TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF BLACK FEMALE AND MALE STUDENT
BEHAVIOR AND RESULTING EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE PRACTICES

AN ABSTRACT

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BY

Haley Peele

Haley Peele, M.A.

APPROVED: Bonnie K. Nastasi, Ph.D.
Chair

Michael Cunningham, Ph.D.

Kimberly Sherman, Ph.D.
Abstract

Black boys and girls are disproportionately excluded from classrooms, leading to worse school and justice system outcomes than children of other races. Minimal qualitative research has been conducted on gender specific analysis of disciplinary data, though there has been an increased interest in conducting both qualitative and quantitative research taking gender into account. This study seeks to identify gender specific patterns in office discipline referrals by teachers to better understand how teachers describe discipline worthy behaviors by student gender. A phenomenological qualitative analysis was conducted using one year of office discipline referral data from a U.S. southern urban K-4 public charter elementary school. The data were analyzed separately by gender, using both deductive and inductive coding. Findings suggest teachers perceive male and female students as intentionally behaving in ways which teachers have difficulty managing and which are perceived as disruptive to the classroom environment or disrespectful to the teacher. Girls were found to be referred more for disrespect and boys more for disrupting the class and leaving class without permission. Recommendations include more detailed reporting on all types of exclusionary discipline, including in-school suspensions, operationalization of discipline worthy behaviors and consequences and gaining student perspective on discipline practices.

Key words: qualitative, teacher perceptions, Black student discipline, Black girls, Black boys, exclusionary discipline, gender differences, charter school, discipline policy.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Black children are punitively excluded from the classroom at disproportionate rates compared to children of other races. Studies have linked exclusionary discipline to Black children’s heightened risk for negative outcomes, including poor school outcomes and increased involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice systems (Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier & Valentine, 2009, Losen, 2011; Skiba et al., 1999). Furthermore, stark gender differences in exclusionary discipline practices have been found, with boys being excluded from the classroom at higher rates than girls (Nowicki, 2018). Teachers’ stereotypic beliefs regarding what is appropriate behavior for female and male students can play a role in how they mete out discipline (Monroe, 2005; Murphy, Acosta & Kennedy-Lewis, 2013; Morris, 2007; Robinson, 1992). Thus, intersectional characteristics of Black girls and boys make them particularly vulnerable to exclusion from the classroom due to implicit biases based on race and gender. Department of Education (2014) statistics reveal that K-12 Black girls make up 7.6% of the total student population, but account for 13.6% of all students who have been suspended from school one or more times and K-12 Black boys comprise 7.9% of the total student population, but account for 25% of all students with one or more suspensions. A multi-component study found that Black boys and girls across grade levels were more likely to have been suspended than White or Hispanic students (Mendez & Knopf, 2003). Elementary aged Black males were more than three times as likely as their White or Hispanic male
classmates to have been suspended and elementary aged Black female students were more than eight times as likely as their White or Hispanic female counterparts to have been suspended (Mendez & Knopf, 2003).

Under recent federal guidelines, schools have attempted to place a greater emphasis on reducing exclusionary discipline and keeping students in the general education setting as well as creating a more positive school environment (DOE, 2014). The *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline* (2014) states that students should be removed from the classroom “only as a last resort” and that students should be returned to their regular class “as soon as possible” (p. 12).

While shifts in state mandated and school discipline policies have been recommended, teachers’ subjective perception of student behavior and their ability to manage that behavior ultimately determines whether students remain inside the classroom or are sent out (Morris & Perry, 2017). Louisiana State law regarding the discipline and suspension of pupils from school, “authorizes teachers to hold every pupil to a strict accountability for any disorderly conduct in school or on the playground of the school” (§17:223, 2006).

Until now, research on exclusionary discipline has primarily focused on quantitative analyses of suspensions by race and gender with minimal attention to other types of exclusionary discipline practices (i.e., in school suspension or any time spent out of the classroom) as well as how children at different grade levels are impacted by these practices. Little is known about the exclusionary discipline of elementary aged children or teachers’ descriptions of the types and dimensions of behaviors which teachers ultimately deem punishable with time out of the classroom through office discipline referrals. More nuanced and qualitative reporting on disciplinary matters along racial and
gender lines is an area of research which has been highlighted as essential to understanding, and ultimately ameliorating, this inequity (Morris, 2012; Morris & Perry, 2017). It is of critical importance to further understand how teachers perceive students’ punishable behavior and apply disciplinary policy with respect to gender among elementary aged Black students as the inequity of discipline practices on Black children has been shown to begin at an early age and continue throughout their time in school, and beyond. An understanding of how teachers qualitatively describe behavioral infractions that lead to office discipline referrals by the type and dimension of behavioral infraction and the gender of the child will allow us to begin to better conceptualize how teachers perceive these behaviors.

**Rationale for the Study**

The present study was spurred by my previous work on a research team which worked with teenaged girls involved in the juvenile justice system in New York City on strengths based, goal-oriented interventions. In follow-up interviews, the girls described their first encounters with law enforcement and the justice system. A theme began to emerge of girls first being arrested in the school setting. This prompted me to further investigate what is known as the “School-to-Prison Pipeline”—which will be discussed in greater detail later in this proposal—as it related to girls involved in the justice system. My introduction to Monique W. Morris’s (2016) important book, *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*, which looked at girls of all ages, as well as Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (2015) policy report *Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced and Underprotected*, which included the results of focus groups with high school aged girls and parents of younger children, guided me to this research project. Both Morris and
Crenshaw call for more nuanced research on disciplinary matters along racial and gender lines to better serve the Black and Latino communities affected by these discriminatory policies. Furthermore, it is important to investigate how these disciplinary practices are being implemented at the youngest grade levels in order to better understand exclusionary and disproportionate discipline at the earliest phase of children’s education. For the purposes of this study, Black will be used to denote the race of individuals of combined African and American descent. This term was chosen because of the prevalence of its use in popular movements highlighting and protecting Black culture (e.g., Black Lives Matter, Black Girl Magic and The Root: Black News, Opinions, Politics and Culture).

Along with my research interests, I am committed to assisting with the provision of reparations for the Black community with an overarching goal of equal power for Black peoples and culture to shape society. I believe it is the responsibility of all U.S. Americans—but particularly U.S. Americans of European heritage—to work tirelessly alongside the Black community towards equality. Through an ongoing open inquiry with individuals who are within the community, there are several ways in which see my role in this effort: through highlighting the obvious strengths of Black communities; elevating the voices of Black U.S. Americans; advocating for Black communities by connecting them with necessary health, human and economic resources; and targeting de facto racist policies in the government, justice, education and economic systems.

In line with this call to action, the purpose of this study is to examine the narrative behavioral accounts reflected in teachers’ written discipline referrals which lead to the physical removal of elementary school Black girls and boys from their classrooms. This study will help to further understand how teachers perceive both Black students and their
behaviors and whether and how those views vary based on the gender of the referred student. This information can be used to create more targeted coaching and interventions for teachers around gendered behavior as well as to identify the most prevalent behaviors teachers are reporting by gender. The findings can also be used to provide social and behavioral support for children identified as “problems” in the classroom.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

The literature review for this paper included a thorough search of the background literature on PsycINFO, utilizing the terms School-to-Prison-Pipeline, Black Student Discipline/Exclusionary Discipline, Black Student Suspension and Education Outcomes, Teacher Perceptions of Student Behavior, Gender and School Discipline, Race and School Discipline, and Intersectionality, along with other similar terms. The following topics emerged from this search which will be discussed in greater detail below:
Disproportionate Minority Exclusionary Discipline and Education Outcomes;
Intersectionality Identities, Perceptions and Discipline as they relate to; Zero Tolerance;
and Educational and Behavioral Outcomes.

Disproportionate Minority Exclusionary Discipline and Education Outcomes

A combination of dynamics has been implicated in contributing to negative outcomes for Black youth, including disproportionate exclusion from school settings, youth internalization of negative adult perceptions, and heightened behavioral expectations. The correlation between Black children’s educational outcomes and their increased risk for poor school outcomes and involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice systems is well established. Racial and ethnic minority children are both disproportionately excluded from the classroom as well as represented in the juvenile justice system. Department of Education (DOE, 2014) data from 2013-2014 show Black students make up 15.5% of the total student population, but 31.8 % of all in school
suspending and 22.6% of all expulsions. Elementary aged Black children have been identified as being suspended proportionally more than children of all other races and grade levels (Mendez & Knopf, 2003). Furthermore, Black and low-income students of all ages in Louisiana were more likely to attend schools with higher rates of suspensions than students of other backgrounds (Barrett, McEachin, Mills, & Valant, 2017).

In 2014, the U.S. Department of Education issued a resource guide entitled, *Guiding principles: A resource guide for improving school climate and discipline*. The paper—which addresses American educators of students of all ages—explicitly states that students should be removed from the classroom for disciplinary reasons as a “last resort” and returned to their regular classroom and instruction “as soon as possible” (DOE, 2014). These guidelines highlight the research which indicates that exclusionary discipline practices are not effective in reducing the behaviors which lead to those practices. In fact, studies show that middle school students who are suspended are more likely to receive another suspension or discipline referral in the same school year and suspension of high school students was correlated with future suspension, dropout and expulsion (Massar, McIntosh, & Eliason, 2015; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Nevertheless, suspension rates remain high across the board for Black girls and boys. Black girls are suspended at six times the rate of White girls and Black boys are suspended at three times the rate of White boys. A study of a large, public school district in Florida found disparities in the suspension ratios of Black children at every level of school (Mendez & Knopf, 2003). Despite males being suspended in higher numbers than females at every grade level, elementary aged Black females were
proportionally more likely to be suspended than elementary aged White or Hispanic boys (ibid.).

When looking at the types of infractions for which students are suspended, White students are more likely to be suspended for objective offenses while Black students are more likely to be suspended for subjective offenses. In a study of 11,000 middle school discipline referrals which led to out of school suspensions, Skiba at al. (2002) found that White students were more likely to be referred for smoking, leaving without permission, vandalism, and extreme language, while Black students were more likely to be referred for disrespect, excessive noise, threats and loitering. Black students of both genders were found to be overrepresented in all but three of the types of infractions which resulted in student suspensions (i.e., tobacco, narcotics, and alcohol possession) (Mendez & Knopf, 2003). Even when referred for the same offenses, Black students aged 11-17 years old are given out-of-school suspensions more often than White students of the same age (Kayama, Haight, Gibson, & Wilson, 2014) with educators and administrators utilizing criminal justice language (e.g., “misdemeanor” or “legal definition”) to justify the discipline practices that send Black children out of the school.

While out-of-school suspensions have been linked to negative education outcomes, they are also correlated with disproportionate involvement in the juvenile justice system. Black youth are arrested at a rate of 5.7% while white youths are arrested at a rate of 2.3% (DOJ, 2014). When controlling for a variety of environmental factors, municipalities with higher rates of out-of-school suspensions for elementary and secondary Black students had higher rates of juvenile justice court referrals for Black youth aged 10-17 (Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier & Valentine, 2009). Disturbingly, Black
students as young as 6-years-old have been arrested in their pre-school classrooms for behaviors related to temper tantrums. In 2012 6-year-old Salecia Johnson was handcuffed, arrested and brought to a Georgia police station for throwing toys, books and wall-hangings. In 2016, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education issued a policy statement recognizing the disproportionate early childhood suspension and expulsion of Black children and highlighting the importance of severely limiting and ultimately ending these practices (DOHHS & DOE, 2016). In order to ameliorate this unequal system, it is necessary to develop a better understanding of the multiple identities of the children being impacted by these practices.

**Intersectionality Characteristics, Perceptions and Discipline**

Intersectionality is a conceptualization of diversity characteristics in which within group differences are addressed to identify and elevate the specific challenges of individuals whose belonging to multiple groups leave them vulnerable to being left out of political and societal narratives (Crenshaw, 1991). For the purposes of this study, it is important to discuss both the vulnerabilities children face because of their race, but also those they face because of their gender and class. Black boys and Black girls have different expectations placed on them at the intersection of their racial and gender groups. Black children are viewed as less in need of protection than White children, and Black girls being perceived as needing less nurturing and protection and knowing more about adult topics and sex than white girls (Epstein, Black & González, 2017). That same survey found that Black girls of all ages (0-4 through 15-19) were perceived by a group of predominantly White and female adults as needing less comfort and support than White girls of the same ages. These perceptions of being more “grown up” can contribute
to Black girls and boys being held more responsible for their actions by school personnel and law enforcement, thereby denying Black children the same opportunity to learn and grow from their mistakes as White children.

