to most teachers being White. Their study found that larger numbers of black students were suspended as compared to their White counterparts.

Decades later, scholars continue to examine the issue of suspensions as it relates to race, discipline, and disproportionality (Fenning & Rose, 2007; Noguera, 2003). During the 2011-2012 school year Black students made up 18% of all the pre-school students in the United States but they were suspended more than forty percent more times than student of other races (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). According to Gass, Smith, and Harper (2015), almost 1.2 million Black students were suspended from American public school in 2015. Fifty-five percent of those suspensions came from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. Black students accounted for 24% of the student population in those school districts but represented 48% of all suspensions and 49% of all expulsions.

Research continued to show that suspension rates were higher among African American students and that minorities bear the burden of most of the suspensions in American schools. In addition, African American males received most of the exclusionary disciplinary consequences and expulsions issued for students in the public-school setting (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002) and the use of these exclusionary practices add to the nation's dropout rates and increase the likelihood of students becoming involved in the juvenile justice system (Skiba, 2002).

Educators and researchers have offered many hypotheses for disproportionality as it pertains to suspensions and expulsions for white students and minorities. Some researchers suggested that racialized discipline disparities were a result of U.S. history that informed schooling experiences based on historical migration through slavery, Jim Crow, separate but equal practices, and the pervasive ideologies that shaped perceptions

of who is dangerous and who is safe. Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock (2017) contend that there exists a boundary experience related to exclusionary and disparate disciplinary practices that come from a reluctance to discuss openly issues relative to race and to constructively find ways to confront disparities. Another hypothesis indicated that students in low socio-economic groups engaged in more problem behaviors, which result in higher suspension rates (Skiba, 2011). But multiple studies indicated racial disproportionality in discipline remains consistent even if you control for low socio-economic status (SES) status. Still another hypothesis says that high suspension rates and disproportionality existed due to the mismatch of cultures between teachers and students. This mismatch in cultures resulted in minority students being punished more severely for minor infractions (Klingbeil, Norman, & Sullivan, 2013).

Early research attempted to explain the racial disparities in suspension practices. Studies by Gee and Green (1998) examined classroom discourse as related to suspensions. They analyzed language prior to a disciplinary action and the actual action during a teacher-student interaction. Blalock (1967) proposed the Racial Threat Hypothesis, which explored the presence of the economic, political and crime related threats to whites. The study applied this hypothesis to the school and suspension. He proposed that school discipline was a method to control minorities within the school population because as the number of minorities rise, the threat also rises. The use of punitive measures assured that the threat is lessened (Blalock, 1967; Welch & Payne 2012). The school to prison pipeline surfaced due to fear and the punitive nature of the American educational system (Heitzeg, 2009).

Students suspended from school were stereotyped as problem students, which has long-term implications (Kennedy-Lewis, Murphy, & Grosland, In Press; Weissman, 2015). For instance, the removal of students from the classroom through use of suspension and expulsion contributed to the decline in graduation rates and an increase in the pipeline to prison (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock, 2017). The school to prison pipeline was costly as it is expensive to incarcerate people on the short-term, long-term or for multiple incarcerations. There is a strong relationship between school failure, systemic policies, and involvement in the criminal justice system. This disproportionately impacted black children and children of color (Brown, 2013; Patton, Woolley, & Hong, 2012, Teske, 2011; & Teske & Huff, 2011).

Systemic policies implemented by school administrators increase a student's chance of being suspended, expelled and arrested at school (Heitzeg, 2009). These disciplinary practices pushed students away from the educational settings and are linked to student involvement in the criminal justice system (Brown, 2013).

The term school to prison pipeline referred to policies, practices, systems and processes that criminalized behaviors in the educational setting (Morris 2012). It emerged when academic failure and disciplinary practices involving suspensions began to be linked and explored. Langberg (2013) later defined the school to prison pipeline as a system of law, policies and practices that were aimed to push students that are poor, disadvantaged, minority and students with disabilities out of school and into the juvenile justice system.

The pipeline begins where it is most harmful in the classroom with teachers and their referral practices and can end with referrals to the criminal justice system. The two largest groups impacted by the pipeline are racial minorities and students with disabilities with African American students and specifically African American males bearing the brunt of the disciplinary practices. For students with disabilities the numbers related to the prison pipeline are even more staggering with 1in 4 black students with disabilities being suspended while only 1 in 11 of white students with disabilities receive suspensions across the nation.

School Resource Officers

School Resource Officers (SRO) had two primary goals initially which were to improve the relationship between police and youth and reduce crime and delinquency in school settings. The rationale for the use of SROs purportedly stemmed from school violence. The notorious Columbine shooting renewed the nation's sentiment that there had to be ways to combat school violence. Experts in the field looked at designs and methods to reduce violence in schools, which included conflict resolution programs, electronic and human monitoring of students, and the increased use of expulsion and suspension (Astor, Meyer, & Behre, 1999). Their work drew from the research of Lave and Wenger (1991) that looked to show how students related to suspensions and disruptive behaviors in the social context of their community. In a national study of public schools, the following conclusions were identified:

- 93% of public schools required some type of controlled access to the building during normal hours. Security cameras were used by at least 75% of public school

in America, staff badges were required in 68% of schools and 58% of America's schools enforce a determined dress code.

- 95% of schools provided training on school policies and procedures, 89% provided bullying training, and 81% provided training on determining warning signs for students that may become violent.

- 88% of all public schools had procedures in place in the event of an active shooter on campus and over 70% of school routinely practice these procedures and over 72% of schools utilized protocols for serious threats of violence and suicide.

In 2014, 43% of all schools had some type of security personnel in their buildings at least once per week and 90% of schools utilize security personnel whether it was local law enforcement or private security 90% of the time for school activities.

Many reportable crimes increased from 2014-15 to 2015-16 in North Carolina. There was an almost 5% increase in assaults on school personnel. The number of firearms confiscated in N. C. schools increased over 37% and robbery with a dangerous weapon increased a staggering 800%. There was one death at school by natural causes. The state did see some decreases in reportable crimes. The most notable decreases included an almost 22% decrease in reported sexual assaults with a 43 % decrease in sexual offenses. Assaults resulting in serious injuries decreased by 33% while assaults using a weapon went down 21%. There was also an 11.5 % decrease in bomb threats. In addition, the possession of weapons excluding firearms saw a decrease of 10% (NCDPI, 2017). There were national examples of traditional school behaviors that have elevated from minor school disciplinary remediation to arrests.

In 2014 the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) released a clear and concise position statement that described the role of the SRO in public schools. In the position statement SROs were charged with three specific roles which were a teacher, informal counselor and law enforcement officer. The role of the SRO has been explored in a variety of ways. A study in Texas looked at 26 SROs and their roles. The SROs surveyed described themselves as social workers, educators and parental advisors (McKenna, Martinez-Prather, & Bowman, 2016).

Rhodes (2016) at the University of Nebraska studied 52 SROs as well as an additional 320 patrol officers. The study found that the SRO did not perform the same duties as patrol officers. The study found that the major duties of the patrol officer included law enforcement tasks such as writing tickets, arresting people and investigating crimes. On the contrary SROs' were found to spend most of their time on non-criminal matters such as advice giving, medical attention, community relations and directing traffic. The study also found that with minor infractions the SRO tended to be more lenient but in the instance of major felony crimes there were no marked differences in the SRO and the patrol officer (Rhodes, 2015).

NASRO's position statement also provided specific directions for the SRO to not involve themselves in discipline situations that should be handled by a school administrator. Their goal as an SRO was to promote a positive school and community relationship of law enforcement. In addition, SROs were to assure and increase the opportunity for a positive learning environment and develop strategies and programs, which prevented conflict and solve problems without involving the judicial system (The National Association of School Resource Officers, 2016). The NASRO required a

specific training program for SROs that involved practices related to a school

environment. The NASRO (2014) report indicated that the presence of the SRO was

effective in reducing crime on school campuses as well as disruptions and increased the

perception of safety for parents, students and the community. The number of SROs rose

by 38% between 1997 and 2007 across the nation (Teaching Tolerance, 2013).

The SRO and National Perceptions

In 2012, prior to this position statement being developed, the role of the SRO in

school was to work collaboratively with school personnel to assure a safe campus climate

while maintaining regard for the rights of students and victims. The recent deaths of

black people such as Michael Brown, Eric Garner and Tamir Rice at the hands of police

officers have heightened and brought tension between the black community and the

police. This has directly impacted the perception of the role of the SRO (Carter, Skiba,

Arredondo, & Pollock, 2017). Some believed that the presence of an SRO in the schools

led to an increase in arrests for minor behaviors and criminal records that lasted a lifetime

for some children. Sneed (2015) stated that SROs were supposed to support the goal of

many Civil Rights activists of fostering better relationships especially with the poor and

minorities. But this was not happening. Earlier research showed that in majority minority

areas there were increases in school security, metal detectors and video surveillance

methods as well as more frequent searches (Green & Johnson, 1999; Hirschfield, 2008).

Some felt that SROs were worsening the situation and are contributing to the school to

prison pipeline (Heitzeg, 2009; Johnson, 2016; Sneed, 2015). The school to prison

pipeline encouraged police presence in schools and facilitated harsh and unnecessary

tactics that resulted in arrests, suspensions and lost class time.

The NASRO (2012) report disputed that law enforcement presence in public schools had directly impacted the "school to jail pipeline" (p. 7). The NASRO positioned that public educators confuse juvenile justice with the mission of education. The role of law enforcement in schools is to collaborate with educational policies and "fulfill the statutory and constitutional duty to maintain a safe and effective learning environment" (p. 7). The NASRO made recommendations for avoiding the school to prison pipeline which included: 1) increasing the use of positive behavioral supports, 2) compiling accurate reports on school violence and suspension, 3) create agreements that place limits on arrests, restraints handcuffs and pepper spray, 4) consistent disciplinary procedures clearly defined and published, 5) create limits as to when police intervention is need vs. administrative interventions in schools and 6) provide profession development for staff in using positive behavioral supports (Teaching Tolerance, 2013).

The NASRO, contrary to emerging research, argued that SROs primarily focused on school safety related issues, which might include monitoring or creating school safety plans, securing and patrolling the buildings and parking lots and only arresting students for clear illegal activities such as drug or weapons possession. The role of the SRO was not to discipline students for minor infractions, but to assist when there was an issue of safety or a threat to the school. The SRO should escort a student to the appropriate administrator or staff member for discipline to take place as the school level. The NASRO does not see the role of policing on campus as that of arresting students, however, some data contradicted this.

In 2014, Congress asked for 150 million dollars in funding for Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). The funding provided for staffing including SROs,

school psychologists and counselors and additional security personnel other than police officers. The funding was to support the cost of safety equipment and mandated the revision of current safety plans and crisis protocols. The committee charged with proving the need for grant indicated that the research on the impact of the SRO programs was very limited due to the scarcity and conflicting views of whether the SRO programs were reducing crime and violence in schools. In 2014, Congress assessed the need for additional national funding for more SROs in America's schools. A national survey of schools was given to school principals and SROs that served those schools. The survey found that the school principals had different views of the impact and purpose of the SRO. Their findings indicated that only 4 percent of the principals listed safety as the reason and need for an SRO. Approximately 25% of the principals reported that the national media attention on school violence was the reason why they needed an SRO.

SROS and Disciplinary Outcomes

Zero-tolerance policies were often linked to the presence of an SRO, and result in short and long-term suspensions and expulsions but these policies were enforced regardless of whether the SRO was on a campus or not (NASRO, 2014). The background of the first usage of the term school-to -prison pipeline can be traced back to the early 1980s through State and Federal efforts to fight rampant drug usage. Authorities began to more harshly punish minor drug offenses in an effort to stop major crimes from occurring. By the early 1990s began to adopt this same principal by punishing minor school infractions which resulted in national suspension numbers doubling. The most ridiculous use of zero tolerance policies was the increase of suspensions for students skipping school. Students that did not want to be in school were sent home again for not

coming to school. In regard to school suspensions zero tolerance references policy or practices that utilize already determined consequences that are intentionally punitive.in nature and do not place any value on individual situations or circumstances. The study of these policies and practices is referred to as the school-to-prison pipeline (Huff, B., & Teske, S.C., 2011). The procedures, policies and standards are decided at the state, federal and local levels. Even though the presence of an SRO on a school campus is an easy target for blame for school-based arrests, suspensions and expulsions, the SRO is a vital member of the school and community team. The SROs relationships of trust with students, experience with the juvenile justice system, and understanding of conflict-resolution and campus crime are integral components which build a relationship between the SRO and school community (NASRO, 2016). They can be involved in making the best decision for the school to keep it safe, but they do not determine consequences for criminal behavior or determine if it is criminal behavior.

