

In School Suspension Reform Website

by

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Introduction

Across America, children are being sent home from school on a daily basis due to behaviors and situations that arise within the school environment. These days of being sent home are called suspensions. While schools often implement suspensions as a form of discipline, research has shown that students who experience repeated suspensions are more likely to face significant challenges later in life. (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2024) Many of these students, who might already be struggling with academic or social difficulties, find themselves on a path that can ultimately lead to incarceration. Across the country, studies reveal a troubling correlation: young adults who end up in the criminal justice system often had difficult experiences in school, including multiple suspensions and other forms of exclusion. This repeated cycle of exclusion is commonly referred to as the “suspension-to-prison pipeline,” (Bacher-Hicks et al., 2024) a phenomenon that highlights the consequences of punitive disciplinary measures on children’s futures. Suspensions, particularly when used repeatedly, remove students from educational opportunities and send a message that their behaviors make them unworthy of participation in the classroom. Over time, society has come to accept suspension as the default response to challenging behavior in schools. On the other hand, In school suspension has become an alternate mechanism to change the system of pushing students out of school. In this system, students remain in the school building but are removed from their normal classes and placed in a separate room where they are expected to reflect on their behavior. While ISS is often viewed as a corrective measure, when implemented in a punitive way, it can reinforce negative patterns rather than encourage growth. Students may feel punished, alienated, or stigmatized, which can perpetuate behavioral issues and increase the likelihood of future suspensions (Blomberg, 2003).

However, the ISS model also has the potential to serve as a tool for positive transformation when approached thoughtfully. By reimagining ISS rooms as spaces for learning rather than solely punishment, schools can create environments that support social-emotional growth, behavioral development, and academic progress. (Blomberg, 2003). Over the past ten years I have worked in this role as an educator. I was the first person in the city of New Haven to change the In-School Suspension room to the reflection room. In this space the room became more of a helpful tool for students to learn positive emotions and behaviors, while reflecting positively on the issue and how to change the cause. I noticed that as an In School suspension worker, we did not have adequate materials to support us in our role. We may go to one training course once a year and the rest was up to us to create solely from our mind.

Furthermore, it is important that we change as I did, the attitude of the staff members in the room. In the past the staff members who held this role had to be mean. I wanted to keep a positive attitude and smile no matter what the cause of the visit. I wanted to help the students not come to the room again. My hopes were to help the student and change the behavior. I realized that not only did the behavior need help, but many times the emotions that lead up to the behaviors need constant reform and attention. Social Emotional learning can aid in the emotional learning endeavor. It helps to teach children how to regulate emotions and feelings. (Mahoney et al., 2018). This is why the transformation of these spaces can help students learn strategies for managing emotions, resolving conflicts, and making responsible decisions. With that, using restorative practices and repairing harm initiatives can aid in the new way of looking at In School Suspension (Augustine et al., 2018). In School Suspension workers can use restorative practices to build relationships with students. If staff use these methods ISS rooms can become safe and supportive environments where students not only reflect on their actions but also develop the

skills and resilience needed to succeed in school and beyond. I want to demonstrate that in-school suspension, when used as a structured and supportive intervention, can help students flourish rather than fall behind. By transforming ISS rooms into centers for behavioral education and personal growth, schools can interrupt the school/suspension-to-prison pipeline and provide students with opportunities to reform their behavior, achieve academic success, and contribute positively to their communities. This is why I created a website that can help In school suspension workers around the country work with the youth in their school. This is a one stop shop for all In-School Suspensions (ISS) staff needs. This system will be forever changing and developing. Through this approach, ISS can evolve from a symbol of exclusion into a beacon of hope, showing that every student has the potential to change, learn, and thrive.

The Project

The purpose of this project was to develop a comprehensive, centralized resource for school staff, teachers, and administrators involved with In School Suspension (ISS) programs. This resource was designed to enhance understanding of ISS as a constructive educational intervention and to support the implementation of restorative practices within ISS settings. By providing practical strategies, pedagogical insights, and structured lesson plans, the project aimed to improve student outcomes, promote Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and facilitate effective conflict resolution in schools. The created resource serves as a one-stop shop for educators seeking guidance on restorative approaches, emotional regulation, relationship building, and repairing harm within the ISS environment. The intended audience included ISS staff, classroom teachers, school administrators, counselors, and other student support personnel. These individuals now have access to a consolidated resource that combines research, practical strategies, and instructional tools, enabling them to address student needs effectively and

consistently within ISS programs. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, this project ensures that every educator, regardless of their prior experience with restorative justice, has the tools necessary to foster a growth-oriented atmosphere.

