Applied Research Methods

April 2017

School discipline data indicators: A guide for districts and schools

Vicki Nishioka
Education Northwest

With

Sho Shigeoka
Beaverton School District

Erin Lolich
Education Northwest

Overview

This guide is designed to help educators select and analyze data to determine whether racial/ethnic disproportionality exists in a school or district's discipline practices. Such information may help educators consider whether they need to reduce disproportionate rates of exclusionary school discipline (suspensions and expulsions) based on race or ethnicity. It provides examples of how to select and analyze data to determine whether racial/ethnic disproportionality exists in a school or district's discipline practices. The guide also describes how to use data as part of a Plan–Do–Study–Act continuous improvement cycle to improve desired school discipline outcomes.

ies NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION EVALUATION AND REGIONAL ASSISTANCE
Institute of Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education

REL NORTHWEST
Regional Educational Laboratory
At Education Northwest

U.S. Department of Education
Betsy DeVos, *Secretary*

Institute of Education Sciences
Thomas W. Brock, *Commissioner for Education Research*
Delegated the Duties of Director

National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance
Ricky Takai, *Acting Commissioner*
Elizabeth Eisner, *Acting Associate Commissioner*
Amy Johnson, *Action Editor*
Ok-Choon Park, *Project Officer*

REL 2017–240

The National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE) conducts unbiased large-scale evaluations of education programs and practices supported by federal funds; provides research-based technical assistance to educators and policymakers; and supports the synthesis and the widespread dissemination of the results of research and evaluation throughout the United States.

April 2017

This report was prepared for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) under Contract ED-IES-12-C-0003 by Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest administered by Education Northwest. The content of the publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

This REL report is in the public domain. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, it should be cited as:

Nishioka, V. (with Shigeoka, S., & Lolich, E.). (2017). *School discipline data indicators: A guide for districts and schools* (REL 2017–240). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs.

This report is available on the Regional Educational Laboratory website at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs.

Contents

Boxes

Figures

Tables

Why this guide?

Disproportionate rates of suspension among racial/ethnic student groups are a local, state, and national concern (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Kaufman et al., 2010; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). In particular, American Indian, Black, and Hispanic students experience suspensions more frequently than their White peers (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; Burke & Nishioka, 2014; DeVoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008; Vincent, Sprague, & Tobin, 2012). Disciplinary actions that remove students from classroom instruction undermine students' academic achievements and weaken their connections with school (Raffaele Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Students with multiple suspensions are more likely to experience academic failure, school dropout, substance abuse, and delinquency (Fabelo et al., 2011; Lee, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2011). Disproportionality in school discipline based on race/ethnicity, gender, or disability also raises concerns about equity and the school's legal responsibility to protect the civil rights of each student (Civil Rights Act, 1964).

Data indicators can help school climate or leadership teams identify racial/ethnic disproportionality in school discipline practices that may require additional information to determine whether further action is needed

Data indicators can help school climate or leadership teams identify racial/ethnic disproportionality in school discipline practices that may require additional information to determine whether further action is needed. If an intervention is implemented, indicators can help teams measure progress and make adjustments if progress lags. Other data that provide information about the nature of discipline issues—such as common reasons for exclusions, the time of day or the locations most often associated with discipline incidents, or the number of days that students are removed from classroom instruction—can guide the selection and implementation of intervention strategies.

Determining whether racial disproportionality exists in school discipline practices requires comparing one racial group to a comparison group. White students are commonly used as the comparison group because they usually have the highest enrollment. However, highly diverse districts may decide that comparing school discipline outcomes of a specific racial group to the school discipline outcomes of all other students would be a more accurate measure of disproportionality in school discipline. Ultimately, it is up to your team to determine the data analysis methods that inform decisions on school discipline policies and practices. A list of terms used in this guide are in box 1.

This guide is designed to supply educators with a means to identify whether racial/ethnic disproportionality in discipline practice exists in their schools or districts. It also aims to help educators use data to reduce racial/ethnic disproportionality in suspensions and expulsions. The guide is organized into two sections. The first section provides information on how to select, analyze, and interpret data indicators to determine whether disproportionate discipline practices exist and, if an intervention is implemented, to measure progress toward desired outcomes. The first section also describes types of data that can help identify factors that may contribute to disproportionality in school discipline and inform selection of interventions. The second section describes how to use the Plan–Do–Study–Act process to make decisions on improving equitable school discipline practices. Throughout the guide, examples are also provided from Oregon districts that have made reducing racial disproportionality in school discipline a priority. This guide may be useful for local and state education agency administrators, principals, teachers, coaches, behavior specialists, and educators involved in school discipline policies or practices.

Box 1. Key terms

Composition index (also called composition) refers to the proportion of a group with the same characteristics, such as demographics or discipline outcomes, within a population. Composition indices can be calculated for students, incidents, or other items of interest. For example, if 100 students enrolled in district A experienced one suspension, and 25 Hispanic students experienced one suspension or more, then the composition of Hispanic students who received one or more suspensions would be 25 percent (25 Hispanic students/100 students times 100).

Data indicators refers to data that provide information about progress toward a desired goal or outcome. These data include types of exclusion, characteristics of students who are suspended or expelled, behaviors or reasons for exclusionary discipline, and length of the exclusion. Examples of data analyses that measure disproportionality in school discipline include composition index, rate, relative difference in composition, and relative rate ratio. The data indicators referenced in this guide are intended to help educators gauge and monitor progress toward reducing racial/ethnic disproportionality in discipline practices.

Exclusionary discipline refers to actions that remove students from their regular classroom instruction for disciplinary reasons. Common forms of exclusion are in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and interim placement in an alternative education setting.

Implementation fidelity refers to the degree to which an intervention is delivered as intended.

Racial/ethnic disproportionality in school discipline refers to a particular racial/ethnic group that shows higher or lower rates of a given school discipline outcome than a comparison racial/ethnic group. For example, if suspension rates are 3.3 times higher among Hispanic students than among White students, this indicates that Hispanic students experience disproportionate rates of school discipline.

Rate (sometimes referred to as risk index) is the number of outcomes for a group, divided by the group's population, multiplied by 100. For example, if 60 Black students are enrolled in district A, and 15 experienced one suspension or more, then the rate of Black students who receive at least one suspension would be 25 percent (15 Black students/60 Black students times 100). Rate can be used to examine other outcomes, such as students who experienced multiple suspensions, suspensions that resulted from disruptive behaviors, or days excluded from classroom instruction for disciplinary reasons.

Relative difference in composition refers to the difference between the composition indices of two groups. For example, if 30 percent of students who received suspensions are American Indian, and American Indian students represent 10 percent of the total student population, the relative difference in composition is 20 percentage points.

Relative rate ratio (sometimes referred to as relative risk ratio) measures whether the rate for a target group and the rate for a comparison group differ. For example, if the suspension rate is 30 percent among Hispanic students and 10 percent among White students, the relative rate ratio comparing Hispanic students who experienced one suspension or more with White students who experienced one suspension or more is 3.0 (30 percent Hispanic students/10 percent White students). This indicates that Hispanic students are three times as likely as White students to be suspended. A relative rate ratio greater than 1.0 indicates that the school discipline outcome of the racial/ethnic group of students was higher than the same outcome for the comparison group (typically, White students), while a relative rate ratio less than 1.0 indicates that the school discipline outcome for the racial/ethnic group of students was lower than same outcome for the comparison group.

How to select, analyze, and interpret data indicators to identify problem areas and monitor progress

This section of the guide provides examples of how to select and analyze data to determine whether racial/ethnic disproportionality exists in a school or district's discipline practices. It examines the public availability of discipline data, the types of discipline data that can inform improvement decisions, and factors to consider in choosing data indicators. It also describes data analysis methods that identify racial/ethnic disproportionality and useful ways to present these data.

Why analyzing data by group or outcome is important

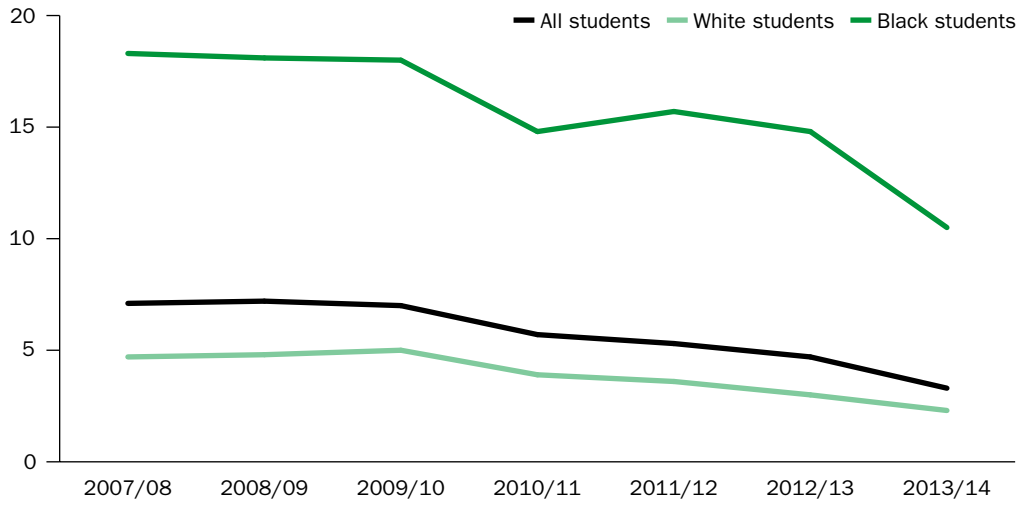
This guide provides examples of how to select and analyze data to determine whether racial/ethnic disproportionality exists in a school or district's discipline practices

Determining whether racial/ethnic disproportionality in discipline practices exists in your district or school requires that you analyze data separately for different racial/ethnic groups. Simply monitoring discipline data on all students will not reveal whether certain student groups receive school discipline at higher or lower rates relative to others. To understand the difference, consider figure 1, which shows the rate among all students, White students, and Black students in example district A who received one or more suspensions and expulsions between 2007/08 and 2013/14. The district noted a downward trend in the rate of suspensions and expulsions among all students.