Intersectional characteristics have been found to effect differential perceptions and treatment of girls and boys of all races by school staff. A study conducted in the Netherlands with girls and boys, mean age 11.09 years, found that girls were generally rated by teachers as exhibiting more prosocial and less antisocial behavior than boys (Veenstra et al., 2008). However, both girls and boys whose parents reported low socioeconomic status and low education were rated more antisocial than their higher SES peers. Skiba et al. (2002) found that middle school Black boys were more likely to be referred to the office for nearly every type of offense than their White male peers, and girls of all races were only more likely than all boys to be referred for truancy (Skiba et al., 2002). When girls do misbehave, these behaviors are at times viewed as intentional and internal. In Australia, it was found that White girls of all ages who are more assertive and confrontational are labeled as “aggressive,” “uncontrollable,” and “bad” and as holding “personal grudges” towards teachers (Robinson, 1992). Both middle school boys and girls labeled by teachers as “frequent fliers” [frequently disciplined] described their own “badness” as a temporary state, but believed their teachers saw this “badness” as a permanent characteristic of their personalities (Kennedy-Lewis & Murphy, 2016).

As a reaction to their environments and the expectations placed on them, Black girls often construct alternative embodiments of femininity (E.W. Morris, 2007). Persistently disciplined middle school girls believe that they must stand up for themselves and must individually manage and address inequitable treatment, both from teachers and
from other students. This belief that they must defend themselves causes middle school Black girls to make attempts to re-assert control over their environments, which teachers view as “unladylike” and non-compliant (Murphy, Acosta, & Kennedy-Lewis, 2013; E.W. Morris, 2005). The resulting disciplinary tactics attempting to make girls more “ladylike” ultimately discourage behavior such as outspokenness—alternatively perceived by teachers as “loud” or “aggressive.”. These traits have been found to be critical to middle school Black girls’ academic success, through their willing and active involvement in full-class conversations (E. W. Morris, 2007). Chen (2013) posited that girls are given the “choice” to conform to “patriarchal heterosexual [White] norm[s]” and are punished if they do not (p. 442).

Black boys are often perceived by adults as having different, but similarly negative qualities than Black girls. Black middle school boys’ behavior, responses to discipline and clothing are consistently reported by school personnel as “bad” and “threatening” leading to heightened scrutiny and further discipline, well beyond other youth groups (Monroe, 2005; Kennedy-Lewis & Murphy, 2016). A survey of Black male students across ages in New Orleans, revealed that they believed they would graduate from high school, but perceived that their teachers did not push them academically nor set high enough goals for them (Garibaldi, 1992). When teachers were asked if they believed their Black male students would graduate from high school, nearly six in ten said they did not, confirming the students’ perceptions. Sixty percent of this sample was elementary school teachers, indicating that this lack of confidence in the ability to educate Black boys begins early in the educational pathway (ibid.). Beyond the classroom, a study conducted with police officers showed that those officers who
dehumanized Black boys in psychological measures were more likely to have previously use violent force against Black boys in their custody (Goff & Jackson et al., 2014). This heightened scrutiny and lowered expectations sets the stage for zero tolerance discipline policies which some teachers believe to be critical to maintaining control of their classrooms but which ultimately may lead to worse student outcomes, particularly for Black children.

**Zero Tolerance**

Teachers explicitly state that control in the classroom is paramount (Robinson, 1992). Students perceive that teachers arbitrarily and inconsistently apply punishment in order to maintain this control (Sheets, 1996). Students who believe that behavioral expectations are arbitrary or designed to control may behave defiantly, leading to acting out by the student followed by further discipline by the teacher (Townsend, 2000). When teachers are making the decision to exclude Black children from the classroom, there is an unwillingness or an inability to differentiate between severe and minor offenses (Monroe, 2005; Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Ultimately, these feelings become pervasive, with Black girls and boys recognizing when they are being treated unfairly and describing feelings of frustration when teachers refused to listen to them or treat them equally (E. W. Morris, 2007; Murphy, Acosta & Kennedy-Lewis, 2013). These feelings about the personal nature of their relationships with teachers, whether positive or negative, contribute to students’ willingness to comply with teachers’ requests or commands, contributing to a cycle of mutual disrespect and absence from the classroom (Kennedy-Lewis & Murphy, 2016; Robinson, 1992). Excluding Black children from the
classroom whether fairly or unfairly can also lead to differential educational and behavioral outcomes.

**Educational and Behavioral Outcomes**

A variety of factors have been implicated in the disparate educational and behavioral outcomes of Black children. “Labeling theory” identifies a phenomenon in which the appraisal of oneself by a significant other can affect how the individual sees their role and furthermore, how they behave in a situation (Matsueda, 1992).

Marginalized students of unspecified races aged 11-14 who were identified and labeled by parents, teachers and peers and dangerous and disciplined as such in school were found to ultimately display truly delinquent behavior leading to arrest and involvement in the juvenile justice system (Sprague et al., 2001). These findings have been extended to elementary school aged Black students whose teachers rated them as less engaged and having poorer relationships with the students were found to perform worse on tests of reading and math achievement (Hughes & Kwok, 2007). A longitudinal study of students found that teacher’s negative perceptions of elementary students’ behaviors were significantly correlated with both behavioral and academic outcomes throughout elementary and middle school (Hamre et al., 2001).

Casella (2003) interviewed school personnel and Black male students at two high schools on the east coast as well as Black male young adults (aged 18-30 years) in an east coast correctional facility. He found that the high school personnel consistently described the Black boys as potentially “dangerous” and expressed the importance of identifying the “good kids” and the “bad kids” (p. 60). Furthermore, students who were perceived as “dangerous” or “bad” were disciplined harshly with detentions and in-school arrests, even
when their behaviors were not dangerous. These disciplinary measures sometimes led to the students’ expulsion from school. Casella’s interviews with the individuals who were incarcerated consistently described connections between discipline experiences in high school and their current incarceration. One 24-year-old man said, “I learned the slightest thing I did I’d be booted… I didn’t think schools could do that, and they didn’t think I would be bad again, but I was worse. And look where it got me [prison]” (p. 66).

Teacher perceptions of both students’ behavior and the student-teacher relationships can also serve as important protective factors. The closeness of the relationship between pre-school aged children and their teacher is more predictive of verbal ability for Black children than for White children (Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Pianta & Howes, 2002). Black high school boys who perceived negative youth experiences, such as being stopped by the police, but high levels of school support, including believing that their teachers wanted them to succeed, reported lower levels of bravado—or hypermasculine behaviors—including masculine demeanor (Corprew & Cunningham, 2012). The potential protective factor of positive teacher perceptions of students highlight the possibility for restorative and supportive relationships within schools which lead to positive education and behavioral outcomes. These potential relationships are an important counterpoint to the predominantly negative outcomes discussed within this study. Therefore, teachers’ perceptions of students from a young age may play an important factor in those students’ outcomes and behaviors.

**Teacher vs. Student Perceptions of Behavior**

Ultimately, there is a gap between students and teachers’ perceptions of the motivations for the behaviors Black students are displaying in the classroom.
Consequences, whether deserved or undeserved can cause an escalation of both teacher and student behaviors, leading to students’ removal from the classroom (Bell et al., 2017). Following disciplinary events, middle school students exhibit self-awareness about their behavior, including an awareness of the probable consequences and in-the-moment emotions (Kennedy-Lewis & Murphy, 2013). Girls describe self-removal from the learning environment because of frustration or aggravation for not receiving or being able to articulate the academic support that they needed. Their perceptions of the teachers’ willingness or unwillingness to explain assignments directly impacts their behavior. “I listen to her more than most teachers because she sits down and talks to me about me and about the work” (Murphy, Acosta & Kennedy-Lewis, 2013, p. 595).

**Present Study**

To date, the literature on exclusionary discipline exclusively focuses on suspensions, expulsions and arrests with no qualitative or quantitative data on behaviors which lead to students’ removal from the classroom to the “office” or in-school suspension setting. Furthermore, there is a dearth of literature which focuses on the experiences of Black girls with all types of exclusionary discipline. While Black boys’ discipline and outcomes have been extensively studied and studies which place Black girls’ discipline and outcomes are on the rise, there has been little investigation of the qualitative descriptions of the discipline worthy behaviors which lead elementary aged Black girls and Black boys to be sent out of the classroom. Ultimately, the subjective removal of Black children from the classroom by teachers is a critical area for understanding events which may set off the cascading effects of labeling, discipline, and other negative life outcomes (Noguera, 2003).
This study seeks to begin to fill these gaps in the literature by conducting a qualitative, phenomenological investigation of teachers’ perceptions and interpretations of children’s punishable behavior through the qualitative analysis of office discipline referrals written by teachers between September 2016 and May 2017 from a southern urban charter school populated primarily by Black children. Prior analysis conducted at the same southern urban K-4 charter school found that boys are more regularly sent out of the classroom than girls with “noncompliance” being the infraction for which both genders combined are most often sent out of the classroom (Verlenden, 2016). The present study seeks to further investigate descriptions of student behavior at both the level of gender of student and types and dimensions of behavior to determine which infractions girls and boys are being most cited for and if those descriptions vary. The purpose of this analysis is to better understand teacher perceptions of elementary school Black boys and girls who are being disciplined and how those descriptions might relate to future outcomes for these children. This study further seeks to offer recommendations for school discipline procedures to teachers and administrators. This study further seeks to offer recommendations for school discipline procedures and classroom management goals to teachers and administrators.

**Research Questions**

#1 What are teacher perceptions of elementary students’ punishable behavior as reflected in teacher descriptions of classroom behavior types and dimensions leading to office discipline referral?
#2 How do teacher descriptions of elementary students’ punishable behavior (as reflected in teacher descriptions of classroom behaviors leading to office discipline referral) vary by type and dimension of behavioral infraction and gender of the student?
Chapter 3

Methods

Participants and Site Context

The school system in which the site school is situated in southeastern Louisiana is comprised almost entirely of charter schools. Prior to this switch to a charter school system, the schools in this city were some of the lowest performing in the country. The switch to the charter school model has been an attempt to overhaul the education system. At the start of this change, all teachers in the school system were fired and charter school leaders hired all new teaching staff, many of whom came from outside of the city from programs like Teach for America. The teacher tenure system was removed at most schools in the district and there is currently no collective bargaining through a teachers’ union, therefore, school leaders are able to hire and fire teachers in their school at will. The new schools have shown moderate performance gains among students, however their presence and methods are at times controversial in the communities which they serve (Buras, 2014). The public charter schools in the city remain highly segregated with Black students making up 87% of the student body, Hispanic/Latinx students making up 7% and White students making up 6%, with 84% of all students qualifying for free or reduced lunch (New Orleans Equity Index, 2017). Almost all White children in the city attend private, parochial schools and have done so since the city’s schools were forced to desegregate in 1960, six years after Brown v. Board of Education was decided. The current charter school system is an attempt to remediate long standing educational
inequalities in the United States. A more detailed account of the charter school system is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is recommended that those who wish to know more about the privatization of public education look at Charter Schools, race, and urban space: Where the market meets grassroots resistance (Buras, 2014) and Hope against hope: Three schools, one city, and the struggle to educate children (Carr, 2013).

The site from which the data were retrieved is a southern urban K-4 charter school. The ethnic makeup of the students of the school is 93.1% Black, 1.5% Hispanic and 4.6% White (non-Hispanic) and is 46% female and 54% male. 96% of the students receive free or reduced meals. Forty-nine percent of teachers at the school are Black and 51% White (non-Hispanic); they all hold undergraduate degrees. The starting salary at this charter school site is between $40,000 and $43,000 per year. The city’s public schools are open enrollment, accepting students from all over the city and busing the students to the school site. The school provided the archival data to the research lab in de-identified form, with the individual discipline records being marked by grade and gender of student and referring teacher. The charter school and the research lab hold a 5+ year relationship that began prior to my tenure in the lab. Through this previously existing relationship, I was first introduced to the school by participating in two projects on which the lab was consulting. By way of participating in these projects, I developed relationships with key stakeholders and built rapport and trust through demonstrating commitment and reliability to the school, their values and their goals.

