PROACTIVE APPROACHES FOR REDUCING SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS
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Abstract

In order to create quality learning environments and to promote student safety, schools place a major emphasis on effectively managing and minimizing student discipline problems. Suspension from school is often used as a consequence when students exhibit inappropriate behaviors or violate school policies. Evidence indicates suspensions disproportionately affect some groups of students, including males, students with disabilities, and African Americans. In addition, evidence suggests suspensions are not always an effective means for reducing or eliminating behaviors which may lead to future suspensions. In an effort to promote appropriate behaviors and reduce reactive, punitive discipline consequences, many schools have implemented programs known as School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS). SWPBS is designed to proactively improve student discipline by teaching, recognizing, and reinforcing appropriate behaviors. Many schools utilizing SWPBS strategies have experienced an improvement in student behavior and a reduction in the frequency of discipline referrals.
Chapter I: Introduction

Student success and academic achievement are most effective when minimal behavior problems exist in school (Andrews, Taylor, Martin, & Slate, 1998). Disruptive student behaviors interfere with both instruction and learning. In addition, school officials have a responsibility to provide an environment that is both physically and emotionally safe for students. As a result of these matters, school personnel spend a great deal of time and resources handling student discipline issues (Putnam, Luiselli, Handler, & Jefferson, 2003).

Statement of Problem

Student discipline is a frustrating problem for school officials. In response, schools are increasingly establishing stringent rules for student behavior, as well as increasing the severity of the consequences for breaking these rules (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008). Most school discipline plans are reactive and punitive, rather than proactive. Suspensions are disciplinary actions typically used as a form of punishment for a violation of school rules or some inappropriate behavior. Rarely does the suspension accompany instruction or interventions intended to teach or reinforce students’ appropriate behaviors (Raffaelle Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron 2002).

The number of school suspensions has been increasing in the last decade. More than 65,000 school suspensions occurred in the state of Kentucky during the 1999-2000 school year, and more than 68,000 suspensions were documented during the 2000-2001 school year (Richart, Brooks, & Soler, 2003). Data from the state of North Carolina (2003) show that in the 2000-2001 school year alone, 217,758 short-term suspensions involving 114,621 students took place with a resulting 650,000 lost instructional days.
A great deal of variance exists in the severity of the offenses resulting in suspension. While some students are suspended for bringing weapons or drugs to school, others are suspended for things such as repeatedly talking too much in class or disrespectful behavior. In one study involving an urban high school in the Midwest, most of the disciplinary referrals were related to student behaviors that threatened the authority of teachers, as opposed to more serious violations of school policy (Vavrus & Cole, 2002).

When students are suspended from school, they often view the suspension as a vacation. Suspended students are more likely to engage in substance abuse, sexual activity, criminal activity, and exhibit lower academic achievement (Dupper, Theriot, & Craun, 2009). In many instances, suspension from school does not appear to be an effective strategy for changing the behaviors leading to the suspension (Raffaelle Mendez & Knoff, 2003).

**Research Questions**

Questions forming the basis of research for this paper include: What are the most common reasons/behaviors leading to suspension from school? Which students are more likely to be suspended? What proactive or preventative approaches could school leaders use to reduce student discipline problems and disruptive behaviors leading to suspension from school?

**Definition of Terms**

For the purposes in this paper, Out-of-school suspension is viewed as a disciplinary action that is administered because of a student’s inappropriate behavior, requiring that a student absent him/herself from the school for a specified time. In-school suspension is defined as a disciplinary action used because of a student’s inappropriate behavior, requiring the student to be absent from the regular classroom for a specified time (Costenbader & Markson, 1998).“Proactive approaches are seen as positive and constructive problem-solving strategies that rely
on prevention in place of attempting to suppress the student’s behavior” (Kant & March, 2004, p. 3).
Chapter II: Review of Literature

In an effort to reduce discipline problems and make schools safer, many schools have implemented zero tolerance policies. The introduction of zero tolerance policies has contributed to the increase in the number of school suspensions. Some groups of students including students with disabilities, minority students, males, and economically disadvantaged students appear to be suspended at a higher rate than students in other groups. In order to reduce the frequency of school suspensions, many schools have implemented positive, proactive systems designed to promote appropriate student behaviors.

Zero Tolerance Policies

Schools have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for students. Additionally schools and classrooms with minimal disruptions and distractions are most favorable for students to learn effectively. In efforts to promote both safety and effective learning environments, many schools have adopted zero tolerance policies for handling student discipline issues. Zero tolerance refers to “a philosophy or policy that mandates the application of predetermined consequences, most often severe and punitive in nature, that are intended to be applied regardless of the gravity of behavior, mitigating circumstances, or situational context” (APA Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2006, p. 852). Incidents of school violence during the 1990’s such as the shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado, as well as legislation such as the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 have led many schools to adopt zero tolerance policies for the possession of weapons in school. According to a 1996-97 report by the U.S. Department of Education, 94% of U.S. public schools had implemented zero-tolerance policies with regard to firearm possession in schools (Richart et al., 2003). The same report indicated zero tolerance policies for alcohol were
present in 87% of schools and 79% of schools required suspension or expulsion for incidents of violence or tobacco use/possession.

In many instances, the consequence for students who violate zero tolerance or other school policies is suspension from school. Suspensions exclude students from school and participation in learning, so suspensions are often viewed as the most extreme disciplinary action school officials could take. A major assumption of practicing zero tolerance is that removal of students who violate school policies will act as a deterrent to other students. The theoretical reasoning for using out-of-school suspensions is to reduce or eliminate the likelihood that the suspended student will commit another violation of school policy or engage in behaviors warranting a discipline referral or additional suspension (Raffaelle Mendez et al., 2002).

Data reported to the Kentucky Center for School Safety points to a disproportionate number of minority students being affected by zero tolerance policies. Although only 10% of students in the state of Kentucky are African American, African American students account for over 22% of students suspended from school in the 2000-2001 school year (Richart et al., 2003). Data from the Office of Education Accountability in the State of Tennessee show that in 2001-2002, 24% of Tennessee students were African American, yet 37% of suspended students were African American. In addition, 2001-2002 data collected from Tennessee schools indicated 24% of students disciplined carried special education labels (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2004). One of the nation’s largest school systems, the Los Angeles Unified School District, reported in 2002-2003 that students with disabilities were more than twice as likely to be suspended from school as nondisabled students were (Barnhart, Franklin, & Alleman, 2008).