Analyzing data separately for White and Black student groups provides both encouraging and discouraging news. The data show that the rates of both White and Black students who received out-of-school suspensions or expulsions decreased over time (represented by the green lines in figure 1). However, the relative rate ratio comparing the rate of exclusions among White students with the rate of exclusions among Black students indicates

Figure 1. The rate of out-of-school suspensions or expulsions is higher among Black students than among White students across all years, 2007/08–2013/14

Rate of students who received one or more out-of-school suspensions or expulsions, by race/ethnicity



Note: For each year the rate of students excluded is the number of students who received out-of-school suspensions or expulsions in each group, divided by the total number of students in the same group, multiplied by 100.

Source: Oregon Leadership Network district A, out-of-school suspension and expulsion data, 2007/08–2013/14.

that racial/ethnic disproportionality in school discipline has been a trend in the district for seven consecutive years (table 1). In 2007/08 Black students were 3.9 times as likely as White students to be excluded (18.3 percent of Black students who were excluded/4.7 percent of White students who were excluded). The likelihood that Black students would be excluded increased from 3.9 times the rate among White students in 2007/08 to 4.6 times in 2013/14. This happened because the discipline rate among White students decreased more quickly than the discipline rate among Black students.

Where to find discipline data

Districts must report incidents that result in exclusionary discipline action (for example, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and transfer to an alternative education setting) on an annual basis for use in federal and state reports (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2014). The required data include the demographic characteristics of each student involved in the incident, the type of exclusionary discipline action, and the offense or the reason for the discipline decision. Districts must also report the number of days that students are restricted from attending their regularly scheduled classes or school. Summaries of district and statewide discipline data are available on the federal Civil Rights Data Collection website (http://ocrdata.ed.gov). In addition, education agencies in Oregon, Washington, and a growing number of other states publicly report district or school discipline data by race/ethnicity, gender, or grade level (Council of State Governments, 2014). Some states also provide districts with reports on the types of exclusionary discipline actions, the reasons for exclusions, and the length of suspensions or expulsions.

Determining whether racial/ethnic disproportionality in discipline practices exists in your district or school requires that you analyze data separately for different racial/ethnic groups

State or district discipline incident data collection

Many state education agencies and districts make exclusionary discipline data publicly available on their websites. For example, the Washington Office of Superintendent of

Table 1. The rate of out-of-school suspensions or expulsions decreased overall and among White and Black students, but disproportionate rates among Black students compared with White students persisted across all years, 2007/08–2013/14

Rate by student racial/ethnic group and relative rate ratio	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Rate							
White students	4.7	4.8	5.0	3.9	3.6	3.0	2.3
Black students	18.3	18.1	18.0	14.8	15.7	14.8	10.5
Relative rate ratio	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.8	4.4	4.9	4.6

Note: For each year, rate is calculated as the number of students in each racial/ethnic group who received out-of-school suspensions or expulsions, divided by the total number of students in the same group, multiplied by 100. For each year, relative rate ratio is calculated by dividing the rate of Black students who received exclusionary discipline by the rate of White students who received exclusionary discipline in the same year. (For example, for 2007/08, 18.3 percent of Black students/4.7 percent of White students = 3.9.) A relative rate ratio greater than 1 indicates that Black students experienced higher rates of exclusionary discipline than did White students.

Source: Oregon Leadership Network district A, out-of-school suspension and expulsion data, 2007/08–2013/14.

Public Instruction provides an interactive website that allows educators to access summaries of statewide and district exclusionary discipline data. The website's charts and tables report discipline data that are disaggregated or analyzed separately for the following student groups: gender, race/ethnicity, English learner students, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students.

Civil Rights Data Collection

The federal Civil Rights Data Collection gathers and reports data on key education and civil rights issues, including exclusionary discipline. Suspension and expulsion data are available in customized tables by state, district, and school and by year. Districts are required to report on key education and civil rights data indicators annually, including school characteristics, student enrollments, and student participation in education programs and services. In addition to reporting data for all students, districts must report data separately by race/ethnicity, gender, English learner status, and disability. The Civil Rights Data Collection analyzes and publicly reports these data separately for the listed student groups:

- Percentage of K–12 students who experienced one or more in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and removals to alternative settings.
- Number of school days missed by students who received out-of-school suspensions.
- Percentage of preschool students who experienced out-of-school suspensions.

Office discipline referral data

Tracking the frequency of school staff referring students to the office for disciplinary reasons and the types of discipline actions assigned by school administrators, including suspensions and expulsions, can provide useful information about a school's discipline practices. Additional office discipline referral data that may help school teams plan strategies to prevent exclusionary discipline include locations, times, people involved, and contexts of discipline situations. Teams can use these data to determine whether disproportionality in school discipline exists, to identify potential solutions, and to measure progress toward school discipline goals across time.

Monitoring the number and rates of students who receive exclusionary discipline will not in itself provide information on problem areas that could inform an intervention decision. Other helpful data include frequency or length of exclusionary discipline, reasons for exclusions, and number of times students experience exclusions

Which discipline indicators to use

The first step in addressing disproportionate discipline is to determine whether the problem exists and, if so, to what extent. However, monitoring the number and rates of students who receive exclusionary discipline will not in itself provide information on specific problem areas that could inform an intervention decision. Other data that could help include the frequency or length of exclusionary discipline, the reasons for exclusions, and the number of times students experience exclusions.

Identifying indicators that are feasible and provide meaningful information on desired outcomes requires discussion between staff who oversee school discipline and those responsible for data analysis and reporting (Bernstein, Bollmer, & Munk, 2012; Bollmer, Bethel, Munk, & Bitterman, 2014; Brown, Wohlstetter, & Liu, 2008). The data indicators that might work best for your district depend on a number of factors (Bernstein et al., 2012; Bollmer et al., 2014; Brown et al., 2008). Questions that your team might want to consider include the following:

Are exclusionary discipline data accessible, accurate, and reliable?

- Are data currently collected and available?
- Are data available to schools on a schedule that is useful for making school improvement decisions or for monitoring progress?
- Are data reported in a format that school teams can use to make decisions?
- Are data collected using common definitions and procedures across staff members?
- Are safeguards in place to ensure that data entry is accurate?

Will districts or schools find the indicators helpful in monitoring progress and identifying changes in the desired school discipline outcomes?

- Do the data provide information on school discipline outcomes that are meaningful and relevant to stakeholders (for example, administrators, teachers, parents, students)?
- Can the data be used to analyze racial/ethnic disproportionality in desired outcomes?

Do the indicators help focus attention on important and actionable concerns?

- Do the data provide information about specific student groups or school discipline problems that may require targeted interventions and support (for example, racial/ethnic groups, grade levels, types of reported misbehavior, and locations and times that are associated with the most suspensions)?
- Do the data provide information on the implementation fidelity—the degree to which an intervention is delivered as intended—of selected interventions?

Does the school discipline system provide all necessary data for monitoring fidelity of implementation, tracking progress, and informing improvement decisions? Can the data collection requirements be simplified without losing important information for monitoring progress and informing improvement decisions?

- Are schools required to report data that are essential for informing improvement decisions or meeting current federal and state reporting requirements?
- Do the data reporting tools provide information that is essential for tracking the fidelity of implementation and program effectiveness?
- Does the school discipline reporting system limit data collection and reporting to only those data necessary for monitoring progress and informing improvement decisions?

The guide also provides an overview of common ways to analyze discipline data, explains how to calculate discipline data, and examines several ways of reporting the results

How to analyze discipline data

Discipline data indicators provide information about the current status of a desired goal or outcome as well as progress over time. Among others, these outcomes may include reducing exclusionary discipline among specific student groups, decreasing the length of exclusions, and reducing exclusions for certain categories of behavior. This section provides an overview of common ways to analyze discipline data, explains how to calculate discipline indicators, and examines several ways of reporting the results. A list of the data needed for each indicator, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the common data indicators, are summarized in table 2.