A central component of the developed resource is a collection of pedagogical articles, research studies, and evidence-based practices related to ISS. This includes content on the educational role of ISS, restorative justice practices in schools, the benefits of SEL, and data supporting positive ISS outcomes. Complementing this, a section on restorative practices provides detailed guidance for conducting repairing harm circles and addressing common student behaviors and conflicts. Step-by-step instructions guide staff in facilitating restorative conversations that help students repair harm and rebuild relationships. The resource also emphasizes conflict resolution and relationship-building strategies, highlighting methods for fostering trust and rapport with students and teaching emotional regulation through mini-lessons and guided conversations. This foundational knowledge shifts the focus from what rule was broken to who was harmed and how that harm can be addressed, creating a more empathetic school culture.

To ensure the SEL component is robust and impactful, the curriculum was anchored in the five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Self-awareness exercises encourage students to identify their emotional triggers and understand how their physiological responses precede their actions. For self-management, the resource provides students with a "toolkit" of de-escalation techniques, including mindfulness breathing, grounding exercises, and cognitive reframing to help them navigate high-stress moments without resorting to disruption. Social awareness and empathy-building modules challenge students to consider perspectives other than their own. Relationship

skills training focuses on active listening and assertive communication, teaching students how to advocate for their needs without escalating conflict. Finally, the responsible decision-making curriculum guides students through an analysis of consequences, helping them evaluate the long-term benefits of prosocial behavior over impulsive reactions. By embedding these competencies into daily ISS routines, the program moves beyond mere compliance, teaching students the internal skills necessary for long-term behavioral change.

The research paper, handbook and website illustrate practical approaches for ISS staff to manage challenging situations effectively. Additionally, the resource includes lesson plans and curriculum ideas tailored for ISS settings. These lessons focus on SEL, providing structured exercises to develop self-awareness, empathy, and problem-solving skills, while also supporting restorative practices to repair harm and restore relationships between students and staff.

Historical context and data on ISS are incorporated to provide insight into the evolution and effectiveness of ISS programs. This section presents research demonstrating the positive impact of restorative practices on student behavior, school climate, and overall educational outcomes.

The resource service serves as a centralized hub, enabling staff to access strategies, lesson plans, articles, and templates efficiently. It will offer downloadable materials such as reflection sheets, circle scripts, and behavior tracking forms, all designed to be user-friendly and practical for daily use. By including these ready-to-use templates, the project reduces the administrative burden on staff, allowing them to focus more on direct student interaction and mentorship.

The website is organized for intuitive navigation, offering sections that provide overviews of ISS programs, access to research and articles, guidance on restorative practices, SEL mini-lessons, conflict resolution strategies, lesson plans, and historical and data-driven insights. Additional considerations included incorporating video demonstrations, interactive

exercises, and a framework for future expansion to ensure it remains relevant to the evolving needs of modern classrooms. Ultimately, this project created a centralized, evidence-based, and user-friendly resource that transforms ISS from a purely punitive measure into a structured, supportive environment where students can develop skills, build relationships, and grow socially and emotionally. By combining research, practical strategies, and curriculum resources, the handbook and website support ISS staff in implementing restorative approaches effectively and consistently, improving outcomes for students and school communities alike, and setting a new standard for disciplinary excellence.

Significance and Relevance

Why is it important to ensure that students have a space to learn positive behaviors and social skills in schools? Why is it important for teachers and staff to have a space in a school where students can learn positive behaviors? Schools have traditionally been seen as places for academic learning, teaching reading, writing, mathematics, and science. While these skills are essential, they are not the only skills sufficient to prepare children for life beyond the classroom. Social-emotional skills, moral reasoning, and behavioral guidance are equally important for a child's development. Many children grow up in environments where they do not consistently learn these skills at home. For example, a significant number of children are raised in single-parent households where the parent must work long hours, often juggling multiple jobs, leaving siblings or other family members to assist in childcare. While families try their best, the demands of modern life can make it difficult to provide structured guidance in positive behavior and conflict resolution. In addition, many children experience challenging circumstances such as poverty, trauma, or exposure to unstable home environments. These factors can severely affect

their social and emotional development, leaving them ill-equipped to navigate interpersonal challenges at school. For some children, the behaviors they display in the classroom, like aggression, withdrawal, or defiance are not signs of bad behavior, but expressions of unmet social, emotional, or moral needs. Schools have a unique opportunity to address these needs and provide a structured environment where children can learn and practice positive behaviors.