Due to the increases in the frequency of school suspensions, as well as the controversial use of suspensions in some situations, questions have arisen about the use of zero tolerance
policies. Researchers at Michigan State University’s Institute for Children, Youth, and Families described Michigan’s zero tolerance policy as “particularly stringent”. Not only are students automatically removed from school for weapons and “look-a-like” weapons, but students are also removed from school for behaviors related to drugs, alcohol, disobedience, vandalism, and for making threats (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2004).

The American Psychological Association developed a task force in 2005 to review 10 years of research surrounding zero tolerance policies in schools. Among the findings presented by the task force were that rather than decreasing the possibility of disruptive behaviors, out-of-school suspensions seemed to be an indicator of future disruptive behaviors and additional suspensions from school (APA Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2006).

**Suspension: Does the Punishment Fit the Crime?**

Richart et al. (2003) conducted a mixed methods study on school discipline data and juvenile crime data in Kentucky that yielded some important results related to the use of school suspensions. Suspension data for all of Kentucky’s public schools were gathered by the Kentucky Center for School Safety. Of the more than 68,000 suspensions issued in the 2000-2001 school year, most were due to behaviors such as defiance of authority (37%), fighting (25%) disturbing class (12%), failure to attend detention (10%, and the use of profanity (9%). In fact, weapons related suspensions (1%) ranked ninth in the number of suspensions by category (Richart et al., 2003).

While little doubt exists that in some situations out-of-school suspensions are appropriate and necessary, Skiba (2000) provided several examples where zero tolerance policies have resulted in questionable discipline practices.
• Seattle, Washington, 1998: A sixth grader at Whitman Middle School in Seattle was expelled when a squirt gun, painted black and brown, fell out of his backpack in the lunchroom. Although the expulsion was upheld by a hearing officer, the Seattle School District reduced the expulsion to a suspension when the family’s attorney cited a state law requiring reduced punishment when toy weapons were not used with malice or in a threatening manner.

• Glendale, Arizona, 1999: Seventh grader David Silverstein was inspired by the movie October Sky and brought a homemade rocket made from a potato chip canister to school. School officials, classifying the rocket as a weapon, suspended him for the remainder of the term.

• Pensacola, Florida, 1999: When a sophomore loaned her nail clippers with an attached nail file to a friend, a teacher saw and confiscated the clippers. The girl was given a 10-day suspension and threatened with expulsion. The high school principal remarked, “Life goes on. You learn from your mistakes. We are recommending expulsion.”

• Deer Lakes, Pennsylvania, 1999: At Curtisville Elementary School, a 5 year old was suspended for wearing a 5-inch plastic ax as part of his firefighter’s costume to a Halloween party in his classroom. When firefighters around the country contacted school officials complaining about the incident, school officials wrote an “Open Letter to Firemen Across the Country” claiming school officials never intended to offend firefighters by referring to the ax as a weapon, but also defended the zero tolerance policy against weapons as being fair.
• East Lake, Florida, 1998: High school senior Jennifer Coonce took a sip of sangria at a luncheon with co-workers as part of a school-sponsored internship. When her parents called the high school to complain about minors being served alcohol, the district suspended her for the remainder of the semester.

• Ewing, New Jersey, 1999: When a freshman dozed off in his social studies class, his teacher became suspicious that he was using drugs and asked him to visit the school nurse for a check of his pulse and blood pressure. When the boy refused, the principal suspended him, and refused to readmit him until he had submitted to a drug test.

• Waldorf, Maryland, 1999: A Westlake High School sophomore was suspended for 10 days when he announced in the school’s morning announcements that his French teacher was not fluent in the language. The student and his parents claimed that the incident was intended as a joke and did not warrant such a punishment. School officials, however, deemed the comments a verbal attack against the teacher.

Other examples of questionable discipline practices involving zero tolerance policies were highlighted by the APA Zero Tolerance Task Force. In 2001, a 10-year-old Florida girl immediately turned over to her teacher a small knife she found in her lunchbox. The knife, which had been placed in the lunchbox by the girl’s mother in order to cut an apple, resulted in the girl’s expulsion from school. Another incident involved a student talking to his mother on a cell phone. The student’s mother was in the military and deployed in Iraq at the time of the incident. The student was expelled for using the cell phone during school, which was a violation of school
policy, even though the student had not spoken with his mother for 30 days (APA Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2006).

**Who Gets Suspended and Why?**

I reviewed discipline referral data from the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years from the high school where I am currently employed. Johannesburg-Lewiston High School is a rural school serving students in Northern Michigan. The high school enrollment for 2008-2009 was 209 students and the enrollment for 2009-2010 was 224 students. There were zero African American students attending the school in 2008-2009 and three African American students attending the school in 2009-2010. As an indicator of socioeconomic status, 75 students received free lunch and 16 students received reduced lunch prices during the 2008-2009 school year. For the 2009-2010 school year, 78 students received free lunch and 25 students received reduced lunch prices.

In the 2008-2009 school year, there were 748 discipline referrals resulting in a lunch detention, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension. The most frequent behaviors resulting in a discipline referral were insubordination (18%), skipping lunch detention (14%), non-compliance of rules (12%), inappropriate language/conduct (10%), disrespectful behavior (8%), and disruptive behavior (6%). The least frequent behaviors leading to referral were alcohol/drug violation (0), larceny/theft (0), weapons violation (1), and assault/battery (1). Among the 748 discipline referrals in the 2008-2009 school year, 26 out-of-school suspensions were recorded. The largest number of suspensions involved fighting (35%), insubordination (19%), non-compliance of rules (15%), smoking (15%), disrespectful behavior (8%), computer violation (4%), and assault (4%). Zero suspensions were recorded for weapons violations, alcohol/drug violations, or larceny/theft.
Through April 30th of the 2009-2010 school year, there were 744 discipline referrals resulting in a lunch detention, in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension. The most frequent behaviors resulting in a discipline referral were insubordination (20%), non-compliance of rules (13%), inappropriate language/conduct (9%), skipping lunch detention (8%), disrespectful behavior (8%), disruptive behavior (6%), and cell phone violation (5%). Among the 744 discipline referrals in the 2009-2010 school year, 23 out-of-school suspensions were recorded. The behaviors leading to suspension included insubordination (26%), disrespectful behavior (17%), inappropriate language/conduct (13%), alcohol/drug violation (13%), behavior contract violation (9%), dress code violation (4%), harassment/bullying (4%), larceny/theft (4%), threatening behavior (4%) and tardy (4%). The discipline data from Johannesburg-Lewiston High School, suggests most of the behaviors leading to discipline referrals and suspensions involve defiance of authority, disrespect, and disruption.