Towards the end of the 2016-17 academic year, I began to spend time in what is referred to by school staff as the “discipline room” with their head disciplinarian and built rapport with her by asking her to describe her job, observing her during the performance
of her job duties, and assisting her when needed. At the request of the school, the partnership with the school and the key stakeholders was renewed and reaffirmed for the 2017-2018 academic year. At the beginning of the 2017-2018 academic year, I transitioned to consulting with the school on their discipline program, which the school is attempting to move towards a behavioral intervention system (as opposed to a punishment-oriented system). I worked as part of a behavioral team—consisting of the school principal, grade vice principals, the school psychologist, social worker and response-to-intervention coordinator—to identify students with high behavioral needs and implement interventions to attempt to address those needs. My role on the team was to analyze and present the office discipline referral data—data the school already collects—for the grade level we met to discuss that week. The “live” data I analyzed for the school in the 2017-2018 academic year is comparable to the archival data set I am analyzing for the present study. In this way, impressions of a similar dataset have been checked with the members and they have affirmed the credibility of the findings. In keeping with the participatory action nature of the consultation, all impressions and findings from the present study have been shared with the school.

Obtaining the Data

The dataset, provided by the school principal, is comprised of one year of archival office discipline referral forms from the 2016-17 school year totaling 934 unique referrals. These referrals were written primarily by classroom teachers of which there are four per grade (i.e., 20 total). Teachers completed pre-printed forms (see attached as Appendix A) immediately following a discipline incident, and subsequently sent the forms to the office. The forms included the date, time and location of the incident, the
scholar’s and teacher’s names and check boxes with referral categories which automatically require an office referral (e.g., leaving class without permission, fighting, etc.) or indicate that the student lost all their stars or dollars and did not “fix it”. “Fixing it” is site specific language for the opportunity a student is given to rectify a situation that the teacher has identified as not in accordance with social, behavioral or academic expectations. Therefore, when a student does not “fix it”, the teacher is permitted to send them to the office. There is a section for teachers to handwrite a description of the incident and these descriptions are what the research team coded. The information on the forms was then entered verbatim into a computer database by the head disciplinarian of the school. Data points in the final database included (a) randomized student identification number, (b) gender, (c) grade, (d) time of day and (e) date of referral (f) referring teacher, (g) reason for referral, (h) description of intervention and (i) any parent contact. Gender of student was added to the database for the purposes of this study.

**Data Coding and Analysis**

A combination of deductive and inductive methods was utilized by the research team consisting of the primary investigator and two undergraduate research assistants, all of whom are White American females. Following analysis, the primary investigator met with a 2nd grade teacher (African-American, female) to gain insight into her interpretation of the findings. The teacher’s insights are addressed in the discussion and conclusion sections.

In preparation for coding and data analysis, the primary investigator first oriented the research assistants to the present study’s foundational research by holding a reading group once per week for a month in which both the primary investigator and the research
assistants read scholarly articles around conducting qualitative research, exclusionary discipline practices in the United States and the unequal treatment of Black girls and boys in the United States education and justice systems. During these meetings, discussions were held in order to better understand both the research teams’ evolving understand of unequal exclusionary discipline practices and how qualitative research might be utilized to better understand the current data set.

Following this orientation, the data was sorted by student gender and grade. Researchers then read through the archival discipline data to familiarize themselves with the format and site-specific language and began a “pre-coding” process and identified exemplary quotes and initial impressions of the data including what we found “striking” and surprising (Saldaña, 2016). Deductive coding—use of a set of codes identified through previous research—of the discipline referrals was begun by all three members of the research team utilizing previously identified behavioral infractions.

These deductive themes were identified by Verlenden (2016) through her dissertation which, in part, identified the valued social, emotional and behavioral competencies of the site school through the coding of focus groups with teachers and parents, interviews with administrators and a review of school artifacts including messaging on walls (Verlenden, 2016). Using this methodology, 12 valued student competencies were identified, including persistence, responsibility, communication, self-regulation and compliance. Furthermore, in the Verlenden (2016) study, office discipline records were inductively coded for behaviors considered to be antithetical to the valued behaviors and seven primary types of behavioral infractions were identified: aggression (physical and verbal); bullying; destruction of property; inappropriate behavior; leaving
class noncompliance (at the levels of not following rules, disrespect and noncompliance with escalation, and; stealing (see Table 1).

Table 1

**Deductive discipline codes** (Verlenden, 2006, reproduced with permission)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>1) Physical: Fighting, hitting, kicking, punching, tit-for-tat aggression (hitting back)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Verbal: Cursing at others with apparent aggressive intent, threatening use of words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>Harsh teasing, name calling, mocking students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of Property</td>
<td>Vandalism or destruction of property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate Behavior</td>
<td>Sexual or lewd remarks, behaviors, or gestures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving class</td>
<td>Leaving class without permission, being found somewhere in the school without permission, running away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncompliance</td>
<td>1) Not following rules: Persistent self-regulatory problems that are disruptive of learning (e.g., talking out, making noises, interrupting, bothering others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Disrespect: Talking back to adult, laughing, mocking in response to correction or disciplinary action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Noncompliance with escalation: Problem behaviors intensify and/or escalate in response to correction or disciplinary action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td>Theft of property</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Behaviors are listed alphabetically.*

In the present study, the full team utilized the deductive codes from the Verlenden (2006) study and coded the first 100 records together; then the primary investigator and one of the research assistants coded the remaining 834 records as a team, reaching consensus on each code. The team continued to note exemplary quotes as well as emerging codes and themes.

Following the initial deductive coding, the team conducted two rounds of inductive, magnitude and in vivo coding, identifying several new codes as well as more nuanced subcodes of the previously determined deductive codes. Magnitude coding
identifies words that suggest frequency (e.g., “constantly,” “all day”) and intensity (e.g., very), to understand the dimensions of behaviors and whether those dimensions differ based on the gender of the student. In vivo coding, known as “verbatim coding,” was used to identify patterns of teachers’ conceptualizations of the behaviors of the students using their own words. Categories of behaviors and the language used to describe those behaviors were subsequently examined by gender, to generate themes. Research team members kept a log of new codes and themes as well as how we were defining the codes. Codes were not mutually exclusive. Each referral could include multiple codes (e.g., if a student shouted at the teacher and then walked out of the classroom, the record would be coded both as “noncompliance 2” and “leaving class”). The researchers’ codes and frequency of those codes are presented in Table 2. New codes, subcodes and themes are discussed in greater detail in the results section. Following deductive coding, the frequency of infractions by gender was examined for patterns of perceptions by gender.
Table 2

*Number of Behaviors Listed in Infractions by Type and Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infraction</th>
<th>Total Group #</th>
<th>Total Group %</th>
<th>Male #</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female #</th>
<th>Female %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying*</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.29%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.06%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraband+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.06%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect for School Property+</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>6.87%</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>6.78%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distracting/disruptive During Class/Test+</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>6.87%</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>7.19%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of School Property*</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.12%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate Behavior*</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving class*</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>10.31%</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>11.56%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncompliance 1*</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>22.66%</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>22.88%</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>21.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncompliance 2*</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>6.13%</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>5.42%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncompliance 3*</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>5.03%</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Threat Against Teacher+</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Aggression Against Teammate+</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>9.76%</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>9.49%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Aggression Against Teacher+</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.77%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusals+</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>9.91%</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>9.26%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing*</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>0.18%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tantrum+</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3.88%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3.60%</td>
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<td>5.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwing+</td>
<td>121</td>
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<td>103</td>
<td>6.07%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching+</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
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<td>0.53%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and Non-Verbal Negative</td>
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<td>Communication Towards Teacher or Adult+</td>
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<td>1.10%</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Verbal and Non-Verbal Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Towards Teammate+</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>4.43%</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
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<td>2.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and Non-Verbal Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Towards Unspecified+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1696</td>
<td>312</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Behaviors are listed alphabetically.

* Behaviors identified using deductive codes

+ Behaviors identified using inductive codes.
**Trustworthiness**

A variety of steps were taken to ensure the findings of the present study are trustworthy. I worked towards learning the culture of the site school through a prolonged engagement of two and a half years working within the school as a consultant, both observing in classrooms and the discipline room and as a part of their behavioral intervention team. Throughout that time, I kept a reflexive journal of my impressions, thoughts and feelings about my experiences in the school as well as detailed notes on interactions I witnessed between students, teachers, and administrators. Multiple methods of triangulation were utilized in creating and analyzing codes, including observations, written school behavioral policy and conversations with teachers and staff. Coding was conducted by two coders throughout multiple rounds of coding to ensure consensus on all codes. Both coders kept reflexive journals after each coding session which were reviewed prior to beginning coding at the following session (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An audit trail documenting coding decisions was made and the process by which definitions were created for the various codes was kept. Furthermore, a preliminary analysis was presented to members (i.e., administrators and teachers), checked for accuracy and feedback and input was incorporated into the discussion of the results; this procedure constituted member checking.
Chapter 4

Results

The study addressed two research questions: Research Question 1: What are teacher perceptions of elementary students’ punishable behavior as reflected in teacher descriptions of classroom behavior types and dimensions leading to office discipline referral?

Research Question 2: How do teacher descriptions of elementary students’ punishable behavior (as reflected in teacher descriptions of classroom behaviors leading to office discipline referral) vary by type and dimension of behavioral infraction and gender of the student?

To answer the research questions, the teachers’ descriptions of behaviors (infractions) that led to office discipline referral were coded both deductively using previously created codes (Verlenden, 2006) and inductively to illustrate teachers’ perceptions in greater detail.

In the next section, descriptive information is provided in the form of the total number of infractions by type and gender. These infractions were identified and compiled based on previous deductive codes (Verlenden, 2006)—some of which remain the same and some of which were broken down into more detailed codes during inductive coding—as well as newly identified inductive codes (see Table 2), the total number of students who received those infractions (see Table 2), and the number of referrals received by gender and grade (see Figure 1). Previously identified deductive codes are
indicated with an asterisk in Table 2 and previously identified codes which have been further broken down into sublevels are indicated with a plus. The infraction coded as refusal is further broken down into sublevels (see Tables 4 and 5). Following the descriptive data, definitions of infractions are provided based on coding of teacher descriptions of the behaviors. It is important to note that, while the school provides teachers with a list of undesired student behaviors and sanctioned intervention suggestions for those behaviors, the school does not operationalize the undesired behaviors (e.g., “minor disruptions,” “repeated defiance”). Therefore, one of the purposes of the inductive analysis and defining of codes was to understand how teachers are interpreting students’ behavior in relation to the school’s identified undesired behaviors.

Two additional data sources were used to triangulate the office discipline referral data: consultation with a 2nd grade teacher at the school (hereafter referred to as “key informant”) and school policy documents. These sources were used to contextualize the discipline data from the perspective of a teacher within the school culture and current school policy in order to identify possible rationales for teacher responses to behavior.