Currently, many schools address behavioral challenges with punitive measures such as out-of-school suspensions. While intended to manage disruptive behavior, these suspensions often fail to achieve any meaningful educational or developmental outcome. In school suspensions are typically used as a temporary solution to remove a student from the classroom and provide teachers with a break, rather than a place for constructive learning. Students are often left unsupervised or minimally monitored, sitting in isolation while their underlying behavioral challenges go unaddressed. The result is a system that functions more as babysitting than as education or skill-building tool. This is why it is critical to rethink and transform these spaces. Instead of serving only as a form of punishment, in-school suspension areas can become dedicated environments for teaching positive social, emotional, and moral behaviors. (Rodas-Richwalder, 2011). By reimagining these spaces, schools can create an opportunity to provide individualized guidance and support to students who need it most.

For instance, a student assigned to in-school suspension for verbally lashing out at a teacher could instead receive structured counseling and coaching centered on anger management, conflict resolution, and respectful communication. Through this approach, staff can guide the student through purposeful reflection activities that explore how their actions impact both themselves and those around them, while simultaneously equipping them with practical strategies to respond more constructively in future situations. The benefits of such a

transformation extend far beyond the individual student, creating a positive ripple effect throughout the entire school. Teachers benefit significantly because they are able to maintain a more manageable classroom environment. Meanwhile, students experience fewer removals from class, which directly supports their academic progress by ensuring they remain present in the learning environment. When teachers face fewer outbursts, they can dedicate their energy to delivering the curriculum rather than spending the entire day managing or teaching basic behaviors. Consequently, educators are likely to return home feeling less stressed and burnt out, as the profession becomes more enjoyable and sustainable.

By addressing behavioral issues through this proactive lens, schools can effectively reduce classroom disruptions, enhance overall learning conditions, and foster a lasting culture of respect and empathy among the entire student body. Moreover, students who acquire these vital social-emotional skills early in life are statistically more likely to achieve greater academic and social success over the long term. This is supported by research consistently showing that programs focused on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) improve academic outcomes, encourage positive behaviors, and significantly reduce behavioral problems within schools. Ultimately, this evidence demonstrates that supporting a child's social and emotional growth is not merely a "nice-to-have" secondary component of education; rather, it is an essential foundation for fostering both academic excellence and lifelong well-being (Mahoney et al., 2018).

To implement these changes effectively, I have created a comprehensive website for educators. This resource provides materials, lesson plans, and step-by-step guidance on integrating social-emotional learning, restorative practices, moral education, and conflict resolution into in-school suspension programs. Staff working with students in these settings can access strategies for teaching empathy, cooperation, and emotional regulation, as well as tools for

guiding restorative circles, mediating conflicts, and addressing specific behavioral challenges. For example, a first-grade student who refuses to share or has hit a classmate could be guided through activities designed to teach empathy, problem-solving, and the importance of prosocial behaviors. Older students could learn anger management techniques, communication skills, and strategies for repairing harm in peer relationships.

Restorative practices in particular have shown remarkable promise in reducing repeat behavioral incidents and promoting a sense of accountability and personal growth. By creating spaces where students can repair harm, reflect on their choices, and practice positive behaviors, schools can shift from a reactive model of discipline to a proactive model of behavioral education. Students learn to understand the consequences of their actions, develop empathy for others, and acquire skills that will serve them beyond the classroom. Transforming in-school suspension from a punitive space into a learning environment for social-emotional and moral development is essential for modern education. It addresses the needs of students who may not receive adequate guidance at home, provides opportunities for skill-building and personal growth, and fosters a healthier, more supportive school culture. Every child deserves the chance to learn not only academics but also the essential skills for navigating life, relationships, and society. By creating dedicated spaces that teach positive behaviors, schools can help students build a foundation for lifelong success, making the educational system more equitable, compassionate, and effective.

Review of Literature

The school/suspension-to-prison pipeline represents a critical systemic challenge where punitive school disciplinary practices directly contribute to future contact with the criminal justice system. A foundational study titled *School-to-Prison Pipeline: Long-Run Impacts of School Suspension and Adult Crime* by Hicks, Billings, and Deming (2024) investigates these long-term effects of school suspensions on adult criminal outcomes. The researchers focused on a cohort of 6th graders from the 2002–2003 school year who progressed through school at the standard rate of one grade per year. These students would have entered 12th grade in the 2008–2009 academic year. The study uniquely tracked these students over a ten-year period, analyzing arrests and incarcerations that occurred between the ages of 16 and 21. By doing so, the researchers were able to observe crime outcomes for students who were in grades 6–8 between 2000 and 2003, providing a longitudinal perspective on the effects of early disciplinary actions.

