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Exploring the Intersections of School Discipline, Discrimination, Connectedness, and Mental
Health for African American High School Students

By

Kandace Shaylyn Forrester

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Na'ilah Suad Nasir, Chair

Professor Daniel Perlstein

Professor Nikki Jones

Spring 2015

Abstract

Exploring the Inteserctions of School Discipline, Discrimination, Connectedness, and Mental Health for African American High School Students

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Kandace Shaylyn Forrester

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Na'ilah Suad Nasir, Chair

Mixed-methods research was conducted to investigate the experiences of African American students in the school discipline system. The relationships between school discipline experiences and gender, perceptions of racial discrimination, feelings of school connectedness, and mental health were also explored. The investigation utilized survey, interview, and observational data. Findings suggest that the majority of African American participants had negative contact with the school discipline system and nearly half of the participants perceived that they had been discriminated against because of their race in school discipline interactions within the current school year. There were no significant gender differences in relation to students' school discipline experiences or their perceptions of discrimination. Findings further indicated a moderate positive correlation between perceived discrimination in school discipline interactions and depressive symptoms. Students' perceptions of discrimination were also positively correlated with their attitude towards teachers and school, but not overall school connectedness. Students' level of contact with the school discipline system was not predictive of their perceptions of discrimination. However, students who had higher levels of contact with the school discipline system (Saturday school and detention consequences) reported using more engaged coping mechanisms, such as speaking up about their experiences and trying to change things, in response to their negative discipline experiences. Overall, findings highlight the frequency with which students have negative and perceived discriminatory school discipline experiences and draws attention to the important internalizing consequences for African American students coming into contact with the school discipline system. The generalizability of findings is limited by the small sample size and selection biases; however, the study nevertheless calls for additional research regarding the variables investigated.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my family. To my parents, Lewie and Kimberly, who have always loved and supported me, please know that your encouragement and belief in me have always meant the world. Your many sacrifices to give me the things and experiences you never had do not go unnoticed. To my sister, who has always challenged me to be true to my passions, and myself, I thank you for inspiring me. To my grandparents, and great grandparents, who have taught me through their examples how to rise above adversity and always strive for greatness, I honor you and your legacies. To my aunts and uncles, who have always been my village, I thank you for teaching me the importance of and embracing me as a part of your community. To all my other family and friends who have supported me through this journey, I sincerely thank and appreciate you.

To my children, Abisola and Ayinde, you are my inspiration. Everyday that I watch you grow and learn, I am reminded of our potential as human beings to change the world. Your inquisitive nature, your genuine caring for others, and your courage, audacity, and strength, give me hope. I am so proud of you both and cannot wait to see the enduring marks you leave on the world.

To, Walé, my husband and best friend, thank you. Thank you for always seeing the best in me and wanting what is best for me. Your love, support, and encouragement give me strength and courage. You make me a better person. I could not have completed this journey without you.

To the students, district personnel, and school administrators who made this work possible, I am grateful for your participation and support. I thank the students for being willing to share their stories with me.

And lastly, to the millions of youth around the nation, struggling to find their places in the world and navigate hopeless institutions, this work is for you. Know that your plight is understood, but the expectation for you to overcome the obstacles you face and the burdens you bear is unwavering.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Inequalities in the school discipline system have been researched for over two decades. Research in the field has consistently found that African American students are suspended and expelled at disproportionate rates in comparison to other ethnic/racial groups and relative to their rates of enrollment. For instance, Harvard University (2000) found that while African American students comprised only 17% of the total public school enrollment overall, they accounted for approximately 33% of all suspensions.

Research indicates that there are several of factors influencing disproportionality in school discipline, including the well-documented use of harsh zero-tolerance policies that mandate pre-determined consequences and punishments for a range of specified offenses (Skiba et al, 1997). There has been a barrage of media and political conversation suggesting that the use of harsh and punitive school discipline practices and policies are necessitated by the increase in violence on school campuses. However, much research points to the contrary. For example, Hyman and Perone (1998) highlight that schools are one of the safest places for youth to be and juvenile crime levels have dropped over the past few decades. Rather than addressing problems of violence in schools, research indicates that zero-tolerance policies are harmful towards students.

Many districts originally claimed zero-tolerance policies were the answer to serious and overwhelming drug, gang and weapons problems; however, district administrators have expanded the use of zero-tolerance policies to address less serious disruptions (Harvard University, 2000). For example, some school officials have categorized organic cough drops as drugs and paper clips as weapons and disciplined students for using these items (Skiba et al., 1997). According to Skiba and Knesting (2001), while suspensions or expulsions for serious offenses remain relatively infrequent, suspensions for minor offenses have dramatically increased. Furthermore, these zero-tolerance policies have also been ineffective in improving student behavior, as the rate of student recidivism is between 35 and 45% (Skiba & Knesting, 2001).

Overall, research indicates that zero-tolerance policies have allowed for school districts and policy makers to exercise increased flexibility in determining what behaviors constitute school discipline offenses while at the same time demonstrating increased rigidity in responses to these school discipline offenses. Research on the discipline gap indicates that this increased discretion afforded to school personnel opens the floodgates for subjectivity and racial bias in the administration of discipline (Skiba, Michael, & Nadaro, 2002), thereby contributing to inequalities in the school discipline system.

In addition to zero-tolerance policies, factors such as interpersonal relationships and implicit biases (Bowditch, 1993; Monroe, 2005; Monroe, 2006), police presence (Hyman& Perone, 1998), and poor classroom management (Devine, 1996) impact school discipline interactions and inequalities. Involvement in the school discipline system carries with it important academic and social consequences. For instance, Townsend (2000) highlights that students who are punished with out-of-school suspension have fewer learning opportunities in school, thus causing them to lag behind their peers academically, be retained, and be tracked into lower ability classes. Essentially, Townsend describes a domino effect were suspension excludes students from an appropriate education and places them at greater risk for dropping out (Bowditch, 1993; DeRidder, 1991; Walker-Dalhouse, 2005).

The negative impact of involvement in the school discipline system also impacts students' social experiences. For example, Noguera (2003) draws a parallel between the current school discipline system and the growing prison system. He explains that "sorting out the bad apples" or excluding students who misbehave, or are perceived to have done so, creates a self-fulfilling prophecy that results in increased anti-social behavior that sends students through a pipeline from school to prison. Wald and Losen (2003) provide additional evidence that such a pipeline exists. According to their research, 68 percent of state prison inmates in 1997 had not completed high school; 75 percent of those in the juvenile justice system had not passed the 10th grade; and having been suspended, expelled or retain a grade during middle school were among the top predictors for later arrest (Wald & Losen, 2003).

While existing research has demonstrated the intersections of African American students' school discipline experiences with academic achievement/ success and broader social outcomes, such as employment, incarceration, and the like, one important intersection remains relatively unexplored. Specifically, research in the field has yet to fully explore the intersection between exclusionary and discriminatory school discipline practices and African American students' mental health. Research in other fields indicates that African American youth are perceptive to racial discrimination in general and that it significantly correlates with aspects of mental health (Wong, Eccles & Sameroff, 2003; Nyborg & Curry, 2003; Brody, 2006). This dissertation study proposes that a similar pattern may exist relative to school discipline, in that African American students are perceptive to instances of discrimination at school and in disciplinary exchanges and that these perceptions of discrimination are related to various aspects of mental health.

This study investigates the relationships between exclusionary discipline, perceived discrimination, and mental health. The research also considers how an additional variable, school connectedness, is related to students' conceptualizations and attributions of discipline experiences and mental health variables. The study investigates these relationships with the use of survey, interview and observational data. Survey data was gathered from 40 participants at a racially diverse, yet academically segregated comprehensive high school in Northern California. Seven of the 40 participants further contributed to the study by allowing the researcher to conduct classroom observations and by participating in interviews in an effort to give voice, depth, and context to the study data.

Theoretical Framework

Common Theoretical Conceptualizations

Studying the intersection between African American students school discipline experiences and their mental health outcomes is difficult for several reasons. One source of difficulty stems from the fact that there is no known published research drawing an explicit connection between school discipline experiences and the mental health of African American students. Thus, studying this proposed intersection requires charting new territories without the advantage of learning from the insights and challenges of others. A second difficulty stems from the fact that a great deal of the literature on African American students' school discipline experiences is not grounded in theory. Rather, much of the field has been more focused on documenting the existence of a "discipline gap" than providing theoretically grounded explanations for why such a gap exists. While most studies in the field lack a theoretical conceptualization of the "discipline gap", there are two notable exceptions.

One such exception is the work by Noguera (2003). Noguera offers the social contract theory as an explanation for African American students' school behavior. He briefly explains in his work that many disenfranchised African American students recognize that schools are institutions that are not meant for them. These students recognize early in their school careers the conditions so frequently sensationalized (i.e. Kozol 1992, 2005) - that their buildings are inadequate, their instruction subpar, and their overall schooling experience is inept. African American students' inadequate schooling symbolizes the termination of the implied social contract. Realizing that schools have not upheld their obligations of the contract to provide an education and opportunities for economic and social mobility, students return in kind by terminating their end of the contract to relinquishing some of one's personal will and control, in order to gain an education and the supposed attached benefits. Students' termination of their contract with the school can be viewed from a psychological perspective. Student's termination of their social contract with the school, or their giving up, is a symptom of the psychological trauma that was inflicted upon. This trauma can be manifested both internally and externally. For example, while some students' response to an unjust system and a futile experience might be withdrawal or depression that stems from a sense of hopelessness, others might show manifestations of their psychological trauma externally, demonstrating rage, anger, and frustration.

While this theoretical framework has many merits, it fails to fully capture African Americans' position in the education system. It is not simply the case that African American students are denied the benefits of the implied social contract, such as quality instruction and inhabitable facilities, but also that much of their experiences in school in general, and in the school discipline system in particular, is marked by many forms and instances of oppression. For instance, the verbal bullying (Bowditch, 1993; Brown, 2001) and physical invasiveness (Hyman & Perone, 1998) that African American students experience in schools at the hands of teachers, administrators, security technology and police, are oppressive and go far beyond simply violating a contract to provide certain educational benefits.

Furthermore, the relationship between student's adherence to the school's social contract and school discipline outcomes appears too simplistic. School discipline experiences are influenced by many factors aside from student behavior. Moreover, student's behaviors (both internalizing and externalizing) can be impacted by a multitude of factors aside from one's belief or disbelief in the social contract, such as personality traits, trauma history, social skills, etc.

Bowditch (1995) offers a second similar theory to explain African American student's experiences in the school discipline system. Bowditch borrowed labeling and social deviance theories to explain how once African American students, either justly or unjustly, were labeled as "trouble makers" their behaviors came to mimic the label that given to them. She explained that this phenomenon occurred through secondary deviance, whereby students "acted bad" because they were told they were. Bowditch's invocation of labeling theory and secondary deviance is helpful in understanding African American student's externalizing behaviors. Externalizing, as well as internalizing symptoms, in this regard should not be understood as willful, intentionally negative behavior because of an arbitrary choice; rather, students' externalizing behaviors, such as "aggression" are the result of the identities students adopt when they are labeled as "bad". And while this theory is important in that it recognizes the limited identities impressed upon African American students impacted by the school discipline system, it is also insufficient. Primarily, conceptualizing African American students' school discipline experiences from a labeling and secondary deviance perspective detracts from the import of social injustice and

oppression, focusing more on student's reactionary "pathological" behaviors rather than on the oppressive behaviors, notions, ideologies, practices, and values that led to them. Essentially, the theory puts more focus on the student's behavior than on the root cause or causes of the behavior. Secondly, Bowditch discusses how messages about "being bad" persuades students to engage in negative behaviors, but does not discuss why and how these particular messages have such profound implications on students' behavior.

Just as the theories provided in the discipline gap literature do not adequately lend themselves to the study of the intersection between school discipline experiences and mental health outcomes for African American students, neither do the theories provided in the literature on the relationship between mental health and perceived discrimination. Research in this field is typically looked at from a risk and resiliency framework. For example, Wong, Eccles, and Sameroff (2003), posited that psychological functioning would have a negative association with perceived racism. They viewed messages of racism and discrimination as a risk factor for students that would serve to increase the probability of negative developmental outcomes (including psychological development). At the same time, they viewed what they called a students' ethnic identity as a protective factor that served to help buffer the negative effects of racial discrimination.

Still, one must also acknowledge that racial identity, self-concept and the like are profoundly impacted by the socio-politico-historical context in which he or she lives. Furthermore, to view African American students' mental health outcomes as balancing act between risk and resilience appears too simplistic an explanation. Racism, discrimination and the like are more than just risks; they are profound assaults to one's sense of self and wellbeing. The term 'risk' obscures responsibility or accountability. Or, as Fine (1991) explains, when society connects a groups' poor academic or psychosocial outcomes to their "risk" status, we essentially position "those people- their genes and pathologies" (p. 26) as the source of their own despair. In other words, "public attention spotlights on them, obscuring the perverse structures, policies, and practices that place them 'at risk'" (p. 26).

And so, while acts, messages, and ideologies of racism and discrimination have the potential to threaten one's psychological development, this threat is not the product of chance, but was structurally created. Thus, conceptualizing the intersection of African American students' school discipline experiences and mental health outcomes from a risk and resilience framework appears too passive to give the phenomenon its due justice.

While the two most related fields do not completely lend adequate theories to help understand the intersection between the fields, exploring the issue from a cultural-ecological framework provides substantial utility.

The Cultural-Ecological Framework

Creating considerable controversy in the field of academia, John Ogbu introduced the cultural-ecological theory. The theory is a framework for understanding the cultural and ecological forces that impact and influence the experiences and successes of different minority groups within the dominant culture. This framework is particularly useful for understanding African American students' views of and experiences within the education system in the United States and is well situated to guide this dissertation study's inquiry into African American students' school discipline experiences.

Incorporation and Treatment of Minority Groups. The cultural-ecological framework suggests that in order to understand the perceptions and responses of particular minority group

members to the education system, one must first understand how the dominant group treats different minority groups in broad society. Thus, understanding a group's treatment requires an analysis of their incorporation into the United States. In exploring the incorporation of several minority groups, Ogbu classified minorities using the following categories: autonomous, voluntary (immigrant), and involuntary (non-immigrant). Autonomous minorities are those individuals who belong to groups that are relatively small in number and who may suffer discrimination but are not specifically dominated or oppressed. Ogbu and Simon (1998) offer the Amish, Jewish, and Mormon as examples of autonomous minorities. The voluntary minority category represents those individuals or groups of individuals who willingly choose to move to the United States and do not see their presence in the U.S. as being forced upon them. The authors argue that these groups of minorities may experience some discrimination, but do not tend to experience long-lasting school difficulties or cultural or language problems due to eventual assimilation or accommodation into the dominant culture. The last major minority category (although refugee minorities are briefly discussed by Ogbu and Simon) is that of the involuntary minority. The involuntary minority category includes minority peoples who have been brought to the new country, conquered, colonized, or enslaved against their will, as is the case of African Americans in the United States.

Within education and broader society, instrumental, relational, and symbolic forces influence the treatment of minorities by the dominant group. Instrumental forces include the economic, political, and legal practices and policies that serve as discriminatory barriers to advancement for minority groups. Relational forces reference the barriers that minority groups face as a result of their interactions and relationships with the dominant group. Relational forces include the experiences of subordination, control, and exclusion, opportunities for legitimate assimilation, and threats and violence. Lastly, the authors explain that symbolic or expressive barriers include derogation, denigration and stereotyping of minority groups due to the intellectual, cultural, and linguistic differences between the majority and minority groups. The authors explain that all minority groups experience discriminatory treatment at the instrumental, relational, and symbolic levels, however, responses to this treatment typically varies by minority group. The variability appears dependent on four key community forces: the group's frame of reference, instrumental adaptation, relational adaptation, and symbolic adaptation to the dominant culture.

Frame of Reference. Frames of reference refer to the particular ways in which a person or group looks at a situation. In the cultural-ecological theory, a frame of reference amounts to how successful one thinks he or she is in comparison to others. An essential feature of the frame of reference is that the minority or minority groups' incorporation into the dominant culture influences whom the "other" is that they compare themselves to. In the case of voluntary minorities, there typically exists a positive dual frame of reference. Whereas one frame of reference focuses on their current experiences in the dominant culture, the other focuses on the experiences and opportunities (or lack thereof) "back home" in their native country. Voluntary minorities see themselves as having opportunities for success despite their experiences with discrimination and mistreatment in comparison to those with fewer opportunities "back home". Having this dual frame of reference allows group members to make important comparisons. Typically the result of such comparisons for voluntary minority groups is the decision to accommodate to the dominant culture and accept temporary inferior treatment because they see themselves having more opportunities for advancement and economic success in their new country.

The dual frame of reference for involuntary minorities differs greatly from that of voluntary minorities. Ogbu and Simons explain that for the involuntary minority, the two primary frames of reference include that of the minority's own social and economic status in the United States and that of middle-class white Americans. The comparison between the two frames of reference is negative. Involuntary minorities see their status and treatment in the United States as inferior to that of middle-class white Americans. Because discrimination against involuntary minorities has persisted since their arrival, involuntary minorities view their discrimination by the dominant culture as a permanent feature of life in the United States and thus are more critical and distrustful of dominant institutions, including schools, school curriculum, and school staff.

Instrumental Adaptation. Similar to groups' frames of reference, minority group's instrumental adaptation also influences how it responds to its' treatment in the dominant culture. According the cultural-ecological framework, a minority group's instrumental adaptation to the dominant culture is influenced by the group's folk theories for success and advancement, the instrumental value it places on education, and its role models. Whereas voluntary minority groups believe that they can "survive" and ultimately "get ahead" or "make it" within the dominant culture by working hard and obtaining educational credentials, involuntary minorities hold a different perception. Ogbu and Simons (1998) explain that involuntary minorities hold the values of hard work, following the rules, and getting an education; however, generational experiences of discrimination have also led to the beliefs that economic barriers in the United States are cemented in institutional discrimination and that individual efforts at success are important but do not eliminate the profound impacts of racism and discrimination. These folk theories and survival strategies not only influence how minority groups interact with the dominant culture, but also influence whom they position as their role models. Whereas voluntary minorities may herald those who have acculturated to the dominant culture and as a result attained high educational status and economic success, the role models for involuntary minorities typically include those who have attained economic success through non-conventional methods. These role models often include entertainers and athletes.

Relational Adaptation. Relational adaptation refers to a minority group's views of accommodation to the dominant culture, their perceptions of a "collective struggle", and their trust or distrust of whites and the institutions they represent. Like other aspects of a minority group's cultural model, views about accommodation, collective struggle, and trust of the dominant group vary by the minority group. Whereas voluntary minorities are described as typically trustful of whites and white institutions and willing to accommodate to the dominant culture because it is perceived as an additive factor (akin to learning new skills, behaviors, language, etc. that will make them more successful without stripping away their home culture), the same tendencies are not readily true of involuntary minority groups. Involuntary minority groups tend to be distrustful of whites and white institutions because of their generational experiences with discrimination, which makes them less willing to accommodate to the dominant culture.

Symbolic Adaption. Symbolic adaption primarily relates to the meaning attached to cultural and language differences between minority and majority groups. Like with relational adaption, voluntary minorities view symbolic adaption from the perspective that language and cultural differences are barriers that are to be overcome by learning about the differences. Through education about the differences in language and culture between the minority and the dominant group, voluntary minorities can essentially learn how to "walk the walk" and "talk the

talk” of the dominant group, in order to gain acceptance and the opportunity to succeed. Furthermore, voluntary minorities do not perceive symbolic adaptation, or accommodating to language and cultural differences as a threat to their collective group identity.

Involuntary minorities do not see accommodation to the dominant culture in a positive light. Rather, language and cultural assimilations is seen as a subtractive process that seeks to replace the groups’ own cultural ways and linguistic patterns that have historically been denigrated. For involuntary minorities, differences in language and culture are viewed as markers of a collective identity, rather than as barriers to be overcome in order to achieve success.

Impact of Cultural Models on Schooling. As reviewed above, the cultural-ecological theory holds that different minority groups generally find differing levels of educational and economic success because of their treatment and their responses to their treatment. Furthermore, the forms, legacies, and severity of discrimination impact how minority groups respond to instances of acute and chronic adverse treatment by the dominant group. While both voluntary and involuntary minority groups may face instrumental, relational, and symbolic discrimination in the United States, voluntary and involuntary minorities’ responses to such discrimination differ from each other due to differences in the group’s incorporation in the United States, their frames of reference, and their ability and/or willingness to adapt to these various forms of discrimination in exchange for potential opportunities for educational and economic advancement.

As it relates to education, the cultural models of many voluntary minorities allows for opportunities for educational success. The voluntary minority’s willingness to accommodate to language and cultural differences, trust in whites and white institutions, and the instrumental value placed on education leads to the general belief that by adhering to educational norms and buying into school cultures, they will have opportunities for educational and economic advancement. And so, they do. The voluntary minority makes great efforts to do what is expected of them in schools: accept the curriculum, produce the work, and learn the “white” way to speak and behave. Bumps on the road to economic and educational success are attributed less so to discriminatory systems and practices, but rather, to their present inability to master the language and cultural norms of the dominant group. However, once mastered, opportunities for advancement, whether in the present or subsequent generations, will abound. For the voluntary minority, accommodating to the dominant culture and to the school institution in particular comes with important rewards.

The cultural model of schooling for involuntary minorities like African Americans in the United States is marred by far more complexity. Without the advantage of a positive frame of reference, African Americans continue to see their experiences in the United States, and in schools in particular, as marked by inferiority. In addition to perceiving and experiencing discrimination, African Americans have witnessed cultural and language denigration by the dominant society. As such, efforts to “convince” African Americans in school to speak “proper” English and exhibit particular types of behaviors are viewed as oppressive and lead group members to oppose what is referred to as “acting White”. Such opposition inevitably puts many minority students at odds with the educational system because adherence to it would cause one to run the risk of losing their cultural identity. Overall, African Americans belief in hard work and the value of education, distrust of whites and white institutions, and opposition to white culture as a means for cultural identity preservation lead to inconsistent attitudes, and ultimately behaviors, among African Americans in schools.

Cultural-Ecological Theory Applied to School Discipline. Applying the cultural-ecological theory to this study's inquiry of African American school discipline experiences is useful because it provides multiple, interrelated perspectives through which to view these experiences. Specifically, the cultural-ecological theory takes into account the external and within-group factors that influence how African American students are treated by the dominant group, how members within the group respond to discriminatory treatment, and their reasons for and the impact of responding in particular ways. For example, the cultural-ecological theory holds that African Americans, as involuntary minorities have experienced tremendous instrumental, relational, and expressive discrimination at the hands of whites and white institutions such as school. As such, one can hypothesize that many African American students will see discrimination as a factor in their school discipline exchanges, even if their behavior in the situation was problematic, because of their generational experiences with discrimination.

While African American students are likely to perceive some level of discrimination in regards to school discipline, from the cultural-ecological perspective, there will be inconsistencies among members of the group in regards to their beliefs about how they should behave in school, which are influenced by their sense of collective identity and belief in the instrumental value of schooling. Based on students' perceptions of collective identity and instrumental value placed on education, Ogbu (2004) argues that African American students assume one of four relevant behavioral strategies in school.¹ He refers to these strategies as ways of "coping with the burden of acting white". The first strategy is to assimilate to or emulate white culture. This strategy requires that one assimilate to white culture and language at the expense of one's own because of the belief that it will lead to educational and economic advancement and acceptance by whites. While this student may find less interaction with the school discipline system because his or her behaviors mirror those of white students, and thus are deemed acceptable, Ogbu notes that that cost of adhering to the assimilation strategy can be high as it relates to one's mental health. The cost of assimilation is often isolation from their cultural group and some forms of self-hatred.

Ogbu refers to the second behavioral strategy as accommodation without assimilation. Essentially, this strategy requires that African American students adopt white cultural and language frames of reference on an "as-needed" basis in order to succeed at school, but do not surrender their own cultural or language frames of reference in the process. This strategy may have advantageous mental health impacts, in that accommodation "helps Blacks to maintain their sanity in a racist society". Explained further:

If you were born Black in America you must quickly teach yourself to recognize the invisible barriers disciplining the space in which you may move. This seventh sense you must activate is imperative for survival and sanity. Nothing is what is seems. You must always take second readings, decode appearances, pick out the abstractions erected to keep you in your place. Then work around them. What begins as a pragmatic reaction to race prejudice gradually acquires the force of an instinctive response (Wierderman (1985) p. 222, as cited in Ogbu (2004) pg. 22).

As it relates to school discipline and mental health, students who are able to accommodate without assimilating may not find themselves in much disciplinary trouble, namely because they are willing and able to navigate white systems when necessary as a means for educational and

¹ Ogbu (2003) proposes five behavioral strategies or strategies for coping with the burden of "acting white", however, the fifth, encapsulation, which is discussed little in his work, refers to individuals who are encapsulated in Black culture and may have not learned how to assimilate or accommodate to white culture, is not apparently applicable to any of the students in the study based on their situation in a diverse school setting, and larger community setting.

economic benefit. Interaction with white systems is viewed as a means to a preferred goal, not the goal in and of itself. For these students, educational and economic advancement may have little psychological cost and also equip students with important coping and social navigational skills.

The third strategy for coping with the burden of “acting white” or navigating white institutions is ambivalence. Students who assume ambivalence believe that racism is a more powerful determinant of their success than any of their individual characteristics or efforts, and thus, care little about adopting white culture or language because doing so will not lead to substantial educational or economical advancement. An ambivalent coping strategy may presumably manifest in hopeless and/or “reckless” behavior. Thus, ambivalent African American students may find considerable contact with the school discipline system as both racism and self-fulfilling prophecies play out. From a mental health perspective, these students’ focus on the discrimination that they face and perceive may have important negative impacts, as is suggested by the research on perceived discrimination and mental health outcomes (Nyborg & Curry, 2003; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003).

The fourth behavioral strategy for African American students in schools is resistance or opposition. Fearful that accommodation and assimilation will cause one to lose their ethnic identity, some students actively resist or oppose “acting white”. Opposing whites and white institutions will invariably put African American students at odds with school staff, resulting in interactions with the school discipline system. The psychological impacts of such a strategy is unclear. In some cases it may translate into a sense of pride in one’s cultural group and cultural identity, which according to the research by Wong, Eccles, and Sameroff (2003), can reduce the impact of racial discrimination on problem behaviors. However, because such a strategy may also put students at increased risk for negative treatment at the hands of whites and white institutions because of their non-conformance, one can hypothesize that they students may also experience feelings of anger, resentment, and possibly even hopelessness and depression.

Overall, Ogbu’s cultural-ecological theory and strategies for “coping with the burden of acting white” provide texture and depth to an analysis of African American students’ school discipline and mental health experiences. One of the primary appeals of the cultural-ecological theory is that it considers both external forces (i.e. treatment by the dominant cultural group), and within group and individual factors (i.e. collective identity, individual strategies for coping in white society, frames of reference, etc.) as they relate to African American students’ functioning and success in the school system. Viewing the school discipline experiences of African American students from the cultural-ecological framework assumes that discrimination is an important feature of students’ experiences. Additionally, instrumental, relational, and expressive factors, as well as students’ sense of and the importance placed on collective identity will influence their responses to their experiences within white institutions. As such, one can expect that African American students’ interactions with and perceptions of the school discipline system, as well their feelings of connectedness and levels of mental health, will be nuanced. The cultural-ecological theory serves to put these nuances and inconsistencies in context to allow for rich and meaningful analysis.