Raffaele Mendez & Knoff (2003) conducted a quantitative study on school suspension data from the 1996-1997 school year in a large school district in Florida. The district is the twelfth largest district in the nation and second largest in Florida. All 142 general education schools within the district were included. Some of the district’s schools are urban, while others are considered rural. Data included in the analysis were collected from elementary, middle, and high schools. Racially, 56% of the students were identified as white, 23% Black, 18% Hispanic, and 3% as either Asian, Indian, or Multiracial. As a measure of socioeconomic status, 49% of the student population received free or reduced lunch prices.

Data used in the study were taken from the out-of-school suspension information provided by the district’s schools. Suspension data included the unduplicated count (students who received at least one suspension) of out-of-school suspensions by race and gender. Data also
included the duplicated count (students receiving multiple suspensions) of out-of-school suspensions by race and gender, as well as the total number of each kind of behavior that led to out-of-school suspension (Raffaelle Mendez et al., 2003).

The study produced a number of important findings regarding school suspensions. The frequency of suspensions increased from elementary to middle school, and then decreased from middle school to high school. At least one suspension was received by 3.36% of elementary students, as compared to 24.41% of middle school students, and 18.46% of high school students. The decrease in suspensions from middle school to high school could be the result of some students with persistent discipline issues dropping out of school. Across all races and school levels, more males than females received at least one suspension. White and Hispanic males were more than twice as likely to receive a suspension as their female counterparts were. Black males were almost twice as likely to be suspended as Black females (Raffaelle Mendez et al., 2003).

Across gender and all grade levels, the likelihood of being suspended was far greater for Black students compared to White or Hispanic students. At least one suspension was received by 26.28% of Black males and 13.64% of Black females. Among White students, 11.95% of males and 4.53% of females were suspended at least once. Among Hispanic students, 15.92% of males and 6.48% of females were suspended at least once. An important point to highlight is Black males were twice as likely to be suspended as White males, and Black females were more than three times as likely to be suspended as White females (Raffaelle Mendez et al., 2003).

Many of the documented suspensions were the result of multiple suspensions to the same students. Middle school, white males accounted for 52.41 suspensions per 100 students. However, only 25% of middle school white males received a suspension. In middle school Black
males had 127.06 suspensions per 100 students. However, only 48.9% of middle school Black males received a suspension. (Raffaelle Mendez et al., 2003). These data indicate some students are receiving multiple suspensions, which lends evidence to the idea that suspensions are not effective deterrents for all students.

Some important findings concerning the types of behaviors and reasons leading to suspensions can be noted. The most common behaviors leading to suspension were disobedience/insubordination (20%), disruptive (13%), fighting (13%), inappropriate behavior (11%), noncompliance with assigned discipline (7%), profanity (7%), and disrespect (6%). The least frequent behaviors leading to suspension were weapons possession (.7%), narcotics possession (.6%), sexual harassment (.6%), and alcohol possession (.3%). These findings suggest most suspensions were for relatively minor violations and not the result of the types of behaviors (weapons and drug possession) targeted by zero tolerance policies (Raffaelle Mendez et al., 2003). The fact that this study only involved one school district is a significant limitation. However, the district involved was racially and economically diverse. In addition, the district’s 142 schools and approximately 138,000 students provided a large sample size for researchers to examine.

Skiba, Peterson, and Williams (1997) conducted a quantitative, empirical study on the entire middle school population of a large, urban Midwestern public school district, which yielded some important results concerning school discipline. Skiba et al. looked at the reasons for disciplinary referrals, the use of various disciplinary consequences, and the rates of school suspensions. The district is located in one of the 15 largest cities in the United States and serves over 50,000 students. The data included disciplinary records of all 11,001 students in the district’s 19 middle schools. Racially, 42% of students were classified as Caucasian, 56% were
African American, 1.2% were identified as Latino, 0.7% of the students were described as Asian American, and 0.1% were identified as Native American. General education students were 83.2% of the population, while 16.8% of students received special education services. As a measure of socioeconomic status, 65.3% of students qualified for free lunch. Students who qualified for reduced lunch prices comprised 26.6% of the population studied.

Data used in this study were taken from the discipline referrals issued in the district’s middle schools during the 1994-1995 school year. The discipline referral form listed 33 reasons for referral along with 22 possible consequences. One-way analysis of variance was used to test for differences in either the number of referrals or the number of suspensions by four independent variables. The independent variables were gender, ethnicity, disability label, and eligibility for free or reduced cost lunch (Skiba et al., 1997).

Significant racial differences exist in the probability of receiving a discipline referral, $F(4, 11,001) = 326.21, p < .001$, as well as the number of referrals, $F(4, 10,996) = 44.63, p < .001$. On average, African American and Native American students received a larger number of discipline referrals than any other ethnic group. Significant racial differences also exist across all students for number of suspensions, $F(4, 10,996) = 24.01, p < .001$, with African-American students receiving more suspensions than other students do, except Native Americans (Skiba et al., 1997).

Large significant differences existed in the average number of suspensions as related to socioeconomic status (free or reduced lunch), $F(2, 10,998) = 46.45, p < .001$, as well as for students receiving special education services. Students receiving free or reduced lunch prices were more likely to be suspended than those paying full price. Emotionally handicapped students
were more likely to be suspended than all other students were in special or general education (Skiba et al., 1997).

Results showed that 41.1% of students had received a disciplinary referral. The mean number of disciplinary referrals was 3.77 for students who received at least one referral. Among the reasons for referral, disobedience (27.6%), conduct (12.8%), disrespect (10.7%), and fighting (10.6%) were the most common. Conversely, behaviors typically considered the most serious, such as weapons possession (.1%) and drugs/alcohol possession (.2%), were among the least frequent reasons for disciplinary referral. An important point to note is that 33.3% of discipline referrals resulted in a suspension from school. The most severe consequences, such as arrest or corporal punishment were used very infrequently. However, the least severe consequences, such as counseling, behavior contract, or withdrawal of privileges were also used least often. (Skiba et al., 1997). The data suggest middle school students are most often suspended for issues related to defiance of authority and noncompliance with school policies. One can infer from this information that most of the suspensions were not related to behaviors targeted by zero tolerance policies, such as those involving weapons, drugs, or alcohol.