The sample for this longitudinal study included approximately 90% of middle school students in the specified years. The demographic breakdown showed that 39% of students were Black, 39% were White, and 8% were Hispanic. On average, 23% of students were suspended at least once per year, with the typical suspension lasting between two and three days. Additionally, 18% of the students were arrested at least once, and 13% were incarcerated at least once during the observation period (Hicks, Billings, & Deming, 2024). These statistics provide insight into both the prevalence of suspensions and their potential link to later criminal activity. The research design had two major components to isolate the true impacts of these environments. First, the authors generated predictions of school-level effects on suspension rates. Second, they leveraged school rezoning policies to create quasi-random assignments of students to schools. In this design, students living in the same neighborhood could be assigned to different schools, allowing

researchers to isolate the effects of school-specific disciplinary practices. The study included several analytical tables, including one that divided the sample by age, comparing outcomes for individuals under 18 and those over 18 at the time of an arrest or incarceration. The results showed that suspensions affected arrest and incarceration outcomes for both age groups, but the magnitude of the effect was larger for those over 18, suggesting that early disciplinary measures have lasting consequences into adulthood (Hicks, Billings, & Deming, 2024).

One of the key findings of the study is that schools with histories of stricter disciplinary practices have negative long-term impacts on students. Specifically, students quasi-randomly assigned to schools with higher conditional suspension rates were significantly more likely to be arrested and incarcerated as adults. These findings provide compelling evidence for the existence of a “school-to-prison pipeline,” demonstrating that early punitive measures in schools can contribute to increased criminal behavior in adulthood. To break this pipeline, the study emphasizes the importance of restorative and rehabilitative approaches, such as well-implemented in-school suspension programs, which can mitigate these negative outcomes and provide students with opportunities to correct behavior without derailing their academic and social development.

In the analytical literature titled *Effective Discipline for Misbehavior: In Suspension (ISS) vs Out of school suspension (OSS)*, it notes that in school settings, classroom management is one of the most significant concerns for educators and parents. When students feel safe, respected, and that they belong, their engagement, grades, and behavior improve significantly. Positive classroom management skills are essential for creating a productive learning environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Strong classroom management not only helps prevent misbehavior but also fosters a sense of community and

mutual respect between students and teachers. The most severe disciplinary measures in schools are out-of-school suspensions (OSS) and in-school suspensions (ISS). Examining the effectiveness of both highlights why shifting the focus toward in-school suspension is vital for student development. One of the primary concerns for teachers, administrators, and parents is maintaining a safe, supportive, and focused classroom that allows students to learn and grow without constant disruptions. Although several strategies exist for classroom management and discipline, the most severe problems and behaviors usually result in either ISS or OSS (Bloomberg, 2003). According to findings regarding historical disciplinary trends, emerging fears of drugs, gangs, and violence were considered the most serious behavioral problems, often warranting harsher consequences. This context explains the prevalence of out-of-school suspensions as a primary disciplinary measure. However, data reveals that the majority of suspensions are not related to these extreme behaviors. Instead, most referrals are due to insubordination, defiance, and minor disruptions in the classroom. This discrepancy highlights the need for alternative approaches that address behavioral issues without unnecessarily removing students from the learning environment. Research on in-school suspension indicates that educators have long been frustrated with the OSS model, which often functions as an unhelpful “time-out” from school rather than a corrective or therapeutic measure.

A specific study on ISS program dynamics included 364 students, with an equal distribution of White and Black students. Although the school lacked funding for additional staff or monitoring technology, the ISS program demonstrated significant benefits. In the ISS room, teachers intervened minimally, only when students attempted to be disruptive or engage in off-task behavior. While the overall effect in a small district was modest, in larger districts focused on reducing OSS, the ISS program proved highly effective. Not only did it reduce the number of

suspensions, but students also reported that the counseling and guidance provided in ISS were the most valuable aspects of the program (Bloomberg, 2003). This research emphasizes that in-school suspension rooms can serve as constructive spaces for student development when implemented thoughtfully. However, systemic challenges persist, as there is a significant disparity in which students are sent to ISS, with Black and Brown students disproportionately represented. When used properly, ISS rooms can counteract the broader inequities of the school/suspension to-prison pipeline by teaching positive behavioral skills, providing access to counseling, and supporting social-emotional learning. By using these rooms as reformatory, rather than purely punitive spaces, schools can help students develop self-regulation, conflict resolution skills, and better decision-making abilities. For ISS to be most effective and truly disrupt the long-term adult crime trajectories identified by modern longitudinal research, staff must actively implement restorative practices and restorative justice, along with social-emotional learning, conflict management, and anger management strategies.