**Descriptive**

This section includes descriptive data to identify the types of behaviors for which male and female students are referred to the discipline room (Table 2). Again, these infractions were identified through both deductive and inductive coding. This section also identifies the number of students who did and did not receive discipline referrals and how many students received what number of office discipline referrals. Descriptive data are presented in both number and percentage. Figures 1 and 2 show the total number of office discipline referrals by gender and grade.
A breakdown of the number of students who did and did not receive office referrals by number of times referred is shown in Table 3. As indicated, a majority of students received no office referrals (M=59.25%, F=79.64%) or between one and three referrals (M=24.45%, F=17.45%). Fifty-two male students and 8 female students received a majority of the office discipline referrals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infraction</th>
<th>Total Group #</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching+</td>
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<td>0.50%</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and Non-Verbal Negative</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Towards Teacher or Adult+</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Towards Teammate+</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>4.43%</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and Non-Verbal Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Towards Unspecified+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1696</td>
<td>312</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Behaviors are listed alphabetically.
* Behaviors identified using deductive codes
+ Behaviors identified using inductive codes.
Table 3

*Number of Infractions by Student and Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infractions #</th>
<th>Total Group #</th>
<th>Total Group %</th>
<th>Male #</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female #</th>
<th>Female %</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>189</td>
<td>59.25%</td>
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<td>79.64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
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<td>78</td>
<td>24.45%</td>
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<td>17.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
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<td>3.70%</td>
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<td>1.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10</td>
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<td>19-24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.67%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.94%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.01%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.88%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>53.70%</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>46.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures 1 and 2 show the number of office discipline referrals by gender and grade. Males received the bulk of office referrals overall (N=776) with third and fourth grade boys receiving the bulk of discipline referrals for boys (n=632). Female students in the first and fourth grades received the majority of office discipline referrals for girls (n=97; N=147). Kindergarten males comprised 60% of office discipline referrals received by all kindergarteners. First grade males comprised 63% of office discipline referrals received by all first graders. Second grade males comprised 71% of office discipline referrals received by all second graders. Third grade males comprised 95.5% of office discipline referrals received by all third graders. Finally, fourth grade males comprised 87% of office discipline referrals received by all fourth graders. These rates are relatively consistent with national discipline numbers, with male students with disabilities comprising 77.7% of all students with disabilities receiving one or more out of school suspensions and male students without disabilities comprising 66.5% of all students without disabilities receiving one or more out of school suspensions (DOE, 2014; these national statistics are not reported by grade and age).
Figure 1. Number of discipline referrals received by male students in each grade.

Figure 2. Number of discipline referrals received by female students in each grade.
Teacher Descriptions of Student Behaviors

In order to identify teachers’ perceptions of the types and dimensions of student behaviors which led them to be sent out of the classroom (research question 1) and whether those perceptions varied by gender (research question 2), teacher’s descriptions of behaviors leading to office discipline referrals were first coded utilizing a deductive coding scheme identified previously by Verlenden (2006; see Table 1). Each referral was given one or multiple deductive codes depending on the number of behaviors referenced in the description. Following the initial round of deductive coding, additional rounds of inductive coding were conducted to further parse the initial deductive codes and identify areas of perceptions and dimensions of behaviors which might reside within those broader codes (see Appendix C). Utilizing a phenomenological lens to frame data analysis, the listed codes were identified as teachers’ perceptions of student behaviors which led teachers to exclude students from the classroom (see Appendix C).

The most frequent codes for unique office referrals for both genders of all grades in order of prevalence are Noncompliance 1, Leaving Class, Refusals, Physical Aggression Against Teammate and Disrespect for School Property (see Table 2). For unique office referrals of female student in all grades \(n=147\); kindergarten \(n=18\), 1st grade \(n=41\), 2nd grade \(n=20\), 3rd grade \(n=12\), 4th grade \(n=56\), the most frequent codes in order of prevalence are Noncompliance 1, Refusals, Physical Aggression Against Teammate, Noncompliance 2 and Disrespect for School Property (see Table 2). For unique referrals of male students in all grades \(n=776\); kindergarten \(n=26\), 1st grade \(n=69\), 2nd grade \(n=49\), 3rd grade \(n=259\), 4th grade \(n=373\), the most frequent codes in order of
prevalence are Noncompliance 1, Leaving Class, Physical Aggression Against Teammate, Refusals, Distracting/Disrupting During Class/Test (see Table 2).

In the following section, definitions and exemplars of the most frequent codes are provided (see Tables 2-5 and Appendix C). Codes are listed based on frequency as follows: (a) five most frequent codes for the total group (both genders), (b) five most frequent codes for girls, (c) five most frequent codes for boys. The remainder of coded behaviors are listed and defined in Appendix C.

**Gender Similarities and Differences in Referral Behaviors and Descriptions**

The most common behaviors for which teachers refer both male and female students are Noncompliance 1, Leaving Class, Refusals, Physical Aggression Against Teammate and Disrespect for School Property; however, only Noncompliance 1, Physical Aggression Against Teammate, Refusals and Disrespect for School Property overlap in frequency when examining data by gender. Female referrals more often include descriptions of Noncompliance 2 and are not as frequently referred for Leaving Class. Male referrals more often include descriptions of Leaving Class and Distracting/Disrupting During Class/Test and are not as frequently referred for Noncompliance 2. In looking at the descriptions of referrals, we can see differences in how teachers describe the same behaviors performed by male and female students as well as for what types of behaviors they refer male and female students. This section first looks at the most frequent overlapping perceived behavioral reasons for referrals for both genders combined including teachers’ descriptions of these student behaviors by gender. The section then goes on to look at the behaviors which are frequently referred for female
and male students and differences in those descriptions as well as differences in overall
descriptions of male and female student behaviors.

*Noncompliance 1* is the most frequently referred code for both male and female
students. Teacher reports of Noncompliance 1 include descriptions of not following rules
or directions, students’ persistent self-regulatory problems that are disruptive of the
learning environment or which demand teacher’s attention (e.g., talking out, making
noises, bothering others, interrupting, etc.). For male students, examples of
Noncompliance 1 include, “incredibly disruptive, out of seat, kicking desks, throwing
things, calling out, bothering other teammates” and, “not doing work, refusing to put his
head up, or arms out, didn’t go to small group, playing in hallway instead, throwing work
on the floor, and screaming ‘do it’.” For female students, examples of Noncompliance 1
include, “scholar has been disrupting the learning environment all morning! She’s
making sounds, clapping, dancing, laying all over the carpet while her teammates are
working. I’ve given her 10 reminders, moved her to another part of the room and the
behavior did not change,” and, “out of her seat, arguing with teacher, kicking the door,
dancing in her seat when the teacher’s back was turned.” Thus, both male and female
referrals for Noncompliance 1 contain descriptions of off-task and behaviors which may
attract attention (i.e., making noise, dancing) which teachers perceive as disrupting the
classroom, however the female behaviors more often include descriptions of dancing,
playing, “screaming” and arguing with the teacher as distracting, while males are more
often cited as not working and making “noises” and “yelling”.

*Refusals* are also among the most frequent reason for referrals for both boys and
girls and include descriptions of a student refusing to comply with a teacher’s request.
These behaviors were identified when a teacher specifically used the word “refuse” in the report, which differentiates this code from Noncompliance 1 referrals. Refusals were further broken down into the sub-levels of Refusing to Calm Down, Refusing to Talk, Refusing to Do Work, Refusing to Follow Directions and Refusing to Reflect (See Table 4). Female referrals more frequently include descriptions of Refusing to Calm Down and Refusing to Reflect, while male referrals more frequently include descriptions of Refusing to Work. Male and female students were referred for Refusing to Follow Directions with similar frequency.

Refusing to Calm Down was coded when a referral noted that a child refused to calm down or refused to take a break when requested by the teacher. Examples of Refusing to Calm down for male students include, “hitting window and self with clipboard, screaming at people across the room, refusing to calm down, and screaming at kids in the hall” and “yelling at other scholars, refusing to take a break.” Examples of Refusing to Calm Down for female students include, “Refused to stop playing in the restroom after a teacher asked her to leave. Was disrespectful towards [teacher]. Came back to class and still refused to calm down kicking shoes and yelling out negative comments. (‘Leave me alone’, ‘I hate these teachers and this school’), “Continues to be verbally aggressive with students and teachers, refused to calm down outside of class, running away from teachers trying to help her,” and “Scholar was refusing to put away toy; refusing to sit in order; refusing to cool down, talking back and yell [sic]at adults.”

Refusing to Talk was coded when a referral noted that a child refused to talk to a teacher when requested. An example of Refusing to Talk for male students is, “Chatting/not finishing work. When he gets a reminder, he has attitude/disrespect.”
Shrugging, mumbling under breath, refusing to talk.” An example of Refusing to Talk for female students is, “came back from sports upset with a friend and refused to talk about it. Started walking around the room.”

*Refusing to Do Work* was coded when a referral noted that a child refused to do work. Examples of Refusing to Work for male students include, “Kicked a teammate, throwing papers, fighting with [teammate], screaming out across the room, and refusing to do work,” “refusal to do work, kicking wall/desks, throwing fit that he isn’t getting over,” and “went to reflect with [teacher]. Came back and refused to do work/ask teammates for help. Walking around the room and refusing to sit down. Slamming and breaking door. [Student] said that he hates white people.” Examples of Refusing to Work for female students include, “[Student] walks in and out of class, refuses to do work and making noises in class,” “refusing to work and being defiant,” and “[Student] does not follow directions, refuses to do work and is disruptive when separated from the team. Stomps, slams door, talks back when corrected.”

*Refusing to Follow Directions* was coded when a referral describes a child not following directions and uses the word “refuses.” Examples of Refusing to Follow Directions for male students include, “refused to follow directions, walked away from class, and refused to stand in line,” “refuses to follow directions, disrespect, and can’t control his body. [Student] put his hands on people’s necks during dismissal on [date],” and “refusing to follow directions, making noises, distracting class, being disrespectful.” Examples of Refusing to Follow Directions for female students include, “disrespectful, back talk to teacher, and refuses to follow directions,” “refused to follow directions all
Refusing to Reflect was coded when a referral describes a child refusing to reflect either mentally or using a reflection process determined by the classroom teacher. Examples of Refusing to Reflect for male students include, “throwing balled up papers across the room and encouraging others to do the same. He was given the option to reflect and refused,” “refusing to follow directions from multiple teachers/refusing to reflect,” and “refused to do any work, refused to reflect, yelled at teacher when lost a dollar.” Examples of Refusing to Reflect for female students include, “refusing to follow directions. Given a choice to reflect in another classroom. Refused to go. Stood in hallway,” “talking back, attitude, and refused to reflect in [teacher’s] class,” and “refused to do reflection, threw it on the floor. She is constantly redirected and when sent to reflection is on the floor as she is swinging her feet.”

Because descriptions of Noncompliance 1 and Refusals are among the most frequent reason for referrals for both boys and girls, it is hypothesized that teachers believe that not complying with teacher requests and commands is a sufficient reason to send students out of the classroom. This belief is compounded by school documents which refer to behaviors such as “not following directions,” “repeated defiance,” and “refusing to do work” but do not define these behaviors leaving it up to teachers to interpret what constitutes these behaviors. Communication with the key informant further identified teachers’ understanding that the school requires students to comply with teacher requests and commands 100% of the time as one underlying cause of teachers
frequently sending students out of the classroom for noncompliant behavior. These hypotheses are discussed further in the Themes section.

Table 4

*Refusal Referrals by Subcode*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-level</th>
<th>Total Group #</th>
<th>Total Group %</th>
<th>Male #</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female #</th>
<th>Female %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To calm down</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.02%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.91%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To do work</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>37.69%</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>42.04%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To follow directions</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>45.73%</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>46.50%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To reflect</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.56%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.64%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To talk</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.01%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.91%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Male and female students are both frequently referred for *Physical Aggression Against Teammate*, which includes descriptions of behaviors such as kicking, hitting, punching, or attempted physical harm against another student. Examples of Physical Aggression Against Teammate for male students include, “all day punching friends and hitting teammates”, “pushed another scholar”, and “continually hitting others, bothering teammates, calling out, and making paper airplanes.” Examples of Physical Aggression Against Teammate for female students include, “fought with a scholar on the playground, threw her to the ground, was punching her from behind. When asked about what had happened, she lied about it,” “hitting student with her jacket, standing up instead of [learning position], told to reflect in one room. Used it as a water and bathroom break,” and “hit a teammate in the face.” During inductive coding, Physical Aggression Against Teammate was found to contain the subcodes of Indirectly Harming Someone with or
with Object, Physical Aggression Against Teammate: Retaliation, Escalation and Between Genders (see Table 5).

*Physical Aggression Against Teammate: Indirectly Harming Someone with Body or Object* includes descriptions of behaviors that teachers perceive as accidental or in which the student harms another student as an indirect outcome of another intentional action, either with their body or with an object. Examples of Indirectly Harming Someone with Body for male students are, “accidentally slapped [student] on the back of the neck”, and “[student] is on [the lowest rung in the school’s daily token economy] and has barely done any work all day. When coming back from recess, he threw himself down on the stairs and refused to come back up which tripped a teammate.” Examples of Indirectly Harming Someone with Object for male students are, “[student] walked up the stairs swinging his sweatshirt. Hit several scholars and lost [money in the school’s token economy]. Upon arrival into the classroom, [student] asked to use the restroom immediately after lunch and recess. He sat refusing to work, [this referral would also receive the code “refusal”]” and, “threw pencil across the room during transition. Pencil hit another scholar.” No referrals speak to female students Indirectly Harming Someone with Body or Object.

