THE IMPACT OF SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS ON STUDENT DROPOUT

Reginald H. Edwards

THE IMPACT OF SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS ON STUDENT DROPOUT

A Field Study

Presented to

The College of Graduate Studies

Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

of Education Specialist

Reginald H. Edwards

December 2010

December, 2010

To the College of Graduate Studies:

We are submitting a Field Study written by Reginald H. Edwards entitled "The Impact of Suspensions and Expulsions on Student Dropout." We have examined the final copy of this Field Study for form and content. We recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Education Specialist.

Research Advisor

Committee Member

Committee Member

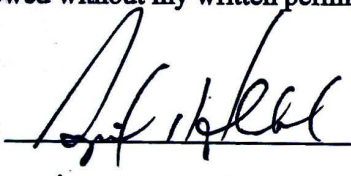
Accepted for the Council

Dean, College of Graduate Studies

Statement of Permission to Use

In presenting this Field Study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Education Specialist Degree at Austin Peay State University, I agree that the library shall make it available to borrowers under the rules of the library. Brief quotations from this field study are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgement of the source is made.

Permissions for extensive quotation or reproduction of this field study may be granted by my major professor, or in his/her absence, by the Head of the Interlibrary Services when, in the opinion of either, the proposed use of the material is for scholarly purposes. Any copying or use of the material in this Field Study for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature: 

Date: 1-15-2011

Dedication

I would like to first dedicate the completion of this project to God. Without his divine help and understanding this would not be possible. I would like to also dedicate this to my lovely wife Kelly, and my wonderful children, Paul, Brittany, Khia, and Demitri. Without you my work would be in vain.

LIST OF TABLES

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my graduate committee chairperson, Dr. Tammy Shutt. She has been the inspiration for me completing this research. She has continued to encourage and help me throughout this study. Dr. Shutt's vast array of wisdom is second to none and a credit to herself and Austin Peay State University.

I would also like to thank the other committee members, Dr. Gary Stewart and Dr. Donald Luck, for all of their hard work and guidance.

I would also like to thank Mr. Frank Wilson and Mr. Hal Bedell for being great mentors during this endeavor. Like great military leaders, they lead by example. The journey was great and their guidance exceptional.

Finally, I would like to thank Wanda Purcell, Maria Farrell, Erin Walden, and Dr. Bettie Barrett for their inspiration and help.

ABSTRACT

REGINALD H. EDWARDS. The Impact of Suspensions and Expulsions on Student Dropout

This research explored the difference between suspensions/expulsions and student dropout in the Robertson County School System. The total number of students was 4,056 with 41 total dropouts during the 2009-2010 school year. A One-Sample *t*-test was performed on hypothesis one. Chi-square (χ^2) Tests with cross tabulations were performed on hypotheses two and three. All analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The study was performed to test three null hypotheses at the .05 level of significance. Results indicated that there were no significance between students who dropped out of school that were suspended/expelled and students that dropped out who were not. There were also no significance based on majority/minority, and no significance based on gender. The individual numbers for the ethnic groups were small, so they were combined to form a majority group consisting of Caucasian students and a minority group consisting of the other ethnic groups.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Violent outbreaks in American public schools, including school shootings, shootings on elementary school playgrounds, and bomb threats initiated by angry students, have prompted administrators and educators to begin implementing Zero Tolerance (ZT) discipline policies. "ZT policies are a form of maximum disciplinary response to behavior deemed as dangerous, threatening, and profoundly disruptive to the educational environment" (Henault, 2001). The policies are intended to respond to a potentially threatening situation with the removal of students considered detrimental to the safety and educational progress of others. In the Robertson County School System, ZT is reserved for only the most severe misbehaviors such as drug possession on school grounds, possession of firearms or blades longer than two inches, or physical assaults on a faculty or staff member (Robertson County School System Student Code of Conduct, 2008-2009). ZT is also defined as relating to policies that assign severe discipline for all offenses, no matter how minor; this disciplinary measure is an effort to treat all offenders equally (Henault, 2001). According to Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles (2006) what has been occurring, however, is the use of Zero Tolerance for students who have historically been ostracized by American public schools This has lead to an increased vulnerability and a further marginalization of the students. The research indicates that males and students with disabilities are being affected disproportionately by the use of Zero Tolerance suspension policies, which has less impact on behavioral alterations, while increasingly impacting the completion of academic careers (Moore, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

A large number of students are being suspended and expelled because of their violation of school policies (Krezmien et al., 2006). If research can provide evidence that schools could improve retention and reduce student dropout, then school systems should be obligated to review and change the disciplinary strategies that effect student dropout.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if the number of students being suspended/expelled has an effect on the student dropout rate in the Robertson County School System. This study seeks to determine if a disproportionate number of the students suspended/expelled dropout of school. The study will use data pertaining to gender and majority/minority status.

Significance of the Study

Determining whether or not the district's suspension or expulsion practices affect the dropout rate, future delinquency, and even successful citizenship with the community is important to educators, parents, and students. Research has shown that minorities and male students are part of a group that continues to be disproportionately suspended and expelled (Monroe, 2006). Everyone benefits from students receiving an education. Academic achievement has been a correlating factor in dropout prevention, decreased disruptive behaviors, and increased positive social interaction between peers. Increased instructional time will benefit all students by improving academic performance (Jolivette, Sticker, & McCormick, 2002). Teachers will be able to teach students when they are in the classroom and not suspended/expelled. The classroom will provide the students with an opportunity to grow academically and socially. Parents will also feel a sense of justice

for their children because they will learn socially acceptable behaviors and the curriculum will enhance their ability to be productive citizens.

Research Questions

1. Is there a statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropout who were suspended/expelled as compared to the students that dropout who were not suspended/expelled?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropout who were suspended/expelled as compared to the students that drop out who were not suspended/expelled based on majority/minority status?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropout who were suspended/expelled as compared to the students that drop out who were not suspended/expelled based on gender?

Hypotheses

1. There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropout who were suspended/expelled as compared to the students that dropout who were not suspended/expelled.
2. There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropout who were suspended/expelled as compared to the students that dropout who were not suspended/expelled based on majority/minority status.
3. There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropout who were suspended/expelled as compared to the students that dropout who were not suspended/expelled based on gender.

Limitations

This study will include high school students who were enrolled in the Robertson County School System during the 2009-2010 school year.