Restorative practices are community-building approaches that focus on strengthening relationships, repairing harm, and fostering accountability through dialogue. These practices encourage students to understand the impact of their actions and take responsibility for resolving conflicts constructively. Rather than simply sitting silently as a form of passive punishment, students should be encouraged to participate in structured discussions or circles, reflect on incidents, and collaboratively develop strategies to prevent future misbehavior (Bass & Gaines, 2023). By prioritizing restorative and educational approaches in ISS, schools can create environments where students not only correct their behavior but also learn essential life skills. When implemented with fidelity, ISS can transform from a punitive tool into a meaningful opportunity for growth, helping students flourish academically, socially, and emotionally.

The scholarly text *Rethinking In-School Suspension through Restorative Practices* directly examines how these restorative methodologies can be implemented with high school students assigned to in-school suspension (ISS) for violating school rules. The study focuses precisely on whether these practices can reduce repeat offenses, improve overall student behavior, and create a more supportive learning environment. By integrating these practices directly into the disciplinary structure, schools can move away from the traditional, exclusionary habits that fuel the school/suspension-to-prison pipeline and instead build a sustainable model of rehabilitative accountability.

An Update on Social and Emotional Learning Outcome Research and Teachers and Their Served Communities: Linking to Racial Disparities in In-School Suspension

In-school suspension (ISS) has traditionally been used as a disciplinary response for students who violate school rules or engage in disruptive behavior. In many schools, ISS is viewed primarily as a form of punishment designed to temporarily remove students from the classroom environment. However, research presented in *An Update on Social and Emotional Learning Outcome Research* suggests that ISS spaces can serve a much greater purpose when combined with social and emotional learning (SEL) practices. Rather than functioning solely as punitive environments, ISS rooms can become structured spaces where students learn emotional regulation, self-awareness, and conflict-resolution skills that support both academic success and personal growth. Many students who are sent to ISS are already experiencing intense emotions such as anger, frustration, embarrassment, stress, or anxiety. These emotions can make it difficult for students to regulate their responses or make thoughtful decisions, particularly because children and adolescents are still developing the cognitive and emotional skills necessary for self-control and problem-solving. By incorporating SEL strategies into ISS programs, schools

have an opportunity to address the root causes of student behavior while equipping students with tools that can positively impact their futures.

Research on social and emotional learning strongly supports the value of these interventions. In *An Update on Social and Emotional Learning Outcome Research*, researchers synthesized findings from hundreds of studies examining the effectiveness of SEL programs in schools. The results consistently demonstrated that students who participated in SEL initiatives experienced meaningful growth in emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes compared to students who did not participate in such programs. SEL programs help students develop essential competencies such as identifying and understanding emotions, practicing empathy, resolving interpersonal conflicts, communicating effectively, and engaging in responsible decision-making. These skills are critical not only within school settings but throughout adulthood, as individuals navigate relationships, workplaces, and community interactions.

The research also highlights how SEL positively shapes students' self-perceptions and emotional well-being. Students who engage in SEL programs often report increased self-confidence, stronger self-awareness, and a greater sense of personal responsibility. As students become more capable of understanding and managing their emotions, they are better able to respond to challenging situations without resorting to aggression or disruptive behavior. This is particularly important in ISS settings, where students may already feel isolated, frustrated, or disconnected from the school community. Providing emotional support and structured opportunities for reflection in ISS can help students reenter the classroom with improved coping mechanisms and a greater sense of accountability for their actions.

Beyond emotional growth, SEL programs have been associated with significant improvements in social behavior. Students who participate in SEL demonstrate increased

prosocial behaviors, including cooperation with peers, empathy, helping others, peaceful conflict resolution, and active problem-solving. These positive behaviors contribute to healthier classroom environments and stronger school communities overall. Schools implementing SEL initiatives often experience reductions in classroom disruptions, bullying, fighting, and other disciplinary incidents. Emotional health outcomes improve as well, with participating students reporting lower levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal. These findings suggest that SEL not only benefits individual students but also contributes to a safer and more supportive school climate.

Importantly, *An Update on Social and Emotional Learning Outcome Research* also identifies a strong relationship between emotional regulation and academic achievement. Students involved in SEL programs frequently show measurable gains in reading and mathematics performance, overall grades, attendance, and standardized test scores. When students are emotionally supported and able to regulate stress effectively, they are more likely to engage positively in learning and remain focused in the classroom. This connection between emotional wellness and academic success reinforces the idea that disciplinary systems should prioritize student development rather than punishment alone. Incorporating SEL into ISS settings can therefore transform these spaces into opportunities for intervention, reflection, and growth rather than environments that simply isolate students from instruction.