In the chapters that follow, the research literature related to African American students’ experiences in schools, the relationship between discrimination and mental health, and the import school connectedness are reviewed. Following a thorough review of the literature most closely related to the present study, the methodology of the mixed-methods study is detailed in chapter 3. Chapter 4 provides an integrated analysis of the quantitative and qualitative results of the

study. The final chapter of this study offers the main conclusions based on the data analysis, and discusses the study's limitations, as well as recommendations for future research and pedagogical applications of the study's findings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

School Discipline in U.S. Schools

The current (and historical) plight of African American and other minority students in the school discipline system is complex and tied to important social, economic, political, racial, and historical factors. The historical and contemporary experiences of African American students in the school discipline system can be characterized as ones of exclusion and differential treatment. Any reasonable and meaningful discussion of the issues brought forth in this work must honor that reality. Thus, the exploration of school discipline inequalities, the school-to-prison pipeline, and the social, emotional, and other outcomes associated with disproportionate contact with the school discipline system require analysis and critique through a “racialized” lens. In the sections that follow I review the historical and current experiences of African Americans in the school discipline system, with an emphasis on students’ experiences with exclusionary discipline methods such as suspension and expulsion. Following, I detail the contributing factors and consequences of African American students’ disproportionate contact with exclusionary school discipline methods. Lastly, I present research suggesting the potential relationship between African American students’ exclusionary school discipline experiences and measures of mental health/ socio-emotional wellbeing and school connectedness.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment (CP) refers to the imposition of physical pain on children as a penalty for unapproved behavior (NCACPS, 2006). CP includes measures such as hitting, paddling, spanking, shaking, pushing, punching, excessive exercise, and electric shock (Dupper & Dingus, 2008). The use of CP in U.S. schools has resulted in student injuries such as blisters, bruising, skin discoloration, blood clots, broken veins, and hematomas. The practice leads approximately 15,000 students to seek medical treatment each year.

Like other forms of punishment and discipline in U.S. society at large and in U.S. public schools specifically, the use of CP reflects gross racial inequalities. National data on CP was not disaggregated by race and gender until 1994 (Gregory, 1995). Prior to the disaggregation of data, anecdotal evidence suggested that Black males received a disproportionate amount of the corporal punishment meted out in schools. Based on data drawn from the 1992 biennial census, the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education presented the first statistical dataset to support those claims. Analyzing this data, Gregory (1995) found significant racial and gender trends in the use of CP. Gregory found that in the over 280,000 cases of CP recorded in 1992, males accounted for 81.6% of the cases. Overall, African Americans accounted for 44.4% of cases and African American males accounted for 34.0% of cases, indicating that Blacks were 3.26 times more likely to be the recipients of CP than whites. When racial and gender factors were taken together, data revealed that Black males were 2.81 times more likely to be disciplined with CP than White males; 3.06 times more likely than Black females; and 16.00 times more likely than White females (Gregory, 1995). Gregory hypothesized that the rates of CP analyzed were likely an underestimate of the true incidences of CP due response bias and sampling methods.

Eight years after the first disaggregated national dataset on the use of CP, only minor gains have been made. While 31 states now ban the use of CP in schools in the U.S., it is estimated that the 19 remaining states administered approximately 184,528 corporal punishments to students in the 2009-10 year (NCACPS, 2006). Racial inequalities in the use of CP have

remained remarkable. According to data provided by the Office of Civil Rights (Office of Civil Rights Data Collection, 2010) based on the responses from a rolling stratified sample of approximately 7,000 school districts and 72,000 schools, African American males without an IDEA identified disability (i.e. students not receiving special education services) accounted for approximately 16% of the public school male student population in 2009-10 but 34.1% of the over 140,000 corporal punishments administered to male students. African American females represented 43.2% of all corporal punishments administered to female students. Overall, African American males and females were disciplined with corporal punishment at rates of 2.05 and 2.57 times greater than their enrollment, respectively. White males were administered CP at rates relatively consistent with their enrollment. Data on the rates of CP with White female students was suppressed because the associated standard error exceeded 50% of the estimate.

Overall, anecdotal, historical, and current data indicate that despite notions that “minimal externally imposed” discipline should be administered to students (Bear, 1998), corporal punishment continues to be used in schools at alarming rates. Moreover, the use of CP in schools indicates that African Americans suffer adverse differential treatment when it comes to the use of CP in schools. African American students, and African American males in particular, are overrepresented in CP cases relatively to their enrollment. The use of CP and racial disparities relative to its use are cause of extreme concern and are evidence of a racially biased and oppressive school discipline system.

Exclusionary Discipline

Exclusionary Discipline Inequalities: Magnitude of the Problem

Though data on the use of CP in U.S. schools provides evidence on racial biases and inequalities in the school discipline system, it provides only a limited view of discipline inequalities as CP is banned in several states. Another illustrative example of inequalities in the school discipline system centers on the use of exclusionary disciplinary methods, such as suspension and expulsion.

Disproportionality in exclusionary discipline is one of the most well documented modern forms of differential treatment in schools. Although disproportionality in school discipline has been documented since 1975 (Children’s Defense Fund, 1975), only recently has the public demonstrated interest and concern. In one of the first studies on the issue, the Children’s Defense Fund found that Black students were overrepresented on a variety of school discipline measures in comparison to their White peers.

Since 1975 several other researchers have offered additional evidence of racial inequalities in the school discipline system. For example, Harvard University (2000) found that African American students were suspended at rates nearly twice their enrollment. Researchers have further disaggregated data on school discipline inequalities by race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and types of behavioral offenses (Skiba, Shure, & Williams, 2012). Regional data on school discipline inequalities has also been explored (Harvard University, 2000; Fabelo & Carmichael, 2011).

For example, a recent study on school discipline in Texas revealed that students not only experienced exclusionary discipline at high rates (approximately 59.6% of students in the state’s public school system had been suspended or expelled), but also that African American secondary students were more likely to be disciplined than any other racial group (Fabelo & Carmichael, 2011). The researchers found that 75% of the over 130,000 African American students in the

state's school system were involved with the school discipline system during their secondary school years. The researchers further found that the majority of African American male students were disciplined at least once because of a discretionary violation, and approximately 94% of African American students first became involved with the school discipline system because of a violation of the school district's code of conduct that did not require a mandatory removal from school per state law. Additionally, African Americans were more likely than Hispanics or Whites to be placed on out-of-school suspension for their first violation.

Consistent with Fabelo and Carmichael's (2011) results, nationwide researchers and journalists have documented racial inequalities in school discipline elsewhere. For example, in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), African Americans accounted for 26% of suspensions although they represented only 9% of the student population. The disproportionate use of suspension has since led to a district-wide ban on suspensions for "willful defiance", an often-used discretionary discipline category (Watanbem, 2013).

Similar problems with racial disproportionality in school discipline were found in the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). In 2012, OUSD, the 14th largest school district in California was found to suspend or expel African American students three and a half times more often than white students. Nearly 20% of African American males were suspended at least once in the year, which is a rate six times that of White students (Huffington Post, 2012).

Contributing Factors

The abundance of local, state, and national-level discipline data has made it possible for researchers to explore the role of potential contributing factors on discipline disproportionality.

Socioeconomic factors. Many have explored the relationship between exclusionary discipline and socioeconomic variables. These researchers have sought to explain the existence of the discipline gap from a socioeconomic perspective, utilizing the basic premise that students of low socioeconomic status, regardless of ethnicity, have an increased risk of being negatively impacted by the school discipline system (Skiba et al, 1997; Mendez & Knoff, 2003). Many political organizations have latched onto this framework for explaining the discipline gap in an attempt to avoid accusations that schools use discipline in a racially discriminatory manner (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2000, as cited in Skiba et al., 2002). Nevertheless, the data does not support this stance. Multivariate studies have concluded that parental unemployment, percentage of students in free lunch programs (Wu et al, 1992), family structure (i.e. single-parent vs. two-parent households), and parental education (Wallace et al, 2008) all were not significant factors explaining racial disproportionality in school discipline. Other studies have concluded that free and reduced priced lunch was an inconsistent predictor of racial discipline disparities (Skiba, Michael, Nardo & Peterson, 2002).

Student misbehavior. Just as the literature suggests that controlling for socioeconomic status variables does not account for racial differences in school discipline outcomes, it also suggests that student misbehavior is not a meaningful explanatory factor. The work of Skiba, Michael, Nardo & Peterson (2002) highlights this point. In examining the extent to which gender, race, and socioeconomic status accounted for differences in school discipline actions, the authors analyzed the disciplinary records of over 11,000 middle school students in a large urban school district in the Midwest. The district was comprised of a relatively diverse sample of students. Approximately 51.8% of students were male; 56% African American; 42% White; 16.8% eligible for special education services; and 65.3% eligible for free or reduced lunch.

In addition to highlighting how disproportions in school discipline are most effectively explained by race and gender, the authors also investigated the types of infractions students were disciplined for by race, providing further evidence that racial disproportions in school discipline are influenced by racial biases. These and other researchers (i.e. Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010), have found that according to both self-reports and school discipline records African American students were not more likely than White students to engage in misbehavior at school. However, there are marked differences in the types of misbehavior in which African American and White students engage. Skiba, Michael, Narado, and Peterson (2002) found that while White students were referred to school disciplinarians for observable offenses like smoking, cutting class, and vandalism, African American students were more commonly referred for subjective offenses, such as loitering, disrespect, and defiance. Taken together, these findings indicate that African American students' school behavior is not a useful explanatory framework for analyzing disproportions in discipline data and draws attention to the power of teacher and administrative discretion in school discipline inequalities.

Gender. While there have been concerted research efforts to understand the role of variables such as socioeconomic status and student misbehavior in the school discipline gap, the role of gender has gone relatively unexplored. The existing research on the issue suggests that overall; boys are far more likely to be subjected to all forms of school discipline than girls (Raffaele Mendez & Dennie, 2012). When accounting for both gender and race, research suggests that Black males are the most likely to be subjected to school discipline, followed by white males, Black females and lastly, white females (Taylor & Foster, 1986). More recent data on the issue of race and gender in school discipline finds that racial disparities between Black and White students are most pronounced among female students (Wallace et al, 2008).

Practices and Policies Contributing to Discipline Inequalities

There are many individual, school, and district-level practices and policies that influence African American students' school discipline experiences. These practices and policies are most commonly related to factors of teacher background, student-teacher relationships and teacher' expectations of students, and school and district discipline system norms and codes of conduct.

Teacher background and preparation. As the work by Monroe (2005) asserts, teacher background exerts an important influence on the ways in which teachers operate in schools and impact school discipline decisions and outcomes. There is a tremendous discrepancy between teachers' background and the backgrounds of most of their students. Monroe (2005) and Ladson-Billings (2005) both critically examine the ways in which the "mismatch" between teacher and student background influences students' school experiences.

Monroe (2005) highlights that the U.S. teaching force is greatly culturally mismatched with the public school system's student population. Approximately one third of the nation's public school students come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and in states like California and Texas less than 50% of students are White (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Meanwhile, over 87% of teachers are White (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Monroe, 2005). Ladson-Billings asserts that the lack of diversity in the field of education creates deficit views of students on the behalf of teachers and "disconnections between and among students, families, and community and teachers and teacher educators" (p. 2).

For example, Ladson-Billings highlights that teacher education about diversity and urban schooling has largely focused on student deficits rather than strengths, effectively explaining the disconnections between students, families, communities and teachers. By instructing pre-service

teachers using a deficit-focused model, graduate schools have prepared cohorts of teachers by indoctrinating them to fear students and uphold negative expectations about their behavior and academic abilities.

Lastly, Ladson-Billings explains that teacher education programs employ a rhetoric calling for diversity in teacher education, however the practices of faculty of most teacher education programs commonly contradicts and resists this rhetoric. For example, she notes how many programs have resisted hiring qualified faculty of color. This exclusionary practice is consistent with Ogbu's claims about how involuntary minorities often find that their credentials and acculturation to and accommodation of white culture do not always translate into increased economic, educational, personal, or professional advancement.

Additionally, other research shows that the exclusion of faculty of color from teacher education programs may have negative consequences. For example, Lim et al (2009) found that the inclusion of full-time non-White faculty in teacher education programs was positively related to more required coursework that focused on working with students and families from diverse backgrounds. Ladson-Billings argues that in order for the teaching field to be "all right", we have to recognize and remedy both of these issues. Essentially, the work on teacher background and teacher education indicate that student-teacher cultural mismatch impacts teachers' perceptions of students and school discipline in important ways, and that the cultural mismatch that we observe is not created by accident, but rather is systematically designed. We have to acknowledge the layers of racism within the education system, from teacher education to teacher perceptions and practices in the classroom. Without a critical analysis of the lack of cultural diversity and the exclusion of qualified faculty of color in the field of education, it is inevitable that the cycle of ill-preparing teachers, using deficit-frameworks, will continue. The result of this cycle is an existence and persistence of a teaching force that misunderstands and fears the very students it is responsible for educating, which leads to the employment of harsh and controlling disciplinary methods (Bowditch, 1993; Casella, 2003; Devine, 1996).

Relationships and expectations. There are many theories about the proposed link between student-teacher relationships and school discipline inequalities and between teacher expectations and school discipline inequalities (Bowditch, 1993; Devine, 1996; Ferguson, 2001). For example, in her book about the disciplining of African American elementary school students, Ferguson suggested that African American male students are perceived in terms of two stereotypes. The first stereotype is that of an endangered species; the second is that of a criminal. Ferguson asserts that in employing these stereotypes in their interactions with African American male students, the teachers in her study developed negative perceptions of and relationships with many African American students and came view their behavior as a void of childhood innocence. Rather, the students were perceived as willful, manipulative, and defiant, resulting in their being disciplined in alarming and discrepant ways in comparison to that of their white counterparts.

In another example, Bowditch (1993) found in her qualitative analysis of school discipline interactions that teachers' and administrators' perceptions of and lack of relationships with students had profound implications for how students were disciplined and treated at school. Bowditch explained that discipline at the predominantly African American school she studied was carried out in a way to "get rid of troublemakers". She described the mechanisms of "getting rid of the troublemakers" primarily in terms of labeling theory. According to Bowditch, although disciplinary decisions were subjectively contrived, decisions were heavily influenced by the school's perceptions of a particular student, and the subsequent label that was ascribed to

him or her. For example, students who performed well academically were seen as non-threats to the school's authority, and mildly disciplined. In contrast, students who had troubled attendance and/or disappointing academic records were assumed to lack an academic orientation and reverence for the school's authority and were punished severely, usually through suspension, expulsion, or an "unofficial drop" from the school roll.

Although perceived academic orientation factored heavily into the labels that the school adhered to students, one of the most important factors that influence a students' label was their prior discipline history. Students who had been disciplined in the past were seen as troublemakers and given little mercy in disciplinary interactions, regardless of their actual behaviors or the reason for their behaviors. Prior discipline records factored so heavily into students' labels and disciplinary interactions that approximately 1/3 of the school's suspensions were for "repeated school violations" (Bowditch, 1993).

What is interesting about the labeling theory and the disciplinary interactions that Bowditch described is that teachers and administrators relied almost exclusively on the information they obtained from student records. They lacked relationships with the students that would enable them to develop an understanding of the student and put their disciplinable behavior into its appropriate context. Essentially, Bowditch's work highlights how the lack of or indifference towards student-teacher and student-administrator relationships led school officials to harshly punish students (through school exclusion), even in contexts in which academic or social support services may have been more appropriate.

School discipline policies. National zero-tolerance policies observably effect inequalities in school discipline more than any other policy. Skiba et al. (1997) define zero-tolerance as a "policy that mandates predetermined consequences or punishments for specified offenses" (p. 3). Zero-tolerance policies began in 1983 as a national initiative to curb perceived behavior problems. The policy was first enacted in the U.S. Navy when 40 sailors were reassigned due to suspected drug use (Verdugo, 2002) and it was subsequently incorporated into many other public and U.S. military sectors. While the use of zero-tolerance policies eventually declined in most sectors by the early 1990's, the U.S. school system stood as one exception. Rather, by 1993, many schools had "adopted zero-tolerance policies that were aimed at drugs, tobacco, weapons, and school disruption" (Verdugo, 2002). Today, over 90% of public schools endorse zero-tolerance policies, primarily because school funding is tied to the acceptance of the policy (Kaufman et al., 2001, as cited in Stader, 2004). According to Casella (2003), school zero-tolerance policies are a form of U.S. national crime policy and are hailed by policy-makers as a significant factor in accounting for the declining rates of crime and violence in school.

Although the rationale for zero-tolerance policies is that their enforcement reduces school criminal and drug offenses to create safer, less violent schools, many researchers question whether these policies hurt students more than they help them. While originally intended to be the answer to what was perceived to be overwhelming drug, gang and weapons problems, many school districts have expanded zero-tolerance policies to less serious disruptions (Harvard University, 2000). The expansion of zero-tolerance policies can be tied to a shift in rhetoric surrounding zero-tolerance over the past decades. Zero-tolerance policies rhetoric has shifted from a focus on crime control to a focus on making schools safer, especially in the wake of incidences of school-wide violence, as witnessed in Columbine (Hyman & Perone, 1998). However, the practices and rhetoric of zero-tolerance are nevertheless inconsistent with the realities of school life. For example, Hyman & Perone (1998) highlight how schools are one

of the safest places for youth to be and juvenile crime levels have dropped over the past few decades.

Despite the research that explains that the policies are unwarranted and ineffective at changing student behavior or improving school safety, government and school officials have expanded the reach of zero-tolerance policies, leading to substantial increases in suspension. This is due to the fact that even minor offenses can be interpreted to fall within the scope of zero-tolerance and be punishable by mandated consequences. According to Skiba and Knesting (2001), while suspensions or expulsions for serious offenses remain relatively infrequent, suspensions for minor offenses have dramatically increased. Furthermore, zero-tolerance policies are also ineffective in improving student behavior, as between 35 and 45% of students are reported to commit repeat disciplinary offenses. Rather than improve school safety or student behavior the authors contend that zero-tolerance policies have resulted in increased civil rights lawsuits from parents, student advocates, and advocacy groups against school districts because they represent a violation of student's rights. Additionally, the authors argue that increased zero-tolerance policies may unintentionally contribute to student misbehavior. The authors explain:

While school personnel see school disruption as primarily a student choice and disciplinary consequences as an appropriate reaction to that choice, students, especially at-risk students, tend to view confrontational classroom management or school disciplinary strategies as playing a significant role in escalating student misbehavior, especially if they believe rules or policies are being unfairly applied. In particular, students who are at risk for disruption may see confrontational discipline as a challenge to escalate their behavior (p. 33).

Overall, with the increased use of zero-tolerance policies, school districts and policy makers have simultaneously demonstrated increased flexibility in determining school discipline offenses and increased rigidity in the responses to school discipline offenses. As research on the discipline gap indicates, this increased discretion afforded to school personnel opens the floodgates for subjectivity and racial bias in the administration as evidenced by research documenting the subjective offenses that African American students are disciplined for as opposed to the more objective and observable ones White students are disciplined for. The increased use of and subjectivity in school discipline policies significantly contribute to inequalities in the school discipline system.

Police presence and legal backing. Whereas zero-tolerance policies promote increased arbitrariness in school discipline, increased police presence on school grounds and legal rulings promote the increased criminalization of students of color. For example, recent legal decisions have served to dramatically reduce students' privacy in schools (Haft, 2000). Hyman and Perone (1998) explain how the use of "intrusive, and sometimes invasive, law enforcement procedures, such as strip searches and the use of undercover agents" (p. 1) serve to decrease student's rights to privacy, criminalize them and make them vulnerable to negative mental health consequences. Such practices have made schools more like prisons and socialize students to expect such treatment. In addition to criminalizing students, these measures have also put many students' physical and mental health in jeopardy. For example, Hyman and Perone (1998) cite that the use of undercover agents in schools has resulted in the sexual abuse of students in some cases, leading to depression in the victims. Additionally, strip searches have been found to have negative impacts on students' mental health and relationships with school officials (Hyman & Perone, 1998).

While the use of undercover agents and strip searches of students may represent extreme examples of the legal and police systems infiltration onto school campuses, the use of police officers or student resource officers (SRO) and other forms of ‘justice technology’ and personnel are more commonplace (Hirschfield, 2008). For example, Hirschfield (2008) explains that school policing is the fast growing law enforcement field. He argues that the saturation of police on school campuses allows teachers to avoid their roles as disciplinarians and extends the reach of the juvenile court system. Specifically in this regard, he explains that current law permits schools to expel students for legal entanglements outside of schools, and offenses committed during school that previously would have been handled by school administrators are often referred to the police for legal recourse (e.g. a fight a school is referred to school police and charged as assault).

While the blatant (or disguised) criminalization of any student goes against conventional morals to treat others with respect and dignity, Hirschfield also highlights that there are differences in the ways in which specific groups of students are criminalized. He explains that many suburban communities use forms of ‘soft surveillance’ techniques, such as security cameras to police students and quiet fears about safety without overtly criminalizing students. In contrast, in urban schools ‘security’ equates to ‘control’ and takes the form of metal detectors and school police officers. Overall, the literature in this area highlights how students are increasingly criminalized and that racial factors influence the manner in which students are criminalized (i.e. through surveillance or police control).

Research on school discipline inequalities is extensive and approaches the issue from several different perspectives. Literature on the role of individual and community factors highlights how negative and often erroneous perceptions of African American students and their communities contribute to teachers’ perceptions of and relationships and interactions with them. The result is negative interactions with teachers and school personnel around issues of behavior and increased contact with the school discipline system. Likewise, research on the school factors that contribute to school discipline inequalities also highlights the role of racial bias and discrimination, subjectivity, and cultural mismatch in its discussion of the role of school personnel’s background, education, and expectations of students. Lastly, research on policy level factors influencing school discipline inequalities highlights the role of ineffective and subjective policies and practices that represent one form of instrumental or institutional racism and oppression that African American students face in school. Together, the research provides evidence regarding the significant impact of personal and institutional adherence to racially biased values on the school discipline experiences of African American students.

Consequences and Outcomes: Academic and Social Implications

The overrepresentation of African American students in the school discipline system has large academic implications, relating it to the achievement gap. For instance, students who are consistently punished under the current discipline system are at an increased risk for doing poorly in school. Townsend (2000) argues that missing class time due to out-of-school suspension creates a domino effect where suspension gives rise to fewer opportunities for learning, increasing the chance that students lag behind their peers academically, are retained or tracked into lower ability classes and receive lower quality instruction in academic subjects. Students who are most negatively affected by the school discipline system are also at greater risk for lower grade point averages (Morrison et al, 2001), not being promoted or not graduating on time (Arica, 2006), and dropping out of school (Walker-Dalhouse, 2005;

DeRidder, 1991; Suh & Suh, 2007). The consequences of dropping out of high school are substantial. Fine (1991) explains that youth who drop out (or are pushed out) of school are much less likely to find employment after their departure. Furthermore, Fine explains:

In the rememberable past, urban economies could absorb low-skill employees in large numbers within the manufacturing sector of urban life. But that history of urban industrialization has, for now, drawn to a close. The problem today is that we have nothing for our urban dropouts to do. In cities in which the costs of living have skyrocketed, the effects of gentrification, the absences of a diploma, and poverty have worsened. (p. 31)

Overall, the research indicates that contact with the school discipline system has negative academic implications, which in turn, negatively impact social and economic stability. Given the devastating domino effect described above, researchers have conducted more nuanced investigations into the relationship between academic achievement and school discipline in attempts to better understand the nature, direction, and moderating factors between the two. Gregory, Skiba, and Noguera (2010) posit that the relationship between exclusionary discipline and poor academic achievement may also be moderated by additional factors aside from missed class time, such as students' reduced school bonding and engagement and lowered school motivation. Further illustrating the nuanced link between school discipline and academic achievement, Arcia (2006) reported several key findings relative to students' pre- and post-suspension academic achievements. Arcia found a negative association between students pre-suspension reading achievement and suspension rates, meaning students with lower academic achievement were suspended more frequently than students with higher academic achievement. Additionally, Arcia found that students who were suspended more frequently had fewer gains in reading achievement over the course of the study's three year longitudinal period. Finally, Arcia found a positive relationship between the number of days of student suspensions and dropout rates. Essentially, Arcia's work describes a process whereby students with lower academic achievement are initially more likely to be engaged in the school discipline system, fall further behind their peers after suspension, and, with continued suspensions, are at an increased risk of dropping out of school. Researchers argue that this process of continued school exclusion sets the stage for another, yet related, domino effect phenomenon termed the school-to-prison pipeline.

In its most basic sense, the school-to-prison pipeline is defined as a student's increased chances for contact with the criminal justice system because of frequent contact with the school discipline system. Smith (2009) explains:

after being pushed out of school, students of color face daunting odds of being criminalized at virtually every juncture of the criminal justice system. In New York City, for example, eighty-five percent of all stop-and-frisk encounters are administered on blacks and Latinos. National figures show that after being stopped, black youth account for thirty percent of all juvenile arrests, despite being only seventeen percent of the juvenile population. After arrest, black youth make up sixty-two percent of all juveniles prosecuted as adult defendants. Once prosecuted, black youth are nine times more likely than white youth to receive an adult prison sentence. Cumulatively, black juveniles are about four times as likely as their white peers to be incarcerated" (p. 1011-1012).

Contact with the school-to-prison pipeline has both social and intrapersonal consequences (Noguera, 2003; Bowditch, 1995) and is believed to contribute to negative self-fulfilling prophecies regarding social behavior.

Relationship Between Racial Discrimination and Mental Health for African American Youth

There is a major body of research in the public health field that has looked at the impact of racism and perceived racism on African Americans. Much of this research focuses on the physical health outcomes of perceived discrimination on African Americans adults. For example, there is research documenting the relationship between perceived racism and discrimination and stress levels and substance use and abuse. As well, there has been an impetus to investigate the relationship between perceived racism and discrimination and mental health outcomes. While this impetus began with an investigation into the relationship between perceived racism and discrimination and the mental health of African American adults, over the years there have been increased efforts to investigate the mental health correlates of perceived discrimination on African American youth and adolescents (Brody et al, 2006; Nyborg & Curry, 2003; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). Work in this field consistently highlights how perceived discrimination negatively influences students' psychological wellbeing and behavioral outcomes.

The empirical research by Wong, Eccles, and Sameroff (2003) effectively illustrates the negative relationship between perceived discrimination and psychological and emotional wellbeing for African American adolescents. In their work the authors explored the effect of ethnic discrimination and ethnic identity on the school and socio-emotional adjustment of African American adolescents by investigating two research questions: 1. Do experiences with racial discrimination at school contribute to changes in African American adolescents academic or psychological functioning, and 2. Does ethnic identity serve as a buffer for this relationship? The authors investigated these research questions using longitudinal data from three consecutive years and hypothesized that psychological functioning would have a negative association with perceived racism because they viewed messages of racism and discrimination as risk factors for students that would serve to increase the probability of negative developmental outcomes (including psychological development). The study was conducted with a large sample of African American families (1480 in first wave; 1067 in second wave) with students in the 7th grade at the onset of the study. Participants were recruited from an area of Maryland, District of Columbia where African American and White residents were of equal status on most demographic variables, including political control and income. The authors measured participants' feelings of perceived discrimination, positive connection to the group, achievement motivation, academic achievement, selection of friends, mental health (operationalized as anger and depressive symptoms), and problem behaviors. After controlling for several demographic variables the authors found that perceived discrimination at the hands of peers and teachers was highly correlated and that perceived discrimination from either peers or teachers was negatively related to students' reports of academic motivation, self-competency beliefs, psychological resiliency, and self-esteem. Perceived discrimination from either group was also positively associated with students' reports of anger, depressive symptoms, and problem behaviors. However, perceived discrimination from either group did not have a significant effect on students' school grades or group-esteem.

The key findings highlighted above explain the important relationship between perceived discrimination and students' mental health. While some of the effects one might expect to see, such as a decline in grades, were not present with the students facing discrimination at school, they were nevertheless impacted psychologically in important ways.

