Alternative to Zero Tolerance Policies and Out-of-School Suspensions: A Multi-tiered Centered Perspective

By:

Eric Kyere, PhD

Assistant Professor,

Indiana University School of Social Work, IUPUI

Email: ekyere@iupui.edu

Andrea Joseph, PhD Candidate,

University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work

Email: anj40@pitt.edu

Kai Wei, PhD Student,

University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work

Email: kaw153@pitt.edu

Abstract

Although zero tolerance policies were created to foster safe school environments for student engagement and performance, the implementation of these policies has inadvertently resulted in the exclusion of millions of students through suspension and expulsion. Students of color, African Americans in particular, disproportionately experience these exclusionary practices. This paper examines the disproportionate negative effects of school discipline under the era of zero tolerance policies. We first examine school discipline in a historical context. Second, we introduce and describe critical race theory and its relevance for understanding racialized school discipline. We conclude with implications for social workers to engage schools, African American students and their families, and advocate for school policies to create safe and equitable school environments that promote learning, in a culturally and racially responsive manner.

Key Words: African American Youth, School Discipline, Zero Tolerance Policies, Critical Race Theory, School Social Work, & Culturally Relevant Practice

Introduction

Zero tolerance policies originated from the U.S. federal drug enforcement in the 1980s and was motivated by the idea of eliminating drug activities with harsh penalties. In the early 1990s, the idea was widely adopted by schools, not limited to its initial intent to prevent the possession of drugs and weapons. In contrast, zero tolerance policies have been used to more broadly punish any infraction of school rules—even minor ones (Skiba & Noam, 2001). Although zero tolerance policies were created to ensure safe and conducive school environments for teacher and student productivity, in practice, these policies have led to the exclusion of millions of students through suspension and or expulsion practices (Morgan et al, 2014; Skiba & Noam, 2001). In response to the increase in school shootings and violence in the 1990s, the 1994 Federal Gun-Free Act was passed to ensure a conducive learning environment and affirm an intolerance to school violence (Klein, 2016). Despite its good intentions, the implementation of the Act in schools has led to the suspension and expulsion of millions of students (Koon, 2013), depriving them the rights to education (Klein, 2016).

While there is no evidence of effectiveness with respect to school safety, zero tolerance policies have become predictors of negative outcomes, such as school disengagement, high dropout rates, high grade retention, criminal justice involvement, substance use, and trauma (Skiba & Noam, 2001; Teasley & Miller,2011). Today, students of color, especially African Americans, experience the negative and unintended consequences of zero tolerance policies at a disproportionate rate (Morgan et al, 2014; Quintana, 2012). The U.S. Office of Civil Rights reports that 5% of White students were suspended while 16% of Black students were suspended during the 2011-2012 academic year (Office of Civil Rights, 2014). In this same timeframe, Black students made up 16% of enrollment and were suspended and expelled at three times the

rate of their White counterparts that comprised 51% of enrollment (Office of Civil Rights, 2014). By the 2013-2014 academic year, Black K-12 students were 3.8 times more likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions compared to their White peers (U.S. Office of Civil Rights, 2016). Although provisions in the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act aimed to decrease the number of students suspended, the suspension rate increased 9% from 2002 to 2011—a trend that may have been influenced by zero tolerance policies (Daly et al., 2010). Meanwhile, the school total victimizations, for the percentage of students ages 12 to 18 dropped approximately 1 % from 2002 to 2011 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013).

However, suspensions have increased for subjective and non-violent infractions such as, "disobedience" (Advancement Project, 2005, p.23; Cregor & Hewit, 2011), which in turn may place students at greater risk for school dropout (Dupper, Theriot & Craun, 2009), substance use, violence and sexual involvement (Farchi et al., 1994), and increased risk for later incarceration (Skiba & Noam,2001). Thus, the punitive overreach of zero-tolerance policies has had a rippling effect on the academic achievement of young people, transforming educational institutions from doorways of opportunities into gateways to the criminal justice system (Morgan et al, 2014).

The overrepresentation of African American students in school discipline policies that deprive them learning opportunities are relevant for social work intervention at multiple levels given social work's stance on social justice and human rights for all persons, with particular focus on those who are highly vulnerable (Gasker & Fisher, 2014; Ife, 2001; NASW, 2008**).** Although previous studies have raised the role of racism and race in unpacking racial disproportionality in school discipline (Monroe, 2005, Carter et al., 2016), fewer have utilized a critical race perspective to expand on the connection between Black students' and their disproportionate representation on discipline practices, particularly in social work. We seek to

fill this gap in the social work literature through a critical race theoretical lens. We first examine school discipline in a historical context. Second, we introduce and describe critical race theory and its relevance for understanding racialized school discipline. We conclude with implications for social workers to engage schools, African American students and their families, and advocate for school policies to create safe and equitable school environments that promote learning in a culturally and racially responsive manner.