Therefore, within the category of Physical Aggression Against Teammates, teachers perceive male students as “accidentally” or indirectly harming their teammates with their bodies, while female students are not referred for these behaviors at all. Boys are described as throwing objects (i.e., work, pencils, etc.) across the room without a specific target and swinging articles of clothing which then hit fellow students. While students may have targets that the teachers are not aware of, the information available
suggests that teachers perceive boys’ actions as disruptive, occurring in the process of other behaviors and at times unintentional. For example, “[student] is on 0 stars and has barely done any work all day. When coming back from recess, he threw himself down on the stairs and refused to come back up which [sic] he tripped a teammate” and “[student] climbed a fence at the park and kicked another scholar in process of it. He was talking back being very disrespectful to me.”

**Physical Aggression Against Teammate: Retaliation** is a subset of the code Physical Aggression Against Teammate and is identified when the referral references kicking, hitting, punching, or attempted physical harm against another student in response to physical aggression from another student. Examples of Retaliation for male students include, “scholar lay down on carpet. Another scholar tried to walk back to his square, accidentally kicked him and [referred student] heard another scholar laugh and he tackled him,” and “[referred student] was pushed by [another student] and [referred student] fought back.” Examples of Retaliation for female students include, “fighting because teammate told her to move up,” and “hit [another student] because [other student] was talking about [referred student].”

**Physical Aggression Against Teammate: Escalation** is a subset of the code Physical Aggression Against Teammate and is identified as kicking, hitting, punching, or attempted physical harm against another student in response to physical aggression or other verbal or physical contact from another student, with the response perceived by the teacher to be at a higher degree of aggression. Examples of Escalation for male students include, “hit scholar in the face because he pushed his hand off the desk,” and “hit another student in the face because he made fun of his socks.” No referrals speak to
teachers referring female students for Escalation of Physical Aggression Against Teammate.

*Physical Aggression Against Teammate: Between Genders* is a subset of the code Physical Aggression Against Teammate and is identified as kicking, hitting, punching, or attempted physical harm against a student of the opposite gender. Examples of Physical Aggression Against Teammate: Between Genders for male students include, “slapped a female scholar in the face while standing in line” and “punched a female scholar on the arm when walking past for no reason.” Examples of Physical Aggression Against Teammate: Between Genders for female students include, “hit a male teammate in the stomach” and “another scholar stated that [the referred student] hit a male scholar.” Male students are more frequently referred for Physical Aggression Against Teammate: Between Genders than female students.

Finally, *Disrespect of School Property* is defined as a level of disrespect towards property such as kicking school property, slamming doors, throwing things on the floor, throwing things across the room, ripping up papers, etc. In instances of Disrespect of School Property, property is not actually damaged or having the potential to be damaged (with the exception of descriptions of ripping up papers). Examples of Disrespect of School Property for male students include, “When given a consequence, he threw his books all over the floor. Whenever scholar is corrected, he has a negative reaction,” and “he yelled and knocked over chairs and desks in response.” Examples of Disrespect of School Property for female students include, “pushed everything off desk. Threw paper” and “second day in a row ripping up work.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-level</th>
<th>Total Group π</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accidentally harming someone with object</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidentally harming someone with body</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.16%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between gender</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40.82%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escalation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.16%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retaliation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.26%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49.99%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages listed are of Physical Aggression Against Teammate by gender.
Gender unique frequent referrals and overall behavioral descriptions. The top reasons for female student referrals are teacher perceptions of Noncompliance 1, Refusals, Physical Aggression Against Teammate, Noncompliance 2, and Disrespect for School Property (see Appendix C). Four of the five referral reasons are shared with male students (i.e., Noncompliance 1, Refusals, Physical Aggression Against Teammate and Disrespect for School Property) and were previously defined and provided with exemplars. The presence of Noncompliance 2 as a top referral reason for girls and not boys suggests that teachers may perceive girls’ misbehaviors as more often containing disrespectful behaviors or language including talking back to adults and laughing or mocking adults in response to disciplinary action or instructions. Examples of Noncompliance 2 for females include, “continued disrespect after being treated very fairly/calmly. Refusing to follow directions, running around and messing with another scholar,” “…once seating [sic], she made noises with her chair. Teammates and I asked her to stop. She rolled her eyes. After telling her she could stand if she didn’t stop, she paused from making noise with the chair and rolled her eyes again,” and “constantly talking and being rude. When given a consequence, starts talking back, rolling eyes, etc. Happened all class until the end, when she had to leave.” Examples of Noncompliance 2 for males include, “yelling out, talking back, and mocking the teacher,” “disrespectful responses/tantrums,” and “yelling at teacher after several reminders to stand in line.”

Female student infractions are at times qualitatively different from male student infractions in several key ways. First, a larger percentage of female student referrals than male student referrals are for Noncompliance 2 (9.94% versus 5.42%), or perceived disrespect of the teacher. In these descriptions, teachers more often describe female
behavior as “rude” and “mocking” towards their authority. Instances of “eye rolling” are cited as reasons for sending female students out of the classroom. Additionally, teachers report female students at a slightly higher rate than male students for Refusals (13.46% versus 9.26%). Despite the large disparity in number of referrals between male and female student, female students are referred about as often as male students for Refusing to Reflect ($n=11; mn=12$). Referrals for Refusing to Reflect include descriptions of girls refusing to go to a “buddy classroom” to reflect using a classroom based procedure. For example, “Refusing to follow directions. Given a choice to reflect in another classroom. Refused to go. Stood in hallway,” “talking back, attitude, and refused to reflect in [another teacher’s] classroom,” and, “refused to do reflection, threw it on the floor. She is constantly redirected and when sent to reflection is on the floor as she is swinging her feet.” This is in contrast with teacher descriptions of male students refusing to reflect which more often include descriptions of boys yelling in response, “Asked to sit down which led to asking to reflect in calm area and telling me ‘no’/ refusing, slamming door repeatedly, kicking chairs over, knocking over trash can, and kicked two teammates in class,” and “refused to reflect, yelling at teacher, out of seat and yelling at teammates.” These examples highlight possible teachers’ perceptions of girls having “attitude” and boys being verbally aggressive.

While teachers do describe males as Refusing to Reflect, teacher descriptions of male students are also sometimes written as their being given the choice to reflect or the student made a choice to not reflect, which does not appear in female student referrals. For example, “asked to reflect, but walked out,” “upset because I asked him to work independently. Left class. Given chance to reflect,” and, “Had many reminders for
controlling body and voice during lesson. He also was told to reflect but chose to kick chair, push chair around the room, and stomp.” Although these referrals all ultimately ended with teachers sending the students out of the classroom, the male students seem to be offered a *choice* to reflect which they did not take, while the female students are perceived as *refusing*.

The top reasons for male student referrals are teacher perceptions of Noncompliance 1, Leaving Class, Physical Aggression Against Teammate, Refusals, Distracting/Disruptive During Class/Test. Noncompliance 1, Refusals and Physical Aggression against Teammate were previously defined and provided with exemplars. Leaving Class and Distracting/Disruptive During Class/Test are most frequently associated with male student referrals.

*Leaving Class* includes descriptions of students leaving the classroom without permission, being found somewhere in the school or outside the school without permission or running away. Examples of Leaving Class for male students include, “walking out of class, playing in stairwell, down the hall, not following directions in class, putting his fingers in his ears, walking around, and bothering other teammates,” “walked out after dollar loss,” “was told to leave small group table and get [reading program] packed, he got up and walked out, was called to come back and refused, trying to slam the door,” “walking away from class in stairwell, going where he feels like going, not with class.” Examples of Leaving Class for female students include, “Stayed in the hallway instead of reflecting,” “Downstairs-was sent to [teacher’s] room to reflect, has been wandering for 20-25 minutes,” and “arrived 10 minutes ago. Won’t come to class.”
Boys are referred for Leaving Class Without Permission at a higher rate than girls (11.56% of male referrals versus 3.53% of female referrals). Boys are described as walking out of the classroom for reasons such as their teacher asking them to move locations because of their behavior or in response to a consequence (i.e., pencils or [token economy] dollars were taken away), walking away from their class in the hallway when they are transitioning between classes or wandering the hallways when they have been told to go to a buddy classroom to reflect. Teacher descriptions consistently describe male students’ “leaving” behaviors in relation to other physical acts the teachers perceive to be intentional. For example, “walked away from class. Beating on the window and slamming door,” “continuing to leave the room, play by the door, roll on the floor, not doing work, trying to throw it away and laughing at reminders,” and “walking out of class, playing in stairwell, down the hall, not following directions in class, putting his fingers in his ears, walking around and bothering other teammates.”

The addition of Distracting/Disruptive During Class/Test to frequent referral reasons for male students illustrates teachers’ perceptions of boys being more disruptive in the classroom than girls. Distracting or Disruptive During Class or Test includes descriptions of students as disruptive to the classroom or learning environment or distracting the class or during a test or state testing. Examples of Distracting or Disruptive During Class for male students include, “disruptive, not completing work, crawling around on the floor, would not leave when told to leave creating a disruptive learning environment; inappropriate talking with [another student] across the room; not following directions” and “walking around class during tests all morning. Refusing to sit, playing with mailboxes. Taking his dollars aren't [sic] working. He still refuses to follow
directions. Seat was moved, didn't work. Distracting others while testing.” Examples of Distracting or Disruptive During Class for female students include, “doing cartwheels and the crab while teammates are working. Drawing on the back of the dry erase board that other teammates are using. This has been going on for the past hour and a half,” and “continues to make small noises to disrupt learning, laughing at teammates, not taking redirections serious, and rolling eyes.” As illustrated, the descriptions of the distracting or disruptive behaviors which teachers refer male and female students for are qualitatively different. Girls are described as dancing, performing, making noises or singing while boys are often described as walking around or talking or shouting across the room.

**Themes**

Themes are larger patterns, which are more tacit, and are identified and derived from codes (Saldaña, 2009). Here, themes are utilized to answer the first research question: What are teacher perceptions of elementary students’ punishable behavior as reflected in teacher descriptions of classroom behaviors leading to office discipline referral?

Predominant themes across all genders and grades uncovered by this analysis are: (a) teachers perceive children as behaving in a multitude of ways which lead to their dismissal from the classroom; (b) teachers’ perceive these student behaviors as intentional, for example, as willfully refusing to comply with given instructions; and (c) teacher subjectivity in operationalizing the student behaviors in conjunction with the school’s behavior and intervention ladder (see Appendix B). Each theme is discussed in the following subsections.
Perceptions of multiple referable behaviors. Fifty-four percent of female referrals and 55% of male referrals include references to multiple behaviors. For example, a referral for a male student which states, “refusing to follow directions, making noises, distracting class, being disrespectful” includes the coded behaviors Refusal, Distracting/Disruptive During Class/Test and Noncompliance 2. This illustrates an important aspect of teachers’ responses to student behaviors which lead to the child’s exclusion from the classroom: While there may be times when teachers immediately send children out of the classroom for a single more serious infraction, they are just as often sending children out after a period of time during which the teacher was unable to successfully manage the child’s behavior while continuing to teach the class. Instead, the teacher seemed to reach a threshold of behaviors or amount of time after which they sent the child out. This can be seen in referrals which reference time, such as, “refused to follow directions all day. Does not listen to teachers.”

Teachers’ perceptions of intentionality of behavior. This leads to the next theme, which is teachers’ perceptions of the motivation and intentionality of student behaviors. Teacher descriptions suggest that the referring teacher may believe that because the child does not change their behavior (either with or without redirection), it is because they do not want to change their behavior. In other words, the behaviors are perceived as intentional and students as willfully noncompliant, rather than being unable to comply with teacher directions for developmental, environmental, relational or emotional regulatory reasons. This perception of intentionality is regularly seen in all referral codes, both high and low frequency, including Refusals, which are identified anytime a teacher writes in a referral that a student “refuses” to comply with a teacher’s
request; Noncompliance 1, which is identified when a teacher describes behavior of students not following rules or directions, exhibiting physical and verbal behaviors that teachers perceive as disruptive of the learning environment or which demand teacher’s attention, and; of Tantrums, which is when teachers state the child is having a tantrum or fit or includes descriptions of marked behaviors of a tantrum, such as kicking, hitting, screaming, crying, throwing or an inability to calm down.