Wong, Eccles, and Sameroff's (2003) important findings about the associations between African American students' perceptions of racism and mental health and behavioral outcomes do not stand in isolation. Rather, other researchers have found similar findings that are worthy of attention (e.g. Brody et al, 2006; Nyborg & Curry, 2003). For instance, Nyborg and Curry's (2003) investigation of the impact of perceived racism on the internalizing and externalizing symptoms of African American boys, found that students' experiences with personal and institutional racism were related to their parents' reports of externalizing symptoms. Additionally, personal experiences of racism positively related to students' self-reports of internalizing and externalizing symptoms, lowered self-concept, and higher levels of hopelessness. This particular study adds to the field by differentiating how different forms of perceived racism impact African American youth differently. This research highlights that although African American adolescents seemed to recognize both institutional and personal forms of racism, experiences with personal forms of racism were more salient and impactful. This finding pushes us to abandon arguments that schools are racist systems but individual and personal racism has disappeared. Such findings call on us to not only challenge the institutional policies and practices that perpetrate racism, but also the implicit and explicit acts of racism by individuals which impact students' self-concept and mental health in negative ways.

School Connectedness

Another area of research relevant to the present study is that on school connectedness. Specific concerns include the relationships between three variables: school connectedness, school discipline experiences, and mental health.

School connectedness has been conceptualized and labeled in a variety of ways. It is also commonly referred to as school bonding, school engagement, school membership, and school belonging. Conceptualization and analyses of these constructs often focus on the measurement and assessment of behaviors and/or attitudes (Nasir, Jones, McLaughlin, 2011). Despite its varying labels or measurement philosophies, at its core, school connectedness reflects a student's perception of positive orientation to the school.

School Connectedness and School Discipline

Research on the relationship between school connectedness and school discipline is just beginning to emerge. In one of the only studies found on the topic, Wald and Kurlaender (2003) explored the relationship between students' perceptions of discipline and attachment to teachers in the Seattle, Washington area with a large sample drawn from several different high schools. The authors analyzed descriptive data by race from two survey items: (1) My teachers administer punishment fairly, and (2) At least one of my teachers takes a special interest in me. The authors found that while over 40% of students from all racial groups agreed that discipline was administered fairly; there were racial differences in terms of students' disagreement with the statement. African American students reported disagreeing that "teachers administer punishment fairly" more frequently than Asian and White students, but less often frequently than Latino students. The authors noted that there was great variation in students' responses across schools. In regards to the second survey item ("at least one of my teachers takes a special interest in me"), students from all racial groups reported disagreeing with the statement at relatively consistent rates and approximately 70 percent or more reported agreement with the statement. Overall, the authors conclude that African American students appear to report connectedness with their teachers at rates consistent with other ethnic groups.

While this research is an important first look into the relationship between connectedness and school discipline, it is limited and warrants additional investigation for several reasons. First, the study represented only a small aspect of school connectedness. In addition to connectedness with teachers, students' connection at the school-level is an important factor to investigate. Such investigations may also help to explain the differing responses to item one across schools in the study referenced above. Secondly, the study described was limited in that the authors note that the students' responses about discipline were not reflective of the overall suspension rates in schools, suggesting that the sample was impacted by selection bias. Lastly, it is essential for future research in the field to utilize more sophisticated analysis methods beyond descriptive statistics in order to ascertain if responses by racial group are statistically meaningful.

School Connectedness and Mental Health

There is slightly more research on the relationship between school connectedness and mental health than there is on connectedness and discipline. Both longitudinal and non-longitudinal research suggests an important relationship between school connectedness and mental health. For example, the longitudinal research conducted by Shocket et al (2006) found that at two separate time points, school connectedness was found to correlate with general mental health functioning, depression, and anxiety symptoms. Additionally, using hierarchical lineal modeling, they found that school connectedness was predictive one year later of depressive symptoms for both boys and girls, anxiety symptoms for girls, and general functioning for boys; however, prior mental health symptoms were not predictive of school connectedness.

In another study with a large sample of 7th through 12th grade students, multivariate analysis indicated that caring and connectedness served as a protective factor for youth (Resnick, Harris, & Blum, 1993). The authors further found that caring and connectedness at home and school provided greater protection than demographic variables such as family structure against high-risk behaviors.

Overall, research on school connectedness, mental health, and school discipline indicates that although the relationship between school connectedness and school discipline needs to be further explored, there appears to be a consistent correlation between school connectedness and mental health. Taken together, the research on the state of the school discipline system, African American adolescents' perceptions of discrimination, and school connectedness suggest that each of these variables may impact African American students' mental health. The presumed presence of a relationship among these variables is consistent with theoretical scholarship, such as the cultural ecological framework, which argues that perceptions of and experiences with discrimination influence minority students' willingness to connect with schools and school staff, as well as their psychological and behavioral reactions. The purpose of this research is to begin the investigation into the relationship among these variables with the hope that the findings will inform policy and practices aimed at addressing oppression and inequality in the school discipline system.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to explore the relationships between African American students' mental health, school connectedness, and interactions with the school discipline system. This research is guided by the following research questions: (1) how, if at all, do African American students see their interactions with the school discipline system influenced by issues of racial discrimination, (2) do students' perceptions of racial discrimination in school discipline experiences vary by gender, (3) how do African American students' experiences with and perceptions of racial discrimination in school discipline relate to mental health variables (4) how do students' levels of connectedness to the school relate to perceptions of racial discrimination and mental health variables and, (5) how do students' involvement with the school discipline system relate to perceptions of racial discrimination and mental health variables.

Research Paradigm

Both pragmatic and philosophical considerations informed the methods of this research design. The research questions investigated were intended to critically analyze the school discipline experiences of African American students. Such a critical analysis relies on both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Therefore, this study employed a mixed-methods research paradigm that uses both established and newly-created survey measures about students' school discipline experiences, perceptions of racism, school connectedness, and mental health. Additionally, qualitative research methods, specifically in-depth individual interviews and a series of brief classroom observations, were employed in order to allow students the opportunity to share their experiences and provide greater context and detail to these experiences.

School Context

Buena View High School is a racially and linguistically diverse school in a large school district in Northern California. During the 2013-14 school year (when study data was collected), the school served approximately 1,600 students in the 9th through 12th grades. The student population was approximately 17% Hispanic or Latino, 27% Asian (which included Indian students), 7% African American, and 42% White. 51% of the student population was female. Slightly less than 41% of the population was identified as socioeconomically disadvantaged. African American students were overrepresented on this variable by almost double their enrollment at a rate of approximately 12% (California Department of Education, 2014).

While the student population at Buena View High School was diverse, the staff, like the teaching force nationwide, was less so. While there were a fair number of male teachers, there were far fewer minority teachers. There were no African American male full-time staff members at the school. The school's administration also lacked racial diversity and was comprised of two White females and one White male.

Despite the lack of staff diversity, within the community and district, Buena View High School was regarded as a "good school." Buena View is a comprehensive high school, and includes both general education and special education programs. Teachers and community members praised the school's curricular and extracurricular academic programs. Top graduates

from the school routinely enroll in prestigious colleges and universities throughout the state and nationwide. Though praised for its strong academic reputation, Buena View utilized an apparent academic tracking system comprised of the equivalents of an Advanced Placement and Honors Programs, a program for “at-risk” students, and the special education program. Academic programs at Buena View High School were divided along racial lines, with the higher track classes being dominated by the school’s White, Asian, and Indian student populations. African American students were predominantly tracked into the school’s program for “at-risk” students. As a component of the “at-risk” program, students shared a “homeroom” with other students in the program where they received lessons on character values, organizational skills, and career preparation. The program was not designed to equip students with all of the required coursework that would make them eligible to attend a four-year college in the state of California directly after high school. Additionally, the program’s “homeroom” period every day limited the electives that program participants had the opportunity to enroll in. Despite its academic and curricular limitations, the program was designed to offer an additional level of continuous support for students at-risk of dropping out of high school because of poor grades. Additional supports included frequent guest speakers from various career fields, grade checks and academic course planning, and teambuilding activities in each class to create a safe and cohesive program community. While “acceptable” behavior and a grade point average of at least 1.5 were prerequisites for admission to the program, admission criteria were applied loosely and counselors routinely placed incoming students with behavior or academic challenges in the program without observable consideration for the stated admission criteria.

Issues of disproportionate tracking were not only apparent at the school-level. School administrators explained that the district overall was identified as one that disproportionately classified African Americans as Emotionally Disturbed and placed them in special education programs. They also revealed that the district was found to suspend African American students at rates disproportionate to their enrollment in the district.

Buena View High School was chosen as a research site for two key reasons. Though the school utilizes a zero-tolerance approach to school discipline and frequently uses suspension as a disciplinary method, the school’s administrators expressed a desire and willingness learn more about the discipline inequalities specific to its school and explore alternative disciplinary practices. Thus, this willingness to participate presented the researcher with access to student participants. Secondly, Buena View was chosen as a research site because of the racial diversity of the student population. It was hypothesized that racial diversity in the school would allow students the opportunity to recognize instances of racial differential treatment and discrimination if they existed.

Research Design

Recruitment and Selection

The opportunity to participate in the study was open to all self-identified African American students at the school with the minimum reading skills (skills expected for a typically developing 7 year old) as required by one survey measure. Only one self-identified African American student was excluded from the study due to not meeting the qualifying criteria.

Students were initially informed of the opportunity to participate in the study via a school-wide announcement via the school’s Public Address (PA) system during the daily student announcements. Teachers who were supportive of the research study also aided the researcher by informing students about the research study. Six teachers at the school volunteered to

distribute recruitment materials provided by the researcher to self-identified African American students in their classes. The recruitment materials included a written letter describing the survey, observations and interview, parental consent, adult student consent, and student assent forms. The teachers who volunteered to distribute recruitment materials also assisted in collecting consent forms from students.

Students were selected to participate in the qualitative portion of the study based on their expressed willingness to do so, their school discipline history throughout the current school year, their willingness to allow interviews to be audiotaped, and the willingness of at least two of their teachers to allow for classroom observations. In regard to school discipline history, the researcher attempted to select a range of students who had no (LOW), moderate (AVERAGE), and frequent (HIGH) contact with the school discipline system.

Participants

Survey study participants included a sample of 40 self-identified African American students. The sample of participants was approximately 34% of the population of African American students at the school. Sixty-five percent (n=26) of study participants were female and 35% (n=14) were male. Overall, female participants were overrepresented in the study compared to their rate of enrollment, which was approximately 53% of the total African American student population. Students in the 9th grade represented 27.5% of participants (n=11), whereas students in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades represented 32.5% (n=13), 15.0% (n=6), and 25% (n=10), respectively. Compared to the total enrollment rate for African American students, 9th grade students were underrepresented in the study and 10th grade students were overrepresented. The enrollment rate for 9th grade African Americans was approximately 33% of the African American student population, whereas the enrollment rate of African American 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students relative to the total African American student population was approximately 23%, 21%, and 23% respectively.

Of the students participating in the survey, seven were selected to participate in observations and an interview. The sample of students participating in the qualitative portion of the study included 3 males and 4 females. Of the female participants, two were in the 9th grade, one in the 11th grade, and one in the 12th grade. Of the male participants, one was in the 11th grade and two were in the 12th grade.

Procedure

The study was conducted in the spring of 2014. The survey was administered to the majority of the participants as a group. Students were instructed to meet in a designated classroom on campus at the start of their lunch period. In the classroom, the students were met by the researcher and presented a packet that contained all survey instruments. Students were asked to complete the packet individually and were reminded that their participation in the study was voluntary. Upon returning the survey items, students were provided lunch and excused from the room. All participating students were able to complete the survey items within the allotted time.

Students who returned appropriate consent forms but were not available to complete the survey on the date of the group administration were contacted by the researcher individually and allowed to complete the survey items at a time convenient to their schedule within the school day in the counseling office. The counseling office was chosen as an alternative administration site

rather than the schools' administration office so as not to give the impression to students that they were in any disciplinary trouble.

Qualitative data collection began approximately two weeks after all surveys were completed. Upon obtaining teacher consent to conduct classroom observations, selected students were observed in two separate classes without prior notice of the scheduled observation. To protect student confidentiality, teachers were not notified of which students were being observed. All observations were completed within a period of two school weeks.

Upon completing the student observations, the research individually invited students to participate in an interview. Interviews lasted between approximately 10 and 30 minutes and followed a semi-structured format. Students participated in the interview during the school day during one of their non-academic courses, such as P.E. or an elective course. Students were excused from class with a pass from the counseling office and teachers were not provided with information regarding the nature of their excusal.

Measures

Demographic Variables. Basic demographic data including participants' grade and gender were obtained from school records.

Discipline History. Information regarding student's school discipline history for the current school year was obtained through self-reports and school discipline records. Students were asked the followings question regarding their discipline history: (1) Have you been suspended this school year, (2) How often do your teachers send you out of class for a behavior problem, and (3) How often do you get a referral to the office. Students indicating they had been suspended during the current school year were also asked to indicate the following: (1) the offense(s) students believed they were suspended for and (2) the location of the school where his or her behavioral infractions typically take place.

Because school discipline can be a sensitive subject, some degree of response bias was expected. Additionally, because all of the behavioral offenses for which a student was cited for on any one occasion may not have always been clearly communicated to students, they may have unintentionally underreported their behavioral infractions. To account for potential underreporting of school discipline incidences, the researcher accessed student records to determine the number of times a student had been suspended during the current school year. Additionally, information on other disciplinary consequences, including detention and Saturday school, was obtained.

Perceived discrimination in school discipline. Survey items assessing participants' perceptions of discrimination in the school discipline system were adapted from the Perceptions of Racism in Children and Youth scale (PRaCY) (Pachter et al 2010). The PRaCY, a self-report instrument, has two developmentally appropriate forms for young children and older adolescents. The PRaCY asks participants to indicate if they have ever experienced several potentially racially influenced experiences. For each of the racially discriminatory interactions included on the measure that a student had experienced, he or she was further asked to indicate the following: (1) the frequency of the experience, (2) his or her attributions about the experience (i.e. "Why do you think it happened?"), (3) his or her feelings about the experience, and (4) his or her approach to dealing with the experience.

While the present study used items adapted from the PRaCY, the items included in the present were modified in several significant ways. First, only items including scenarios related to discrimination in the school setting were included. Two of the original discrimination

scenarios were retained unaltered. Six of the scenarios were excluded because they concerned discrimination in general or in places outside of school, such as at the mall or shopping center. Two scenarios were slightly modified to relate more specifically to students' experiences with authority figures at school. Six additional discrimination scenarios were also added. These scenarios centered on students' experiences with disrespectful communication, public embarrassment by an adult at school, and exclusionary practices. Scenarios about experiences of disrespect and embarrassment were included because research indicates that perceptions of disrespect and public embarrassment influence student behavior in school discipline experiences (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Devine, 1996; Skiba & Knesting, 2001).

Secondly, some item response options of the PRaCY were revised for the current study in order to reduce the survey's administration time and to provide for easier coding and data analysis. Response options regarding the frequency of discrimination experiences, students' feelings about the experience, and his or her approach to dealing with the experience were collapsed. Lastly, the response options for the sub-question regarding student's attributions of a racially discriminatory experience were collapsed and reworded to more clearly ask students if they attributed a particular experience to their race or skin color.

Mental Health. Students' socio-emotional/mental health was measured using the Behavior Assessment System for Children, 2nd Edition Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BASC-2 BESS). The BASC-2 BESS is a brief, 30-item screening measure that assesses the emotional and behavioral strengths and weakness of children and adolescents from grades kindergarten through 12th grade. The measure was found to have good validity and reliability properties (Kamphaus & Reynolds, 2007). Participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which they think, feel, or act consistent with the items on the instrument on a 4-point Likert-scale: (N) Never, (S) Sometimes, (O) Often, and (A) Always. Students were only administered the self-report version of the BASC-2 BESS. The BASC-2 BESS results in a single T-Score. Score classifications are provided in Table 1.

Table 1
BASC-2 BESS Score Classifications

T-Score	Score Classification
60 or lower	Normal Range
61-70	Elevated Range
71 or higher	Extremely Elevated Range

Participants' total scores were coded for analysis (Normal Range=0; Elevated Range=1; Extremely Elevated Range=2). Additionally, participants' responses to three individual items related to anxiety and depression were also analyzed.

In addition to the BASC-2 BESS, sub-items from the mPRaCY were used as additional measures of mental health. Students' responses to "how did you deal with it?" in regards to each of the negative school experiences listed were divided into two broad categories reflecting the participants' engagement with or disengagement from the negative situation, and included both positive and negative coping strategies (Tobin, Holroyd, Reynolds, & Wigal, 1989). Engagement and disengagement coping strategies are listed in Table 2.

Table 2
Engaged and Disengaged Coping Strategies

Disengaged Coping	Engaged Coping
Ignored it	Spoke up
Accepted it	Tried to change things
Kept it to myself	Hit someone or something
Lost Interest in things	Worked hard to prove them wrong
Tried to forget it	

Research indicates that there are important relationships between coping approaches and adolescent mental health, making it an important variable in the present study. For example, Herman-Stabl, Stemmler, and Peterson (1995) found that of the large sample of youth studied over a short-term longitudinal period, those who used approach (or engaged) coping mechanism reported the fewest symptoms of depression, whereas youth who used avoidant (or disengaged) coping mechanism reported the most depressive symptoms. Thus, the authors explain that the use of effective coping strategies may reduce the negative effects of stress while ineffective strategies may increase the effect of stress and negatively impact youth adjustment.

School Connectedness. Student's levels of interpersonal and institutional school connectedness were assessed using 11 items developed by Nasir, Jones, and McLaughlin (2011). Items were presented on a five-point Likert scale (1=not at all, 5= a lot). Three negative items ("How often are you late to class", "How often do you cut two or more classes per day", and "How often do you come to class without a pencil, paper or homework") were reverse coded to allow for analysis.

Interview protocol. The semi-structured interview protocol contained a total of 23 questions that were asked of all participants. Interview questions focused on students' relationships and interactions with peers and adults on campus, their behavior at school, experiences with the discipline system, perceptions of discipline at the school, the influence of race in school discipline, and strategies for avoiding contact with the school discipline system.

Piloting Study

The final quantitative and qualitative research instruments used in this study were informed by feedback from pilot studies and focus groups. After the initial survey instruments were developed, a panel of six graduate students familiar with educational research and the present study reviewed the items. The panel provided feedback on the content of instrument items, protocol instructions, instrument formatting, and item ordering. Feedback from the panel of graduate students results in significant changes to the initial survey instrument and minor changes to the semi-structured interview instrument. Feedback from the panel indicated the following: (1) the length of the initial survey instrument was too long and might be too taxing for the intended sample, (2) the instrument contained too many response options for several items about students' school discipline experiences and thus might not produce reliable data or capture

meaningful differences between students regarding their experiences, (3) items about perceived discrimination were worded in a way that they captured students' hypotheses about others' perceptions of discrimination rather than their own experiences with perceived discrimination, and (4) items related to interpersonal relationships between students and teachers were worded from the perspective of the teachers instead of students, which would require students to speculate about the teachers' perspective and thus may have resulted in many "I don't know" responses.

To address the feedback and suggestions provided by the panel of graduate students, the following revisions to the initial instrument were made: (1) the instrument was reduced to 37 items (including the modified PRaCY (mPRaCY) but not including the BASC-2 BESS), (2) items responses regarding students school disciplinary experiences were revised to reflect a Likert-scale (1= Not at all, 5= A lot; 1= Not at all true, 5= Very true) as opposed to asking students to report on the frequency with which they experienced various events over the course of the school year, (3) initial items regarding interpersonal relationships with teachers were deleted and items regarding interpersonal and institutional relationships at school were adopted from the scales developed by Nasir, Jones, & McLaughlin (2011), and (4) initial items regarding perceived discrimination in schools were deleted and items reflecting this constructed were adapted from the PRaCY. In addition to addressing the feedback provided by the panel of graduate students, the researcher also made considerable modifications to the PRaCY as noted above. Based on feedback from the panel of graduate students, revisions to the interview protocol were minor and included re-ordering some questions.

In addition to feedback from the panel of graduate students, the researcher also obtained feedback from her dissertation committee on the survey and interview instruments. This feedback resulted in the addition of three new interview questions about students' perceptions of how other groups of students are disciplined at school.

Upon making the necessary revisions to the study instruments, the researcher piloted the instruments (with the exception of the BASC-2 BESS) on a small sample of African American high school students. The sample consisted of 3 female students and one male student. Feedback from pilot sample participants indicated that the items were easy to understand, response options were appropriate, and the length of the instruments was also appropriate. Minor changes to printed instrument directions were made for clarification purposes.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection and analysis were informed by a pragmatic parallel mixed-methods design in which data is collected simultaneously or with a time lag and all data sets were intended to answer the same research questions (Mertens, 2005). Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately and then integrated. Inferences from both were used to address the research questions presented in this study.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted to address each of the research questions presented in this study. Descriptive analyses were conducted to provide general information about the sample (i.e. grade, gender, number and type of disciplinary encounters, etc.).

To answer the first research question- how do African American students see their interactions with the school discipline system influenced by issues of racial discrimination, the

researcher analyzed students' responses on the modified PRaCY (mPRaCY). The researcher calculated descriptive statistics regarding the number, frequency, and attributions of negative school discipline experiences.

To answer the next research question regarding the impact of gender on students' perceptions of racial discrimination in the school discipline experiences the researcher conducted t-tests on the above-mentioned variables to detect if there were significant gender differences.

The third research question regarding the relationship between students' perceptions of racial discrimination in school discipline and mental health was addressed by determining the correlations between participants' mean number of perceived experiences with discrimination and total scores on the BASC-2 BESS. Correlations between participants' mean number of perceived experiences with discrimination and individual BASC-2 BESS items relating to anxiety and depression and were also calculated. As well, correlations between participants' perceptions of discrimination and the use of engaged and disengaged coping mechanisms were analyzed.

To address the fourth research question (how is students' level of connectedness to the school related to perceptions of racial discrimination and mental health) the researcher conducted several statistical analyses. To determine the relationship between school connectedness and participants' perceived experiences with racial discrimination the researcher conducted regression analysis on the school connectedness and perceived discrimination experiences composites. To determine the relationship between school connectedness and participants' mental health the researcher conducted regression analysis on the school connectedness composite, total BASC-2 BESS scores, specific BASC-2 BESS items reflecting anxiety and depression, and coping mechanisms composites.

Several analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to assess the final research question- how is students' involvement with the school discipline system related to perceptions of racial discrimination and mental health. Specifically, ANOVAs were run to determine the correlations between each of the disciplinary consequences (i.e. detention, Saturday school, and suspension) and the perceived discrimination experiences composite; each of the disciplinary consequences and total BASC-2 BESS scores; and each of the disciplinary consequences and coping mechanisms composites.

Qualitative data analysis

In accordance with methods described by Mertens (2005), qualitative data analysis was a process that began during the collection of data. The qualitative data analysis process began with the collection of observation data. After conducting observations of participants in their classrooms, observational data was open-coded and personal reflections and basic themes were noted. After identifying patterns, themes, and commonalities in the observation data, interviews with participants were conducted. Interview data was analyzed in the same way as observation data. With the availability of both observation and interview data, the researcher identified themes, patterns, and commonalities throughout all of the data and created a set of codes related to these findings. All qualitative data was then analyzed according to these codes and considered in light of the existing literature on the coded constructs in order to develop meaningful theories about the data.

Chapter 4: Results

Approaching this study into the school discipline, school connectedness, and mental health experiences of African American high school students from a mixed-methods perspective was important and purposeful. While there is a plethora of research documenting the existence of the discipline gap, the school-to-prison pipeline, and the correlation between perceived discrimination and mental health, looking at these issues from a statistical perspective only provides part of the story. To add richness, depth, and context, a research perspective that looked at overarching trends from a statistical perspective, while also allowing space for students' voices to be heard and experiences to be honored was necessary. Furthermore, because the statistical patterns revealed in this study are so intertwined with the individual experiences of students who participated in the qualitative portion of this study, the quantitative and qualitative data are presented in an integrated fashion in this chapter. In the sections of this chapter that follow, I briefly describe how each student fit into one of two profiles based on their discipline history, orientation towards school, and perceptions of discrimination in their school discipline interactions. Following this description of student profiles, I provide a brief overview of the exploratory analyses conducted on the quantitative data. Finally, I present an integrated analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data as it pertains to the study's initial research questions.

Student Profiles

Exploratory analysis of the qualitative data revealed that students' school discipline experiences typically fell into one of two profiles: Frequently Disciplined and Infrequently Disciplined Students. Four of the students (Michelle, Brittany, Robert, and Marcus) participating in the qualitative portion of the study fit the Frequently Disciplined profile. Layla, Jasmine, and Calvin fit the profile of Infrequently Discipline students.

Frequently discipline students not only had relatively frequent interactions with school staff in disciplinary capacities, but also had similarities in their expressed perceptions of discrimination and in their expressed instrumental value placed on education. Students fitting the frequently disciplined profile all expressed beliefs that racial discrimination in school discipline existed, even if they had not experienced or witnessed explicit discrimination themselves. This belief in the existence of discrimination is plausible according to the cultural-ecological theory because of students' personal and collective experiences of instrumental, relational, and symbolic discrimination in schools and the larger community. For example, although a student may not have experienced explicit discrimination in any school discipline interactions, the student may have come against educational, economic and political barriers to economic advancement for one's collective group outside of and within schools (i.e. academic tracking, lack of familial access to employment, etc.), subordination and exclusion from opportunities to assimilate to the dominant culture (i.e. separation of ethnic groups in schools and communities because of educational, economic, and social factors), and negative linguistic and cultural stereotyping and denigration, which influenced the students' perceptions of discrimination as a feature of the school system overall. As an example of a general educational barrier to advancement for African American students at Buena View High School, many student participants expressed that they were placed in the academic program for "at risk" students against their desires and were denied the ability to exit the program by their counselors. They described that their academic program limited their educational opportunities and they perceived

students in the other academic tracks to be favored by school staff. Students often expressed their lack of educational opportunities in terms of racial discrimination.

In addition to holding beliefs that their interactions with the school discipline system are marked by discrimination, students who were frequently disciplined also all held what Ogbu referred to as inconsistent beliefs about the instrumental value of education as a mechanism for economic advancement. These students displayed and expressed varying levels of school connectedness, demonstrated less academic orientation towards school during observations even though many talked about the importance of getting an education, and only infrequently referred to school as a mobilizing force.

Students who fit the Infrequently Disciplined profile were formally disciplined by school staff within the classroom or through a referral to the school administrators no more than one time during the current school year. Although the students had infrequent school discipline encounters during the current school year, they all were able to recount interactions with the school discipline system that occurred in the past. These students all described varying ways in which they learned to better adapt to the behavioral expectations in school in order to access an education. Essentially, these students explained that they learned to accommodate to white culture and school behavioral expectations over the course of their school careers. Students fitting the Infrequently Disciplined profile all expressed clear academic orientations and an expressed belief in the instrumental value of education. Although similar in regards to their views about the value of education, there were some inconsistencies in these students' perceptions of discrimination in the school discipline system. While all students described negative school discipline interactions, only two of the students described discrimination playing a role in school discipline interactions. The other students explained negative school discipline exchanges as the result of interpersonal or personality conflicts. For example, Layla, a 9th grade female student in the academic program for "at-risk" students, did not attach broader meaning to negative discipline interactions with teachers and staff, and rather explained that the individual was "rude" and her decision "to be rude back" created discipline conflicts. Although this student did not express a belief that discrimination played a role in school discipline interactions, she did not appear to be trying to assimilate to the dominant culture by rejecting her own ethnic identity and embracing "whiteness" or excusing negative treatment by whites. Rather, she appeared to accommodate to the dominant culture relatively well while at the same time maintaining important connections with her ethnic group, as evidenced by the group of peers she associated with and her use of language.

Overall, the profiles of students align closely with the cultural-ecological theory and Ogbu's strategies for "coping with the burden of acting white". Frequently Disciplined Students were similar to one another in respect to the instrumental value that they placed on education and their perceptions of discrimination in school discipline. Students' strategies for navigating the school system, however, varied. Whereas some Frequently Disciplined students attempted accommodation, they were generally less successful at accommodating to the dominant culture's school expectations than the Infrequently Disciplined students. Other Frequently Discipline students demonstrated clear ambivalence. All of the Infrequently Disciplined students appeared relatively successful at accommodating to the dominant culture but did not appear to desire or value assimilation.