Historical Context of School Discipline in the U.S.

The historical context of school discipline in the U.S. is rooted within the early British concept 'in-loco parentis', meaning, 'in place of parent' (Skiba et al., 2009). This concept established a precedence that allowed some parental rights and privileges to non-parental caregivers. It established the basis for school authorities to discipline students. The purpose of school discipline was to ensure the safety of those within the school and create a conducive learning environment. Efforts to respond to or manage students' undesirable behaviors include, but are not limited, to suspension, expulsion and corporal punishment for breaching the code of conduct (Cameron, 2006). In the 1960s, corporal punishment was the common intervention schools employed to discipline students (Skiba et al., 2009). However, because of the physical nature and the purposeful infliction of pain associated with corporal punishment, it was found to violate human rights principles and therefore, untenable (Skiba et al, 2009). Suspensions and expulsions became common discipline practices to manage student behavior dating back to the 1970s (Nogura, 2003; Skiba et al., 2011). Discipline practices later became a racialized concept when White educators and academic gatekeepers used discipline as a means to deny students of color from education; a *post Brown v Board of Education* resistance to integration (Edelman, Beck & Smith, 1975).

Brown vs. Board of Education ushered in both integration and hyper-control of Black and Brown children within U.S. education systems (Edelman, Beck & Smith, 1975; Skiba et al., 2011). It was the early Children's Defense Fund report of 1975 with concerns regarding the more than one million students suspended or expelled during the 1972-1973 academic year that found that Black students were disproportionately suspended (Edelman, Beck, & Smith, 1975). According to Nogura (2003), schools play three primary functions that shape the lives of children. (1) They sort children for placement in society thereby determining who governs and who is governed; (2) schools socialize children in social and moral norms that necessitate civic engagement; (3) schools serve as surrogate institutions for the care and movement of children in the society. Consistent with the British concept of 'in-loco parentis' the third function of school outlined by Nogura (2003) implies a social contract between children and teachers where children must submit themselves to teachers' authority (Nogura, 2003). However, for African Americans, the authority given to teachers to discipline students has become a tool to limit educational opportunities at a higher rate than non-Black students (Nogura, 2003). Since schools mirror the racialized U.S. society, African American children have been the target of discipline and control (Anderson, 1988; Monroe, 2005). History indicates that Black intellectual abilities, skills, posture, versatility, athletic abilities, resistance, strength and prowess have often threatened whites (Battalora, 2013). To deal with this threat, laws through structures and institutions were employed to subordinate Black people (Battalora, 2013; Crenshaw et al, 1995, Bell, 1976). The contention by some scholars suggests that school discipline may be one-way Blacks are controlled in response to the threat of fear (Battalora, 2013; Wacquant, 2001).

Although Black children's exclusionary experiences in the school date back to the era before zero tolerance policies, zero tolerance has exacerbated the trend (Carter et al., 2014;

Togut, 2011; Nogura, 2003). We therefore, contend that while addressing zero tolerance policies is critical, retributive discipline beliefs and racialized assumptions about student behavior must be addressed in tandem with zero tolerance discipline practices. Although discrimination is no longer de jure, racism and it negative effects against Black children have not been done away with; rather, they have adapted and evolved over time with persistent negative impact on African Americans and their children (Alexander, 2010; Diamond, 2006). Thus, the overrepresentation of Black children in discipline referrals for non-violent and non-drug related infractions under zero-tolerance policies potentially indicates a long history of racism in U. S. schools. Various leaders and advocates have called for an end to the use of zero tolerance policies (Spiller & Porter, 2014). However, without any legislation to mandate this, zero tolerance policies still remain a threat to a just school discipline. In the section that follows, we introduce and discuss critical race theory (CRT) to support our claim and to argue the need for social workers to critically assess and understand the role of racism and race in order to intervene effectively. Critical race theory asserts the need to revisit history to understand racialized legacies and the ways they continue to manifest and influence current day racial disparities. This assertion by CRT appears consistent with social worker's use of genograms to assess generational and intergenerational patterns among clients.

Zero Tolerance Practice from A Critical Race Theory Lens

Critical race theory (CRT) is an analytic tool that asserts that racism is a pervasive feature of the American society and contributes to inequality in education (Bell, 1995, 1976). Originally developed in legal scholarship (Bell, 1995, 1976; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001), CRT emerged in the field of education by Gloria Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995). CRT posits that race is socially constructed and therefore, challenges ahistorical and race-neutral interpretations of racial

disparities (Bell, 1995; Bondi, 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998) argued that the aim of critical race theory in education is to disrupt and interrupt the cycle of inequality that disadvantages Black students. To this end, she argues that CRT in education will serve as a tool for deconstruction, reconstruction and construction. That is, deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses that devalue Black children's potential, reconstruction of human agency, and the construction of equitable and socially just educational practices (Gloria-Landson-Billings, 1998).

