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HOW DOES THE PROGRESSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY CLASSROOM INTERVENTION
EFFECT DISCIPLINE OUTCOMES IN URBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS?

by

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Abstract

School discipline has garnered national, state and local attention in regard to the excessive use of exclusionary practices and its lifelong impact on youth. The increase in exclusionary practices has been attempted to be addressed through discipline policy reform, the push for multi-tiered systems of support, and the adoption of restorative practices. The longevity of these initiatives, however, can be thwarted by the origins of most suspensions- the classroom. This study evaluated the Progressive Accountability Classroom Intervention for Middle School (PACI-MS) to explore its impact on discipline outcomes. The PACI-MS was created through the collaboration of network school counselors, the network school psychologist, administrators, special education teachers, and general education teachers to provide support for teacher-managed behaviors. The archival discipline data for students attending an urban middle school located in the southeastern United States were reviewed for one-year pre-intervention and two years post-intervention. The discipline outcomes for 83 students was analyzed from the pre-intervention year, post-intervention year, and for the post-intervention follow-up year. This program evaluation aimed to answer the general research question: How does the Progressive Accountability Classroom Intervention for Middle School effect discipline outcomes in urban middle school students? Discipline categories that were assessed include: after-school reflection, administrative referral, suspension, and expulsion occurrences. Findings indicated that the use of the PACI-MS led to statistically significant differences in discipline data across time points and discipline categories. There were also no mean differences in discipline occurrences based on gender prior to and after PACI-MS implementation. Additionally, after-school reflection occurrences decreased in the first year of implementation but increased in the second year of implementation. Administrative referral and suspension occurrence did not have a statistically significant decrease after PACI-MS implementation. Correlation analyses, however, indicated a strong relationship between administrative referral outcomes and suspension outcomes. Select years also conveyed a strong relationship between after-school reflection occurrences and suspension outcomes. This suggests that integrated programs such as the PACI-MS created through collaboration across disciplines, is necessary to impact classroom managed behavior and referrals. Other implications for future practice, school counselor leadership & collaboration, and other areas of study are reviewed and discussed.

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Introduction

Annually, over 3 million students are suspended from school, and over 130,000 are expelled (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Minority students are suspended and expelled at three times the rate of their non-minority peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Minority students also tend to receive harsher punishments for lower level offenses when compared to their non-minority peers. Examples of these lower level offenses include: disrespect, insubordination, or even excessive noise (Betters-Bubon, Brunner, & Kansteiner, 2016). These students are subsequently three times more likely to engage in criminal activity (Kang-Brown, Trone, Fratello, & Daftary-Kapur, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). These data lend to academic research that reports that minority students that are more likely to be impacted by exclusionary practices, are also behind their non-minority peers academically (Betters-Bubon et al., 2016).

The data show that minority students are lagging behind their Caucasian peers by 23-26 points in Math and 21-26 points in Reading on national assessments (Betters-Bubon et al., 2016). The tendency to rely on out-of-school suspension to modify student behavior creates a cyclical process of students not having access to academic material and continued skill deficits (American Federation of Teachers, 2018). Additionally, Kang-Brown et al. (2013) reports that a suspension or expulsion is directly correlated to grade retention. Subsequently, grade retention in secondary school is directly related to a higher likelihood of dropping out of school (Kang-Brown et al., 2013). This problem must be addressed to provide sustainable support for students and teachers that allows for the following: 1) disciplinary equity supported by teacher preparedness and student skill building; 2) student access to learning opportunities; and 3) increased academic achievement. School counselors, administrators, and other support staff have

the appropriate training to collaborate and build programs to address this unique student and teacher issue (Grothaus, 2013). The purpose of this study is to conduct a program evaluation on the Progressive Accountability Classroom Intervention (PACI) to determine its impact on discipline outcomes in urban middle school students.

A Call to Respond: School-Wide Interventions

In response to early calls to rethink and restructure school discipline, school-wide interventions like Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Practices were created and utilized by school districts (Bear, 2010). PBIS emerged as a juxtaposition to heavily followed codes of conduct (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Codes of conduct are structured to convey the consequences associated with behavior intensity, frequency, and sequence (Sugai & Horner, 2002). They serve as an indicator to the student that a school rule or expectation was not followed, and aim to message that future violations will not be tolerated (Sugai & Horner, 2002). The continued usage of consequences with students that are repeat offenders ignores social skill deficits and actually increases the occurrence of unwanted behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Relying on suspensions and expulsions and other reactionary means to address student behavior provides, if any, a temporary reduction in unwanted behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2002). While these reactionary methods provide short-term relief, they do not cultivate positive and sustainable learning environments that would actually support long-term behavior modification (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Proactive programming such as PBIS promotes positive classroom climates while providing more opportunities for academic success (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Restorative practices were introduced to schools more than a decade ago as a response to increases in exclusionary practices and as a supplement to multi-tiered systems of support like PBIS (Armour, 2016). Restorative practices aim to positively impact teacher-student

relationships by increasing the sense of belonging and collaboration present in schools (Armour, 2016). Armour (2016) states:

Restorative justice is a philosophy and set of principles and practices that bring together stakeholders voluntarily in the aftermath of crime or wrongdoing to directly address harm, make amends, and restore, to the extent possible, the normative trust that was broken. (p.1014)

While there has been moderate success in employing PBIS and restorative practices in schools, Grothaus (2013) suggests that the use of ‘one-size-fits-all’ programming is discouraged. Programming that is created and facilitated by several key stakeholders such as school counselors, and programming that allow for the support of the unique needs of students is necessary for the best results (Grothaus, 2013). The Progressive Accountability Classroom Intervention for Middle School (PACI-MS) aims to provide holistic supports to respond to and decrease problematic classroom behaviors.

Program Description: Progressive Accountability for Middle School

The PACI-MS was created in an effort to provide a teacher-managed, multi-tiered, preventative, and responsive response to middle school behaviors. The classroom intervention’s goals, objectives, scope, and intended audience is outlined below (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019).

Program purpose.

The PACI-MS was created to address exclusionary practice disparities for middle school students in an urban charter school network in Memphis, TN. The PACI-MS aims to directly employ equitable discipline practices for all scholars regardless of race, gender, and disability status. This aim is supported by multi-disciplinary interventions curated in an integrated

prevention and response model. PACI-MS is grounded by the following beliefs (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019):

- Student behavior is a physical manifestation of skill deficits and not a representation of the will of the student.
- Teacher response to student behavior is a crucial component in social skill building.
- The social emotional skill set of school staff, students, and teachers is continuously in flux and must be supported by both didactic and experiential training.
- Multiple disciplines must be consulted and embedded in practice to support the functionality of the classroom intervention. These disciplines include human lifespan and development, teacher strategies, behavior analysis, special education, education law and policy, discipline approaches, and adolescent group and individual counseling treatment approaches.

PACI-MS serves as the intersection of Multi-Tiered Systems and Supports (MTSS), Restorative Practices, Collaborative Problem Solving, and ‘Teach Like a Champion’ strategies. These approaches and modalities are used in concert to support the whole child, and simultaneously provide network-normed teacher guidelines and support. Subsequently, this support will increase teacher confidence, positive student relationships, and teacher-managed behavior. The increase in teacher-managed behaviors and interventions will, in turn, decrease exclusionary practices.

Program goals.

- Goal One: TDecrease the exclusionary practices of suspensions and expulsions.
- Goal Two: Identify and norm evidence-based strategies and interventions that all teachers can use to address scholar behavior, regardless of years of experience.

- Goal Three: Increase the existence of positive teacher-scholar relationships, which is vital to academic achievement and positive school climate.
- Goal Four: Increase emotional regulation for middle school scholars through prompted reflection, self-guided reflection, emotion identification, and appropriate group or individual referrals when applicable.
- Goal Five: Increase student achievement by addressing barriers at the scholar and teacher level.

Program objectives.

- Objective One: To ensure that equitable discipline practices are used across gender, race, and in regard to scholars with disabilities as evidenced by a decrease in racial disparities by 50%.
- Objective Two: To reduce the use of exclusionary practices such as suspensions and expulsions across gender, race, and disability status as evidenced by 50% decrease in total exclusionary practices utilized within three years of implementation and a less than a ten percent disparity amongst special groups (minority students, male minority students, and students with disabilities).
- Objective Three: To increase student perception of positive teacher-student relationships as indicated by our semester climate surveys.
- Objective Four: To decrease the use of exclusionary consequences by the third year of implementation, as evidenced by a proportional increase in the use of intervention opportunities in the classroom.

- Objective Five: To increase TN-Ready proficiency by ten percent annually, as a result of decreasing social skill deficits and increasing the development of emotionally regulated scholars that interact daily with teachers that build positive relationships with them.

Scope of program.

1. Monitor each objective outlined above through quantitative and qualitative methods, and share progress with all stakeholders (School Staff, Scholars, Families, and Community Partners) annually.
2. Provide training to key staff stakeholders (administrators, school counselors, teachers, and other school staff) to increase social emotional competency and time to practice the processes embedded in the theoretical framework.
3. To collaboratively diagnose needs indicated in the qualitative and quantitative data garnered in progress monitoring and make applicable adjustments that can improve programming.

Intended audience.

The PACI-MS is intended for stakeholders in secondary urban education. These stakeholders include, but are not limited to: principals, assistant principals, instructional leaders, school counselors, school social workers, general education teachers, special education teachers, parents and guardians of middle school students, community partners, and other student support specialists.

School Counselors as Leaders and Collaborators

Traditionally, school discipline is not a specific job responsibility for school counselors, but school counselors often find themselves involved in the effects of exclusionary practices (American School Counselor Association, 2019). Disruptive behaviors impact the classroom and

in turn impact the academic success for students with and without problematic behaviors (American School Counselor Association, 2019). Additionally, students are disproportionately sent to the school counselor for behaviors that can be managed by teachers, and miss direct instruction (Bryan, Day-Vine, Griffin, & Moore-Turner, 2012). This requires school counselors to consider their role as student advocates and review their roles as it relates to intervention and school discipline (American School Counselor Association, 2019; Stickel, Satchwell, & Meyer, 1991). While it is not the role of the school counselor to issue consequences, it is their role to be a key stakeholder in creating positive programming that can deter disruptive behaviors and exclusionary practices (American School Counselor Association, 2019).

The American School Counselor Association suggests that school counselors should spend a vast majority of their time providing direct services to students in the form of individual and group interventions (American School Counselor Association, 2019). Although school counselors are encouraged to spend a lot of their time facilitating direct services, the indirect services that they provide are also a valuable asset to the school environment. Within these indirect services, the school counselor can serve as a consultant for school leaders, teachers, and other staff in creating, maintaining, and monitoring the effectiveness of school-wide discipline programs (American School Counselor Association, 2019; Curtis, Van Horne, Robertson, & Karvonen, 2010; Grothaus, 2013). It is important for schools to have programs that both prevent and appropriately respond to disruptive behaviors (Curtis et al., 2010). Decreases in disruptive behaviors, and subsequent referrals and suspensions, can possibly make school counselors more available for preventative services instead of reactionary services (Curtis et al., 2010). School counselors' backgrounds in human life span development as well as experience with interventions makes them a fitting consultant in regard to shifting from punitive school discipline

to preventative and restorative practices that can protect ethnic groups that are disproportionately impacted by disciplinary consequences (American School Counselor Association, 2019; Grothaus, 2013; Stickel et al., 1991).

Definition of Terms (Graphic Provided in Appendix A)

Private Redirect:

- **Teacher:** Teacher gives an independent practice (a natural and creative break in the lesson) to the class to allow privacy for a proximate redirection. A redirection is an action of assigning or directing a scholar's behavior to a new or different purpose. The teacher is stating or noting the observed off-task behavior and redirecting to the expected behavior. Example: "Tim, I've noticed that you are talking during instruction; you are expected to follow along and fill in your notes" The goal is to bring the scholar back to the expectation.
- **Scholar:** Scholars appropriately respond with an understanding of the expectation and next steps.

What's Up Form:

- **Teacher:** A "What's Up" form is a reflection form used to help a scholar self-reflect and problem solve around a particular issue. The teacher should provide the opportunity for the scholar to complete the 'What's Up' form after a redirection has already been given, and the scholar was unable to self-regulate. The teacher gives this opportunity in a non-punitive manner.
- **Scholar:** The scholar completes the form in a designated area and given time to regulate in a non-punitive manner. The teacher utilizes the form to follow up with the scholar. The scholar and teacher problem solve collaboratively, if a solution is possible.

After-School Reflection:

- Teacher: After-School Reflection is utilized by a teacher after a scholar completes a ‘What’s Up’ form and re-engages in the same behavior.
- Scholar: The scholar is assigned to a structured time after school where scholars follow guided prompts to reflect on their behavior and identify barriers to their success. Their feedback is sent home for parent review and collaboration that is shared with the teacher upon re-entry to class.

Tier I Check-In/Check-Out (CICO):

- Teacher: A teacher utilizes Tier I CICO if a scholar continues to display a skill deficit concerning the same behavior after assignment to after school reflection. Tier I CICO allows the teacher to digitally monitor the student’s progress across classrooms via the computer database Review 360. The scholar is monitored in the areas of: Readiness, Respectfulness, Responsibility, and Safety.
- Scholar: The scholar checks in with the assigned teacher daily to discuss monitored data and set daily goals. Goal acquisition is tied to incentives to increase scholar motivation.

Collaborative Circle:

- Teacher: Teachers refer scholars that are not progressing on Tier I CICO to Collaborative Circle. The Collaborative Circle is facilitated by the school counselor and utilizes restorative discipline circles to encourage peer-problem solving in a small group setting.
- Scholar: The scholar identifies a maximum of three behaviors or concerns that pose a barrier for them in the educational environment. Scholars meet daily after school in a two-week cycle to build the capacity to solve problems and self-regulate.