Limitations in this study include the likelihood that different teachers have varying rules, expectations, and tolerance for certain types of student behaviors. Additionally, the discipline consequences incurred by each student could vary depending on the philosophy of the administrator handling the issue, as well as the student’s previous discipline history (Skiba et al., 1997).

Hinojosa (2008) conducted a qualitative study examining student demographics and attitudes affecting school suspensions in a large, urban Midwestern school district. Using questionnaires, data were collected from sixth and eighth grade students in 1997. The analysis in
the study was limited to White and African American students in order to compare suspension dynamics of these two groups. Each student was questioned about whether he or she had received an in-school or out-of-school suspension. Additional information was gathered concerning race, gender, number of parents in the home, number of siblings in the home, and presence of home resources (quiet place to study/do homework, daily newspaper, computer, calculator, room of your own). Using a Likert-style scale, Hinojosa collected further data regarding school participation, academic engagement, student misbehavior, student beliefs about teacher fairness and caring, and student beliefs about teacher expectations.

Hinojosa (2008) used a one-way ANOVA to analyze the data and to determine whether differences in school suspension existed. Results of the study provided some important information concerning the demographics and attitudes of students suspended from school. In regards to out-of-school suspensions, African American students were 249% more likely than White students were to receive an out-of-school suspension. Male students were 51% more likely to indicate receiving an out-of-school suspension. Each additional sibling living in the home increased the chance of receiving an out-of-school suspension by 5%. Students who reported engaging in serious misbehavior were 5.21 times more likely to be suspended out-of-school. Conversely, students who reported having two parents at home decreased their odds for out-of-school suspension by 12%. Students who had a greater number of home resources available also showed decreased odds for out-of-school suspension. Additionally, when students believed teachers maintained high expectations of them, their likelihood of receiving an out-of-school suspension decreased by 26%. However, no statistically significant relationship was found between out-of-school suspension and student beliefs about teacher fairness and caring (Hinojosa, 2008).
Results for students receiving in-school suspensions are similar to those reporting out-of-school suspensions. African American students have an in-school suspension rate that is 127% higher than White students have. The likelihood of male students receiving an in-school suspension was 61% higher than for females. Each additional sibling living in the home increased the chance of receiving an in-school suspension by 4%. Students who reported engaging in serious misbehavior were 4.38 times more likely to receive an in-school suspension. Having two parents at home decreased the odds of an in-school suspension by 11%, and having greater availability of home resources decreased the likelihood of in-school suspension (Hinojosa, 2008). Findings of this study suggest once again that African American students are overrepresented in the number of both out-of-school and in-school suspensions. An important point to note is the negative relationship between the odds of receiving a suspension and greater availability of home resources, increased teacher expectations, and the presence of two parents in the home. An important limitation of this study is the fact that students self-reported about their suspension history. The information supplied by students may or may not accurately correspond to actual suspension records.

Costenbader & Markson (1994) conducted a study of school suspension practices on information involving 349 schools in 10 states. The middle and high schools included in the study were located in Maine, New York, Iowa, Minnesota, California, Washington, Georgia, Florida, New Mexico, and Texas. Rural schools comprised 55% of the sample, 20% were classified as urban and 24% were identified as suburban. Respondents to the survey included principals (59%), vice-principals (37%), and in-school suspension room monitors (4%). Middle schools accounted for 31% of the sample, high schools comprised 51%, and 18% of schools included grades 7-12. On average, each school had an enrollment of 500-750 students.
Results showed the number of high school students who received in-school suspensions each week was significantly greater than in middle schools $t (242) = 2.68, p < .01$. The average length of out-of-school suspensions was two to four days, and did not differ significantly between middle and high schools. Although the rate of out-of-school suspensions was higher for high schools than for middle schools (Costenbader & Markson, 1994). These results conflict with results from an earlier study by Raffaelle Mendez et al. (2003), where suspension rates decreased from middle school to high school. An explanation for this conflict could be that schools included in the study conducted by Raffaelle Mendez et al. (2003) may have experienced a higher dropout rate among students engaging in maladaptive behaviors. Another reason for this conflict may be that high schools have less tolerance for disruptive or defiant behaviors than do middle schools.

The most frequent reason for both in-school and out-of-school suspension was physical aggression (fighting). In middle schools, 25% of in-school suspensions and 51% of out-of-school suspensions resulted from physical aggression. At the high school level, 12% of in-school suspensions and 51% of out-of-school suspensions resulted from physical aggression. A t-test showed a significant difference between in-school suspensions for physical aggression at the middle school and high school level – $t (224) = 4.13, p < .001$. A significant difference was also discovered for out-of-school suspensions between middle and high schools – $t (253) = 4.44, p < .0001$. As with other studies cited in this paper, a significant disproportion was also found between the numbers of suspensions given to African American students in relation to their population in the study – ($t = 4.13), p < .0001$ (Costenbader & Markson, 1994).

The survey also asked for information about additional behaviors leading to suspension. Twenty-two percent of respondents listed truancy, tardiness to class, or unexcused absences as
leading to in-school and out-of-school suspensions. In these cases, students who were not attending classes as required were being removed from classes by school officials (Costenbader & Markson, 1994).

Often times the disruption of learning is a frequent reason cited for the use of school suspensions. In this study, nearly half (48%) of respondents indicated students were suspended for behaviors that interfered with the student’s learning or the learning of other students. Thirty-two percent of respondents perceived suspension as being punitive in nature; whereas, just 11% indicated suspension was used as therapy. Additionally, 42% of all suspended students were classified as repeat offenders who had received multiple suspensions. This finding suggests suspensions may not be effective as a deterrent to future disruptive behaviors or violations of school policies. A significant difference was not found for the rate of multiple suspensions between middle and high schools or in rural, urban, or suburban schools (Costenbader & Markson, 1994).