Assumptions

1. Each school follows the same discipline policy.

Definition of Term(s)

1. Discipline- punishing a student for the violation of school policy.
2. Zero Tolerance- mandatory calendar year expulsion for having violated the following at school:
    a) possession of a firearm
    b) battery on school employee/School Resource Officer
    c) possession of illegal drugs
3. Suspension- dismissed from attendance at school for any reason for not more than 10 consecutive days.
4. Expulsion- removal from attendance for more than 10 consecutive days or more than 15 days in a month of school attendance.
5. Majority- Caucasian students.
6. Minority- all other ethnic categories to include African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Native American/Alaskan.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

According to the research, three categories of students are being most affected by the Zero Tolerance (ZT) policies concerning suspensions and expulsions; students with disabilities, students of low socioeconomic status, and minorities (Frank, 2007 and Moore, 2007). These three groups are also identified as having the highest rates of suspension from disruptive acts that were often duplicated by their peers, which failed to illicit the same reprimands (Vavrus & Cole, 2002; Townsend, 2000; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000). Disruptive behavior is observably identified as Disruptive/Aggressive and defined as:

1. Starting fights over nothing
2. Making fun of people
3. Bothering people as they work
4. Ignoring teachers
5. Saying they can beat people up
6. Exaggerating and make up stories
7. Complaining nothing makes them happy (Tremblay et al., 1992, p. 67)

These behaviors traditionally decline through the progression of school. The decline usually starts in early elementary school when students' social skills and academic skills are expected to improve. Cultural contextual reasons and home life have been accredited for the smaller decline in disruptive behaviors among the three groups most affected (Patterson, 2005; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Robb, 1993; Monroe, 2005; Frank, 2007; Gurian & Stevens, 2005). Research suggests that one's home life impacts

the developmental behavior of children, but the relationship most researched is the correlation between socioeconomic status and aggressiveness. Aggressiveness often observably translates into disruptive behaviors, which are usually treated with responsive discipline actions such as expulsion and suspension. Skiba et al. (2000) reported that students who receive free and reduced lunches are more likely to experience suspension from school. Thereby, socioeconomic environment is a risk factor for suspension (Skiba et al., 2000; Nichols, 2004; Drakeford, 2006). According to the research, high-income students are less likely to receive the harsh or severe consequences that students of low-socioeconomic status receive (Skiba et al., 2000). A correlating relationship thus exists between economic status of one's home life and aggressive behavior (Skiba et al., 2000).

Research suggests that disruptive and aggressive behaviors are shaped in the home and then begin to materialize when children experience coercive-rejection from peers, selective affiliation in schools or neighborhoods, and deviancy training (Patterson, 2005; Granic & Patterson, 2006). The rate, at which the disruptive behaviors are used as a measure for determining suspension and expulsion for members of one of the three aforementioned categories, is substantially higher than any other classification of student, particularly white students. Male students are disciplined at rates that far exceed their statistical representation (Monroe, 2005; Townsend, 2000; Skiba et al., 2000). In a school district in Indiana, black males were four times more likely to experience exclusionary discipline practices for what is labeled disruptive behavior (Rausch & Skiba, 2004). Even when controlling for socioeconomic status, nonwhites still have a higher rate of suspension, except in rural school districts (Skiba et al., 2000). Nationally, this population of students represents fifteen percent of the total student population, while in

some instances they represent 85% of the total suspensions and expulsions (Skiba et al., 2000; Carla, 2006; Drakeford, 2006). The students mostly affected by suspensions and expulsions in most major school systems are black males (Monroe, 2005; Townsend, 2000). In a study of a West Central Florida school district, 3.48% of 79,917 white students represented suspensions at the elementary school level. Comparatively, of 32,345 black students, a suspension rate of 16.08% existed (Mendez, & Knoff, 2003). The rate of black students being suspended in this Florida school district was almost five times the rate of the white students. The disproportionate rate of suspension and expulsion, or use of Zero Tolerance policies, is a national problem not associated with one specific state or school population; the problem occurs across the United States (Krezmien et al., 2006; Brown & Beckett, 2006).

Factors of Disruptive Behavior

Many educational researchers have attempted to identify characteristics related to the factors of disruptive behavior, which correlate with suspension rates among students with disabilities, students of low socioeconomic status, and minorities (Ruder, 2006). Research has demonstrated that relationships exist between socioeconomic status and disruptiveness, poor academic skills and disruptiveness, and differentiation in the use of cultural context clues and the teacher's disciplinary response (Krezmien et al., 2006). Identifying the relationships may further help educators and administrators change the rate at which minorities and students with disabilities are being suspended (Irvine, 1990). Thus, alternative discipline methods can be implemented when educators and administrators are able to make the connections.

One such connection is the relationship between socioeconomic status and suspension rates. Findings indicated that students of low socioeconomic status have exhibited aggressive behaviors more frequently for social or biological reasons (Miller-Johnson, Coie, Maumary-Greman, Lochman, & Terr, 1999; Arnold & Doctoroff, 2003). The presence of common risk factors may exist more frequently in low socioeconomic environments, but even when controlling for socioeconomic status, the suspensions are skewed (Skiba et al., 2000). Students from low socioeconomic environments suffer bias from the adults hired to instruct them and are at a higher risk of profiling (Nichols, 2004; Drakeford, 2006; Verdugo, 2002). Research suggests that even the high profile instances of violence committed by students that are not of low socioeconomic status in rural or suburban schools contribute to the disproportionate disciplinary practices against students with disabilities, low socioeconomic status, and of minority ethnic groups. The high-profile school violence, such as school shootings committed by these students caused tougher zero-tolerance policies (Drakeford, 2006). Biological factors induced by environmental agents may also be contributors to increased aggression, which results in increased disciplinary actions for a specific group of students. Biological connections between low socioeconomic status and aggression may include the presence of lead in the blood stream (Stewart, 2003). Many low-income homes were constructed with the use of lead-based products, and while these products are not currently used, many of the homes were never purged of these remnants of unhealthy building materials. There also exists a direct cause and effect relationship between lead exposure and the tendency to behave more aggressively (Stewart, 2003; Brody, 1996). Dr. Deborah Denno, a sociologist at the University of Pennsylvania, conducted a longitudinal study of 987 African-American

children. In her study, she found that having "lead poisoning... [was]... the strongest predictor of disciplinary problems in junior high school boys and the third strongest predictor of both juvenile and adult offenses" (Brody, 1996). Bellinger (2004) stated that:

> The Pittsburgh study "breaks new ground, opening the possibility that some of the violence in our society could be the result of preventable environmental pollution" by lead. The study took into account various social and family factors that have previously been linked to delinquent behavior. These included nine measures reflecting maternal intelligence, socioeconomic status and child-rearing factors, such as the number of children in the family and the presence of two parents in the home. Also accounted for were the children's race and history of medical problems. Still, the lead-delinquency relationship held strong, the researchers reported. (p. 9)