Scholar Support Team (S-Team):

- Teacher: School staff refer students to the S-Team when students continue to struggle despite intervention attempts and/or the staff member becomes aware of risky behavior that requires immediate intervention. The S-Team serves to engage the parent, teacher, administrator, school counselor, and other specialists to create an intervention plan for the scholar. Initial meetings explore the scholar's familial, medical, and educational history. Follow-up meetings monitor the progress of chosen interventions such as: academic intervention plans, behavior intervention plans, individual counseling, group counseling, safety plans, etc.
- Scholar: Psychoeducation is provided to the scholar in relation to the chosen intervention and its expected impact on their behavior. The scholar is allowed to give feedback on the applied intervention throughout implementation. Adjustments to the plan are made based on both qualitative and quantitative feedback.

Admin Referral:

- Teacher: Admin referrals are automatically employed when it comes to offenses that are not teacher-managed as outlined in the code of conduct. They are also utilized in association with repetitive and persisting behaviors that have been addressed by utilizing all prior steps in the PACI-MS.
- Scholar: Scholar and parent will convene with the designated school leader. A combination of more individualized interventions as well as consequences can be utilized.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to conduct a program evaluation on the Progressive Accountability Classroom Intervention to determine its effect on school discipline outcomes in urban middle school students.

General Research Question:

How does the Progressive Accountability Classroom Intervention for Middle School (PACI-MS) effect discipline outcomes in urban middle school students?

From the general research question the following hypotheses were generated:

1. H₀: If the PACI-MS is implemented there will be no effect on the occurrences of after-school reflections for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years.

H₁: If the PACI-MS is implemented, then there will be a significant decrease in the occurrences of after-school reflections for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years.

2. H₀: If the PACI-MS is implemented there will be no effect on the occurrences of administrative referrals for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years.

H₁: If the PACI-MS is implemented, then there will be a significant decrease in the occurrences of administrative referrals for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years.

3. H₀: If the PACI-MS is implemented there will be no effect on the occurrences of suspensions for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016–2017, 2017 – 2018, and 2018–2019 school years.

H₁: If the PACI-MS is implemented, then there will be a significant decrease in the occurrences of suspensions for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years.

4. H₀: If the PACI-MS is implemented there will be no effect on the occurrences of expulsions for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years.

H₁: If the PACI-MS is implemented, then there will be a significant decrease in the occurrences of expulsions for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years.

5. H₀: If the PACI-MS is implemented there will be no effect on the difference in the occurrences of after-school reflections, administrative referrals, suspensions, and expulsions for male and female students over the course of the 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years.

H₁: If the PACI-MS is implemented, then there will be a positive effect on the difference in the occurrences of after-school reflections, administrative referrals, suspensions, and expulsions between male and female students over the course of the 2016–2017, 2017 – 2018, and 2018–2019 school years.

6. H₀: The implementation of the PACI-MS has no effect on the occurrences of after-school reflections, administrative referrals, suspensions, and expulsions for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years.

H₁: The implementation of the PACI-MS has a positive effect on the occurrences of after-school reflections, administrative referrals, suspensions, and expulsions for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016–2017, 2017–2018, and 2018–2019 school years. This

chapter provided a brief overview of the previous research followed by the statement of the problem. The introduction was followed by the purpose and significance of the study. The research questions are presented along with the definitions of key terms that are used throughout the proposal.

Chapter 2 provides the review of the literature pertaining to the history of federal involvement in education policy, the impact of accountability on instruction, perception studies, and teacher perceptions of accountability. Chapter 3 describes the study's methodology and procedures for data analysis and collection. Chapter 4 describes the findings of the study while Chapter 5 provides the discussion of the findings, connections to the previous research, and implications for practice and future research.

Review of Literature

School Discipline History

Public education in the United States was first initiated for the wealthy and to support access to religious teachings (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). In the mid-1600s, the Massachusetts Bay Colony made it mandatory that an elementary school was established in every moderately sized town and that a Latin school was established in bigger towns (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). Well into the 18th century, it was believed that the poor were not able to be educated and were better fit for labor (FindLaw, 2017). It was not until the late 1700s that there were structured educational tracks for both laborers and the upper class (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). During this period, select laborers were absolved into the upper-class educational track (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). At the turn of the 19th century, Pennsylvania started the call for free public education, but laws only applied it to poor children (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). Upper class citizens were expected to pay for the education of their children (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.).

Free public education for the poor was based on the Lancasterian model (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). This model structured instruction by appointing one teacher that was referred to as “master” over the direct instruction of hundreds of pupils in one room (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). The master would often give lessons to the older pupils, who were then responsible for educating the smaller pupils (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). At this time, there was still a persisting goal that poor pupils would become laborers and push the economy (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). Due to this underlying goal, much of the

emphasis of free public education was based around discipline and obedience (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). These were both characteristics that were sought after for factory workers. It was not until the early 1820s that the Secretary of State of Massachusetts, Horace Mann, pushed for free education for all despite class (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.; FindLaw, 2017). Boston started this initial push by attempting to make all primary education free, but this was thwarted due to businessmen being against tax increases (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). The second, but successful, attempt in Boston came from the opening of their first public high school in 1820. By 1827, public education was a legal requirement for all grade levels in Massachusetts (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). This set the precedent for other states and the legalization of public education despite class (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). It is important to note that although this provided educational statutes that transcended class, the laws at this time did not transcend race. As such, it was still illegal for enslaved minorities to be taught how to read.

In 1848, the first reform school for pupils that refused to attend public school was formed. Students often had to kneel on sharp objects, stand for extensive amounts of time, or were hit using rulers, cowhide, and switches (American Public Media, n.d.; APM Reports, 2016; “Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). This served as the catalyst for the creation of other reform schools and also started the early pairing of education and the juvenile justice system (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.).

In the mid-nineteenth century, there was an added educational focus for laborers. While in the 18th century there was a focus on discipline and obedience, the 19th century had an added focus on restraint to prevent social unrest. The one-room schoolhouses educational structure in

the 19th century was accompanied by brutal forms of discipline (American Public Media, n.d.). During this period there was a general belief that physical punishment was a crucial element in character development (American Public Media, n.d.). The mid-nineteenth century also ushered in both European immigrants and European influence within the realm of public education in the United States, and this came with opposing views in reference to discipline practices in the United States (American Public Media, n.d.; FindLaw, 2017). Early reformers such as Horace Mann, held that physical discipline only taught compliance, and did not actually teach the student how to self-regulate in the absence of physical discipline (American Public Media, n.d.; APM Reports, 2016). Although there were opposing views on *how* pupils should be disciplined, there was a general consensus that teachers should facilitate disciplinary consequences (American Public Media, n.d.).

Some educators started studying European discipline models, such as those proposed by Phillip Emanuel von Fellenberg, that denounced corporal punishment (FindLaw, 2017; Licea, 2016; Weymouth, 1967). His model expressed that corporal punishment should not be used in accordance with academic errors, and instead expressed that learning occurs best in a culture of encouragement and kindness (FindLaw, 2017; Licea, 2016; Weymouth, 1967). One of the first documented integrations of this pedagogy in an American school district took place in Quincy, Illinois (FindLaw, 2017; Licea, 2016; Weymouth, 1967). Francis Parker introduced what came to be known as the progressive Quincy Movement that connected kindergarten to elementary education and had a primary focus on social and academic learning through play (FindLaw, 2017; Licea, 2016; Weymouth, 1967). From this integration, a poignant implication emerged that highlighted the need to examine the volley between school discipline, education, and the teacher's role in creating environments that cultivate learning (FindLaw, 2017; Licea, 2016;

Weymouth, 1967). This was an important turn in discipline, but it was often practiced in silos and was not a common practice.

The late 19th century was characterized by African Americans fighting for the right to public education in the South (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). The Louisiana court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 ruled that railroad cars had to be separate but equal for Blacks and Whites (Henry, 1998; “Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.; Kauper, 1954). This court case set the foundation for separate but equal educational institutions for black children and adolescents in the South (Henry, 1998; “Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.; Kauper, 1954). Shortly after this, many states were required to also extend a public and free education to Asian children and adolescents (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). By 1910, public school was mandatory for all children and adolescents across the nation, regardless of class and race. This meant that the amount of time that children spent with parents decreased while the amount of time that children were governed by teachers increased. This caused a shift in discipline, and extended the teacher’s role to disciplinarian (FindLaw, 2017). At this time, teachers acted as parental disciplinarians and acted in lieu of parental presence (APM Reports, 2016). Parallel to these social changes within the school disciplinary system in the early 1900s, the legal system was navigating through and creating juvenile offender policies and procedures that would set them apart from adult offenders (FindLaw, 2017). Conclusively, it was generally determined that adult offenders should be punished for their crimes and juvenile offenders should be rehabilitated. It should be noted that this conclusive ideology was different from the view of child punishment in the school system at the time where punishment was utilized more than rehabilitation or teaching skills (FindLaw, 2017).

The early twentieth century was characterized with the view that education required controlled and normed behaviors while information was transmitted from teacher to student (FindLaw, 2017). After World War II in 1945, one-room schoolhouses were replaced by larger schools with multiple rooms and the emergence of the school principal as the lead disciplinarian (American Public Media, n.d.; APM Reports, 2016). Students that exhibited behaviors outside of the social norms or expectations were sent to the principal and faced punishment to regain control (American Public Media, n.d.; FindLaw, 2017). Teachers stood firm that disciplinary responsibilities were not in their contact and believed that behaviors should be handled outside of the classroom (American Public Media, n.d.). This was the start of excluding students from instruction on the basis of behavioral challenges (American Public Media, n.d.). This model is the undertone of our current discipline paradigm within the public-school system. There were, and continue to be, many challenges to this rigid view of discipline with encouragement to be more flexible, empathetic, affectionate, and relationship-focused. Critiques of this ideology expressed a fear that a move from the rigid constraints of school discipline will lead to a decrease in accountability, an unclear definition of right and wrong, the inability to comply, ego-centrism, and more (FindLaw, 2017). In the 1940s and 1950s, there was a social consensus that kids were out of control due to the influence of rock n' roll, movies, and comic books (American Public Media, n.d.). Blackboard Jungle became a popular movie in 1955, and the behaviors illustrated in the film confirmed the fears of adults in relation to adolescents in the 50s. This fear was addressed through strict rules applied in homes and schools across the country (American Public Media, n.d.). There was and remains to be, however, a failure to also address that school discipline used as a knee-jerk reaction to fear has failed to decrease or curb the likelihood of initiating and re-engaging in similar problematic behaviors (FindLaw, 2017). Inflexibility and

other control tactics also often led to power struggles in the classroom that have the ability to escalate age-appropriate behaviors to disciplinary offenses.

Parallel to disciplinary shifts, the country was responding to the legal ramifications of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954 (Gutierrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivken, 2009, “Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). This court case made the segregation of schools illegal on the basis that the separate educational facilities for Whites and Blacks were inherently unequal (Gutierrez et al., 1995; Hanushek et al., 2009, “Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). In the 1960s, out-of-school suspension was not only used as a way to reduce misbehavior but was also a physical manifestation of cultural gaps and fears that were difficult to navigate in an incensed post-segregation climate (Allman & Slate, 2011; American Public Media, n.d.). There was public fear in regard to Civil Rights protests and teachers even participated in strikes across the nation in regard to integration and the minority community’s interest in being incorporated in school policy (American Public Media, n.d.; “Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). There is some speculation that suspensions were also used as a direct way of pushing black students out of schools after desegregation (American Public Media, n.d.). American Media reports in their documentary *Spare the rod: Reforming school discipline* (n.d.) that Black students were twice as likely to be suspended than their White counterparts in the 1970s. 1974 was marked by *Milliken v. Bradley*, which essentially “legally segregated students of color in inner-city districts from white students in wealthier suburban districts (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d., p.6).” In concert with progressive racial inclusivity, the 1970s also saw an increase in crime and a subsequent focus on juvenile criminality (American Public Media, n.d.). The following decades

of the 1980s and 1990s continued to see increases in crime that was framed by the emergence of crack cocaine (American Public Media, n.d.).

In the 1980s, the media was saturated with stories about schools that were out of control and filled with violence (Retro Report, 2017). One of the most noted schools was Eastside High School in New Jersey. This school was plagued with criminal activity that included robbery, drug possession, drug distribution, gang activity, weapon possession, and truancy (Miller, 2011; Retro Report, 2017). A newly appointed school principal named Joe Clark fought to gain control of the school through harsh disciplinary practice (Miller, 2011; Retro Report, 2017). His most notable approach was gathering all students in the school's auditorium and expelling almost 300 identified problem students from the school simultaneously (Miller, 2011; Retro Report, 2017). During this time, his approach was applauded and welcomed by his educational peers and the public (Miller, 2011; Retro Report, 2017). His local school district pushed back on his exclusionary practices, but their accountability measures were drowned out by admiration from the public and high achievement test scores for East Side High (Miller, 2011; Retro Report, 2017). Principal Clark became a public beacon for school discipline and a movie was even created about his success at East Side High (Miller, 2011; Retro Report, 2017). This method of discipline spread and so did Clark's message that "there are some people that you are not going to save, they are incorrigible" (Retro Report, 2017, p. 4). This left a gap in the continuity of education and support for struggling students and did not hold schools and school districts accountable for creating systems of support within schools.

Additionally, anti-immigrant sentiments were supported by laws like Proposition 187 in 1994 that made it illegal for the children of undocumented immigrants to attend school, and a subsequent law in 1998 that made bilingual education illegal (Arnold, 1997; "Historical Timeline

of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). In concert with these cultural exclusions, there were also changes in the familial structure for minority students, increased exposure to violence in the media, the aforementioned increased exposure and access to illegal drugs, and other social factors that contributed directly to the severity and frequency of presenting behaviors of children & adolescents and the resulting increase in punitive consequences utilized in schools (FindLaw, 2017; “Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). The 1990s and 2000s, specifically, were marked with a high level of felonies that took place on school property (FindLaw, 2017). This spike in criminality on school campuses caused a panic and led to the development of zero tolerance policies. School shootings also impacted the cultural shift to zero tolerance policies (Bear, 2010; Retro Report, 2017). Although school shootings were isolated occurrences, the threat of students killing other students became a national crisis (Bear, 2010; Retro Report, 2017). After a mass shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, the public demanded that school districts respond immediately in ensuring that children would be safe in schools (Bear, 2010; Retro Report, 2017). Students started being viewed as possible predators and criminals (Retro Report, 2017). Since then, there has been a wavering alliance between the proven need for restorative and relationship-centered disciplinary practices and the social necessity of zero-tolerance policies. Generally, critics note that what was deemed as a stance to make students more accountable, was actually an unintentional push to criminalize adolescents with little change to student behavior and increased exclusionary practices for minority students (American Public Media, n.d.; FindLaw, 2017).