Quantitative Exploratory Analyses

Before exploring the data as it specifically relates to the research questions, exploratory analysis of the quantitative data was conducted. Descriptive statistics revealed interesting findings regarding students' contact with the school discipline system. Detention was the most frequently experienced discipline consequence for students ($M= 1.5$, $SD= 2.53$), followed by suspension ($M= .65$, $SD= 1.49$), and then Saturday school ($M= .58$, $SD=1.60$). This finding is interesting, because from a progressive discipline perspective, one would expect the order of frequency for discipline consequences to be as follows: detention, Saturday school, then suspension. For analysis purposes, participants' experiences on each of these disciplinary outcomes were categorized and coded as Low, Average, or High. Low represented no experiences with the disciplinary outcome. Average disciplinary experiences were coded as the range from the mean rounded up to the nearest whole number to the mean plus one standard deviation rounded to the nearest whole number. For example, an Average suspension record meant that a student was suspended between one (.65 rounded up to the nearest whole number) and 2 times (.65 (M) + 1.49 (SD) = 2.13).

High Prevalence of School Discipline Encounters and Perceived Racial Discrimination

Frequency statistics provide information about participants' school discipline and perceived racial discrimination experiences. Eighty seven percent of participants reported encountering at least one of the negative school discipline experiences listed on the survey instruments and each of the students participating in the qualitative portion of the study recalled at least one negative school discipline experience at some point in their school careers. Of those who reported experiencing a negative school discipline experience, 47% of all participants attributed at least one of those experiences to perceived racial discrimination. The majority of interview participants (5 out of 6) reported that they perceived racial factors to influence the ways in which they or other Black students are disciplined. For example, Brittany, Jasmine, Robert, and Calvin all explicitly stated that African American students are discriminated against in school discipline encounters and that they themselves have been the recipients of such discrimination at some point in their academic careers. In discussing his perceptions of racial discrimination in school discipline interactions, Robert, an athletic 12th grade student not enrolled in any of the school's academic programs, explained how he is treated differently than his group of friends, the majority of whom are white:

Robert: I would like say, if I was talking in class or something like that...I would get told to stop talking and if I were to do it again I would either get a detention or a referral or something, but if one of my white friends were to like talk or something like that, repetitively, nothing would really happen.

Researcher: What are some of the things you think they might get in trouble for?

Robert: Umm...maybe like threatening somebody.

Researcher: Do you think that...I don't want to put words in your mouth but it seems like there's a big difference between talking in class and threatening somebody. Why do you think there is such a big difference between what would get each of you in trouble?

Robert: 'Cause...I feel like...like Black kids are kinda expected to get in trouble...like I feel like everyone sees us like we're gonna do something bad but like...when somebody else, if they were going to get in trouble it would have to be something really bad.

Researcher: Why do you think...why do you feel like its expected that Black kids get in trouble?

Robert: Honestly, because like, I think its because we're kinda like set up sometimes.

Researcher: Tell me what you mean.

Robert: Well, its kinda hard to explain...you kinda have to be in the classroom but you can kinda see what's gonna happen. Like, if a Black kid were to do something wrong then it would pretty much just go down hill.

Researcher: And if a white kid did something wrong how do you think the teacher would handle it?

Robert: I feel like, every time I've seen my friend...every time he does something he'll get took outside and like they would have a conversation with the teacher for a minute or whatever...but if somebody that were Black were to go through something like that they would usually just get sent to the office.

While Robert both perceived and reportedly experienced racial discrimination in some of his school discipline interactions, others like Michelle, a mixed-race 11th grade student in the “at-risk” academic program, assumed that race factored into discipline experiences but reports never having actually witnessed or experienced discriminatory treatment. Michelle’s ability to escape such experiences may in part be a reflection of her mixed-race status. Perhaps because phenotypically she does not appear to be Black, school administrators and staff do not treat her in the same ways or she expects that others will not treat her in the same ways as they would someone with more stereotypical Black phenotypic characteristics. In essence, her ability to “pass” may buffer her from negative racial experiences as well as color her perceptions of interactions. Nevertheless, one can assume that despite her personal experiences in the school discipline system, Michelle has experienced and/or witnessed enough instrumental, relational, and symbolic discrimination in the community and in schools overall to assume that racial discrimination is also a feature of school disciplinary exchanges.

While the majority of students reported experiencing negative school discipline experiences, there was great variety in the type of experiences they had. The most common negative school discipline experiences reported on the survey included being yelled at by a teacher, being sent to the principal’s or vice principal’s office, receiving detention, being accused of something he or she did not do, being treated badly or unfairly by a teacher, and being disrespected by a staff member. Each of these negative school discipline interactions was reportedly experienced by over 40% of the total sample. Being accused of something that he or she did not do was the most common experience that participants attributed to racial factors.

Brittany, a 9th grade student in the “at-risk” academic program, and Jasmine, a 12th grade identified with an IDEA disability but taking all general education class, provided pointed examples of how being falsely accused of doing something resulted in disciplinary trouble. For example, Brittany recounted a particular incident in which her teacher accused her and her group of not working and having off-topic conversations. After initially trying to defend herself and explain to the teacher that her group was on task, Brittany became frustrated and put her head down when her teacher began to yell at her. Brittany explained that her teacher yelled at her for several minutes and “got in [her] face”. While the specific incident did not result in suspension because her mother and school administrators got involved in the situation after learning that the teacher “got in her face”, Brittany explained that it had a significant affect on her. She reported that the incident made her “irritated” and made her feel like not going back to that class. Perhaps

this incident was even more impactful because Brittany reported witnessing incidences similar to hers play out in vastly different ways in the same classroom. Brittany explained:

I know like students that like...that are other races...they'll be talking and [the teacher will] go to their table and tell them to stop talking and they'll start to explain to her what they're actually doing and she'll be like 'ok' and will just like leave them alone.

Similar to Brittany, Jasmine recalled an incident in which she was accused of misbehavior in the classroom:

Jasmine: I was in class, trying to do my schoolwork and a student kept interfering with my group, cause you know... you have to do group work sometimes, you can't just do your own work because one of the things about high school is learning to work with your peers, you know, learning how to collaborate and everything. So I'm working with my group and me and my group aren't where I want us to be at...we're not ahead, we're not done with our project therefore, we need to work. A student in my group wanted to hang out with his friend who was in another group and it just so happened that his group was done...my group is not...so I need my group to pay attention. I asked him politely leave...he wouldn't leave my group..."I don't need to go anywhere"...I'm like "ok. I need you to leave. Please, my group needs to finish..." No don't wanna leave?", fine. "If you don't leave I'm gonna tell the teacher". I'm trying to get the teacher's attention...I'm calling her name, calling her name, her name...she's not answering, o.k. Now I'm like getting frustrated because this is eating up so much time for no reason, can you just please let my group finish...no he can do whatever he want...whoompdee, whoomp, whoomp...so then he gets in my face and I'm like...you know like, we're human but we have animal instincts...so now I'm getting frustrated and he's tryna get physical and the teacher's not paying no never mind but as soon as I get up to like handle the situation is when, of course...dun dun dun...I'm the one that looks like the villain when really I'm the victim I feel. I was just trying to do my work, and honestly as a teacher you weren't doing your job paying attention. I'm calling your name...what's your name for if I keep calling your name and you're not gonna respond then I gotta handle the situation the best way I know I think I can...which might not have been the best situation or the best way but I had to do what I had to do. Any who, she noticed me and it looks like I'm the one getting in trouble. Any who, I get in trouble, she sends me outside and now I really can't finish my work so I'm getting even more boiled up cause I'm like a workaholic. So now I'm like dang, I really can't finish my project, I'm finna get sent to the office for no reason. She's asking his side of the story first and is not tryna hear my side of the story. I already know that he's gonna lie but when I almost got the teacher's attention was when he started walking away and when I started to get up, so it just automatically looked like...I could just see what type of person he was and it just all made me very upset...and I was just so frustrated that day. I got sent to the office. I got a referral...he didn't get anything. It's always two sides to the story...I can't just get in trouble by myself...that makes no sense and that's unfair...that's why sometimes I just think it depends on the person and the teacher. Part of me feels like it had to do with....I don't want to say it but...the teacher was a...a student teacher, so she was learning new things, so I kinda give her slack for that, but then I kinda feel like it maybe coulda been a racial thing sometimes because I feel it's totally unfair how he didn't get disciplined at all and I got kicked outta class for three

Table 3
Percentage of Participants' Encountering Negative School Discipline Experiences and Attributions of Experience

Negative School Discipline Experience	Encountered Experience	Repeatedly Encountered Experience	Attributed to Racial Factors
Been treated unfairly by a police officer or security monitor at school	10.0	5.0	2.5
Been accused of something you didn't do at school	47.5	22.5	32.5
Been treated badly or unfairly by a teacher	45.0	35.0	22.5
Had teachers or school staff assume you're no smart or intelligent	35.0	25.0	27.5
Been scolded or embarrassed by any of your teachers	27.5	10.0	10.0
Been yelled at by any of your teachers	52.5	42.5	17.5
Been talked down to by any of your teachers	17.5	10.0	2.5
Been sent to the principal's/VP's office or given detention	52.5	37.5	12.5
Been suspended or expelled from school	35.0	10.0	5.0
Had a teacher or staff member disrespect you	42.5	37.5	30.0

Note. Repeat encounters with a negative school discipline experience were defined as student encountering experience two or more times at his or her current school.

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

days when the whole reason I got in trouble was because I was trying to work...now he gets to work, he got to talk, he got to do what he wanted to do, he got to get a good grade and now I'm failing...

The excerpts from Jasmine's and Brittany's interviews provide examples of how students felt that teachers often falsely accused them of or assumed that they had participated in wrongdoing without giving them an adequate opportunity to explain or defend themselves. Overall, quantitative and qualitative data reveal that participants experienced negative school discipline interactions at high rates. Although the specific types of negative school discipline interactions students faced varied, nearly half of all the participants attributed their negative school discipline interactions to racial discrimination.

Lack of Gender Differences in Discipline Experiences and Perceived Racial Discrimination

An Independent Samples t-tests was conducted to compare males' and females' reports of the number negative school discipline interactions experienced. There was no significant difference between males ($M=2.57$, $SD=2.31$) and females ($M=3.69$, $SD=2.46$), in regards to the overall number of negative school discipline experiences reported; $t(38)=1.402$, $p=.169$. T-tests also indicated there was no significant difference in males' ($M=.714$, $SD=1.33$) and females' ($M=1.81$, $SD=2.30$) attributions of negative school discipline experiences overall; $t(37.73)=1.91$, $p=.064$. Qualitative data revealed more gender differences, however, the small sample size limits the ability to interpret the significance of these differences. Half of the female and all three of the male interview participants indicated that racial discrimination factored into their personal discipline experiences. The lack of or small gender differences in students' perceptions of discrimination in school discipline experiences is not surprising when considering statistical data on the discipline gap. Just as African American males are more likely to experience exclusionary discipline at higher rates than their white male counterparts, African American female students also experience exclusionary discipline at higher rates than their white female counterparts. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that, as each gender group considers their own experiences, males and females will perceive that racial discrimination factors into school discipline interactions at comparable rates when using their gender group as reference.

Positive Relationship Between Racial Discrimination in School Discipline and Depression

A Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was calculated to assess the relationship between participants' perceptions of discrimination in school discipline experiences and overall mental health (as measured by the total BASC-2 BESS score). Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was chosen as the appropriate statistic because the use of nonparametric statistics is recommended with ordinal data and/or skewed data (Morgan et al, 2013). The BASC-2 BESS Scores (0=Normal, 1=Elevated, 2=Very Elevated) represents ordinal data, whereas data on participants' perceptions of discrimination in school discipline was skewed to the left.

Analysis indicated there was no correlation between participants' perceptions of discrimination in school discipline and total BASC-2 BESS scores, $r(38)=.275$, $p=.086$. Spearman's rho correlation coefficients were also calculated to assess the relationship between participants' perceptions of discrimination in school discipline experiences and BASC-2 BESS items relating to depression and anxiety. There was a correlation between participants' perceptions of discrimination in school discipline experiences and one of the BASC-2 BESS items reflecting depression ("I feel like my life is getting worse and worse), $r(38)=.468$, $p=$

Table 4

Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for School Discipline Experiences by Sex

	Sex						95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df
	Female			Male					
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n			
Overall	3.69	2.46	26	2.57	2.31	14	-.50, 2.74	1.40	38
Police/ Monitor	.12	.326	26	.07	.267	14	-.16, .25	.43	38
Accused	.58	.504	26	.29	.469	14	-.04, .62	1.80	38
Bad/ Unfair teacher treatment	.46	.508	26	.43	.514	14	-.31, .38	.20	38
Assumed unintelligent	.38	.496	26	.29	.469	14	-.23, .43	.61	38
Scolded/embarrassed	.31	.471	26	.21	.426	14	-.21, .40	.62	38
Yelled at	.58	.504	26	.43	.514	14	-.19, .49	.88	38
Talked down to	.19	.402	26	.14	.363	14	-.21, .31	.38	38
Sent to office/ detention	.62	.496	26	.36	.497	14	-.08, .59	1.57	38
Suspended/ expelled	.35	.485	26	.36	.497	14	-.34, .32	-.07	38
Disrespected	.50	.510	26	.29	.469	14	-.12, .55	1.30	38

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

.002. This is consistent with student interview data. Students who reported experiencing discrimination in school discipline experiences did not report overall poor mental wellbeing. However some students did report experiencing feelings associated with particular aspects of mental health. For example, Brittany described feeling “irritated” and like she wanted to withdrawal when she felt like she was discriminated again in a school discipline exchange. According to the DMS-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), irritability is one potential symptom of depression in children and adolescents.

Overall, there was a moderate, positive relationship between students’ perceptions of discrimination and his or her reports of depressed feelings. The more discrimination in school discipline experiences a participant perceived the more he or she reported to feel consistent with the statement “I feel like my life is getting worse and worse”.

Consistent with the finding that participants who perceived more racial discrimination in school reported feeling like life was getting worse, participants who perceived more discrimination also used more disengaged coping mechanisms, $r(38) = .574$, $p < .01$. There was also a moderate relationship between perceived discrimination and engaged coping mechanisms, $r(38) = .548$, $p < .01$. These findings indicate that students perceiving more discrimination employed a greater number of methods to try to “deal” with negative school discipline experiences than students who perceived less discrimination. For example, many students who reported discrimination also reported instances of standing up for themselves to teachers to cope with perceived disrespect. Students also employed strategies of disengaging from teachers and peers in order to avoid “the drama” that can result in disciplinary issues. Illustrating disengagement, Brittany reports putting her head down when her teacher was disciplining her. Others like Marcus, a 12th grade special education student, reacted to disciplinary situations by engaging with the teacher in active resistance as is detailed below:

Marcus: I was in class and I was sitting in the front row and I was talking to a couple of friends beside me and she kept saying "shh"...so alright... then I talked again and same ole' same ole' thing...then I turned around and did my work and she was like "so, like, so you're just gonna sit here and not do your work and mess up everybody's education?" and I was like "no, how bout you go back over there and sit down and leave me alone while I do what I want to do?" she was like "no, that's not how it works. You're disrupting our class". Well obviously I'm not cause nobody else is talking to me but you in the situation so you're making it a bigger deal than what it is already because you're over here yelling at me, talking to me about it. And she was like "so you're just gonna sit here and talk back to me". I said "no, you're the one that came over here... if you didn't come over here this wouldn't be a problem" and then she was like "stop right there" and I was like "no, you started so I'm gonna finish it". And she was like "I'm gonna write you up...this is unacceptable". I was like "well, you're being unacceptable right now talking to me". She was like "stop, just stop...go outside". "No... You want me to go outside than come with me cause I want to talk to you about this". She was like "no, I'm gonna write you up and then I'm gonna send somebody to take you up to the office". I said, "how come you can't take me cause I want to talk about this. This is not right". She was like "no, I'm done talking about this...go outside". I was like "no". So they had somebody from the front office come get me.

Negative Effect of Discrimination on Connectedness

A Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was conducted to assess the relationship between participants' feelings of overall school connectedness (interpersonal and institutional) and his or her perceptions of discrimination in school discipline experiences. There was no correlation between these variables, $r(38) = -.193$, $p = .234$. Analyzed separately, there was no correlation between interpersonal connectedness and perceptions of discrimination, $r(38) = -.280$, $p = .080$, or between institutional connectedness and perceptions of discrimination in school discipline, $r(38) = .007$, $p = .967$. This finding is consistent with qualitative data. Both students who expressed or who were observed to have some connection with school and those who did not readily convey connections with the school expressed perceptions of discrimination in school discipline. For example, students like Marcus, who expressed and displayed connections with peers, staff, and school in general (i.e. he got along with his peers, participated in extracurricular activities, and reported positive relationships with adults on campus), and students like Brittany who were very disconnected from school (i.e. expressed strained relationships with peers and school staff), both reported feeling discriminated against.

While there were no consistent patterns in perceptions of discrimination in relationship to reports of school connectedness, there were significant correlations between perceptions of discrimination and items on the BASC-2 BESS reflecting attitude towards school and attitude towards teachers. There were moderate, positive relationships between perceived discrimination and feeling that his or her teacher was unfair, $r(38) = .538$, $p > .001$; and between perceived discrimination and the statement "teachers make me feel stupid", $r(38) = .405$, $p = .010$. Overall, students who perceived more discrimination in school discipline experiences were also more likely to feel his or her teachers were unfair, feel stupid at the hand of his or her teacher(s), and were less likely to feel good about school.

Table 5
Correlations for Attitude Towards School/ Teachers and Perceived Discrimination

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Overall discrimination	1.43	2.06	1.00						
2 Want to quit school	.55	.68	.00	1.00					
3 School is boring	1.18	.64	.12	.60**	1.00				
4 Hate School	.78	.66	.13	.45**	.38*	1.00			
5 Teachers Unfair	1.00	.56	.53**	.16	.20	.29	1.00		
6 Make feel stupid	.65	.74	.42**	.23	.31	.43**	.38**	1.00	
7 School feels good	1.23	.70	-.436**	-.07	-.15	-.301	-.35	-.37	1.00

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Spearman's rho correlation coefficients were also calculated to determine the relationship between participants' feelings of school connectedness and mental health. Contrary to expectations, neither qualitative nor quantitative data revealed any clear relationships between school connectedness and mental health. This may suggest that the students in the study have many other influences aside from their connections with school that impact or buffer against assaults on overall mental health.

Table 6
Results of Spearman's rho correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Connectedness and Perceptions of Discrimination

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Overall Connect	3.70	.44	1.00													
2. Interpersonal Connect	3.31	.65	.752**	1.00												
3. Institutional Connect	3.67	.59	.79**	.24	1.00											
4. Overall Discrimination	1.43	2.06	-.19	-.28	.01	1.00										
5. Police/ Monitor	.02	.16	.06	.14	-.01	.17	1.00									
6. Accused	.33	.47	-.26	-.37*	.00	.76**	-.11	1.00								
7. Bad/ Unfair treatment	.23	.42	-.27	-.35*	-.04	.74**	-.09	.52**	1.00							
8. Assumed unintelligent	.28	.45	.07	-.14	.23	.48**	.26	.29	.34*	1.00						
9. Scolded/embarrassed	.10	.30	-.03	-.19	.13	.48**	-.05	.13	.42**	.36*	1.00					
10. Yelled at	.18	.39	-.22	-.18	-.12	.66**	-.07	.52**	.70**	.45**	.29	1.00				
11. Talked down to	.15	.53	-.20	-.42**	.13	.54**	-.05	.31	.62**	.54**	.70**	.51**	1.00			
12. Offended/abandoned	.13	.34	-.12	-.08	-.13	.53**	.42**	.38*	.34*	.28	.13	.42**	.12	1.00		
13. Suspended/ expelled	.05	.22	-.16	-.34*	.15	.33*	-.04	.33*	.15	.12	.31	.20	.30	.26	1.00	
14. Disrespected	.30	.47	-.14	-.15	-.06	.83**	.25	.48**	.69**	.33*	.51**	.56**	.51**	.41**	.10	1.00

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Table 7

Correlations for Connectedness and Mental Health

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Overall Connect	3.70	.44	1.00						
2 Interperson. Connect	3.31	.65	.74**	1.00					
3 Institut. Connect	3.67	.59	.80**	.23	1.00				
4 Overall Mental Health	.25	.54	-.17	-.23	-.07	1.00			
5 Unexplained worry	1.25	.84	-.00	.04	-.03	.14	1.00		
6 Life getting worse	.65	.80	-.20	-.25	-.03	.68**	.33*	1.00	
7 Worry about future	1.15	.80	-.23	-.35*	-.05	.38*	.63**	.48	1.00

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Lack of Effect of School Discipline History on Perceptions of Discrimination

A one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted to compare participants' perceptions of discrimination according to detention history (Low, Average, High). There was not a significant effect of detention history on participants' perceptions of discrimination at the $p < .05$ level for the three categories [$F(2,37) = .634$, $p = .536$]. Similarly, there was not a significant effect of Saturday school history [$F(2,37) = .319$, $p = .729$] or suspension history [$F(2,37) = .340$, $p = .740$] on participants' perceptions of discrimination. These results indicate that the number of discipline consequences a student receives does not have a significant effect on their perceptions of discrimination or on variables of his or her mental health. This finding is consistent with the qualitative data. Students from both the Frequently Disciplined and Infrequently Discipline profile groups expressed perceptions of discrimination in school discipline experiences.

Lack of Effect of School Discipline History on Overall Mental Health

To investigate the relationship between school discipline involvement and mental health variables a one-way between groups ANOVA was again conducted. Results indicated there was not a significant effect of suspension history on participants overall mental health [$F(2,37) = 1.247$, $p = .299$] or on specific items related to anxiety or depression. There also was no significant effect of Saturday school [$F(2,37) = 1.306$, $p = .283$] or detention history [$F(2,37) = 1.530$, $p = .230$] on total BASC-2 BESS scores. This is consistent with qualitative findings. Students expressed feelings of irritability, anger, frustration, and sadness in relation to specific discipline events but no students participating in the interview indicated or described having overall poor mental health.

Positive Relationship between Discipline History and Engaged Coping

While there were no significant effects of discipline experiences on mental health variables, there were significant effects of discipline experiences on coping mechanisms. Specifically, there was a significant effect of detention history on engaged coping mechanisms [$F(2,37) = 4.609$, $p = .016$]. Tukey post hoc tests indicate that the mean number of engaged coping mechanisms reported for the High detention group was greater than the mean number of engaged coping mechanisms reported for the Low detention group. Saturday school history also had a significant effect on engaged coping mechanisms, [$F(2,37) = 3.676$, $p = .035$]. Tukey post tests reveal that students in the High Saturday school group reported using more engaged coping mechanisms than did students from the Average Saturday school group. There was no significant difference between the High and Low Saturday school groups. There were no significant effects of Suspension history on either disengaged or engaged coping mechanisms. There were also no significant effects of any of the discipline histories on disengaged coping mechanisms. Overall, these results indicate that students who were assigned detention and Saturday school more often

were also more likely to employ engaged coping mechanisms. However, the directionality of this relationship is unclear. Marcus serves as an example. As a student who was assigned detention, Saturday school, and suspension, his reaction to a disciplinary encounter illustrates an engaged coping mechanism. His manner of standing up for himself represents active resistance to his teacher and perceived unfair treatment.

Table 8
One-Way Analysis of Variance of Engaged Coping by Detention Group

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between groups	2	.42	.21	4.61	.016
Within groups	37	1.67	.05		
Total	39	2.08			

Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test

		Mean Difference	Std. Error	<i>P</i>	Confidence Interval
Low	Average	-.06	.07	.71	-.24, .12
Low	High	-.32*	.11	.01	-.58, -.06
Average	High	-.26	.11	.06	-.53, .01

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 9
One-Way Analysis of Variance of Engaged Coping by Sat. School Group

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between groups	2	.35	.17	3.68	.04
Within groups	37	1.74	.05		
Total	39	2.08			

Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test

		Mean Difference	Std. Error	<i>P</i>	Confidence Interval
Low	Average	.11	.10	.54	-.14, .36
Low	High	-.31	.13	.06	-.63, .01
Average	High	-.42*	.16	.03	-.81, -.03

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Negative Effect of School Discipline History on School Connectedness

Analysis of the relationship between discipline history and school connectedness indicated there was significant effect of the frequency of suspension on school connectedness at the $p < 0.05$ level for the three suspension groups (Low, Average, High). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicate that the mean connectedness score for the High suspension group ($M=3.0769$, $SD=.40704$) was significantly lower than the Low suspension group ($M=3.8159$, $SD=.07395$). However, the Average suspension group did not differ from the Low or High groups. These results suggest that the frequency of suspension has an effect on school connectedness. Specifically, students who are suspended at high rates (over one standard deviation above the mean of the sample) overall felt less connected to school. This finding is somewhat consistent with qualitative findings. Students like Jasmine, Layla, and Calvin all

expressed and demonstrated connectedness with the school institution and/or their peers and staff and were either not suspended or suspended very few times. In contrast, students like Brittany who were suspended on more than one occasion expressed less institutional and interpersonal connectedness. However, there were also some students like Robert who displayed high levels of connectedness but still experienced suspension.

Similar results were found relative to the frequency of Saturday school and school connectedness. There was a significant effect of the frequency of Saturday school frequency on school connectedness at the $p < .05$ level for the three Saturday school groups. Tukey HSD post hoc comparisons indicate that the mean connectedness score for the High Saturday school group ($M = 3.0769$, $SD = .40704$) was significantly lower than the scores for the Low Saturday school group ($M = 3.8077$, $SD = .38832$). Overall, the results indicate that students who were assigned Saturday school the most felt less connected to school.

Table 10
One-Way Analysis of Variance of School Connectedness by Suspension Group

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between groups	2	1.78	.89	5.77	.007
Within groups	37	5.70	.15		
Total	39	7.47			

Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test

		Mean Difference	Std. Error	<i>P</i>	Confidence Interval
Low	Average	.27	.15	.17	-.09, .64
Low	High	.74*	.24	.01	.16, 1.32
Average	High	.46	.26	.196	-1.32, -.16

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 11
One-Way Analysis of Variance of School Connectedness by Sat. School Group

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between groups	2	2.08	1.04	7.15	.002
Within groups	37	5.39	.15		
Total	39	7.47			

Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test

		Mean Difference	Std. Error	<i>P</i>	Confidence Interval
Low	Average	.44	.18	.056	-.01, .89
Low	High	.73*	.23	.01	.17, 1.29
Average	High	.29	.29	.55	-.39, .97

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

To summarize, overall the study found that the majority of African American students in the study were negatively impacted by the school discipline system and that these negative experiences were attributed to racial discrimination by nearly half of the participants. Despite national data indicating that African American males students are disciplined at higher rates than African American females, there was no evidence of gender differences in the study relative to the types of school discipline experiences students had or their perceptions of discrimination. While there was no evidence of gender differences, there were notable relationships between other important variables in the study. Discrimination in school discipline was moderately correlated with depressive symptoms, but not overall mental health measures. Students' perceptions of discrimination were also correlated with their attitude towards teachers and school, but not composite measures of school connectedness. The study also found that the frequency of students' contact with the school discipline system was related to their response pattern and coping mechanisms. Students with higher levels of disciplinary contact reported more engaged coping mechanisms in response to negative school discipline experiences. Lastly, the study found that a students' level of contact with the school discipline system was not correlated with their perceptions of discrimination in the school discipline system. Essentially, this finding indicates that students did not have to experience many instances of discriminatory treatment personally to recognize discrimination within the school discipline system.