SROs do not create juvenile justice laws, they do not decide on whether a juvenile can or should be charged, they cannot force a student to come on campus and they do not decide if a student is suspended or excluded from school (NASRO, 2014). SROs do not levy any consequence about inappropriate or illegal behavior on a school campus (NASRO, 2014). Law enforcement makes determinations regarding juvenile arrests. In 2009 of incidents initially handled by law enforcement when juveniles were arrested in the U.S., 22% were arrested and released, 67% were referred to juvenile court, 9% were sent to criminal court and the remaining cases were sent to welfare or other public agencies (Juvenile Offenders and Victims Report, 2011).

Theriot (2009) did a comparative study using 15 schools that consistently had an SRO on campus for at least 3 consecutive years and 15 schools that did not have an SRO assigned them for at least 3 consecutive years. The students in these schools were from urban or suburban areas. The dependent variables used were the total number of arrests over three years and the total number of arrests for disorderly conduct, assault, drug possession, alcohol possession, possession of a weapon and all other infractions that could result in an arrest. The independent variables used were total enrollment at each school, the total percent of minorities, total number of students considered poor, the total number of students receiving free and reduced lunch and attendance rates. The study determined that there were 216 more arrests within the schools with an SRO than those without. In the schools with an SRO the most common charge was disorderly conduct followed by other charges and next drug related charges. In schools without an SRO the most common charges were for drugs followed by disorderly conduct and next possession of alcohol. The study also determined that there was a relationship between poverty, arrests and ethnicity and this relationship needed to be more explicitly studied (Theriot, 2009). Theriot agrees that more research is needed, and most studies agree that the number of youth referred for inappropriate actions or criminal behaviors will continue to increase, especially for those behaviors that really should be handled by the schools Beger, 2003; Brown, 2006; Hirschfield, 2008; & Lawrence, 2007).

Price (2009) found that there were consequences for having SROs in schools, especially when crime and suspension rates were dropping. In this situation the criminalization of lesser infractions that should be handled by the school administrator increased (Price, 2009). The emphasis of the existing research was whether an officer on

campus deters school shootings (James & McCallium, 2013). The limited research

suggested that children in schools where an SRO was present was more likely to be

arrested for minor offenses. However, there are other studies that say the presence of an

SRO can deter or even stop students from committing minor or serious assaults as well as

keep students from brining weapons to school. According to McCallium (2013) students

were more likely to report non-serious infractions to staff than they would if their school

did not have an SRO.

Current research showed that when an SRO was present there could be a higher

number of suspensions. Pigott (2016) surveyed over 3,000 principals across the country.

She chose as her independent variables the presence of an SRO, the total percentage of

White students enrolled in each school, school urbanicity (urban, suburban, rural or

town), and the number of students that scored below the 15th percentile on state

benchmarks. The dependent variables used were suspensions and expulsions. Using a

regression model Pigott's study yielded that the presence of an SRO did increase the rate

of suspensions and expulsions with a high numerical significance. Another area of

significance was the percentage of White students enrolled in the school in relation to

suspensions and expulsions. The findings showed that as the number of White students

increased, the number of expulsions/suspensions decreased. Lesser offenses committed

by students were often dealt with using in-school suspensions or short-term suspensions.

The inclusion of SROs was at best an effective strategy to maintain school safety,

but more troubling was that they may function as the initial facilitator of formal

processing for minor offenses in response to minor disciplinary school infractions (Na &

Gottfredson, 2013). Na and Gottfredson (2013) concluded in a national study of 3,000

schools that students in schools with police officers were not more likely to be removed

or suspended than at schools that did not have police officers. However, Zhang (2018)

asserted that SROs may serve as a deterrent to fighting and to bringing weapons to school

campuses. Zhang acknowledged that disciplinary problems traditionally managed by

school administrators were more likely to be handled by an SRO. This position concurred

with previous studies that minor behavioral problems were redefined as criminal

problems, thus creating a historical shift of behaviors from a school issue to a legal

problem subject to formal processing (Mckenna & Pollock, 2014; Na & Gottfredson,

2013). Examples include, an angry student pushing a teacher being elevated to a formal

assault or battery charge, a fight between students resulting in a public disturbance

charge, or a spray-painted locker becoming a vandalism citation (Mckenna & Pollock,

2014).

Effectiveness of SROs

The research related to effectiveness of SROs was typically based on the

implementation of programs, the description of duties or roles of the SRO, the

collaborative partnership between the SRO and school community and student views

towards the SRO, but there was minimal study and data about actual arrests or

convictions (Finn & Rich, 2005; Hopkins, Hewstone & Hantzi, 1992; Jackson, 2002;

Lassiter, McDevitt & Rich; 2005).

The Congressional Research Service in 2013 was charged with reviewing the

research on the impact of SROs in schools. They indicated that there were very few

studies that reliably evaluated the effectiveness of the SRO. The Congressional Research

Service indicated that adequate data must be collected with reliable outcomes to measure

both a treatment group (time with no SRO) and a control group (time when an SRO was present). Data from both groups should be collected from comparable groups with enough time span so that a stable outcome can be attained (James & McCallion, 2013). Studies that focused on safety outcomes as the measure of success often yielded mixed results. Some suggested improvements in safety and reduced crime statistics while others showed no change. Those reports that showed positive results relied on perception data, which was subjective and not objective. Other studies did not show a noted difference between incidents of crime and violence, which made it difficult to determine if the SRO's presence impacted the outcomes or other factors (Finn & McDevitt, 2005; James & McCallion, 2013). The use of the SRO in public schools was popular, but there were very few studies that could reliably and validly provide information on their actual effectiveness (James & McCallion, 2013).

The Congressional Research Service summarized their findings of three studies. The three studies were conducted from 2011 to 2013 and looked at the effectiveness of SROs. The National Institute of Justice (2011) examined nineteen SRO programs and did not draw any relevant conclusion on the effectiveness or impact of the SRO in schools. The Institute concluded that the assessments conducted were not useful or valid (National Institute of Justice, 2011). Fisher, Tillyer, and Wilcox (2011) conducted a study to address some of the inadequacies of previous studies. They chose to use broader datasets and other statistical techniques that considered possible conflicting variables while also recognizing their possible limitations. The study found that in schools where an SRO was present there were fewer reports of students being the victim of serious violence. The

study used data from rural schools, which negated the ability to generalize to areas not like them (Fisher, Tillyer, & Wilcox, 2011; James & McCallion, 2013).

Jennings, Khey, and Maskali (2011) completed a study and found that the presence of an SRO in a school had a negative impact on the number of reported serious violent crimes but not on the impact of reporting violent crimes. Because this study only used one year of data, it could not show if the numbers reported increased or decreased (James & McCallion, 2013; Khey, & Maskali, 2011). Na and Gottredson (2011) completed a study and allowed for multiple years of data in order determined if the offenses increased or decreased after the use of an SRO in the schools. The analysis of the data showed that schools with an SRO did not have a lower number of serious violent crimes reported nor did the number of reported non-serious violent or property crimes decrease. However, the report did yield that schools with an SRO reported a higher number of drug and weapon offenses. The study did have some limitations which included the fact that the reported number of crimes might be impacted by the presence of an SRO, the sample population used did not represent all schools in the United States and other security measures might also influence the impact of the SRO on the increase or decrease of the effectiveness of the SRO (Gottredson & Na, 2011; James & McCallion, 2013).

Security Strategies and SROs

The School to Prison Pipeline encouraged a police presence in schools and facilitated harsh and unnecessary tactics that results in arrests, suspensions and lost class time. Schools in high crime areas or that had a large amount of poor kids were more likely to use police or security. Some researchers found that the use of selected methods

of security including the SRO was ineffective and even counterproductive causing school

disorder Gibson, Miller, & Schreck, 2003; Leon & Mayer, 1999). Nickerson and Spears

(2007) suggest that schools often use the police as a sign of authority. Common and

seemingly impactful security measures often led to students turning against law

enforcement and school personnel, experiencing emotional distress and increased low

self-esteem (Beger, 2003; Brown, 2005; Eisenbraun, 2007; & Hyman & Perone, 1998).

Other schools surveyed showed no measurable impact on misbehavior when an SRO and

a metal detector were in a school (Hankins, Hertz & Simon, 2011) while other studies

have shown a possible relationship between security measures used in schools and types

of student discipline. One study found that in schools where locker searches were

common, there was an increase in students being victimized (Gibson, Miller, & Schreck,

2003). There has not been much research on the types of schools that use high security

measures.

In 2014, Servoss and Finn (2014) utilized school level data as well as data

gathered from National databases to examine school characteristics regarding school

security and the relationship between school security and suspensions, dropout rates and

college entry rates. The data for the study was gathered from the Education Longitudinal

Study of 2002 (ELS, 2002) given by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Additional data was also obtained from the Common Core Data (CCD) as well as

suspension rate information from the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC). The highest

predictor of suspensions, they found, was having a higher proportion of African

American students. They, as did the Servos and Finn study mentioned, found that if you

controlled for low SES status then race/ethnicity remained statistically significant

(Servoss & Finn, 2014). Servos and Finn addressed the relationship between security measures and tactics and forms of disciplinary practices. It was found that school principal's positive impression of the SRO was linked to reductions in infractions such as fights, drugs and theft. It also showed that in schools with metal detectors there was a slight decrease in the number of weapons brought onto campuses, but the metal detector and the SRO did not impact fighting statistics in the schools surveyed.

In the Servoss and Finn (2014) study they used a multivariate regression analysis to predict security characteristics and school disciplinary outcomes. The study focused on high schools with at least seven security measures in place. The security measures were as follows: (1) metal detectors at the school entrance, (2) random metal detector checks on students, (3) drug testing, (4) random sweeps for contraband, (5) security cameras, (6) police or security guards during school hours and (7) random dog sniffs for drugs. The use of an SRO and dogs used to search the schools for contraband were the most used methods in the high schools (Servoss & Finn, 2014). The analysis used was both descriptive and inferential analysis

Summary

School practices and policies throughout history were disproportionately biased in the use of suspensions and expulsions based on race, gender and disability (Losen, & Skiba 2015). The disparities that existed between minorities, especially Black males, and their White peers has become a topic of discussion with varying opinions, but not a lot of viable solutions (Okilwa & Robert, 2017). Black students were disciplined based on discretion and yielded higher level suspensions for lower infractions and minor school routine rules such as dress code violations, absenteeism, tardiness, cell phone use,

loitering and low-level disruptions (Knoff & Raffaele-Mendez, 2003; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Monroe, 2006; Skiba, 2002;). The patterns of discipline hold true for Black males and Black females, but overwhelmingly effect Black males (Skiba, 2011). Studies have shown that discipline for minor infractions disproportionality lead to suspensions for African American students at all grade levels (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Losen & Skiba, 2011).

Research has shown that school security measures can positively or negatively impact school suspension rates, which showed the relationship between school security measures, SROs, and disciplinary measures. The use of a SROs can yield a punitive school environment. The use of security within elementary, middle and high school buildings may consistently impact the rate of suspensions but may not impact other areas such as dropout rates and other factors.

Suspensions can also be impacted by principal perceptions of what is crime and misbehavior. This can lead to increased disciplinary actions for lower infractions. Additional research needs to occur to study the impact of the school administrator in establishing the disciplinary climate and culture of individual schools which has become an issue but not brought to the forefront (Resnick, Harris, & Shew, 1997; Stewart, 2003; Rumberger, 2011; Finn & Servoss, 2014).

The use of suspensions can have a serious educational, emotional and social impact on the lives of students. The absences created using suspension can interfere with learning which further delays students who already academically lagging (Blum, Beuhring, & Rinehart, 2000; Finn & Rock, 1997). Suspended students were likely to feel isolated at school and could potentially drop out. Students who were suspended may be

left to spend their days in unsafe environments, be exposed to crimes or even begin to commit crime.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the trend data for the overall long-term and short-term suspension rates and expulsion statistics for African American males, White males, Black females and White female students in grades K-12 in relation to the presence of SROs in three large school districts located in the Southeastern portion of the United States. The study focused on, as defined by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), suspension data by race and gender in relation to the presence of SROs. Chapter 3 outlines the data collection methods and analysis procedures. The research questions examined in this study were:

1. How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White females overall short-term suspension rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers?

2. How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White females overall long-term suspension rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers?

3. How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White female's overall expulsion rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers?

Research Design

The current study used a non-experimental descriptive quantitative analysis to examine long-term trend data associated with suspensions and expulsions. This longitudinal descriptive design sought to describe the issue of suspensions and expulsions within three school districts relative to race and gender. This type of design was focused on describing and explaining the phenomenon of investigation (Creswell, 2005). Data were collected across multiple years for students to observe changes.