Zero-Tolerance Policies

Zero-tolerance policies shifted the focus of school discipline to primarily punishment

through the use of lengthy codes of conduct that create a road map to suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to alternative schools as well as a hyper-vigilance in regard to tracking negative student behaviors (Bear, 2010). Zero-tolerance policies were initially a direct response to drug enforcement policies in the 1980s (Skiba & Peterson, 1999 as cited in Allman & Slate, 2011). Initial behaviors that were categorized as zero-tolerance offenses included the possession of drugs, confirmed gang activity, and possession of weapons. The Guns-Free School Act was signed in 1994 by President Bill Clinton, but, by this time, zero tolerance policies were already informally enforced in schools (American Public Media, n.d; Kang-Brown et al, 2013.). To further push the widespread usage of zero tolerance policies, states were required to pass laws that mandated expulsions in connection with possession of a weapon in order to receive educational funds (Kang-Brown et al, 2013). Zero Tolerance policies outlined infractions that had to be addressed with “mandatory penalties” and often had to be reported to police (American Public Media, n.d., p.10). By the end of the 90s, school districts adopted zero tolerance policies in mass and the presence of security guards and police officers tripled in most public high schools. Over time, zero-tolerance policies have been used in response to less serious and violent offenses like the possession or use of tobacco and varied generalized school disruptions (Allman & Slate, 2011; Kang-Brown et al, 2013; Retro Report, 2017). This was the catalyst for the upward trend in out-of-school disciplinary practices for less egregious acts.

The social and educational implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act also played a major role in the creation of zero-tolerance policies. The policy attempted to make school districts accountable for school safety, but inadvertently fueled the mismanagement of zero-tolerance policies as evidenced in language such as: “adopt a zero-tolerance policy that empowers teachers to remove violent or persistently disruptive students from the classroom”

(Allman & Slate, 2011, page number). In the absence of guidance, this created variance in educational policies and fed the delinquent machine. Keeping this historical perspective in mind, since the early 1970s, suspension rates in the United States doubled from 3.4% of students in 1973 to 7.4% in 2010 (Porowski, et. al., 2014). This increase has disproportionately impacted minority students who are more than two times as likely to be suspended than their non-minority peers (Porowski, et. al, 2014). Suspensions and school-based arrests increased dramatically when zero tolerance policies were enforced, but the occurrence of school-based crime stayed the same (American Public Media, n.d., p. 11). Actually, in 1994 juvenile crime peaked but continued to decrease in following years (Kang-Brown et al., 2013). Despite this fact, a general sense that the youth should be feared was paramount, and suspensions and expulsions increased while youth crime declined to its lowest reported rates (Kang-Brown et al., 2013). Subsequent research that explored zero tolerance policies' actual impact on student misbehavior found that zero tolerance policies did not decrease student misbehavior (American Public Media, n.d.). Schools were suspending upwards to three million students a year but were doing so for subjective and minor infractions like class disruption and other behaviors that could be teacher managed. It was also emphasized that these rules that were supposed to be applied to all students, adversely impacted minority students more. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) initially supported zero tolerance policies, but now views it as a toxic remedy (American Public Media, n.d.). Randi Weingarten, president of the AFT, stated that:

It [Zero Tolerance Policies] didn't help us to get to the safe and welcoming school environments that every parent wants for his or her child. That every teacher wants and that every student needs. When you see that you're wrong, you have to say that you're wrong and apologize for it. (American Public Media, n.d., p. 11)

In response to data that conveyed that zero tolerance policies were leading to a school to prison pipeline and targeting minority students, the federal Departments of Education and Justice drafted a letter that was sent to the education commissioner for each state (American Public Media, n.d.). The letter instructed schools to use suspensions and expulsions as a last resort. It also stated that schools that were suspending minority students at a higher rate than their non-minority peers, would be investigated for possible civil rights violations (American Public Media, n.d.). This letter did two things: 1) It created awareness of the racial inequity embedded in school discipline as well as the highly criminalized usage of school discipline (American Public Media, n.d.). 2) It also unintentionally sent a message that students could not be suspended, and it did not equip schools with alternatives to the harsh discipline policies that had been adopted in some form for over a century (American Public Media, n.d.). Some educators interpreted the accountability guidelines to mean that they could not refer a student of color to the office for administrator worthy offenses (American Public Media, n.d.). For some schools, there was an extreme pendulum swing from zero tolerance policies to a complete absence of discipline (American Public Media, n.d.). The absence of discipline practices created an equally toxic environment when compared to the climate of schools during the zero-tolerance era.

In the early 21st century, collaborations amongst physical & mental health care professionals and educators aided in addressing the developmental and social implications present in disciplinary consequences. It was at this time that physiological and psychology contributors were also considered in relation to disciplinary practices (FindLaw, 2017).

The collaboration between health care professionals and educators uncovered psychological developments and implications in the area of attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, emotional disturbance, and other diagnoses that were prevalent in

school-aged children (FindLaw, 2017). This implied that controlling for normalcy should be replaced with individualized learning experiences that promote the best version of each scholar. With this advancement in collaborating with medical and psychological professional, there was still social unrest that impacted education as well as student perception and behavior, but now there was a highlighted need to structure a system that addressed the child or adolescent holistically and still supported school staff (“Historical Timeline of Public Education in the US,” n.d.). In response to the government push for equitable discipline practices, schools began adopting school wide initiatives and methods that curtail suspensions and increase student self-monitoring as well as student-teacher relationships (APM Reports, 2016). The most notable initiatives are Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Practices.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

PBIS first encourages the creation of school-wide rules and expectations for each area of the school (Sugai & Horner, 2002). This is different from a code of conduct which contains ambiguous words like disrespect, disruption, and other subjective words and defines each word for each setting in the school (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Research by Madsen, Becker, Thomas (1968) and others that dates all the way back to the late 1960s suggest that classroom make classroom climates more positive (Becker, Madsen, Arnold, & Thomas, 1967; Madsen, Becker, & Thomas, 1968; Thomas, Becker, & Armstrong, 1968 as cited in Sugai & Horner, 2002). Moreover, research by Mayer, Sulzer-Azaroff, and others further cited that there was a direct relationship between behavior improvement and the proactive teaching of school expectations (Mayer, 1995; Mayer et al., 1983; Sulzer-Azaroff & Mayer, 1994, 1986 as cited in Sugai & Horner, 2002). These studies conveyed decreases in behaviors such as vandalism, assault, classroom disruption, and office referrals (Sugai & Horner, 2002). This supports the idea that

progressive and holistic school-wide interventions garner better results than the traditional exclusionary practices that have been used for decades (Sugai & Horner, 2002). The data showcase the lasting power of inclusionary and preventative practices (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Positive behavior interventions and supports are encouraged based on these research findings:

a. punishment and exclusion are ineffective when used without a proactive support system (Gottfredson, Karweit, & Gottfredson, 1989; Mayer, 1995; Tolan & Guerra, 1994 as cited in Sugai & Horner, 2002, p. 28).

b. behavioral principles exist for organizing successful support for individual students with problem behavior (Alberto & Troutman, 1999; Kazdin, 1982; Kerr & Nelson, 1983; Vargas, 1977; Wolery, Bailey, & Sugai, 1988 as cited in Sugai & Horner, 2002, p. 28).

c. effective instruction is linked to reduced behavior problems (Becker, 1971; Heward, Heron, Hill, & Trap-Porter, 1984; Jenson, Sloane & Young, 1988; Lee, Sugai, & Horner, 1999; Sulzer-Azaroff & Mayer, 1986 as cited in Sugai & Horner, 2002, p. 28).

d. school-wide systems of behavior support can be an efficient system for reducing the incidence of disruptive and antisocial behavior in schools (Chapman & Hofweber, 2000; Colvin & Fernandez, 2000; Horner & Sugai, 2000; Lohrman-O'Rourke et al., 2000; Nakasato, 2000; Nelson, in press; Neresian et. al., 2000; Sadler, 2000; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997; Taylor-Greene & Kartub, 2000; Walker et al., 1996 as cited in Sugai & Horner, 2002, p. 28).

PBIS contains four key elements that must be in place for successful implementation (Sugai & Horner, 2002). The first element holds that the school must be able to identify measurable outcomes for school staff and students so that they can evaluate effectiveness (Sugai & Horner, 2002). The second element instructs schools to use research and evidence-based practices to best address behavior concerns (Sugai & Horner, 2002). More specifically, the

second element urges schools to stay the course in the midst of new initiatives and strategies (Sugai & Horner, 2002). The third element urges school to utilize data to make decisions with regard to implementation, measuring effectiveness, and accurately identifying problem behaviors or skill deficits (Sugai & Horner, 2002). In the fourth, and final element, schools are encouraged to review current systems that directly impact the efficiency of their positive interventions (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Questions to consider include: Are current policies relevant and aligned with program goals? Are committees formed and meeting with fidelity? Are all key stakeholders involved in the system? Are officials that are in school leadership willing to participate and are they aligned with program goals (Sugai & Horner, 2002)? While schools that utilize PBIS with fidelity report a reduction in suspensions and expulsions nationally, it is important to note that within this reduction there is often still a disparity in the use of exclusionary practices based on race (Armour, 2016). This indicates that PBIS alone does not specifically mediate the issue of exclusionary practices being used at a higher rate with students of color versus their peers.

In 2016, PBIS was rebranded in several states and revamped as Response to Intervention-Behavior (RTI²-B). The rebranding signaled the acknowledgment that there was a direct relationship between academics and behavior and that school wide, small group, and individual interventions are necessary to sustainably impact the achievement gap in schools (Betters-Bubon et al., 2016). The persisting issue is that most of these interventions are not created by teachers which poses a challenge in obtaining buy-in, and the interventions are often facilitated by non-teaching staff or professionals (Betters-Bubon et al., 2016). There is a need for class level expectations and steps that cultivate relationship building, learning, student accountability, teacher accountability, and teacher leadership (Williams & Wiggan, 2016). Suspensions and other disciplinary consequences are not always garnered through isolated events (Williams &

Wiggan, 2016). They are driven by teacher referrals to administration (Williams & Wiggan, 2016). Steps that can streamline this process and increase teachers' ability to handle misbehavior through teachable moments, education, and empathy can also decrease the need for consequences that place children, especially minority students, out of school.

Restorative Practices

Restorative practices impress upon its participants to covet values that increase self-worth and global acceptance (Armour, 2016). The tenets of the practice teach scholars to respect themselves and others, be accountable, and value relationships (Armour, 2016). The first tier of restorative practices includes the use of restorative circles (Armour, 2016). In restorative circles, regularly scheduled time is allotted in the school day for small groups or classes to come together with an assigned adult to identify and maintain the values of their classroom community (Armour, 2016). The second and third tier of restorative practices include: "targeted circles, restorative conferencing, or peer juries- interventions that include repairing damage, reintegrating back into the school, and resolving differences" (Armour, 2016, p. 1018). The first tier of restorative practices works to prevent school culture dynamics that result from a lack of relationship or sense of belonging, while the second and third tier are more responsive in nature (Armour, 2016). Schools report the most significant impact when both preventative and responsive practices are present (Armour, 2016). While PBIS and Restorative Practices have garnered success in their own right, the number of exclusionary practices that originate from classroom or teacher referrals remain high (Williams & Wiggan, 2016). A class-room intervention that fuses teacher leadership, multi-tiered supports, restorative practices, and other evidence-based strategies is needed to combat increases in administrative referrals stemming from the classroom.

Current Research

Exclusionary practices continue to disproportionately impact students of color while maintaining the achievement gap. Suspensions and expulsions in secondary schools saw a 40% increase in suspensions over a 40-year span (Kang-Brown et al., 2013). One in 13 students were suspended and expelled from 1972 to 1973, while one in nine students were suspended and expelled from 2009 to 2010 (Kang-Brown et al., 2013). On average, two million students are suspended and expelled from secondary schools annually, compared to three million students that graduate from high schools on average. Much research has been conducted to explore this problem from an educational system, school, and teacher stance. A recent study conducted by Williams & Wiggan (2016) noted that many of the disciplinary referrals are not coming from serious incidents such as fighting, destroying school property, or drugs—but are instead coming from classroom referrals around disrespect and other class disruptions. More specifically, in a study that compared two urban charter schools in Chicago, lower rates of discipline referrals were facilitated by highly qualified teachers (higher years of experience and possessed a teaching degree) when compared to their colleagues that were not highly qualified (Williams & Wiggan, 2016). There was additional research by Ladd & Sorensen (2019) that found that urban schools also tend to have low rates of teacher retention in comparison to rural and suburban schools. The high turnover in teachers impacts both academic and culture consistency within these schools (Ladd & Sorensen, 2019). High turnover also leads to the hiring of new teachers or other unqualified staff, and this staff pool is not often retained which continues the cycle of low teacher retention in inner city and urban schools (Ladd & Sorensen, 2019). This research implies several things: 1) New teachers need a level of support to understand and triage challenging behaviors that they may encounter. 2) Preparation and support is something that the school

should be prepared to provide in a way that is organized and considerate of their unique school culture. 3) Regardless of the qualification of the teacher, an intervention is necessary at the classroom level to mitigate referrals to administration (Williams & Wiggan 2016).

Okonofua, Paunesku, and Walton (2016) addressed these implications by evaluating how a brief empathic intervention impacted student and teacher views on discipline as well as outcomes. Teacher development in the area of empathy through professional developments and trainings cut administrative referrals in half for teachers that received the training versus teachers that did not receive the training (Okonofua et al., 2016). Students also perceived teachers that received the training as fair and cited a stronger relationship with the teachers in comparison to teachers that did not receive the training (Okonofua et al., 2016). Although this study showcased a successful intervention, it is important to note that the intervention was brief and assessed immediately after the training. More data would have to be collected to demonstrate the impact of the intervention over time. Empathy training through article and case study discussion can be an ambiguous task. It is possible that some teachers will not see themselves within the discussions and continue in a traditional classroom model. It is also possible that some teachers may be challenged in moving from theory to practice. In comparison, the Progressive Accountability classroom intervention provides steps and guidelines for empathetic practice in the classroom.