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

The present study is an investigation into the school discipline experiences of African American students. Research in the field consistently highlights how African American students are disciplined at disproportionate rates in comparison to other ethnic groups (Harvard University, 2000; Children's Defense Fund, 1975). African American students' disproportionate contact with the school discipline system has been correlated with many negative outcomes, such as lower academic achievement (Townsend, 2000; Morrison, 2001), higher drop out/push out rates (Walker-Dalhouse, 2005; DeRidder, 1991; Suh & Suh, 2007), and higher rates of contact with the juvenile justice system (Smith, 2009). Research indicates that there are a plethora of factors that influence African American students' disproportionate contact with the school discipline system, including harsh zero-tolerance policies (Skiba et al, 1997; Harvard University, 2000; Monroe, 2005), poor student-teacher relationships (Monroe, 2005), and implicit racial biases and discrimination (Ferguson, 2000).

While the current body of research on the discipline gap effectively illustrates the overuse of exclusionary discipline with African American students there is little research in the field that discusses African American students actual experiences in the school discipline system. The purpose of this study was to combine quantitative and qualitative methods to provide insight into how students conceptualize and are impacted by their school discipline experiences. The study was also intended to provide information about how African American students see issues of race, gender, and interpersonal relationships influence their school discipline experiences. This research was guided by the following research questions: (1) how, if at all, do African American students see their interactions with the school discipline system influenced by issues of racial discrimination, (2) do students' perceptions of racial discrimination in school discipline experiences vary by gender, (3) how do African American students' experiences with racial discrimination in school discipline relate to mental health variables (4) how is students' level of connectedness to the school related to perceptions of racial discrimination and mental health variables and, (5) how is students' involvement with the school discipline system related to perceptions of racial discrimination and mental health variables.

These research questions are addressed in the sections that followed based on quantitative and qualitative data provided by a small sample of students attending a racially diverse high school in Northern California. The quantitative data analyzed for this study included survey instruments measuring student's feelings of interpersonal and institutional school connectedness, overall social, emotional, and behavioral wellbeing (mental health), negative school discipline experiences, perceptions of discrimination in school discipline interactions, and coping mechanisms. Quantitative data was integrated with observational and interview data to provide context about students' behavior and interpersonal relationships with peers and adults on campus, as well as to give voice to students' explicit thoughts and reflections about the variables of interest. Key findings from the study are discussed in the following section.

Key Findings

The first research question investigated in this study regarded African American students' interactions with the school discipline system and how students' see their experiences influenced by racial factors. Survey and interview data indicated that an overwhelming majority of students had had a negative experience with the school discipline system and over half of the students in the study attributed at least one of their negative school discipline experiences to issues of racial discrimination. Students' typically tended to associate school discipline with discrimination

regardless if they experienced or witnessed such discrimination personally or not. Looking at this finding from a cultural-ecological perspective, it is not surprising that students perceive discrimination to influence school discipline experiences. As involuntary minorities in the United States, the students in this study are assumed to have experienced instrumental, relational, and expressive discrimination within and outside of schools at some point in their lives. The research literature on school discipline inequalities highlights many of these forms of discrimination. For example, the political support of exclusionary discipline and police infiltration into schools, as well as school and district-level discriminatory discipline practices and policies represent forms of instrumental discrimination. Consistent subordination into lower ability academic classes and programs, and interpersonal attempts at threats, violence, and intimidation relative to students' physical, emotional, and academic wellbeing represent forms of relational discrimination. Lastly, the cultural denigration and devaluation that students experience when they are told to "speak properly" or behave in particular ways that are inconsistent with their collective or ethnic identities reflect forms of symbolic discrimination.

Although one may assume that students may have experienced many of the forms of discrimination referenced above, students discussed their experiences with relational discrimination the most in this study. The most common negative school discipline experiences that students encountered included being yelled at by a teacher (intimidation), being given a referral to the office or assigned detention (control), being accused of something that he or she did not do, and being disrespected (subordination and exclusion). These types of experiences were commonly brought up during student interviews. For example, 9th graders Layla and Brittany, and 12th grader Marcus described multiple classroom incidents in which they were yelled at and spoken to disrespectfully by teachers. Furthermore, most students (approximately 71%) participating in interviews indicated that they believed racial biases and discrimination influences school discipline interactions. Given the students' focus on perceptions of relational discrimination in school discipline interactions, interventions aimed at improving relational interactions are key. Such interventions could include meaningful attempts to reduce cultural mismatch between students and teachers by training and recruiting more culturally-matched school personnel. Additionally, working with existing staff to improve their interactions is also imperative. Education on the school-to-prison pipeline, cultural awareness, implicit biases and training on community-building and classroom/behavior management would be potential starting points.

While referenced less, study data also revealed that students experienced instrumental and symbolic discrimination, which influenced student behavior and relationships at school. For example, in response to perceived discrimination, students developed an array for survival strategies, or engaged or disengaged coping mechanisms. Putting one's head down on the desk to disengage from a teacher, challenging teachers, and removing one's self from the classroom are all examples of instrumental survival strategies activated in the presence of perceived discrimination and negative treatment. Furthermore, students provided examples of the school acting as a culturally subtractive agent. For example, one student described how her choice to befriend other African American students subjugated her to belonging to what was labeled as the group of "ratchets". Overall, the cultural ecological framework proved useful in exploring African American students' school discipline experiences. This dissertation study demonstrates how different forms of adaption for involuntary minorities influences student behavior, perceptions of school discipline, and interactions with the school in general.

The second research question investigated in this study regarded the presence of gender differences in students' experiences with and perceptions of school discipline. Survey data indicates that there were no significant differences in the rates at which male and female participants were suspended or assigned Saturday school or detention. Additionally, there were no observed gender differences in the mean number of negative school discipline experiences students reported or the mean number of experiences that students attributed to racial discrimination. The lack of gender differences in perceptions of discrimination in school discipline may be due to the study's small sample size. However, it is also plausible that the absence of gender differences could be due to trends in both gender groups' overrepresentation in school discipline in comparison to their white counterparts. The latter explanation of the lack of gender differences is consistent with the cultural ecological theory. Students, both male and female, are likely to notice the differences between how they are treated in school discipline issues relative to white students and attribute these differences to various forms of racial discrimination. The legacy of racial discrimination towards involuntary minorities has historically impacted both male and females, which may obscure the groups' ability to recognize differences in treatment relative to sexism. Whatever the case, the lack of gender difference in students' experiences with and perceptions of school discipline is an important one. To date, research on the school discipline experiences of African American students has overwhelmingly focused on males, at the exclusion of female students. While national trends indicate that African American males are disciplined more frequently than African American female students, their feelings about and responses to school discipline interactions are consistent with one another according to this study. Additional research in this area with larger samples should be conducted to better determine if any gender differences do exist and to better understand the impacts and consequences of negative school discipline interactions for African American females in order to address any common or unique challenges these groups may face relative to school discipline.

While there were no clear statistical gender differences, interview data indicated that some students believed that males are treated more harshly in the school discipline system. Students like Layla and Brittany reported that male students are perceived as "dangerous" and "troublemakers", and believed that these perceptions lead teachers to discipline them more frequently and harshly. These beliefs are in line with one of the two images of Black masculinity that Ferguson (2000) describes. Ferguson argues one of the most common images of the Black man is as a criminal. She further explains that this image signifies "danger and a threat to personal safety" and plays a critical role in the "production of a racial Other". Ferguson argues that these perceptions of Black males are especially problematic in the school setting:

At the intersection of this complex subject positions are African American boys who are doubly displaced: as black children, they are not seen as childlike but adultified; as black males, they are denied the masculine dispensation constituting white males as being "naturally naughty" and are discerned as willfully bad (p. 80)

Some interview participants' beliefs that males are punished more severely because they are perceived as "dangerous" and "troublemakers" signifies the need for education on cultural awareness and implicit biases. Specifically, school staff should receive training to make them aware of their implicit biases against African American males that pervade American culture and influences interactions with them. Such training should consider the role that instrumental, relational, and symbolic adaptation play in these dynamics. Looking at the production of the racial "other" and the adultification of Black males from a cultural ecological perspective, one

would assume that Black males are aware of these stereotypes and beliefs about them, which impacts their behavior and adaptation strategies. From an instrumental adaptation perspective, faced with negative stereotypes about their “dangerousness”, Black males may develop survival strategies intended to counter perceptions of their “dangerousness”, such as heightened awareness of their surroundings and defensiveness. From a relational perspective, negative perceptions of “adultified dangerousness” may only serve to make Black males more distrustful of white institutions. Given this, the growing trend to provide mental health services in schools as an intervention for behavioral problems may be met with resistance from Black males who do not consider themselves to be deviant and are weary of those instituting and implementing services. Lastly, from symbolic perspective, the presumption that Black males are “dangerous” “troublemakers” is an example of cultural subtraction. Presumed cultural characteristics such as assertiveness are devalued when coming from African American males, and thus are relabeled as negative attributes, such as aggressive.

While the majority of interview participants believed that male students were disciplined more frequently than female students, one student disagreed. Jasmine perceived that males were given “a little more slack” in discipline interactions because they are less mature and are therefore expected to engage in more misbehavior. Though Jasmine’s belief is at odds with the research on disproportionality in school discipline, it brings up the important questions of the developmentally appropriateness of school’s behavioral expectations of students and how developmental factors influence student behavior, reasoning about behavior, perspective-taking, and many other issues that impact school discipline interactions.

Just as there were no observed gender differences in relation to students’ experiences with and perceptions of school discipline interactions, there were also no correlations between students’ perceptions of discrimination in school discipline experiences and their overall mental health. The absence of a significant correlation between these variables is somewhat surprising and may in part be due to the selection of assessment tools. As a screening tool, the BASC BESS is designed to quickly screen for broad mental health or school functioning concerns. It is possible that a more in-depth assessment tool would have provided more robust findings.

While there lacked a relationship between perceptions of discrimination in school discipline and overall mental health, a more nuanced look at the relationship between perceptions of discrimination and specific aspects of mental health functioning revealed more interesting findings. The present study indicated a moderate positive correlation between perceptions of discrimination and depression symptoms. This finding about the positive relationship between perceived discrimination and internalizing symptoms is consistent with Wong, Eccles and Sameroff’s (2003) findings that perceived discrimination from peers and adults was associated with self-reports of depression in African American youth. These findings suggest that perceptions of discrimination do not negatively influence student’s overall social, emotional, or behavioral wellbeing but are related to students’ increased perceptions about a declining quality of life. Further, this finding calls for increased attention to be paid to the internalizing effects of discrimination, especially in the development of school discipline interventions. Essentially, the school system should take care not to just focus on externalizing behaviors like “aggression” but should also be conscious of the internalized struggles of African American students. For instance, as Ogbu explains, ones experiences with discrimination, as well as societal pressures to accommodate to the dominant culture may create within students “the burden of acting white” which may carry important psychological costs depending on the strategy that a student uses to cope with this burden. As such, honoring the internalized struggles of African American

students does not equate to pathologizing students and offering counseling services, but requires that school personnel lessen this burden by respecting students cultural and language frames of reference and treating cultural and language differences as social capital that students bring with them that can be used in schools and classrooms to teach all students about perspective-taking, critical-thinking, and analysis, instead of viewing these differences as things that should be stripped away and replaced with a 'white way' of talking and behaving. Further cautioning about pathologizing students, Fine (1991) explains how the psychological stress that students content with both within and outside of school should be viewed not as individual problems, but as public and political ones. Fine explains that failure to address the many problems that students bring and encounter at school reinforces the feeling of alienation that many experience. Fine suggests that schools address this aspect of student isolation by incorporating student's lived experiences and issues into the educational curriculum and allowing students to participate on genuine discourse on the issues.

Findings about the relationship between perceptions of discrimination in school discipline interactions and students' feelings of school connectedness were also interesting. There was no correlation between perceptions of discrimination and overall connectedness, or interpersonal or institutional connectedness. However, there was a positive relationship between perceptions of discrimination and attitude toward teachers and school. These findings are interesting considering that attitude towards school and teachers appear to be related to school connectedness. Results may reflect a positive correlation between attitude to school and teacher and discrimination because it measures the relationship between them using narrower constructs that are more closely related. Illustrative of the relationship between perceived discrimination and attitude towards teachers and schools, students like Marcus who reported experiencing a lot of discrimination in the school discipline system explains that he perceives his teachers to generally be uncaring. He holds this belief despite appearing to have developed a positive interpersonal relationship with at least one of his teachers. Again, this finding points to students' concern with relational discrimination and suggests that more research, support, education, and services focused on becoming aware of and addressing implicit biases, cultural competence, and effective strategies for community-building and improving staff-student relationships become available.

The last major finding of this study regarded the relationship between students' level of involvement in the school discipline system and perceptions of racial discrimination. The rate at which a student was disciplined was not related to perceptions of racial discrimination in the school discipline system. Rather, students from all discipline backgrounds were perceptive to racial inequalities in the school discipline system. For example, students like Calvin who had no interactions with the school discipline system reported witnessing racial biases in the administration of school discipline system just as students who were frequently disciplined did. The cultural-ecological theory application to this finding is discussed earlier in this chapter.

However, while there was not a relationship between students' involvement in the school discipline system and perceptions of discrimination, there was a correlation between students' use of engaged coping mechanisms and the frequency with which students were assigned detention and Saturday school. The directionality of this correlation is unclear but suggests that students who are more apt to cope with negative disciplinary interactions by mechanisms such as speaking up or trying to change things (or in other words, used opposition or resistance as a coping mechanism) were more frequently assigned detention and Saturday school. This finding parallels that of Fine and Rosenberg (1983), that overall, students in their study who remained in

school (were not pushed out and did not drop out), were more depressed, less likely to be assertive in school contexts, and more “conformist”. The authors argue that these students underwent a process of “silencing” in schools. Essentially, “they learned not to raise, and indeed to help shut down “dangerous” conversation. The price of academic “success” may have been the muting of one’s own voice” (Fine, 1991, p. 37). Overall, this study, and the findings by Fine and Rosenberg suggest, that in order for African American students to “make it” through school, they must learn to deny themselves the right to self-advocate and critique the systems, institutions, and individuals that profoundly impact them.

Overall, as is suggested by the cultural-ecological framework, the sample of involuntary minorities represented in this study had complex and nuanced perceptions of the school discipline system. Historical, collective, and individual experiences with the dominant culture outside of and within schools likely influenced their perceptions of school discipline interactions. Also as suggested by the cultural-ecological theory, additional factors, such as the instrumental value that students placed on education and their ability to successfully learn and employ cultural and language accommodation strategies influenced students perceptions of and responses to negative treatment in school discipline exchanges. As with attempts to “cope with the burden of acting white” in any other social arena, one may expect there to be some psychological correlates attached to students’ responses to the school discipline system, as was demonstrated by some students’ responses. Overall, this study’s findings calls for more concerted research on African American female students school discipline experiences, systematic efforts and reforms aimed at addressing relational discrimination in schools, and efforts to reduce internalizing mental health concerns by appropriately addressing pressures from schools to “act white”.

Attempts to reform the school system to address the problems that African Americans face should not be approached lightly, and are undoubtedly marred by layers of complexity. While I have indicated some avenues worth exploring in attempts to improve the school, school discipline, and mental health experiences of African American, such as increasing staff training on cultural competence, improving cultural match, and educating educators on the impact of relational, instrumental, and symbolic discrimination, a first step at rectifying the problems highlighted requires what Fine (1991) describes as “naming”. According to Fine:

Naming involves those practices that facilitate critical conversation about social and economic arrangements, particularly about inequitable distributions of power and resources by which the students and their kin suffer disproportionately (p.34).

Improving the school experiences and outcomes of African American students require that we are no longer silenced, but openly, and with open-minds, name and critique the problems plaguing them.

Limitations

While the present research provided an important perspective into African American high school students’ school discipline experiences and helped to highlight the ways in which school discipline, perceptions of discrimination, school connectedness, and mental health intersect, it was limited in important ways, thus warranting additional investigation. One of the primary limitations of the study concerns the study’s sample size. The research drew from a relatively small sample size from one school, limiting the generalizability of the conclusions found. The sample was also limited in that students were drawn from a small sample of classrooms, the majority of which were special education or academic support classes. Therefore, it is plausible that the sample was skewed relative to the representativeness of the academic programs at the

school. Lastly, one of the major limitations of the study was concerns the low number of student observations that were conducted. A few observations over a relatively short period give only a small snapshot of student behavior from which to understand the context of their behavior, interactions, and interpersonal relationships. More observations over a longer period of time throughout the school year may have provided more depth to observation data.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Instruments

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses are important. Please be sure to answer every question. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask!

1. How comfortable are you with talking to adults at this school about your problems?				
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

2. How interested are the adults at your school in the things you say?				
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

3. How much do the adults at your school care about you as a person?				
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

4. How much do the adults at your school respect you?				
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

5. How close do you feel to students at this school?				
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

6. How often are you late to class?				
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

7. How often do you go to all of your classes?				
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

8. How often do you cut two or more classes per day?				
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

9. How often do you come to class without a pencil, paper, or homework?				
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

10. How often do you pay attention in class?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

11. How often do you attend after-school events?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

12. How often do your teachers send you out of class for a behavior problem?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

13. How often do you get a referral to the office?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

14. The rules at my school are fair.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

15. Students are treated fairly at my school.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				A lot

16. All students are treated with respect at my school.

☐ True ☐ False

17. All students are treated the same when they misbehave or break the rules at my school.

☐ True ☐ False

18. My school uses suspension as a last resort for handling behavior problems.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true				Very true

19. My school has programs or resources to help students improve their behavior.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true				Very true

20. My school has programs or resources to help students solve their problems with others.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true				Very true

21. Have you been suspended this school year?

☐

Yes

☐

No

----- If you answered YES to the question above (# 21), please continue to the next page. If you answered NO, stop here-----

22. This school year I have been suspended for the following reason(s). (Please check all that apply)

- ☐ Fighting
- ☐ Threatening a teacher/staff
- ☐ Threatening another student
- ☐ Having a weapon or dangerous item at school
- ☐ Having or using drugs or alcohol at school
- ☐ Selling drugs or alcohol at school
- ☐ Damaging or stealing property
- ☐ Using inappropriate behavior or language (“cursing”, “swearing”, etc.)
- ☐ Being disruptive in the classroom
- ☐ Ignoring or disobeying a teachers/staff instructions/directions
- ☐ Bullying another student
- ☐ Not going to assigned detention/ Saturday school
- ☐ Being late to school or class
- ☐ Leaving class or school without permission (“cutting”, “skipping school”)
- ☐ Talking back to or disrespecting school staff
- ☐ Not finishing classwork or homework
- ☐ Sleeping or not paying attention in class

23. I usually get suspended for things that I do in... (please check ONE)

- ☐ Academic classes (math, science, English, social studies, history, language arts)
- ☐ Elective classes (art, P.E., computers, etc.)
- ☐ Hallways/ quad
- ☐ Cafeteria/ lunchroom
- ☐ Bus to/ from school

24. When I do things to get suspended, I usually do those things because... (Please check all that apply)

- ☐ I lose self-control (I have trouble controlling my emotions)
- ☐ I don't understand the school rules
- ☐ I am frustrated with my schoolwork
- ☐ I am bored in school
- ☐ I am under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol
- ☐ I am frustrated/ upset with a teacher or staff member
- ☐ I am frustrated/ upset with another student

- ☐ I am frustrated/ upset about something that happened at home
- ☐ I don't care about getting in trouble
- ☐ I want to give my teacher/ staff member a hard time
- ☐ I want to look cool/ tough in front of my friends

25. Please check the ONE statement below that best describes how you feel when you are suspended.

- ☐ I feel angry with the person who sent me to suspension
- ☐ I am relieved to get out of the situation
- ☐ I feel sorry that I did what I did; I regret what I did
- ☐ I feel that I am being picked on unfairly
- ☐ I feel embarrassed in front of my friends
- ☐ I feel like no one understands me
- ☐ I feel disappointed in myself
- ☐ I feel cool in front of my friends
- ☐ I am happy to get to go home from school
- ☐ I feel worried that my parents will be upset
- ☐ I feel like I let others down

26. How much did being suspended help you solve whatever problem you had so that you won't be suspended again?

- ☐ Not at all; I will probably be suspended again
- ☐ A little bit
- ☐ A lot
- ☐ I learned a lesson and I will never be suspended again

27. Please check below any of the things listed that might help you to solve your problem better than suspension does.

- ☐ Providing classes that are more interesting and useful
- ☐ Teaching better ways to respond if this happens again
- ☐ Providing someone to talk to about my problems (teacher, counselor, etc.)
- ☐ Providing more help with school work
- ☐ Helping me to develop pride in myself
- ☐ Teaching the classroom and school rules
- ☐ Providing opportunities to talk about problems with other students

FOR RESEARCHER USE ONLY:

ID: _____
 SCHOOL ID: _____
 Date: _____

For each of the following situations, think whether you have ever at your current school felt you were treated differently because of the color, culture, or race:

At your school have you ever:

BEEN TREATED UNFAIRLY BY A POLICE OFFICER OR SECURITY MONITOR AT SCHOOL?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
IF YES PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS BELOW	
IF NO: PLEASE SKIP TO NEXT QUESTION	
How often has this happened?	<input type="checkbox"/> ONCE <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 TIMES <input type="checkbox"/> 4 OR MORE TIMES
Do you think this happened because of the color or your skin or your race?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
How did it make you feel? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE ANSWER FOR EACH LINE)	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ANGRY
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT FRUSTRATED
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY SAD <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT SAD <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SAD
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT HOPELESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT POWERLESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ASHAMED
How much did this event matter to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY MUCH <input type="checkbox"/> A LITTLE <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
How did you deal with it? (You can choose more than one answer)	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 48%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> IGNORED IT <input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPTED IT <input type="checkbox"/> SPOKE UP <input type="checkbox"/> KEPT IT TO MYSELF <input type="checkbox"/> LOST INTEREST IN THINGS </div> <div style="width: 48%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO CHANGE THINGS <input type="checkbox"/> HIT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO FORGET IT <input type="checkbox"/> WORKED HARD TO PROVE THEM WRONG <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (PLEASE DESCRIBE): </div> </div>

BEEN ACCUSED OF SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T DO AT SCHOOL?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
IF YES PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS BELOW	
IF NO: PLEASE SKIP TO NEXT QUESTION	
How often has this happened?	<input type="checkbox"/> ONCE <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 TIMES <input type="checkbox"/> 4 OR MORE TIMES
Do you think this happened because of the color or your skin or your race?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
How did it make you feel? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE ANSWER FOR EACH LINE)	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ANGRY
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT FRUSTRATED
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY SAD <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT SAD <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SAD
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT HOPELESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT POWERLESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ASHAMED
How much did this event matter to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY MUCH <input type="checkbox"/> A LITTLE <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
How did you deal with it? (You can choose more than one answer)	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> IGNORED IT <input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPTED IT <input type="checkbox"/> SPOKE UP <input type="checkbox"/> KEPT IT TO MYSELF <input type="checkbox"/> LOST INTEREST IN THINGS </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO CHANGE THINGS <input type="checkbox"/> HIT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO FORGET IT <input type="checkbox"/> WORKED HARD TO PROVE THEM WRONG <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (PLEASE DESCRIBE): </div> </div>

BEEN TREATED BADLY OR UNFAIRLY BY A TEACHER?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
IF YES PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS BELOW	
IF NO: PLEASE SKIP TO NEXT QUESTION	
How often has this happened?	<input type="checkbox"/> ONCE <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 TIMES <input type="checkbox"/> 4 OR MORE TIMES
Do you think this happened because of the color or your skin or your race?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
How did it make you feel? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE ANSWER FOR EACH LINE)	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ANGRY
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT FRUSTRATED
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY SAD <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT SAD <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SAD
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT HOPELESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT POWERLESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ASHAMED
How much did this event matter to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY MUCH <input type="checkbox"/> A LITTLE <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
How did you deal with it? (You can choose more than one answer)	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> IGNORED IT <input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPTED IT <input type="checkbox"/> SPOKE UP <input type="checkbox"/> KEPT IT TO MYSELF <input type="checkbox"/> LOST INTEREST IN THINGS </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO CHANGE THINGS <input type="checkbox"/> HIT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO FORGET IT <input type="checkbox"/> WORKED HARD TO PROVE THEM WRONG <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (PLEASE DESCRIBE): </div> </div>

HAD TEACHERS OR SCHOOL STAFF ASSUME YOU'RE NOT SMART OR INTELLIGENT?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
IF YES PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS BELOW	
IF NO: PLEASE SKIP TO NEXT QUESTION	
How often has this happened?	<input type="checkbox"/> ONCE <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 TIMES <input type="checkbox"/> 4 OR MORE TIMES
Do you think this happened because of the color or your skin or your race?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
How did it make you feel? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE ANSWER FOR EACH LINE)	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ANGRY
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT FRUSTRATED
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY SAD <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT SAD <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SAD
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT HOPELESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT POWERLESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ASHAMED
How much did this event matter to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY MUCH <input type="checkbox"/> A LITTLE <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
How did you deal with it? (You can choose more than one answer)	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> IGNORED IT <input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPTED IT <input type="checkbox"/> SPOKE UP <input type="checkbox"/> KEPT IT TO MYSELF <input type="checkbox"/> LOST INTEREST IN THINGS </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO CHANGE THINGS <input type="checkbox"/> HIT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO FORGET IT <input type="checkbox"/> WORKED HARD TO PROVE THEM WRONG <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (PLEASE DESCRIBE): </div> </div>

BEEN SCOLDED OR EMBARRASED BY ANY OF YOUR TEACHERS?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
IF YES PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS BELOW	
IF NO: PLEASE SKIP TO NEXT QUESTION	
How often has this happened?	<input type="checkbox"/> ONCE <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 TIMES <input type="checkbox"/> 4 OR MORE TIMES
Do you think this happened because of the color or your skin or your race?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
How did it make you feel? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE ANSWER FOR EACH LINE)	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ANGRY
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT FRUSTRATED
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY SAD <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT SAD <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SAD
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT HOPELESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT POWERLESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ASHAMED
How much did this event matter to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY MUCH <input type="checkbox"/> A LITTLE <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
How did you deal with it? (You can choose more than one answer)	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> IGNORED IT <input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPTED IT <input type="checkbox"/> SPOKE UP <input type="checkbox"/> KEPT IT TO MYSELF <input type="checkbox"/> LOST INTEREST IN THINGS </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO CHANGE THINGS <input type="checkbox"/> HIT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO FORGET IT <input type="checkbox"/> WORKED HARD TO PROVE THEM WRONG <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (PLEASE DESCRIBE): </div> </div>

BEEN YELLED AT BY ANY OF YOUR TEACHERS?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
IF YES PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS BELOW	
IF NO: PLEASE SKIP TO NEXT QUESTION	
How often has this happened?	<input type="checkbox"/> ONCE <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 TIMES <input type="checkbox"/> 4 OR MORE TIMES
Do you think this happened because of the color or your skin or your race?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
How did it make you feel? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE ANSWER FOR EACH LINE)	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ANGRY
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT FRUSTRATED
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY SAD <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT SAD <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SAD
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT HOPELESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT POWERLESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ASHAMED
How much did this event matter to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY MUCH <input type="checkbox"/> A LITTLE <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
How did you deal with it? (You can choose more than one answer)	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> IGNORED IT <input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPTED IT <input type="checkbox"/> SPOKE UP <input type="checkbox"/> KEPT IT TO MYSELF <input type="checkbox"/> LOST INTEREST IN THINGS </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO CHANGE THINGS <input type="checkbox"/> HIT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO FORGET IT <input type="checkbox"/> WORKED HARD TO PROVE THEM WRONG <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (PLEASE DESCRIBE): </div> </div>

BEEN TALKED DOWN TO BY ANY OF YOUR TEACHERS?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
IF YES PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS BELOW	
IF NO: PLEASE SKIP TO NEXT QUESTION	
How often has this happened?	<input type="checkbox"/> ONCE <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 TIMES <input type="checkbox"/> 4 OR MORE TIMES
Do you think this happened because of the color or your skin or your race?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
How did it make you feel? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE ANSWER FOR EACH LINE)	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ANGRY
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT FRUSTRATED
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY SAD <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT SAD <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SAD
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT HOPELESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT POWERLESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ASHAMED
How much did this event matter to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY MUCH <input type="checkbox"/> A LITTLE <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
How did you deal with it? (You can choose more than one answer)	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> IGNORED IT <input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPTED IT <input type="checkbox"/> SPOKE UP <input type="checkbox"/> KEPT IT TO MYSELF <input type="checkbox"/> LOST INTEREST IN THINGS </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO CHANGE THINGS <input type="checkbox"/> HIT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO FORGET IT <input type="checkbox"/> WORKED HARD TO PROVE THEM WRONG <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (PLEASE DESCRIBE): </div> </div>

BEEN SENT TO THE PRINCIPAL'S/ VP'S OFFICE OR GIVEN DETENTION?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
IF YES PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS BELOW	
IF NO: PLEASE SKIP TO NEXT QUESTION	
How often has this happened?	<input type="checkbox"/> ONCE <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 TIMES <input type="checkbox"/> 4 OR MORE TIMES
Do you think this happened because of the color or your skin or your race?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
How did it make you feel? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE ANSWER FOR EACH LINE)	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ANGRY
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT FRUSTRATED
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY SAD <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT SAD <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SAD
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT HOPELESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT POWERLESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ASHAMED
How much did this event matter to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY MUCH <input type="checkbox"/> A LITTLE <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
How did you deal with it? (You can choose more than one answer)	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> IGNORED IT <input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPTED IT <input type="checkbox"/> SPOKE UP <input type="checkbox"/> KEPT IT TO MYSELF <input type="checkbox"/> LOST INTEREST IN THINGS </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO CHANGE THINGS <input type="checkbox"/> HIT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO FORGET IT <input type="checkbox"/> WORKED HARD TO PROVE THEM WRONG <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (PLEASE DESCRIBE): </div> </div>

BEEN SUSPENDED OR EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
IF YES PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS BELOW		
IF NO: PLEASE SKIP TO NEXT QUESTION		
How often has this happened?	<input type="checkbox"/> ONCE <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 TIMES <input type="checkbox"/> 4 OR MORE TIMES	
Do you think this happened because of the color or your skin or your race?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
How did it make you feel? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE ANSWER FOR EACH LINE)	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ANGRY	
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT FRUSTRATED	
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY SAD <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT SAD <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SAD	
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT HOPELESS	
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT POWERLESS	
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ASHAMED	
How much did this event matter to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY MUCH <input type="checkbox"/> A LITTLE <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL	
How did you deal with it? (You can choose more than one answer)	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> IGNORED IT <input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPTED IT <input type="checkbox"/> SPOKE UP <input type="checkbox"/> KEPT IT TO MYSELF <input type="checkbox"/> LOST INTEREST IN THINGS </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO CHANGE THINGS <input type="checkbox"/> HIT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO FORGET IT <input type="checkbox"/> WORKED HARD TO PROVE THEM WRONG <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (PLEASE DESCRIBE): </div> </div>	

HAD A TEACHER OR STAFF MEMBER DISRESPECT YOU?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
IF YES PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS BELOW	
IF NO: PLEASE SKIP TO NEXT QUESTION	
How often has this happened?	<input type="checkbox"/> ONCE <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 TIMES <input type="checkbox"/> 4 OR MORE TIMES
Do you think this happened because of the color or your skin or your race?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
How did it make you feel? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE ANSWER FOR EACH LINE)	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ANGRY <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ANGRY
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT FRUSTRATED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT FRUSTRATED
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY SAD <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT SAD <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SAD
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT HOPELESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT HOPELESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT POWERLESS <input type="checkbox"/> NOT POWERLESS
	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> SOMEWHAT ASHAMED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ASHAMED
How much did this event matter to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> VERY MUCH <input type="checkbox"/> A LITTLE <input type="checkbox"/> NOT AT ALL
How did you deal with it? (You can choose more than one answer)	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> IGNORED IT <input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPTED IT <input type="checkbox"/> SPOKE UP <input type="checkbox"/> KEPT IT TO MYSELF <input type="checkbox"/> LOST INTEREST IN THINGS </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO CHANGE THINGS <input type="checkbox"/> HIT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING <input type="checkbox"/> TRIED TO FORGET IT <input type="checkbox"/> WORKED HARD TO PROVE THEM WRONG <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (PLEASE DESCRIBE): </div> </div>

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

How would you describe yourself as a student?