Many educators note that they do not see color in their practice and interactions with students in and out of the classroom (Milner, 2012). However, by practicing under colorblind notions and ideologies, educators consciously or unconsciously construct and enact practices that perpetuate racism (Johnson et al., 2001) which can influence discipline practices. In the same way, without a critical perspective, social workers are likely to reinforce racism even as they attempt to reduce racially disproportional suspensions. Social workers thus need a critical lens to understand overt and covert forms of racial undercurrents in school discipline practices (NASW, 2007, 2014). Alexander (2010) argues that the only difference between today and the Jim Crow era is the language and symbols of communication, but not the existence of structural racism. From her insights in the criminal justice system, she asserts,

> *in the era of colorblindness, it is no longer permissible to use race explicitly as justification for discrimination, exclusion and social contempt. So we don't. Rather than rely on race, we use our criminal justice system to label people of color criminals, and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind* (p.8).

The same may be said of the education system in America today. In this post-Brown era, it is not permissible to rely on race to deny or restrict Black students' access to education.

However, the school's practices, cultural and organizational structure may function to label Black children and restrict their access to educational opportunities and resources (Ahram et al., 2011; Erevelles, 2000; Tomlin et al., 2013). As Alexander (2010) states, "today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against criminals in nearly all the way it was once legal to discriminate against African Americans" (p.8). Similarly, in education, once Black children appear threatening or violate codes of conduct under zero tolerance policies, it is justifiable to suspend, expel or easily refer them to the criminal justice system. We contend that schools have a mandate to provide a nurturing school climate that is consistent with young people's development and human capital potential. However, the exclusionary discipline practices disproportionately experienced by Black students deprive these students the right to education and fair treatment (Klein, 2016), and ultimately, the subordination of a protected racial group who appears to be normatively at increased risk within our school systems (Lipman, 1998).

A review of promising alternatives to addressing school discipline (e.g. School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, Social Emotional Learning and Restorative Justice) suggests that without carefully and intentionally addressing racism, even these widely-touted practices are less likely to achieve justice in school discipline for Black children (Koon, 2013). Thus, disrupting discipline disproportionality requires a critical assessment and understanding of the historical foundations (e.g. racial segregation and residual impacts of slavery) that undergird racial disparities today. For social work to contribute to equitable discipline practices, the profession needs to advocate for school-wide interventions that incorporate CRT for a transformative school context in ways that allow adults and peers to develop *culturally sensitive* and *culturally specific knowledge* about themselves and others (Lee & Green, 2003) to help

reframe the negative view of Black students. This can allow for one's racially and ethnically diverse lived experiences to be viewed as strength versus threat to society.

Alternatives to Zero Tolerance Practices: A Model by Tiers: A Model

Globally, there is a growing demand for social work interventions in today's schools (Allen-Meares & Montgomery, 2014). To respond to issues of equity within American public schools, social workers need to engage in anti-racist and multicultural practices with educators and students. We recommend an evidence-based tiered model (Kelly et al., 2015) to enhance social work practice in schools. This includes, 1) culturally sensitive practices that acknowledge race as a social construction with lived reality, 2) family-community-school partnerships to support students; and 3) a multi-systemic intervention (See Table 1). Ultimately, this model aims at increasing cultural sensitivity, reducing implicit racial bias among teachers, students and school personnel. Secondly, the model encourages collaborative efforts to ensure ecological contexts that support, and foster students' engagement in academics, and prevent punitive disciplinary practices. This model prioritizes the use of in-school suspensions and detention over suspensions and expulsions. Yet, it accounts for the need to utilize suspensions in extreme cases such as violence and drug use/possession by providing alternatives to suspension options.

Tier 1

According to the model, tier 1 interventions target the school as an organization with the aim of increasing protective factors that foster positive behavior and academic engagement among students (Kelly et al., 2015). Tier 1 interventions are preventive in nature and are provided to every student (Kelly et al., 2015). School climates where African American youth feel supported, experience a sense of belonging, and are provided opportunity for participation in both academic and extracurricular activities in racially and culturally responsive