Similarly, a program evaluation of a Restorative Practice program was conducted where violent and serious conduct offenses were reduced by 52% after a year of implementation of the three-year program (Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2016). Smaller incidents like insubordination, disrespect, and classroom disruption were reduced by 70% (Gregory et al., 2016). Schools that used the three-year Restorative Practice program saw a reduction in

suspensions for minority students and a smaller gap between their disciplinary occurrences and the occurrences on their non-minority peers (Gregory et al., 2016). These are also promising data in regard to the reduction of disproportionate disciplinary practices, but it should be noted that a huge part of the restorative practice is utilized after a student receives a disciplinary consequence. There are preventative teacher-led components within the Restorative Practice system, such as classroom circles, that are invaluable in creating the student-teacher relationships that buffer maladaptive behaviors in the classroom. It should also be noted that restorative practices do not offer guidelines and suggested steps for persisting behaviors. Progressive Accountability aims to provide suggested steps that authoritatively combine relationship and discipline.

Progressive Accountability Classroom Intervention

In reviewing discipline reform and its impact on academics Flay, Allred, and Orway (2001) implemented the Positive Action Program. The Positive Action Program was designed for grades K-6 and consisted of several components: school wide curriculum, school wide climate inquiries and modifications, family inclusion, and community inclusion (Flay et al., 2001). The program was employed in two school districts where it reduced disciplinary referrals by 78% in one district and 85% in the other within a year (Flay et al., 2001). It also improved achievement by 16% in one district and 52% in the other within a year (Flay et al., 2001). This research suggests that programs that are created to reduce exclusionary practices must crosswalk social-emotional skill acquisition, data monitoring, and stakeholder inclusivity to garner positive results. Data associated with secondary exclusionary practice also highlight a disparity in primary and secondary suspensions and expulsions, where more exclusionary practices are used

with secondary students. This suggests that more specialized school wide programs are needed at the secondary level to assist school staff and scholars in increasing pro-social behaviors.

The PACI-MS aims to address this gap with the following evidence-based components:

- 1) Private Redirect- Teacher gives a private redirect in a positive, scholar-centered manner (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019).

The private redirect step in the PACI-MS, was gleaned from the private individual correction strategy suggested in the widely adapted *Teach Like a Champion* classroom strategies guide.

Teach Like a Champion defines private individual correction as an attempt to maintain privacy in cases where teachers have to directly prompt students to extinguish behaviors contrary to real-time expectations (Lemov, 2015). The core of the strategy resides in an authoritative teaching style that utilizes high involvement and high warmth to create positive classroom culture and, ultimately, convey teacher care (Lemov, 2015). It is suggested that the best practice of this strategy involves redirections that are not only explicit with a clear indication of the appropriate behavior or task that the scholar should be engaged in, but also stated in a warm and discreet manner (Lemov, 2015). The discretion assists the teacher in not embarrassing the scholar and possibly impacting the student-teacher relationship or student motivation (Lemov, 2015). The undercurrents of this strategy point directly to data that hold that teacher-student trust impacts the student's perception of authority and rules, cooperation, and discipline outcomes. Perception of authority and subsequent infractions labeled as 'defiance' and 'disrespect' account for a large proportion of disciplinary consequences for secondary students (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). There is also supporting data that teachers view minority middle school students as the most defiant group in comparison to elementary and high school students (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). The existence of these perceptions calls for a neutralizing, but relationship-focused,

approach. Private redirection serves as the first attempt to build trust, convey mutual respect, and mitigate authority struggles (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019).

Gregory and Ripski's study (2008) explored the possible predictive relationship around teacher-student relationship and externalized student behavior as well as internalized trust of teacher authority between thirty-two teachers and high school students. Seventeen of the thirty-two teachers used a relational approach with thirty-two students in an after-school discipline program (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). The relational approach was defined as an emphasis on connectedness and personal relationships in an effort to elicit cooperation and trust (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). Fifteen of the thirty-two teachers used their traditional means of engaging with the same sample of students (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). In the findings, teachers that utilized the relational approach reported less defiant behaviors and higher cooperation than their colleagues that did not utilize the approach (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). Conjointly, students reported that they viewed themselves as more cooperative and engaged in the classrooms that used the relational approach and rated their level of trust higher for these particular teachers (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). These data are similar to a 1996 study by Smetana & Bitz, that found that students' belief in the genuine nature of the teacher's authority versus the execution of conventional rules led to decreased rates of misbehavior (as cited in Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). This research implies that efforts to prioritize student-teacher relationship increase both trust and compliant behaviors. This idea is supported in the execution of private redirection in an effort to build rapport and authentic relationships through mutual respect. It is also important to note that a level of trust was able to be built with students that were already in an after-school discipline program and were suspended previously. This conveys that intentional relational programming can make a significant impact with students with multiple offenses, even at a high

school level. Earlier interventions could possibly rehabilitate middle school student perceptions in reference to authority. As stated by Gregory & Ripski (2008): “Having trust in a teacher may be particularly important when students interpret ambiguous teacher cues. It is well established that when adolescents read hostile intent into another’s actions, they are more likely to react aggressively” (p.346).

2) What’s Up?- Teacher gives scholar an opportunity to share perspective (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019).

Step 2 in the PACI-MS involves the teacher utilizing a ‘What’s Up Form’ to explore the cause of persisting unmet expectations from the scholar’s perspective (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019). This form was constructed based on some of the general tenets of a cognitive-behavioral model called Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS). CPS holds that externalizing behaviors are a result of cognitive deficits in the areas of flexibility or adaptability, frustration tolerance, and problem solving (Greene, Abalon, & Martin, 2006; Greene, 2011; Schaubman, Stetson, & Plog, 2011). Research by Pollastri, Epstein, Heath, & Abalon (2013) suggests that adult expectations cannot be comprehended or met until the lagging skills associated with these cognitive deficits are identified and taught. Until these skills are taught, the scholar will likely struggle to consistently respond appropriately to directives across settings, be unable to express their needs at all or in an appropriate way, and may not be able to handle frustration in a regulated fashion (Pollastri et al., 2013). Usually, a lack of skills in one or more of these areas lead to externalized behaviors that are inappropriate in an educational setting (Pollastri et al., 2013).

Research by Blasé (1986), Geving (2007), and Yoon (2002) imply that externalized behaviors that present within the classroom can cause teacher related stress (Schaubman et al., 2011). A lot of this stress stems from academic-related expectations from administrators or the

school district that are perceived to outweigh student social or cognitive skill mastery, in concert with a limited amount of resources to assist teachers that did not receive explicit training on how to address externalizing behaviors in the classroom (Schaubman et al., 2011). This stress can directly adversely impact the teacher-student relationship that is crucial in student success (Schaubman et al., 2011). More specifically, due to externalizing behaviors' ability to disrupt instruction and impact teacher goals; over time, the frequency of this behavior impacts the teacher's interpretation of presenting behavior and subsequently their perception of the scholar (Schaubman et al., 2011). Schaubman et al. (2011) state:

Many teachers often believe that the cause of a student's problems are beyond the teacher's control—that they are best explained by factors intrinsic to the child, such as the child's cognitive potential or motivation, or that they are caused by family or other environmental factors outside of school. (p. 76)

Notably, a study conducted in 1983 by Ysseldyke, Christenson, Algozzine, & Thurlowe found that 85 percent of teachers attributed student behaviors to an inherent issue that resides in the child (as cited in Schaubman et al., 2011). Teachers did not view themselves as potential contributors to student triggers or challenges (Schaubman et al., 2011). In not being able to see themselves as contributors or possible change agents, student behaviors continue to be viewed as variables that are out the scope of the teacher and are ultimately perceived as a stressor (Schaubman et al., 2011). This idea can negatively impact student-teacher relationships and thwart the teacher's ability to be objective and curious about student behavior (Schaubman et al., 2011). Schaubman et al. (2011) explain how this becomes cyclical in the teacher-student relationship:

Thus, it is easy to imagine a vicious cycle, wherein teachers interpret misbehavior as something beyond their control, their response is only reactive—to reprimand the student—perhaps leading to the student’s greater dissatisfaction with school and an increased likelihood of further misbehavior, which could only increase the teacher’s level of stress and likelihood of a negative response, such as reprimanding or punishing the student. (p. 77)

Collaborative Problem Solving directly impacts this dynamic by encouraging the identification of underlying skill deficits and working collaboratively to close the gap in these skill deficit areas (Greene et al., 2006; Greene, 2011; Schaubman et al., 2011). CPS explicitly conveys that there is an adult role in assisting students in building their skills and becoming better problem solvers (Schaubman et al., 2011). It also encourages the use of proactive strategies that can decrease the frequency of maladaptive externalized behaviors in the clinical and educational setting (Schaubman et al., 2011). While reactive strategies can lead to increased stress, diminished teacher-student and teacher-colleague relationships, as well as decreased instructional minutes—proactive strategies positively impact all of these areas and overall school culture (Schaubman et al., 2011). A study in 2006 by Beaman, Wheldall, & Kemp found that teachers that utilized reactive strategies and classroom management techniques had student reports of less engagement in lessons and less time on task (as cited in Schaubman et al., 2011).

The second PACI-MS step aims to proactively address student behavior by remaining curious about what barriers may exist in reference to the scholar being able to meet the teacher’s expectation (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019). The form asks a neutral question to the scholar—“What’s Up?”—and then asks the scholar to express how the teacher can collaboratively assist them in mitigating the barrier or extinguishing the problem (Gestalt

Community Schools, 2019). This question derives from a component of Collaborative Problem Solving called ‘Plan B’ (Greene, 2011). In a Plan B conversation, an adult and student can come together to explore challenges as partners (Greene, 2011). The adult opens up the Plan B conversation with the student by asking them “What’s Up?” or similar question, to engage in a non-threatening fashion (Greene, 2011). In the same way, PACI-MS employs this question to initiate problem solving in an objective and empathetic way (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019). Additionally, the ‘What’s Up’ form asks the scholar to identify feelings that they may be experiencing due to the present barrier (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019). Many students that have lagging skills in the areas of flexibility, adaptability, and emotional regulation also have difficulty identifying their emotions and triggers (Schaubman et al., 2011). This second step in the PACI-MS aims to both assist teachers and students in working collaboratively to solve problems and to start the initial process of identifying possible lagging skills that are impeding scholars’ ability to comply with expectations (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019).

- 3) After-School Reflection- Teacher refers scholar to after-school reflection and phone call to parent (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019).

In direct response to the increased use of the exclusionary practices of suspensions and expulsions, step three of the PACI-MS aims to address student behavior through inclusion, an opportunity to problem solve and parent communication (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019). At the onset of the implementation of PACI-MS, after school reflection served to replace previous intermediary practices that were serviced through after school detention. Traditionally, after school detention is punitive in nature and has not been proven to make positive changes to student behaviors or school climate (Ashworth et al., 2008). Revamping after-school detention ideals to incorporate restorative practices could prove fruitful to both behavior or emotional

regulation for the student and overall school climate (Armour, 2016). In traditional detention, students are often asked to sit quietly and are not afforded an opportunity for skill building or identifying and repairing the harm associated with their referring behavior (Armour, 2016). Restorative practices shift climate by promoting respect, accountability, and creating the space to build trust and relationships (Armour, 2016). It is important to note that restorative practices are not meant to only be used with students with behavior challenges (Armour, 2016). Restorative practices are meant for school-wide, Tier I use and shift the paradigm from power or authority-based performance to behaviors that are a by-product of authentic relationships between teachers and students (Armour, 2016).

At a Tier I level, it is suggested that intimate community meetings are held with teachers and students to build a sense of belonging, develop classroom values, and address classroom challenges collaboratively (Armour, 2016). Tier II and Tier III implementation is more individualized and intensive (Armour, 2016). The goal of Tier II and Tier III restorative practices include restoring specific relationships, repairing harm, and reintegrating into the classroom or school community (Armour, 2016). Restorative practices suggest that educators move away from asking punitive questions such as: What rule did you break? Who broke the rule? How should you be punished as a response to your behavior? Instead, they should rely on restorative questions such as: What harm did your behavior cause and to who? What are your needs? Who can assist you in addressing these needs? How can you repair the harm and restore the relationship? (Armour, 2016). PACI-MS embeds questions inspired by restorative practices in after-school reflection worksheets (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019). After the scholar completes their worksheet within the allotted reflection time, parents are asked to review the form to contribute their perspective and provide insight on scholar needs (Gestalt Community

Schools, 2019). The scholar and referring teacher then conference to review student needs and to provide an opportunity to repair any harm that resulted due to the referring behavior or interaction that led to the referral (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019).

Employing restorative practices can be successful in this space as evidenced by several studies that convey a positive impact with relation to school discipline. In one study of a high school in Philadelphia, acts of violence and other serious incidents were reduced by more than half (Armour, 2016). A middle school in California also cited improvements with an 84% decline in suspensions and a report of zero suspensions in their first two years of the implementation of restorative practices (Armour, 2016). Similarly, five middle schools and two high schools employed restorative practices for three years and reported a 30% decrease in suspensions across all schools and a 90% decrease in administrative referrals (Armour, 2016). Notably, schools did not just report a decrease in teacher referrals, but an actual decrease in the externalizing behaviors (Armour, 2016). Data connected to restorative practices demonstrated widespread impact ranging from decreases in absenteeism, student arrests, tardiness, and physical altercations—with subsequent increases in graduation rates and student achievement for secondary students (Armour, 2016). In a study of a K-8 urban schools, racial disparities connected to suspensions decreased over three years of implementation as evidenced by suspensions decreasing from 51% to 14% for black students and 34% to 6% for Hispanic students. These data suggest that integrating restorative practices within responses to discipline can be promising in addressing and decreasing office referrals, exclusion, inherent racism that resides in discipline culture and, ultimately, the school to prison pipeline.