How are you able to get along with your schoolmates?

How are you able to get along with the adults at your school?

Is it easy to get along with your teachers here? Why or why not?

Are your teachers effective/good/successful at teaching you new skills/things/facts?

Do you like your teachers? Why or why not?

Do you behave differently at school than at other places?

Tell me about discipline at your school. What are the formal and informal rules here?

Can you describe a time when an adult at this school disciplined you? What happened?
Do you think you were disciplined fairly? How did it make you feel? Would you have done anything differently? What would you have wanted the adult to do in this incident?

Are you usually treated fairly at this school?

How do you think your teachers would discipline you if you were...Asian, female, Pacific Islander, Latino, White, etc?

Another student told me that Black students are treated differently when it comes to discipline at school? Do you think this is true? Why or why not?

Do you think you have ever been disciplined unfairly at this school because of your race?
If yes, can you tell me about a time when this happened? Do incidences like this happen often? To you or to other people? How does it make you feel when it happens to you?
How does it make you feel when it happens to other people?

What does it feel like when you're disciplined at school?

Have you ever gotten a referral at this school? How do you feel when you get a referral?

Have you ever been suspended from this school? How do you feel when you get suspended?

Have you ever been in a conflict-mediation at school? How did it make you feel?

Have you ever taken part in a (RJ) circle at this school? How did it make you feel?

Have you ever had a parent-teacher conference because of your behavior at this school?
How did it make you feel?

What happens to students that get suspended too many times? (If expulsion...then what happens).

What do you think some strategies are for not getting in trouble at school? Do you usually use these strategies? Why or why not?

What do students who don't get in trouble do to get through school?

How do you think your friends feel about getting into trouble? Do you feel that same way as you about getting suspended, sent to the office, etc.

Appendix C: Student Introductions

Michelle

Michelle is an mixed-raced, 11th grade student at Buena View high school who reports that she most commonly self-identifies as African American. She is enrolled in the academic support program for “at-risk” students at Buena View High School. Michelle has fair-skin, long wavy hair, and is of average weight and height for someone her age.

From observations, Michelle appears to be popular and well-liked by both her female and male peers. Michelle confirms this observation, describing herself as a very happy and social student. Observations of Michelle suggest she has an informal approach to school. In addition to socializing with her peers frequently, Michelle was observed to engage in behaviors such as eating and drinking in class, sitting improperly in her seat, and listening to music through her headphones. Though she describes herself as a social person, Michelle explains that she does not get along with all of her peers and uses avoidance as a strategy to stay away from peer conflict and distraction.

Like her relationships with her peers, Michelle’s relationships with her teachers appear complex and varied. Michelle reports liking her teachers out a sense of obligation, however, she also reports that it is difficult to get along with them. Michelle describes her teachers as irritating, primarily because they talk and nag “too much”. Michelle’s frustration with her teachers also stems from her feelings that some are very unhelpful.

While Michelle was able to recount experiences of unfair disciplinary treatment, she expressed that she is usually treated fairly at the school and did not attribute her unfair experiences to racial factors. This was consistent with her responses on survey instruments in the study. Michelle’s views on the role of race in school discipline were relatively inconsistent. Michelle expects race and other factors, such as presumed intelligence, to play a role in school discipline interactions; however, she admits to not experiencing or witnessing racial discrimination in school discipline at Buena View High School.

Brittany

Brittany is a 9th grade student at Buena View High School and is enrolled in the academic support program for “at-risk” students. She has a slender frame, smooth, dark skin, and stands several inches taller than most of her female peers. Over the course of the school year, Brittany had considerable contact with the school discipline system, being suspended twice and assigned nine detentions.

Brittany expresses that she has both academic and social orientations to school. However, Brittany’s description of herself as a student was sometimes at odds with the classroom observations conducted.

Brittany started her high school career with many peer acquaintances and friendships. Despite being very personable, Brittany reports that the number and nature of her peer relationships has changed dramatically over the course of the school year. She explains that many of her interactions with her peers have been plagued by “drama”, including a physical fight that she had with a former friend. Interactions such as this have influenced her current perception of peer interactions, viewing them as obligations that she would rather avoid.

As with her peers, Brittany reports problematic relationships with many of her teachers. She reports that it is often difficult to get along with her teachers because they “just have

attitudes for no reason”. In addition to having negative attitudes, Brittany also perceives many of her teachers as being unwilling to help her with her academic work.

Brittany sees many of her school discipline incidences to often be influenced by racial discrimination. Though “irritated” and “disgusted” by negative interactions with the school discipline system, Brittany reports she is not affected much by disciplinary consequences such as suspension. Rather than seeing suspension as a punishment, Brittany explains that when she is suspended she feels “free from people and the teachers”.

Layla

Layla is a relatively soft-spoken 9th grade student at Buena View High School. At the time that participants for the qualitative portion of the study were chosen, Layla had had no contact with the school discipline system. However, Layla was suspended from school on the day of the first planned observation for initiating a fight with one of her former friends.

Like many other students, Layla’s classroom behavior varied across contexts. Her varying behavior is consistent with the multiple aspects of her personality. In describing herself as a student, Layla explains that she is “cool, fun, calm... I’m just a chill person, like I’m very happy...but if you say anything disrespectful or rude that’s when I’ll just start to yell ‘cause my temper is really bad”. Layla admits that her will direct her temper at both peers and adults at school if she perceives disrespect. While Layla takes incidences of perceived disrespect seriously, she explains that they do not occur frequently and overall she sees her teachers as allies. She explained that typically even when she does have conflict with a teacher she is able to “look past it” and cooperates with them in class in order to obtain their academic support. Layla further explained that most of her conflicts from teachers stem from what she perceives as a lack of classroom management.

Layla believes that her opportunities to gain academic assistance are not only influenced by classroom management issues, but racial issues as well. She reports that her requests for academic assistance are acknowledged less readily than those from students of other races.

While Layla hints at racial differential treatment in academic support, she appears more confident about the existence of differential treatment based on gender in school discipline issues. She perceives male students to be punished more harshly than female students because of perceptions that they are “dangerous”.

Layla does not see racial discrimination as a factor in school discipline interactions for either herself or her peers. Rather, she believes that any student can successfully navigate the school discipline system by “being quiet.. don’t speak to anyone. Do you and avoid the drama”.

Jasmine

Jasmine is a mature and independent 12th grade student with medium brown skin and average build. Jasmine moved to Northern California when she was in the 10th grade and has attended Buena View High School for the past two years. Jasmine had no contact with the school discipline system throughout the entire school year but reports having had contact in previous school years.

While Jasmine is enrolled in the special education program because of a learning disability, she has elected to take all general education classes in an attempt to challenge herself academically. As well, Jasmine is working towards a career in the medical field. She participates in related internships at local clinics and was registered to take classes in the field after graduation at a local community college.

Jasmine describes herself as a hardworking and self-motivated student. Jasmine's view of herself as a hardworking student was consistent with observations. Jasmine's focus on academic success leaves little time for peer relationships. She reports that her interactions with her peers are limited because "I don't really have a lot of time in my schedule, but I mean I have people that I talk to"

Jasmine reports that she is generally able to get along with most adults on campus as well. Jasmine believes that a student's relationship with his or her teachers not only impacts academic experiences, but school discipline experiences as well. Jasmine explains that she believes that discipline is sometimes unfairly administered at Buena View High School. She attributes unfair discipline to multiple factors, such as interpersonal relationships, race, perceived intelligence and academic ability, and teaching experience. Specifically she holds that students in higher tracked academic programs receive preferential treatment in school discipline issues. Additionally, Jasmine believes that male students are given more leeway in school discipline issues. Jasmine also explained that students have to look at discipline interactions from a broad perspective. She explained, "I feel like you have to know when to fight your battles, you have to know when to step back, know when to stay focused".

Marcus

Marcus is an outgoing 12th grade student at Buena View High School. He has a slender build, low cut hair, and medium-brown skin. Marcus is enrolled in the special education program as a student with a learning disability. All of his academic courses are in self-contained special education classes. Although Marcus receives instruction in self-contained classes, he interacts with the general education student population in afterschool extracurricular activities. Over the course of the school year, Marcus was assigned one detention and one Saturday school. He was also suspended once. He reports he was suspended for not attending Saturday school. Marcus describes himself as an independent student. Observations of Marcus were consistent with this observation.

While Marcus reports that he generally gets along well with his peers, he regards his relationships with adults on campus less positively. In general, Marcus sees the teachers at school as being uncaring. He reports that he has held that perception since elementary school and that his mother reinforced this perception at home. Overall, Marcus explained that adults on campus yell at and put him down.

Although he recounted several negative interactions with teachers and other adults on campus, Marcus explained that he does like some of his teachers. Specifically, he likes his teachers that are helpful with his schoolwork.

In discussing discipline at Buena View High School, Marcus explains that he is somewhat fairly disciplined. He explained that takes responsibility for his misbehaviors and understands why he was disciplined in specific situations; however, he feels that his disciplinary consequences are sometimes excessive or unjustified when considering his offense. Furthermore, he feels that other Black students are treated in a similar manner.

Robert

Robert is an athletic 12th grade general education student at Buena View High School. He is not enrolled in any of the school's academic programs/tracks. Robert's looks are unique. He has medium brown skin, dark sandy brown hair and hazel eyes. Robert had more contact with the school discipline system than any other male student participating in the qualitative portion of

the study. He was suspended on two occasions and assigned detention twice during the school year. Robert reports that both of his suspensions were due to accusations that he was under the influence of marijuana on campus. Robert did not confirm or deny the accusations. Robert describes himself as a social student. He explains that he likes to meet new people and be around his friends.

Robert reports that he gets along well with the majority of the adults at Buena View High School. He reports that although some adults on campus can be “rude”, he feels that his teachers are generally accessible and he can talk with them as needed about things like his grades.

In discussing school discipline at Buena View High School, he explained that he believes that administrators are too lenient. He reports that students “get away with a bunch of stuff...like smoking on the blacktop”. However, Robert explains that not all students are granted leniency in school discipline matters. Rather, he reports that racial factors greatly influence school discipline encounters. Robert explains that his core group of students at Buena View High School is mostly made up of white students. In comparing his experiences to those of his white friends, Robert believes that he is disciplined very differently from his friends. Robert explains that his interactions with the school discipline system have made him mad and confused. To avoid such interactions and reactions, Robert reports using a variety of strategies that help my stay out of trouble at school. Robert’s strategies include finding a group of good, positive friends, and engaging in afterschool activities and hobbies. Robert reports that participating in after school sports have helped him to be more focused on his grades and staying out of trouble in order to eligible to play and to “better [himself]”.

Calvin

Calvin is an 11th grade general education student at Buena View High School. Calvin is not enrolled in any of the school’s academic programs/ tracks; however, he took three advanced academic courses this school year. Calvin had no involvement with the school discipline system this school year. Calvin is a dark-skinned student with mild acne.

Calvin describes himself as a social student. He reports that he is well-liked by and has good interpersonal relationships with both peers and adults on campus. Calvin’s ability to get along well and like others appears to be grounded in his personality traits and philosophical values. He explains that he likes his peers and teachers because “I don’t dislike anybody...I don’t feel like anybody deserves to be put in that category...there is good in everybody...I like everybody”.

Though Calvin did not talk much explicitly about his orientation towards school, he appears to have reverence for the institution. He explains, “school is like my workplace...[at school] I act more professional”. Observations of Calvin in his U.S. History were consistent with his comments, however, in less structured classes, Calvin appeared to act less professionally and engaged in behaviors like coming to class tardy, socializing with his peers, and on occasion being off-task when instructed to work on an assignment.

Having had no contact with the school discipline system at Buena View High School, he reports that he does not know how typically works at his school. However, he explained that while he doesn’t know the specific disciplinary practices and procedures used at Buena View High School, he does see believe that racial factors influence how harshly students are disciplined. While unable to give specific examples, Calvin explained: “you can kinda see it...everybody sees it...they see the difference. If a black student were to do something you’d

obviously see that they get treated more harshly or very different as opposed to a different student. It's kinda hard to miss...it happens as often as the student gets in trouble".

While Calvin sees the differential treatment by adults playing a role in disciplinary experiences, he also sees student behavior as an important factor. In discussing strategies for avoiding trouble, Calvin explained that students should simply "not do bad things" if they want to avoid getting into trouble. Although Calvin has been successful in avoiding contact with the school discipline system, he reports that he has been treated unfairly at the school. He explains that he feels that sometimes he is given lower grades than what he feels he has earned. While Calvin believes that he is sometimes treated unfairly in academic matters, he did not know what to attribute his experiences of unfair treatment to.

Appendix D: Interview Transcripts

Michelle

Describe yourself as a student

A happy student.

How is your behavior in the classroom...you would you describe how you are in the class?

Very sociable

How are you able to get along with your schoolmates?

Don't talk to them

But you're sociable?

Sometimes

How are you able to get along with the adults at your school?

Do my work...pay attention

Is it easy to get along with your teachers here?

No

Why do you say?

Because they irritate me

Why?

I can't explain that

Can you think of an example?

No

They just irritate you?

Yeah...talk too much...just go on and go on...

About what kind of things?

They tell you one thing but then you have to...I can't explain it.... actually, I can give you an example...I have a teacher and she does not teach at all.... she gives us a paper and tells us do it yourself...I don't know what I'm doing...

So that's irritating?

Yes

Cause you feel like she's not helpful?

Yes...

Are you teachers effective/good/successful at teaching you new skills/things/facts?

Certain teachers.

What kinds of things do they do to be helpful and teach you new things?

Some help you. Some sit down and actually help you one on one.

Do you like your teachers?

Yeah

Why?

Cause they're my teachers

You're supposed to?

Yeah...

Do you behave differently at school than at other places?

No...The same

Tell me about discipline at your school.

It depends on what they do. Sometimes they'll get detention or suspended. Sometimes they'll just get sent outside.

What happens when they get sent outside?

They've probably been talking too much in class.

And then what happens? What does the teacher do?

Just stay outside until the teacher feels like bringing them back in.

Do they usually have a conversation with them?

Yeah...

Can you describe a time when you were disciplined by an adult here at this school?

Yeah...I was suspended for a pre-fight. We were just arguing back and forth sophomore year and it was verbal and then they suspended us.

Do you think that was fair?

Yeah... no... Not really.

Why not?

Cause I didn't fight her... so why are you gonna suspend me.

How did it make you feel when all that happened?

I didn't care...

Did you care about the suspension?

No

Would you have done anything differently?

I would have fought her so they could have a reason to suspend me

What would you have wanted the adults to do in this situation?

Nothing...it didn't matter

Are you usually treated fairly at this school?

Yeah

How would your teachers discipline you if you were...

Asian- different.... because Asians are smart

How does that factor in?

Because I find teachers to pick favorites in different races.

And so being smart helps you to not get in trouble?

Yeah

Latina- umm...I feel like you wouldn't get as much help.... umm...I don't know...the same

White...ummm, oh gosh.... I think discipline would be different cause they're white. People are racist...like white people tend to get away with a lot more than other races do.

Do you see that happening here at school?

Have I seen it...no

You just feel like that's the case?

Yeah...

Another student told me that Black students are treated differently when it comes to discipline at school. Do you think this is true?

Uhh...not that I've seen no

Do you think you have ever been disciplined unfairly at this school because of your race?

No

What does it feel like when you're disciplined at this school?

Just feel like being disciplined doesn't really bother me.

Any emotions? Are you frustrated, upset...?

No

Have you ever gotten a referral at this school?

Yes.... gosh...

How did it feel?

It was irritating cause I didn't do anything

So you felt it was not fair?

Yes...cause of a sub

What happened?

I was listening to music during a movie and my teacher usually doesn't care and then we had a sub and the sub told me to take it out and I did and then like 20 minutes later I put my earphones back in cause I was mad so I didn't want to talk and be hecka loud as I'm explaining the story so I just put my headphones in and put my head down and then I got a referral.

Have you ever been suspended from this school?

Yes... It didn't bother me...

But how did you feel

Just didn't care...like, do what you have to do

Have you ever been in a conflict mediation at this school?

No

Have you ever taken part in a RJ circle?

What? No..

Have you ever had a parent-teacher conference at this school because of your behavior?

no

What happens to a student that gets suspended too many times?

they get expelled...and they go to a different school...and that's it.

What do you think are some strategies for not getting in trouble at school?

do your work and pay attention and don't talk in class

do you usually use these strategies?

nope...sometimes...it depends on my mood. if I'm I'll be social, but if I want to get my work done then get my work done.

What do students who don't get in trouble do to get through school?

they're work...they don't talk... just do their work.

what kind of kids don't get in trouble?

IB kids

why do you think that is?

cause they are smart...they don't do anything bad...it goes back to racism...I think its all about race.

do kids who get in trouble...are they usually not as smart as the other kids?

I don't know...

have you ever known any smart kids to get in trouble?

uh huh... yeah

How do you think your friends feel about getting into trouble? Do they feel the same way as you?

some care, some don't

what do you think the difference is? Why do you think some care and some don't care?

some people have different mindsets and just don't care if they get in trouble...that's why they do the things they do.

what about the ones that care...why do you think they care?

cause it coulda been an accident and they didn't mean to do something.

Brittany

Describe yourself as a student

ummm...weird. like, I do weird stuff but at the end of the day I still pay attention in class and I talk a lot but

what do you mean weird stuff?

I don't know...I make weird jokes. like one of the clowns of the class but when its time to pay attention I pay attention.

how are you able to transition from being the class clown to getting on task?

ignore people around me.

would you say that's easy or difficult to do?

kinda difficult.

how successful are you usually?

from 1 and 10 like a 5 or 6.

I being not successful?

yeah

How are you able to get along with your schoolmates?

I just look at it like I have to spend time with them for 45 minutes so...yeah...I don't know how to explain that.

do you get along with them well?

yeah

all of them?

no

what makes getting along with some of them difficult?

cause of their attitude.

How are you able to get along with the adults at your school?

don't talk back

Is it easy to get along with your teachers here?

some of them

why do you say?

cause like some of teachers will just have attitudes for no reason so even if you are being nice they'll still be rude.

Are you teachers effective/good/successful at teaching you new skills/things/facts?

yeah

Sounds like you hesitated...

[laughs] well, I'm a hands on learner and like I can tell some of the teachers get irritated when I don't get it even after they say it like four times...but yeah...some of them

would you say generally your teachers are successful at teaching you new things?

ummm...most of them.

Do you like your teachers?

only three of them

what do you like about them, or why do you like them?

they tell me actually how it is and what I need...

they tell you what what is?

like how I'm doing and like what I should be doing and they actually help me...yeah...yeah...and actually take time out of their...they take their time out so they can help me.

what about the teachers that you don't like. why don't you like them?

cause they're rude and always have attitudes and if you always have an attitude you're not gonna get anywhere

how do they show that they're rude?

by getting mad for asking for a pencil or an eraser because you're trying to draw or write...or...umm.. if you need help they get irritated cause they're like "oh...I just told you what to do, why do you still need help?"

how do they show that they're irritated?

cause like they'll huff and puff or the way they walk or the way they answer you.

what do you mean the way they answer you?

like they'll huff and puff...they'll say like "were you not listening" and they'll get a little attitude about it and start huffing and puffing and then have me ask someone else in class to tell me what to do

so you rely on your classmates a lot to help you when you feel like the teacher is not being very helpful?

yeah... and then I end up getting in trouble

why?

for umm asking my classmates for help because most of the teachers think I just sit there and talk when I actually am asking for help

how often would you say that it happens that you ask your classmates for help and then you end up getting in trouble for it?

a lot

Do you behave differently at school than at other places?

no...well, kinda yeah

in what ways?

more quieter at school

why do you think that is?

there's a lot of judgmental people

are you talking about the adults or students?

both

how...what makes you feel that people are judging you?

like... for example, I could just be walking with my friends...even if its like a group of friends but they'll all be black people and then they'll be like "oh, they're getting ready to fight" or "there goes the ratchets"...

Tell me about discipline at your school.

get detention or a referral or gets sent to office so you can sit there or get a class suspension

does your school use anything else to discipline students?

no

Can you describe a time when you were disciplined by an adult here at this school?

[laughs] well...I was in class and one of my teachers had thought that me and my group were talking...well, we were talking but she thought we were talking off-topic so she came over to our table and she started getting mad at us and then my whole group got mad and yeah...I kinda spaced a little bit...

what does that mean?

like I got mad and I was telling her we weren't talking about whatever we were talking about our topic and then she starts yelling at me more so I put my head down and she gets in my face and then she starts yelling at me saying "this is my classroom, these are my rules, if you don't like it

you can get out" and then she called my mom. I was in the office but she called my mom and she was being rude to my mom and then my mom was like "ok, I understand if my daughter is being rude, but you have no right to get in her face" and then when my mom was talking to her she was getting all up in her face...yeah.

so in this incident do you feel like you were disciplined fairly?

nope.

how did it make you feel when all of this happened?

like not going back to that class.

anything else? what was your emotion?

I was irritated.

would you have done anything differently in this situation?

probably not say anything in the beginning

say anything to the teacher?

yeah...to tell her that we were talking.

why do you think you wouldn't have done that?

I don't know...I think...I don't know if she would have said anything still, but yeah...

what would you have wanted the adult to do in this situation?

umm...like understand that we weren't talking and we were actually on topic and she could have asked questions about exactly what we were talking about and we would have told her, instead of getting mad

so not making assumptions about what your group was doing?

nods yes.

what happened when you got to the office?

they were mad.

at?

at the teacher.

so did anyone in the office take the time to talk to you and hear from you what happened?

I told them about one minute of it and they got mad and then my mom called...so they didn't really want to hear the rest cause when they heard she got in my face they got mad about it cause I told them I put my head down and then... yeah

so what happened after that...what was the result? did you get suspended?

no, she [the teacher] tried to expel me.

who?

the teacher.

and what did the principal or vice principal do?

she...my mom came in the office and she showed my mom and my mom said she shredded it...put it in the shredder and said its not gonna happen.

so the vice principal was supporting you in this situation?

nods yes

Are you usually treated fairly at this school?

somewhat

tell me what you mean.

I don't know, like...I don't know how to explain it.

How would your teachers discipline you if you were...

Asian- I don't know.

would it be any different than now?

yeah kinda...I think would be nicer about it.

why do you think that is?

I don't know.

Latina- no...it would probably be the same.

White- it would be different.

how so?

not trying to be racist but white people...they like...I don't know...they probably...I don't know...I don't know how to explain it.

why would it be different?

I honestly don't know how to explain it...

do you think they would treat you the same way?

no.

how would they treat you?

well...wait....if I was white I think they would be more nicer about it.

why do you think that is?

cause like...they think of... I don't know how to explain it...its just like, white people are more nicer to other people when their the same race...but when its a different race its different.

so if we have black VP's and a black student got in trouble, do you think they would be nicer?

I don't know.

boy- horrible...cause like they just look at a boy like... like if a boy is talking back...not even talking back, they just look at it like "oh he's talking back"

why do you think that is?

umm...I don't know, cause most guys...yeah some of them do talk back but its like so of them are trouble makers and teachers see that and it makes them think that all guys are trouble makers and...yeah

Do you think you have ever been disciplined unfairly at this school because of your race?

yeah.

can you tell me about a time when this happened?

that whole little....

with the teacher getting in your face?

yeah.

you think that was because of your race?

yeah.

why do you think that was because of your race?

because I know like students that like, that are other race...they'll be talking and she'll go to their table and tell them to stop talking and they'll start to explain to her what their actually doing and she'll be like "ok" and will just like leave them alone.

do like incidences like this happen often?

yeah

in just her class or more than one of your classes?

more than one

does it just happen to you or other people too

other people too

how does it make you feel when this happens to you?

pissed.

anything else?

irritated

how does it make you feel when it happens to other people?

disgusted.

What does it feel like when you're disciplined at this school?

ummm....I don't know.