The violence in our society also extends to the disruptive and aggressive behavior demonstrated by students that result in suspensions. Twenty percent of the suspensions in the West Central Florida school district is labeled "Disobedience/Insubordination," versus six percent labeled "Disrespect" (Mendez & Knoff, 2003). If a student is unable to restrain impulsivity or aggressiveness on account of biological factors such as lead-poisoning then they may be at a greater risk for demonstrating what teachers identify as insubordination. Particularly, in children three and under, lead alters the cell structure and chemistry of developing brains, often resulting in lower intelligence, hyperactivity and increased aggression (Stewart, 2003). Hyperactivity resulting from elevated lead levels in both the blood and the bones may be problematic for particular learning environments. Thirteen percent of the suspensions in the West Central Florida school district resulted

from "disruptive" behavior. Hyperactivity of a student when coupled with a lowered tolerance level of a teacher, or with a student's ethnic make-up, or with a student's socioeconomic status equates to a disproportionately higher level of suspensions among students with learning disabilities and minorities (Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Frank, 2007; Moore, 2007; Nichols, 2004; Krezmien et al., 2006).

A bi-product of lead-poisoning or increased levels of lead in the body, especially in children younger than three, is altered brain development (Stewart, 2003). Brain development that results in lower intelligence will affect academic achievement, hyperactivity resulting in more disruptive behaviors, and increased aggression in the form of poor socialization skills or high incidents of peer rejection, which have all been linked to disruptive behaviors that result in suspension (Stewart, 2003). Twenty-four percent of suspensions in the West Central Florida school district are allotted to "Fighting/Inappropriate behaviors" (Mendez et al., 2003). A quarter of all suspensions in this particular school district is a result of aggressive behaviors, or violence, as stated by Dr. Bellinger, that "could be the result of preventable environmental pollution" (Brody, 1996, p. 9).

Poor academic achievement has exhibited itself as a direct link to disruptive behaviors that may result in higher rates of suspension. Additionally, students with learning disabilities are less likely to engage themselves in academic tasks, thereby engaging in off-task behaviors that may be more disruptive to the learning environment. According to a study entitled, *Education and Treatment of Children*, students coming from low socioeconomic environments tend to have lower pre-academic skills which results in less academic success (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2004; Bower, 1995;

Hinshaw, 1992; Trout, Nordness, Pierce, & Epstein, 2003). Experiencing academic failure early during a child's school years establishes a cycle of failure that is difficult to break, and results in exclusionary practices such as time-outs or suspensions (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2004). A subsequent result of being deprived access to the educational environment is falling further behind, creating a greater tendency toward disruptive behavior as a means of work avoidance, and even increased risk in juvenile courts and corrections (Krezmien et al., 2006). Students with learning disabilities, especially emotional behavioral disorders (EBD), are at a greater risk of being excluded from educational settings, completing high school, and becoming well-functioning members of society (Trout et al., 2003). Although exhibiting a learning disability alone in first grade was not a predictor of adolescent delinquency, research indicated that deficits exhibited in cognitive functioning at the beginning of elementary school does lead to anti-social behavior by age17 (Tremblay, Nagin, Seguin, Zoccolillo, Zelazo, Boivin, Perusse, & Japel 2004). These anti-social behaviors are also key factors as to why students may not feel connected to their school and thus misbehave (Moore, 2007).

A disproportionately high number of students with Emotional Behavior Disorders (EBD) who receive special education services become involved with the juvenile justice system and students with EBD are at a greater risk of becoming delinquent during adolescence (Miller-Johnson et al., 1999; Trout, et. al., 2003). The adolescent delinquent behavior often stems from entering school with poorly developed social skills and high levels of disruptive and aggressive behaviors (Miller-Johnson et al., 1999). In a state-wide review of Maryland's suspension rates, students with behavioral disorders were being suspended with greater frequency than students without the disorders, and low

socioeconomic students with behavioral disorders were being suspended at a rate higher than any other comparative category (Krezmien et al., 2006). Students with learning disabilities may be more likely to exhibit disruptive behavior as a result of their struggles with academic tasks, and when not given adequate interventions to improve academic skills, the misbehaviors may increase, leading to administrator's reactionary use of Zero Tolerance policies.

Research suggested that there exists a connection between disruptive behavior and delinquency (Tremblay, Masse, Perron, Leblanc, Schwartzman, & Ledingham 1992; Jolivette et al., 2002; Irvine, 1990). A direct causal link exists between disruptive behavior in grade one and delinquency in males aged 14. In addition, poor student achievement affects juvenile delinquency (Tremblay et al., 1992). The relationship that cannot be determined is the causal relationship between poor academic achievement and future delinquency (Bower, 1995). Early conduct problems are predictors of poor academic achievement and early poor academic achievement is a predictor of misbehavior (Tremblay et al., 1992; Bower, 1995; Hinshaw, 1992; Trout et al., 2003). Poor academic achievement and future delinquency are less amendable factors than peer group rejection (Miller-Johnson et al., 1999).

When analyzing the socialization aspects of aggressiveness, Miller-Johnson et al. (1999) determined that socialization affects students' behavior or misbehavior in schools, identifying students who experience peer rejection as being directly related to their aggressive behavior. As a result, by the age of 10 or 12, children who are frequently rejected by peers initiate deviant peer groupings very early in school. The researchers found that being rejected by peers and being highly aggressive in childhood are early

predictors of serious interpersonal issues. These interpersonal issues result in felony assault offenses for boys. Although poverty, crime, and unemployment may be contributing factors for aggressive behaviors in a particular group of students, peer group rejection remains a major cause. Low interpersonal skills do not allow students to engage in healthy peer relationships, and may lead to more aggressive behaviors as a means of getting respect, All God's Children (as cited in Drakeford, 2006). When educators are made aware of the numerous casual factors associated with aggressiveness, disruptive behaviors, and disengagement from the learning environment, applications can be made to improve students' performance in the classroom through interpersonal relationships with educators.