Table 2. School discipline data you need and advantages and disadvantages of common ways to analyze such data

Analysis method	Data you need	Advantages	Disadvantages
Absolute number or count	• Number in a group or category of interest	Provides information about the number or count of a group or category of interest; it can help you gain a perspective on whether exclusionary discipline is overused or applied too often that rate alone may not provide	• Does not provide information about the proportion of the group or relative differences across groups • Does not tell you about disproportionality between two groups • Differences in absolute number between groups or across time do not adjust for changes in the population size
Rate	• Number of students or incidents with a particular characteristic or outcome • Total number of students or incidents in the group	Provides information about the proportion of an event or condition within a group	• Does not provide information about disproportionality between two groups
Relative rate ratio	• Rate of target group • Rate of comparison group	Identifies disproportionate rates by examining the relative differences between two groups	• Does not tell you the number or rate of exclusions so you are unable to determine if these are acceptable • If a rate ratio is based on small group sizes, then minor changes in the target or comparison group can result in large changes in the relative rate ratio
Composition index	• Number of students or incidents in the group of interest • Number of students or incidents in the population	Provides information about the proportion of a group that has a particular characteristic or outcome	• Does not tell you the number or rate of exclusions so you are unable to determine if these are acceptable • Does not tell you if the proportion of a group is disproportionate compared with another group (for example, the proportion of Hispanic students who experienced suspensions compared with the representation of Hispanic students in the total population)
Relative difference in composition	• For the group of interest: • Number of students or incidents in the group of interest • Number of students or incidents in the population	Identifies differences between the proportion of a group with a particular characteristic or outcome and the group's representation in the population	• Difficult to compare across schools or districts that differ in size of enrollment or composition of student body

Sources: Bollmer, Bethel, Munk, & Bitterman, 2014; Boneshefski & Runge, 2014; Burke & Nishioka, 2014.

Rate

The rate (sometimes called the risk index) is the number of outcomes for a group, divided by the group's population (such as the percentage of a student racial/ethnic group that experienced suspensions, the number of suspensions per student, or the percentage of suspensions that resulted from disruptive behaviors), multiplied by 100. For example, in Oregon Leadership Network district A if 333 Black students experienced one suspension or more, and there were 4,991 Black students enrolled in the district, then the rate of Black students who have experienced one suspension or more is 6.7 percent (333 students/4,991 students × 100; table 3). Rate can also be used to report the number of suspensions per 100 students. For example, if a group of 30 Asian students received 45 suspensions, the rate would be 150 suspensions per 100 Asian students (45 suspensions/30 students × 100). Rate may answer the following questions:

- What is the rate of Black students who received one suspension or more in district A?

- What is the number of suspensions per 100 Hispanic students?
- What is the rate of suspensions that district A imposed under the category of disruptive behavior?

How to calculate rate. The equation for calculating the rate is as follows.

$$\text{Rate} = \frac{\textit{Number of students or incidents with a particular characteristic or outcome (for example, students who experienced one suspension or more)}}{\textit{Total number of students or incidents in the group}} \times 100$$

How to report rates in a table or visual display. An example of how to report rates of students suspended one or more times by racial/ethnic group is illustrated in table 3.

Visual displays can be used to report rates of students suspended one or more times by racial/ethnic group

A graphic representation of the rate of students suspended one or more times is shown in figure 2. The bars for each race/ethnicity illustrate the rate (that is, the percentage of students who experienced suspensions in a particular racial/ethnic group, multiplied by 100). In district A, the rates of suspensions were 1.6 percent among White students, 0.7 percent among Asian students, and 6.7 percent among Black students.

Considerations. In this example, rate shows the incidence of students within a specific racial/ethnic group who experienced exclusionary discipline but does not answer questions about the significance of a problem (for example, "How many suspensions?" or "How many days are students excluded?"). It also does not report on the disproportionality across groups. Determining whether disproportionate discipline exists requires calculating a

Table 3. The number of students enrolled, number of students suspended, rate of students suspended, and relative rate ratios comparing rate of suspensions of each racial/ethnic group with the suspension rate of White students, 2014/15

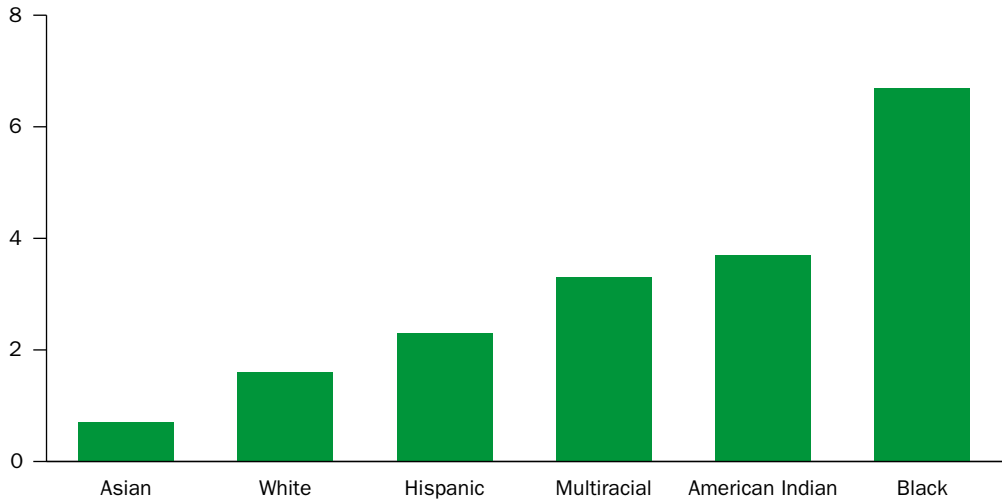
Student racial/ethnic group	Number of students enrolled	Number of students suspended one or more times	Rate of students suspended one or more times	Relative rate ratio comparing rate of suspensions of each racial/ethnic group with the suspension rate of White students
White	27,089	437	1.6	1.0
American Indian	436	16	3.7	2.3
Asian	3,780	26	0.7	0.4
Black	4,991	333	6.7	4.2
Hispanic	7,850	182	2.3	1.4
Multiracial	3,925	128	3.3	2.1
All students	48,071	1,122	2.3	1.4

Note: Rate is calculated as the number of students of each racial/ethnic group who received one suspension or more, divided by the number of students of the same racial/ethnic group enrolled, multiplied by 100. (For example, number of White students who received one suspension or more/number of White students enrolled × 100: 437/27,089 × 100 = 1.6.) Relative rate ratio is calculated by dividing the rate of a particular racial group by the rate of White students. (For example, rate of Black students suspended/rate of White students suspended: 6.7/1.6 = 4.2.) A relative rate ratio greater than 1.0 indicates that the suspension rate of the racial/ethnic group was higher than the suspension rate of White students, while a relative rate ratio less than 1.0 indicates that the suspension rate of the racial/ethnic group was lower than the suspension rate of White students.

Source: Oregon Leadership Network district A, out-of-school suspension and expulsion data, 2014/15.

Figure 2. Rate of students who experienced one suspension or more, by racial/ethnic group, 2014/15

Percent of students who experienced one or more suspensions



Note: Rate is calculated as the number of students of each racial/ethnic group who experienced one suspension or more, divided by the number of students of the same racial/ethnic group enrolled, multiplied by 100. (For example, White students who experienced one suspension or more/White students enrolled × 100: 437/27,089 × 100 = 1.6; see table 3.)

Source: Oregon Leadership Network district A, out-of-school suspension and expulsion data, 2014/15.

relative rate ratio, a comparison of the rates among two groups (Bollmer et al., 2014; Boneshefski & Runge, 2014).

A relative rate ratio measures whether a particular characteristic or outcome is lower, similar, or higher among one group of students or incidents relative to a comparison group

Relative rate ratio

A relative rate ratio measures whether a particular characteristic or outcome is lower, similar, or higher among one group of students or incidents relative to a comparison group. For example, the relative rate ratio of suspensions among Hispanic students is calculated by dividing the rate of Hispanic students who were suspended by the rate of White students who were suspended. In district A, Hispanic students are 1.4 times as likely as White students to be suspended (2.3 percent among Hispanic students/1.6 percent among White students = 1.4). Examples of questions that relative rate ratios may help answer are as follows:

- How does the suspension rate among Hispanic students compare with the suspension rate among White students?
- How much higher are exclusion rates for Black students than for White students?