- 4) Intervention- Teacher will facilitate Tier I Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) and send notification to parent, teacher, and dean (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019).

While peer-reviewed research and studies are limited in reference to the CICO strategy, research around tiered student supports throughout the years in the areas of Positive Behavior and Supports (PBIS), Positive Behavior and Supports Plus (PBIS-Plus), Multi-Tiered Systems and Supports (MTSS) and what is now known as Responsive to Intervention for Academics and Behavior (RTI-B²) respectively convey the benefits of a tiered approach to serving all students (Bettors-Bubon et al., 2016; Bradshaw, Pas, Goldweber, Rosenberg, & Leaf, 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Recently, elementary research confirmed the benefits of universal Tier I strategies with a reported reduction in office referrals, exclusionary discipline practices, and externalized behaviors (Bradshaw et al., 2012). Additionally, the elementary schools also reported an increase in school climate (Bradshaw et al., 2012). One of the major components of the Tier I approach the behavior modification incorporates identifying and teaching school expectations for all school areas (i.e. cafeteria, hallway, bathroom, classroom, and more) to all scholars (Sugai & Horner, 2002). In accordance with this particular component, CICO allows the teacher to monitor scholars that are struggling to meet Tier I expectations. CICO is directly facilitated by teachers, but data monitoring is completed by the school counselor (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019). Behaviors are monitored in relation to taught expectations as a remediation prior to escalation to more individualized Tier II services and as a means to start exploring which Tier I expectations pose a challenge for the scholar (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019). This checkpoint streamlines the track to both tiered services and discipline stages (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019).

- 5) Intervention II- Teacher makes referral to collaborative circle and phone call to parent (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019).

Step five of the PACI-MS is specifically for scholars that have received several after-school reflections and struggle to meet general Tier I expectations as evidenced by unfavorable CICO data (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019). In comparison to after-school reflection, scholars are still required to remain after school, but they work as a group to explore needs, problem solve, and create actions plans (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019). Hawthorne Elementary School in South Dakota recognized a gap and opportunity in their response to disciplinary infractions and created an after school student-centered process driven by evidence-based restorative practice tenets (Armour, 2016). Even though these data were gleaned from a primary school, the results are hopeful for secondary implementation. Similar to the process outlined in the PACI-MS, Hawthorne Elementary School employed a group process where students brought in completed forms that detailed any behaviors that caused harm to a person or the school community as well as a form that detailed their perspective of the incident (Ashworth et al., 2008). The students sit together in a circle to introduce themselves, review the group's common goal of helping each other and themselves as individuals, review group rules, and sign confidentiality agreements (Ashworth et al., 2008). Students then work with an adult mentor to review the incident, explore feelings associated with the incident, and to initiate problem solving (Ashworth et al., 2008). The group then comes back together to share final reflections and proposed action steps to garner group feedback. The plan is set for implementation during the following school day and the circle is closed with positive reflections (Ashworth et al., 2008). Results surrounding this particular school and its circle process were not disclosed, but it is built on the promising results of restorative practices across the nation (Ashworth et al., 2008).

- 6) Counselor Referral- Teacher makes a referral to the Scholar Support Team (S-Team) for repeated behavioral infractions that are not in stages 3-5 on the code of conduct (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019).

Similar to step four in the PACI-MS, step six utilizes a referral process to service students that need the more intensive and individualized supports provided in Tier II and Tier III (Bradshaw et al., 2012). While there have been several studies that convey the benefits of Tier I universal supports, research about the more intensive tiers is scarcer (Bradshaw et al., 2012). This is important because while 80% of the school is projected to respond appropriately to Tier I expectations, 10-15% will require group and early individual interventions (Tier II), and a remaining 5-10% will need specialized individual interventions (Tier III) (Bradshaw et al., 2012). In the interest of servicing all students, it is important to explore effective processes for all tiers (Bradshaw et al., 2012).

Scholars are primarily referred to S-Teams by teachers but they can also be referred by other staff members and parents (Bradshaw et al., 2012). The goal of the S-Team meeting is to review background information, applicable academic data, and/or behavior data to identify appropriate interventions that will best support the student in being successful (Bradshaw et al., 2012). The S-Team meeting is facilitated by the school counselor and examples of typical interventions include functional behavior assessments (FBAs) and Tier II Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) (Bradshaw et al., 2012). Functional behavior assessments aim to uncover the function of the behavior of scholars that are not responding to universal supports (Bradshaw et al., 2012). An example of the flow of a referral to the S-Team that results in a FBA is as follows: The scholar is identified as an individual that could benefit from extra supports and previous progressive accountability steps have been implemented with no behavior modification; the teacher then

refers the scholar to the S-Team and facilitating school counselor; the S-Team meeting is held with applicable stakeholders which include the parent or guardian, referring teacher, school administration, and the student if possible; academic, behavior, and background information is reviewed by the S-Team; identify applicable interventions based on presented data; identify roles and responsibilities associated with the identified interventions; identify possible function of behavior; create, implement, and monitor a behavior plan that addresses the proposed function of the behavior (Bradshaw et al., 2012).

Tier II CICO is different from Tier I CICO in that it monitors specialized behavior expectations in comparison to universal behavior expectations (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019). Similar to Tier I CICO, however, Tier II CICO allows the scholar to receive feedback on their progress on meeting behavioral goals (Bradshaw et al., 2012). It also allows the scholar to check in with one staff member daily to discuss challenges and share successes (Bradshaw et al., 2012). This simultaneously teaches the skills of accepting feedback and builds student-teacher relationships if used properly (Bradshaw et al., 2012). Studies have conveyed that the use of CICO reduces administrative referrals (Bradshaw et al., 2012).

A 2006 study by Aleada Lee-Tarver indicated that many teachers receive training on S-Team referrals, but do not understand the premise of the process. This study also found that teachers were only involved in the S-Team process when they personally referred a scholar and had limited knowledge if they were never a referring party (Lee-Tarver, 2006). The study also found that teachers viewed S-Teams primarily as a track to special education services and can often over identify minority students without exploring alternative interventions (Lee-Tarver, 2006). These findings support the need for coaching to properly facilitate S-Teams and the subsequent interventions identified by the team. In a three-year study that involved 42 Maryland

elementary schools, the implementation of S-Team coaching, corresponding FBAs, and evidence-based interventions were monitored to identify outcomes (Bradshaw et al., 2012). Results from this study indicate that consistent teacher coaching in relation to S-Teams and fidelity in implementing interventions have a significant impact on increasing academic achievement (Bradshaw et al., 2012).

- 7) Administrative Referral- Teacher provides an administrative referral to the Dean of Scholars or the Principal after steps 1-6 are completed or if the scholar presents with behaviors represented in stages 3-5 of the code of conduct (Gestalt Community Schools, 2019).

Theoretical Implications

Traditionally, quantitative research is not often paired with a theoretical framework (Sablan, 2018). There is, however, an emergence of researchers that suggest that the merging of theory and quantitative data assists in unearthing more contextual and holistic data analyses (Sablan, 2018). There are increasing opportunities in education and other areas, to delve deeper in quantitative research and explicitly address the issue of race, its impact on the group surveyed, and its impact on the data collected (Sablan, 2018). Historically, quantitative research outcomes have been misapplied and misinterpreted, but attempts to sit at the helm of the identification of racial disparities (Garcia, Lopez, & Velez, 2018). Quantitative research cannot continue to operate in a silo that does not extend to inclusion of self-reflection and power dynamics, as well as political, historical, and economic structures (Garcia et. al, 2018). QuantCrit reimagines quantitative research by merging quantitative research and critical race theory to critically explore narratives that exist within the data and are crucial to accurate data analysis (Garcia et. al, 2018; Sablan, 2018). The Critical Race theory is typically viewed as only a framework, but

QuantCrit holds that it should not be confined and can be far reaching if it is also utilized as a tool to collect and analyze data (Sablan, 2018).

The roots of Critical Race Theory hold the assumption that injustice and subjugation shape our experience. It states that people only partly determine their own existence but that the social system determines it as well (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002).

Critical theory is concerned in particular with issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy; matters of race, class, and gender; ideologies; discourses; education; religion and other social institutions; and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system. (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002,p. 91).

Critical Race Theory was born out of the legal analysis of race and the creation of legislative policy in reference to race in the United States. It also has deep roots in sociology, history, ethnic studies, and women's studies (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). This theory was translated from the language of law to education in the mid-90s as evidenced by the work of Ladson-Billings and Tate (Williams & Wiggan, 2016). Critical race theory specifically addresses the sources of oppression within society with a direct focus on race relations (Williams & Wiggan, 2016). Its existence directly impacts, dismantles, and disrupts present power structures as well as promotes social change (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

Critical race theory directly confronts the dominant narrative interwoven in education. (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). It can be used to review disproportionate disciplinary practices where minority students are suspended and expelled far more than their non-minority counterparts (Williams & Wiggan, 2016). It can also review the disconnect between education ideals or expectations and the actual lived experiences of students (Williams & Wiggan, 2016). QuantCrit can confront both the dominant narrative in education and quantitative research

(Sablan, 2018). There is an assumption that quantitative research lacks bias (Sablan, 2018). There is also a juxtaposed notion that quantitative research does not fully represent minorities, and instead provides linear analyses that ignore social and structural impacts directly related to race and racism (Sablan, 2018). Without the accurate analysis of the experience of minority students, the dominant narrative fights disproportionate claims by “pushing personal responsibility, where student flaws are highlighted instead of flaws in the larger oppressive social and institutional systems” (Rector-Aranda, 2016, p. 4). Placing this blame on students for not meeting these expectations negates the larger system’s responsibility to not fail these students (Rector-Aranda, 2016). While counter stories are essential in combatting dominant narratives in qualitative research, QuantCrit highlights that a response to dominant narratives is just as important (Sablan, 2018). Quantitative research can serve as a response to these dominant narratives in a way that qualitative research alone cannot (Sablan, 2018). In accordance with racial realism, there is not a lofty goal to completely eradicate racism, but instead a commitment to challenging oppressive systems and neutral cognitions within regard to race (Rector-Aranda, 2016).

Critics of the Critical Race Theory express that the theory originated with a binary focus on black and white race relations. Although the theory has evolved to include Latino Critical Theory, Asian Critical Theory, and Tribal Critical Theory, the original lens explores the relationship African Americans/Blacks have with the rest of the world. Critics also view critical race theory’s focus on race as one dimensional and divisive. There is a misconception that discussing very present systems of oppression and racism cause division. Critical Race theorists respond by acknowledging that there is division, but that it is due to the *existence* of these structures and not the *discussion* and exploration of these structures. Critics of critical race

theory also indicate that critical race theorists go into the study with a fixed perception which can lead to bias, instead of allowing participant narratives to unpack.

There is often a misconception that critical race theory speaks to overt racism and oppression. Critical race theory actually views racism in a way that is not defined as intentional interactions and exchanges, but rather a “dysconscious act- it is an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given” (Rector-Aranda, 2016, p.3).

It challenges the dominant everyday practices that have become instinctive and invisible for dominant members of the culture. Critical race theory acknowledges the multiple ways that the dominant narrative is constructed and perpetuated in an effort to disrupt and dismantle it (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). Within education there is a general misconception that education is a space of racial neutrality and equality (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). There is a thought that racism and oppression are isolated incidents and not present in education (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). Solorzano and Yosso (2002) state that, “educational institutions operate in contradictory ways with their potential to oppress and marginalize co-existing with their potential to emancipate and empower” (p. 26). Critical race theory directly challenges this, and this is necessary to progress within the educational arena.

Critical race theory is important for continued work and progress in education. Because education is a foundation to the culture, it is important for educators to be aware of and acknowledge how school practices influence the outcomes and practices of other institutions and society at large (Rector-Aranda, 2016). “Education has the power to challenge or perpetuate societal injustices” (Rector-Aranda, 2016, p. 3). From a critical race perspective, schools that

serve urban youth and their families must provide access to high quality instruction as a form of social justice (Williams & Wiggan, 2016). For example, studies of student achievement normally highlight the deficits of minority students but fail to review the counter story that acknowledges the societal oppression that makes educational equity impossible (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). Sablan (2018) stated that “racial differences in educational attainment and experiences are often attributed to explanations other than race/racism” (p.183). QuantCrit aims to address the absence of the direct exploration of race and racism in education policy (Sablan, 2018).

Critical Race methodology provides the counter-narrative to the traditional European narrative and creates a multi-directional compass of reality or normality (Williams & Wiggan, 2016). Solorzano and Yossi (2002) cite critical race methodology as a theory grounded approach that sets out to achieve the following:

(a) center race and racism in all aspects of research process; (b) challenge traditional research paradigms, texts, and theories that have been used to explain Students of Color’s experiences; (c) provide a liberatory or transformative response to oppression and subordination (racism, genderism, classism); (d) focus on Students of Color’s racialized, gendered, and classed experiences; and (e) apply an interdisciplinary knowledge base, drawing from ethnic studies, women’s studies, sociology, history, humanities, and law to develop an enhanced understanding of Students of Color’s experiences in higher education. (p. 35)

As aforementioned, the counter story is an important element in critical race methodology. Counter story telling aims to tell the stories of a people that are often unheard (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). The QuantCrit methodology provides a tool to counter deficit storytelling in quantitative research (Sablan, 2018; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). While the counter narrative

presented in qualitative research is important, it can be supported by quantitative research that further substantiates the existence of multiple factors that impact the emergence of a specific phenomenon (Sablan, 2018). An example of this could be the identification of the phenomena that a majority of juvenile delinquents are black males. A qualitative study would at minimum, include observational and interview data and identify common theme from the experience of the juvenile delinquents. Critical Race theory would explore how the race of the participants impacted the participants from an individual and systemic perspective. QuantCrit would use quantitative research to explore the multi-systemic phenomena and respond to the dominant narrative (Sablan, 2018). Quantitative research can play an essential role in uncovering mitigating circumstance and conditions that cause procedural inequities or biases across various groups (Garcia et. al, 2018; Sablan, 2018). In the area of education specifically, differences in educational outcomes and experiences are often explained by a plethora of theories outside of race (Garcia et. al, 2018; Sablan, 2018). The use of QuantCrit can give intentional guidance to consider the impact of race and racism within educational policies and procedures (Sablan, 2018). More specifically, Garcia et. al (2018) identifies the following tenets of QuantCrit:

- 1) The centrality of racism as a complex and deeply rooted aspect of society that is not readily amenable to quantification;
- 2) The acknowledgement that numbers are not neutral, and they should be interrogated for their role in promoting deficit analyses that serve white racial interests;
- 3) The reality that categories are neither ‘natural’ nor given and so the units and forms or analysis must be critically evaluated;
- 4) The recognition that voice and insight are vital: data cannot ‘speak for itself’ and critical analyses should be informed by the experiential knowledge of marginalized groups;

- 5) The understanding that statistical analyses have no inherent value but they can play a role in struggles for social justice. (p. 151).