Cultural Misunderstanding

Another explanation offered for the high suspension rate of low socioeconomic status students is the differentiation in the use of cultural context. Racial profiling of minorities is a secondary factor to the primary factor of cultural misunderstanding (Monroe, 2005; Carla, 2006; Cartledge, Tillman, & Johnson, 2001; Drakeford, 2006; Frank, 2007; Gurian & Stevens, 2005). Although the predominance of minority students are being taught by white female teachers, research provides anecdotal information that indicates when minority teachers deal with minority students the suspension rate does not decrease dramatically (Frank, 2007; Gurian & Stevens, 2005). Poor relationships that exist between minority students and their teachers result in increased disruptive behavior and lack of discipline (Nichols, 2004). Nichols (2004) stated that, "some students have developed adaptive behaviors to discriminatory educational policies and now regard academic success as being culturally subtractive" (p. 410). Teachers are more likely to

discipline black males, even when students of other races participate in identical behaviors (Monroe, 2006). The role of cultural misunderstandings has become a recently developed concept to explain the higher rates of suspension among minorities. Irvin (1990) stated, "the lack of cultural synchronization between students and their teachers leads to misunderstandings that may result in the use of disciplinary actions against the students" (p. 58). Ironically, many of the aggressive behaviors demonstrated as a part of "street code" (getting respect and maintaining respect at all costs) are fundamental American values, All God's Children (As cited in Drakeford, 2006). These are historical American values demonstrated in American schools. Monroe (2006) stated that:

> African-American pupils tend to possess a distinct cultural orientation based on their African heritage. Tenets of cultural continuity are identifiable in students' attitudes, speech, behaviors, referents, and so forth. Commonly cited examples of African-influence norms include overlapping speech, candor in dialogue, animation, rhythmic presentation of styles, cadence variations, and interaction marked by physical expression. (p. 102)

These types of cultural behaviors may be considered disruptive in a business or institutionalized setting, but if teachers are unaware of these cultural attributes of communication, then the highly contextualized interactions become misinterpreted. According to Vavrus and Cole (2002), "Disruptions appear to be highly contextualized social interactions whose interpretations depend on the socio-cultural context in which the disruptive events occur" (p. 87). Using this explanation, the higher rate of suspension for minor disruptive behaviors is based on cultural misunderstandings that could be prevented if approached in a proactive manner (Ruder, 2006). Students from

subjugated groups have not been socialized according to the rules of the dominant group (Cartledge et al., 2001). These students need explicit instructions on the expectations within the school. Students from culturally diverse backgrounds often misinterpret the language use and intentions of an authority figure. According to Larson (1998), "Management of disruptive behaviors, particularly at the high school level, must reflect decisions that are researched based, developmentally and culturally sensitive to particular groups of students, and that have been implemented at the elementary and middle school level" (p. 283). Behaviors believed to be noncompliant or insubordinate may actually be a result of differences in cultural communication (Townsend, 2000). According to Townsend's anecdotal research, black students "prefer activities that allow them to socialize with others while completing task," (p. 2) which may be a result of the cultural requirement to complete more than one activity simultaneously while in the home or community. Nonverbal and verbal language differences may also impact the cultural misunderstandings that result in exclusionary practices of minority students at higher rates than their white peers. Nonverbal communication may appear combative or argumentative to those unfamiliar with the cultural distinctions, and may be perceived as disruptive when the institutionalized setting calls for less aggressive or quieter tones (Townsend, 2000). Therefore, cultural communication appears to be a causal factor in the disproportionate number of minorities being suspended and expelled under the Zero Tolerance umbrella.

Methods to Decrease the Discipline Disparity

A number of the studies provided anecdotal and research-based methods of decreasing the discipline disparity between minority and non-minority students. There

appears to be a greater emphasis on relationship building between teachers and students, students and their school, and the school and the community. Since peer relationships appear to be important in understanding the development of antisocial behaviors in students, teacher-student relationships need to become a primary focus in education in order to positively counter the rejection of peers that may result in the development of antisocial behaviors (Miller-Johnson et al., 1999). Student surveys will allow teachers to acquire pertinent information about students' lives that may impact performance in the classroom. Teachers should gather information about students' personal, cultural, familial, and neighborhood backgrounds to help create meaningful learning experiences (Monroe, 2006). Teachers can help develop relationships with their students by first acknowledging their backgrounds and by being observant of characteristics that may be culturally significant.

One means of strengthening the relationship between teachers and students is by instructing students to strengthen their resolve to overcome injustice (Monroe, 2006). According to Monroe (2006), "Encouraging young people's willingness to question the world around them was among the most fundamental of [James] Baldwin's instructional aims" (p. 102). Encouraging students to be advocates against injustices allows them to develop expectations for social situations and strengthens the relationship with their adult mentors.

According to Monroe (2006), when students are intellectually immersed in the academic tasks at hand and hold positive feelings about their schools, teachers, and roles as students, they are clearly more likely to become productive citizens. Offering students multiple ways of learning through differentiated instruction helps students become more

engaged in academic tasks, less likely to be off-task, and, thus less likely to become disruptive. One form of differentiated instruction identified as being a preventive measure is incorporating physical movement in the classroom (Monroe, 2006). When teachers implement kinesthetic movement into well-designed lesson plans, increase their tolerance for elevated noise levels, limit teacher talk, incorporate multi-sensory experiences, and value self-directed learning, students are given more opportunities to develop relationships with their instructors, peers, and thus become less likely to act disruptively (Monroe, 2006; Gurian & Stevens, 2005).

Aside from attempting to develop relationships with their students, teachers can take a proactive stance toward discipline. This proactive stance helps to teach students the expectations early on, and by making expectations explicit there is an avoidance of misunderstandings and students are socialized for classroom success (Ruder, 2006; Cartledge et al., 2001). If infractions occur, then having a clear routine for dealing with referrals rather than immediate suspension are also critical in decreasing the disproportionate rates of suspension for all students. Ruder (2006) outlines the following steps as a means to establishing expectations when dealing with misbehaviors:

> Step 1: Send student directly to the principal
>
> Step 2: Have student contact the parents/guardians
>
> Step 3: Have teacher submit the office referral
>
> Step 4: Schedule a conference with the student on the same day the infraction occurred (p. 32)

Making behavioral expectations and punitive reactions explicit and consistent may be a means of decreasing the rate of suspension for minority students and students with disabilities (Cartledge et al., 2001).

The research-based methodologies may be just as instrumental in minimizing the soaring suspension rate for minorities and students with disabilities. Clearly, the current policies designed to meet troubling behaviors with harsh punishment may be ineffective for reducing or eliminating the behaviors and may exacerbate the problems they are designed to punish. Since research demonstrates that out-of-school suspensions are linked to educational negatives like grade retention, continual academic failure, increased drop-out rates, and future delinquency, then alternative policies need to be proactive means to counterbalance discipline problems (Nichols, 2004). Assessment procedures need to be developed to intervene with students at-risk of being disruptive or antisocial (Krezmien et al., 2006). By involving special education teachers in the development of school discipline policies, since Special Education students are disproportionately suspended from school, students with disabilities may be less likely to suffer from ZT policies based on disruptiveness (Krezmien et al., 2006).