A relationship is evident between suspension from school and school drop-out rates. Respondents indicated that for all students who dropped out of school, previous suspension was a common factor for between 51% and 55% of students. Smaller schools (fewer than 500 students), reported a drop-out rate for previously suspended students of between 16% and 20%. The relationship was even more prominent in large schools (more than 2,000 students), which reported a drop-out rate for previously suspended students of 46% to 50% (Costenbader & Markson, 1994). In other words, in schools with larger student enrollments, suspension seems to be a greater predictor of dropping out of school.

Costenbader & Markson (1998) performed another study involving an empirical investigation of variables associated with students who had been suspended from school.
Participating in the study were 620 middle and high school students from two different school districts. One district was located in an urban area, while the other was located in a rural town. The qualitative study involved a 15-item written survey used to gather data related to student demographic information, involvement with extracurricular activities and the legal system, and information about the events leading to and following suspension from school. Students also completed a 48-item Student Rating Scale (SRS), to measure their school attitudes and behaviors.

Of the 620 participants in the study, 252 students (41%) indicated they had received either an in-school or out-of-school suspension in their school history. Three groups within the sample were compared: students who indicated they had never been suspended (59%), students who had only received in-school suspension (18%), and students who had received an out-of-school suspension (22%). In terms of gender, males comprised 48% of the sample and females were 52%. Forty-five percent of the students were seventh or eighth graders enrolled in a middle school, while 55% of the students were high school students in either ninth or tenth grade. Racially, 50% of students were White, 23% Black, 8% Hispanic, 3% Native American, 2% Asian American, 8% were listed as “other”. Students attending school in the rural town of approximately 17,000 made up 67% of the sample. The remaining students in the sample (33%) attended school in a metropolitan area with a population of approximately 800,000 (Costenbader & Markson, 1998).

Costenbader & Markson (1998) used a four-way ANOVA to analyze the data collected from the Student Rating Scale. Results indicated a significant difference between the number of males and females who were given in-school and out-of-school suspensions. Males made up 48% of the total sample, yet they accounted for 56% of in-school suspensions and 64% of out-of-
school suspensions. Females, who made up 52% of the sample, accounted for 60% of the students who had never been suspended. As in previous studies discussed in this paper, Black students were also represented disproportionately. Forty-Five percent of Black students reported receiving an out-of-school suspension, but only 12% of White students and 18% of Hispanic students reported receiving an out-of-school suspension. Students reporting either an in-school or out-of-school suspension had an increased likelihood of involvement with the juvenile court system. Just 6% of students in the never suspended group claimed to have been arrested, on probation, or on parole. However, 32% of students who were suspended out-of-school and 14% of students who were suspended in-school claimed involvement with the legal system (Costenbader & Markson, 1998).

Students in this study reported being suspended for a wide range of behaviors. The most common behaviors leading to both in-school and out-of school suspensions included physical aggression/fighting, talking back to school staff, use of obscene language, and being late to school or class. In contrast, more severe discipline infractions such as weapon, drug, and alcohol possession were among the least frequent behaviors leading to suspension. In addition, students in the rural sample reported significantly more incidents of suspension resulting from nonviolent behaviors, such as talking back to school staff or being late for class, than did the inner-city students (Costenbader & Markson, 1998).

Another important finding was related to the likelihood that receiving a suspension would deter future behaviors potentially leading to another suspension. Students were asked whether being suspended would reduce the probability of being suspended again. Thirty-two percent responded “not at all; I will probably be suspended again in the future”, 36% responded “A little bit”, 12% responded “A lot”, and 19% responded “I learned a lesson and I will never be
suspended again” (Costenbader & Markson, 1998). These responses suggest that for the majority of suspended students, school suspensions are not an effective deterrent for preventing future behaviors, which may lead to additional suspensions.

**Proactive Approaches for Reducing Behaviors Leading to Suspension**

“In order for schools to create safe and effective school environments, we need to stop looking at punitive measures that tend to remove students and prevent educators from using their most powerful intervention – teaching” (Kant & March, 2004, p. 5). In an effort to reduce inappropriate student behavior and improve academic achievement, many schools have initiated proactive, positive approaches, in place of reactive, punitive ones. One such proactive approach is known as School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS). “This approach is based on the assumption that when educators across the school actively teach, expect, and acknowledge appropriate behavior, the proportion of students with serious behavior problems decreases and the school’s overall climate improves” (Skiba & Sprague, 2008, p. 41).

**Developing a SWPBS Plan**

The initial action in implementing SWPBS is implied in the name. All school personnel, including teachers, support staff, and administrators must support and participate in the program. The subsequent steps and processes involved in implementing SWPBS may vary according to school level, student needs, and available resources. In their review of literature on SWPBS, Kant and March (2004) identified several fundamental steps used for developing and implementing most SWPBS plans.

- Step 1. Select three to five expectations designed to promote positive behaviors and academic achievement. Expectations could include examples such as be respectful, be responsible, be on-time, be helpful, and be safe.
• Step 2. Teach all students the behavioral expectations of the school. For example, rather than simply telling students to be respectful, school staff must teach students what being respectful means. Examples of being respectful might be keeping your hands to yourself or not interrupting a teacher who is talking.

• Step 3. The school must develop a system for acknowledging and encouraging appropriate behaviors. Many schools have instituted a reward program involving tokens, prizes, coupons, or special privileges. An important component of promoting appropriate behaviors is not just giving the prize or token, but the acknowledgment of the appropriate behavior by the school.

• Step 4. The teaching staff and school administration must create a clear understanding of behaviors that will be managed in the classroom as well as behaviors that will be handled by an administrator outside of class.

• Step 5 requires the development of a plan to apply consistent consequences for violations of both minor and serious school policies that do not exclude the student from the academic environment. When behavioral expectations are violated, schools must have clear, consistent measures in place to handle the violations.

• Finally, a school-based team must be responsible for regularly collecting, organizing, and reviewing data, such as discipline referrals, in order to determine if the SWPBS plan is succeeding or needs modification.

Three-Tier Approach

In reviewing literature on SWPBS, Simonsen et al. (2008) indicated a three-tier approach (primary, secondary, tertiary) is often utilized in an effort to promote positive, appropriate
behaviors and academic achievement. Primary tier interventions are designed to support all students across all settings of the school. Examples of primary tier interventions include establishing positively stated schoolwide rules and expectations, teaching the rules and expectations to all students, and developing a reward system to acknowledge and reinforce appropriate behaviors.