How to calculate a relative rate ratio. The equation for calculating relative rate ratio is as follows:

$$\text{Relative rate ratio} = \frac{\textit{Rate of target group of students or incidents with a particular characteristic or outcome (for example, rate of Black students who experienced one suspension or more)}}{\textit{Rate of comparison group of students or incidents with the same characteristic or outcome (for example, rate of White students who experienced one suspension or more)}}$$

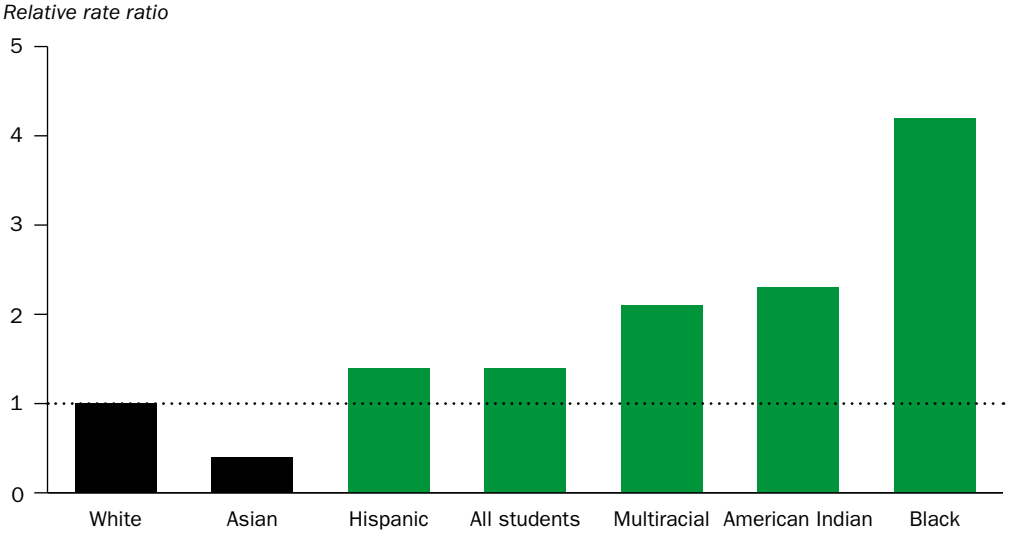
How to report relative rate ratios in a table or visual display. An example of how to report the relative rate ratio comparing the rates of students of various racial/ethnic groups who were suspended to the rate of White students who were suspended is presented in table 3. That racial/ethnic disproportionality in exclusionary discipline is a problem in district A is indicated by the fact that the relative rate ratios across most racial/ethnic groups other than White are higher than 1.0. Relative rate ratios that are higher than 1.0 indicate that the suspension rate of students in that racial/ethnic group is higher than the suspension rate of White students. In district A the relative rate ratio was 4.2 among Black students during the 2014/15 school year. This means that Black students were 4.2 times as likely as White students to be suspended. In contrast, the relative rate ratio of Asian students of 0.4 was less than 1.0, indicating that the suspension rate of Asian students was lower than the suspension rate of White students.

An example of how relative rate ratios can be presented graphically is shown in figure 3. Each bar represents the rate of suspensions among students in a specific racial/ethnic group compared with the rate among White students. In this example, the relative rate ratios of exclusionary discipline are disproportionately higher among all racial/ethnic groups except Asian students.

However, a relative rate ratio does not indicate whether the number of suspensions or expulsions among students in racial/ethnic groups is acceptable

Considerations. A relative rate ratio indicates the extent of disproportionality in exclusionary discipline among selected racial/ethnic groups compared with a target group (in this case, White students). However, a relative rate ratio does not indicate whether the number of suspensions or expulsions among White students or students in racial/ethnic

Figure 3. Relative rate ratios comparing the rates of students who experienced one suspension or more in specific racial/ethnic groups with the rate among White students who experienced one suspension or more, 2014/15



Note: Relative rate ratio is calculated by dividing the rate of a particular racial group by the rate of White students. (For example, 6.7 percent of Black students suspended/1.6 percent of White students suspended = 4.2.) A relative rate ratio greater than 1.0 indicates that the suspension rate of the racial/ethnic group of students was higher than the suspension rate of White students, while a relative rate ratio less than 1.0 indicates that the suspension rate of the racial/ethnic group was lower than the suspension rate of White students.

Source: Oregon Leadership Network district A, out-of-school suspension and expulsion data, 2014/15.

groups is acceptable. Thus, even if a district or school eliminates racial/ethnic disproportionality in exclusionary discipline, it may still impose unacceptably high rates of suspensions or expulsions on students. Districts or schools should set target goals for each school discipline indicator, such as the number or rate of students experiencing exclusionary discipline or the number or rate of days or amounts of classroom time lost for disciplinary reasons.

Composition index

The composition index (sometimes called composition) describes the proportion of a group that has a particular characteristic or outcome within a population. Composition indices can be calculated for students, discipline incidents, suspension days, or other items of interest. For example, table 4 shows that 38.9 percent of students who experienced one suspension or more were White (437 White students who experienced suspensions/1,122 total students who experienced suspensions). This gives a composition index of 38.9 for White students. One composition index by itself does not provide information about disproportionality. Instead, you must compare two composition indices, such as the proportion of students who received suspensions who are White and the proportion of enrolled students who received one suspension or more. A composition index may answer the following questions:

- What percentage of students who experience one suspension or more are White?
- What percentage of enrolled students are Black?
- What percentage of all suspensions is assigned for disruptive behavior?

The composition index describes the proportion of a group that has a particular characteristic or outcome within a population and can be calculated for students, discipline incidents, suspension days, or other items of interest

How to calculate a composition index. The equation for calculating a composition index is as follows.

$$\text{Composition index} = \frac{\text{Number of students of a group with a particular characteristic or outcome (for example, the number of White students who experienced one suspension or more)}}{\text{Total number of students with the same characteristic or outcome (for example, all students who experienced one suspension or more)}} \times 100$$

How to report composition in a table or visual display. An example of how to report the composition of students who experienced suspensions among different racial/ethnic groups is shown in table 4. Providing the number of enrolled students and the number of students who experienced suspensions gives information about the overuse of exclusionary discipline. The table also reports the composition of each racial/ethnic group in the total student population and the composition of students who received suspensions in each racial/ethnic group.

An example graphic presentation of the two composition indices (students who received one suspension or more by racial/ethnic group and representation of each racial/ethnic group in the total student enrollment) is shown in figure 4. For each racial/ethnic group, the green bars show the group's representation in the total student enrollment, and the black bars show the group's representation in the group of students who were suspended. In this graph, the difference in composition between the students experiencing suspensions and their representation in the total student population is evident. White and Asian students

Table 4. The number of students enrolled, composition of district enrollment, number of students suspended, composition of students suspended, and difference in composition between the proportion of students in particular racial/ethnic groups who were suspended and the proportion of each group in the total student population, 2014/15

Student racial/ethnic group	Number of students enrolled in district	Composition of district enrollment (percent)	Number of students suspended one time or more	Composition of students suspended one time or more (percent)	Difference in composition (percentage points)	Relative difference in composition of students suspended and enrollment composition (percent)
White	27,089	56.4	437	38.9	–17.5	–31.0
American Indian	436	0.9	16	1.4	0.5	55.6
Asian	3,780	7.9	26	2.3	–5.6	–70.9
Black	4,991	10.4	333	29.7	19.3	185.6
Hispanic	7,850	16.3	182	16.2	–0.1	–0.6
Multiracial	3,925	8.2	128	11.4	3.2	39.0
All students	48,071	na	1,122	na	na	na

na is not applicable because composition can be calculated only for subgroups (for example, racial/ethnic groups).

Note: Difference in composition is the percentage point difference between the composition of two groups. (For example, composition of White students who were suspended minus composition of White students in district enrollment: 38.9 percent – 56.4 percent = –17.5 percent.) A relative difference in composition is the difference between the proportion of a student group with a particular characteristic or outcome and the representation of the student group within the population. (For example, difference in composition of White students who were suspended /composition of White students in district enrollment × 100: –17.5/56.4 × 100 = –31.0 percent.) A positive value for difference in composition or relative difference in composition indicates the student group is overrepresented in suspensions compared to the group's representation in the total student population, while a negative value means the group is underrepresented.

Source: Oregon Leadership Network district A, out-of-school suspension and expulsion data, 2014/15.

who experienced suspensions are underrepresented in the group of students who experienced suspensions. Conversely, American Indian, Black, and multiracial students are overrepresented because the proportion of these students who received suspensions is higher than the enrollment composition of these students. The proportion of Hispanic students who were suspended and their representation in total enrollment are about the same.

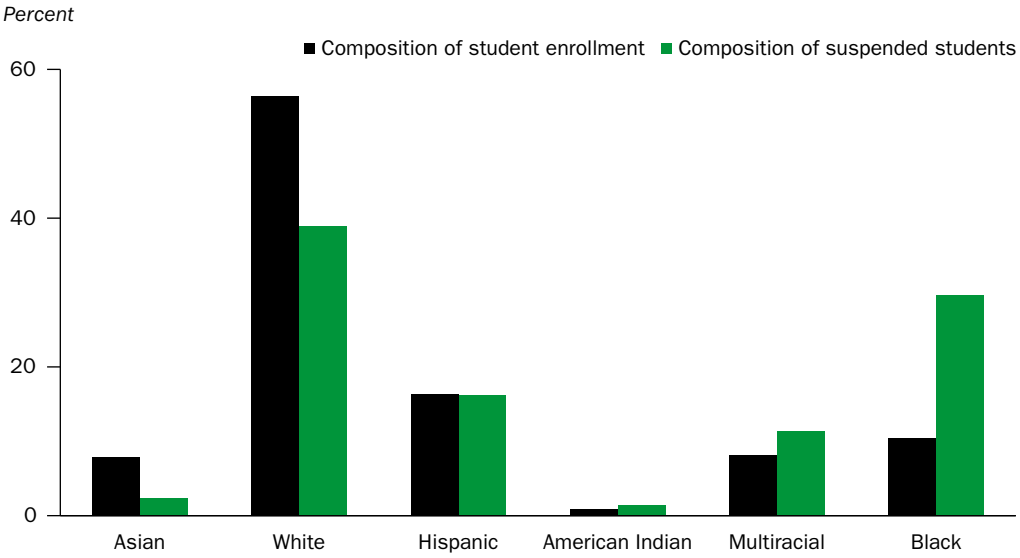
Relative difference in composition

Relative difference in composition measures the relative difference between the proportion of students with a particular characteristic, condition, or discipline outcome and the representation of these students in the student population

Relative difference in composition is a ratio that measures the relative difference between the proportion of students with a particular characteristic, condition, or discipline outcome and the representation of these students within the total student population. If the relative difference in composition is a positive value, the student group is overrepresented compared with their representation within the total student population. If the relative difference is a negative value, the student group is underrepresented. Below are examples of questions that relative difference in composition may answer.