Data Collection

Data came from three large school districts in the Southeastern United States from 2003-2004 to 2016-2017. Data came from the 2003-2004 to 2016-2017 *North Carolina State Board Annual Report on School Crime and Violence*, the *North Carolina State Board Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee Annual Study of Suspensions and Expulsions*, and the NCDPI data and statistics portal. The information for the school systems was gathered from their perspective websites which offered demographic and academic program information as well as the *NC Annual Report of School Crime and Violence* (2017) which contained consolidated discipline reports, research on discipline reports and accountability reports.

Each academic year the North Carolina State Board of Education is required by North Carolina State Statute (G.S. 115C-12(27) to provide reports on dropout statistics, school crime and violence, suspensions and expulsions, alternative learning programs, reassignments to alternative programs due to disciplinary actions and corporal punishment statistics. Archival data were gathered starting with the school years 2003-2004 through 2017. Prior to 2003 there was limited summative information available.

The information for each school year was listed on a separate document with summary data for the previous two years noted for comparative purposes in each yearly report. The *Annual Report of School Crime and Violence* provided data for a variety of categories including: short-term suspensions, long-term suspensions, multiple suspensions, expulsions and suspension information per school and per school district. In addition, categorical and demographic information were detailed such as short and long-term suspensions by race and ethnicity. The archival information was in PDF format and had to be transferred into an Excel spreadsheet.

<div align="center">Participants and Sites</div>

Data came from three large school districts in the Southeastern United States from 2003-2004 to 2016-2017.

School District 1

School District 1 served students in one of the largest rural areas in the Southeastern United States. The District served over 71,700 students in kindergarten through 12th grade with 127 schools. School District 1 served students that spoke over 105 languages. School District 1 had 46 magnet programs with 54 programs with advanced offerings in visual arts, advanced academics, Spanish immersion, and other areas. In Career and Technical Education, they offer 187 CTE courses in 50 of their schools. Their high schools offered 30 Advanced Placement Courses. The District had 69 elementary schools, 23 middle schools, 28 high schools and 10 alternative schools. The demographics of School District 1 were as follows: .42% American Indian, 6% Asian, 40% Black, 15% Hispanic, 4% Multi-racial, .15% Pacific Islander and 33% White. The District employed over 10,000 employees. There were 5,786 total full-time teachers and

support staff, 805 administrative and office staff and 5,946 certified teachers. School

District 1 had 782 National Board-certified teachers.

School District 1 led the state and nation in several areas including recognition for

academics, character education, athletics and technology. The district was recognized

statewide and nationally for their Character Education Initiatives, the United Way, and

the Council of Great City Schools and for their top performing athletic programs. In 2016

the graduation rate reached its highest at 89.4%. The District had eleven high schools that

reached 100% graduation rates. In addition, eleven more of their high schools topped

over 90% graduation rates. Fourteen of their high schools made the national news as

some of the nation's most challenging high schools. School District 1 was known for

their academic rigor. They offered thirty different Advanced Placement (AP) courses,

International Baccalaureate (IB) programs in four high schools with their 2016 graduates

taking and passing almost 2000 AP and IB exams.

School District 2

School District 2 served students Served students in a large metropolitan area in

the Southeastern United States. This school district was one of the country's fastest

growing metropolitan areas and was the third fasted growing major city in the U.S.

(Wikipedia, 2017). The district served over 147,000 students in kindergarten through 12th

grade with 170 schools. School District 2 served students from 165 different countries

from various ethnic backgrounds and cultures with differing academic programs

including 47 full or partial magnet programs, nine specialized career and technical

education themes, three early college programs 32 AP course offerings and 15

International Baccalaureate programs. School District 2 included 91 elementary schools,

30 middle schools, 33 high schools, eight Pre-K-8 school, three K-8 schools, one K-12 school, one 6-12school, and three alternative schools. The demographics of School District 2 were as follows: 39% African American, 3% Indian/Multiracial, 6% Asian, 23% Hispanic, and 29% White. The students in School District 2 spoke 187 different languages. The graduation rate for School District 2 during the time of the study was 89.6%. School District 2 was one of the largest employers within the city and surrounding areas. The District employed over 19,098 staff members. There were 13,146 total full-time teachers and support staff, 1586 administrative and office staff and 9,360 certified teachers. School District 2 had 4,511 teachers with advanced degrees and 1,199 National Board-certified teachers.

School District 2 schools received national recognition for academic performance, achievement and success. Over the past few years the district had been recognized nationally in a variety of ways. In 2011 the District won the Broad Prize for Urban Education which was a highly competitive and difficult award to win for a school system. The award was given based on raising student achievement and narrowing the achievement gap. School District 2 improved their graduation rate by over 15% since 2010. The graduation rate increase exceeded the state average in all subgroups and in Career and Technical Education (CTE) the rate was over 95%. Twenty-two of the District's magnet schools received recognition for student achievement. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), or the nation's report card, School District 2 was a top performer. School District 2 was ranked first in fourth and eighth grade math and second and fourth in eight grade reading. In comparison to other large school systems in the nation School District 2 scores ranked higher than the national average. The

District's overall reading, math, science, English and biology increased from nine to eighteen points since 2014. Finally, the state ranked individual schools in one of three categories: exceeded expected growth, meth expected growth or did not meet expected growth. 82% of School District 2 schools met or exceeded expected growth (North Carolina Department of Education, 2017).

School District 3

School District 3 served 159, 549 students and was the largest school system in North Carolina and the 15th largest in the nation. The District tripled its population since 1980 and they expected at least 9,000 more students by 2020. School District had 177 schools with 110 elementary schools, 34 middle schools, 26 high schools, 4 alternative schools and 3 K-8, 6-12 schools. The demographics of the district were as follows: 68.6 % White, 20.9% Black, .3 % American Indian/Alaskan, 5.4 % Asian, and 1.9% Multi-racial and 9.8% Hispanic. The District had over 19,000 employees with 10,225 teachers with over 41% of the teachers having advanced degrees and 1,517 of their teachers were Nationally Board- certified which leads the nation and they have done so for over 10 years.

School District 3 was focused on initiatives that increased equity and narrow the achievement gap, given that their school population was not very diverse. The District was committed to increasing graduation rates and lowering minority suspension rates. Over the past four years the district has showed a 6.1% total graduation rate increase with a 12.2% increase for African Americans, a 7.8% increase for Hispanic students and a 10.7% increase for students with disabilities. The District increased in student achievement over the past four years as well including a 3.8% total increase in students

scoring above grade level. These increases were higher for African American students (4.6%) and lower for Hispanic students (2.7%) and students with disabilities (.6%). The District has also saw a steady increase in students taking Advanced Placement courses with an overall increase of 23%, a 50% increase in African American participation, a 26% increase in Hispanic participation and a 16% increase in participation for students with disabilities. School District 3 was focused on initiatives such as cultural proficiency training, equity coaching, and access to rigor and multi-tiered intervention systems.

<div align="center">Variables</div>

The dependent variables used in this study were short-term suspensions, long-term suspensions and expulsions. Short-term suspension numbers were gathered yearly by the state for every grade level. The data reflected included multiple suspensions of the same student. A short-term suspension was defined as a suspension of ten days or less. Short-term suspension data were gathered by race/ethnicity and gender per grade level, per school and per school district.

Long-term suspension numbers were gathered yearly by the state for every grade level. The data reflected included multiple suspensions of the same student. A long-term suspension was defined as a suspension of eleven days or more. Long-term suspension data were gathered based on race/ethnicity and gender per grade level, per school and per school district.

Expulsion data were gathered each yearly by race/ethnicity and gender per grade level, per school and per school district. Students that were expelled from a district were generally not allowed to continue going to school in that district, but some schools

allowed the student to reapply for admission. The students may apply in another district, charter school or be placed in an alternative setting.

The dependent variables were disaggregated by race (White and Black) and gender (Male and Female). The independent variables used in this study were Black males, White Males, Black Females and White Females.

Chapter 3 outlined the data collection methods and analysis procedures. The chapters described the quantitative analysis used and the longitudinal descriptive design that was used. Chapter 3 provided information on the three large school districts, data collection, participants as well as the variables used within the study.

<div style="text-align:center">Data Analyses</div>

After the data were downloaded from the website, data was entered SPSS. Proportion of students' short-term suspension, long-term suspension and expulsion from each district was calculated by taking the number of incidences and dividing by the total number of students in the district across all 14 years. Next line graphs were created for each outcome variable and examined for similarities and differences in student groups.

The Friedman test of rank allowed for the analysis of repeated measures data that were measured on two or more different conditions or occasions or to subjects that were matched in pairs or greater numbers. The Friedman test allowed for this study to determine if the suspension and expulsion rates changed over time across multiple years (Green, S. B. & Salkind, N.J., 2008).

Repeated measures ANOVAs with one within factor (i.e., years) and one between factor (i.e., student group) was calculated to determine differences between the groups across the years.

Summary

This study used a non-experimental design to examine the short-term, long-term and expulsion rates by race (i.e. White and Black) and gender. Archival data from 2004 to 2017 were used to examine the trends. Full implementation of the school SROs began in 2006, which allowed examination of trends before and after implementation of SROs. The next chapters describe the results and interpretation and implications of the findings.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Chapter 4 outlined analyses of trend data from three large school Districts in North Carolina over a span of 14 school years from 2004 to 2017. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the trend data for the overall long-term and short-term suspension rates and expulsion statistics for Black males, White males, Black females and White female students in grades K-12 in relation to the presence of SROs in three large school districts located in the Southern portion of North Carolina. The full implementation of SROs in schools was 2006, and suspension and expulsion data before and after this date will be examine. The following research questions were addressed: 1) How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White females overall short-term suspension rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers? 2) How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White females overall long-term suspension rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers? and 3) How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White females overall expulsion rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers?

Data Collection for the Three School Districts

The study focused on the number of suspensions and expulsions as defined by the

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). Data collection came from the

2002-2003 to 2016-2017 *North Carolina State Board Annual Report on School Crime*

and Violence, the 2002-2003 to 2016-2017 *North Carolina State Board Report to the*

Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee Annual Study of Suspensions and

Expulsions, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Data and Statistics

Portal for 2002-2003 to 2016-2017. The three large school Districts began with

perspective populations of Black males, Black females, White males and White females

of 59,127 students for District 1, 98,286 students for District 2 and 98,864 students for

District 3. In 2017 the population of the Districts used was 52,967 students for District 1,

100,503 students for District 2 and 112,094 students for District 3. The data was used to

examine changes in suspension and expulsions rates.

Findings for Research Question 1

Research Question 1- How do African American males, African American

females, White males, and White females overall short-term suspension rates vary from

2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3

in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers?

The proportion of short-term suspensions for the three large school districts from

2004 to 2017 by race and gender groups were reported in Table 1. Graphs of the

proportions for each of the three school districts were shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3. The

data shows that across the three large school districts Black males were suspended at a

higher rate across all the years than all three of the other subgroups listed. Black Females

across all three school districts were suspended at a higher rate than both White males and White females. Each of the three school districts demonstrated their highest number of short-term suspensions in 2004 with a steady decrease until 2016 when all three of the districts experienced an increase. During the year of full implementation of the SRO in 2006 each of the three districts experienced an increase in short-term suspensions. However, the three districts studied did show a clear decline in short-term suspensions across all of the identified groups. Although there was a marked decrease in long-term suspensions there was continued disproportionality created between the suspension rates of Black males and all other subgroups.

Table 1

Short-Term Suspension Percentages for District 1, District 2 and District 3 from 2004-2017

		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
District 1	Black M	.471	.177	.336	.308	.360	.360	.321	.363	.338	.314	.179	.221	.526	.226
	Black F	.198	.086	.150	.142	.166	.162	.146	.154	.151	.137	.077	.099	.117	.111
	White M	.135	.064	.057	.051	.106	.106	.108	.104	.097	.078	.041	.057	.058	.061
	White F	.037	.030	.015	.014	.033	.029	.027	.026	.027	.022	.011	.016	.016	.017
District 2	Black M	.777	.248	.573	.573	.488	.609	.444	.302	.300	.651	.442	.417	.450	.392
	Black F	.359	.119	.273	.269	.212	.091	.243	.288	.073	.287	.189	.176	.189	.170
	White M	.161	.081	.110	.110	.093	.123	.122	.119	.116	.099	.064	.053	.055	.059
	White F	.059	.020	.035	.037	.026	.035	.039	.040	.035	.029	.019	.015	.017	.015
District 3	Black M	.584	.586	.465	.485	.492	.423	.333	.400	.326	.364	.262	.267	.614	.263
	Black F	.261	.239	.195	.218	.213	.160	.171	.177	.145	.146	.106	.120	.121	.114
	White M	.116	.127	.104	.101	.101	.092	.083	.072	.057	.059	.043	.041	.040	.045
	White F	.036	.037	.031	.031	.028	.026	.026	.021	.015	.013	.011	.009	.009	.009

Each of the figures depicts the proportionate suspension rate within each of the districts. Figure 1 depicts a decrease in short-term suspensions from 2004 to 2005 for Black males in District 1. In 2006 during the full implantation of the SRO there was an increase in short-term suspensions followed by a steady but level increase in suspensions above the significant decrease in 2005. After full implementation of the SRO the graph in Figure 1 shows that there was not a significant increase or decrease in suspensions for Black males. However, in 2015 through 2016 there was a large increase in short-term suspensions that was similar to suspensions in 2005. The overall trend for suspensions for Black males indicates that District 1 did reduce suspensions over the studied years. There was a significant decrease in overall short-term suspensions from 2004 to 2017. Figure 1 depicts a significant decrease in short-term suspensions from 2004 to 2005 for Black females in relation to the number of suspensions for District 1. After full implementation of the SRO the graph in Figure 1 shows there was not a noticeable increase or decrease in suspensions for Black females. However, in 2015 through 2016 there was another pattern of increase in short-term suspensions that was not as large as the suspensions in 2005. The graph shows that Black females were the most short-term suspended group other than Black males in District 1. There was an overall decrease in suspensions for Black females across the years of the study.