While SEL offers clear benefits for improving student behavior and emotional development, *Teachers and Their Served Communities: Linking to Racial Disparities in In-School Suspension* emphasizes that school disciplinary systems are deeply influenced by broader social and structural inequities. The study specifically examines racial disparities in suspension practices and explores how teacher-student ethnoracial congruence influences disciplinary

outcomes in Tennessee schools. The research investigates whether students are disciplined differently depending on whether their teachers share similar racial or cultural backgrounds. Findings from the study reveal that schools with greater racial alignment between teachers and students were less likely to demonstrate large disciplinary gaps between White students and students of color. Conversely, districts with higher concentrations of White teachers were more likely to exhibit disproportionate in-school suspension rates affecting Black and Brown students. These findings are particularly significant because they highlight the role that implicit bias and institutional norms can play in shaping disciplinary decisions. Across the United States, the teaching workforce remains predominantly White, middle-class, and female, while many schools serve increasingly diverse student populations. This demographic mismatch means that many students of color are taught by educators who may not share their cultural, racial, or linguistic experiences. Although many teachers work hard to support all students equitably, unconscious biases can still influence how behaviors are interpreted and disciplined. Behaviors that may be viewed as minor or manageable when displayed by White students may be interpreted more negatively when displayed by students of color, contributing to disproportionate disciplinary outcomes. The study utilized data from the 2017–2018 Civil Rights Data Collection, educator demographic information from the Tennessee Department of Education, and demographic and economic data from the American Community Survey. Researchers analyzed information from 440 school districts across 96 counties in Tennessee to better understand patterns of racial disparity in school discipline.

The findings revealed that 82 percent of Tennessee school districts were more than 94.7 percent White, with approximately 90 percent White teachers on average. Districts with higher percentages of White teachers consistently demonstrated larger disparities in suspension rates

between White students and students of color. These disparities suggest that disciplinary inequities are not simply the result of individual student behavior but are also connected to broader structural and cultural dynamics within schools. The implications of this research are profound. Students who are disproportionately disciplined are more likely to experience negative academic and social outcomes, including decreased academic achievement, lower graduation rates, and increased disengagement from school. Frequent exclusionary discipline practices such as ISS can also contribute to what researchers often describe as the “school-to-prison pipeline,” in which repeated disciplinary actions increase students’ risk of future involvement with the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Black and Brown students, particularly Black boys, are often overrepresented in exclusionary disciplinary settings, which raises serious concerns about fairness and equity within educational systems. When considered together, *An Update on Social and Emotional Learning Outcome Research and Teachers and Their Served Communities: Linking to Racial Disparities in In-School Suspension* provide a compelling argument for rethinking how schools approach discipline and student support. SEL programs demonstrate that students can learn emotional regulation, empathy, and constructive problem-solving skills when schools intentionally provide these opportunities. At the same time, the research on racial disparities in ISS reminds educators and policymakers that discipline cannot be separated from issues of equity, representation, and bias. Effective disciplinary reform must therefore address both individual student development and systemic inequalities within schools. One potential solution is the integration of restorative practices alongside SEL initiatives. Restorative practices focus on repairing harm, rebuilding relationships, and encouraging accountability through dialogue and reflection rather than punishment alone. When combined with SEL, restorative approaches can help students understand the impact of their actions while also giving them the

tools to make better choices in the future. In ISS settings, restorative conversations, emotional regulation exercises, counseling, and skill-building activities can replace passive punishment with meaningful intervention. This approach not only reduces repeat disciplinary incidents but also helps students remain connected to their school communities.

Additionally, increasing diversity within the teaching workforce may help reduce racial disparities in discipline. Recruiting and retaining teachers of color can improve cultural understanding, strengthen relationships between educators and students, and create more inclusive learning environments. Professional development focused on culturally responsive teaching and implicit bias awareness can also help educators examine how their perceptions and disciplinary practices may unintentionally disadvantage certain student groups. Schools that prioritize equity, inclusion, and emotional support are better positioned to create environments where all students feel valued and understood. Ultimately, both *An Update on Social and Emotional Learning Outcome Research and Teachers and Their Served Communities: Linking to Racial Disparities in In-School Suspension* emphasize the importance of moving beyond punitive approaches to discipline. ISS should not simply function as a space where students are removed from learning opportunities. Instead, schools can transform ISS into an environment where students develop emotional intelligence, reflect on their actions, and receive the support needed to succeed academically and socially. By combining SEL practices, restorative approaches, culturally responsive teaching, and equitable disciplinary policies, schools can reduce behavioral issues, address racial disparities, and create safer, more supportive educational environments for all students.