The research-based interventions for closing the discipline gap need to address the larger cognitive, interpersonal, and emotional deficits associated with peer rejection and aggression (Miller-Johnson et al., 1999). When students are rejected, they become aggressive, and display a diversity of problem behaviors, including high levels of inattention, verbal aggression, hyperactivitiy, and lower levels of pro-social skills. Multiple domains of functioning for rejected-aggressive children including behavioral, social-cognitive, and interpersonal skills can be handled in a holistic manner with the use

of social skills training. Groups should include small numbers of high-risk students in order to provide an intensive focus on skill deficits in the domains of play and prosocial behavior (Miller-Johnson et al., 1999). A final critical research-based intervention is the use of literacy as a core component in the classroom. This idea relates back to the principle that students who struggle with academic tasks are more likely to engage in off-task disruptive behaviors that may result in suspension. Thompson (2002) found, in her work with African-American students and their families, that there existed weak skills in comprehension and other academic areas that were well correlated with behavioral problems (p. 59). Thus, when students are given the opportunity to strengthen the skills that they will consistently use within the context of a classroom, they will be more likely to engage themselves in productive work.

Summary

The research on the area of discipline policies highlighting educational disparities for minorities and students with disabilities is extensive. Although the rates of suspension for minority students are nearly three times their student body make-up, there is very little research that directly explains a means to minimize the growing trend (Townsend, 2000; Rausch & Skiba, 2004; Christle et al., 2004; Skiba et al., 2000; Mendez & Knoff, 2003). While Zero Tolerance policies are forcing children to go underserved by America's educational system, educators have found themselves relying on ZT to save their hardworking students. Simultaneously they are failing to save their students who are at the greatest risk for detriment, delinquency, and jail down the road (Noguera, 2003). Research has clearly demonstrated that there exist relational connections between societal factors such as socioeconomic status, institutionalized racial prejudices, and suspension

rates. It also implicates biological factors such as lead poisoning and learned aggressiveness as other causes of increased suspension rates. The causal factors for youth aggressiveness and the subsequent perceived disruption to the learning environment can all be implications for the statistically higher suspension rate of minorities and students with disabilities. The bottom-line is that regardless of the casual factors linked to higher rates, educators are the independent variable impacting the disproportionate numbers. By implementing the anecdotal and research-based interventions, school systems and individual classrooms will be able to better service the students at greatest risk. The historically marginalized students will no longer suffer removal and expulsion, and will feel like members of a school community that wants them to be successful.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology that was used in conducting this descriptive study using archival data. The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a statistical difference between suspensions/expulsions, and student dropout in the Robertson County School System. The five schools in this study have a similar ethnic and gender make-up. The school demographics are as follows:

Table 3.1

School Demographics in the Robertson County School System High Schools

Name	NS	ED	CS	AA	HS	Other	Female	Male
Schools	4,056	29.6%	87%	9%	3.15%	.85%	48.1%	51.9%

Note. NS =Number of Students; ED =Economically Disadvantaged; CS =Caucasian; AA =African American; HS =Hispanic.
[i]Percentages are the total average for the five schools.

Research Design

The research utilized an ex post facto design. Archival data were obtained and analyzed to answer the research questions. The statistical analyses that were applied in this study were the One-Sample *t*-test and Chi-square Test (χ^2). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized for all statistical analysis.

Participants

The participants consisted of 41 high school students in the Robertson County School System. Robertson County School System is made up of five high schools with varying demographics.

Data Collection Procedure

Approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of Austin Peay State University to conduct this study. Approval was obtained from the Robertson County School District to conduct research using Archival Data. Data were retrieved on school discipline from the Robertson County Office of Student Services and the Tennessee Department of Education Report Card. A randomly selected letter (A, B, C, D, or E) designated the schools. Data were collected for the 2009-2010 school year.

Data Analysis Plan

When exploring the data to determine if students who have been suspended/ expelled dropout more than students who have not been suspended/expelled, a One-Sample *t*-test was utilized. The One-Sample *t*-test was performed to compare the mean number of students that dropped out to the total number of students that dropped out. *A* Chi-square Test (χ^2) was performed to determine the affects of suspensions/expulsions on dropout between males and females. A Chi-square Test (χ^2) was used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropped out who were suspended/expelled and the students that were not based on majority/minority status. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized for all statistical analyses. Hypotheses were tested for statistical significance at the $p < .05$ level.

Chapter IV

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This study was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the dropout rate of students that were suspended or expelled as opposed to the students that were not. The study used archival data of students attending five high schools in Robertson County during the 2009-2010 school year. Permission to conduct this study was received from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), (see Appendix A), and granted by the Robertson County School System (see Appendix B).

This study utilized descriptive statistics to analyze three hypotheses. Hypothesis One, addressing student dropout and suspensions/expulsions, was tested utilizing a one-sample *t*-test at the .05 level of significance. Hypothesis Two, addressing student dropout and suspensions/expulsions based on majority/minority status; and Hypothesis Three, investigating student dropout and suspensions/expulsions based on gender, were tested using a Chi-square (χ^2) Test with cross tabulation. An alpha of .05 was used to determine statistical significance. This chapter discusses each hypothesis and provides detailed information and related tables.

Table 4.1 identifies descriptive attributes of the 41 students in this study. Of the 4,056 students, 41 dropped out of school during the 2009-2010 school year. There were five ethnic groups accounted for in this study. African-Americans made up 9% of the sample population, while Asian/Pacific Islander made up .7%. Hispanic made up 3.15%, Native American/Alaskan made up .15%, and Caucasian made up 87% of the sample population. Since African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Native American/Alaskan students made up a very small percent individually; they were

combined to form the minority group. The Caucasian students made up the majority group. The male students accounted for 51.9% of the sample, while female students accounted for 48.1%. Schools A, B, C, and E accounted for 100% of the dropouts. School D had no dropouts during this school year.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Attributes of the Participants

Attributes	N	%
Majority	25	61%
Minority	16	39%
Gender		
Male	29	71%
Female	12	29%
Student Dropout		
Suspended/Expelled	16	39%
Not Suspended/Expelled	25	61%

Analysis of the Null Hypotheses

The data used in testing the research questions of the study are presented in the following sections. An interpretation of the data follows all research questions.