- Is the relative difference between the percentage of American Indian students who receive at least one suspension higher than the percentage of American Indian students in the student population?
- Is there an overrepresentation of Hispanic students who receive suspensions compared with the representation of these students in the student population?

Figure 4. Comparison of two compositions: Proportion of the student group who were suspended and proportion of the group in the student population, by racial/ethnic group, 2014/15



Note: If the composition of the racial/ethnic group represented in the student population (black bar) is greater than the composition of the racial/ethnic group represented in the student group that received one suspension or more (green bar), the difference in composition has a negative value, indicating that the racial group is underrepresented in suspensions or expulsions compared with the group's representation in the total student population. If the black bar is lower than the green bar, the difference in composition has a positive value, indicating that the racial/ethnic group is overrepresented. The difference in composition, as shown in table 4, is the percentage point difference between the composition of two groups. (For example, composition of White students who were suspended minus composition of White students in district enrollment: 38.9 percent – 56.4 percent = –17.5 percent.)

Source: Oregon Leadership Network district A, out-of-school suspension and expulsion data, 2014/15.

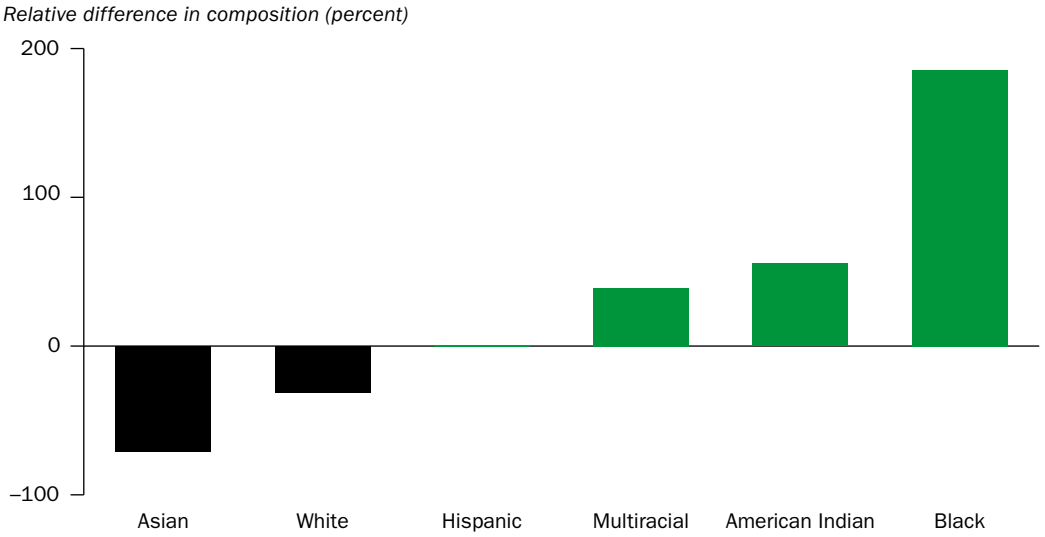
How to calculate a relative difference in composition. The equation for calculating a relative difference in composition is as follows.

$$\text{Relative difference in composition} = \frac{\textit{Composition of a group with a characteristic or outcome} - \textit{Composition of the same group in the population (for example, proportion of Black students who received suspensions} - \textit{proportion of Black students in the population)}}{\textit{Composition of the same student group in the population (for example, proportion of Black students in the population)}} \times 100$$

Sample table and graphic representation of relative difference in composition results. An example of how to report composition indices is shown in table 4. For each racial/ethnic group, the table lists the number and percentage of students represented in the total population and the number and percentage of students who experienced suspensions.

An example of how relative differences in composition indices can be graphically displayed is shown in figure 5. The black bars show the groups with negative values in the relative difference in composition. Thus, the black bars for White and Asian students mean that these student groups are underrepresented in the population of students who experienced a suspension. The bar for Hispanic students is also black but too small to see. The green bars show the groups—American Indian, Black, and multiracial students—with positive

Figure 5. The relative difference in composition between the proportion of students who experienced suspensions in each racial/ethnic group and proportion of the group in the total student population, 2014/15



Note: Relative difference in composition refers to the difference between the proportion of a student group with a particular characteristic or outcome and the proportion of the student group within the population. (For example, difference in composition of White students who were suspended/composition of White students in district enrollment × 100: –17.5/56.4 × 100 = –31.0 percent.) The green bars display a relative difference in composition with a positive value, indicating that the student group is overrepresented in suspensions compared with the group's representation in the total student population, while the black bars display a negative value, indicating that the group is underrepresented.

Source: Oregon Leadership Network district A, out-of-school suspension and expulsion data, 2014/15.

values in the relative differences in composition. These groups are overrepresented in the proportion of students who experience suspensions. Of the three groups, Black students exhibited the largest difference.

Relative rate ratios compare outcomes between two different groups, while relative difference in composition examines whether the percentage of a group that exhibits a particular characteristic or outcome is proportionate to the group's representation within the population

Considerations. Relative risk ratios and relative differences in composition both provide useful information about disproportionate discipline, but there are important differences between the two discipline data indicators. Relative rate ratios compare outcomes between two different groups, such as the exclusionary discipline rates of White students and Asian students. Relative difference in composition examines whether the percentage of a group that exhibits a particular characteristic or outcome is proportionate to the group's representation within the total population (for example, comparing the percentage of expelled students who are Asian to the percentage of Asian students represented in the total student population).

A composition index is relatively easy to calculate, and graphic displays of relative differences in composition yield an accessible visual representation of disproportionality. However, the composition index does not provide information about differences between racial/ethnic groups. The findings can also be misleading if group sizes are widely unequal or the group size represents a high or low percentage of the student population (Bollmer et al., 2014; Gibb & Skiba, 2008).

How to use the Plan–Do–Study–Act process to make decisions on improving equitable school discipline practices

If your team determines that disproportionality in school discipline is a problem, the next step is to intervene. This section of the guide describes how to use data as part of the Plan–Do–Study–Act continuous improvement cycle to inform intervention decisions and monitor progress toward desired outcomes. It also provides an example of how one district used the continuous improvement cycle to address racial disproportionality in its school discipline practices. A list of state and federal resources that provide information on root cause analysis, creating a theory of change and logic model, developing goals, and selecting evidence-based practices to include in your intervention plan are included in the appendix.

The guide also describes how to use data as part of the Plan–Do–Study–Act continuous improvement cycle to inform intervention decisions and monitor progress toward desired outcomes

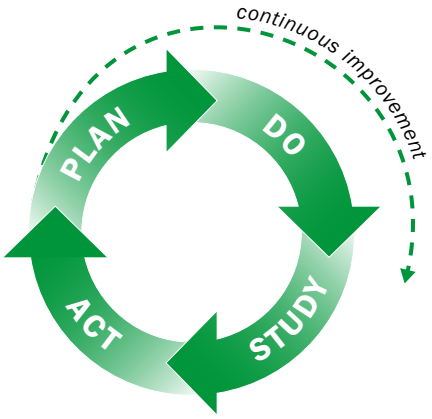
How to use the Plan–Do–Study–Act process

Planning and evaluating any form of school improvement involve continuously examining relevant data, asking questions to learn more about the problem, and adjusting interventions as needed. To facilitate this process, many educators use the four-step Plan–Do–Study–Act process outlined in figure 6 (Deming, 1986).

Plan: Identify root causes, develop goals, create an intervention plan, and choose indicators to track progress

At this stage of the improvement process, it is important to ask questions and decide what you are trying to accomplish. You may need to gather additional data to learn more about the problem before deciding on an intervention plan. Examine the data to identify patterns that may help you select and implement an intervention. Data that could be reviewed include racial/ethnic patterns in the rate of students who experienced suspensions, the average number of suspension days experienced by each student, the types of behavior that resulted in suspensions, and the location of the discipline incidents. Collecting information about the root causes and circumstances that contribute to disproportionate discipline practices is a critical step to planning an intervention.

Figure 6. Plan–Do–Study–Act: Using data to guide improvement decisions



Plan	Identify root causes, develop goals, create an intervention plan, and choose indicators to track progress
Do	Implement the intervention plan and collect indicator data to monitor fidelity of implementation and track progress
Study	Evaluate progress, review what you have learned, and determine what adjustments, if any, are needed
Act	Adjust the intervention plan if needed

Source: Authors' illustration of the Plan–Do–Study–Act continuous improvement cycle, based on Deming (1986.)