manner are likely to foster student-to-school connection (Darly et al., 2010; Wright, 2009). Since racism and cultural mismatch in-part drive the disproportionate application of zero tolerance policies (Monroe, 2005, Skiba et al, 2015), we recommend racially and culturally sensitive school practices that are developed through assessment and understanding of students' unique needs. Students needs can be established through caring and genuine relationships (Cholewa et al., 2012; Davis et al., 2014). Scholars outline that Black children are often relational; thus, when they feel cared for, heard, and respected in a racially and culturally sensitive manner, they are more likely to develop trust which promotes positive behaviors and engagement for achievement (Cholewa et al., 2012; Hale, 1982; Parson, 2008; Wallace & Chhuon, 2014). Such culturally sensitive student-teacher relationships are noted to facilitate conflict prevention (Gregory et al, 2014). This is a central strategy for reducing racially disproportional discipline as many students are not culturally similar to their teachers and are often misunderstood both verbally and behaviorally (Gay, 2005). Social workers guided by the value of the importance of human relationships—such as interacting with teachers, students and their families— can play a key role establishing culturally conscious and caring relationships (Darensbourg, Perez, & Blake, 2010; Sampson, 2013).

Tier 2

At tier 2, interventions are secondary, and are directed toward students who are at risk of academic underperformance and engaging in disruptive behaviors (Kelly et al., 2015). Social workers can conduct assessment of students needs and use the data to inform decision about the kind of intervention that may be needed, and at what level (micro, mezzo or macro or a combination of these systems). Students in need of intervention at tier 2 may display early signs that can include unexcused absences, submitting incomplete homework, coming to school late,

violating dress codes and other minor or nonviolent infractions. Social workers can utilize genograms to investigate the underlying impetus for a student's behavior. By using a genogram, the social worker can examine the influence that both the student's family and school have on the student's behavioral decision making (McCullough-Chavis & Waites, 2004). Genograms also allow social workers to make strengths-based assessments of student performance and behavior. In so doing, students can recognize their strengths instead of internalizing the labels associated with their misbehavior or classroom conflict. Finally, a genogram can inform culturally relevant practices (McCullough-Chavis & Waites, 2004) that will strengthen teacher-student relationships. Together, social work interventions that are grounded in culturally relevant practices, and use ecologically centered assessment tools will help to deter the use of behavioral referrals, detention and suspensions.

In addition, if the social worker's assessment reveals the need for micro level interventions related to non-violent related behaviors, the social workers can advocate for restorative practices, in-school suspension and detention. Unlike out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, these methods are less likely to exacerbate the academic and socio-emotional challenges students face. Instead, in-school suspension keeps students within schools and provides the opportunity for the completion of assigned work. Other non-exclusionary discipline can include behavior-based reflection essays and school-community service (Hopkins, 2004).

Tier 3

Tier 3 represents more serious problems that negatively impact academic and behavioral outcomes of students, and can undermine school safety. Intervention at this level is tertiary prevention and targets more extreme student behaviors that include violence and drug usage (Kelly et al., 2015). We suggest an alternative to out-of-school suspension. To achieve this, we

recommend a multi-system approach that leverages relationships with community organizations, families and the individual children. Students identified needing tier 3 interventions will be engaged in rehabilitative resources to prevent future behavioral occurrences. This alternative to suspension gets students involved with volunteering their time at a community agency, and obtaining intensive counseling and academic assistance. Since suspended students are less likely to have adult supervision at home (Dawson, 1991), they are exposed to greater risks. Specifically, they are more likely to engage with substance abuse, become sexually active, fight, have weapons, become involved with crime, and face imprisonment (Farchi et al., 1994). However, out-of-school suspensions within a community agency provides a protected environment and positive experience for students such as civic engagement. Students may gain important social, human and cultural capital, and reduce the likelihood of reinforcing problematic behavior.

With the recent congressional allocation of funding for alternatives to suspension programs through the Community Service Program Initiative (Owen, Wettach, Hoffman, 2015), more schools are now able to employ alternative to suspension initiatives. We recommend the engagement of a community organization that specializes in children and youth development. In Pennsylvania, the onTRACK Program is noteworthy for its success in establishing positive relationships and reducing students' negative behaviors (New Pittsburgh Courier Editorial Staff, 2013). The onTRACK Program is a school-centered program aimed at positive youth development in a non-profit organization (King, 2013). The program focuses on building trust among high risk youth (between six to eighteen years old), their parents, school staff and providing community resources. Its goal is to improve academic performance and school attendance, build strong healthy relationships between families and schools, and increase youth

engagement in extracurricular and social activities (King, 2013). Similarly, research on seven community service based alternative to suspension programs in Arizona has found statistically significant reductions in student tardiness, absences, discipline referrals and infractions (Bosworth et al., 2006). Although further studies are needed, alternatives to suspension programs have promise to reduce punitive disciplinary methods that often place students at greater risk.