Short-term -suspensions for White males and White females were significantly lower than that of Black males in District 1. The short-term suspension of White males shows a similar suspension pattern of those of Black females. The rate of short-term suspension for both Black females and White males were almost equal in 2005, however the trend of short-term suspensions for White males then increased steadily from 2007 to

2013 with a decrease in 2014 which remained constant until 2017, but again was lower than Black Females, higher than White Females but much lower than Black males. The short-term suspension rate for White females was significantly lower than Black females and Black males. The trend of short-term suspensions for White females then increased steadily from 2007 to 2013 with a decrease in 2014 which remained constant until 2017, but again was lower than White males, Black Females, and significantly lower than Black males for District 1. The suspension rates for Whites in District 1 decreased over the years of the study and significantly decreased from 2017 to 2017. Although there was a marked decrease in suspensions there was continued disproportionality created between the suspension rates of Black males and all other subgroups.
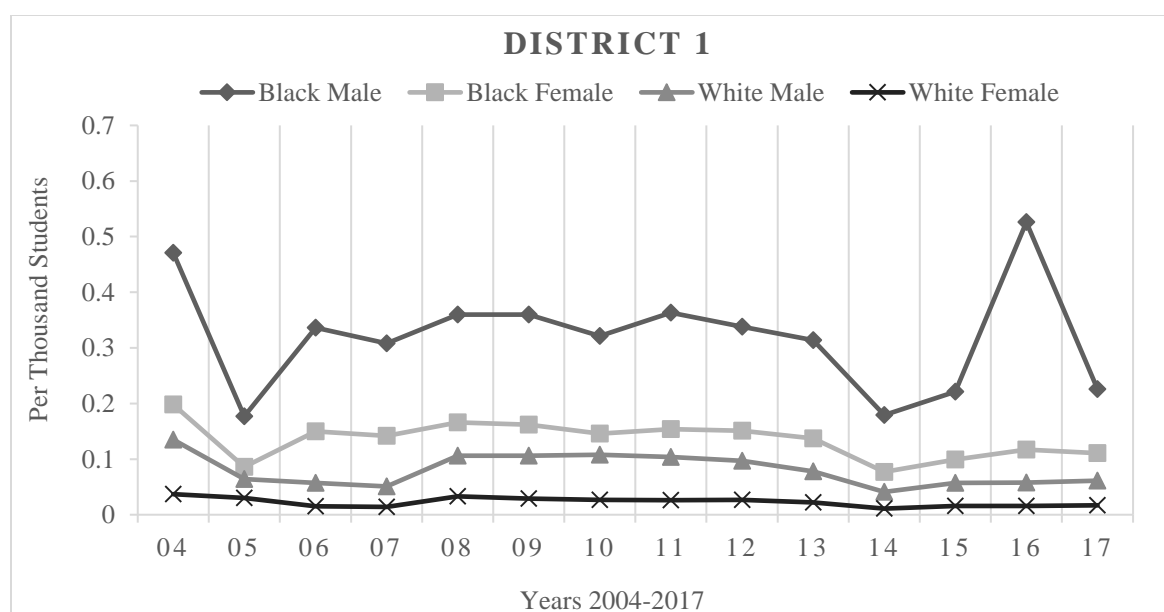

Figure 1

Graphic description of short-term suspension percentages for District 1, from 2004-2017 for Black males, Black females, White males and White females

Figure 2 depicts a significant decrease in short-term suspensions from 2004 to 2005 for Black males in District 2. In 2006 during the full implantation of the SRO there was an increase in short-term suspensions followed by a steady but level decrease in suspensions above the significant decrease in 2005. After full implementation of the SRO Figure 1 shows that there was not visual increase or decrease in suspensions for Black males until 2009 to 2012. However, in 2013 there was a large increase in short-term suspensions for Black males in District 2 that was like suspensions in 2005. This pattern decreased and leveled off from 2014 to 2017. Figure 2 depicts a decrease in short-term suspensions from 2004 to 2005 for Black females in relation to the number of suspensions for District 2. In 2006 during the full implementation of the SRO there was an increase in short-term suspensions followed by a steady but level increase in suspensions. After full implementation of the SRO there was not a significant increase or decrease in suspensions for Black females. The suspension rates for Black females increased and decreased from 2006 to 2009 and again from 2010 to 2012 with an increase in 2013 which leveled off and decreased steadily from 2014 to 2017 in District 2 Black females were the most short-term suspended group other than Black males in District 2, however the suspension rates for Black females over the years of the study decreased steadily within District 2.

Short-term suspensions for White males and White females were significantly lower than that of Black males in District 2. The short-term suspension of White males showed a similar suspension pattern as Black females. There was an intersection of suspension rates between Black females and White males in 2005, 2009 and 2012. The trend of short-term suspensions for White males then increased steadily but

insignificantly from 2006 to 2017, but again was lower than Black Females, higher than White Females but significantly lower than Black males in District 2. The overall suspension rates for Whites in District 2 did show an overall decline over the years of the study.

There was a decrease in short-term suspensions from 2004 to 2006 for Black males in District 3 prior to the full implementation of the SRO. In 2006 during the full implementation of the SRO the short-term suspension rate remained level from 2006 to 2008 followed by another steady decrease from 2009 to 2010. There were incremental increases and decreased in the short-term suspension rates from 2011 to 2015 with a large increase in suspensions for one year (2015) followed by another leveling off and decrease in 2016 and 2017. District. After full implementation of the SRO, there was not a significant increase or decrease in suspensions for Black males. The suspension rates remained relatively stable for Black males in District 3 for periods of time but overall there was a decrease of suspensions during the years of the study in District 3 for Black males. There was a significant decrease in short-term suspensions from 2004 to 2005 for Black females in relation to the number of suspensions for District 3. In 2006 during the full implantation of the SRO there was an increase in short-term suspensions followed by a steady but level increase in suspensions above the significant decrease in 2005. However, the overall suspension rate for Black females in District 3 did decrease over the years studied.

Figure 2

Graphic description of short-term suspension percentages for District 2, from 2004-2017 for Black males, Black females, White males and White females

After full implementation of the SRO the graph in Figure 3 shows there was not a significant increase or decrease in suspensions for Black females. The suspension rates for Black females decreased from 2004 to 2006. The suspension rate for Black females after full implementation of the SRO in 2006 increased and decreased slightly from 2006 to 2017 with no significant increases or decreases as noted in District 1 and District 2. The graph shows that Black females were the most short-term suspended group other than Black males in District 3. There was an overall decrease in suspensions for Black females over the years studied.

Short-term suspensions for White males and White females were significantly lower than that of Black males and lower than Black females in District 3. The short-term suspension of White males and females showed an intersection of similar suspension

numbers and rates from 2006 until 2017 with the patter of suspension rates decreasing

gradually and incrementally throughout those years. The trend of short-term suspensions

for White males and White females was lower than Black Females, slightly higher than

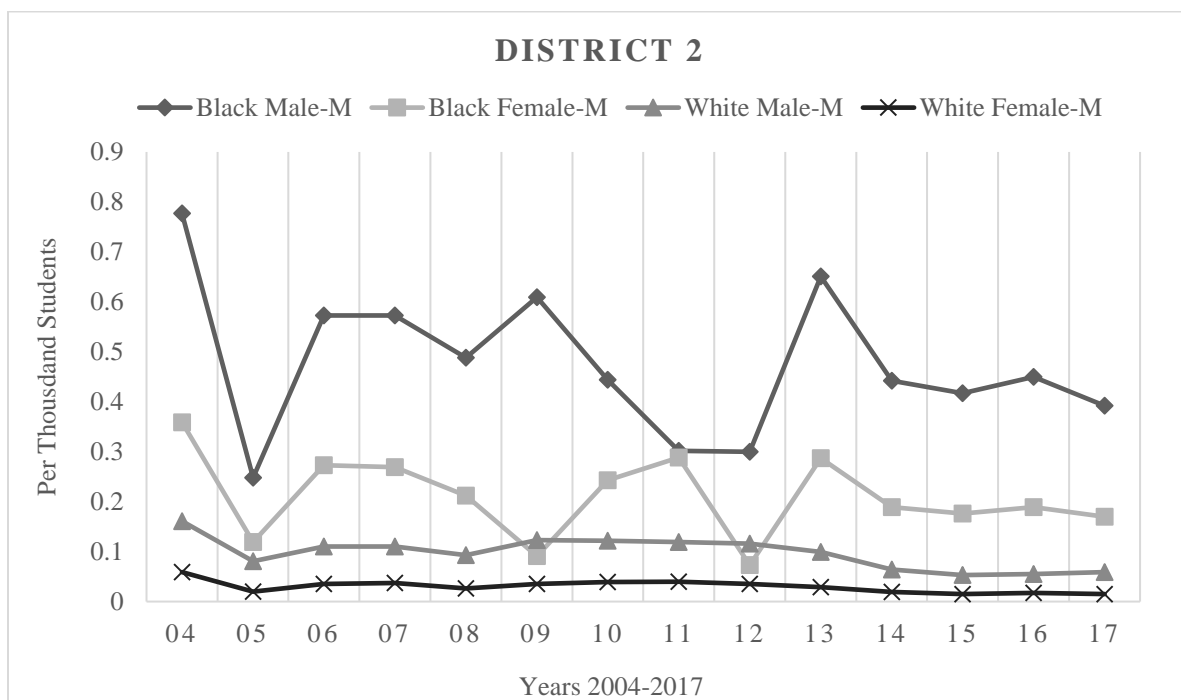White Females but significantly lower than Black males in District 3.
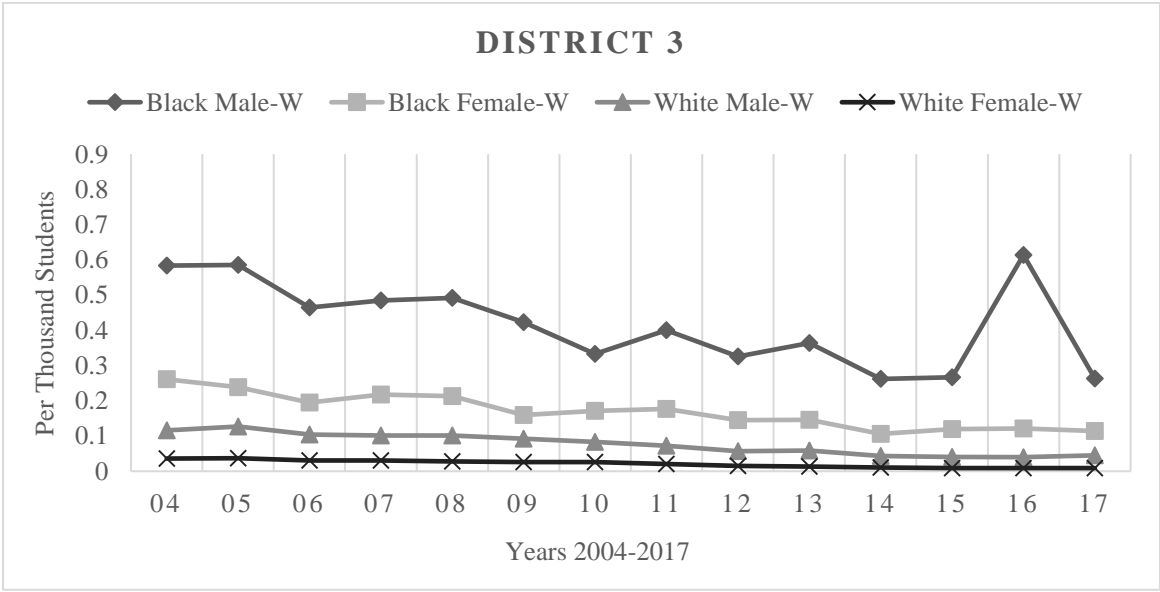
DISTRICT 3

Figure 3

Graphic description of short-term suspension percentages for District 3, from 2004-2017 for Black males, Black females, White males and White female

To examine changes in short-term suspension, a Friedman test of rank was conducted. The school district served as the unit of analyses. The mean rank based on the 14 years of short-term suspension (i.e., 2004 to 2017) were reported in Table 2. There as a statistically significant differences across the years (χ^2= 79.15, *df*=13, *p*<.01) with a steady decrease in the mean rank from 2004 to 2017. The most noticeable changes were noted between 2004 and 2005 and 2013 and 2014. During the first full year of the implementation of the SRO in 2006 the mean rank of short-term suspensions during the previous year was less across the three school districts. After 2006 the mean rank decreased in 2007 and steadily rose incrementally in 2008 and 2009. After 2009 the mean rank again steadily and incrementally until 2017 with one year of increase followed by decrease in 2010 and 2011. There was a significant difference in the mean ranks for short-term suspensions from the first measured year (2004) to the final measured year (2017).