Have you ever gotten a referral at this school?

yeah.

how did you feel?

I didn't understand it.

you didn't understand...

why I got the referral

did you ever have the opportunity to talk to your teacher about the referral?

no.

so you just went away not understanding it and you still don't get it?

nods yes

Have you ever been suspended from this school?

yeah.

how do you feel when you get suspended?

[long pause] umm...free.

tell me what you mean...

cause like...like free from people and the teachers and stuff like that.

you feel like you get to escape the situation?

yeah.

is that a good feeling for you or a bad feeling?

yeah...it's a good feeling

does it bother you to get suspended?

I mean it does cause I miss out on a lot of work but besides that no.

Have you ever been in a conflict mediation at this school?

yeah

how did that make you feel?

better.

tell me more.

cause like...I actually got to talk to the person. any other day they would just put us in a room and try to talk to us but then that person would get an attitude and then I would get an attitude and then we'll just argue and then the situation wouldn't get any better.

Have you ever taken part in a RJ circle?

what is that?

Have you ever had a parent-teacher conference at this school because of your behavior?

no

What happens to a student that gets suspended too many times?

they get expelled...

then what happens?

most likely they drop out...I don't know.

What do you think are some strategies for not getting in trouble at school?

ignore people, or talk to people at the school about the problems

do you usually use these strategies?

yeah

why do you think you use them?

cause I don't like drama

how successful have these strategies been for you to stay out of trouble?

ok...

why just ok?

I feel like sometimes I just try to ignore it but the situation gets worse.

so ignoring is a strategy but it doesn't always work?

yeah

do you know of any other strategies you could use?

no.

What do students who don't get in trouble do to get through school?

be a nerd.

why do you say?

nerds...they're all about school and other people they try to be all about school but somehow
somehow their name just gets mentioned.

How do you think your friends feel about getting into trouble? Do they feel the same way as you?

well...I only have two friends...so, they don't like getting into trouble at all.

do they feel the same way about getting suspended as you...do they feel free?

[laughs] yeah.

what about getting sent to the office...how do you think they feel about that?

irritated

Layla

Describe yourself as a student

Cool, fun, calm student, but if you disrespect me my other side will come out.

What's your other side?

I'm calm and cool, I'm a chill person, like I'm very happy...you'll never really see me angry all the time but if you say anything disrespectful or rude that's when I'll just like start yell...cause my temper is really bad.

How are you able to get along with your schoolmates?

Good.

How are you able to get along with the adults at your school?

Some teachers....well all my teachers...yeah...but my English teacher...she told me...she made rules because she said all the classes were disrespecting her so she was telling us to shut up and I said "my grandmother doesn't even tell me to shut up, that's rude" and she said "well maybe if she did you wouldn't be so rude to me". That was real disrespectful and I got made and I had to walk out the classroom and calm myself down.

Is it easy to get along with your teachers here? Why or why not?

Yeah...we get over it...like our problems and issues cause they help me out with my work and help me get better grades than what I have right now.

Are your teachers effective/good/successful at teaching you new skills/things/facts?

Yup.

Do you like your teachers? Why or why not?

Yeah...Sometimes I feel like some teachers can't handle their classes calmly and calm them down if their being loud...I'll be hard...my first period teacher...he's a new teacher supposedly but he can't control his students cause they talk loud and its hard for him to teach and its harder for us to learn and I had asked him one day can he help me and he said I was talking so he wouldn't help me and he got made cause I said I was gonna have my passport teacher help me but he wasn't gonna help me so who else is gonna help me if you're not gonna help me.

What makes it difficult to get along with your teachers sometimes? Or what makes it difficult to like them?

I'm not sure.

Do you behave differently at school than at other places?

Yes... at home and at school is different types of personalities. At school I'm calm, ready to do my work, education...at home I'm myself, like chill...with my mom and sister I can talk a lot about anything.

Tell me about discipline at your school. What are the formal and informal rules here?

I'm not sure....what? Detention, referral. I almost got a detention for supposedly disrespecting my teacher but I don't think I disrespected him because I feel like if you yell at me I'm gonna yell back cause you're not gonna just disrespect me...I'm gonna disrespect you back because it will hurt my feelings if I just walk away...like, your not my mom...I'm not gonna just let you yell at me so I'm gonna yell back.

Can you describe a time when an adult at this school disciplined you? What happened? Do you think you were disciplined fairly? How did it make you feel? Would you have done anything differently? What would you have wanted the adult to do in this incident?

The incident I just told you about...I don't really get in trouble a lot.

When you got into it with the teacher did you feel like the discipline you received was fair?

Yes, but then no...but I didn't end up getting it. He ended up talking to my mom after that day and everything got cleared up and he took everything away and then I started doing better in his class and we started growing closer and closer...he's like the closest teacher that I'm close to now.

So his discipline was calling home to your mom and that turned out to be a positive thing?

Yeah.

How did it make you feel when all of this happened?

It made me feel mad because I feel like I didn't do anything for him to yell at me and give me a detention so he felt like I'm not gonna deal with your talk...get out of my face, get out of my class... and he was just yelling and pointing at the door like "bye. Bye. Bye." So I yelled "Bye" louder than him and he took that offensive saying "oh well...she's getting a Saturday school and a detention". So I told my mom and she was made and said she was gonna talk to the teacher and once they talked everything worked out perfectly.

Would you have done anything differently in this situation?

Probably not yell back but...no, I probably woulda yelled because if you yell at me I'm gonna yell back so... that's how my attitude is.

What would you have wanted your teacher to do in this incident?

Pull me outside and talk to me better about what happened, why I got a detention and explain it to me. We could talk together like as a student to a teacher...we coulda talked better and everything woulda worked out fine.

Are you usually treated fairly at this school?

Yes.

How do you think your teachers would discipline you if you were...Asian, female, Pacific Islander, Latino, White, etc?

Probably some teachers would be different... like my color...my race...I don't think it's a big issue but sometimes I get jealous cause I feel like if a white kid raised their hand they'll answer their question but if I raise my hand I'm like the last person to answer the question and I be feeling some type of way because I have my hand first up and they answer before me so sometimes I feel like its because of my color but then sometimes I don't.

Do you ever feel like you get in trouble more because of your color?

No.

How would you be disciplined if you were a boy at this school?

Probably they would go harder on me because I'm not a female...I'm a male.

Why do you think they would go harder?

Cause boys...I feel like they go harder on because they can take it...with girls you have to be softer because we're females... we're not like boys...we're girly girls and boys...their like dangerous, lightweight to me.

Another student told me that Black students are treated differently when it comes to discipline at school? Do you think this is true? Why or why not?

No...not really. Cause it doesn't happen to me over getting in trouble but raising hands and stuff it happens to me. But out of getting kicked out and detentions and stuff...no...

Do you see this happening to other students at school...other Black students?

No.

Do you think you have ever been disciplined unfairly at this school because of your race? If yes, can you tell me about at time when this happened? Do incidences like this happen often? To you

or to other people? How does it make you feel when it happens to you? How does it make you feel when it happens to other people?

No.

What does it feel like when you're disciplined at school?

I get mad because...sometimes like the incident I got into a week ago when I suspended because Ms. Principal was telling how...basically telling me how I was in the wrong but she didn't take the time to listen to my story, she just went off of what the girl said and it made mad and she felt like I was disrespecting her in the office but really she just didn't understand where I was coming from. She made it seem like, oh...I just don't like her and I hit her in the back of the head for no reason but she doesn't know the behind story like how you talked to us... she didn't do that, which I don't understand why she would take everything out on me if she didn't hear my story...she just heard her story.

Have you ever gotten a referral at this school? How do you feel when you get a referral?

No.

Have you ever been suspended from this school? How do you feel when you get suspended?

Yes.

What were you suspended for?

Fighting.

How did you feel when you got suspended?

I was mad but then I couldn't be as mad because I brought it upon myself.

Have you ever been in a conflict-mediation at school? How did it make you feel?

Yes. Better...I feel like it worked better and we got down to the real solution and I regret me fighting last week cause I feel like it wasn't worth me fighting about... it was very stupid.

Have you ever taken part in a (RJ) circle at this school? How did it make you feel?

No.

Have you ever had a parent-teacher conference because of your behavior at this school? How did it make you feel?

Yes. It made me feel better...but then it made me want to improve myself. It made me want to be better because of how the teachers explained to my mom, and then my mom was like "ok STUDENT...you know, you're here to learn and get your education so you gotta stop fooling around". I made me work harder and push myself harder cause now I see...you know like...STUDENT you're messing up you gotta get on your education, get your grades, graduate and do my plan. So I feel like it worked better and it pushed me harder to really try.

What happens to students that get suspended too many times? (If expulsion...then what happens).

They get expelled.

What happens after that?

They switch schools or they get home schooled.

What do you think some strategies are for not getting in trouble at school? Do you usually use these strategies? Why or why not?

Ignoring...ignoring problems and drama and talking to counselors about the issues so they can solve everything so it can be better than what it was.

Do you usually use these strategies?

I don't talk to my counselor...she's always busy and sometimes its hard for me to express myself to another different race for me cause I can't...I feel like she doesn't understand where I'm coming from and my point of view but if I was talking to someone my race they would probably really more understand because they've probably went through the same situation as me.

What do students who don't get in trouble do to get through school?

Quiet...you don't speak to anyone. Do you and avoid drama.

Do you think that easy or difficult to do?

It's easy but its hard also because its like drama follows you. You know, like, you try to avoid it but drama still comes and it follows you wherever you go even if you try to avoid it.

How do you think your friends feel about getting into trouble? Do you feel that same way as you about getting suspended, sent to the office, etc.

Some of them claim they don't care but they get punished for it and some of them they'll be like "oh my gosh...I don't want to get in trouble but I did it to myself".

What about the ones who claim that they don't care? Why do you think they don't care?

Cause they don't care about their life. They don't care about their plan. They basically don't care about school and how they want to do better in life.

Why do you think that is?

Because if you don't care about getting in trouble than basically you don't care about your life...you don't care about basically when you're older...how in life you'll get fired from a job and its not easy to find another job...this is getting you prepared for the real world...so them not caring is like...its like reflecting on how their gonna be when they get older.

Why do you think they don't care though?

They probably just have that attitude where they don't care about anything but themselves.

How do you think that they developed that attitude?

Problems that's probably going on at home.

Jasmine

How would you describe yourself as a student?

Hardworking, motivated, self-motivated student with some support now and then. I just try.

What do you mean when you say some support?

Well, some support from my teachers. The teachers I'm connected with, you know you're not connected with everybody. You don't always bond with everybody but the ones that I do bond with support me.

How are you able to get along with your schoolmates?

Um, I think as classmates, as...how do I say...as acquaintances...I think I get along with them just fine. Not too personal, not too distant. You know, "hi" here and there. So, I mean good I guess.

Do you feel like you have a relationship with any of the students here beyond an acquaintance?

Uh...yeah..ish. I mean I don't really have a lot of time in my schedule, but I mean I have people that I talk to.

How are you able to get along with the adults at your school?

Fine. The ones that I said at the beginning...the ones that support me...fine.

Is it easy to get along with your teachers here? Why or why not?

Some of them.

Why do you think that is?

People's different personalities. People just learn differently and I feel like some teachers get that and some teachers don't. That's it.

Are there teachers that you're not able to get along with?

There's some teachers that I don't...yeah. There are some teachers you like just don't understand. But I feel like I'm a different person so even though I might not get along with them or understand everything, I don't really feel like I show it as much as I think some other students would. There are teachers that I can see that I sometimes feel like they do wrong...its hard to describe.

The ones that you don't get along with, why do you think you don't get along with them?

I just don't understand them. They don't understand me and I don't understand them. Or I don't feel like they put effort in trying to motivate us as teachers.

So when you say you don't understand them...do you mean in terms of the courses that they teach or...?

Yeah...courses that they teacher. I mean, I feel like the courses that they teach they just throw it at you like "here...do it", not you know, slowing down, stepping down, explaining it and gets the students involved. I don't know how to describe it...

Are your teachers effective/good/successful at teaching you new skills/things/facts?

Yeah...

Do you like your teachers? Why or why not?

Yeah, I like the teachers I have. I don't have too many but I like the ones that I have.

What is it about them that you like?

Umm...some of them I like the things that they teach me. Some of them I like how they talk to me...like respect. They talk to me with respect. We laugh, we giggle, we have a teacher-student real relationship I feel like. I can go to them and like really talk to them and understand them. I can really sit down and be like "I'm not understand this" and they'll be like "ok, well let me explain it to you". School-wise, or like if I had something going on in my personal life I feel like that would be somebody I would go to for advice and be like "how do I go about this situation?".

Do you behave differently at school than at other places?

Umm...no...

So, you're pretty consistent?

I try to be, I mean, you have your good days and your bad days...

Tell me about discipline at your school. What are the formal and informal rules here?

Discipline here is... sometimes it can be unfair...sometimes it can be. I think it really just depends on how you carry yourself...if that makes sense.

Explain a little bit more...

Ok, to me, not everybody can be a good student. Not everybody can be a bad student. Everybody has their ups and downs. And I feel like sometimes when it comes to discipline, some teachers can understand that and then I feel like sometimes teachers don't and that's when it comes to the role of the relationships I was telling you about the connections teachers have and some teachers don't try to take advantage to try to get that connection...I feel that if teachers got more involved with students here sometimes it wouldn't go into discipline, really bad discipline like getting suspended and stuff if they just sat down and showed care cause some students just need to know that you care cause they don't have that person like they think cares...sometimes students just don't want to talk to their parents. Who wants to talk to their parents at this age? So sometimes its just, I feel like teachers don't understand so its like students get in a lot of trouble, like getting suspended and expelled and that's all on your record and whompdee whoomp whoomp...I don't know, discipline here is...so much. It could be good. It could be bad. It just depends on the person.

Can you describe a time when an adult at this school disciplined you? What happened? Do you think you were disciplined fairly? How did it make you feel? Would you have done anything differently? What would you have wanted the adult to do in this incident?

Yes. I thought it was unfair. The incident was I was in class, trying to do my schoolwork and a student kept interfering with my group, cause you know... you have to do group work sometimes, you can't just do your own work because one of the things about high school is learning to work with your peers, you know, learning how to collaborate and everything. So I'm working with me group and me and my group aren't where I want us to be at...we're not ahead, we're not done with our project therefore, we need to work. A student in my group wanted to hang out with his friend who was in another group and it just so happened that his group was done...my group is not...so I need my group to pay attention. I asked him politely leave...he wouldn't leave my group..."I don't need to go anywhere"...I'm like "ok. I need you to leave. Please, my group needs to finish...no don't wanna leave, fine. "If you don't leave I'm gonna tell the teacher". I'm trying to get the teacher's attention...I'm calling her name, calling her name,

her name...she's not answering, o.k. Now I'm like getting frustrated because this is eating up so much time for no reason, can you just please let my group finish...no he can do whatever he want...whoompdee, whoomp, whoomp....so then he gets in my face and I'm like...you know like, we're human but we have animal instincts....so now I'm getting frustrated and he's tryna get physical and the teacher's not paying no nevermind but as soon as I get up to like handle the situation is when, of course...dun dun dun...I'm the one that looks like the villain when really I'm the victim I feel. I was just trying to do my work, and honestly as a teacher you weren't doing your job paying attention. I'm calling your name...what's your name for if I keep calling your name and you're not gonna respond then I gotta handle the situation the best way I know I think I can...which might not have been the best situation or the best way but I had to do what I had to do. Anywho, she noticed me and it looks like I'm the one getting in trouble. Anywho, I get in trouble, she sends me outside and now I really can't finish my work so I'm getting even more boiled up cause I'm like a workaholic. So now I'm like dang, I really can't finish my project, I'm finna get sent to the office for no reason. She's asking his side of the story first and is not tryna hear my side of the story. I already know that he's gonna lie but when I almost got the teacher's attention was when he started walking away and when I started to get up, so it just automatically looked like...I could just see what type of person he was and it just all made me very upset...and I was just so frustrated that day. I got sent to the office. I got a referral...he didn't get anything. It's always two sides to the story...I can't just get in trouble by myself...that makes no sense and that's unfair...that's why sometimes I just think it depends on the person and the teacher. Part of me feels like it had to do with....I don't want to say it but...the teacher was a...a student teacher, so she was learning new things, so I kinda give her slack for that, but then I kinda feel like it maybe coulda been a racial thing sometimes because I feel it's totally unfair how he didn't get disciplined at all and I got kicked outta class for three days when the whole reason I got in trouble was because I was trying to work...now he gets to work, he got to talk, he got to do what he wanted to do, he got to get a good grade and not I'm failing because....

What was his ethnicity?

I think he was Russian, or white...he was one of the two. It was just very unfair. I mean I'm the type of person where I apologized and I see the teacher sometimes and I still say hi to her cause she substitutes. You know, I let bygones be bygones but sometimes I do think that that day I did get treated unfairly. For me to be the only one on school suspension and he has nothing when the whole thing started was he was not where....and her rule was "stay in your seats...I don't mind if ya'll talk but stay in your seats". How is it that I was where I was supposed to be and you saw me get up from my seat where I was supposed to be at but I'm the only one getting in trouble when he had to go all the way back to across the room...how does that make sense? But whatever...I was the one in trouble.

So how did this all make you feel at that time?

At that time I was boiled up...heated, I was hot, I was frustrated, I was sad, I was mad cause when it comes to school I'm so into it sometimes cause I know like I wanna make it somewhere so I was upset because it wasn't hurting no body but me I felt and that was unfair and I was like wow...I'm being hurt by this, nobody else is seeing it...nobody's waking up...I don't know...I was hurt, I was deeply hurt that day.

Would you have done anything differently?

You know what...no I wouldn't have cause I wouldn't have learned how to deal with it if I ever ran into it again, so now I know I should just walk away from the situation and maybe explain to

the teacher later...I don't know. But no, I wouldn't have done anything differently because it made me the person that I am today...part of me.

What would you have wanted the teacher to do in this incident?

I wish she would have paid attention more or at least showed me some... like, showed me she noticed me cause I called her name like 10 times so maybe if she would have been like at least like "ok, STUDENT, I hear you, one moment please, I'm with another student" I woulda been like "Ok, let me just move myself away from the situation until she can, you know, show me some attention". But no, it was like she just totally ignored me and that's when it almost got physical and now I'm the one in trouble when you didn't even see the whole thing.

Are you usually treated fairly at this school?

It just depends on the day people have...I don't know, you know...the universe is weird...everybody connects but everybody doesn't sometimes. I could be having a good day but that teacher that day might have had a bad day at home with her husband, you just never know, so like, it just depends, it just depends on that day. I know that so wide but...

How do you think your teachers would discipline you if you were...Asian, female, Pacific Islander, Latino, White, etc?

Asian: {laughs} Um, part of me wants to say yes because this school is so focused on IB students that I feel like they don't pay other students any mind. Sometimes I feel like it because I know a few incidences that have happened to IB students and they're ok and everything's fine, but then sometimes its just like if that was some other students they would have got in so much trouble...gotten expelled, got suspended...something, something different. But then sometimes I don't know...its like Asians...the only way I can kinda agree with that is because the times that the Asians do do something bad its like every now and then, whereas with other students its more frequently so its like...O.k. I don't know what to do with you...

Latino: Same...I think it would be the same scenario I just gave you, like the IB student. I feel like I would be treated a little different

White: I don't know, it just depends on who you connect with, like who understands you, cause like some people understand you and some people don't.

Boy: That's a good one...I think it would be different because I think a lot of teachers, as you get older and grow up you learn that boys mature slower than you...slower than girls so sometimes I feel like I would be treated a little different...I would get a little more slack I feel, cause at this age they're just not focused right now...unfortunately...They're just not as focused as girls...you expect more out of girls because we're just more in tuned sometimes...unless you're just one of those girls that don't care...but even the ones that don't care...there's a reason that they don't care and they're still in tune with that, you know, so we're just more stably in tuned and focused I feel....

Another student told me that Black students are treated differently when it comes to discipline at school? Do you think this is true? Why or why not?

Sometimes....like I said, this school is dominated by IB/IS students and there's not a lot of Black students in them...there's not a lot of activities. There's not even a lot of black students...there's a lot of Asians and Indians from...I don't know...

How do you think that factors into how Black kids are disciplined?

I feel it factors in because were the only ones that...we have a different struggle I feel like...a different way of being reached out to...whereas theses students might have...most...if you do like the statistics, a lot of these kids have both their parents, life pretty set up for them, and they can be more focused and know more wrongs from right, whereas us....its like we're out here

trying to do it on our own...you know, we don't really know, so it interferes with the way that we had to teach ourselves...like some students feel acting up is the only way we can get attention, so that we get disciplined when some of these students know like... all you have to do is...you know....I don't know how to make this make sense....

Do you think you have ever been disciplined unfairly at this school because of your race? If yes, can you tell me about at time when this happened? Do incidences like this happen often? To you or to other people? How does it make you feel when it happens to you? How does it make you feel when it happens to other people?

That same incident I told you about earlier I feel like I was treated unfairly because of my race by that specific teacher and I also feel like she didn't know what to do because she just so happened to be a student teacher and that day she was alone...so it was like I think she really felt threatened and didn't know what to do.

Do incidences like the one you described happen often?

Umm...I think I had another incident like that a few years back like that one. There was another one that I kinda feel like happened because of my race but then you never know what the other person was thinking. I always say don't assume cause if you break down assume you know make a fool out of me and you, so...part of me don't want to assume and say that its racism cause you never really know what that person was thinking or what was going on through their head that day...what happened that minute before you walked in...so I don't really wanna say it was racism...I'm tryna think its 2014...we're past all that, but then again, being a black person you don't help but to think of that because it seems like every time you turn around their just fine but you're always the one getting disciplined or in trouble or the one that...you know...its just always something like that.

Have you ever gotten a referral at this school? How do you feel when you get a referral?

It was like I was being mistreated again.

Have you ever been suspended from this school? How do you feel when you get suspended?

I never got suspended...just in school suspension.

Have you ever been in a conflict-mediation at school? How did it make you feel?

Yeah...I think with the student I had the issue with, I think that was a conflict mediation. That was the only reason that the referral wasn't on my thing and I got an in-school suspension...cause we talked about it supposedly. I don't even know where that student at now.

How did that go?

Ummm....it was like the worst of times.

Was it done by students or an adult?

Uhh...it was me, the student I had the incident with, and one of the vice principals.

Have you ever had a parent-teacher conference because of your behavior at this school? How did it make you feel?

No, not behavior.

What happens to students that get suspended too many times? (If expulsion...then what happens).

They're put up for expulsion or expelled. I don't know, I never really made it that far.

After expulsion: You get sent to a continuation school.

What do you think some strategies are for not getting in trouble at school? Do you usually use these strategies? Why or why not?

Bringing back old school....count to 5...I don't know. Sometimes you just have to do it and bring it back to the first grade... but then again that's why I say some teachers just need to connect to their students cause, you never know, maybe that student moved before they got a

chance, or maybe they just wasn't in school when you're supposed to learn certain things...you know...but I would just bring it back old school...sometimes everybody needs a breather and a little minute to themselves.

Can you think of some specific strategies that might be helpful?

For me? I love music...sometimes I think sitting in a room listening to music is good for me...keeps me calm...if you like to write, I would say write...you know...if you like sports that would be a good one...I know a lot of students here, I feel like when they're angry or upset, exercise...especially for boys...if you ever feel like you need a moment to yourself I would suggest exercising...you know, or lifting some weights...sometimes just doing something else and getting your mind off what you're mad at is like the best thing you can do for yourself...and then come back to that.

What do students who don't get in trouble do to get through school?

You would have to be a student who recognizes...I'm not saying you have to be a nerd, cause that's not true...I'm not a nerd...I used to be, but like, maybe not to everybody's eyes, but to my eyes I used to be a nerd...I feel like you have to know when to fight your battles, you have to know when to step back, know when to stay focused, and when...you have to balance yourself...you have to literally balance yourself out

Do you think that's difficult to do?

It can be very hard. It can

What makes it difficult?

Sometimes you don't know where to put your little rocks at...you'll be like, "I don't know... is it too heavy over here...is it too light over here?" You just never know...but...it with a lot of concentration and motivation, and I feel...focus...you gotta have focus...that's why I think sometimes boys don't get disciplined as hard because they don't have a lot of focus sometimes...you just have to give them chances because they just don't get it sometimes...its like "wake up!" but...it can be very hard...you just have to know where to put your puzzle pieces.

How do you think your friends feel about getting into trouble? Do you feel that same way as you about getting suspended, sent to the office, etc.

Well, somebody that I'm close friends with here...I feel like she does...me and her are somewhat the same...we're not from the same place but we're from the same area and we both been through a lot. We kind feel the same way. We came from rough situations and the only thing we're trying to do is build our empire up and make it... you know...

Do you think other students feel that same way that the two of you feel?

I feel like everybody in the world feels like how we feel...even if you're rich you're always trying to make something better... you know, you're always trying to improve yourself...depending on how you go about it, that's a whole 'nother thing...depending on where you put your rocks at...its like I said...this world is crazy...

What about the kids that get in trouble a lot?

I think they care about it a lot...they might not know how to show it emotionally...they feel like if they do show it that person might not care...that's why I'm saying teachers need to find a way to connect to these students because I feel like I used to get in trouble a lot...maybe not at this school... and a lot has changed for me from where I used to be at but I used to get in trouble all the time and I used to feel like its because I didn't have anybody I can talk to...nobody was trying to understand...ya know...nobody got what I went through...nobody understood that...and now its like I had to wake up and understand that its all about me... so I feel like some

students that get in trouble...I mean to don't really.... like who wants to get in trouble? You just want to feel like you can do what you want without anybody telling you something but sometimes that's not the scenario, but there's always two sides to the story...I don't know...but yes...I feel like they feel the same way...nobody wants to get in trouble...nobody wants to be disciplined for something they thought was right...you know?

Marcus

Describe yourself as a student

Independent and sometimes self...like, I don't really know... its like...like I'm different from everybody else, I know that for sure. Like if I need help I'll ask for it or if I don't ill do it on my own obviously but most of the time I will get the work done by myself and do it on my own...so pretty much self-independent

How are you able to get along with your schoolmates?

Be cool with them...

Do you get along with others pretty well?

Yeah...

How are you able to get along with the adults at your school?

I get along with them...it all depends on who it is

Are there people that you don't get along with here?

Um hum...

What are some of the reasons that you don't get along with them?

Their attitude or the way they talk to me

Explain what you mean...

Like...if they're having a bad day and you're wanting to have a conversation with them and then they they'll come at you with a bad type of tone or if the teacher...you say something and they'll say something back and you'll be like "what the heck?"...Like...why the attitude? Or....

Is it easy to get along with your teachers here? Why or why not?

Yes and no. Yes because its...if your having a good day you make them...if you're having a good day and you talk with everything should be fine. But if they're having a bad day its gonna be all bad after that.

So if the student is having a good day than they'll have a good day with the teacher and if the student is having a bad day then they'll have a bad day with the teacher?

Yeah...that's how I see it...

Are your teachers effective/good/successful at teaching you new skills/things/facts?

Yeah...like if I need help, they'll give me the help...if I don't get it...yeah.

Do you like your teachers? Why or why not?

Yeah...some of them, all depends on who it is

What do you like about them?

They're helpful...they get down to detail if I don't get and they'll break it down for me step by step and their just really cool...

What about the teachers that you don't really like...what is it about them that you don't really like?

Like...they're impatient...like, one of the teachers...if I'm sitting there and thinking about it they'll rush me and be like "stop sitting there. Get your work done. Stop sitting there doing nothing". I'm trying to understand this work...I need help. "I'll be over there in a minute"...like, you see me

over here struggling and your gonna sit over there and yell at me but you ain't gonna come over and help me...that don't work.

Do you behave differently at school than at other places?

Yeah

How so?

Behavior-wise like...I'm more quiet at school than I am at wherever else I am.

Why is that?

School just doesn't seem like a type of place you can be yourself.

What do you have to be like to be at school?