Implications for Social Work

Besides working with African American children and families, social workers also advocate for integrated schools that recognize and accept racial and cultural identity of African American children as active members of a multiracial society. Standard eleven of the NASW's school social work standards (2012) details that "School social workers shall engage in advocacy that seeks to ensure that all students have equal access to education and services to enhance their academic progress" (p.13). The standards also convey that school social workers should advocate against institutional racism and any form of discrimination that would impact students. Social workers can play this advocacy role by: (1) working with school and students to modify the school codes of conduct, disciplinary procedures and introduce alternatives that incorporates students input on student codes; (2) working with educators to design and implement culturally responsive teaching approaches that maintain students' cultural and racial identity for the creation of an accepting and affirming environment (Kennedy, 1990); and (3) engage in anti-bias education strategies in order to challenge racial disproportionality in discipline at the personal and institutional level.

Moreover, as noted in Daly et al. (2010), zero tolerance policies have been linked with less school connectedness among minority youth including African Americans. Therefore, building an affirming school climate may help youth feel and experience positive and prosocial

connection to peers, educators, and school personnel; sense of interest in school; perceived sense of belonging, and commitment to school—which are linked to positive school outcomes and reduction in disciplinary related measures (Daly et al., 2010). Social workers can help establish school climate for African American students' school connectedness by: 1) offering professional development and support to educators to meet the diverse social, emotional, and cognitive needs of students (CDC, 2013) in ways that are racially/culturally sensitive; 2) creating decision making process that foster open communication between families, students, the community and schools. This can be achieved when social workers learn and understand the cultural frame of African American children, and engage educators through professional development activities for educators to develop and apply cultural sensitivity skills in their instructional and pedagogical approaches in the classrooms (Sampson, 2013).

Further, given that educational practices are informed by policies (Lipman, 1998), social workers can engage in legislative advocacy at local, state and national levels to change school districts, and educational policies regarding positive school climates that carter to all students irrespective of racial or cultural background. Social workers can lobby for legislative changes that mandate the teaching of race and ethnicity in school curriculum thus advancing the social, cultural and educational experiences of all students (Cameron & Sheppard, 2006). As noted in Boykin (1984), it is possible that African American children may register their dissatisfaction with the school curriculum and the classroom in ways that may be perceived as rude by educators, which in turn can lead to discipline referrals. Thus, social workers must continue to intervene at the macro and micro level by advocating for policy changes and working to strengthen cultural understanding between students and their teachers through race-centered and strengths-based perspective.

Conclusion

While the implementation of zero tolerance policies has inadvertently led to the exclusion of millions of students, it has had a disproportionate impact on students of color particularly for subjective behaviors (Advancement Project, 2005, p.23). To achieve a safe school environment for all children, it is important that the historically driven inequities in school discipline practices are understood. Thus, we recommend the use of critical race theory as an analytic tool as it is consistent with social work values, assessments and interventions. Further, through tier 1 of our model, we argue that social workers should have a critical understanding of racism and race to interrupt racial bias in schools. Following the work of Allen-Meares et al. (2005) and Diaz (2015)**,** tier 2 suggests that social workers and teachers can collaborate to support students who are at risk of suspension through the use of data gathered by a social work assessment framework. Finally, at tier three, the multi-system approach suggests that social workers coordinate resources within schools, families, and communities. Ultimately, tier three is designed to ameliorate risky behaviors while restoring student confidence, citizenship and academic success. Social workers are therefore called upon to incorporate critical race theory and a mutli-tiered system that allow them to play multiple roles such as advocate, broker, and counselor in their endeavors to support students, families and the schools they work in. These steps can work together to create school environments that are just, fair, and equitable for all children to thrive successfully.

References

Advancement Project. (2005). *Education on Lockdown: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track*. Children and justice family center of Northwestern University School of Law. United States of America. Retrieved on July 2016 from:
https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=209551

Ahram, R., Fergus, E., & Noguera, P. (2011). Addressing racial/ethnic disproportionality in special education: Case studies of suburban school districts. *Teachers College Record*, *113*(10), 2233–2266.

Alexander, M. (2010). New Jim Crow, The. *Ohio St. J. Crim. L.*, *9*, 7.

Allen-Meares, P., Hudgins, C. A., Engberg, M. E., & Lessnau, B. (2005). Using a collaboratory model to translate social work research into practice and policy. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *15*(1), 29-40.

Allen-Meares, P. (1996). The new federal role in education and family services: Goal setting without responsibility. Social Work, 41(5), 533-540.

Allen-Meares, P., & Montgomery, K. L. (2014). Global trends and school-based social work. *Children & Schools*, cdu007.

Anderson, J. D. (1988). *The education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*. Univ of North Carolina Press. Chapel Hill, NC.

Battalora, J. (2013). *Birth of a white nation: The invention of white people and its relevance today*. Houston, TX: Strategic Book Publishing.

Bell, D. A. (1995). Who's afraid of critical race theory? *University of Illinois Law Review, 1995(4),* 893.