The Persistent Effect of Race and the Promise of Alternatives to Suspension in School Discipline Outcomes and The essential role of positive behavior supports in today's.

Research on school discipline continues to demonstrate that exclusionary practices disproportionately affect students of color and negatively influence academic achievement. Studies examining both out-of-school suspension and in-school suspension (ISS) reveal that disciplinary policies often contribute to inequities in education, particularly for Black, Latino, Multiracial, and low-income students. Collectively, the findings suggest that schools must adopt more equitable and restorative approaches to discipline while ensuring that students remain academically engaged during disciplinary interventions.

One study found that Black, Latino, and Multiracial students received harsher punishments than White students for similar behaviors. Schools located in low-income communities with higher populations of Black and Latino students were also more likely to rely on suspensions and other exclusionary disciplinary practices. In addition, factors such as poverty, behavioral referrals, and placement in special education were associated with increased disciplinary actions, with office referrals identified as the strongest predictor of expulsion (Anyon & McQueen, 2014). When researchers reanalyzed the data using demographic variables such as race, gender, and disability status, male students were found to be at an even greater risk of expulsion. These findings indicate that disciplinary disparities are shaped not only by student behavior but also by administrative decision-making and inconsistencies in school discipline policies. The research further emphasizes the importance of restorative practices and graduated discipline systems as alternatives to exclusionary discipline. Restorative approaches and in-school interventions have been shown to reduce office referrals and suspension rates while promoting fairness and inclusivity among diverse student populations. By focusing on repairing

harm, improving relationships, and supporting student behavior rather than removing students from school, these approaches may help create safer and more equitable learning environments.

Similar research examining the effects of in-school suspension highlights both its intended benefits and its academic consequences. Although ISS is often viewed as a less harmful alternative to out-of-school suspension because students remain on campus under supervision, its impact on academic performance remains concerning. Students assigned to ISS are removed from their regular classroom settings and separated from peers and instructional routines, though they are expected to complete assignments independently using materials provided by teachers (Smith & Ortiz, 2020). This structure is intended to reduce missed instructional time, maintain attendance, and prevent students from being unsupervised outside of school.

However, findings from studies focused on ninth-grade students indicate that ISS still has a significant negative effect on academic achievement (Blake & Miner, 2020). Students placed in ISS tend to earn lower GPAs and are at greater risk of dropping out compared to students who are not suspended. In fact, research shows that even a single ISS placement can increase the likelihood of failing a statewide standardized test by more than 25%, with the effects being especially severe for students of color (Asha & Unni, 2020). These disparities further demonstrate how disciplinary practices can deepen existing educational inequities.

Beyond academic decline, suspension can also contribute to emotional disengagement from school. Students who experience ISS often report feelings of anger, frustration, and apathy, all of which can weaken motivation and increase dropout risk. Additionally, disciplinary removal limits access to important classroom experiences such as direct instruction, peer collaboration, curriculum support, and social interaction. As a result, students may struggle to maintain academic progress even when they remain physically present at school.

Together, these studies demonstrate that both out-of-school and in-school suspensions can have long-lasting academic and social consequences, particularly for marginalized student groups. The evidence strongly supports the implementation of restorative practices, graduated discipline systems, and targeted academic support during disciplinary interventions. Schools must ensure that students assigned to ISS continue to receive meaningful instructional support and opportunities for engagement. Teachers should consistently provide assignments, while ISS staff actively monitor student progress and assist students in understanding and completing their work. Overall, the research suggests that effective school discipline should prioritize equity, student support, and continued academic engagement rather than exclusion. By addressing disparities in disciplinary decision-making and investing in restorative and instructional interventions, schools can reduce suspension rates, improve academic outcomes, and foster more inclusive educational environments for all students.

The world around us, our physical settings, and how the people in our lives act are all deeply connected to our own actions and the decisions we make about how we want to behave or react. Just about everyone knows what behavior is, and at some point or another, we have all reacted to something in either a positive or negative way. Most people also realize that acting positively is much more accepted by society than acting negatively. Because of this, teaching kids how to behave is easily one of the most vital roles a teacher or parent can have. The way someone is taught to handle themselves really shapes whether they will have a good or bad reaction when they are faced with a specific situation or trigger. In The essential role of positive behavior supports today's Educators and parents spend a lot of time trying to model good behavior, showing kids how to act the right way in different moments. They also work hard to fix

negative behaviors by helping students understand what they could have done differently, which helps turn those moments into a lesson on positive behavior.