Although many questions can be answered by analyzing suspension data, gaining a deeper understanding of the root causes of discipline disparities may require other types of data. Direct observation of classroom instruction or supervision practices in hallways, the cafeteria, and other areas of the school is one way to gather information or verify information provided by other sources. Asking students, parents, teachers, and staff why some students are suspended more than others can produce valuable insights about the problem and potential solutions. These stakeholders can share information about communication difficulties, bullying or harassment problems, or cultural misunderstandings that lead to suspensions but that are not documented in discipline data.

At all times, remember to stay focused on identifying root causes that are actionable and within the school's control. Avoid becoming sidetracked discussing issues outside the school's control (for example, poverty) that do not lead to productive action. It is important to use your planning time to discuss what adults can do to achieve the desired discipline outcomes, such as decreasing the use of suspensions or narrowing disproportionality among racial groups. Below are questions that can guide your team's discussions on using data throughout the Plan–Do–Study–Act process.

Although many questions can be answered by analyzing suspension data, gaining a deeper understanding of the root causes of discipline disparities may require other types of data

Are there systemic issues contributing to the problem? Is the problem schoolwide or isolated to a few settings or problem areas?

- Are the processes and practices that promote a positive school climate and equitable discipline clearly defined in policies and guidance documents?
- Is the focus of discipline policies and practices on prevention and keeping students in school?
- Does the school discipline approach focus on restoring the environment and social relationships in the classroom or school instead of punitive practices?
- Do disproportionate rates of suspension exist across most schools or classrooms or is the problem evident only in a few settings?
- Do discipline policies or procedures present barriers to potential solutions?
- Do we have the data necessary for identifying the root causes of problems, selecting solutions, and tracking progress?

What are the reasons or reported behaviors for which students receive suspensions?

- What behaviors or offenses (for example, disruption, disrespect, and so on) result in the highest rates of suspensions?
- Are there differences in the types of behaviors or offenses that lead to suspensions across racial/ethnic groups?
- How much more likely is it for racial/ethnic minority students than for White students to receive suspensions for disruptive or disrespectful behaviors?

What is the nature of the situations that lead to exclusionary discipline?

- What happens before and after the discipline incident?
- Do communication issues or cultural misunderstandings contribute to the problem?
- Do discipline incidents occur more often at certain times of the day, in particular locations, or during specific events? Are there more problems in the morning, at lunch, or in the afternoon?

Are there issues that reduce the quality of teacher–student relationships?

- Do teachers provide positive recognition to each student?
- Do teachers have high expectations for each student?
- Do teachers provide instruction that engages each student, encourages higher order thinking, and represents the diverse cultural perspectives of the students in their classrooms?
- Do students and educators have agreements about how conflict or differences in opinion are resolved?
- Do teachers respect cultural differences in their interactions with students?
- Are students subjected to intentional or unintentional comments or actions that are disrespectful (for example, jokes or comments based on stereotypes, or curriculum and images that promote stereotypes or negative messages about a particular racial/ethnic group)?

Once root causes or conditions that lead to disproportionate discipline practices have been identified, it is time for the team to gather information to inform the selection of evidence-based or promising practices

What practices are being implemented well? What practices need improvement?

- Are processes that promote a positive school climate and equitable discipline practices adhered to across the system?
- Do school and classroom expectations respect differences in culture and communication styles among students? Conversely, are there expectations or routines that unintentionally disadvantage certain groups or create cultural misunderstandings that contribute to discipline incidents?
- Does our school solicit the perspectives and help of families and the community to maintain a welcoming educational climate that supports learning?
- Do educators or students need support to increase their knowledge and skills (for example, cross-cultural communication, self-management, perspective-taking, or the ability to respect differences among others)?
- Is the school or district implementing professional development or targeted interventions to address cultural or other factors that may increase the likelihood of a discipline incident?
- Are schoolwide interventions available that could prevent discipline situations, such as reteaching expectations or routines, increasing supervision in certain locations or at certain events, or changing schedules?
- Are other factors influencing the effectiveness or equity of school discipline practices?

How do we know that our current interventions are working?

- How do we know whether school discipline interventions are implemented with fidelity?
- What data tell us that we are making progress toward eliminating racial/ethnic disproportionality?
- What data tell us that we are reducing the use of exclusionary discipline, especially in specific problem areas in our school or district?
- What are the positive outcomes that we hope to achieve by reducing exclusionary discipline, such as increasing classroom instruction time? How do we know if we are achieving these outcomes?

Once you have identified root causes or conditions that lead to disproportionate discipline practices, it is time for the team to gather information to inform the selection of evidence-based or promising practices. It is also helpful to develop a theory of change statement or

diagram to ensure that the team has a shared understanding of how and why the intervention will achieve the desired outcomes. Developing a theory of change statement will help team members identify indicators to guide their discussions and improvement decisions. It will also inform selection of an intervention that addresses the specific needs of your school or district. The appendix includes a list of state and federal resources on root cause analysis, developing goals, and selecting evidence-based practices to help you plan an intervention.

Do: Implement the intervention plan and collect indicator data to monitor fidelity of implementation and track progress

At this stage you are ready to implement and test the plan. You may want to start small by choosing one issue and piloting the intervention with a small group of students or schools. Starting small can help the team gather data about the intervention's effectiveness and make adjustments before the intervention goes schoolwide or districtwide. A start-small strategy can also help the team determine what professional development and support are needed to implement the intervention with fidelity. It is important to collect indicator data to track progress and monitor the fidelity of implementation of the intervention plan.

Monitoring progress on a specific intervention may require additional data

Study: Evaluate progress, review what you have learned, and determine what adjustments may be needed

At this stage, you should collect data on indicators to regularly check progress toward desired discipline outcomes. The indicators should report on the desired outcomes of the intervention and on the quality of implementation. Team members should consider several factors when selecting data indicators to measure progress. The selected data indicators should be easy to collect, understand, and use. They should also provide accurate or reliable information on the desired outcomes that will guide improvement decisions, such as reducing rates of exclusionary discipline and identifying schools or classrooms that could benefit from more support and coaching or the types of disciplinary actions that result in fewer suspensions.

Monitoring progress on a specific intervention may require additional data. For example, an Oregon middle school decided to create a process that would allow students to take a short break during a class and receive support if they became frustrated in the classroom. To accomplish this goal, the team created a behavior reflection room as an additional support for students. The reflection room provides a place for the student to take a 10–15 minute break from difficult situations in the classroom. Students may ask permission to use the room or receive a teacher referral. In the reflection room students receive support from a classroom instructional assistant who helps them refocus and reflect on strategies to resolve their concerns.

The school collects data on students using the behavior reflection room and on referring teachers, the time of day, and the reasons for the use. The support staff assigned to the reflection room help students complete a worksheet documenting their perspective on the problem, potential solutions, and next steps. School administrators share students' reflection sheets with the referring teacher to increase awareness of the students' concerns. Administrators and staff review these data to determine whether the intervention (providing the reflection room) is reducing the number of suspensions and the amount of instructional time students miss. A review of the reasons students give for using the reflection room helps identify strategies that could prevent recurrence of the problem situations.

Act: Adjust the intervention plan if needed

The team should review data regularly to ensure that the intervention is working. If the data indicate that there has been little or no progress, the team should investigate and adjust the plan as needed. The team's investigation should determine whether the intervention was implemented as intended (implementation fidelity). If the quality of implementation is not a factor, then the team should consider how to change the intervention. Once a potential solution is found, the team should implement the recommended changes. If the intervention was successful, then the team could consider expanding it or identifying a different problem of practice to address. In either scenario, this stage provides an opportunity for your team to begin a new cycle of planning based on what you have learned.

A district example of how to use the Plan–Do–Study–Act process

The team should review data regularly to ensure that the intervention is working

The Oregon Leadership Network is a statewide research alliance that focuses on equitable practice and leadership development. With REL Northwest's support, the alliance districts chose school discipline practices as a priority because of data showing disproportionately high rates of exclusionary discipline experienced by their American Indian, Black, and Hispanic students compared with White students (Burke & Nishioka, 2014). Several districts have applied the Plan–Do–Study–Act process to reduce racial/ethnic disproportionality and the use of exclusionary discipline in their schools. An example of one alliance district is presented below.