Bell, D. A. (1976). Serving two masters: Integration ideals and client interests in school

      desegregation litigation. *Yale Law Journal*, *85(4),* 470-516.

Bondi, S. (2012). Students and institutions protecting whiteness as property: A critical race

      theory analysis of student affairs preparation. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and*

      Practice, *49*(4), 397–414.

Bosworth, K., Ford, L., Anderson, K., & Paiz, D. (2006). Community Service as an Alternative

      to suspension Smith Prevention Initiatives.

Boykin, R. (1984). Reading achievement and the social-cultural frame of reference of Afro-

      American children . *Journal of Negro Education*, *53*(4), 464–473.

Cameron, M. (2006). Managing school discipline and implications for school social workers: A

      review of the literature. *Children & Schools*, *28*(4), 219-227.

Cameron, M., & Sheppard, S. M. (2006). School discipline and social work practice:

      Application of research and theory to intervention. *Children & Schools,* 28(1), 15-22.

Carter, P. L., Skiba, R., Arredondo, M. I., & Pollock, M. (2016). You can't fix what you don't

      look at: Acknowledging race in addressing racial discipline disparities. *Urban*

      Education, 52(2) 207-235.

Carter, P., Fine, M., & Russell, S. (2014). *Discipline disparities series: Overview.* Bloomington,

      IN: Center for Evaluation and Education Policy

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). School Connectedness: Strategies for

      increasing Protective Factors Among Youth. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and

      Human Services, 2009.

Cholewa, B., Amatea, E., West-Olatunji, C. A., & Wright, A. (2012). Examining the relational

processes of a highly successful teacher of African American children. *Urban Education*,*47*(1).

Constable, R. (2009). The role of the school social worker. *School social work: Practice, policy, and research*, 3-29.

Coulson, A. (2012). Zero tolerance. Causes, consequences, and alternatives. Retrieved on May, 2013, from https://www.cato.org/publications/congressional-testimony/zero-tolerance-causes consequences-alternatives.

Cregor, M., & Hewitt, D. (2011). Dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline: A survey from the field. Poverty & Race, 20(1), 5-7

Crenshaw, K. (1995). *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement*. The New Press.

Daly, B., Buchanan, C., Dasch, K., Eichen, D., & Lenhart, C. (2010). Promoting school connectedness among urban youth of color: Reducing risk factors while promoting protective factors. *The Prevention Researcher*, *17*(3), 18-20.

Darensbourg, A., Perez, E., & Blake, J. (2010). Overrepresentation of African American males in exclusionary discipline: The role of school-based mental health professionals in dismantling the school to prison pipeline. *Journal of African American Males in Education*, 1(3), 196-211.

Davis, H. A., Chang, M. L., Andrzejewski, C. E., & Poirier, R. R. (2014). Examining relational engagement across the transition to high schools in three US high schools reformed to improve relationship quality. *Learning Environments Research*, *17*(2), 263-286.

Dawson, D. A. (1991). Family structure and children's health and well-being: Data from the

1988 National Health Interview Survey on Child Health. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 573-584.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. NYU Press. NY.

Diamond, J. B. (2006). Still separate and unequal: Examining race, opportunity, and school achievement in "integrated" suburbs. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *75*(3), 495–505.

Diaz, M. (2015). Facilitating urban school social worker collaboration with teachers' in addressing ADHD: A mixed-methods assessment of urban school social worker Knowledge. *School Social Work Journal, 39(2),* 63-78.

Dupper, D. R. (2010). Does the punishment fit the crime? The impact of zero tolerance discipline on at risk youths. *Social Work in Education*, *32*(2), 67-69.

Dupper, D. R., Theriot, M. T., & Craun, S. W. (2009). Reducing out-of-school suspensions: Practice guidelines for school social workers. Children & Schools, 31(1), 6-14.

Edelman, M., Beck, R., & Smith, P. (1975). School suspensions: Are they helping children. *Cambridge, MA: Children's Defense Fund*.

Erevelles, N. (2000). Educating unruly bodies: Critical pedagogy, disability studies, and the politics of schooling. *Educational Theory*, *50*(1), 25–47.

Farchi, S., Molino, N., Giorgi Rossi, P., Borgia, P., Krzyzanowski, M., Dalbokova, D., & Kim, R. (1994). Health risk behaviors among adolescents who do and do not attend school-- United States, 1992. *MMWR: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report,* 43(8), 129-132.

Gasker, J. A. & Fisher, A. A. (2014). Toward a context-specific definition of social justice for social work : In search of overlapping consensus. *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, *11*(1), 42–53.

Gay, G. (2005). Educational equality for students of color. In (eds) J, Banks and McGee-

Banks, C, *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives.* (pp. 211-241). Hoboken, NJ, StatesJossey- Bass.