Secondary tier interventions are aimed at supporting students who have not responded to primary tier interventions. Secondary tier interventions expand on primary tier interventions by providing greater structure, additional instruction of social skills, and more frequent reinforcement for appropriate behaviors.

Tertiary tier interventions are typically designed to support students who have not responded to primary or secondary tier interventions, and/or students whose behaviors pose a risk to themselves or others. Tertiary tier interventions are much more individualized, such as one-on-one or small group counseling (Simonsen et al., 2008)

**Research on the Effectiveness of SWPBS**

Sherrod, Getch, and Ziomek-Daigle (2009) conducted a quantitative research study examining discipline among 468 students at a suburban elementary school. The purpose of this study was to examine whether discipline referrals could be reduced using positive behavior support (PBS) strategies. Both schoolwide and more focused small-group counseling strategies were implemented. The strategies were then reviewed to determine their effectiveness in reducing discipline referrals. All 468 students attending the school were included in the study. Racially, 52% of the students were African-American, 31% were White, 7% were Multiracial, 5% were Asian, and 5% were Hispanic.
All of the students received the school-wide behavior support strategies. Additionally, students who had accumulated three or more discipline referrals during the fall semester were also selected to participate in a more focused, small-group counseling named Positive Results in Discipline Education (PRIDE). Of the five students targeted for counseling, three were White and two were African American. The parents of the five students identified for participation in the PRIDE group were informed of the situation and subsequently the parents completed consent forms to permit their student’s participation. Following parental consent, the five students selected for the PRIDE group were informed about the group and agreed to participate. The school-wide program involved three weeks of lessons taught to students by their homeroom teachers. The lessons were designed to teach schoolwide rules and expectations. Following three weeks of instruction, all students were given a quiz to make certain they knew the rules and expectations (Sherrod et al., 2009).

The PRIDE group completed a unit including eight lessons. The 30-minute lessons were administered once a week, for eight weeks, and led by a school counselor. The first lesson focused on explaining the purpose of the group, as well as establishing the group’s rules and expectations. Subsequent lessons focused on why rules are important, building positive relationships, dealing with anger, the impact of distractions and disruptions on learning, communication skills, and developing a positive self-image. Throughout the eight-week period, students were given both pre-tests and post-tests to assess their understanding of the lessons. In addition, the PRIDE group’s homeroom teachers monitored each student’s behavior by completing a weekly form with items designed to track both behavior and study skills. The form used a Likert-style scale (e.g., always, most of the time, some of the time, never) to record data. Each response was given a corresponding number value, with always having a value of four and
never having a value of one. Responses were averaged each week, to determine how teachers perceived each student’s behavior for that week. Analysis of the behavior forms completed by the PRIDE group’s teachers indicated most students improved their behavior. Of the five students in the PRIDE group, three received average teacher ratings indicating an improvement in behavior. One student’s average behavior rating was unchanged, while one student’s average ratings declined. Data from this group were analyzed using a t test. Results showed a significant decrease in discipline referrals \((p = .009), p < .05\) for the PRIDE group between the 2006-2007 school year (before PBS) and the 2007-2008 school year (after PBS). Overall results indicated a reduction in discipline referrals and an improvement in behavior. Amongst the entire student population who received the schoolwide approach, 26% fewer discipline referrals were recorded in the 2007-2008 school year (year the PBS strategies were implemented) than were recorded the previous school year (Sherrod et al., 2009).

Authors of the study concluded the lessons taught to the PRIDE group could be attributed to their improved behavior. Moreover, advances in students’ knowledge, attitudes, and skills results in improved behavior. Additionally, proper utilization of PBS strategies can improve both student behavior and achievement, because improved behavior results in less disruption and more time on task (Sherrod et al., 2009).

Despite the apparent success observed in this study, some important limitations should be noted. A change in assistant principals took place between the school years involved in the study. Since the assistant principal at this school is responsible for determining whether discipline is warranted, as well as the severity of punishment, some inconsistencies in how discipline was handled from one school year to the next potentially occurred. Additionally, the teachers’ ratings
of the PRIDE group’s behavior were purely subjective and potentially influenced by other factors (Sherrod et al., 2009).

Warren et al. (2006) studied the implementation of a SWPBS plan within a Midwestern, inner-city middle school. The school included approximately 737 students in grades 6-8. Racially, 41% of students were African American, 35% were Hispanic, and 18% were classified as European-American. The free lunch rate was approximately 80% for the entire student body. Discipline data from the school year prior to implementing SWPBS showed 42% of students had received at least five office discipline referrals, while 81% of students received at least one office discipline referral.

At the beginning of the school year in which SWPBS was implemented, students were introduced to the behavioral expectations developed by school staff. Subsequently, teachers used pre-established lessons designed to teach and model appropriate behaviors. In addition, students were given the opportunity to practice appropriate behaviors in different school settings. School staff also developed a reward system designed to reinforce and acknowledge appropriate behaviors. Students were given tickets for demonstrating appropriate behaviors. Tickets were entered into frequent drawings where students could win prizes and privileges. The names and pictures of students receiving prizes were posted near the school’s cafeteria. Teachers were also instructed in positive behavior support methods in order to meet the needs of individual students (Warren et al., 2006).

Discipline data showed some substantial differences from Year 1 (the school year before beginning SWPBS) and Year 2 (the school year when SWPBS was implemented). The total number of office discipline referrals decreased by 20%. In-school conferences (discussing the student’s problem behavior with him/her) decreased by 17%. Time-outs requiring students to sit
in the office decreased by 23%. In-school suspensions dropped by 5% and out-of-school suspensions plummeted by 57%. Importantly, both teachers and administrators provided numerous reports of improved school climate and attitudes toward schools (Warren et al., 2006).

In Year 3 of the study, the school experienced a considerable increase in the number of office discipline referrals. Several factors may have contributed to the increase in Year 3. Examples of these factors included, implementing a new zero tolerance policy, which increased punishments for targeted behaviors, as well as decreases in awarding tickets designed to reward and reinforce appropriate behaviors. Another change in Year 3 was the adoption of a school uniform policy; violations of the policy resulted in numerous office discipline referrals. Although the initial gains made in Year 2 were not sustained the following year, the importance of the Year 2 gains cannot be ignored. The most notable being the 57% reduction in the number of out-of-school suspensions. The findings of the study showed both decreases in inappropriate behaviors, as well as increases in the ability of school personnel to handle inappropriate behaviors when the behaviors took place. The authors noted another important limitation of the study was the fact that a matched comparison school was not used for this study, which reduces support for the idea that changes witnessed in Year 2 resulted entirely from implementing SWPBS (Warren et al., 2006).