Table 2.

Mean Rank for Short-Term Suspensions for District 1, District 2 and District 3 from 2004-2017

Year	Mean Rank
2004	13.58
2005	7.50
2006	8.75
2007	8.33
2008	9.96
2009	9.46
2010	8.92
2011	9.25
2012	6.63
2013	7.42
2014	2.88
2015	3.04
2016	5.75
2017	3.54

To examine the immediate effects of the placement of the school resource officers, the average short-term suspension rate for 2004 and 2005 (i.e., before full implementation of school resource officers) was compared to the average short-term suspension rate immediately after placement of school resource officers (i.e., 2006 and 2007). Results of a paired-t test indicated there was not a statistically significantly difference before and after the school resource officers was introduced to the schools ($t_{(11)}$=1.12, *p*=.29). The mean proportion short-term suspension before was .21 (*SD*=.18) and the mean proportion after fully implemented was .20 (*SD*=.18).

To examine differences across the years by race and gender, a repeated measures analysis of variance was conducted. Again, the unit of analysis is the school district. The 14 years of proportion short-term suspension for each school district was the dependent variable. The within subjects' factor was the year (2004 to 2017) and the between

subjects' factors were students' gender (male or female) and race (black or white). Due to a violation of the assumption of sphericity, Greenhouse-Geisser correction was used to determine statistical significance. There was a statistically significant within subjects effect for years ($F (2, 17) = 5.96$, $p = .01$) but there were no statistically significant two-way interaction for year by gender ($F (2, 17) = 1.58$, $p = .23$), year by race ($F (2, 17) = 3.07$, $p=.07$), or three-way interaction of year by gender by race ($F (2, 17) = 1.25$, $p=.31$). For the between subjects' effects, there were statistically significant differences in gender ($F (1, 8) = 33.85$, $p<.01$), race ($F (1, 8) = 85.78$, $p<.01$), and an interaction effect gender by race ($F (1, 8) = 33.85$, $p<.01$). This interaction is depicted in Figure 4 below.
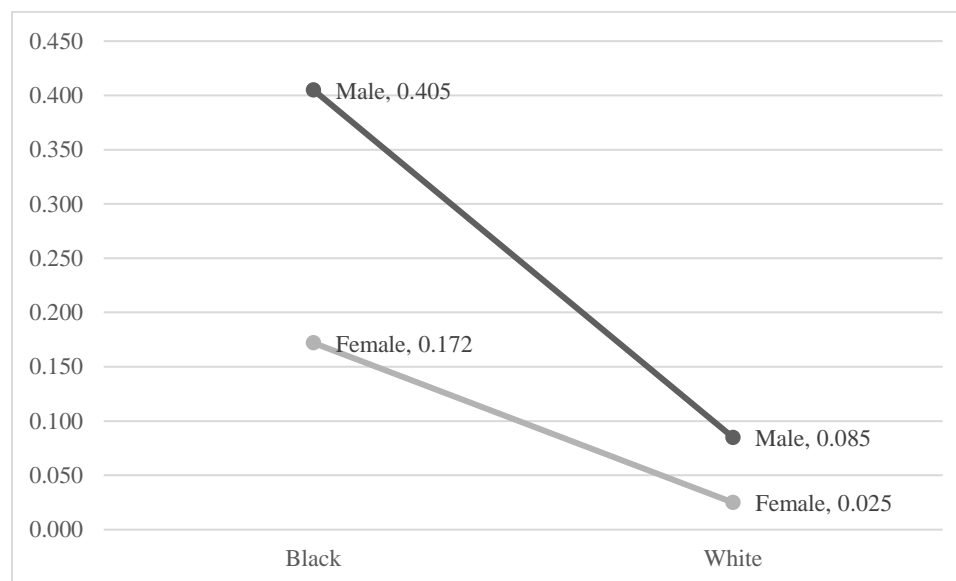

Figure 4

The marginal means of race and gender aggregated over 14 years.

Table 3 shows the marginal mean proportions of short-term suspension, standard error, and 95% confidence interval. An illustration of the interaction is shown in Figure 4. White male and female students remained lower than black male and female students on short-term suspension rates on average across the 14 years. Black males on average were suspended at a much higher rate than all other student groups.

Table 3.

Marginal Means, Standard Error (SE), and 95% Confidence Interval for Short-term Suspensions for District 1, District 2 and District 3 from 2004-2017 by Gender and Race

Gender	Race	Mean	SE	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Male	Black	0.405	0.025	0.347	0.464
	White	0.085	0.025	0.027	0.143
Female	Black	0.172	0.025	0.114	0.230
	White	0.025	0.025	-0.033	0.083

Findings for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 Long-Term Suspension - How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White females overall long-term suspension rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers?

Table 4 shows the percentages of students that received a long-term suspension for each of the three School Districts. The numbers were shown per 1000 students (e.g., proportion of students suspended multiplied by 1000) to eliminate the numbers to the right of the decimal. White male and female students remained lower than Black male and female students on long-term suspension rates on average across the 14 years. Black

males on average were suspended at a much higher rate than all other student groups

Table 4 provides actual student counts for each of the three school districts and provided

the total number of Black males, Black females, White males and White females for each

school district as well.

Table 4

Long-term Suspension Rate (per 1000 students) for District 1, District 2 and District 3 from 2004-2017

		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
LEA 1	Black M	1.168	.999	.613	2.504	3.817	1.023	2.975	3.852	.609	.337	.672	.674	.677	.680
	Black F	.986	.610	.761	1.066	.440	.929	.559	1.033	.347	.000	.679	.681	.688	.697
	White M	.388	.263	.085	.369	1.214	.068	1.385	1.933	.351	.000	.742	.763	.787	.804
	White F	.067	.068	.030	.059	.285	.073	.371	.360	.376	.000	.798	.820	.842	.859
LEA 2	Black M	12.714	18.251	10.775	3.592	1.327	.791	1.584	2.694	1.194	1.979	.336	.669	.545	.481
	Black F	4.736	7.140	3.341	1.826	.400	.260	.165	1.332	1.010	.620	.344	.727	.351	.353
	White M	3.044	7.075	6.587	.417	.257	.394	.308	.265	.351	.353	.441	.460	.460	.469
	White F	.735	2.403	6.040	.131	.044	.000	.227	.229	.228	.228	.455	.472	.472	.481
LEA 3	Black M	22.942	18.454	28.109	28.364	30.277	24.939	19.159	12.997	10.790	8.269	8.377	8.685	8.877	.531
	Black F	8.422	6.153	7.410	8.121	8.414	7.367	5.140	3.774	2.351	2.224	1.334	1.671	2.501	.544
	White M	3.967	1.992	.426	1.649	3.806	3.266	3.142	2.492	1.232	.978	.687	1.118	.729	.260
	White F	.999	.504	.385	1.393	1.190	.861	1.064	.754	.315	.169	.281	.277	.304	.685

Figures 5, 6 and 7 show separate illustrations of the suspension percentages by Black male, Black female, White male and White female. The graphic depictions again repeat the findings that were found for short-term suspension that showed Black males were suspended more than any of the four identified groups with Black females being long-term suspended more than White males and White females. The figures also show a trend of an overall decrease in suspensions for all of the studied subgroups.

Figure 5 depicts the long-term suspension rates for Black males in District 1. The overall pattern for suspensions for District 1 shows that for all of the identified subgroups the long-term suspension rates increased and decreased from 2004 to 2017. Specifically, for Black males there was a decrease in the suspension rates from 2004 to 2006. During the full implementation year of the SRO in 2006 long-term suspension rates increased dramatically from 2006 to 2008 with a sharp decline in 2009. The sharp decline in 2009 was followed by another increase in suspensions in 2011 that were similar to the significant increase in 2009. From 2009 to 2013 there was a drastic decrease in the long-term suspension rate that was not like the rates of short-term suspensions for the same years. Black male long-term suspension rates for District 1 showed a drastic decline followed by a leveling off from 2012 to 2017. Across all of the subgroups the suspension rate of Black males was still higher than any of the identified groups. There was an overall decrease in suspensions for Black males during the years being studied.

After the year of full implementation of the SRO in 2006 the suspension rate for Black females began to rise from 2004 to 2006 and continued to rise in 2007 with a decrease in long-term suspensions in 2008. The data shows incremental increases and

decreases from 2008 to 2014 with the suspension rate leveling off from 2014 to 2017 and with this note that as with Black males that although the long-term suspension rates for all sub-groups intersected the short-term suspension rates increased which does shows that although students were not long-term suspended at a similar rate, but they were still being suspended.

Within District 1 the rate of long-term suspension for White males did not mirror the pattern of short or long-term suspensions within each of the three districts. From 2004 to 2006 the rate of suspensions for White males in District 1 was significantly lower than that of Black males and Black females and only slightly higher than that of White females. In 2006 during the year of the full implementation of the SRO the long-term suspension rate for White males was it lowest. However, from 2006 to 2008 the long-term suspension rate began to rise, decreased in 2009 but from 2010 to 2011 rose to its highest rate surpassing the rate of Black females. From 2011 to 2013 the long-term suspension rate hit its lowest point in 2013 and was similar to the rate of White females but as with Black males, although the long-term suspension rates for all sub-groups intersected the short-term suspension rates increased which does shows that although White male students were not long-term suspended at a similar rate, but they were still being suspended. There was an overall decrease of suspensions for White males over the years studied.

Within District 1 the rate of long-term suspensions for White females was significantly lower than all three of the other mentioned subgroups. There were very few White female long-term suspensions in comparison to White and Black males and Black females for the years 2004 to 2009. In 2006 during the full implementation year of the

SRO long-term suspension for White female students did not move until 2010 and even

so the rates were still significantly lower than the other mentioned subgroups. The long-

term suspension rate for White females increased from 2013 to 2017 and were similar to

Black males and females and White males. This pattern was not similar to the pattern

demonstrated in the short-term suspension data but was similar to the rate of White

females but as with Black males, although the long-term suspension rates for all sub-

groups intersected the short-term suspension rates increased which does shows that

although White male students were not long-term suspended at a similar rate, but White

females were still being suspended. There was an overall decrease in suspensions for

White females.