In many schools today, there are teachers and leaders who are trying to change the old ways of managing behavior and how those rules are put into place. Nowadays, behavior management skills are being taught to students, teachers, and staff through all kinds of different structured programs. Teaching positive behavior has become a huge priority in schools everywhere. This is why utilizing In school suspension rooms can work, but to really figure out the best way to handle behavior in a classroom or an entire school, we need to look at all the different methods out there.

Effect of the Number of In-School Suspensions on Academic Failure

Although in-school suspension (ISS) can support emotional regulation and behavioral improvement, it is essential that academics remain a primary focus. We want to get the student to reenter in the classroom. Without adequate academic support, students risk falling behind in their learning. This study explores the use of ISS as a less harmful alternative to out-of-school suspension and examines its impact on students' academic performance. While the negative effects of out-of-school suspension are well documented, the academic consequences of ISS remain less understood (Smith & Ortiz, 2020). This article investigates, from a theoretical perspective, the relationship between ISS and academic performance on standardized achievement tests. While prior research has examined the connection between school suspensions and academic outcomes, most studies have focused on out-of-school suspensions across various grade levels. In contrast, this study specifically examines ninth-grade students assigned to ISS (Blake & Miner, 2020).

The findings reveal that students exhibiting negative behaviors are frequently placed in ISS, where they are removed from the general classroom setting and separated from their peers and daily routines. However, unlike out-of-school suspension, these students remain on campus for the full school day and are expected to complete their assignments independently using materials provided by their teachers. This approach allows schools to supervise students during disciplinary periods rather than sending them home unsupervised. As a result, ISS is intended to minimize missed instructional time, reduce unstructured hours, and maintain lower absenteeism rates. Despite these intentions, the study found that ISS has a significant negative impact on academic achievement. Students assigned to ISS tend to earn lower GPAs and face a higher risk of dropping out than their peers who are not suspended.

These findings strongly connect to the ideas presented in *The Essential Role of Positive Behavior Supports in Today's Schools*, which emphasizes the importance of teaching and reinforcing positive behavior rather than relying heavily on punitive disciplinary measures. The article explains that behavior is shaped by environmental influences, relationships, and the ways students are taught to respond to difficult situations. Teachers and parents play a major role in modeling appropriate behavior and helping students learn positive ways to react when challenges arise. Instead of focusing solely on punishment after negative behavior occurs, many schools are beginning to implement proactive behavior support systems designed to prevent disciplinary issues before they escalate.

In many schools today, behavior management strategies are being taught through classroom and school-wide support programs. These programs often include direct instruction on behavioral expectations, school assemblies, token reward systems, and interactive tools that encourage students to make positive choices. While some systems prove more successful than

others, the overall purpose is to create supportive learning environments where students feel engaged, understood, and motivated to succeed academically and socially. This shift toward positive reinforcement is especially important when considering the findings from the ISS study, which showed that even one in-school suspension can increase a student's likelihood of failing a statewide standardized test by more than 25%.

The connection between these two studies highlights the importance of keeping students actively engaged in learning while addressing behavioral concerns. Students placed in ISS not only lose valuable classroom instruction time, but they also miss opportunities for peer collaboration, teacher guidance, curriculum support, and participation in the classroom community. These missed experiences can contribute to feelings of frustration, anger, apathy, and emotional disconnection from school. Over time, this disengagement may increase absenteeism, lower academic achievement, and raise the likelihood of students dropping out altogether. The Essential Role of Positive Behavior Supports in Today's Schools further supports this concern by examining whether effective behavior support systems can improve attendance, reduce office referrals, and lower dropout rates.

Another important issue addressed in the ISS study is the disproportionate impact suspensions have on students of color. The findings suggest that these students are more likely to experience the negative academic effects associated with disciplinary actions, revealing concerning disparities in school discipline practices. This makes the implementation of positive behavior supports even more critical, as preventative and supportive interventions may help reduce unequal disciplinary outcomes while promoting a more inclusive and equitable school environment.

Both articles ultimately emphasize that schools must find ways to balance discipline with academic and emotional support. While ISS may provide supervision and keep students physically present at school, it does not fully protect students from academic decline. The new version of the ISS room must focus on academic education, social emotional education and behavioral education. Teachers must continue to provide meaningful assignments and instructional assistance during disciplinary periods, and ISS staff must actively monitor students to ensure they understand and complete their work successfully. At the same time, schools should continue investing in positive behavior support systems that teach students the social and emotional skills needed to manage behavior appropriately. By combining supportive behavior interventions with strong academic guidance, schools may be able to reduce disciplinary issues while improving overall student success, attendance, and engagement.

Ethics Page

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Course: EDU591

Assignment/Project Title: In School Suspension

Date Submitted: 5/11/26

Part I: AI Usage Disclosure

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