Nelson, Young, Young, and Cox (2009) studied a form of SWPBS using data from the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years at a middle school in the western United States in the third year of using a SWPBS plan. The purpose of the study was to determine whether teacher-written notes praising appropriate student social skills and behaviors would influence office discipline referrals. Participants included 70 teachers (48 females and 22 males), along with 1,809 sixth and seventh grade students. Racially, participants were 86% Caucasian, 11%
Hispanic, 1% Native American, and 1% Pacific Islander. The school’s free or reduced lunch rate was approximately 39%.

Teachers were instructed to write praise notes to students when they witnessed students engaging in expected behaviors established within the SWPBS plan. Praise notes consisted of a triplicate form, where the student received one copy, the parents another, and the third copy was entered into a weekly prize drawing for students. Winners were announced during the reading of the school’s announcements. In an effort to increase the frequency of writing praise notes, teachers were given gift certificates to local restaurants when they had written particular amounts of notes (Nelson et al., 2009).

Researchers collected data on both office discipline referrals and praise notes for the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. After quantitatively analyzing the data a strong negative correlation was found between the number of praise notes written to students and the number of office discipline referrals ($r = -.551$), $p < .05$. In other words, as the number of praise notes increased, the number of office discipline referrals declined. Similarly, among students who had previously received an office discipline referral, a strong negative correlation was associated between the number of praise notes received and the subsequent office discipline referrals ($r = -.553$), $p < .05$. In other words, as the number of praise notes increased for students with at least one office discipline referral, the rates of office discipline referrals for these students decreased (Nelson et al., 2009).

The results presented in this study lend evidence that teacher praise and acknowledgment of appropriate behaviors may produce a decrease in the rate of office discipline referrals. However, the school was also using additional strategies, such as social skill instruction, as part of a SWPBS plan. In addition, teachers were deliberately attempting to reduce the number of
office discipline referrals by responding positively to students and their behaviors. Due to the fact other SWPBS strategies were being used along with the praise notes, the exact reason for the decrease in office discipline referrals could not be determined. However, because the number of office discipline referrals decreased in correlation with teacher praise and acknowledgement of appropriate behaviors, the results are promising for future use and research of SWPBS models (Nelson et al., 2009).

In spite of some serious concerns, suspension from school continues to be a common, reactive punishment when students misbehave or violate school policy. Frequently, students are suspended for being disrespectful, disrupting class, or defying authority, as opposed to more severe violations of school policy, such as weapons or drug possession. Some groups of students, including males, African Americans, and students with disabilities receive a disproportionate number of suspensions. Furthermore, evidence suggests suspension from school is not always an effective deterrent for preventing behaviors, which may lead to additional suspensions. However, proactive approaches do exist which can reduce student misbehavior and ultimately reduce suspensions. Strategies such as SWPBS, which teach, recognize, and reinforce appropriate behaviors are promising alternatives to school suspension.
Chapter III: Results and Analysis

The frequency of school suspensions has increased since the 1990’s. One of the primary reasons for the increase in the number of school suspensions is believed to be the implementation of zero tolerance policies. Zero tolerance policies have been criticized as being unfair and impractical, because these policies limit discretion on the part of school officials. Suspensions resulting from violations of zero tolerance policies are designed to deter the most severe violations of school policy, such as weapons and drug possession. However, substantial evidence suggests most suspensions do not result from behaviors such as weapons or drug possession. In fact, several studies reviewed in this paper, as well as data from my own school district support the claim that most suspensions are the result of behaviors such as insubordination/disobedience, disruptive behavior, disrespect to staff, and fighting (Costenbader & Markson, 1998; Costenbader & Markson, 1994; Raffaelle Mendez et al., 2003; Richart et al., 2003; Skiba et al., 1997). Although events involving school violence, weapons, and drugs are certainly more newsworthy, most discipline issues leading to suspension are for much less severe violations of school policy. Another goal of school suspension is to deter behaviors leading to future suspensions. Again, evidence from several studies highlighted in the literature review suggests students who are suspended are often times more likely to be suspended in the future (APA Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2006; Costenbader & Markson, 1998; Costenbader & Markson, 1994; Raffaelle Mendez et al., 2003).

Some groups of students, such as males, students with disabilities, and African American students are overrepresented in the number of school suspensions received. In regards to gender, significant results from numerous studies indicate the frequency of suspensions given to males is disproportionate to the suspensions received by females (Costenbader & Markson, 1998;
Hinojosa, 2008; Raffaelle Mendez et al., 2003; Skiba et al., 1997) Additionally, multiple studies in the literature review found evidence of higher suspension rates for students with disabilities and special education labels (Barnhart, Franklin, & Alleman, 2008; Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2004; Skiba et al., 1997). Several studies described in this paper identify the disproportionate number of African American students being suspended from school (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2004; Costenbader & Markson, 1998; Costenbader & Markson, 1994; Hinojosa, 2008; Raffaelle Mendez et al., 2003; Richart et al., 2003; Skiba et al., 1997). Data from the U.S. Department of Education indicates African American students are nearly three times more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension and two and a half times more likely to be expelled than white students (APA Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2006). While research data clearly shows males, students with disabilities, and African American students are over-represented in terms of the number of suspensions received, the reasons for the over-representation of these students are not certain. One explanation could be that males, students with disabilities, and African American students simply engage in the types of behaviors that lead to suspension more frequently than other students. However, the disproportionate number of suspensions could also be due to such items as prejudice, discrimination, insufficient educator training for working with special education students, or cultural differences between African American students and White school staff. Further research in this area is appropriate and necessary.