Ummm...I don't know...I don't know... try to be someone that you're not.

Do you think its students or teachers that make you feel like you have to be somebody that you're not?

Both. Students...I mean its a lot of people who don't like you just because of who you are but most of the time you want...you don't take that personal...but with teachers its like, ok...people tell me all the time to be on the teacher's good side you gotta be this type of way or...its like oh my god...now I gotta change my whole attitude and behavior. When I was little just none of this...I was not like this...I was ohhh-weee.

What were you like?

I was bad...like; I got expelled from three different schools and got switched all the time and got in fights, fights, fights...

Why do you think you were like that?

I have no ideal...I just didn't care.

What changed?

Everything. Behavior, attitude, now I'm really focused in school trying to get everything done. Like at first I was like I don't care about school...why am I here?

Why do you think you didn't care?

Cause it wasn't for me...I didn't like it. When I was there the teachers...my mom was like teachers don't care about you they just care about ummm.... you getting out of their class or something like that...and I was like "oh, so what's the point of being there"... "so you can get your education"...ok I get it but if you don't want me to be here and you're throwing me all these assignments and you really want...don't want me to be here than why am I really here?

So you felt like your teachers didn't care?

Yeah

What about now? You said things have changed...

I think high school it still feels the same way but it doesn't matter about me...you gotta remember its your life so you...its like you live it how you wanna live it.

So how did you start to change your behavior? When did the change come about?

Me and my auntie we discussed it cause I lived with her after the 6th grade. My mom couldn't handle me no more so she made me live with my auntie and she was like "alright this is how you're gonna be over here...you're not gonna be like that so she straightened me up. Everyday when I came home she had me sit down at the table and do my homework...I did my homework...that how it was...that's when I was like "alright, I understand school"

Tell me about discipline at your school. What are the formal and informal rules here?

Oh my god...that's a good question....

What happens when a kid gets in trouble?

You get sent to the office...it all depends with what type of situation that person is in

So generally speaking, how do you think it goes? You get sent to the office and then what?

Detention, sat. School, or big old lecture about don't do it again

Do you think these things are helpful in keeping kids out of trouble?

Yes and no. Like some kids they'll understand so next time if I do this again the consequence will be bigger or some kids are like whatever...I don't care either way...I'm gonna still be out and do what I do

What about the rules here...do you think the rules are clearly explained to kids or do you think that everyone knows the rules?

Yeah...they just don't obey them

Why?

I don't know...they not my parents so why do I listen to you? I don't know...some kids will obey it but some kids are like ok, when you're not looking I'll do what I want to do and when you're looking I got you.

Are there rules that aren't formal or written down that kids have to follow?

umm humm

What are some examples of those?

Like...[long pause]... good question...umm...I know there's a few...[mumbles]...I don't really know at the top of my head right now.

Can you describe a time when an adult at this school disciplined you? What happened? Do you think you were disciplined fairly? How did it make you feel? Would you have done anything differently? What would you have wanted the adult to do in this incident?

Shook head no

You've never gotten in trouble here?

I have but it wasn't like woo woo woo

What happened?

Not going to class

So what happened?

They caught me outside of school...I was coming back on campus.

So you cut and then you were coming back?

Yeah...they were like "what are you doing here?" "Why are you off campus and this and that" then they took me to the office and said "we caught this student off campus this this and that" and then they were like "we're gonna call your parents cause you cut. Saturday school for you"...I'm like oh god...

How did you feel when that happened?

At the same time I was like ok I deserve a consequence cause I knew I wasn't supposed to do that so I wasn't really trippin off of it, but at the same time I was like man...its not that serious, you ain't gotta call my mom and do all this extra stuff... you coulda just gave me a detention and whoopdie whoop and we can go on about our business

Do you think that you were disciplined fairly in this incident?

Laughs...yes and no... Yes because...ok...why are you cutting school...but then no cause how big the incident was...how big they made it...like...I'm like "ok, I understand the situation but you ain't gotta be all overly hyped about it...like...its not that serious". That's how this school is, when its a situation or an incident they make it extremely more than what the problem seems like...that's what I don't like about that.

Would you have done anything differently in this situation?

Like... in my actions? In what type of way?

In any way?

I mean... I thought I handled it perfectly fine...like, y'all can do what you gonna do...just don't yell at me again.

What would you have wanted the adults to do in this situation?

Not yell at me, cause when you yell at me it makes me mad. I hate that. My mom don't even yell at me.

Are you usually treated fairly at this school?

Yes and no... Yes...I think its like a love hate type of thing...if they like you they like you. If they don't...get out my face...its weird...I don't know...this school is weird.

How do you think your teachers would discipline you if you were...Asian, female, Pacific Islander, Latino, White, etc.?

Asian: I think they would treat me fairly, or at least...like I don't understand anything. You know how you give them the information and they're like "they don't get it, let me break it down for them". And its like "no, I got it the first time you said it. You ain't got to say it like I'm dumb or something".

So kinda like talking down to you?

Yeah

White: like every other person here...normal

Latino: like the Asian person...they'd talk down to me like I don't understand what they're talking about

Girl: that's a good one... I don't know...I had...I could really see that...I think they would treat you more sweet, I should say. I think they have it easier way of life...cause their girls...they see...girls always have that little sweet side.

Another student told me that Black students are treated differently when it comes to discipline at school? Do you think this is true? Why or why not?

Uh huh...

Why do you think that's true?

Because some people when they're in trouble its not a big deal...see with me, when I get in trouble its like "oh my god" ...I think they said in they're head "oh my god he's black" and makes the situation bigger than what it is so they can understand the concept of the situation...I think they overdo things with black people...they treat black people different...I think that's because they knew the problems before but they don't see how people change... but at the same time I think they're trying to help us by making the situation as big as possible so they'll be like "oh my god if I do this again its gonna lead to this"...

So they're trying to make an example?

Exactly...that's how I see it...so I'm like "imp not doing it again", but if I do it's like "ok. I got it"

Do you think you have ever been disciplined unfairly at this school because of your race? If yes, can you tell me about at time when this happened? Do incidences like this happen often? To you or to other people? How does it make you feel when it happens to you? How does it make you feel when it happens to other people?

Ummm...yeah, one time...a teacher...one time a teacher and there was a Caucasian kid...it was me and him and the teacher...we were talking and whatever and one of the students was like "no, no, no, he can't do that, that's not fair"...I was like "what?" I'm tryna remember the situation.... and the teacher was like "you're right" and I was like "what's the problem?" and they were like "we don't really appreciate"...I don't know...but I was like "is it because I'm black?" and the student turns around and get quiet and I'm like "is that the reason why?" it was like wow...and I walked

out of class...I don't remember it all, I just remember I got mad, I was really upset...like, "ok, that's how you feel about me...how does everybody else feel about the situation?" the whole minority thing...the whole world is going in a circle again...

Have incidences like this happened often?

No, not really?

How does it make you feel?

Makes me mad, makes me sad...cause its like if I can't do that than what can I do...it feels like I have limited options of what I want to do...say if I want to major in something that I really like and they said, "oh you can't do that cause your black"...its like "ohhhh...that hurts". Sometimes its like you wake up like "what's your day gonna be like now?"

Do you incidences like this happening to other people?

Not at this school...probably, but not as bad

What does it feel like when you're disciplined at school?

They put you down...it all depends if you did something wrong and you know you did something wrong then they put you down instead of just speaking to you...but at the same time you're upset and you did it for a reason so you're like I don't care...you really don't care.

Have you ever gotten a referral at this school? How do you feel when you get a referral?

I'm sure I have [laughs]. If was from...one for cutting class. I was in class, he [teacher] wrote me down and then I left...I just left and then I came back at like the end of the period and as soon as I came back the bell rang and she was like "really...that's a referral". I was like ok, whatever. And then the other one was just for being loud and disrespectful in class and talking back.

Tell me about that one

I was in class and I was sitting in the front row and I was talking to a couple of friends beside me and she kept saying "shh"...so alright... then I talked again and same ole' same ole' thing...then I turned around and did my work and she was like "so, like, so you're just gonna sit here and not do your work and mess up everybody's education?" and I was like "no, how bout you go back over there and sit down and leave me alone while I do what I want to do?" she was like "no, that's not how it works. You're disrupting our class". Well obviously I'm not cause nobody else is talking to me but you in the situation so you're making it a bigger deal than what it is already because you're over here yelling at me, talking to me about it. And she was like "so you're just gonna sit here and talk back to me". I said "no, you're the one that came over here... if you didn't come over here this wouldn't be a problem" and then she was like "stop right there" and I was like "no, you started so I'm gonna finish it". And she was like "I'm gonna write you up...this is unacceptable". I was like "well, you're being unacceptable right now talking to me". She was like "stop, just stop...go outside". "No... You want me to go outside than come with me cause I want to talk to you about this". She was like "no, I'm gonna write you up and then I'm gonna send somebody to take you up to the office". I said, "how come you can't take me cause I want to talk about this. This is not right". She was like "no, I'm done talking about this...go outside". I was like "no". So they had somebody from the front office come get me.

It sounds like you got angry...

I did.

Why do you think you got so angry with her?

I felt offended...everybody else in the class was talking as well and you're just talking to me...

So you felt singled out?

Yeah...like, I'm just sitting here turned to the side and you see everybody else and the first place you look is me...before that she was helping somebody in front of me and I'm just sitting there

the whole time and she didn't say nothing before till she goes back to her desk...I look at her and she's like "that's annoying" like, "you don't see everybody else talking...get out my face.... it burns me up.

Have you ever been suspended from this school? How do you feel when you get suspended?

Yes...because I didn't go to Saturday school

How did that make you feel?

I knew it was coming so I didn't really care

Have you ever been in a conflict-mediation at school? How did it make you feel?

What do you mean? Like a big argument?

Like after an argument...like a mediation with a peer or a counselor or VP to sit and talk about the problem...

No

Have you ever taken part in an RJ circle before?

No

Have you ever had a parent-teacher conference because of your behavior at this school? How did it make you feel?

Yeah... at the beginning of the school year

What happened?

My behavior towards the teachers...that's always been me...when I first start a new school I always get on the teacher's bad side... I'm not sure why yet...I don't know why...its like, alright...I don't know...I wanna see what you got

Why do you think that is?

I don't know why I do that...its always been like that for me. I get on their bad side and then the next day I'll be ok...its like, "oh... ok that's how you react...I'm gonna leave you alone"

So you kind of like testing them?

Yeah...there you go...that's the word for it.

So how did the parent teacher conference go?

It was cool till at the end when we're about to go and they're like "oh wait...I have something to tell you"...and I'm like "oh my god...what?" we sat back down and they were like your student is late to class and always disrupting my class, and my mom was like "ohhh, oh no he didn't whoompdie whoomp"...you know parents always being parents...going off...and I was like "mom, that's not.... no". So I tried to get on my mom's good side and make the teachers seem like they were lying...[laughing]. Its like you know when people come in late, everybody looks and they say that's disruptive...I mean, that ain't my fault, I didn't make them look so... "

How did it feel to be a part of the parent teacher conference?

I was scared actually. I thought it was going to be something really really bad and I couldn't go to the school no more...I don't know...I had that before and the teacher was like...they actually had to send me out to the meeting to talk with my mom and then the principal comes in and is like "how are you?" and I'm like "I'm good". And the next day they were like you don't go to this school no more. That's how I see it...its like "ohhh... What it that's gonna happen again?"

So what do you think has been the most effective way your teachers or the school has disciplined you? What's worked the best?

Suspension and parent teacher thing

How has suspension been useful?

Cause I'm not gonna come back and do all the work I missed. I don't like that

And what about the parent teacher conference. How has that been helpful?

The drama when you go back home.

What happens to students that get suspended too many times? (If expulsion...then what happens).

Get expelled...you gotta find another school outside of the district...

What do you think some strategies are for not getting in trouble at school? Do you usually use these strategies? Why or why not?

Being...like I said being your... well, you can't really be yourself at school, well you could but I'm not really myself at school...being quiet, being to yourself...ummm...just, interact with people sometimes...hi and bye but just...avoid all the drama and all the problems

What do students who don't get in trouble do to get through school?

Ummm...that's not me...I don't know...I'm always in trouble here and there.... that's how I see it...I don't want to be in trouble but trouble always finds a way to follow me....

When you say in trouble, do you mean getting sent to the office trouble or just your teacher has a conversation with you?

Well, can you call that being in trouble...the teacher having a conversation with you about your behavior?

I don't know...do you?

I said it is...

How does that feel when the teacher has a conversation with you about your behavior when you're in trouble?

I get frustrated

Why?

Cause I don't want to talk about it...its like "ok... I got it". I don't like talking about my behavior.

Is it ever helpful?

Yes and no...Yes cause like ok, I won't do it again and at the same time its like "get off my back...that's who I am...if you don't want me here take me somewhere else and I'll do it".

How do you think your friends feel about getting into trouble? Do you feel that same way as you about getting suspended, sent to the office, etc?

They probably don't care

Why do you think?

Its just who they are...I don't think they have the same feeling that I do when I get in trouble and I come home and when your parent know you got in trouble its like "ohhhh"

Robert

Describe yourself as a student

I would say I'm someone who likes to be around my circle of friends a lot and umm...I like to meet new people all the time

How are you able to get along with your schoolmates?

Umm... there are some of my classmates that I don't get along with but I don't like to push any issues towards them cause I'm not...I don't like drama so I try to stay within my own boundaries.

How are you able to get along with the adults at your school?

Umm...the majority of the adults on the campus I would say are pretty cool... I can talk to them on a equal level...sometimes...some of them can be kinda rude depending on the words you say

What do you mean?

Like if you don't address them as a teacher they'll get really mad

Is it easy to get along with your teachers here?

For the most part yeah...some of them can be kinda hard to cooperate with but like if I were to go to pretty much any of my teachers outside of class...during lunch or something...it should be pretty easy to talk to them

Are you teachers effective/good/successful at teaching you new skills/things/facts?

Ummm...In some areas yeah...I would say that sometimes it would be kinda hard for them to relate what they know to us

I'm what ways? Life skills or academics

Ummm...I would say the academics

Do you like your teachers?

Yeah...I would say so...yeah

Why do you think you like your teachers?

Ummm....

What do you like about them

Well, cause, with me I'm usually all about like...like... having a good conversation with my teachers for the benefit of myself and I would say that for the most part I'm able to do that with my teachers

What do you mean for the benefit of yourself?

Like if my grades are slipping or something like that and I have to have a serious talk with my teachers about what I need to do then they usually help me with that

Do you behave differently at school than at other places?

Yes

How so?

Umm...I would say that outside of school I'm kinda more...I'm a little bit more myself and I would say that at school I try to like tone down how much like how active I am and how much things I do at school

Give me an example of what turning down looks like

Umm...outside of school I'm pretty hyperactive I would say and in school I'm kinda like mellow

Tell me about discipline at your school.

Ummm.... I think like here its kind of the teachers are...I would say...from a student standpoint I would say they're too lenient with certain things cause I'm seeing a bunch of kids get away with a bunch of stuff

Like what...what's something that kids get away with a lot?

Like smoking on the blacktop...I just seen it like last period...it happens like everyday

Can you describe a time when you were disciplined by an adult here at this school?

Ummm.... freshman year when I almost got into a fight. I got suspended for like three days.

So what happened...how did the fight start...or almost start?

Well, we were standing in the quad and I was with my friends and I could tell that something that something was gonna happen cause the dude that was trying to fight me was like not that far from me and he was talking pretty loud about me and I didn't like say anything to him that was like negative...I was just like stop, that's not cool cause I just don't like when people do stuff like that and then like he ran up to me and like pushed me and we almost fought but the... Mr....what was the principal at that time..Mr. [name] I think it was...broke it up.

Do you think you were disciplined fairly in that incident?

Ummm...honestly I would say so because when he came up to me I was yelling at him back and I was kinda like adding on to it...so I felt like I did wrong in that situation. I coulda handle it better

How did you feel when you got disciplined?

Umm...I was kinda mad about it but I'm usually the type of person to let things go pretty quickly cause I don't like to weigh stuff on my head

Would you have done anything differently?

Ummm.... I would have just walked...I just wouldn't have been over there if I could have done it over again.

What would you have wanted the adults to do in this incident?

I woulda wanted them to recognize what was actually going on cause they went off of what they saw...they just saw two kids yelling at each other and assumed that they were both fully at fault and honestly at the time I didn't really like I did too much like too much wrong besides yelling back at him and stuff like that.

And you felt like you didn't start it?

Yeah.

Are you usually treated fairly at this school?

For the most part yeah

How would your teachers discipline you if you were...

Asian- honestly I think it would be different

In what ways?

I would...I feel like I would get more respect.

Latino- I feel like I would be treated fairly the same, if not a tad bit worse

Why do you say that?

Because like here like at this school were very culturally diverse but it really depends on what ethnic group you're in...Like those people that are like white kids or the Asian kids...they usually get more respect than say a black kid

What about if you were Indian?

Umm... I feel like it would probably be that same as if I were Asian

What if you were a female?

Umm...I think the same

Another student told me that Black students are treated differently when it comes to discipline at school. Do you think this is true?

Ummm...I think it depends on the adult cause there are a lot of adults that it doesn't matter what race the kid is ...you know their gonna treat every kid the same. But, umm...I don't know...some teachers you can kinda see like...how...how they pick favorites sometimes and... I mean I see it all the time, but it doesn't really bother me that much, I'm kinda used to it.

Do you think you have ever been disciplined unfairly at this school because of your race?

Yeah...

Can you tell me about what happened?

Ummm...kinda the same situation as the last one I told you... I was in class and I was doing my work and I was joking around with this one kid...we were both black and umm...he kinda got mad at something I said and then he stood up out of his desk and tried to fight me right there on the spot...and so umm...I told him that it was... I wasn't trying to be mean or anything and umm... he like sat down and then I thought it was over with but then I stood up and went towards the door to throw something away and he like rushed up behind me and he...he didn't necessarily push me out of class but he was coming towards me so fast that I just moved out the door and so he started yelling at me in the hallway and then we both got gotten to the office and got suspended.

Why do you think that had something to do with your race?

Well, cause I told them what happened and the whole class seen what happened but it didn't really matter because apparently I was at fault for not telling a teacher or something like that...I thought it was kinda dumb.

So how did that make you feel?

That made me really mad...I was really pissed off that day.

Do instances like this happen to you often?

Umm... not really. For the most part I keep my head down

What about instances of being treated unfairly because of your race... does that happen frequently?

Umm...I wouldn't say frequently but the times where it does happen it's pretty clear

What does it feel like when you're disciplined at this school?

Umm...confusion...cause I'll go through the conversation with the principals or what not of why I'm getting in trouble and they'll kinda blow over it a little bit and give me little details of why I'm being in trouble

So it's not really clear?

Yeah

Have you ever gotten a referral at this school?

Yes...

How did you feel?

Umm...I'd say the last time I got a referral was freshman year...it was the last one I remember at least. I didn't have my stuff for class cause I was in the hospital the day before cause of the football game and my coach had my stuff and my teacher said that was unacceptable and he sent me to the office with a referral.

How did you feel?

I was really mad as soon as he gave it to me but I knew that the referral wasn't gonna stand cause one of the vice principals was like with me at the time when I was getting escorted to the hospital.

Have you ever been suspended from this school?

Yes.

What happened?

Umm...recently, uhh... like last week I got suspended for smelling like weed.

How did you feel when you got suspended?

Umm...I was mad but I would say I wasn't really really pissed off cause...I don't know...I just let it go really quickly.

Have you ever been in a conflict mediation at this school?

What is that?....EXPLANATION.... that's never happened before, ever

Have you ever taken part in a RJ circle?

No

What happens to a student that gets suspended too many times?

Umm... honestly...nothing from what I've seen...they just get suspended and come back...there's not too much of a big consequence

What do you think are some strategies for not getting in trouble at school?

Umm...I would say finding good people to hang out with that are... that can benefit your life in a positive way.

Can you think of any other strategies you'd recommend to others?

I would say like getting a hobby...

How would that help?

Well, cause I played football. During the season I was more focused on my team and like, you know, like my grades and bettering myself rather than whatever, everything else that was going on...like girls...it was kinda irrelevant to me.

Do you usually use these strategies?

I would say so, yeah.

What do students who don't get in trouble do to get through school?

Umm...I would say like...well the kids at this school that are super smart and never get in trouble...they feel like... not all of them, cause I know a lot of cool kids that are in the IB program and what not... but a lot of them feel like they're better than the rest of the school.

In what ways do you think?

A lot of them pretty much see themselves 10 years from now working in some big company and like the people that they feel are beneath them are gonna be those ones that are scrounging from a job.

So they have kinda like...they're arrogant maybe... is that what you're saying?

Yeah

How do you think your friends feel about getting into trouble? Do they feel the same way as you?

Well, its kinda a little bit different cause I mostly hang out it...my core group of friends I would say are mostly white...and so me getting in trouble and them getting in trouble, depending on the reason could be entirely different.

Explain a little bit more

Umm...I would say like, say if I was talking in class or something like that...I would get told to stop talking and if I were to do it again I would either get a detention or a referral or something, but if one of my white friends were to like talk or something like that, repetitively, nothing would really happen.

What are some of the things you think they might get in trouble for?

Ummm...maybe like threatening somebody

Do you think that...I don't wanna put words in your mouth but it seems like there's a big difference between talking in class and threatening somebody. Why do you think there is such a big difference between what would get each of you in trouble?

Cause...I feel like...like black kids are kinda expected to get in trouble...like I feel like everyone sees us like we're gonna do something bad but like...when somebody else, if they were going to get in trouble it would have to be something like really bad.

Why do you think...why do you feel like its expected that black kids get in trouble?

Honestly, because like...I think its because we're kinda like set up to sometimes

Tell me what you mean...

Well, its kinda hard to explain...you kinda have to be in the classroom but you can kinda see what's gonna happen if like a black kid were to do something wrong than it would pretty much just go down hill.

And if a white kid did something wrong how do you think the teacher would handle it?

I feel like, every time I've seen my friend...I'm not gonna say his name...but every time he does something he'll get took outside and like they would have a conversation with the teacher for a minute or whatever...but if somebody that was black were to go through something like that they would usually just get sent to the office.

So there's less talking...

Umm hum...cause they feel like there's not really anything they can say to get through to that person about their actions or what not...they always feel like its necessary to send some kids to the office.

How does that make you feel?

Umm...I look over it a lot...not too much stuff can bother me, cause... I don't know...I just...I try to look past it.

Why do you think you do that?

Because I'm afraid for how I would feel if I were to weigh it on my head.

How do you think...if you didn't let it go, how do you think you might react?

Belligerent....

Calvin

Describe yourself as a student

well a lot of people tell me that I'm pretty cool, awesome. I don't wanna toot my own horn but yeah... I'm pretty awesome.

what are you like as a student?

I like to be in school.

How are you able to get along with your schoolmates?

pretty well...everyone likes me. I don't have one enemy.

How are you able to get along with the adults at your school?

most adults are pretty cool...some of them have that whole 'I'm an adult thing...' so its kinda awkward...most of them... I get along with them fine

Is it easy to get along with your teachers here?

yeah...I get along with everybody. most of my teachers are really teachers are really chill...laid back and stuff.

why is it easy for you to get along with your teachers?

cause I'm a people person and I can talk to people like really cool.

are there any teachers that you're not able to get along with?

ummm...is there? ummm...nope...not one.

Do you like your teachers?

yea...all of them

why do you think you like them

cause I don't dislike anybody...I don't feel like anybody deserves to be put in that category...there is good in everybody... I like everybody

Are you teachers effective/good/successful at teaching you new skills/things/facts?

yes, especially one of my teachers... well, should I say six or five of my teachers

Do you behave differently at school than at other places?

yes...school is like my workplace and if I had a job at school...this is a very fun workplace...yes, I act differently at school

in what ways, how do you behave differently?

I act more professional...like a little more professional...it really depends on where I'm at but if I'm at home I'm more relaxed

Tell me about discipline at your school.

uh...I've never really been in trouble at school so I don't really know too much about the disciplinary actions that are taken

have you seen other people be disciplined here?

I've seen referrals go out.

how does that usually work.

well they get a referral and then I think they go to the principals office and I think they get a detention or something or a Saturday school.

So you said you've never been in trouble?

not at this school...no

Are you usually treated fairly at this school?

uhh...sometimes.

tell me about a time when you feel like you haven't been treated fairly

when it comes to like grades and work and stuff...like I turn in my work and then like I'll get like, like a low grade or an average grade when obviously I did like a superb job... like I

remember one time I like I did my work and this other student had copied off of me and we both got our papers back and I got a lower score and they had a higher score and I'm like dude...how is that even possible when you copied off me...so, yeah...sometimes...yeah, its just like whatever and go on about my life.

How do you think teachers would discipline you if you were...Asian, Latino, White, etc.?

ummm....yes.. different

in what ways

I probably think it would be like...probably like better in a way like... I don't know, its hard to explain cause like the way they discipline some kids they'll be like...they'll discipline you then they'll treat it like its normal, like their being fair to everybody.

you think they are being fair to everybody or they aren't?

ummm....it's kinda hard to be fair to everybody. I guess they try to be fair it's just that it doesn't really happen that way.

What about if you were a girl?

I've never seen a girl be in trouble so I wouldn't know

Another student told me that Black students are treated differently when it comes to discipline at school. Do you think this is true?

yes...cause you kinda see it...everybody see it... they see the difference. if a black student were to do something you'd obviously see that they get treated more harshly or very different as opposed to a different student. It's kinda hard to miss.

does it happen often...

it happens as often as the student gets in trouble.

Do you think you have ever been disciplined unfairly at this school because of your race?

in the past... I've been in the past of course.

were you treated unfairly in the past because of your race.

in the past... of course... I went to this one school where it was predominantly Asian...I can't really stress that enough... literally I was the only African American kid there...seriously.

and so how did you feel like you were treated differently?

cause I'm the only black kid there.... they'd look at me. when I would walk in class, its the only time I've seen like just like...it was crazy, cause they all dropped their jaws and their eyes opened wide and ... I was like, "sup..." it was...I was just different and the culture there...it was different...I was kinda awkward to see a predominantly Asian school in an area like that.

Have you ever gotten a referral at this school?

no

Have you ever been suspended from this school?

no

Have you ever been in a conflict mediation at this school?

nope

Have you ever taken part in a RJ circle?

uh...I don't believe so

Have you ever had a parent-teacher conference at this school because of your behavior?

nope, at this school, no

What happens to a student that gets suspended too many times?

I think there's like a hearing at the district and then they take further action from there.

so then what happens? what are some of the further actions?

I think either they get suspended a lot or in serious causes they'll have expulsion, and in very serious cases there will be expulsion and getting arrested or something

What do you think are some strategies for not getting in trouble at school?

don't do bad things...

any other specific strategies...

yes, don't do stupid bad things...that are bad.

that's an approach...what about a strategy?

eliminate bad things

tell me what you mean

that's a really hard question

eliminate bad things like what?

that's really hard...its really hard to eliminate bad things

What do students who don't get in trouble do to get through school?

keep their head in the books, do all their homework and get involved in some sort of sport and become active in their community...that's the stuff I do.

how does each of those things help you to not get in trouble?

I don't have too much time on my hands to get in trouble.

so it keeps you busy?

yeah, it keeps you really busy...afterschool I have to play football so I'm very active...and then after that I've got homework, and then after that I've got sleep...so....

How do you think your friends feel about getting into trouble? Do they feel the same way as you?

they don't really get in trouble.

do you think most students feel the same way about getting in trouble, getting suspended, sent to the office, that kind of thing?

yes...well, I don't know. I'm a people's person...I'm just not too people personal...I just not getting into people's personal...I can hold a conversation...

do you think most kids try to stay away from getting in trouble like you do?

some kids do and then some kids like the attention...it depends on the student...like, I know I don't like to be in trouble cause I don't like the drama and I don't like the effort that goes into getting in trouble and some student they just like the attention...they like everyone being around them and seeing them get sent to the office...its stupid but its what they like...its what they feed