Figure 5

Graphic Description of Long-term Suspension Percentages for District 1, from 2004-2017 for Black Males, Black Females, White Males and White Females

Figure 6 depicts the long-term suspension rates for Black males in District 2. The overall pattern for suspensions for District 2 shows that for all of the identified subgroups the long-term suspension rates increased and decreased from 2004 to 2017. Specifically, for Black males there was an increase in suspensions from 2004 to 2005 and then a drastic decline in 2006. During the full implementation year of the SRO in 2006 long-term suspension rates for Black males in District 2 showed a drastic decline, which mirrored the pattern also demonstrated for the other identified subgroups. During the full implementation year of the SRO the drastic decline shown in all the four subgroups did not indicate a negative or positive influence of the SRO and did not as noted before and did not show similarities to the short-term suspension rates in District 2 and with this note that as with Black males that although the long-term suspension rates for all sub-groups intersected the short-term suspension rates increased which does shows that although students were not long-term suspended at a similar rate but they were still being suspended. The data showed a marked decrease in suspensions across the identified subgroups, however, the suspension rates of Black males was significantly more than all of the other subgroups as noted in all of the school districts.
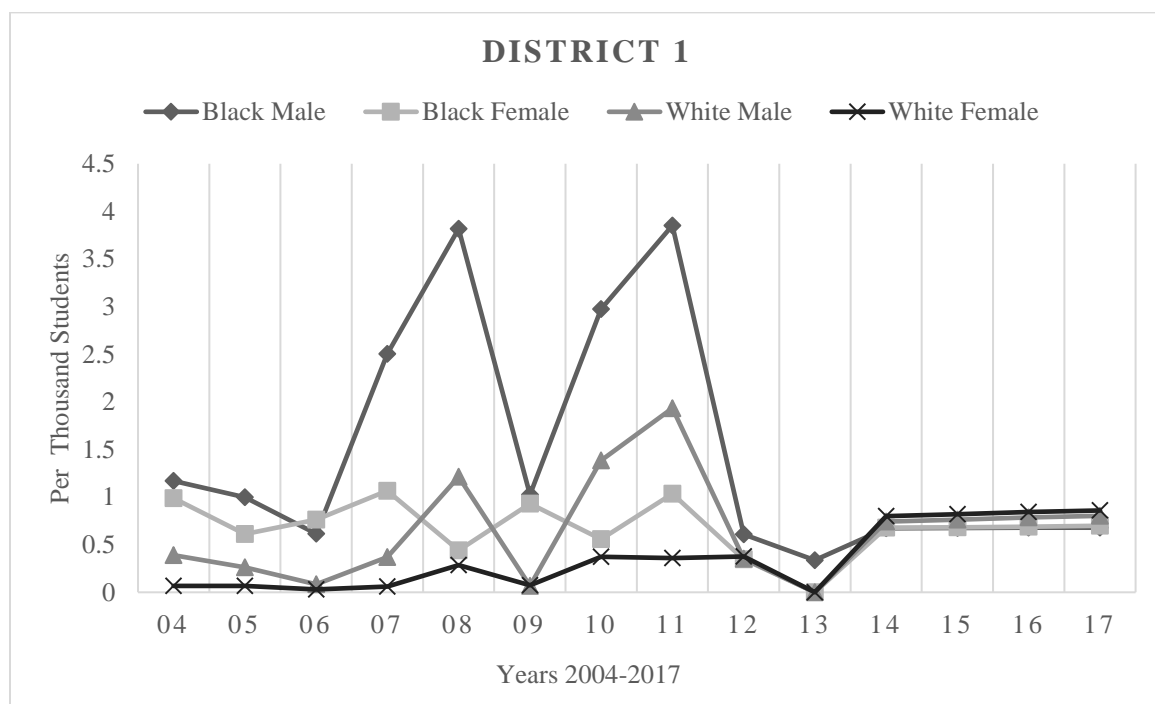
Figure 6

Graphic Description of Long-Term Suspension Percentages for District 2, from 2004-2017 for Black Males, Black Females, White Males and White Females

Figure 7 depicts the long-term suspension rates for Black males in District 3. The overall pattern for suspensions for District 3 shows that for all of the identified subgroups the long-term suspension rates decreased from 2004 to 2017. Specifically, for Black males there was an increase in suspensions from 2005 to 2008 and then a drastic decline in 2009 to 2017. During the full implementation year of the SRO in 2006 long-term suspension rates for Black males in District 3 showed a drastic decline which mirrored the pattern also demonstrated for the other identified subgroups. During the full implementation year of the SRO the drastic decline shown in all the four subgroups did not indicate a negative or positive influence of the SRO and did not as noted before and did not show similarities to the short-term suspension rates in District 3 and with this note that as with Black males that although the long-term suspension rates for all sub-groups intersected the short-term suspension rates increased which does shows that

although students were not long-term suspended at a similar rate but they were still being

suspended. The data showed a marked decrease in suspensions across the identified

subgroups, however, the suspension rates of Black males was significantly more than all

of the other subgroups as noted in all of the school districts with. Although there was a

marked decrease in suspensions there was continued disproportionality created between

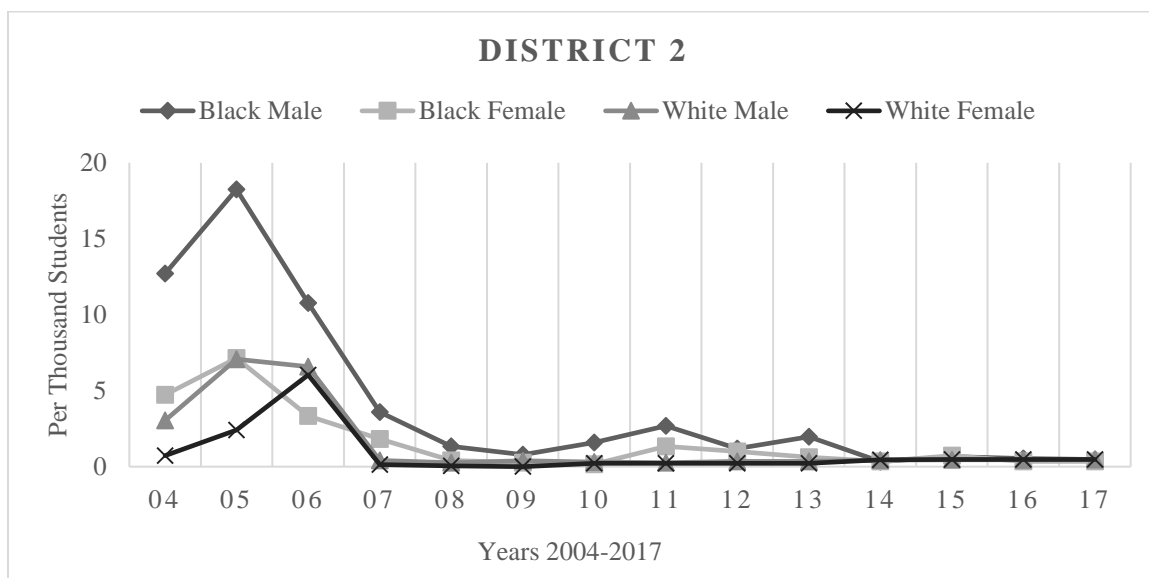the suspension rates of Black males and all other subgroups.
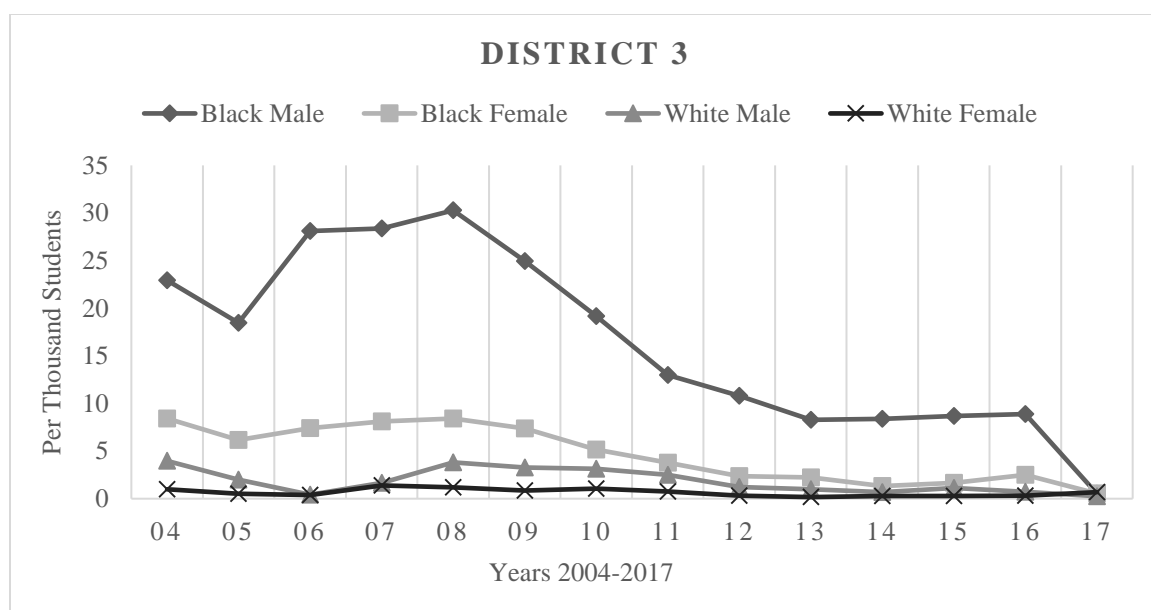
Figure 7

*Graphic Description of Long-Term Suspension Percentages for District 3, from 2004-2017 for
Black Males, Black Females, White Males and White Females*

To examine changes in long-term suspension, a Friedman test of rank was conducted. The school district served as the unit of analyses. The mean rank based on the 14 years of long-term suspension (i.e., 2004 to 2017) were reported in Table 5. There was a statistically significant difference across the years ($\chi^2= 35.47$, $df=13$, $p<.01$) with a steady decrease in the mean rank from 2004 to 2017.

Table 5

Mean Rank for Long-Term Suspensions for District 1, District 2 and District 3 from 2004-2017

Year	Mean Rank
2004	11.00
2005	9.17
2006	8.33
2007	9.42
2008	8.67
2009	7.08
2010	7.83
2011	9.25
2012	5.54
2013	3.54
2014	5.00
2015	6.58
2016	6.83
2017	6.75

To examine the immediate effects of the placement of the school resource officers, the average long-term suspension rate for 2004 and 2005 (i.e., before full implementation of school resource officers) was compared to the average long-term suspension rate immediately after placement of school resource officers (i.e., 2006 and 2007). Results of a paired-t test indicated there was not a statistically significantly difference before and after the school resource officers was introduced to the schools ($t_{(11)} =.40$, $p=.70$). The mean suspension rate per 1000 students before was 5.17 ($SD=6.57$) and the mean after fully implemented was 4.75 ($SD=7.82$).

To examine differences across the years by race and gender, a repeated measures analysis of variance was conducted. Again, the unit of analysis is the school district. The 14 years of proportion long-term suspension for each school district was the dependent variable. The within subjects' factor was the year (2004 to 2016) and the between subjects' factors were students' gender (male or female) and race (black or white). Due to a violation of the assumption of sphericity, Greenhouse-Geisser correction was used to determine statistical significance. There was not a statistically significant within subjects effect for years ($F (2, 15) = 3.49$, $p = .06$) and there were statistically no two-way interaction for year by gender ($F (2, 15) = .91$, $p = .42$), year by race ($F (2, 15) = 1.83$, $p=.20$), or three-way interaction of year by gender by race ($F (2, 15) = .52$, $p=.60$). For the between subjects' effects, there were no statistically significant differences in gender ($F (1, 8) = 1.42$, $p=.27$), race ($F (1, 8) = 2.58$, $p=.15$), and an interaction effect gender by race ($F (1, 8) = .81$, $p=.40$). Table 6 shows the mean proportion of short-term suspension, standard error, and 95% confidence interval.

Table 6

Marginal Means, Standard Error (SE), and 95% Confidence Interval for Long-term Suspensions for District 1, District 2 and District 3 from 2004-2017 by Gender and Race

Gender	Race	Mean	SE	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Male	Black	7.341	2.401	1.804	12.878
	White	1.328	2.401	-4.209	6.865
Female	Black	2.322	2.401	-3.215	7.859
	White	0.627	2.401	-4.910	6.164

Findings for Research Question 3

Research Question 3- How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White female's overall expulsion rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers?

The number of expulsions across the 14 years is reported in Table 7. Data for all years was missing due to changes in the reporting of expulsion. Actual expulsion numbers were reported based on the number of students expelled from 2004 to 2017. In District 1 there was only one expulsion reported in 2008 and that expulsion was a Black male with, again, no expulsions for Black females, White males or White females.

In District 2 there were multiple expulsions reported. Black male expulsions were reported in 2004 as follows: ($n=18$), 2005 ($n=6$), 2006 ($n=2$), 2007 ($n=4$), 2008 ($n=10$), and 2009 ($n=7$). Black female expulsion reported for District 2 were as follows: 2004 ($n=11$) and 2009 ($n=2$) for a total of 13 reported from 2004-2009. White male expulsions were reported in 2004 ($n=11$) and 2005($n=1$) for a total of 12 reported from 2004-2009. White female expulsions reported in 2004 ($n=1$) for a total of 1.

In District three Black male expulsions were reported as follows: 2004 ($n=4$), 2006 ($n=17$), 2007 ($n=7$), 2008 ($n=1$) and 2009 ($n=3$) for a total of 32 expulsions from 2004 to 2009. There were no expulsions reported from District 3 from 2004 to 2009 for Black females. White male expulsions were reported in 2004 ($n=1$) and 2007 ($n=1$) for a total of 2. There were no expulsions reported from District 3 from 2004 to 2009 White

females. This data as all other trends show the continued pattern of Black male exclusion

at a higher rate in two of the three Districts.