Gregory, A., Clawson, K., Davis, A., & Gerewitz, J. (2014). The promise of restorative practices to transform teacher-student relationships and achieve equity in school discipline. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *26*(4), 325-353.

Hale, J. E. (1982). *Black children: Their roots, culture, and learning styles*. JHU Press. Baltimore.

Hopkins, C. Q., Koss, M. P., & Bachar, K. J. (2004). Applying restorative justice to ongoing intimate violence: Problems and possibilities. Louis U. Pub. L. Rev., 23, 289.

Ife, J. (2012). *Human rights and social work: Towards rights-based practice*. Cambridge University Press. New York

Johnson, T., Boyden, J. E., & Pittz, W. J. (2001). *Racial profiling and punishment in US public schools: How zero tolerance policies and high stakes testing subvert academic excellence and racial equity*. Research Report [and] Executive Summary.

Kelly, M. S., Thompson, A. M., Frey, A., Klemp, H., Alvarez, M., & Berzin, S. C. (2015). The state of school social work: Revisited. *School Mental Health*, *7*(3), 174-183.

Kennedy, D. (1990). A cultural pluralist case for affirmative action in legal academia. *Duke Law Journal*, *1990*(4), 705-757.

King, K. (2013). For immediate release about onTRACK program. Retrieved from http://www.tcv.net/uploads/8/8/1/1/8811813/pumpkin.pdfLangsberg.

Klein, R. (2016). Keeping our kids in school and out of court: Rooting out school suspension hearings and a new alternative. *Cardozo J. Conflict Resolution.*, *17*, 633-633.

Koon, D. S. (2013). *Exclusionary school discipline*: *An Issue Brief and Review of the Literature*.

Berkeley, CA: The Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Policy, University of Berkeley School of Law.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. *11*(1), 7-24.

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, *97*(1), 47–68.

Lee, M. Y., & Greene, G. J. (2003). A teaching framework for transformative multicultural social work education. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, *12*(3), 1-28.

Lipman, P. (1998). *Race, class, and power in school restructuring*. Albany, New York: Sunny Press.

McCullough-Chavis, A., & Waites, C. (2004). Genograms with African American families: Considering cultural context. *Journal of Family Social Work*, *8*(2), 1-19.

McElderry, C. G., & Cheng, T. C. (2014). Understanding the discipline gap from an ecological perspective. *Children & Schools*, *36*(4), 241-249.

Milner, H. R. (2012). Beyond a test score: Explaining opportunity gaps in educational practice. *Journal of Black Studies, 43(6)*, 693-718.

Monroe, C. R. (2005). Why are" bad boys" always Black? Causes of disproportionality in school discipline and recommendations for change. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*,*79*(1), 45-50.

Morgan, E., Salomon, N., Plotkin, M., & Cohen, R. (2014). The school discipline consensus report: Strategies from the field to keep students engaged in school and out of the

juvenile justice system. *The Council of State Governments Justice Center: June*, *4*, 112.

National Association of Social Workers (2007). *Institutional racism and the social work Profession: A call to action*. NASW; Washington, DC.

National Association of Social Workers. (2008). *Code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers*. Washington, DC. NASW Press.

National Association of Social Workers. (2012). NASW standard for school social work services Washington, DC. NASW Press.

Noguera, P. A. (2003). Schools, prisons, and social implications of punishment: Rethinking disciplinary practices. *Theory into Practice*, *42*(4), 341-350.

New Pittsburgh Courier Editorial Staff. (2013). Graduate Pittsburgh summit spotlights successful programs. Retrieved from: http://newpittsburghcourieronline.com/2013/04/26/graduate-pittsburgh-summit-spotlights-successful-programs/.

Owen, L., Wettach, J., Hoffman, C.K. (2015). Instead of suspension: Alternatives strategies for effective school discipline. Duke Center for Child and Family Policy and Duke Law School. Retrived From:

https://law.duke.edu/childedlaw/schooldiscipline/downloads/instead_of_suspension.pdf

Parsons, E. C. (2008). Learning contexts, black cultural ethos, and the science achievement of African American students in an urban middle school. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, *45*(6), 665–683.

Quintana, S. (2012). *Ethnic and Racial Disparities in Education: Psychology's Contributions to Understanding and Reducing Disparities*. Report to the APA Presidential Task Force on Educational Disparities.

Sampson, W. A. (2013). *Narrowing the Achievement Gap: Schools and Parents Can Do it*. R&L Education. New York.

Skiba, R. J., Horner, R. H., Chung, C. G., Rausch, M. K., May, S. L., & Tobin, T. (2011). Race is not neutral: A national investigation of African American and Latino disproportionality in school discipline. *School Psychology Review*,*40*(1), 85.