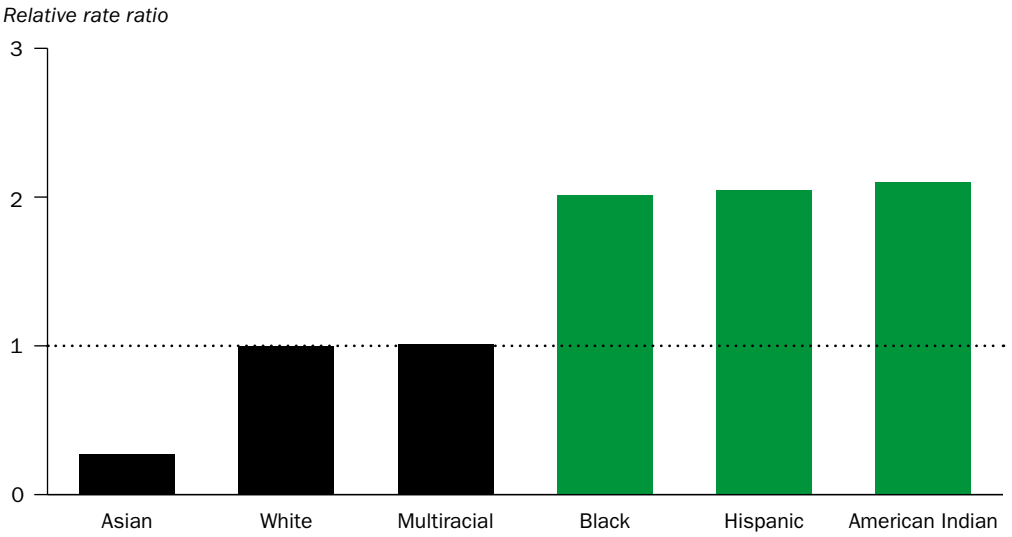
Plan: Identify root causes, develop goals, create an intervention plan, and choose indicators to track progress

District B analyzed its exclusionary discipline data and identified two trends that it wanted to address. First, the district determined that racial/ethnic disproportionality in exclusionary discipline was a problem in the district (figure 7). American Indian, Black, and Hispanic students were twice as likely as White students to receive suspensions and expulsions. Second, high rates of suspensions and expulsions in middle schools were a concern (figure 8).

The district team's deeper analysis of school discipline practices found several factors that contributed to disproportionality in school discipline. The district's school discipline policies allowed exclusionary discipline for misbehavior that ranged from weapons violations to nonviolent offenses such as refusing to follow directions or being tardy to class. The policies also provided little guidance on using disciplinary actions that focused on keeping students in school. The team's investigation also identified the need to provide professional learning to staff members on strengthening teacher-student relationships, recognizing bias in discipline practices, and implementing culturally relevant classroom instruction. Finally, the district identified the need to support school administrators in providing coaching to teachers who require additional support. In response to these data, the middle school principals established an annual goal and a theory of action.

> **Goal:** By June 2014 the rate of Black, American Indian, and Hispanic students who are excluded from classroom instruction for disciplinary reasons will have decreased by 2 percentage points.
>
> **Theory of action:** If school administrators collectively employ leadership practices that help teachers develop appropriate attitudes, gain knowledge, and learn skills

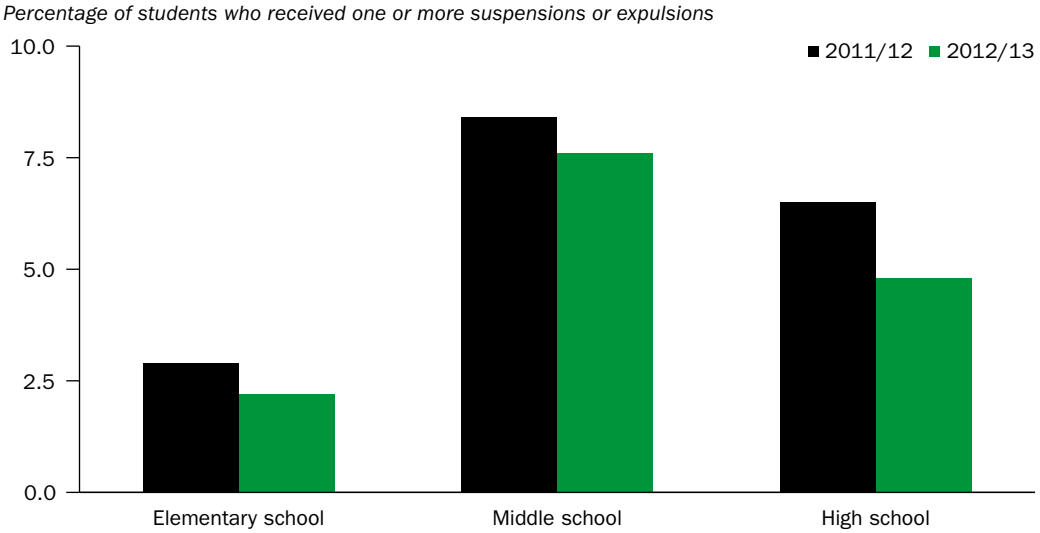
Figure 7. American Indian, Black, and Hispanic students are twice as likely as White students to receive suspensions and expulsions, 2012/13



Note: Relative rate ratio is calculated by dividing the rate of a particular racial/ethnic group by the rate of White students (for example, the rate of Black students suspended, divided by the rate of White students suspended). A relative rate ratio greater than 1.0 indicates that the exclusion rate of the racial/ethnic group of students was higher than the exclusion rate of White students, while a relative rate ratio less than 1.0 indicates that the exclusion rate of the racial/ethnic group was lower than the exclusion rate of White students.

Source: Oregon Leadership Network district B, Out-of-school suspension and expulsion data, 2012/13.

Figure 8. The rate of students who experienced one or more suspensions or expulsions was higher in middle school than in elementary school or high school, 2011/12–2012/13



Note: Rate is calculated as the number of students at each school level who experienced one or more suspensions or expulsions, divided by the number of students enrolled at that school level, multiplied by 100.

Source: Oregon Leadership Network district B, Out-of-school suspension and expulsion data, 2011/12–2012/13.

to nurture positive, caring teacher-student relationships, with a particular focus on Black, American Indian, and Hispanic students who have experienced more than one out-of-school suspension or expulsion, then racial/ethnic disproportionality in exclusionary discipline will decrease in the middle schools.

The district then identified a two-pronged approach to reducing the use of exclusionary discipline in middle schools. First, the district appointed a school policy team of administrators, educators, and parents to revise the student–parent handbook. Second, the equity coordinator and middle school principals formed a professional learning community to increase equitable discipline practices in their schools.

Do: Implement the intervention plan and collect indicator data to monitor fidelity of implementation and track progress

The guide also provides an example of how an Oregon Leadership Network district implemented the Plan–Do–Study–Act process

The school policy team developed and implemented a two-year plan to revise the district's student–parent handbook. The revised handbook clearly outlines the rights and expectations of students, families, and educators. It also outlines disciplinary practices that focus on involving families as soon as a problem is identified and increasing support for students who are experiencing difficulty in school. The team revised the code of conduct to include a progressive discipline process and suggested alternatives to suspension that allow more flexibility to administrators on discipline issues that do not pose a safety risk to others. The revised handbook also removed the option to impose long-term suspension for nonviolent behaviors such as tardiness, disruption, defiance, or disorderly conduct.

The middle school principals met monthly as a professional learning community to gain knowledge on root causes and evidence-based practices that promote equity in school discipline practices. The principals worked collaboratively to implement positive behavior interventions, positive supports, and restorative justice practices in their schools. They also reviewed exclusionary discipline data and discussed potential solutions to difficult discipline situations. The indicator data that principals reviewed were the rate of students who received exclusionary discipline and the number of days that students were excluded from classroom instruction, disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender.

Study: Evaluate progress, review what you learned, and determine what adjustments may be needed

Between 2011/12 and 2013/14 the rate of middle school students who experienced exclusionary discipline decreased from 8.4 percent to 5.2 percent (table 5). The district also made progress in reducing the racial/ethnic disproportionality affecting Black, Hispanic, and multiracial students. The review of data and discussions during the monthly professional learning community meetings helped the district's equity director plan professional development and guide discussions on supporting students who experience multiple suspensions.

Act: Adjust the intervention plan if needed

The district continues to use data to monitor progress and adjust interventions accordingly. The middle school principals noted the reduction of exclusions across all racial/ethnic groups. They continue to meet as a professional learning community to focus on eliminating racial/ethnic disproportionality in exclusionary discipline, embedding restorative

Table 5. The rate of middle school students who experienced exclusionary discipline decreased across all racial/ethnic groups, and the relative rate ratio for Black, Hispanic, and multiracial student groups declined, 2011/12–2013/14

Student racial/ ethnic group	Rate			Relative rate ratio		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
White	7.1	6.3	5.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Asian	3.0	1.7	2.0	0.4	0.3	0.4
Black	17.5	12.7	9.6	2.5	2.0	1.9
Hispanic	12.6	12.9	7.5	1.8	2.1	1.5
Multiracial	8.9	6.3	3.8	1.3	1.0	0.8
All students	8.4	7.6	5.2	na	na	na

na is not applicable because relative rate ratio can be calculated only for subgroups (for example, racial/ethnic groups).

Note: For each year, rate is calculated as the number of middle school students in each racial/ethnic group who received one or more out-of-school suspensions or expulsions, divided by the total number of students in the same group, multiplied by 100. For each year, relative rate ratio is calculated by dividing the rate of a particular racial/ethnic group that received one or more out-of-school suspensions or expulsions during that year by the rate of White students who received one or more out-of-school suspensions or expulsions during that year. A relative rate ratio greater than 1.0 indicates that the exclusion (suspension and expulsion) rate of the racial/ethnic group of students was higher than the exclusion rate of White students, while a relative rate ratio less than 1.0 indicates that the exclusion rate of the racial/ethnic group was lower than the exclusion rate of White students.