Null Hypothesis 1:

There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropout who were suspended or expelled as compared to the students that drop out who were not suspended/expelled.

Table 4.2

One-Sample t-test for Student Dropout and Suspensions/Expulsions

Variables	N	M	SD	*t*	df	*p*
Suspended/Expelled	16	1.61	.494	1.423	40	.162
Not Suspended/Expelled	25					

$p<05$

A One-Sample *t*-test was performed at the .05 level and indicated there was no statistical significance in the number of students who were suspended/expelled prior to dropping out of school and those who were not ($p=.162$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained. Students that dropped out of school after being suspended/expelled did not significantly outnumber students that dropped out without being suspended/expelled.

Null Hypothesis 2:

There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropout who were suspended or expelled as compared to the students that dropout who were not suspended or expelled based on majority/minority status.

Table 4.3

Descriptive Results for Majority (White) and Minority (all other ethnic groups) Status

Source	Suspended/Expelled	Not Suspended/Expelled
Majority	10	15
Minority	6	10

Table 4.3 demonstrates the number of students that were suspended or expelled and the students that were not suspended or expelled prior to dropping out of school by majority/minority. Caucasian students had the larger number of dropouts, while Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American/Alaskan had none. Since the total number of dropouts was small, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Native American/Alaskan were grouped together to form the minority group. Caucasian students made up the majority group.

A Chi-square (χ^2) Test with cross tabulation was used to determine if the number of students that were suspended/expelled prior to dropping out of school was significantly different that the number of students that were not based on majority/minority. This hypothesis was tested at the .05 level of significance.

The null hypothesis was retained based on $\chi^2(1, N = 41) = .026, p = .873$ resulting from the Chi-square (χ^2) Test with cross tabulation. Majority/Minority did not have a significant effect on student dropout between students who were suspended or expelled and those who were not as indicated in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Chi-Square (χ^2) Test with Cross tabulation for Suspensions/Expulsions and Student Dropout Based on Majority and Minority

Source	Majority	Minority	χ^2	df	*p*
Suspended/Expelled	10 (.2)	6 (-.2)	.026	1	.873
Not Suspended/Expelled	15 (-.2)	10 (.2)			

$p < .05$ *Note.* Residuals appear in parentheses below group frequencies.

Null Hypothesis 3:

There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropout who were suspended or expelled as compared to students that dropout who were not suspended or expelled based on gender.

A Chi-square (χ^2) Test with cross tabulation at the .05 level of significance also tested this hypothesis. This hypothesis sought to determine if there was a significant difference in the number of students that dropped out of school that were suspended/expelled and those who were not based on gender.

There was no statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropped out of school who were suspended or expelled and those who were not; therefore the null hypothesis was retained. The analysis $\chi^2\,(1, N = 41) = .050, p = .823$ allowed for the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Table 4.5

Descriptive Results for Gender

Gender	Suspended/Expelled	Not Suspended/Expelled
Female	5	7
Male	11	18

Of the 41 students that dropped out during this school year, 12 were female and 29 were male.

Table 4.6

Chi-Square (χ^2) Test with Cross tabulation for Suspensions/Expulsions and Student Dropout Based on Gender

Source	Male	Female	χ^2	df	*p*
Suspended/Expelled	11 (-.3)	5 (.3)	.050	1	.823
Not Suspended/Expelled	18 (.3)	7 (-.3)			

$p < 05$ *Note.* Residuals appear in parentheses below group frequencies.

Other Results

In addition to the analyses for the hypotheses postulated, two other areas were researched. The percentage for the ratio of total student dropouts to the total student enrollment was calculated. The percentage for the ratio of total student dropouts that were

suspended or expelled compared to the total number of students that were suspended or expelled was also calculated.

There was a student enrollment of 4,056. From this total, 41 students dropped out of school. The students that dropped out accounted for approximately 0.010% of the entire student population. There were a total of 576 students that were suspended or expelled. From this total number of students, a total of 16 students dropped out of school. Students that were suspended or expelled prior to dropping out of school accounted for approximately 0.028% of the total number of students that were suspended or expelled during the school year. While statistical analyses were not conducted to determine statistical significance for these percentages, the suspended/expelled group indicated a higher percentage of dropouts. Based on this, additional studies should include hypotheses addressing these areas.

Chapter V

Summary, Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of suspensions/expulsions on student dropout in the Robertson County School System. There were a total of 41 students that dropped out during the 2009-2010 school year. The study focused on the five high schools in Robertson County. The relationship between suspensions/expulsions and student dropout was examined based on majority/minority status and gender. A Chi-square (χ^2) Test with cross tabulations and a One-Sample *t*-test were utilized to test for statistical significance. The study was conducted to test three null hypotheses at the .05 level of significance. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze all data.

Findings

The main purpose of this study was to determine if suspensions/expulsions of individual students had a statistically significant impact on those students dropping out of school.

Hypothesis One: There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropout who were suspended or expelled as compared to the students that dropout who were not suspended or expelled.

This hypothesis compared the number of students that dropped out of school after being suspended or expelled with the number of students that dropped out without being suspended or expelled. This hypothesis was tested for all 41 students that dropped out. A One-Sample *t*-test with an alpha of .05 was used to test for statistical significance. The

analysis indicated there was no statistically significant ($p = .162$) difference in students who dropped out of school after being suspended/expelled and those who did not.

The acceptance of the null hypothesis indicated that students that dropped out of school after being suspended/expelled did not significantly outnumber those who dropped out without being suspended/expelled for the 2009-2010 school year.

Hypothesis Two: There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropout who were suspended or expelled as compared to the students that dropout who were not suspended/expelled based on majority/minority status.

This hypothesis was tested by utilizing a Chi-square (χ^2) Test with cross tabulations at the .05 level of significance. The hypothesis was analyzed to determine if majority/minority status had an impact on student dropout between students who were suspended/expelled and those who were not. The analysis indicated that there was no statistically significant difference based on majority/minority status. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. There was no particular ethnic category that significantly outnumbered the other when grouped together.

Hypothesis Three: There will be no statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropout who were suspended/expelled as compared to the students that dropout who were not suspended/expelled based on gender.