Teachers write that children are Refusing to Calm Down, Refusing to Talk, Refusing to Do Work, Refusing to Follow Directions, or Refusing to Reflect. Descriptions include: “refused to do work after not passing a quiz. Literally sat with head down for over an hour,” “refusing to do any work so far today,” and “refusing to take test,” “refused to go to the office,” “refusing to sit down,” and “generally not following directions. Scholar was in the office refusing to follow directions.” This is aligned with teacher descriptions of tantrum behaviors in relation to refusal behaviors, including, “Running, refusing to work, screaming-tantrums,” and “Daily [female student] refuses to follow classroom expectations, yelling, talking loud, pouting and stomping.”

While in many cases, we do not know what happened prior to the “refusal,” one could generate hypotheses for why a child who did not pass a quiz might not be able to continue to work. In instances where teacher descriptions state that the child “refused to calm down,” it is important to take into account what we know about children’s ability to exert emotional control when they are emotionally distressed or dysregulated. A teacher writes: “Refused to stop playing in the restroom after a teacher asked her to leave. Was disrespectful towards [teacher]. Came back to class and still refused to calm down kicking shoes and yelling out negative comments. (‘Leave me alone’, ‘I hate these
teachers and this school’).” Once the child is in a state of emotional distress (i.e., kicking shoes and yelling), there is little chance that they will be able to comply with a request to calm down. These developmental factors will be discussed in greater detail in the Discussion section.

In describing students’ noncompliant behaviors, teachers’ descriptions indicate that students are not performing work and instead making the choice to do other things. Teachers write that a student “didn’t go to small group, playing in hallway instead,” and another student, “chose to keep making distracting noises and moving chair around, would not stay in seat.” These descriptions indicate that teachers are ultimately sending students out of the classroom for not performing work. However, once out of the classroom, the student is removed entirely from the learning environment and the chance that they will complete the task is further diminished. It is also possible that students may be performing these behaviors to avoid work and the teacher sending the student out of the classroom then behaviorally reinforces the students’ avoidance behaviors.

Contextually, the key informant described the school as placing a heavy emphasis on student compliance with teacher directions or expectations. This emphasis is aligned with the strong importance often placed on individual responsibility for behavior as well as an emphasis on control in Black, low-income classrooms (Chen, 2013; Monroe, 2005). At the beginning of the school year, the site school leaders emphasize the importance of behavior management in the classroom. Teachers are then coached on the behavioral management cycle which teaches behavior management and expectations. Furthermore, when the school year begins, teachers are observed by coaches and rated on student compliance with the goal of 100 percent student compliance with teacher directions.
According to the key informant, teachers feel tremendous pressure from school administrators for their students to comply with all instructions. Not only are teachers coached and rated on the goal of 100 percent compliance, their ratings impact their overall teacher score which in turn influences their salary. Furthermore, teachers who do not meet classroom behavioral goals can get “stuck” on this goal, meaning they cannot move on to other academic or content related goals. This pressure and frustration may account for some of the reasons which teachers send children out for noncompliance and “refusals.”

Additionally, this charter network employs a “no opt out” teaching strategy, meaning that students are not allowed not to answer a question when called on by the teacher. This strategy is meant to encourage students and teachers to engage mentally and “refusing” to do mental work is not considered an option. Again, teachers are coached and rated on this element, which puts pressure on them to be strict with students who may not be able to or wish to answer a question when called upon. Refusal to work and not following directions are listed on the school’s behavioral list as requiring intervention, while reflection is part of the behavioral management cycle in the school and is listed as an intermediary step before sending the student to the office (See Appendix B). Therefore, it is recommended that a student who is “refusing to do work” or “not following directions” be sent to “reflect” in a buddy classroom. Ostensibly, a child who “refused” this reflection would then be sent to the office.

Reliance on teachers for operationalization of behaviors and interventions.

The behaviors laid out in the school’s behavioral and intervention chart (see Appendix B) are not operationalized, which requires teachers to then subjectively define the behaviors
which lead to children being sent out of the classroom. For the listed behavior of “minor disruptions,” an in-class “reflection space” is prescribed. Neither the threshold for what constitutes the level of “minor” disruption nor what should happen in the reflection space is defined. One teacher wrote, “disrupting student in class he was sent to office for reflection” and under the consequence, “scholar reflected” was written. It is unclear whether this was a minor disruption (there is no higher level of disruption listed under behaviors), however, an in-class intervention is specifically prescribed and an out-of-class intervention was enacted. The reflection component of the intervention is also not operationalized. In conversation with the key informant, she described a protocol of students being sent to an area in the classroom where they are supposed to reflect in written form based on a specific prompt and then review the written reflection with the teacher. The key informant also stated that this reflection protocol rarely occurs in this way. She said more often, the student is sent to reflect, they “reflect mentally” and then rejoin the class when they are ready. This illustrates how the intended intervention is both not written down, nor employed as well as issues with the correct intervention being prescribed for behaviors.
Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of the present study is to better understand what leads teachers to exclude students from the general classroom setting. In order to understand this process, two research questions were posed:

Research Question 1: What are teacher perceptions of elementary students’ punishable behavior as reflected in teacher descriptions of classroom behavior types and dimensions leading to office discipline referral?

Research Question 2: How do teacher descriptions of elementary students’ punishable behavior (as reflected in teacher descriptions of classroom behaviors leading to office discipline referral) vary by type and dimension of behavioral infraction and gender of the student?

Summary of Findings

In relation to Research Question 1, the findings suggest that teachers perceive students as intentionally behaving in myriad ways which the teachers have difficulty managing and which teachers perceive as disruptive to the classroom environment or disrespectful to the teacher, but are not necessarily dangerous to the student, their peers or the teacher. These student behaviors appear to compound to the point where the teacher sends the child out of the classroom. This can be seen in teachers’ written referrals which list multiple behaviors more than half of the time and in teacher’s descriptions of intentional or willful acts within all behaviors, particularly in the frequent codes of
Refusals, Noncompliance 1, Noncompliance 2, Leaving Class and Distracting/Disrupting During Class/Test. This perception of multiple, intentional, disruptive and disrespectful behaviors is likely compounded by both the lack of specific written guidelines from the school of operationalized behaviors which should lead to out of class interventions as well as [key informant] reported pressure from the school to maintain order in their classrooms as exemplified by goals of 100% student compliance with teacher instructions.

Regarding Research Question 2, the findings from this study suggest that teachers have differing perceptions of male and female students. This can be seen through both the descriptions of behaviors for which male and female students are commonly frequently referred as well as through the behaviors which are uniquely frequently referred for male or female students. In looking at commonly referred behaviors, these differences are most prominent in descriptions of Noncompliance 1 and Refusals. Noncompliance 1 behaviors for boys were found to more contain descriptions of making “noises”, “yelling” and not working, which female behaviors were more often described as arguing with the teacher or distracting in a performative manner (i.e., dancing, playing, etc.). This suggests teachers perceive boys and girls as seeking attention from both teachers and peers and avoiding work in different ways. In looking at teacher perceptions of refusal behaviors, girls were more frequently cited for Refusing to Reflect and boys were more frequently cited for Refusing to Do Work. These variations may indicate that there are gendered differences in classroom behavior and/or that teachers have differing expectations for boys and girls with regards to participation and reflective practices.
Interpretation of Findings

The analysis of the discipline referrals suggests that the discipline process in this school in part consists of a cycle of negative interactions with students which, in the teachers’ descriptions, begins with a student refusing to comply with task demands. From what we can gather from the current data set, the sequence commences with a student refusing to obey or comply with teacher direction, redirections or the work or environmental demands and is followed by descriptions of students’ purposeful disregard of instructions and emotionally dysregulated, disruptive and disrespectful behaviors. One second grade boy’s referral reads, “refusing to sit correctly in his carpet square. He wants to put his feet in another teammate’s square, was told to go sit in his chair and started kicking chairs, doors and wall. Disrupting the learning environment,” and another first grade boy’s referral says, “[Student] does not follow any directions. He refuses to work and be with his team. When corrected he reacts with stomping, tantrums and disrespectful outburst.” These descriptions of noncompliance are examples of student behaviors of refusing to comply with a teacher’s request and disruptions within the learning environment and refusing to work which leads to the exclusion of the child from the classroom.

The removal of students from the classroom for noncompliant behaviors illustrates tension between the goals of the Department of Education and Louisiana State law when creating school policy. The U.S. Department of Education’s Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline (2014) states that students should be removed from the classroom “only as a last resort” and further that schools should “reserve the use of out-of-school suspensions, expulsions and
alternative placements for the most egregious disciplinary infractions that threaten school safety and when mandated by federal or state law.” In direct opposition to these recommendations, Louisiana State law gives teachers great latitude when making the decision to remove students from the classroom with the possible outcome of suspension. In part, the law reads that a teacher may have a student “immediately removed from his [or her] classroom and placed in the custody of the principal or his [or her] designee” when a student’s behavior:

- prevents the orderly instruction of other students or poses an immediate threat to the safety or physical well being of any student or teacher, when a student exhibits disrespectful behavior toward the teacher such as using foul or abusive language or gestures directed at or threatening a student or a teacher, when a student violates the school's code of conduct, or when a student exhibits other disruptive, dangerous, or unruly behavior, including inappropriate physical contact, inappropriate verbal conduct, sexual or other harassment, bullying, throwing objects, inciting other students to misbehave, or destroying property (§17:416.c.i, 2006)

Several of the behaviors listed in this section of the law are highly subjective (e.g., “disrespectful behavior,” “other disruptive… or unruly behavior,” etc.) when not accompanied by school policy which operationalizes these behaviors. The findings of the present study also suggest that Black elementary students are frequently referred for subjective offenses including disrespect and excessive noise (e.g., shouting, disrupting, etc.) (Skiba et al., 2002). In conversation with the key informant, a list of behavior codes which we considered to be subjective was compiled (see Appendix D). According to this division, subjective behaviors comprised 61% of all referred behaviors. This tendency for teachers to refer students for subjective behaviors is likely further complicated by the site school’s Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) “Discipline Policy” which does not operationalize either the sanctioned punishable behaviors of being disruptive or
disrespectful or the desired behavior of “compliance”. This leaves it up to the teacher to determine whether a student’s behavior indicates “emerging disrespect” or suggests a “severe/pattern of disrespect” and consequently whether the appropriate intervention is to keep the child within the classroom or send them out. The lack of operationalization of these behaviors is compounded by the information shared by the key informant that teachers are under significant pressure from the school site for their students to fully comply with teacher requests and commands. Therefore, teachers find themselves in the difficult position of being both required to maintain 100% order in their classroom but without operationalized definitions of what that looks like and does not look like. Further research involving interviews with teachers is suggested in order to better understand the relationship between these factors.

Social, cognitive and emotional development of both teachers and students are other possible factors which may impact both student behaviors and teachers’ perceptions of those behaviors which lead to student removal from the classroom. Social and emotional development factors have been shown to affect both students’ school outcomes and their relationships in the school setting, including their relationships with teachers (Elias, 2003). Children’s ability to regulate their emotions has also been linked to their success in school (Huffman, Mehlinger, & Kerivan, 2000). It is further known that emotional competence is linked to social competence and vice versa (Denham, 2007). Both stage of development and environmental factors can impact children’s ability to regulate their emotions. Denham (2007) describes a variety of coping strategies utilized by grade school children to regulate their emotions. Some of these age-appropriate strategies may be viewed by teachers as defiant or disruptive, including externalizing
behaviors (e.g., teacher descriptions of students yelling or throwing things in response to teacher redirections) and distancing themselves from an anger-provoking interaction with a peer or adult (e.g., teacher descriptions of students walking out of the classroom). While there are more adaptive strategies, such as problem-solving or support seeking, not all children have access to these strategies when experiencing emotional upset (Gilliam, Shaw, Beck, Schonberg, & Lukon, 2002). Teachers’ descriptions suggest that they may perceive students as unwilling to comply with and “refusing” to follow instructions or work, even when students display upset or emotionally dysregulated behaviors.