Table 7

Expulsion Counts for District 1, District 2 and District 3 from 2004-2017

		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
LEA 1	Black M	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
	Black F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-
	White M	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0
	White F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-
LEA 2	Black M	18	6	2	4	10	7	5	5	0	5	-	-	-	-
	Black F	11	0	0	0	0	2	5	5	0	5	-	-	-	-
	White M	11	1	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	5	-	-	-	-
	White F	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	5	-	-	-	-
LEA 3	Black M	4	0	17	7	1	3	8	5	0	5	-	-	-	-
	Black F	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	-	-	-	-
	White M	1	0	0	1	0	0	5	5	0	5	-	-	-	-
	White F	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	5	-	-	-	-

The expulsion rates decreased over time but due to changes in the States'

reporting practices in 2010 the actual number of students expelled from each county was

not readily available. District and principal discretionary reporting practices based on

how each District deals with infractions also changed. Lesser offenses committed by

students were often dealt with using in-school suspensions or short-term suspensions,

which are out-of-school suspensions of one to ten days. Principals usually make decisions

about whether to suspend a student in-school or short-term out-of-school and about the

duration of suspensions. In-school suspensions were usually served in an in-school

suspension classroom. When a school does not have an in-school suspension program or

when offenses were more serious or chronic, they may be dealt with through short-term

or out-of-school suspensions. A serious offense may employ a long-term suspension as a

consequence. Long-term suspensions last from 11 days up to the remainder of the school

year. When a student was suspended long-term, the student may not return to his or her

regular school for the duration of the suspension. Districts may allow long-term

suspended students to attend an alternative learning program (ALP) or alternative school

during their long-term suspensions. For reporting purposes, students were not considered

suspended while attending an ALP or alternative school. Certain very serious offenses

may result in the student not being allowed to enroll in any school or program for the

remainder of the school year or being suspended for an entire calendar year (365-day

suspension). Usually superintendents and/or local boards of education, upon

recommendation of principals, make decisions on a case-by-case basis about long-term

suspensions (including 365-day suspensions), the length of those suspensions, and

whether an ALP is provided. When a student is expelled from school, the student cannot

return to the home school or any other school within the LEA for an indefinite period. As with long-term suspensions, the superintendent and/or the local board of education, upon the recommendation of the principal, make decisions about student expulsions on a case-by-case basis. An expulsion was usually reserved for cases where the student is at least 14 years of age and presents a clear threat of danger to self or others. The acts do not have to occur on school premises for the superintendent or school board to expel a student. Some districts allow expelled students to apply for readmission after a period of time.

Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the trend data for the overall long-term and short-term suspension rates and expulsion statistics for African American males, White males, Black females and White female students in grades K-12 in relation to the presence of SROs in three large school districts located in North Carolina. The following research questions were addressed: 1) How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White females overall short-term suspension rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers 2) How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White females overall long-term suspension rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers and 3) How do African American males, African American females, White males, and White females overall expulsion rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers?

The intent of Chapter 4 was to provide descriptive statistics over the 14 years of data collected from the 2004 school year until 2017. Descriptive statistics over the 14 years of data collected revealed that both short-term and long-term suspension rates in the three large school districts decreased starting in 2004, however there was no indication that there was a significant increase or decrease before and after SROs were placed in the

school systems. While all student groups' suspension rates decreased, Black males tended to have the highest suspension rates across all years when compared to all other groups.

Chapter 5 provides summary details and discussion of conclusions, recommendations for future research and implications and recommendations for leadership within the schools as it pertains to the relationship of the SRO and school suspensions and expulsions. The findings from the research and the relationship to the theoretical framework will be explored to look at the systemic implications and issues raised as it relates to school suspensions and the SRO within the schools. This discussion will assist with recommendations for future disciplinary practices within schools.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study sought to examine the trend data for the overall long-term and short-term suspension rates and expulsion statistics for African American males, White males, Black females and White female students in grades K-12 in relation to the presence of SROs in three large school districts located in the Southern portion of North Carolina. The specific research questions addressed were: 1) How do Black males, Black females, White males, and White females overall short-term suspension rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers 2) How do Black males, Black females, White males, and White females overall long-term suspension rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers and 3) How do Black males, Black females, White males, and White females overall expulsion rates vary from 2004 to 2017 in the designated School District 1, School District 2 and School District 3 in North Carolina concurrent with the presence of School Resource Officers?

Theoretical Considerations CRT and Suspensions

As discussed in Chapter 3, CRT was the theoretical framework used to understand this study. Critical race theorists proposed remedies to provide a voice for those most impacted by the current policies and practices that govern American public education. (Su, 2007). CRT aims to provide scholars with a positive vision of what school should look like for marginalized groups (Su, 2007; Stovall, 2005; & Warren, 2001). CRT called for educational reform that means challenging the current pedagogy and policy in

different ways with an emphasis on changing direct processes rather than rely on visionary discussions that never amount to any change (Su, 2007).

CRT was an appropriate framework to examine the plight of the African American males as it relates to suspensions and the examination of race and the discussion of experiences of this population. The acknowledgment of race based practices and racism within educational policies and practices can contribute to a knowledge base, which could further explain the educational challenges that exist in American public education (Kholi, Pizzaro & Navarez, 2017)

The interaction of CRT within educational issues and suspensions should center on interventions that address the state of the African American in public education. Change in education must be based on research based practices that provide interventions and restorative practices that will improve the daily interactions between students (Black males) and the educational system (Crenshaw, 1995).

CRT probed the "how" and "why" Black males were overrepresented in the impact of zero-tolerance polices (Brown, 2008). Those policies were designed in the mid to late nineties to intervene in the rising school violence but increased racial overtones due to the disproportionate numbers of suspensions for Black males. By 2000 the African Americans were 2.6 times more likely to be suspended than White students and African American males are more likely to be expelled than any other student group. African American students accounted for 34% of all suspensions and 30% of expulsions with Black males taking the brunt of these suspensions and expulsions (Reynolds, 2010).

Summary of Findings

Research Q1 – Short-term Suspensions

In Districts 1, 2 and 3 the overall suspension rates for all four subgroups decreased from 2004-2017. There were marked periods of increase and decrease over specific years, but from 2004 to 2017 each sub-group decreased in suspension. The suspension rates for Black males was higher than all three other subgroups. Black female suspensions were higher than for White males and females, but still disproportionately lower than Black males as with Whites.

Research Q2- Long-Term Suspensions

In all three Districts the initial long-term suspension rates for Black males was significantly higher that all the other three sub-groups combined. In 2012 all three Districts showed a steady and significant decrease in long-term suspension rates for Black males. The suspension rates for the other three subgroups gradually declined over the years of study but remained significantly lower than the suspension rates of Black males. The rate of long-term suspensions for Black females was higher across the years of study than Whites and in some cases double that of Whites combined. All three Districts showed significant decreases in suspension from 2004 to 2017 when comparing the two years.

Research Q3- Expulsions

There were expulsions reported by all three Districts until 2013. From 2014 to 2017 there were no expulsions reported by any of the Districts. Between 2010 and 2013 due to changes in state reporting practices the exact number of expulsions per District were not readily available. From 2004 to 2013 all expulsions reported, except 1, came

from Districts 2 and 3 with the majority of those suspensions being overwhelmingly

Black males.

<div align="center">Interpretation of Findings</div>

There was clearly a reduction in suspensions, however the gap in suspension

rates, which amplify the concept of disproportionality, have not been addressed. The

disproportionality and the idea that this has been raised by CRT repeatedly and over

many years lends itself to the fact that districts have not addressed the solutions. The

problem was clearly evident but those that have the greatest impact (administrators) have

no solutions.

My study was guided by CRT and the findings from this study suggested that the

school discipline along with the presence of SROs are part of the embedded unequal

manifestations of the racialized behaviors in schools in the Southeastern part of the

United States. However, presence of the SRO within this study in no way was to be

presented as a direct relationship to suspensions and the amount or rate of suspensions in

the school. The data does not suggest that the SRO negatively or positively impacted the

suspension rates; rather the SRO was a presented artifact at the schools.

The findings do not dispute previous studies that minority students, specifically

African American males, were disproportionately impacted by school discipline

procedures. Through the lens of CRT, the higher rates of suspensions for Black males and

females is understood as an inequitable education practice that may be a byproduct of

ineffective strategies for impacting this marginalized student population (Brown, 2008;

Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The role of race should not be diminished as being a

clichéd attempted at "playing the race card", but rather as not choosing to ignore the role

of race within societal norms associated with "deconstruction and reconstruction" of intellect that contribute to construction of equitable practices in education (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 9). Simson (2014) asserted that CRT functioned as the framework for understanding pervasive inequality associated to race and particularly with school discipline.

Simson (2014) used CRT to underscore the racial inequality within the context of school discipline with the position that the implicit biases associated with racial stigmatization and stereotyping were part of the larger national narrative of racial prejudice in the United States that defines appropriate behavior within the constraints of the racial majority. Simson (2014) contented that the nationwide punitive approach to school discipline does not protect students' educational rights and were ineffective at creating academic environments that aided in social development, but rather, contributed to the numerous pervasive and systemic issues that continue to be overrepresented in minority communities, particularly, African American youth.

Ladson-Billings (1998) contended that the use of CRT is cautionary as being explanatory for "race, racism, and social injustice" in schools, rather there is an assertion for more acknowledgement of racism in education and the need for creative solutions (p. 22). As part of the Ladson-Billings (1998) approach to outlining CRT as being relevant in education was the relationship to ongoing efforts related to "school/civil rights legal battles" specific to the concept of "equal opportunity." School curriculum, instruction, assessment, funding, and desegregation as exemplars to support the assertion that CRT framed the issue of sustained inequity for students of color. Particular relevance to the current study was that CRT suggested that instructional strategies assumed Black

students were deficient rather than broad based pedagogy application to all students

(Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 19).

Howard (2008) concurred that CRT is a framework to allow for the centralization of discourse about race, class, and gender to be inclusive in analysis of Black male underachievement. Howard (2008) explained that explicit awareness of race and racism as part of educational theory and practice is important as part of study analysis as it offers another level of complexity understanding the educational challenges experienced by Black students, particularly males. We can take from Howard (2008) that suspensions and expulsions may be part of detrimental racial politics in U.S. schools. Howard (2008) suggested that failures in PreK-12 for Black males have implications for poor academic performance, dropout rates, and later involvement with the penal system.

The current study does not offer solutions to the inequality of school disciplinary practices such as suspensions and expulsions, but it does acknowledge that through the lens of CRT that there exists racial inequality. This study does suggest that within the frame of CRT that ignorance of race and gender were neutrality positions that "serve to camouflage the interests and ideology of dominant groups" (Howard, 2008). Similar to the contentions of Howard (2008), this current study does not have rationales for understanding why analysis of suspension and expulsion data show an oversimplification that minority students were somehow inherently more disruptive and required more school disciplinary practices to remove them from the classroom. CRT is a tool to acknowledge the inequity in school disciplinary practices.

One tenet of CRT is that race is not a natural, fixed or biological concept but has been constructed by the legal system. Race has been used to provide privilege for White

students and to oppress Black students. Within the study racial categories were used to sort student into groups in order to complete the analysis of suspensions. This study does not address the concept of privilege or the inferiority or superiority of any given race. It does show through the data presented that one race, Black males, are disproportionately suspended at a higher rate than the other three subgroups compared. The data also shows that Black males are disproportionately suspended at an even greater rate than White students. The study outlined long-term and short-term suspensions and expulsion data but does not outline the social factors that contribute to this skewed numbers. The sheer level of disproportionality within the study cannot simply be explained by numbers only.

<div align="center">Limitations</div>

The present study had limitations that were present in other similar including the one cited. The strength of the study focuses on disproportionality and the Black male in American public schools which is an irrefutable concept. However, a limitation of the study is its reliance on data gathered from three school districts within the Southeastern United States to describe the experiences of Black males, Black females, White males and White females. The findings from this study were only generalizable to school districts with similar policies, practices, demographics and similar population within the urban large school setting. It would be beneficial to provide further investigation of a larger sample of schools similar to the three school districts studied in order to gain more knowledge about the subject of suspension and the presence of an SRO. The study only examined short and long-term suspensions and expulsion numbers.

Chapter 3 outlined that reporting practices for expulsions changed impacting the accuracy of data for the actual number of students expelled from the schools within the three school districts. In addition, the study did not explore the specific zero tolerance or other disciplinary practices within the districts, counties or states that impact disciplinary decisions. Likewise, the data did not include expansion on the types of infractions committed by the 4 identified subgroups or information on the persons delivering the consequences.

Other limitations of the study include the exclusive use of data from the Department of Public Instruction that was not measured or compared to other data sources or policy documents. The focus was on the outcome (suspensions) but did not focus on processes that led to the suspension, the policies utilized by staff or the narratives or perspectives of the subgroups studies.