This hypothesis was also tested by utilizing a Chi-square (χ^2) Test with cross tabulations at the .05 level of significance. The acceptance of the null hypothesis indicated that gender had no statistically significant effect on student dropout between the students that were suspended or expelled and those that were not. Neither, female or male students significantly outnumbered the other.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between students who drop out of school after being suspended or expelled and students who drop out who are not suspended or expelled. The study examined the dropout of 41 high school students attending the Robertson County School System in the 2009-2010 school year. Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were presented:

1. There was no statistically significant difference in the number of students that dropped out of school after being suspended or expelled and those who were not.
2. Majority/minority status was found to have no statistically significant effect on the number of students who dropped out that were suspended or expelled and students who were not. Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American/Alaskan had no dropouts during the 2009-2010 school year. Because of the low individual numbers, the ethnic groups were combined to form a majority and minority. Majority was identified as Caucasian (White) students. Minority was identified as all other ethnic groups included in this research.
3. Gender was found to have no statistically significant impact on the number of students who dropped out that were suspended or expelled and students who were not. This indicated that neither female nor male students dropped out significantly more than the other.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Further research should be conducted on individual schools.

2. This research needs to be on going in comparing suspensions/expulsions to student dropout.
3. Further research should be conducted with a more diverse set of student.
4. Further research should be conducted to include statewide data.
5. A longitudinal study should be conducted on suspensions or expulsions and student dropout.

REFERENCES

Arnold, D., & Doctoroff, G. (2003). The early education of socioeconomically disadvantaged [Electronic version]. *Annual Review of Psychology. 54*. 517-545.

Bellinger, D. (2004). "Lead" [Electronic version]. *Pediatrics. 113*(4), 1016-1020.

Bower, B. (1995). Criminal intellect: Researchers look at why lawbreakers often brandish low IQs [Electronic version]. *Science News. 147.* 233-233, 239.

Brody, J. (1996). Aggressiveness and delinquency in boys is linked to lead in bones. *The New York Times.* Retrieved April 12, 2008 from http://www.nytimes.com/1996/02/07/us/aggressiveness-and-delinquency-in-boys-is-linked-to-lead-in-bones.html

Brown, L., & Beckett, K. (2006). The role of the school district in student discipline: Building consensus in Cincinnati [Electronic version]. *The Urban Review. 38*(3), 235-256.

Carla, M. (2006). African American boys and the discipline gap: Balancing educators' uneven hand [Electronic version]. *Educational Horizons. 84*(2), 102-111.

Cartledge, G., Tillman, L., & Johnson, C. (2001). Professional ethics within the context of student discipline and diversity [Electronic version]. *Teacher Education and Special Education. 24*(1), 25-37.

Christle, C., Jolivette, K., & Nelson, M. (2004). School characteristics related to the use Of Suspension [Electronic version]. *Education and Treatment of Children. 27*(4), 509-26.

Drakeford, W. (2006). Racial disproportionality in school disciplinary practices. National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems. Retrieved April 12, 2008 from http://www.nccrest.org/Briefs/**School**_Discipline_Brief.pdf

Frank, J. (2007). Effective discipline across racial [Electronic version]. *The Education Digest. 73*(1), 62-64.

Granic, I., & Patterson, G. (2006). Toward a Comprehensive Model of Antisocial Development: A Dynamic Systems Approach [Electronic version]. *Psychological Review. 113*(1), 101-131.

Gurian, M., & Stevens. (2005). "What is happening with boys in school [Electronic version]?" *Teacher College Records.* Retrieved from http://www.tcrecord.orgitemID=11854

Henault, C. (2001). Zero tolerance in schools. *Journal of Law & Education* [Electronic version]. *30*(3), 547-553.

Hinshaw, S. (1992). Externalizing behavioral problems and academic underachievement in childhood adolescence: Causal relationships and underlying mechanisms [Electronic version]. *Psychological Bulletin. 111*, 127-155

Irvine, J. (1990). Black students and school failure: Policies, practices, and prescriptions [Electronic version]. New York: Praeger.

Jolivette, K., Sticker, J., & McCormick, K. (2002). Making choices- Improving behavior- Engaging in learning [Electronic version]. *Teaching Exceptional Children. 34*(3), 24-29.

Krezmien, M., Leone, P., & Achilles, G. (2006). Suspension, race, and disability: Analysis of state-wide practices and reporting [Electronic version]. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. 14*(4), 217-226.

Larson, J. (1998). Managing student aggression in high schools: Implications for practice [Electronic version]. *Psychology in the Schools. 35*(3), 283-295.

Mendez, L., & Knoff, H. (2003). Who gets suspended from school and why: A demographic analysis of schools and disciplinary infractions in a large school district [Electronic version]. *Education and Treatment of Children. 26*(1), 30-51.

Miller-Johnson, S., Coie, J., Maumary-Greman, A., Lochman, J., & Terr, R. (1999). Relationship between childhood peer rejection and aggression and adolescent delinquency severity and type among African American youth [Electronic version]. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*. *7*(3), 137-146.

Monroe, C. (2005). Why are "bad boys" always black? Causes of disproportionality in school discipline and recommendations for change [Electronic version]. *The Clearing House*. *79*(1).

Monroe, C. (2006). African American Boys and the Discipline Gap: Balancing Educators' Uneven Hand [Electronic version]. *Educational Horizons. 84*(2), 102-111.

Moore, E. (2007). Decreasing discipline referrals for Black Males. *School Administration. 64*(10), 24-25.

Nichols, J. (2004). An exploration of discipline and suspension data. *The Journal of Negro Education. 73*(4), 408-423.

Noguera, P. (2003). Schools, Prisons, and Social Implications of Punishment: Rethinking Disciplinary Practices [Electronic version]. *Theory into Practice*. *42*(4), 341-350.

Patterson, K. (2005). Increasing Positive Outcomes for African American Males in Special Education with the Use of Guided Notes [Electronic version]. *Journal of Negro Education*. *74*(4), 311-320.

Rausch, M., & Skiba, R. (2004). Disproportionality in school discipline among Minority students in Indiana: Description and analysis [Electronic version]. *Center for Evaluation and Education Policy.* Retrieved April 12, 2008 from www.iub.edu/~safeschl/ChildrenLeftBehind/pdf/2a.pdf

Robb, N. (1993). School of hard knocks. *OH & S Canada. 9*(5), 47-48.

Robertson County School System (2008-2009). *Student Code of Conduct*. 2008-2009. Retrieved from http://www.rcstn.net/students/student.services/student_handbook

Ruder, R. (2006). Four steps to address student discipline [Electronic version]. *Education Digest. 71*(7), 32-35.