Source: Oregon Leadership Network district B, Out-of-school suspension and expulsion data, 2011/12–2013/14.

practices in classroom settings, and providing teachers with coaching support on culturally responsive communication and instruction. The improvement in middle school discipline data prompted the district to start a second professional learning community for high school vice principals.

Appendix. List of supportive school discipline websites and resources

Below is a list of websites that provide helpful resources related to equity in school discipline policies and practices. Resources on quality improvement processes are also provided.

School discipline websites and resources

American Institutes for Research provides research, toolkits, and resources that support educators in efforts to implement equitable school discipline. The website includes information on a wide range of topics, including district and school improvement, social and emotional learning, educator effectiveness, and youth-serving systems. http://www.air.org/topic/p-12-education-and-social-development/school-discipline

National Clearinghouse on Supportive School discipline provides tools, information, and fact sheets on positive approaches to school discipline. Topics include restorative justice, positive behavioral interventions and supports, conditions for learning, social and emotional learning, and evidence-based practices. http://supportiveschooldiscipline.org/

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration website hosts the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices. The interactive website provides information on the level of evidence for interventions as well as cost, required professional development, and other logistics related to implementation. http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/02_about.aspx

Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports provides research, professional development resources, and tools to support the implementation of positive behavioral interventions and supports in schools. The website also provides information on training and technical assistance resources that are available to school teams, parents, and students. http://www.pbis.org/

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences provides practice guides, intervention reports, single study reviews, and quick reviews of recent research on a wide array of topics relevant to early childhood and K–12 education. Featured sites on the website include products and services provided by the What Works Clearinghouse, the Regional Educational Laboratory Program, the Education Resources Information Center, and national data resources. http://ies.ed.gov/sites.asp

U.S. Department of Education, School Climate and Discipline provides information on resources, research, webinars, data tools, and policies related to school climate and discipline in early childhood and K–12 settings. The website also includes several compendiums on evidence-based school and classroom practices. http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html

U.S. Department of Justice provides civil rights guidance and resources to schools, including a series of Dear Colleague Letters that provide answers to states, school districts, parents, and community members on their obligation under federal law to provide equal educational opportunities to each child. The website also offers resources on evidence-based school and classroom practices to address disproportionate discipline. https://www.justice.gov/crt/guidance

Quality improvement process resources

Anderson, A. (2005). An introduction to theory of change. *Evaluation Exchange, 11*(2), 12–19. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED486082

Bocala, C., Henry, S. F., Mundry, S., & Morgan, C. (2014). *Practitioner data use in schools: Workshop toolkit* (REL 2015–043). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED551402

Cherasaro, T. L., Reale, M. L., Haystead, M., & Marzano, R. J. (2015). *Instructional improvement cycle: A teacher's toolkit for collecting and analyzing data on instructional strategies* (REL 2015–080). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Central. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED556126

Cokeley, S., Byrnes, M. A., Markley, G., & Keely, S. (2007). *Transformation to performance excellence: Baldrige education leaders speak out*. Milwaukee, WI: ASQ Quality Press.

Ewy, R. W., & Gmitro, H. A. (2010). *Process management in education: How to design, measure, deploy, and improve educational processes*. Milwaukee, WI: ASQ Quality Press.

Gerzon, N., & Guckenburg, S. (2015). *Toolkit for a workshop on building a culture of data use* (REL 2015–063). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED555739

Kekahio, W., Lawton, B., Cicchinelli, L., & Brandon, P. R. (2014). *Logic models: A tool for effective program planning, collaboration, and monitoring* (REL 2014–025). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED544779

Malone, N., Mark, L., & Narayan, K. (2014). *Understanding program monitoring: The relationships among outcomes, indicators, measures, and targets* (REL 2014–011). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED544758

Shakman, K., & Rodriguez, S. M. (2015). *Logic models for program design, implementation, and evaluation: Workshop toolkit* (REL 2015–057). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED556231

University of Chicago, Consortium on Chicago School Research. (2014). *Selecting effective indicators: College Readiness Indicator Systems (CRIS) resource series*. Chicago, IL: Author. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED561863

References

Aud, S., Fox, M. A., & KewalRamani, A. (2010). *Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups* (NCES No. 2010–015). National Center for Education Statistics Working Paper. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED510909

Bernstein, H., Bollmer, J. M., & Munk, T. E. (2012). *Measuring significant discrepancy: An indicator B4 technical assistance guide (Version 2.0)*. Rockville, MD: Westat. Retrieved March 25, 2016, from https://www.ideadata.org/tools-products/measuring-significant-discrepancy-an-indicator-b4-technical-assistance-guide.html.

Bollmer, J. M., Bethel, J. W., Munk, T. E., & Bitterman, A. R. (2014). *Methods for assessing racial/ethnic disproportionality in special education: A technical assistance guide*, rev. ed. Rockville, MD: Westat. Retrieved March 25, 2016, from https://www.ideadata.org/tools-products/methods-for-assessing-racialethnic-disproportionality-in-special-education---a-technical-assistance-guide-revised.html.

Boneshefski, M. J., & Runge, T. J. (2014). Addressing disproportionate discipline practices within a school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports framework: A practical guide for calculating and using disproportionality rates. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *16*(3), 149–158. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1041149

Brown, R. S., Wohlstetter, P., & Liu, S. (2008). Developing an indicator system for schools of choice: A balanced scorecard approach. *Journal of School Choice, 2*(4), 392–414. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ840581

Burke, A., & Nishioka, V. (2014). *Suspension and expulsion patterns in six Oregon school districts* (REL 2014–028). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED544799

Civil Rights Act of 1964. (1964). § 7, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq.

Council of State Governments, Justice Center. (2014). *School discipline data: A snapshot of legislative action*. New York, NY: Author. Retrieved March 25, 2016, from http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/NCSL-School-Discipline-Data-Brief.pdf.

Deming, W. E. (1986). *Out of the crisis*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Advanced Engineering Study.

DeVoe, J. F., & Darling-Churchill, K. E. (2008). *Status and trends in the education of American Indians and Alaska Natives: 2008* (NCES No. 2008–084). National Center for Education Statistics Working Paper. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED502797

Fabelo, T., Thompson, M. D., Plotkin, M., Carmichael, D., Marchbanks, M. P., III, & Booth, E. A. (2011). *Breaking schools' rules: A statewide study of how school discipline relates to*

students' success and juvenile justice involvement. New York, NY: Council of State Governments, Justice Center. Retrieved March 25, 2016, from http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/breaking-schools-rules-report/.

Gibb, A. C., & Skiba, R. J. (2008). Using data to address equity issues in special education. *Education Policy Brief, 6*(3), 1–8. Bloomington, IN: Center for Evaluation & Education Policy. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED500606

Gregory, A., & Weinstein, R. S. (2008). The discipline gap and African Americans: Defiance or cooperation in the high school classroom. *Journal of School Psychology, 46*(4), 455–475. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ796047

Kaufman, J. S., Jasper, S. S., Vaughn, E. L., Reynolds, J. S., Donato, J. D., Bernard, S. N., et al. (2010). Patterns in office referral data by grade, race/ethnicity, and gender. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 12*(1), 44–54. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ873846

Lee, T., Cornell, D., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2011). High suspension schools and dropout rates for black and white students. *Education and Treatment of Children, 34*(2), 167–192. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ920359

Raffaele Mendez, L. M., & Knoff, H. M. (2003). Who gets suspended from school and why: A demographic analysis of schools and disciplinary infractions in a large school district. *Education and Treatment of Children, 26*(1), 30–51. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ678680

Skiba, R. J., Michael, R. S., Nardo, A. C., & Peterson, R. L. (2002). The color of discipline: Sources of racial and gender disproportionality in school punishment. *Urban Review, 34*(4), 317–342. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ663870

Skiba, R. J., & Rausch, M. K. (2006). School disciplinary systems: Alternatives to suspension and expulsion. In G. G. Bear & K. M. Minke (Eds.), *Children's needs III: Development, prevention, and intervention* (pp. 87–102). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2014). *2013–14 Civil rights data collection*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved February 1, 2016, from https://crdc.grads360.org/#communities/pdc/documents/5117.

Vincent, C. G., Sprague, J. R., & Tobin, T. J. (2012). Exclusionary discipline practices across students' racial/ethnic backgrounds and disability status: Findings from the Pacific Northwest. *Education and Treatment of Children, 35*(4), 585–601. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ999358

Wallace, J. M., Jr., Goodkind, S., Wallace, C. M., & Bachman, J. G. (2008). Racial, ethnic, and gender differences in school discipline among U.S. high school students: 1991–2005. *Negro Educational Review, 59*(1–2), 47–62. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ819980

The Regional Educational Laboratory Program produces 7 types of reports

Making Connections
Studies of correlational relationships

Making an Impact
Studies of cause and effect

What's Happening
Descriptions of policies, programs, implementation status, or data trends

What's Known
Summaries of previous research

Stated Briefly
Summaries of research findings for specific audiences

Applied Research Methods
Research methods for educational settings

Tools
Help for planning, gathering, analyzing, or reporting data or research