Recommendations for Practice

The study upheld what has been shown through other research studies and substantiated that Black males were being suspended at a disproportionate rates and the presence of an SRO does not decrease the number of suspensions for Back males or the other identified subgroups. In this current study, there is much that is unknown about the SROs and their relationship to school discipline. The suggested recommendations are aimed toward administrators because data findings for this study do not lend themselves to strategies for SROs. Four recommendations for practice include the usage of clear and concise multi-tiered systems of support structures (MTSS), Restorative Justice Practices and leadership practices that promote equity and fairness within the public schools and clearly defined roles for the school SRO as defined by already set regulations.

Restorative Justice Practices

       Restorative Justice is a way of dealing with student discipline and misbehavior with a focus not on suspension but on retribution and rehabilitation. The key components to Restorative practices were providing remediation and healing, lessons in morality, community involvement, respectful conversations, forgiveness, and accountability for one's behavior, apologizing and making amends for what has occurred. The goal is for the offender to learn from the experience and leave the situation better than it was through practice, intervention and mediation. (Simson, 2012). The goal of Restorative Justice Practices was to identify the infraction and its impact, develop a consequence through dialogue, mutually agree upon a consequence that repairs the harm and also leads to rehabilitation for the offender.

       Restorative Justice Practices can be used as an alternative to suspensions. The model could be used in lieu of zero-tolerance policies that were not historically as lenient. Restorative practices consider the offender, the victim and other factors that were normally not considered in traditional disciplinary practices. Restorative practices were all-inclusive and look at the levels of harm versus a one-size-fits all approach. The practices promote a comfortable environment with dialogue and discussion being integrated into the decision making process (Simson, 2012).

       Restorative Justice Practices encourage and promote community service and restitution rather than suspension and exclusion. The offender can demonstrate an understanding of the impact of their misbehavior and learn from their behaviors. This learning can take the place of suspension and expulsions. The offender is provided with solutions which might include mediation and opportunities for closure. Restorative

practices work best when the entire school adopted the practices and were consistent and emphasized building positive relationships.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) defined the MTSS framework as a means of promoting school improvement through both academic and behavioral supports that were research based and proven to produce high yield positive results. Within large urban districts like the three utilized in this current study there were key components of MTSS that must be adhered to.

The first component was leadership, which included administrators and staff within the leadership framework of a school. The leadership must engage in meaningful and ongoing professional development that focused on clearly defined MTSS strategies. The leadership team must be instrumental in planning for professional development, lead the implementation plan and model problem-solving strategies to anticipate and move through any challenges that arise. The school principal must lead the vision for MTSS implementation, assure that resources were provided for implementation and intervention and make available any and all data needed by staff so that they can make informed data-driven decisions.

The second component was the building of the capacity of staff and the infrastructure for implementation. The school must be set up to properly carryout and follow through with the implementation of MTSS structures. These structures include relevant and on-going professional development and staff coaching with an intentional focus. There must be structures for data analysis, problem solving and intervention

strategies. The school must be set up with a viable and productive schedule that assisted with the implementation of MTSS structures.

The third component is communication and collaboration, which promote consensus and consistent practices. There must be mechanisms of feedback to support the continuous improvement. All of these mechanisms must include all stakeholders including the community and district supports. The communication would assure that all practices were implemented and sustained.

The fourth component is the use of data based practices that inform decisions in and around student success. The problem solving must include student outcomes, content, assessment, grade level information, student's behavioral and academic tiers and barriers to success. MTSS utilized the four-step problem solving method that consisted of defining the goals and objectives, identifying the reasons for lack of success, developing a plan for addressing the lack of success with research based practices and evaluating the impact of the plan.

The fifth component was used and implementation of a three-tiered instructional and behavioral intervention model. Tier one accounts for the instruction of all students. Tier two included instructional supports for students that were not meeting their academic targets. Tier three includes intensive, targeted and small-group supports for students that face multiple challenges. This tier focused on academics, but also on social-emotional supports that may increase disciplinary challenges that contributed to suspension.

The sixth component of MTSS was evaluation of data. Data were key to implementation of MTSS structures and the MTSS model. School staff must understand data and how it can effectively be used. Staff must be provided with accurate and useful

data that were not overwhelming and they must be shown how to interpret it. There must

be clear protocols in place that assist with informed educational decisions.

The School Administrator and Leadership Practices

This study suggested that there was a role of the SROs in connection to school

disciplinary longitudinal data. This is problematic as this study did not focus on a

potential relationship and as such recommendations are not directly aligned to SROs, but

rather are aimed to practitioners, administrators, and policy makers. Collective

examination of data revealed the need for greater clarity of what was being masked, such

as there may be inconsistency in reporting of poorly defined infractions that left

interpretation up to individual administrators. The state of NC mandates the definition of

infractions, but administrators have discretion in what discipline is applied. As a result

the data sets may have underreported infractions and suspensions and expulsions.

Today's educators cannot ignore the impact of equity, diversity and inclusion

matters of educational policy and, as in this study, school suspensions. More and more

students of color were being disproportionately suspended and underserved. School

leaders must be prepared to discuss this issue (Esposito and Normore, 2015).

Leaders needed specific qualities to address the issue of suspension and the

disproportionate amount levied on Black males. There were two types of leadership

styles that were applicable. The first was the transformative leader. The transformative

leader addresses inequities that occur within society (Hewitt, Davis & Lashley, 2014) and

for the purpose of this study, the inequities occur in the area of suspensions.

Transformative leadership practices acknowledge that change does not happen

immediately. This type of leader works to unlock the potential of a school in order to see

what a school can be (Glenn, Gordon, McHatton & Sue, 2012). The transformative leader focused on providing equity for marginalized groups such as Black males. The focus must be on resources and conditions that deter negative impacts on individuals or groups (Jahan, 1999).

The second type of leader was a transformational leader. The transformation leader works within the confines of directives and mandates which lead to school change. These mandates could include the restructuring of schools, closing schools and the replacing of the teachers and administrators (Hewitt, Davis & Lashley, 2014). The transformational leader must work on both technical improvements and cultural improvements. They were supposed to demonstrate ethical practice that acknowledge that school improvement is not just raising test scores but supposed to also value integrity, professional standards, rely on input from all stakeholders and encompass the community (Mettell & Scribner, 2014).

Educators used suspensions and expulsions(exclusionary practices) to address student discipline problems even though these practices have consistently not deterred unwanted behaviors, but increased academic failure, dropout rates and family disruption (Achilles, Croninger & McLaughlin, 2007). The concern for suspensions and expulsions have consistently shown that disproportionality was an ongoing issue that is applied to only certain groups of students particularly minorities and the poor. This disproportionality was at the forefront due to the impact on the social, emotional and academic outcomes that arise (Skiba, 2011). A school leader has both a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that all students, not just certain students, are afforded socially just outcomes (Armstrong and McMahon, 2015). A socially just leader must demonstrate

persistence and commitment, be all-inclusive and democratic, develop relationships, and be reflective and action-oriented. The transformative and socially just leader acknowledges the role that oppression plays within the educational world and beyond. Transformational and transformative leadership practices can co-exist, but they were more often in conflict with one another. The pressure of educational policy while also attempting to be socially just, can also be a professional struggle. However, order to address the constant oppression perpetuated against marginalized groups a leader must be transformative in practice.

<div align="center">Implications for Future Research</div>

Qualitative studies focusing on the perception of the staff delivering the consequences and the students receiving the consequences would add to the richness of the study. Future research should focus on school's use of policy, Codes of Conduct, intervention programs, student sensitively exposure in curriculum and programs and the relationship of the SRO and the school community. It was noted that the rate of long-term suspensions decreased over time and this rate of decrease did not match the rate of short-term suspensions. It would be worth further study to look at the practices used to either legitimacy reduce long-term suspensions or was simply an excessive use of short-term suspensions in lieu of long-term suspension practices.

This study, like others, showed that the presence of the SRO in schools did not lead to a decrease in suspension rates and in many case, as referenced in the data, there were increases in suspensions during the full year of implementation and after. Possible explanations include racial stigmas, implicit bias or stereotyping, the types of infractions, zero-tolerance policies or institutional practices that impact suspensions.

What is not evidenced was research on the policies, practice and procedures used within each school and school district by and in conjunction with the SRO to improve student behavior, decrease suspensions and assess the true impact of the SRO. The research needs to consider the school setting and they type of person staffed as an SRO within a particular school. In addition, future research should focus on schools and districts that were utilizing the guidelines and policies already set forth for the SRO in public schools to determine if the effectiveness was due to the SRO or the school's utilization and understanding of the role. This study did not reveal anything about SROs and their working relationship to administrators. Much of chapter 2 focused on the role of SROs, but there was an absence of data related to how infractions were reported and if there was any relationship to the SROs. Any suggestion that there was a role of the SRO to suspensions or expulsions in this study would be inaccurate.

The data and research used as its comparative bases, as did this study, the suspension rates of the Black male as it relates to the other three identified subgroups. In regards to Black females, which must be mentioned, the implications indicated that this subgroup was subjected to more harsher disciplinary consequences than White students. The study addressed the short and long-term suspension rates for Black females and the data showed that there were the second most suspended group. The implications were that school personnel have a limited understanding of race and racism and how it impacts Black females. School personnel need more training related to those areas in addition to historical racism and power structures that privileged White students and oppressed Black students. In addition, staff needed training to acknowledge their own biases, stigmas and stereotypes and how those practices may contribute to imbalances in school

discipline. Staff must be made aware that their view of the Black female can lead to excessive exclusionary practices, which lead to them being removed from school and could lead to them being pushed towards the criminal justice system.

The disproportionate number of suspensions that were levied on Black male students is highly documented. This study provided and added to the body of knowledge that indicates that this sub-group is suspended long and short-term and expelled more than all of the identified sub-groups combined. The large body of research on suspensions and disproportionality continues to add to the knowledge that is already known. This study was not about disproportionality, but this study presented previous studies that did denote the overrepresentation of African American males in school discipline. For example, Lacoe and Steinberg (2017) noted that students of color as well as disabled students face suspensions and expulsions more often than their White peers. Racial disparity and disproportionality begin as early as preschool and extend into primary, middle and high school. Although policy reform has reduced suspensions, the gap in suspension rates between Black students and White students continue to grow doubling between 1989 and 2010.Rationales for the overrepresentation may be a result of systemic issues within the schools that include the use of zero tolerance policies, the use of harsher discipline for students of color, school characteristics, and racial bias. Future studies should include districts and schools that were utilizing MTSS practices, Restorative Justice Practices, attitudes, and perspectives of the administrators that suspend these students at such high rates.

There must be a re-examination of disciplinary practices and suspension rates across America's schools K-12, with special attention to Black male suspensions. Individual districts and school practices must be examined and the patterns of suspensions must be investigated and the disproportionate number of black male suspensions must be looked into and studied with greater detail. In addition, the rate of short-term suspensions for White males and females and in some instances Black females have decreased, however, the rate of suspensions for Black males continues to be significantly higher than the other subgroups. District initiatives utilize alternative to suspension practices that need to be examined for their impact and effectiveness. These practices include Restorative Justice Initiatives and multi-tiered systems that address student behaviors as well as academics. The implication for practice must in the evaluation systems that monitor the impact of this reform. The suspension rates may decrease but what is the impact on students not misbehaving and the staff that implement these practices. Future study should look to determine the impact of initiatives designed to address the suspension rate of Black male students.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

In conclusion, this study provided evidence that suspension and reported expulsion rates were higher for African American male students in the three districts used for comparison. These findings were consistent with the previous studies referenced in the text. African American males were issued more long-term suspensions, short-term suspensions and expulsions in the public school setting (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). Suspensions as a disciplinary practice do not deter misbehavior and at times, a student may return and exhibit the same or worse behaviors that were not

responsive to school discipline. The use of suspensions as a consequence contributes to the problems for students and acts as a predictor for more suspensions.

School leaders must begin not only to examine policies but make changes that will impact and alter the procedures in school which lead to suspensions of Black male and all students. This research provided information that demonstrated schools were not evaluating their discipline policies in order to make changes that positively impact the culture and climate of the school and decrease suspensions and exclusionary practices. The goal of disciplinary practices must demonstrate fair practices, while also ensuring the safety, security and order in order provide a conducive learning environment (Loveless, 2017). School leaders must delicately balance school policy and the rights of students from a district level, from a school level and from the level of each individual incident and student involved. There must also be a balance of the school's mission and vision, which should also assure that each individual student has the opportunity to be afforded a quality education even after misbehavior. There must be procedures in place that provide students with clear expectations for behavior but also include the opportunity for the students to correct their behaviors before excluding them from the learning environment.

Suspension policies must be mindful of race and the disparities caused by discriminatory practices. Reform policies for districts must not ignore race and present race neutral policies which create disproportionality but consider it an unintentional effect. This cannot be tolerated as polices need to be examined for both their intentional and unintentional impact at all times. Disciplinary practices should not only include a concern for the student committing the infraction but the harm that the disorder causes

and the consequences for the students that were behaving as well as the entire school

climate (Donnelly, 2016).

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