Skiba, R., Michael, R., Nardo, A., & Peterson, R. (2000). The color of discipline: Sources of racial and gender disproportionality in school punishment [Electronic version]. *Indiana Education Policy Center*. Retrieved April 12, 2008 from http://www.indiana.edu/~safeschl/cod.pdf

Stanton-Salazar, R. (1997). A social capital framework for understanding the socialization of racial minority charity. [Electronic version]. *Harvard Educational Review. 67*(1), 1-41.

Stewart, A. (2003). Lead levels tied to aggressive behavior. *Star-Ledger (Newark, NJ).* Retrieved April 12, 2008 from http://www.mindfully.org/Health/2003/Lead-Aggressive-Behavior

Thompson, G. (2002). *African American teens discussing their schooling experiences*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Townsend, B. (2000). The disproportionate discipline of African American learners:

Reducing school suspensions and expulsions [Electronic version]. *Educational Children*. *66*(3), 381-391.

Tremblay, R., Nagin, D., Seguin, J., Zoccolillo, M., Zelazo, P., Boivin, M., Perusse, D., & Japel, C. (2004). Physical aggression during early childhood: Trajectories & Predictors. *Pediatrics*. [http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/114/1/e43]

Tremblay, R., Masse, B., Perron, D., Leblanc, M., Schwartzman, A., & Ledingham, J. (1992). Early disruptive behavior, poor school achievement, delinquent behavior, and delinquent personality: Longitudinal analysis [Electronic version]. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. *60*(1), 64-72.

Trout, A., Nordness, P., Pierce, C., & Epstein, M. (2003). Research on the academic status of children with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders 11*(4), 198-210.

Vavrus, F., & Cole K., (2002). "I didn't do nothin": The discursive construction of school suspension [Electronic version]. *The Urban Review*. *34*(2).

Verdugo, R., (2002). Race-ethnicity, social class, and zero-tolerance policies [Electronic version]. *Education and Urban Society*. *35*(1), 50-75.

Appendices

Appendix A

Austin Peay State University

Institutional Review Board Approval

Austin Peay
State University

College of Graduate Studies

April 17, 2008

Reginald H. Edwards
414 Helton Dr
Clarksville TN 37042

RE: Your application regarding study number 08-013: Impact of Suspensions and Expulsion on Students Dropout in the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System

Dear Reginald Edwards:

Thank you for your recent submission. We appreciate your cooperation with the human research review process. I have reviewed your request for expedited approval of the new study listed above. This type of study qualifies for expedited review under FDA and NIH (Office for Protection from Research Risks) regulations.

Congratulations! This is to confirm that I have approved your application through one calendar year. This approval is subject to APSU Policies and Procedures governing human subject research. The full IRB will still review this protocol and reserves the right to withdraw expedited approval if unresolved issues are raised during their review.

You are granted permission to conduct your study as described in your application effective immediately. The study is subject to continuing review on or before April 17, 2009, unless closed before that date. Enclosed please find the forms to report when your study has been completed and the form to request an annual review of a continuing study. Please submit the appropriate form prior to April 17, 2009.

Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and approved. Some changes may be approved by expedited review; others require full board review. If you have any questions or require further information, contact me at (221-7415; fax 221-7641; email pinderc@apsu.edu).
Again, thank you for your cooperation with the APSU IRB and the human research review process. Best wishes for a successful study!

Sincerely,

Charles A. Pinder

Charles A. Pinder, Ph.D.
Chair, Austin Peay Institutional Review Board
Cc: Dr. Tammy Shutt

Appendix B

Approval Letter from

Robertson County Board of Education

Robertson County Schools

Daniel P. Whitlow
Director of Schools
Dan.Whitlow@rcstn.net

2121 Woodland Street
P.O. Box 130
Springfield, Tennessee 37172
(615) 384-5588 phone ~ (615) 384-9749 fax

Danny Weeks
Assistant Director
Danny.Weeks@rcstn.net

05 May 2008

Reginald H. Edwards
414 Helton Drive
Clarksville, TN 37042

Dear Mr. Edwards:

Please accept this letter confirming permission to proceed with your research project as outlined in your letter of April 30, 2008. You have permission to review archival data regarding suspensions, expulsions, and dropout rates. Your System contact will be Ms. Donna Dorris, Supervisor of Student Services. She may be contacted by telephone (615-384-5588) or by e-mail (DonnaRae.Dorris@rcstn.net).

Upon completion, we would request that you would submit a copy of your work to my office. If I may be of further assistance, or provide additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you again,

Dr. Danny L. Weeks,
Assistant Director of Schools

Appendix C

Austin Peay State University

Institutional Review Board Extension Approval

Austin Peay
State University

Psychology Department

April 16, 2009

Reginald H. Edwards
414 Helton Dr.
Clarksville, TN 37042

Dear Reginald,

I have received your request for an extension on your field study, "The Impact of Suspension and Expulsion and school dropout in Robertson County School District". Your request for an extension has been approved for an additional year ending on April 16, 2010.

Sincerely,

Charles R. Grah
Chair, Austin Peay Institutional Review Board

www.apsu.edu

P.O. Box 4537 • Clarksville, TN 37044 • P: (931) 221-7233 • F: (931) 221-6267

Appendix D

Austin Peay State University

Institutional Review Board Second Extension Approval

Gmail

Reginald Edwards <edwardsr86@gmail.com>

FW: Edwards Field Study

1 message

Thu, Apr 8, 2010 at 3:41 PM

Grah, Charles <GrahC@apsu.edu>
To: Reginald Edwards <edwardsr86@gmail.com>
Cc: "Lujan, Jennifer D." <lujanj@apsu.edu>, "Shutt, Tammy" <shuttt@apsu.edu>

Please accept this email as documentation that your request for an extension until December 31, 2010 has been granted.

best of luck on your project

Buddy Grah, Chair

Austin Peay IRB

From: Grah, Charles
Sent: Tuesday, March 02, 2010 12:17 PM
To: Reginald Edwards
Cc: Lujan, Jennifer D.
Subject: RE: Edwards Field Study

Reginald.

Please accept this email as documentation that your request for an extension until the end of the semester (May 7, 2010) has been granted.

best of luck

Buddy Grah, Chair

Austin Peay Institutional Review Board

From: Reginald Edwards [mailto:edwardsr86@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 02, 2010 9:31 AM
To: Grah, Charles
Subject: Edwards Field Study

Good morning Dr. Grah. I have met with Dr. Shutt on my Field Study and she ask me to e-mail you and ask for an extension on my field study until the end of this semester, she said to let you know that everything looks good to finish by the end of this semester. I have attached the previous extension to this e-mail. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Reginald H. Edwards
414 Helton Drive
Clarksville, TN 37042