Environmental factors, including exposure to trauma and community violence, are known to impact children’s ability to regulate their emotions and impact their peer interactions (Schwartz & Proctor, 2000). While it is important not to presume that all Black children living in economically depressed communities experience trauma and community violence, we know that approximately 60% of children nationwide have experience at least one victimization in the past year, either that they witnessed or experienced personally (Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, & Hamby, 2009). Therefore, it is expected that a portion of the children from this study who exhibit behaviors that teachers at times find disruptive and aggressive will have been exposed to experiences which may cause trauma and make those types of behaviors more likely to occur. Although teachers are likely aware of these patterns of trauma and their impact on student behavior, teacher descriptions indicate they are at least partially attributing these student behaviors as an intentional choice. This finding extends previous research by revealing teachers’ perceptions of students prior to and during student emotional dysregulation as intentional
behaviors when these behaviors are both typical for children in this age range (i.e., 5-11 years of age) as well as potentially exacerbated by environmental circumstances.

Just as students’ social and emotional competence impact their academic outcomes, we know that teachers’ social and emotional competence are also crucial to student and classroom outcomes (Jennings & Greenburg, 2009). Like students, teachers have varying levels of social and emotional management skills. Research shows that children in the classrooms of teachers who have lower levels of these skills also display lower levels of on-task behavior and academic performance (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). These teachers are more likely to react to student misbehaviors in overly punitive ways which contribute to a cycle of disruptive classroom behaviors such as the ones which are frequently described in this study (Osher et al., 2008). Even when teachers possess social and emotional management skills, their personal well-being from day to day can impact their capacity to manage their classroom. In a previous study conducted at the site school, teachers’ self-reported well-being was correlated with the frequency of ODRs over time (Brachfeld, 2017).

Taken together, external pressure from the site school for teachers to demonstrate their ability to manage their classroom coupled with lack of operationalized discipline procedures and variable teacher and student coping strategies may lead teachers to feel they have no choice but to send students out of the classroom when students do not comply, regardless of the severity of the behavior. It is suggested that further research be conducted to better understand teachers’ perceptions of their own emotional state at the moment they send the student out of the room, what they believe are their options for managing student behaviors, and why they chose to send the student out of the room. It is
also important to further investigate when teachers do not refer students and what they believe to be the differences in those two outcomes. The current study only addresses behaviors and students that teachers are referring for discipline and does not encompass the full extent of teachers’ perceptions towards students.

In keeping with previous research findings, the present study suggests that teachers perceive Black youth’s discipline worthy behaviors as aggressive towards their fellow students and teachers and disruptive of the learning environment (Casella, 2003; Matsueda, 1992; Sprague et al., 2001). Fifty four percent of ODRs were for student behaviors categorized as disruptive, physically aggressive or verbally negative (e.g., Bullying, Perception of Threat Against Teacher, Throwing, Distracting/Disruptive During Class/Test, etc.). Referrals include descriptions such as, “Mad about his breakfast food. Got up without permission, was reminded to raise his hand to get up. Pushed me out of the way.” Boys and girls as young as 8 years old are described as “threatening” their classmates and teachers, for example, “pretended to shoot teacher” and “threatening all people who try to correct him that he was going to punch and smack them. Came up from recess extremely disruptive, was sat by himself, but kept being disruptive,” and “yelling at scholars and teacher.” Teachers describe students as being disruptive “all day” or “constantly.” Again, while teacher perceptions of students’ punishable behaviors should not be taken as indicative of their overall perceptions of the students, it certainly warrants further research about the totality of teachers’ perceptions of student. Further study will help practitioners understand teachers’ perceptions of students’ strengths as well as weaknesses as well as teachers’ personal strengths and weaknesses when managing their classrooms.
While the preponderance of the data illustrates teachers’ perceptions of students’ noncompliant, disruptive and aggressive behaviors, the findings from this study also suggest some differences in how teachers perceive female and male students. There is evidence that teachers may perceive female students as more disrespectful than male students (Noncompliance 2). This finding aligns with research that Black girls who believe that they are standing up for themselves are perceived by adults as “loud” or “aggressive” (Murphy, Acosta & Kennedy-Lewis, 2013; E.W. Morris, 2005). The present study further suggests that teachers may believe female student should be more in control of their emotions when they are upset than boys. This is illustrated by girls being more frequently referred for Refusing to Calm Down and Refusing to Reflect. This perception of relative control may be related to research which shows that Black girls are perceived as needing less comfort and emotional support than White girls of the same ages (Epstein, Black & González, 2017). These perceptions of Black girls as being more “grown up” may also contribute to teacher descriptions of female student behaviors of physical aggression. First grade referrals for girls read: “fought with a scholar on the playground, threw her to the ground, was punching her from behind. When asked about what had happened, she lied about it,” “choked and punched another scholar in the eye,” and “[student] has been using inappropriate/adult language to teammates. She told a girl in [another teacher’s] class that ‘she was having sex in the bathroom’ and a girl in my class about alcohol. Teammates were very upset.” Several kindergartener referrals read, “aggressive behavior, kicking furniture, and refusing to follow directions,” “hit [another student] for no reason on the playground,” and “punching and hitting everyone in her sight, regardless if friend or not.”
The findings from the present study also suggest that teachers perceive boys to be more disruptive or distracting to the class than girls, leading to boys’ more frequent exclusion from the classroom. While both boys and girls are frequently referred for physical aggression, only boys were referred for Indirectly Harming Someone with Body or Object or Escalating physical aggression in response to another student. While there is not enough data to draw conclusions about this finding, further research should be conducted to better understand these perceptions of “accidentally” harming people as well as possibly disproportionate responses to negative or neutral interactions with other students. This tendency may be aligned with current research findings which suggest that teachers perceive middle school aged Black boys as more physically aggressive than girls and other youth groups (Monroe, 2005; Kennedy-Lewis & Murphy, 2016). Furthermore, research shows that high school aged Black children are expelled and suspended at the highest rates in urban environments (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Very little research has been conducted with elementary aged children, however suspension rates for elementary school Black girls and boys are disproportionately higher than elementary school children of other races and Black children are more likely to attend schools with higher rates of suspension (Barrett, McEachin, Mills, & Valant, 2017; Mendez & Knopf, 2003). The present study extends these findings to other forms of exclusionary discipline (i.e., in school suspensions) for elementary aged Black children, and particularly Black boys.

There are several possible factors which may commingle to lead to this disproportionality, (a) unclear school discipline policies; (b) emotional regulation of teachers and students; (c) the intersection of race and class privilege; and (d) implicit
biases. The lack of clarity of the school discipline policies and emotional regulation of teacher and students have been previously discussed. The intersection of race and class privilege has been identified as an area which requires more investigation. At the site school, as in many educational settings and society, White and middle-class individuals hold most positions of power. This power structure can lead to White and middle-class behavioral norms being valued above Black and lower-class norms. The result of this power dynamic can lead Black and White middle-class teachers to interpret “Black behaviors” such as play fighting as aggression and overlapping speech as disrespect (Monroe, 2005). In line with these findings, the key informant suggested that class differences between teachers and students may account for differing behavioral expectations as well as perceptions of student behavior. Furthermore, implicit biases can lead teachers to pay more attention to Black boys, particularly when looking for challenging behaviors (Gilliam, Maupin, Reyes, Accavitti, & Shic, 2016). Further investigation into implicit bias in elementary, urban setting is needed in order to better understand the possible effects of each of these factors.

Limitations

This study is both limited and bolstered by its qualitative and cultural and context specific nature. It is limited because it seeks to identify how teachers perceive Black male and female elementary aged student behaviors which lead the students to be sent out of the classroom in this particular setting. While some findings align with the broader literature base, caution should be used when generalizing these findings, and the extensions of those findings, to other settings. It is up to practitioner's to determine...
whether the perceptions of teachers in these classrooms may also be influencing discipline practices in their own schools.

The study is further limited by the necessarily brief, time-specific and one-sided nature of the narratives. The descriptions are written from the teachers’ perspectives and are further limited by their archival nature; the referrals capture the teachers’ perspective at the moment of discipline. As noted, the referrals often begin with a student’s behavior, however we do not know what may have happened prior to the start of the referral, nor do we know either the student’s behaviors or the teacher’s response to those behaviors after the referral. For example, one referral reads “talking back, attitude and refused to reflect in [other teacher’s] class.” To what was the student “talking back” to? What were the behavioral indications that the student was giving the teacher “attitude”? How and why did the student “refuse to reflect” in another teacher’s classroom? We may hypothesize that there are multiple factors from the perspectives of both the student and the teacher (including relationship histories and class differences) which contributed to this exchange, but we cannot presently know what those factors are without further study.

Furthermore, no data from the student perspective was collected for analysis and therefore we do not know how students perceive either the discipline process, or their teachers. The author has spent significant time in the school’s discipline room and interacted with students during that time. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those informal interactions suggest that students have differing perceptions of the causes of their behaviors which lead them to be sent out of the classroom. I spoke with a girl who had been sent to the office for getting into a fight with another boy. She told me that she had gotten into a fight because she told a boy who had passed too close to her to “watch himself.”
He then poked her and she hit him after chasing him. She said that she gets into fights “often” (although this was her first fight this year and was approximately one and a half months into the school year). She further intuited that she has a hard time letting things go. It is important to recognize that there is an individual child behind each of these referrals and those children would have their own versions to tell of these interactions.

It is important to note that these findings come from a single data source (i.e., teacher descriptions of students’ punishable behaviors) which was interpreted in conjunction with a single key informant and school policy. This study would benefit from more intensive time spent in the classroom to observe the discipline cycle as well as collaboration with more key informants. While the researcher spent considerable time in classrooms, I did not see a student sent out of the classroom firsthand. Therefore, qualitative description, based on direct observations, of the teachers’ actions in those moments is not available. I observed teachers manage student behaviors in their classrooms with varying outcomes. There were times when teachers would effectively manage student misbehaviors while continuing instruction and other times when students were either told to go to a different area of the classroom as punishment or removed themselves to another area of the classroom.

**Implications for Future Research and Practice**

As previously noted, most students had between 0 and 3 discipline referrals (M=83.7%, F=97.1%). Therefore, a small portion of students accounted for a majority of the discipline referrals. Furthermore, referrals by classroom varied widely. For example, one fourth grade teacher referred 176 students in the school year and another fourth grade teacher referred 12 students. This variation may be due to a variety of student, teacher
and school level factors, including the number of students in the class, student and teacher social emotional development, and teacher classroom management and relationship building skills, the quality of the coaching the teacher is receiving, and school climate, among others. These are all areas for future research and data collection which can then be used to create more targeted coaching and interventions for teachers around student behaviors. The findings can also be used to provide social and behavioral support for the children whose behaviors are being targeted as “problems” in the classroom. Because the same students are continually sent out of the classroom for similar behaviors, the intervention system does not appear to be working for them. Based on my experiences on the behavioral intervention team, the school was aware of these students and teachers and the need to provide them with supports. Each week the highest need teachers and students were identified and possible interventions were discussed at the individual and classroom levels. However, because school success via continuation of the school’s charter is based on academic achievement, academics remain the primary focus for school resources and, with limited resources, interventions were implemented with varying degrees of integrity.

In summary, there are several recommendations that can be made for research and practice based on these findings. Current U.S. Department of Education guidance recommends that schools have clear written discipline policies which provide “specific and objective” criteria for both offense categories as well as disciplinary penalties (2014). While the school’s “Discipline Procedures” ladder appears to be an attempt to satisfy that recommendation, as can be seen, neither the Behaviors nor the Interventions provide specific or objective criteria to identify the presence of those behaviors or enact the use of
those interventions. The DOE report further discourages “specific consequences for specific actions” regardless of the circumstances surrounding those actions. Therefore, the first recommendation is that the school operationalize both behaviors and interventions for both teachers and students in developmentally appropriate ways. What constitutes “not following directions” and “minor disruptions”? What is the process for the reflection space and how is that being monitored? Furthermore, once students are sent out of the classroom to the discipline room, what can they expect to happen while there? How long should they remain in the discipline room for various behaviors? Are there specific steps they must undertake in order to return to their classroom and what are those steps?