QuantCrit can essentially be used in education to “represent educational processes and outcomes to reveal inequities...to identify perpetuation of those that were systemic...[and to] question models, measures, and analytical practices, in order to ensure equity” (Sablan, 2018, p. 183).

There are many studies in the educational realm that have controlled for race or highlighted racial difference, but there are few that review all aspects of race critically (Garcia et. al, 2018; Sablan, 2018). Numbers do not speak for themselves in regard to how quantitative research is traditionally utilized (Garcia et. al, 2018; Sablan, 2018). In actuality, numbers should be framed in context and rooted in lived experiences (Sablan, 2018). Garcia et. al (2018), further states that researchers themselves are also a part of what they observe and not scientific onlookers. As explicitly stated by Sablan (2018) but also evident in the research of Garcia et. al (2018):

“Numbers are not neutral, statistics are not color-blind, and descriptions of educational statistics can unearth counter stories or people of color and their trajectories through education” (p.185).

In using QuantCrit there is an aim to deconstruct the racial bed that quantitative research may rest in to prevent waking up on the wrong side of equity (Garcia et. al, 2018).

Chapter two presented previous research that supports the research question being explored. The literature review provided a brief history of school discipline, the positive and negative impact of discipline mandates on schools, the place of student and teacher voice in educational research, and teacher perceptions of discipline mandates. Chapter 3 describes the study methodology and procedures for data analysis and collection.

Methods

Participants and Setting

A secondary analysis of pre-existing discipline data from 2016 to 2019, was conducted in an urban metropolitan charter school network in the southeastern United States. The charter school network serviced 2,103 scholars during the 2016-2017 school year, 1,890 scholars in the 2017-2018 school year, and 1,989 scholars during the 2018-2019 school year. Table 1 further describes the network's population in reference to identified ethnicity.

Table 1

Charter Network Population Demographics 2016-2019

Demographics	School Years		
<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>2016-2017</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>	<u>2018-2019</u>
African-American	1941	1651	1638
American Indian	0	0	0
Asian	5	2	1
Caucasian	2	2	2
Hispanic	140	218	330
Other	4	7	7
Pacific Islander	0	2	2
Unclassified	11	8	9
Total	2103	1890	1989

The network is comprised of five schools- two elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Ten percent of the network's total population are scholars that have

disabilities as identified by the scholars being serviced through a Section 504 Plan or an Individualized Education Plan. The network had an average staff retention rate of 47.2% in 2017-2018 and an average staff retention rate of 62.6% for the 2018-2019 school year. Staff retention data for the 2016-2017 school year are unavailable.

For the purposes of this study, the discipline data of a sample of middle school scholars from this charter school network was reviewed to assess the impact of the PACI-MS. The middle school served 431 scholars during the 2016-2017 school year, 448 scholars during the 2017-2018 school year, and 433 during the 2018-2019 school year. Table 2 further describes the school population:

Table 2

Charter Middle School Population Demographics 2016-2019

Demographics	School Years		
<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>2016-2017</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>	<u>2018-2019</u>
African-American	367	360	316
American Indian	0	0	0
Asian	1	0	0
Caucasian	1	0	0
Hispanic	55	80	111
Other	2	3	3
Pacific Islander	0	1	1
Unclassified	5	4	2
Total	431	448	433

On average, nine percent of the school's total population are scholars that have disabilities as identified by the scholars being serviced through a Section 504 Plan or an Individualized Education Plan. The school had an average staff retention rate of 44% in 2017-2018 and an average staff retention rate of 42% for the 2018-2019 school year. Staff retention data for the 2016-2017 school year are unavailable. The school mobility rate as defined by transfers in and out at the end of the first quarter- was 15% during the 2016-2017 school year, 9% in the 2017-2018 school year, and 5% in the 2018-2019 school year. The school attrition rate is calculated by subtracting entry and exit totals and then dividing this number by the enrollment total at the end of the first quarter. The attrition rate for this school for the 2016-2017 school year was 1%, the attrition rate for the 2017-2018 school year was -3%, the attrition rate for the 2018-2019 school year was 0%.

The discipline data for scholars that were enrolled in the sixth grade in the 2016-2017 school year were reviewed annually as they matriculated to eighth grade. During the 2016-2017 school year, the sixth-grade sample was comprised of 142 scholars. In the 2017-2018 school year, the seventh-grade sample was comprised of 154 scholars. In the final school year of review, 2018-2019, the eighth-grade sample was comprised of 141 scholars. By the end of the three-year review, an average of 60% of the scholars that started in the first year of review were retained.

Table 3 details the sample population across the three years that were reviewed.

Table 3

Middle School Population Demographics 2016-2019

Demographics	School Years		
<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>2016-2017</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>	<u>2018-2019</u>
African-American	122	125	106
American Indian	0	0	0
Asian	0	0	0
Caucasian	0	0	0
Hispanic	19	27	34
Other	1	1	0
Pacific Islander	0	0	0
Unclassified	0	1	1
Total	142	154	141

On average, 17% of the scholars in this sample were students with disabilities, as defined by having disabilities supported by Section 504 Plans and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). From 2016-2019, the scholars were between the ages of 11 to 14.

This middle school was selected because it used the network's designated software to record disciplinary referrals and concerns, the other middle school used another software during one of the years of review which would impact the accuracy of data. This grade level was selected as a sample because it had the most years of non-exposure and exposure to the PACI-MS in comparison to other grade levels. In accordance with the years reviewed by this program

evaluation, the selected grade level had one year of non-exposure and two years of exposure to the PACI-MS.

The discipline data were collected over three years before and after the implementation of the Progressive Accountability classroom intervention. The discipline data for scholars enrolled in sixth grade in 2016-2017 school year were tracked and monitored for their subsequent years of matriculation at the middle school. Year one, 2016-2017, serves as the baseline year when the PACI-MS was not yet introduced to the school environment. Years two and three, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, represent the first and second year of implementation of the PACI-MS.

Procedure

The PACI-MS was initiated in the following stages: collaborative feedback, training, and implementation. In January of 2017, school principals, assistant principals, school counselors, special education interventionists, and network personnel were invited to participate in a ‘Rethink Discipline Committee’. During this convening, discipline data for the past two years were reviewed and indicated that there was an increase in exclusionary practices across the charter network. Based on these data, the committee functioned to create and norm a classroom intervention to decrease administrative referrals and increase the teachers’ ability to manage classroom behaviors. The committee was ultimately comprised of five school principals, three assistant principals, seven school counselors, two special education interventionists, and four network personnel. Meetings where the committee created the classroom intervention were held once a month from January 2017 until May of 2017 in relation. Initial meetings explored the data and the research associated with the school to prison pipeline and other risk factors associated with exclusionary practices. In subsequent meetings, steps crafted by the network school counseling coordinator, network special education lead, and network school psychologist were

presented to the committee for feedback and revisions. In later meetings, committee members collaboratively engineered training guides for teachers and identified key dates for implementation. These dates included dates for teacher training and student training, dates for program fidelity checks, and dates for data review. This process continued annually for new teachers and staff.

To conduct the program evaluation, a data sharing agreement (Appendix B) and memorandum of understanding (Appendix C) were provided to the participating charter management organization. Secondary discipline data were collected and reviewed from the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years. Data that were reviewed and analyzed included the following: end of year administrative referrals, end of year detention or after-school reflection occurrences, end of year suspension occurrences, and end of year expulsion total. The charter management organization provided individual student data that were de-identified and only analyzed in aggregate. The proposal for the study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board for pre-determination.

Measures

A Test of Proportions was used to determine whether there was a difference in the proportion of discipline occurrences before the PACI-MS implementation (2016-2017), one year post-implementation (2017-2018), and two years post-implementation (2018-2019). The test of proportions was used to determine if a statistically significant difference existed between the proportion of two independent variables (two time points) on a dichotomous dependent variable (discipline outcome category).

An Independent Samples t-test was employed to determine if a difference existed between the means of male and female discipline outcomes across two time points (pre- and

post-intervention). An Independent Samples t-test allows the researcher to determine if the difference between two group means is statistically significant (Sheskin, 2011).

A Paired Samples t-test was also employed to determine how the mean difference between paired disciplinary outcomes changed over time. The Paired Samples t-test allows the researcher to measure participants on the same dependent variable (disciplinary occurrences), but under two different conditions (pre- and post-intervention) (Fradette, Keselman, Lix, Algina, & Wilcox, 2003). Furthermore, the Paired Samples t-test was also used to measure participant impact on different variables while using the same measurement scale. The Paired Samples t-test also generates paired correlation values. The Paired Samples Correlations relays the bivariate Pearson correlation coefficient and is used to determine how strongly the paired disciplinary outcomes are associated with one another (Fradette et al., 2003).

This chapter provided a detailed description of the methodology of the study. A description of the population was provided at the beginning of the chapter, followed by the outline of the research design. Procedures for data collection and analysis were also described.

Results

The following discipline data were analyzed for each scholar within the sample: after-school reflection or detention occurrences, administrative referral occurrences, suspension occurrences, and expulsion occurrences. Each discipline data category was tracked and compared pre-measure, post-measure year one, and post-measure year two. A test of proportions, independent samples t-test, and paired samples t-test were used to analyze proportion and mean differences between two time points.

Test of Proportions

School discipline outcomes were reviewed for a sample of middle school students at the end of three school years: 2016-2017 (pre-program implementation), 2017-2018 (post-one year program implementation), and 2018-2019 (post-two year program implementation). Table 4 contains the discipline outcomes for each year.

Table 4

Pre & Post PACI-MS Discipline Outcomes 2016-2019

Sample Size by Year		Discipline Categories			
<u>Year</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>AR</u>	<u>ADR</u>	<u>SUS</u>	<u>EXP</u>
2016 - 2017	142	99	25	28	0
2017 - 2018	154	33	104	50	0
2018 - 2019	141	68	68	41	0
Total	437	200	197	119	0

Note. AR = After-School Reflections; ADR = Administrative Referrals, SUS = Suspensions, EXP= Expulsions

A test of proportion found a statistically significant difference ($p < .001$) between after-school reflection occurrences accrued by the end of the 2016-2017 school year (Pre-PACI-MS implementation) and after-school reflection occurrences accrued by the end of the 2017-2018 school year (One-Year-Post-PACI-MS implementation). A test of proportion also found a statistically significant difference ($p < .001$) between after-school reflection occurrences accrued by the end of the 2016-2017 school year (Pre-PACI-MS implementation) and after-school reflection occurrences accrued by the end of the 2018-2019 school year (Two-Years-Post-PACI-MS implementation).

A test of proportion found a statistically significant difference ($p < .001$) between administrative referral occurrences accrued by the end of the 2016-2017 school year (Pre-PACI-MS implementation) and administrative referral occurrences accrued by the end of the 2017-2018 school year (One-Year-Post-PACI-MS implementation). A test of proportion also found a statistically significant difference ($p < .001$) between administrative referral occurrences accrued by the end of the 2016-2017 school year (Pre-PACI-MS implementation) and administrative referral occurrences accrued by the end of the 2018-2019 school year (Two-Years-Post-PACI-MS implementation).

In reference to suspension occurrences, a test of proportion found a statistically significant difference ($p = .013$) between suspension occurrences accrued by the end of the 2016-2017 school year (Pre-PACI-MS implementation) and suspension occurrences accrued by the end of the 2017-2018 school year (One-Year-Post-PACI-MS implementation). A test of proportion also found a statistically significant difference ($p = .069$) between suspension occurrences accrued by the end of the 2016-2017 school year (Pre-PACI-MS implementation)

and suspension occurrences accrued by the end of the 2018-2019 school year (Two-Years-Post-PACI-MS implementation).

Independent Samples T-Test

School discipline outcomes were reviewed for participants that attended a charter middle school during all data review periods: pre-implementation, post-implementation, and follow up (two years after implementation). A total of 42 male and 41 female participants met the attendance criteria, and their discipline data outcomes were analyzed using an independent samples t-test. Table 5 identifies the mean and standard deviation for the dataset.

Table 5

Discipline Outcomes by School Year and Gender

	Male		Female	
<u>School Year Data</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
2016-2017 AR	1.43	2.37	.73	1.48
2016-2017 ADR	.33	.69	.24	.70
2016-2017 SUS	.38	.83	.64	.10
2017-2018AR	.31	.68	.15	.48
2017-2018ADR	.55	1.31	.71	2.12
2017-2018SUS	.31	.72	.37	1.02
2018-2019 AR	.52	.86	.27	.84
2018-2019 ADR	.55	1.31	.39	.89
2018-2019 SUS	.36	.93	.24	.77

Note. Abbreviations were used in the descriptors of the school year data categories

(AR = After-School Reflection, ADR = Administrative Referral, and SUS = Suspension). No expulsion data were reported from 2016 – 2019.