Finally, in an effort to reduce the frequency of school suspensions many schools have initiated proactive strategies designed to support positive, appropriate student behaviors. Data from the literature review supports the claim that SWPBS can be an effective approach to reduce inappropriate behaviors often leading to suspension, by teaching, recognizing, and reinforcing
appropriate student behaviors. Several examples were identified where the implementation of SWPBS strategies coincided with improved student behavior and decreased frequency of discipline referrals (Kant & March, 2004; Nelson et al., 2009; Sherrod et al., 2009; Warren et al., 2006). Based on the results presented in this paper, one can make the claim that SWPBS strategies cause decreases in behavior problems, office discipline referrals, and suspensions, at least in the short term. The discipline improvements noted in schools who have implemented SWPBS strategies cannot be discounted. For schools, teachers, or administrators looking for proactive ways to promote appropriate behaviors, and reduce reactive disciplinary actions that remove students from school, SWPBS is a promising approach.
Chapter IV: Recommendations and Conclusion

After identifying, reviewing, analyzing, and synthesizing relevant research, I have identified several characteristics of students who are frequently suspended from school, as well as the behaviors most often leading to suspension. Furthermore, I have identified a positive, proactive approach designed to reduce the behaviors which most often result in suspension from school.

Recommendation

Students are disciplined and suspended from school for a variety of reasons. However, most of the behaviors leading to suspension involve defiance of authority, disrespect and disruption. For school leaders looking to reduce the frequency of suspensions, it seems appropriate to focus on reducing the behaviors which most often lead to suspension. In order to reduce the behaviors leading to suspensions and move away from reactive discipline consequences, school leaders should focus on proactive, positive strategies designed to teach, recognize, and reward appropriate student behaviors. One noteworthy, promising approach is SWPBS. This research based approach has produced substantial improvements in student discipline, as well as reduced discipline referrals. (Kant & March, 2004; Nelson et al., 2009; Sherrod et al., 2009; Warren et al., 2006). Moreover, SWPBS strategies have been effective in the short term across a variety of school settings including rural and urban areas, as well as, elementary, middle, and high schools. I would recommend any school leader looking for an alternative to traditional, reactive discipline consequences consider SWPBS as a potential answer for their school.
SWPBS requires support from all school personnel in order to achieve maximum results and effectiveness. School leaders attempting to implement SWPBS in their schools should consider the following:

- Leaders should work with their staff to identify the need for change and identify targeted behaviors to address, such as respect, responsibility, and safety.
- In order for the effects of SWPBS to be long lasting, schools must teach students the rules and behavior expectations of the school. Rules and expectations could be taught through a variety of ways including classroom instruction, schoolwide assemblies, or mentoring programs.
- To reinforce the behaviors and rules being taught to students, schools must develop a system for recognizing and rewarding appropriate behaviors. This could involve giving prizes or special privileges to students “caught” displaying targeted behaviors.
- School leaders must create clear expectations and policies allowing teachers to handle routine behavior problems in the classroom, which then allows administrators to focus on exceptions to those policies.
- A SWPBS “Team” must be created to regularly collect and analyze data, such as discipline referrals or suspensions, to evaluate whether the SWPBS plan is succeeding or in need of modification. The “Team” could consist of the school’s principal, guidance counselor(s), and both general and special education teacher(s). Depending on the school’s schedule, meetings to review discipline data and the SWPBS plan should take place after each semester or trimester, but could occur as often as every 9 weeks.
Areas for further research

Often the construction and implementation of the SWPBS plan can be the greatest challenge for schools attempting to improve student behavior and reduce discipline problems. In order to aid schools in successfully implementing SWPBS, further research is necessary to identify the conditions that have allowed other schools to successfully implement a SWPBS plan, as well as, the conditions that have inhibited successful implementation. In order to thoroughly evaluate the effectiveness of SWPBS the need exists for empirical, longitudinal studies of SWPBS plans across a variety of settings. Additional studies examining the effectiveness of SWPBS must involve rural and urban areas, schools with large minority populations, and students with disabilities. The vast majority of research on the implementation and effectiveness of SWPBS has been conducted at the elementary and middle school levels. Further research is required at the high school level to determine the effectiveness of SWPBS on reducing the behavior problems impacting high schools most, such as, defiance, disrespect, and fighting. While most research examining SWPBS has focused on behavior and discipline, more research is needed to examine the effects of SWPBS on improving academic achievement, such as students’ grades and standardized test scores.

In an attempt to thoroughly evaluate the effectiveness of SWPBS, I would implement a SWPBS plan in a rural high school and an urban high school each containing approximately 1000 students. At least one of the high schools, likely the urban school, would need to contain a large population of African American students greater than or equal to 40%. The participants in the study would include all regular and special-education students currently in the 10th grade. Upon implementing the SWPBS plan, I would collect data on the number of discipline referrals, suspensions, and grade point averages of all 10th grade students for the entire year (Year 2) in
which the SWPBS plan was initiated. I would compare this data to data from the same students during the previous school year when they were in 9th grade (Year 1). The data would be analyzed to determine whether the number of discipline referrals and school suspensions increased or decreased from Year 1 to Year 2. In addition, grade point averages could be analyzed to determine whether students’ grades improved from Year 1 to Year 2. I would continue to collect data on this group of students during their 11th grade year (Year 3) and 12th grade year (Year 4). By collecting and analyzing data throughout the students’ entire high school careers, conclusions could be drawn about the efficacy of SWPBS on reducing discipline referrals and suspensions, as well as improving academic performance. In addition, by including all special education students, as well as a large population of African American students, the effectiveness of SWPBS could be evaluated for these minority groups.

Another idea would be to implement the SWPBS plan in a middle school and compare the results to discipline data at the high school level. Additionally, a program could be started simultaneously at both a middle and high school, and then discipline data from both schools could be compared in order to gauge the effectiveness of SWPBS across different grade levels.

**Summary and Conclusion**

Throughout my career as an educator, I have been troubled by the number of discipline problems and disruptive behaviors in schools. Discipline problems and disruptive behaviors have destroyed lessons, teachers’ careers, and students’ educations. Frequently, traditional disciplinary action does not appear to be successful in reducing discipline problems and disruptive behaviors. As a current teacher and future school principal, I understand the negative impact discipline problems and disruptive behaviors can have on a school, and wanted to acquire some knowledge and strategies about how to handle these issues. In my experience, school suspensions have been
particularly troublesome. It often seems most students who are suspended, can least afford to miss school, as the suspension only compounds the students’ problems. In order to ensure success for all students and create a community of learning, school leaders must continue to search for strategies to reduce discipline problems and improve academic achievement.
References