We know that minority, and particularly Black, youth of all ages are disproportionally excluded through suspension and expulsion with the highest rates of those punishments existing in urban settings (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Furthermore, these exclusionary policies have not been found to be effective in the long term at reducing student misbehavior. Rather, they are correlated with future suspensions, dropout and expulsion (Wallace et al., 2008). What we still do not know are the short- and long-term impacts of other exclusionary practices, such as the ones being implemented at this school, which affect Black and minority students at the elementary level. These practices include “In School Suspension” and other time spent out of the classroom. This study suggests that this school and its teachers are following the harsher allowances of state law for classroom removal in low-income, urban school settings. These practices are also aligned with research that indicates a strong importance placed on individual responsibility for behavior as well as an emphasis on control in Black, low-
income classrooms (Chen, 2013; Monroe, 20050). Recommendations have been made for models of culturally appropriate teaching pedagogy for Black children which include the encouragement of expressive individualism and movement amongst students (Hale, 2001). Incorporating these elements into school policy is suggested as a counterbalance to a focus on control and compliance.

From a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support perspective, it is important for this school and others to collect sufficient data to better understand the trajectory and outcomes of their discipline system. It is recommended that the school collect students’ perspectives on the discipline process overall as well as collecting and analyzing data from their reflections from these individual referrals. Second, is important to understand how much time students are spending out of the classroom. To that end, it is recommended that a broad scale study—both at this school and others—of so-called “in school suspension” practices be undertaken. To begin to understand these practices at the current site, it was recommended to the school that students sign into and out of the discipline room so that the school could gain an understanding of how much time students are currently spending out of the classroom. Although members of the school administration agreed these were important data points to collect, the school was unable to enact these suggestions due to limited resources. This brings us to recommendations for areas of possible consultation.

From a consultation standpoint, it may be beneficial to consult with multiple stakeholders at the school about the behavior management systems. Because descriptions of Noncompliance 1 and Refusals are among the most frequent reason for referrals for both boys and girls, it can be extrapolated that teachers perceive students behaving with
compliance in response to teacher requests and commands as paramount. Teachers’ actions illustrate that sending students out of the classroom for these noncompliant and refusal behaviors is a classroom management tool used with frequency. These practices are contrary to research which has shown that aversive consequences such as reprimands or exclusion may exacerbate student noncompliant behaviors (Mayer, 2001). Effective classroom management by teachers, including whether students comply or respond aversively, is impacted by a variety of factors including teacher-student relationships as well as teacher immediacy (i.e., the student’s perceptions of teacher approachability and engagement) (Burroughs, 2007). Furthermore, there are classroom management techniques which are known to be successful in reducing the disruptive behavior of students, such as increasing behavior specific praise and student opportunities to respond (Zaheer et al., 2019; Zoder-Martell et al., 2000). These techniques have been shown to be effective even when working with students with high emotional and behavioral needs (Zaheer et al., 2019). The school site where this study occurred is aware of these classroom management techniques and they are included in coaching, however, it is unknown with what fidelity they are being implemented and what other factors may be impacting their efficacy.

Beyond classroom management, it is known that teacher perceptions affect how they define compliant behavior. Teachers have the power to subjectively define compliant and non-compliant behavior and that power can lead to discipline disproportionality based on teacher perceptions, including implicit biases (Girvan et al., 2017). Because of this tendency towards subjectivity and risk for biases to impact students, it is important for school sites to create specific policies around appropriate
teacher response to perceived noncompliance as well as trainings opportunities for teachers to learn to recognize and address their biases.
Chapter 6

Conclusion

The disparity in the discipline between Black children and children of other races is impacted by a variety of individual and environmental factors. Understanding teacher perceptions of Black female and male student behavior is one way to identify some of the causes of elevated disciplinary infractions. This study indicates that teachers may need more training in effective classroom management and understanding, respecting and responding to gender and culture-specific behaviors. This study further suggests that schools’ lack of explicit definitions for and responses to perceived non-compliant behaviors may lead to their more frequently sending children out of the classroom.

School policy around rating and compensating teachers is also implicated in increased referrals for behaviors which may otherwise be handled within the classroom. With regards to sending children out of the classroom, it is recommended that state law be adjusted so that it is aligned with federal guidelines which strongly advocates for students to be kept inside the classroom except for when their or other students’ physical safety is at risk. It is also recommended that social emotional learning programs be implemented and studied for both teachers and students. By addressing these areas in future research, policy and practice, we may hope to see discipline disparities decrease and student outcomes improve.
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Appendix A

Photograph of Site School Office Discipline Referral Form
Appendix B

Site School “Discipline Protocol”

“Our job is to create a safe, joyful, healthy, and academically rigorous learning environment for our scholars. In order to ensure a safe and productive learning environment for all of our scholars, we will adhere to the following ladder of interventions.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors:</th>
<th>Behaviors:</th>
<th>Behaviors:</th>
<th>Behaviors:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Not following directions</td>
<td>• Repeated defiance</td>
<td>• Fighting/aggressive behavior</td>
<td>• Physically harming a teammate or teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Talking out of turn</td>
<td>• Emerging disrespect</td>
<td>(throwing, pushing, shoving with intent to harm)</td>
<td>• Leaving the building without permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inappropriate words to teammates</td>
<td>• Refusing to do work</td>
<td>• Bullying, threatening</td>
<td>• Broken restorative circle agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Minor disruptions</td>
<td>• Not following directions in common spaces (lunch and recess)</td>
<td>• Property damage/vandalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-Class Interventions:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Beyond Class Interventions:</strong></td>
<td>• Walking out of the classroom</td>
<td><strong>Out of School Interventions:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Repeat directions</td>
<td>• Phone call home</td>
<td>• Severe/pattern of disrespect</td>
<td>• Out-of-school suspension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Private check-in</td>
<td>• Buddy classroom intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Return to school restorative meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Change seat</td>
<td>• Lunch intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reflection space</td>
<td>• Recess intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Behavior intervention push-in</td>
<td>• After-school intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual early-stage interventions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Planned discussion</td>
<td>• Parent conference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Goal-setting</td>
<td>• Parent “sit-in”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Data collection</td>
<td>• Parent “pop-up”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- and debrief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Academic assessments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix C

**Definitions of Deductive and Inductive Behavioral Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infraction</th>
<th>Descriptions of Student Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying*</td>
<td>Harsh teasing, name calling, or mocking others, especially when a single person or group is singled out. Noted when occurring between genders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraband</td>
<td>Objects in school that are against policy, such as a knife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect for School Property</td>
<td>Disrespect towards school property such as kicking furniture, slamming doors, throwing things on the floor, throwing things across the room, ripping up papers, etc. Noted if also throwing items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distracting/Disruptive During Class/Test</td>
<td>Disruptions or distractions to the classroom or learning environment either during general class time or during a state or subject test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of School Property*</td>
<td>Damage to school property or intentionally breaking an item of value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate Behavior*</td>
<td>Sexual or lewd remarks, behaviors or gestures as well as any action involving bodily fluids (e.g., spit, urine, blood). This includes looking at others while going to the bathroom or infringing upon another person's privacy as well as inappropriately touching another student. Noted when occurring between genders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving class*</td>
<td>Leaving class without permission, being found somewhere in the school or outside the school without permission or running away from the classroom or school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncompliance 1*</td>
<td>Not following the rules or directions, persistent self-regulatory problems that are disruptive of learning environment or demand teacher's attention (e.g., talking out, making noises, bothering others, interrupting, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncompliance 2*</td>
<td>Disrespectful behavior or language including talking back to adults and laughing or mocking adults in response to disciplinary action or instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncompliance 3*</td>
<td>Noncompliance 1 or 2 with escalation of behaviors. When problem behaviors intensify and/or escalate in response to correction, redirection or disciplinary action. This does not include a continuation of previous problem behaviors, only a clear escalation of problem behaviors after redirection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Type</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Threat Against Teacher</td>
<td>Attempting to kick, hit or punch a teacher or school employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Aggression Against Teammate</td>
<td>Kicking, hitting, punching or attempted physical harm against another student. Noted when retaliation (i.e., in response to physical aggression from another student), escalation (i.e., in response to physical aggression from another student, with the response at a higher degree or aggression), or between genders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Aggression Against Teacher</td>
<td>Kicking, hitting, punching, or attempted physical harm against a teacher or school employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusals</td>
<td>Statements that a student is &quot;refusing&quot; to calm down, reflect, talk, do work or follow directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing*</td>
<td>Theft of property of another student, a teacher or the school. Reserved for intentional theft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tantrum</td>
<td>Statements of a tantrum or fit or descriptions of marked behaviors of a tantrum such as kicking, hitting, screaming, crying, throwing and/or an inability to calm down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwing</td>
<td>Throwing an object for any reason including joking around, anger, a tantrum, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching</td>
<td>Touching another student or student's belongings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and Non-Verbal Negative Communication</td>
<td>Shouting, yelling, or screaming, harsh language, cursing or threatening use of words towards a teacher or school employee. Specified if a pretend weapon is involved, including paper guns or pretending the hand is a gun or use of inappropriate language or gestures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and Non-Verbal Negative Communication</td>
<td>Use of shouting, yelling or screaming, harsh language, cursing or threatening use of words towards another student. This included similar language against self, such as yelling self-deprecating remarks. Specified if a pretend weapon is involved, including paper guns or pretending the hand is a gun or use of inappropriate language or gestures. Excluding if the situation is considered bullying. Noted when between genders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and Non-Verbal Negative Communication</td>
<td>Use of shouting, yelling or screaming, harsh language, cursing or threatening use of words with an unspecified target or audience. Specified if a pretend weapon is involved, including paper guns or pretending the hand is a gun or use of inappropriate language or gestures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: behaviors are listed alphabetically with previously identified deductive codes indicated by an asterisk. Behaviors which were previously identified but expanded upon are indicated by a plus.*
### Appendix D

Suggested Classification of Behavioral Codes Into Objective and Subjective Infractions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective Infractions</th>
<th>Subjective Infractions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All types of Physical Aggression Against Teammates and Teachers</td>
<td>Some Types of Verbal and Non-Verbal Negative Communication Towards Teacher, Teammate and Unspecified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Types of Verbal and Non-Verbal Negative Communication Towards Teacher</td>
<td>- shouting, yelling, screaming toward a teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• harsh language, cursing, threatening use of words toward a teacher or school employee</td>
<td>- inappropriate language and gestures e.g. paper gun, pretending the hand is a gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing – All Types</td>
<td>- Shouting, yelling, screaming toward another student, verbal aggression against self-excluding suicidal remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwing</td>
<td>Refusing to Reflect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving Class</td>
<td>Refusing to do Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Types of Touching</td>
<td>Refusing to Follow Directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inappropriate Touching</td>
<td>Distracting/Disruptive During Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraband</td>
<td>Some Types of Types of Touching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate Behavior – All Types of Sexually Inappropriate Behavior</td>
<td>• touching another student’s belongings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spit on a Teammate</td>
<td>• Not Keeping Hands to Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Types of Verbal Negative Communication Towards Teammate</td>
<td>Tantrum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Harsh language, cursing, threatening use of words toward another student</td>
<td>Noncompliance 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>Noncompliance 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect for School Property</td>
<td>Noncompliance 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of School Property</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Biography

Haley Peele was born in Morristown, NJ and began her long road through higher education at the age of 17 when she failed out of school her first semester at the University of Texas at Austin. Following several years of employment at Starbucks, she received her Associate’s Degree from the County College of Morris and then her Bachelor’s Degree from Rutgers University-The State University of New Jersey, Newark. Following graduation, she moved to Colorado for 5 months, but then decided that was not the place for her and returned to Newark to a job at The New Jersey Historical Society, then employment at Columbia Law School and New York University School of Law. It was at this time, she began to pursue a Master of Arts Degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs at NYU. Following graduation, she began to work in the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at NYU where she worked closely with the doctoral students. It was at this point in time when she realized that she began to consider pursuing a doctorate degree. She applied to another Master of Arts Degree in Counseling for Mental Health and Wellness at NYU and then transferred to Tulane University for her Doctorate in School Psychology, where she remains.