An independent-samples t-test was run to determine if there were differences in the after-school reflection, administrative referrals, and suspension occurrences between males and females during the 2016-2017 school year which was one year prior to the implementation of the PACI-MS. After-school reflection data were analyzed, and the homogeneity of variances was not met, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .016$). The t-test for variance not assumed was ran to determine if there were differences in after-school reflection occurrences between male and females. Male after school reflection occurrences ($M = 1.43$, $SD = 2.37$) were higher than female after school reflection occurrences ($M = .73$, $SD = 1.48$), but there was not a statistically significant difference, $M = .70$, 95% CI $[-.17, 1.56]$, $t(69.111) = 1.610$, $p = .112$. For administrative referral occurrences there was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .382$). Male administrative referral occurrences ($M = .33$, $SD = .69$) were higher than female administrative referral occurrences ($M = .24$, $SD = .70$), but there was not a statistically significant difference, $M = .09$, 95% CI $[-.213, .392]$, $t(81) = .588$, $p = .558$. Suspension occurrences had homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .0650$). Suspension data indicated that male suspension occurrences ($M = .38$, $SD = .83$) were higher than female suspension occurrences ($M = .20$, $SD = .64$), but there was not a statistically significant difference, $M = .19$, 95% CI $[-.137, .509]$, $t(81) = 1.144$, $p = .256$. There were no expulsions reported during the 2016-2017 school year.

An independent-samples t-test was run to determine if there were differences in the after-school reflection, administrative referrals, and suspension occurrences between males and females during the 2017-2018 school year which was the first year of implementation of the PACI-MS. The homogeneity of variances was not met, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .022$). The t-test for variance not assumed was run to determine if there were

differences in after-school reflection occurrences between male and females. Male after-school reflection occurrences ($M = .31$, $SD = .68$) were higher than female after-school reflection occurrences ($M = .15$, $SD = .48$), but there was not a statistically significant difference, $M = .163$, 95% CI $[-.093, .420]$, $t(73.612) = 1.267$, $p = .209$. For administrative referral occurrences, there was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .319$). Male administrative referral occurrences ($M = .55$, $SD = 1.31$) were lower than female administrative referral occurrences ($M = .71$, $SD = 2.12$), but there was not a statistically significant difference, $M = -.160$, 95% CI $[-.928, .609]$, $t(81) = -.413$, $p = .680$. Suspension occurrences had homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .478$). Suspension data indicated that male suspension occurrences ($M = .31$, $SD = .72$) were higher than female suspension occurrences ($M = .37$, $SD = 1.02$), but there was not a statistically significant difference, $M = -.056$, 95% CI $[-.440, .327]$, $t(81) = 1.144$, $p = .292$. There were no expulsions reported during the 2017-2018 school year.

An independent-samples t-test was run to determine if there were differences in the after-school reflection, administrative referrals, and suspension occurrences between males and females during the 2018-2019 school year which was the second year of implementation of the PACI-MS. After-school reflection occurrences had a homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .136$). Male after school reflection occurrences ($M = .52$, $SD = .86$) were higher than female after-school reflection occurrences ($M = .27$, $SD = .837$), but there was not a statistically significant difference, $M = .256$, 95% CI $[-.116, .627]$, $t(81) = 1.369$, $p = .175$. For administrative referral occurrences, there was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .371$). Male administrative referral occurrences ($M = .55$, $SD = 1.31$) were higher than female administrative referral occurrences (M

= .39, $SD = .89$), but there was not a statistically significant difference, $M = .157$, 95% CI [-.288, .603], $t(81) = .703$, $p = .484$. Suspension occurrences had a homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .319$). Suspension data indicated that male suspension occurrences ($M = .36$, $SD = .93$) were higher than female suspension occurrences ($M = .24$, $SD = .77$), but there was not a statistically significant difference, $M = .113$, 95% CI [-.260, .487], $t(81) = .603$, $p = .548$. There were no expulsions reported during the 2018-2019 school year.

Paired Samples T-Test

School discipline outcomes were reviewed for 83 participants. A paired samples t-test was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant mean difference between discipline occurrences at the end of the 2016-2017 (pre-implementation), 2017-2018 (one year post-implementation), and 2018-2019 (two years post-implementation) school years. While three years of data were analyzed, the paired samples t-test was specifically used to analyze the difference in discipline occurrences over time between two time points. To prevent skewing the data in a small sample size of 83 students, the outliers were kept in the analysis.

Correlations. A paired samples correlation found that all analyzed pairs had statistically significant correlations and had low to moderate correlated relationships. The administrative referral and suspension occurrences at the end of the first year of the PACI-MS implementation ($r = .689$) had the strongest positive linear relationship amongst the analyzed pairs. There was also a notable moderate positive linear relationship between after-school reflection and suspension occurrences at the end of the school year prior to PACI-MS implementation ($r = .592$). All correlation data are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

PACI-MS Discipline Correlations

Outcome Categories		Statistics	
<u>Pair</u>		<u>Correlation</u>	<u>Significance</u>
*Pair 1	2016-2017 AR & 2017-2018AR	.530	.000
*Pair 2	2017-2018AR & 2018-2019 AR	.518	.000
*Pair 3	2016-2017 AR & 2018-2019 AR	.593	.000
*Pair 4	2016-2017 ADR & 2017-2018ADR	.373	.001
*Pair 5	2016-2017 AR & 2017-2018AR	.607	.000
*Pair 6	2016-2017 ADR & 2018-2019 ADR	.395	.000
*Pair 7	2016-2017 SUS & 2017-2018SUS	.639	.000
*Pair 8	2017-2018SUS & 2018-2019 SUS	.501	.000
*Pair 9	2016-2017 SUS & 2018-2019 SUS	.324	.003

Outcome Categories		Statistics	
<u>Pair</u>		<u>Correlation</u>	<u>Significance</u>
*Pair 10	2016-2017 AR & 2016-2017 ADR	.468	.000
*Pair 11	2016-2017 ADR & 2016-2017 SUS	.407	.000
*Pair 12	2016-2017 AR & 2016-2017 SUS	.592	.000
*Pair 13	2016-2017 AR & 2017-2018ADR	.484	.000
*Pair 14	2017-2018AR & 2017-2018SUS	.689	.000
*Pair 15	2017-2018AR & 2017-2018SUS	.463	.000
*Pair 16	2018-2019 AR & 2018-2019 ADR	.555	.000
*Pair 17	2018-2019 ADR & 2018-2019 SUS	.257	.019
*Pair 18	2018-2019 AR & 2018-2019 SUS	.504	.000
<i>Note.</i> Significant at the $p < .05$ level. (* $p < .05$)			

Paired samples t-test results. A Paired Samples t-test conveyed that participants had less after-school reflection occurrences after the first year of implementing the PACI-MS ($M = .23$, $SD = .591$) as opposed to after-school reflection occurrences prior to implementation ($M = 1.08$, $SD = 2.001$), a statistically significant mean decrease of .855, 95% CI [0.471, 1.240], $t(82) = 4.426$, $p < .001$. Participants had higher after-school reflection occurrences after the second year of implementing the PACI-MS ($M = .40$, $SD = .855$) in comparison to after-school reflection occurrences accrued at the end of the first year of the PACI-MS implementation ($M = .23$, $SD = .591$), a statistically significant increase of -.169, 95% CI [-.332, -.006], $t(82) = -2.060$, $p = .04$. Additionally, participants had less after-school reflection occurrences after the second year of implementing the PACI-MS ($M = .40$, $SD = .855$) in comparison to after-school reflection occurrences reported at the end of the school year prior to PACI-MS implementation ($M = 1.08$, $SD = 2.001$). There was a statistically significant mean decrease of .687, 95% CI [.328, 1.046], $t(82) = 3.804$, $p < .001$.

The paired samples t-test also conveyed that participants had higher administrative referral occurrences after the first year of implementing the PACI-MS ($M = .63$, $SD = 1.751$) as opposed to administrative referral occurrences prior to implementation ($M = .29$, $SD = .690$), a statistically significant mean increase of -.337, 95% CI [-.692, .017], $t(82) = -1.891$, $p = .062$. Participants also had lower administrative referrals occurrences after the second year of implementing the PACI-MS ($M = .47$, $SD = 1.016$) in comparison to administrative referral occurrences accrued at the end of the first year of the PACI-MS implementation ($M = .63$, $SD = 1.751$), however the decrease of .157, 95% CI [-.147, .461], $t(82) = 1.025$, $p = .31$ was not statistically significant. Additionally, participants had more administrative referral occurrences after the second year of implementing the PACI-MS ($M = .47$, $SD = 1.016$) in comparison to

after-school reflection occurrences reported at the end of the school year prior to PACI-MS implementation ($M = .29$, $SD = .690$). The mean increase of $-.181$, 95% CI $[-.394, .033]$, $t(82) = -1.685$, $p = .096$, was not statistically significant.

Furthermore, the paired samples t-test conveyed that participants had higher suspension occurrences after the first year of implementing the PACI-MS ($M = .34$, $SD = .873$) as opposed to suspension occurrences prior to implementation ($M = .29$, $SD = .741$), however the mean increase of $-.048$, 95% CI $[-.200, .104]$, $t(82) = -.630$, $p = .530$, was not statistically significant. Participants also had lower suspension occurrences after the second year of implementing the PACI-MS ($M = .30$, $SD = .852$) in comparison to suspension occurrences accrued at the end of the first year of the PACI-MS implementation ($M = .34$, $SD = .873$), however the decrease of $.036$, 95% CI $[-.152, .224]$, $t(82) = .382$, $p = .70$ was not statistically significant. Additionally, participants had more suspension occurrences after the second year of implementing the PACI-MS ($M = .30$, $SD = .852$) in comparison to suspension occurrences reported at the end of the school year prior to PACI-MS implementation ($M = .29$, $SD = .741$). The mean increase of $-.012$, 95% CI $[-.215, .191]$, $t(82) = -.118$, $p = .906$, was not statistically significant.

Pre-existing discipline data was reviewed to explore the effects of the PACI-MS on discipline outcomes. While mean differences before and after the intervention were not consistently significant, strong positive correlations were found between discipline categories. Chapter five will discuss these findings grouped by the research questions that guided the study and will include implications for practice and future research.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to conduct a program evaluation on the PACI-MS to determine its effect on school discipline outcomes in urban middle school students. The general research question was: how does the PACI-MS effect discipline outcomes in middle school students?

Interpretation of Results

The test of proportions indicated that there were statistically significant differences between all pre-program implementation and post-program implementation discipline outcomes. There were statistical differences in the occurrences of after-school reflections, administrative referrals, and suspensions when comparing the baseline school year (2016-2017) and the subsequent program implementation years: 2017-2018, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019.

While the test of proportions conveyed that there was a generally significant difference in the proportion of discipline occurrences within the population of students after the implementation of the PACI-MS, the independent samples t-test aimed to convey how the PACI-MS may have impacted special groups. More specifically, the independent samples t-test analyzed discipline data outcomes for male and female students pre- and post-implementation of the PACI-MS. The independent samples t-test conveyed that while there were mean differences in discipline outcomes based on gender, these differences were not statistically significant. Based on the findings of this analysis, there was no significant difference in the occurrences of after-school reflections, administrative referrals, and suspensions for male and female students after the PACI-MS implementation. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected and the findings support the alternate hypothesis which stated: If the PACI-MS is implemented, then there will be a positive effect on the difference in the occurrences of after-school reflections,

administrative referrals, suspensions, and expulsions between male and female students over the course of the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years.

From the general research question, hypotheses were generated to analyze the effect of the PACI-MS. The first hypothesis stated the following: If the PACI-MS is implemented, then there will be a significant decrease in the occurrences of after-school reflections for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years. The paired-samples t-test indicated that there was a statistically significant decrease in the pre-implementation and post-implementation (year one) after-school reflection occurrences. It also indicated that there was a statistically significant decrease in pre-implementation and post-implementation (year two) after-school reflection occurrences. There was also a statistically significant increase in the mean of after-school reflection occurrences at the end of the first year of PACI-MS implementation and the end of the second year of PACI-MS. Therefore, the data identified that while there was an initial decrease in after-school reflection occurrence data after the PACI-MS implementation, the mean number of after-school reflections increased in the first year. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis is accepted. Further studies should be employed to specifically explore the usage of after-school reflection as a teacher-managed discipline tool.

From the general research question, the second hypothesis stated the following: If the PACI-MS is implemented, then there will be a significant decrease in the occurrences of administrative referrals for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years. The paired samples t-test conveyed that there was not a statistically significant decrease in administrative referrals after the implementation of the PACI-MS. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis was accepted. From the general research

question, the third hypothesis posed the following: If the PACI-MS is implemented, then there will be a significant decrease in the occurrences of suspensions for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years. The paired samples t-test conveyed that there was not a statistically significant decrease in suspension occurrences after the implementation of the PACI-MS. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis was accepted. From the general research question, the fourth specific research question posed the following: If the PACI-MS is implemented, then there will be a significant decrease in the occurrences of expulsions for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years. There were no expulsions reported during the analyzed school years.

In summary, the findings did not support the ideas presented in the research that state that multi-tiered and relational approaches to school discipline significantly decrease misbehavior or exclusionary practices (Armour, 2016; Betters-Bubon et al., 2016; Bradshaw et al., 2012; Flay et al., 2001; Gregory et al., 2016; Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Williams & Wiggan, 2016). However, the paired samples correlation analysis provided evidence that all paired samples displayed in Table 6 were significantly correlated. The sixth hypothesis that was generated from the general research question held that the implementation of the PACI-MS had a positive effect on the occurrences of after-school reflections, administrative referrals, suspensions, and expulsions for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students over the course of the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years. Based on the findings, the null hypothesis was rejected. The paired-samples correlation also identified pairings that had the strongest correlated relationships. The positive relationship between 2017-2018 administrative referrals and 2017-2018 suspension occurrences one-year post-PACI-MS

implementation, represented the strongest correlation amongst the paired samples ($r = .689$). This correlation illustrates one of the critical findings in the 2016 research of Williams & Wiggan. Williams & Wiggan (2016) found that many of the referrals that lead to suspensions originated in the classroom and did not result from serious incidents. The study also found that an increase in administrator managed referrals instead of an increase in teacher managed occurrences can be associated with an increase in exclusionary practices (Williams & Wiggan, 2016). Similarly, the paired-samples correlation also conveyed that 2016-2017 after-school reflections and 2016-2017 suspensions were highly correlated. This correlation expresses that the discipline categories can be associated with each other, and can be impacted by intervention programs like the PACI-MS as suggested by the research of Armour (2016), Betters-Bubon et al. (2016), Bradshaw (2016), Gregory et al. (2016), Gregory & Ripski (2008), Gregory & Weinstein (2008), Sugai & Horner (2002), and Williams & Wiggan (2016). Both of these highly correlated pairings also had statistically significant differences in their means, as evidenced by the paired-samples t-test.

