An Examination of the Relationship Between Outcomes of Student Expulsion Hearings and Variables That May Predict the Outcomes of These Hearings

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### Advanced Organizer

- **What we know about**
  - Issues related to school discipline
  - Exclusion
  - Focus of this study
  - Preliminary findings

### Issues Related to School Discipline

“'Youth violence is a high-visibility, high-priority concern in every sector of U. S. society. No community, whether affluent or poor, urban, suburban, or rural, is immune from its devastating effects’” (Kaufman et al., 2000, p. 1).

### Discipline Issues among High School Students

- Attendance
- Tardiness
- Disrespecting teachers
- Use of alcohol
- Physical conflicts
- Drug abuse
- Cutting classes
- Vandalism of school property
- Robbery or theft
- Possession of a weapon
  (DeVoe et al., 2002)

### Reported In Schools

- **2001**
  - 7-9% of students reported threats of injury and/or with weapons
- **2000**
  - 700,000 violent crimes
  - 1.2 million thefts
- **2001**
  - 27% of students reported a greater fear of threat at school than elsewhere

### Zero-tolerance Policies

- Mandate strict disciplinary repercussions (DeVoe et al., 2000; Dowling-Sendor, 2001; Kaufmann et al., 2000; Morrison & D’Incau, 1997)
- Fear for health & safety (Dowling-Sendor, 2001; Morrison & D’Incau, 1997)
- Perceived threats (Dowling-Sendor, 2001; Todd, 1998; Zirkel, 1999)
- 90% of public schools (DeVoe et al., 2002)
- Misused (e.g., Cartledge, 1999; Claiborne, 1999; Dowling-Sendor, 2001; Todd, 1998; Zirkel, 1999).
Using Exclusion to Address Problem Behaviors

- Excluding students with discipline problems increasing (Cartledge, Tillman, & Johnson, 2001; Hayden, Sheppard, & Ward, 1996; DeVoe et al., 2002; Morrison, D’Incau, Couto, & Loose, 1997).

- Exclusion constitutes break in or end of formal education (Black, 1999; DeRidder, 1991; Mayer, 1995; Zirkel, 1999, 2000).

Factors Associated with Expulsion

- Truancy (Morrison & D’Incau, 1997; Pritchard, Cotton, & Cox, 1992; Schulenberg, Bachman, O’Malley, & Johnston, 1994).

- Cigarettes or use of other drugs (Bryant et al., 2000; DeVoe, et al., 2002; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992; Shannon, James, & Gansneder, 1993; Welte & Barnes, 1987)

- Negative school outcomes (Bryant et al., 2000; Morrison & D’Incau, 1997; Tobin & Sugai, 1999a, 1999b)

- Academically or behaviorally challenged (Townsend, 2000; Uchitelle, Bant, & Hillman, 1989)

Preventing Expulsion

Knowledge of precursors to violent or offending behaviors (Dusenbury et al., 1997; U.S. Department of Justice, 1998) allows for prevention programs that target risk factors for the precursors (Wasserman & Miller, 1998).

Middle School Students

- Fifth grade behavior predictive of the likelihood of being arrested in seventh grade (Walker, Stieber, Ramsey, & O’Neill, 1993)

- Relationship of middle school behaviors to continuing behavior problems and high school outcomes (Tobin, 1996)

Focus of this Study

- What information found in the behavioral histories of high school students who have been before an expulsion hearing predicted the likelihood of (a) expulsion, (b) not receiving an expulsion, or (c) receiving a placement change in lieu of expulsion? Information collected should provide answers to the following questions:
  - Are students with records of chronic attendance problems, poor academic achievement, or ongoing behavioral problems in school more likely to receive an expulsion from school?
  - Do students who commit expellable offenses that are more likely to result in expulsion if they attend schools with zero-tolerance policies possess certain characteristics?
  - Are school administrators more likely to allow students with certain behavioral characteristics who commit expellable offenses to return to school?
Setting and Participants

- High schools (approximately 20) in the Pacific Northwest
- Records of students
  - Sent to expulsion hearing within past 2 years
  - In special education who have been or would have been sent to expulsion hearing

Independent Variables

- School attendance issues
- Grade retentions
- School transfer information
- Academic performance & achievement information
- Special education & related services
- Positive interventions
- Office discipline referrals
- FBAs & Behavior Support Plans
- Contacts with government or social services

Preliminary Findings

Descriptives: Percent of Days Present

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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Reading CIM/Benchmark 3

- Does not meet standards
- Meets standards
- Exceeds standards
- Missing
Main Findings

- The following are associated with the likelihood of receiving a conditional expulsion:
  - Better attendance in high school
  - Better cumulative grade point average in high school
  - Meeting or exceeding standards on statewide reading assessment
  - Attending a school with a zero tolerance policy
Findings cont’d
• The expulsion committee is more likely to offer conditional expulsions to students
  • in the 12th grade conditional expulsions
  • with good attendance

Findings cont’d
• The expulsion committee is least likely to offer conditional expulsions and more likely to unconditionally expel students
  • in the 10th grade
  • females
  • with higher number of documented referrals for non-violence in high schools

Findings cont’d
• Females tend to achieve higher than males on statewide assessments (reading associated with conditional expulsion), yet they are less likely to be offered a conditional expulsion
• No clear difference in the treatment of students who were and were not receiving special education services

Findings cont’d
• School administrators in schools with zero tolerance policies are as likely to provide a conditional expulsion as a conditional one. 83% of the offers of a conditional expulsion came from schools with zero tolerance policies in place.

Future Research
Should look more closely at conditional expulsions
• Are they unique to Oregon?
• Clear definition
• What types of schools (e.g., zero-tolerance) utilize them?
• Who receives them and under what conditions?
• At what rate do students who receive them remain in school? Stay out of trouble? Graduate?