Skiba, R. J., Eckes Suzanne, E., & Brown, K. (2009). African American disproportionality in school discipline: The divide between best evidence and legal remedy. *NYL Sch. L. Rev.*, *54*, 1071.

Skiba, R. J., & Noam, G. G. (2001). *Zero tolerance: Can suspension and expulsion keep schools Safe? New direction for youth development.* New York, NY*:* Jossey-Bass.

Social work policy institute (2014). *Achieving racial equity: Calling the social work profession to action.* Washington, D.C. National Association of Social Workers.

Spilt, J. L., & Hughes, J. N. (2015). African American children at risk of increasingly conflicted teacher-student relationships in elementary school. *School Psychology Review*, *44*(3), 306.

Spiller, M. J., & Porter, J. (2014). Bringing an end to the school to prison pipeline in the age of 'post-racialism'. In Zamani-Gallaher, E.M., *The Obama Administration and Educational Reform* (pp. 71-90). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Teasley, M. L., & Miller, C. R. (2011). School Social Workers' Perceived Efficacy at Tasks Related to Curbing Suspension and Undesirable Behaviors. *Children & Schools*, *33*(3), 136-145.

Tomlin, C., Mocombe, P. C., & Wright, C. (2013). Postindustrial capitalism, social class

    language games, and Black underachievement in the United States and United Kingdom.

    Mind, Culture, and Activity, *20*(4), 358–371.

Togut, T. D. (2011). Gestalt of the school-to-prison pipeline: The duality of overrepresentation

    of minorities in special education and racial disparity in school discipline on

    minorities, The. *Am. UJ Gender Soc. Pol'y & L.*, *20*, 163.

United States Department of Education. (2014). *Supportive Schools Discipline Initiative*. Office

    of Civil Rights Retrieved from: http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-School

    Discipline-Snapshot.pdf.

United States Department of Education. (2016) 2013-2013 *Civil rights data collection: A first*

    look. Office of Civil Rights, Retrieved from :

    http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf.

United States Department of Education (2013). *Rates of school crime: National Eductional*

    Statistices. Retrived from; https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/Indicator.

U.S. Department of Education. (2009). *Condition of Education 2009* [Data file]. Retrieved from:

    http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009081.

U.S. Department of Education. (2011). Condition of Education 2011 [Data file]. Retrieved from:

Wacquant, L. (2001). Deadly symbiosis when ghetto and prison meet and mesh. *Punishment &*

    Society, *3*(1), 95-133.

Wallace, T. L., & Chhuon, V. (2014). Proximal processes in urban classrooms: engagement and

    disaffection in urban youth of color. *American Educational Research Journal*,

    51(5), 937–973.

Wright, B. L. (2009). Racial-ethnic identity, academic achievement, and African American

    males: A review of literature. Journal of Negro Education, 78, 123–134.

Table 1. Prevention and intervention by tiers

Definitions	Adult and student beliefs and behaviors	Goal	Involved personnel	Prevention and intervention strategies	Evaluation of strategies	Evidence-based practices
Primary prevention	Misunderstanding, miscommunication and cultural mist-match.	Build supportive school climate that are racially and culturally sensitive	Teachers, students, school social workers	Programs that increase the cultural competence and race literacy of teachers and school personnel and increase students' connection with and to school	Obtain students' perceptions of being heard, supported by teachers and peers	Supportive School Climates that are culturally relevant Wallace & Chhuon, 2014; Cholewa et al., 2012; Davis et al., C 2014 Ladson-Billings, 2009; Parson, 2008; Smalls, 2010; Sampson, 2013)
Secondary Prevention	Minor/subjective offenses e.g. being late to class, not completing homework	Resolve conflicts and reduce disruptive behaviors and prevent future offense Reduce teacher bias	Teachers, students, school social workers, Parents, School counselors, School administrators	In-school suspension and detention, e.g. after school suspensions, clean-up activities around school, reflective essay writing, conflict resolution skills	Increased school attendance, students completing homework, high student engagement in classroom, reduced rate of disruptive behaviors	Equitable Discipline Practices (Coulson, 2012; Gregory et al., 2014; Massachusetts H. B. 4332, 2012; Sebastian, 2005)
Tertiary Prevention	Major offense e.g. bullying, drinking, possession of firearms and drugs	Reduce disruptive behaviors and prevent future offense	Teachers, students, school social workers, parents, school counselors, school administrators, court, community personnel (e.g. leaders of religious organizations), youth specialties, local non-profit organizations	Suspension in a supervised setting, mentoring services, Community services, Restorative justice, counseling and academic assistance	Reduction in the use of drugs, develop civic engagement skills, restoration to regular classroom, reduced rate of violent and problematic behaviors, reduced episode of mental health concerns	(Dawson, 1991, King, 2013, Sampson, 2013)