Strengths & Limitations to Research Design

One of the strengths of the research study resides in its use of the quantitative research design. Quantitative research conveys statistical trends that can assist in accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis (Rao & Woolcock, 2003). The quantitative research design is the best research model in the area of program evaluation because the impact of a model is statistically analyzed before and after the implementation of an intervention (Rao & Woolcock, 2003). The other strength of this design is that several statistical tests were used to analyze the data to support a quality assessment of the outcome discipline data. Each analysis examined a different but crucial element of the research data. The test of proportions gave an overview of the data, and identified significant proportional differences before and after the implementation of the

PACI-MS. The independent samples t-test compared subjects within the data by comparing discipline outcomes for males and females before and after the implementation of the PACI-MS. The paired samples correlation analyzed the correlation for dataset pairings within and between baseline and implementation years. Finally, the paired samples t-test analyzed the difference in means for dataset pairings within and between the baseline and implementation years. In concert, these statistical tests generated a robust analysis of the data.

The study was limited in the number of schools and grade levels utilized to conduct the study. The historical disciplinary outcomes for one grade level were analyzed over three years. For statistical purposes, data cleaning was completed to identify participants that attended the middle school during all three years of archival data analysis: the year before the PACI-MS implementation, the year after PACI-MS implementation, and the second year after PACI-MS implementation. Cleaning the data led to the data of only 83 participants being able to be used in the independent samples t-test, paired-samples correlation test, and the paired-samples t-testing comparison to yearly grade-level enrollment totals that ranged from 142 to 154 scholars. As a best practice, several schools and grade levels should be used in the future to increase the sample size, and best identify consistent findings and trends in relation to the implementation of the Progressive Accountability Classroom Intervention.

It is also important to include that although a quantitative approach is beneficial in program evaluation, there is also significant information garnered from qualitative research (Rao & Woolcock, 2003). The structure of this research did not convey teacher or student perception of the PACI-MS, and their voice is vital in intervention implementation and policy reform. The addition of teacher and student counter stories can add culturally enriched perspectives related to discipline practices. While the quantitative research design can uncover gaps in implemented

programs, qualitative research can assist in closing these gaps (Rao & Woolcock, 2003). In this study, qualitative research can explore and identify extraneous factors that were not identified in the quantitative data. A quantitative and qualitative mixed-methods research design can gather hard data and counter-stories in the future.

Implications for Future Studies

The sample used for this study contained minority students that were attending an urban middle school. In the future, it would be beneficial to explore discipline outcomes for more racially diverse school settings and compare these outcomes to racially homogenous environments. The research sample consisted of all minority students. Due to this, the research study was unable to compare minority students to their non-minority peers. Overwhelming data from the U.S. Department of Education (2016), Betters-Bubon (2016), and Kang-Brown et al., hold that minority students experience exclusionary discipline practices at a higher rate than their non-minority peers. The existence of this phenomenon urges educational entities to monitor the equity of their discipline practices. QuantCrit also implores researchers to directly address the racial biases that may exist in quantitative research findings (Garcia et al., 2018; McCoy & Rodricks, 2015, Rector-Aranda, 2016; Sablan, 2018; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Williams & Wiggan, 2016). Additionally, QuantCrit supports the notion that quantitative research should also identify socio-cultural contextual issues that may impact data outcomes (Garcia et al., 2018; McCoy & Rodricks, 2015, Rector-Aranda, 2016; Sablan, 2018; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Williams & Wiggan, 2016). In considering the attrition of students and the retention of school staff in urban schools, it would be beneficial to explore these factors impact the data outcomes associated with the implementation and maintenance of systems of support in urban community schools (Ladd & Sorensen, 2019).

In the future, this study can extend to assess differences based on race, grade level, and disability status. Additionally, it would be advantageous to analyze the rate of discipline occurrences as well as the use of preventative strategies embedded in the PACI-MS such as private redirection, what's up forms, scholar support team referrals, and collaborative circle referrals. Analyzing discipline data in a silo does not allow for exploration of the full impact of the implemented program. The existing data suggested that all pairings in the paired samples correlations analysis were significant. This finding suggests that discipline occurrences are related to each other and PACI-MS implementation. In considering this relationship, it is advised that a multi-disciplinary school team comprised of network officials, administrators, school counselors, teachers, families, and students reconvene to adjust PACI-MS components, review fidelity, and reassess the related discipline outcomes.

Implications for Practice

The data analyses associated with the program evaluation demonstrated that there was not a significant difference in mean discipline outcomes before and after the implementation of the PACI-MS. The data analyses also expressed, however, that the discipline categories were highly correlated. This finding implies that the targeted discipline categories are connected and should continue to be monitored, but the program structure should be reviewed to promote effectiveness. There is an opportunity to increase the use and fidelity of after-school reflection to deter the increase in problematic behaviors that can lead to administrative referrals and suspensions.

Additionally, historically, school principals or assistant principals have been associated with student behavior outcomes (American Public Media, n.d.; APM Reports, 2016; Findlaw, 2017). Pervasive or increasing discipline outcomes; however, suggest that students with

challenging behaviors need exposure to strategies and interventions. These interventions are supported by school counselors (American School Counselor Association, 2019; Bryan et al., 2012; Curtis et al., 2010; Grothaus, 2013; Stickel et al., 1991). As a practice, schools need to explore if school counselor referrals are made in a timely and appropriate manner. This practice is essential because while the PACI-MS includes hierarchical procedures, it can also consist of parallel interventions that are facilitated by the school counselor. An example of this is students that are exposed to the PACI-MS in class daily but simultaneously referred for direct services such as a behavior intervention plan, individual counseling, or group counseling. The direct services of the school counselor can further support the success of all scholars. If applicable scholars are not referred they may continue to struggle in class despite the supports provided in the initial steps of the PACI-MS. The program evaluation and subsequent findings also support implications as it relates to counselor education and supervision. School counselor practicum and internship experiences must contain opportunities to increase knowledge about the way that school counseling programs directly and indirectly support students with challenging behaviors. More specifically, school counselor in training need direct supervisory support in reference to consultation services provided to teachers, administrators, and other school staff.

Recommendations for the Program

In conducting this program evaluation, there was not only an interest in reviewing outcomes but also in identifying what could make the program more effective. As indicated by the data cleansing associated with the data analyses, it was discovered that scholar retention was low in the assessed grade. On average, only 60% of the scholars that were enrolled in the first year that was reviewed (2016-2017) remained in the third year of the study (2018-2019). The retention data indicate that 40% of the scholars that were enrolled did not have the same length

of exposure to the PACI-MS. If new scholars do not have a full understanding of the program, it is challenging to ensure their buy-in. It is recommended that these scholars receive a tailored orientation that explains the purpose of the PACI-MS and its components. Similarly, another recommendation is that new teacher training is tailored to increase their support in implementing the PACI-MS and programs like it, with fidelity (Okonofua, 2016; Williams & Wiggan, 2016). Studies convey that new teachers have the highest number of incidents that are escalated to administration, but tailored training reduces this number by half (Okonofua, 2016; Williams & Wiggan, 2016). This can also be another opportunity for school counselors to utilize their skillset in the areas of collaboration and consultation, in leading teacher orientation to study body demographics as well as teacher development in understanding the needs of their unique study body (American School Counselor Association, 2019; Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Scheduled fidelity checks also need to occur to ensure the effectiveness of the program. Fidelity checks are a best practice supported by the research of Sugai & Horner (2002). The school that participated in this study has monthly RTI2-B meetings where they discuss behavior trends, discipline outcomes, rewards, and responses to behavior. This monthly meeting should also include a review of the PACI-MS strategies and their impact on discipline outcomes. This review can include analyzing the use of PACI-MS strategies for success such as: private redirection, ‘What’s Up?’ forms, after-school reflection, check-in/check-out, Scholar Support Team Referrals, and behavior intervention plans. It is suggested that school counselors, school leaders, teachers, and special educators are a part of this meeting. A review of the utilization, as well as the barrier or successes of these preventative and responsive strategies, can assist in decreasing exclusionary practices (Sugai & Horner, 2002). In summary, it is recommended that the PACI-MS interventions and subsequent discipline outcomes are reviewed monthly to

monitor progress, identify teachers for support, and identify scholars that may need more intense interventions. It is also recommended that the outcomes discovered and discussed in this meeting are shared with school staff, scholars, and families on a monthly or at least a quarterly basis to connect the school community to the data.

Additionally, at the end of the school year, a multi-disciplinary team should analyze the discipline data to explore the effectiveness of the PACI-MS. This data review should be paired with teacher or student feedback through surveys or focus groups. The multi-disciplinary team can then adjust the PACI-MS based on data outcomes and stakeholder feedback. These adjustments can then be enacted in the next school year. Special attention should be given to reviewing processes and their effectiveness in responding to classroom behaviors.

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Appendix A

Progressive Accountability - MS

1	Private Redirect - Teacher gives a private redirect in a positive, scholar-centered manner. (Daily)
2	'What's Up?': Teacher gives scholar an opportunity to share perspective. (Daily-if not the same behavior)
3	Referral to After-school Reflection and phone call to parent.
4	Teacher makes referral to Collaborative Circle and phone call to parent.
5	Intervention: Teacher will facilitate Tier I CICO and sends notification to parent, counselor and dean).
6	Make a referral to Scholar Support Team for repeated behavioral infractions which are not in stages 3-5.
7	Provide an administrative referral to Dean of Scholars/Principal after steps 1- 4 are completed or if the scholar escalates the behavior to stages 3-5.

Appendix B

Data-Sharing and Usage Agreement

This agreement establishes the terms and conditions under which the University of Memphis and appointed Lead Investigator (LI) can acquire and use data from Gestalt Community Schools. The confidentiality of data pertaining to individuals will be protected as follows:

- a. Gestalt Community Schools will provide deidentified student discipline data that will be analyzed only in aggregate. This data is limited to: individual after school reflection or detention occurrences, administrative referrals, suspension totals, and expulsion totals from 2016-2019.
 - b. The data recipient will not release the names of individuals, or information that could be linked to an individual, nor will the recipient present the results of data analysis (including maps) in any manner that would reveal the identity of individuals.
 - c. The data recipient will not release individual addresses, nor will the recipient present the results of data analysis (including maps) in any manner that would reveal individual addresses.
 - d. The data recipient shall comply with all Federal and State laws and regulations governing the confidentiality of the information that is the subject of this Agreement.
 - e. The data recipient will have access to the PowerSchool database for the purposes of research until the data sharing end date acknowledged below.
1. The data recipient will not release data to a third party without prior approval from the data provider.
 2. The data recipient will not share, publish, or otherwise release any findings or conclusions derived from analysis of data obtained from the data provider without prior approval from the data provider.
 3. Data transferred pursuant to the terms of this Agreement shall be utilized solely for the purposes set forth in the "Memorandum of Understanding".
 4. Any third party granted access to data, as permitted under condition #2, above, shall be subject to the terms and conditions of this agreement. Acceptance of these terms must be provided in writing by the third party before data will be released.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, both the University of Memphis, through its duly authorized representative, and Gestalt Community Schools, through its duly authorized representative, have hereunto executed this Data Sharing Agreement as of the last date below written.

Data Sharing End Date: _____

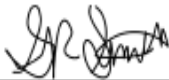
Gestalt Community School Authorized Official

Date: October 11, 2019



Lead Investigator

Date: October 11, 2019



Faculty Advisor

Date: 3/25/2020


Stephen Zauskas, Ph.D.
Stephen Zauskas, Ph.D. (Mar 25, 2020)

Appendix C



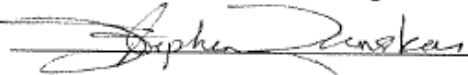
Appendix C

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This is a Memorandum of Understanding between the Gestalt Community Schools network and The University of Memphis to specify the shared access to data derived from the study being conducted by Shaneika Smith, M.S., lead investigator (LI). "How does the Progressive Accountability Classroom Intervention impact discipline outcomes in urban middle school students?" has a planned implementation date of September 2019. The study will be proposed to The University of Memphis's Institutional Review Board (IRB) contingent upon the LI receiving a data sharing agreement, such as the one outlined herein. The lead investigator, Shaneika Smith, will have access to the designated school's electronic disciplinary data (total number of: administrative referrals, detentions, suspensions, and expulsions) and an overview of demographic information related to the charter network, school, and study sample. Participation by the network is voluntary and not required. Gestalt Community Schools does not authorize the use of identifiable student information in data analysis or outcome data. Gestalt Community Schools authorizes a secondary review of discipline data to analyze program effectiveness.

Effective Date and Signatures

This MOU shall be effective upon the signatures of an authorized official from Gestalt Community Schools and the LI, Shaneika Smith.

 _____ CEO and CoFounder	_____ September 10, 2019
Gestalt Community Schools authorized official	Date
 _____ Shaneika Smith, M.S., Lead Investigator	_____ 9/10/2019
	Date
 _____ Stephen Zanskas, Ph.D., Doctoral Advisor	_____ 3/6/2020
	Date

Appendix D



Institutional Review Board
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

October 3, 2019

PI Name: Shaneika

Smith Co-

Investigators:

Advisor and/or Co-PI: Stephen

Zanskas Submission Type: Admin

Withdrawal

Title: How does the Progressive Accountability Classroom Intervention impact discipline outcomes in urban middle school students?

IRB ID: PRO-FY2020-167

From the information provided on your determination review request for “How does the Progressive Accountability Classroom Intervention impact discipline outcomes in urban middle school students?”, the IRB has determined that your activity does not meet the Office of Human Subjects Research Protections definition of human subjects research and 45 CFR part 46 does not apply.

This study does not require IRB approval nor review. Your determination will be administratively withdrawn from Cayuse IRB and you will receive an email similar to this correspondence from irb@memphis.edu. This submission will be archived in Cayuse IRB.

Thanks,

IRB Administrator
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
315 Administration Building
Memphis, TN 38152-3370
P: 901.678.2705
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