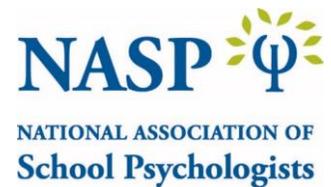


Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Research Highlights Approaches to Help Close the Discipline Gap in U.S. Schools

Special Edition of *School Psychology Review* Tackles Racial Disparities in School Discipline Practices

Bethesda, MD—New research published in a special issue of *School Psychology Review*, a preeminent quarterly research journal published by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), reveals both promising approaches and critical challenges to closing racial and ethnic gaps in schools’ use of exclusionary and punitive discipline practices. The special issue, entitled “Closing in on Discipline Disproportionality” was guest edited by renowned scholars Catherine P. Bradshaw and Jessika H. Bottiani of the University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education and Human Development and by Anne Gregory of Rutgers University.

While a myriad of studies have identified the existence of racial and ethnic disparities in school discipline practices, particularly for Black students, few studies have closely examined potential remedies. The studies released in this issue of SPR highlight a number of promising strategies, including Double Check and GREET-STOP-PROMPT (GSP) professional development models for supporting school staff in handling problem behavior in the classroom; restorative interventions; threat assessments; and other issues related to classroom behavior management and culturally responsive practices.

Taken together, the studies in “Closing in on Discipline Disproportionality” bring attention to the progress made in developing strategies to address some underlying causes of disproportional discipline. Although these strategies appear to hold promise for ‘nudging the gap’, ongoing challenges that are hindering progress in closing racial gaps in discipline include limitations in our ability to measure progress, complex school ecologies, and the pervasive nature of racism. More research is needed to serve as the foundation for an evidence-based, next-generation approach to fully closing the discipline gap. Guest editors Bradshaw, Bottiani, and Gregory discuss in a podcast the implications of the research.

TOP LINE FINDINGS

Double Check. In a randomized study of 158 elementary and middle school teachers, the teachers who received Double Check coaching engaged in significantly more instances of proactive behavior management and anticipation of student problems in the classroom. Student cooperation was also higher and disruptive behaviors lower in coached teachers' classrooms, relative to noncoached teachers. Coached teachers also had a reduced number of office discipline referrals for Black students.

GREET-STOP-PROMPT (GSP). An examination of the efficacy of GSP found systematic reductions in risk ratios once the GSP approach was introduced, with a two-third reduction in the likelihood of Black male students receiving an office discipline referral.

The study also found that GSP lead to improvements in Black male students' perceptions of school connection, indicating that the GSP may also be associated with improved perceptions of school climate and their sense of belonging in school.

Restorative interventions (RIs). An analysis of 2014–2015 data from Denver Public Schools found that students who participated in RIs showed a reduced likelihood of being suspended. Specifically, the receipt of one or more RIs was associated with a 69% decrease in the odds of receiving out of school suspension while controlling for all other school and student characteristics.

Additionally, records revealed that discipline-referred students' participation in RIs was only marginally associated with more comparable assignment of an out of school suspension to Black students relative to their White peers. Implications are that RI participation was associated with nudging, though not substantially narrowing, Black/White suspension gaps.

Threat assessment. In a study of threat assessments in Virginia found that although schools tended to suspend Black and Hispanic students at higher rates than White students across all disciplinary infractions, there were no statistically significant racial differences in outcomes for students receiving threat assessments.

Proactive behavior management and culturally responsive teaching practices. Observations of culturally responsive teaching and proactive behavior management were significantly and positively associated with positive student behavior while teachers' self-reported efficacy was not. This study highlights the need for more attention to the measurement of culturally responsive practices.

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About NASP

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is a professional association that represents more than 25,000 school psychologists. The world's largest organization of school psychologists, NASP works to advance effective practices to improve students' learning, behavior, and mental health. Our vision is that all children and youth thrive in school, at home, and throughout life.

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