
Suspension and expulsion patterns in six Oregon school districts

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Key findings

This study of student suspension and expulsion in six diverse school districts in Oregon in 2011/12 finds that:

- Some 6.4 percent of students were suspended or expelled from school. The most common reasons were physical and verbal aggression and insubordination/disruption.
- Nearly 40 percent of students who were suspended received more than one suspension.
- The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension was 3.3 days.

REL 2014–028

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Summary

Concern about the loss of classroom instruction resulting from school disciplinary actions has motivated many states and districts to review their use of student suspension and expulsion (exclusionary discipline), which has increased over the last four decades. In 2009/10, 2.4 percent of elementary school students and 11.3 percent of secondary school students across the country were suspended, up from 0.9 percent and 8 percent in 1972/73 (Losen & Martinez, 2013).

The intent of exclusionary discipline is to maintain safe and orderly schools. However, there is no evidence that imposing exclusionary discipline on more students has increased school safety, improved learning climates in schools, or improved the behavior of students receiving such discipline (American Psychological Association, 2008). In fact, the increased use of exclusionary discipline has been accompanied by undesirable consequences for both students and schools.

For example, gaps in percentages of White and racial/ethnic minority students receiving discipline have widened (Losen & Martinez, 2013). In addition, schools with a higher percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline have lower levels of academic achievement (Eitle & Eitle, 2004; Raffaele Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002) and environments less conducive to learning (Steinberg, Allensworth, & Johnson, 2011). Furthermore, exclusionary discipline is associated with poorer outcomes for students. Students who are suspended are more likely to repeat a grade, drop out, and become involved in the juvenile justice system (Lee, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2011; Fabelo et al., 2011).

While there is no evidence that exclusionary discipline causes these school- or student-level problems, this type of discipline usually results in loss of instruction time that students can ill afford. These dual concerns—that exclusionary discipline fails to improve learning environments in schools and that it is associated with poorer outcomes for students—have prompted action at the federal and state levels to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline.

This study was conducted in response to the Oregon Leadership Network's request to Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Northwest to identify how frequently students in six selected districts received exclusionary discipline during the 2011/12 school year, the most common reasons for such discipline, the percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions, and how many school days students lost to suspensions. The districts collectively enroll 24 percent of K–12 public school students in Oregon and are among the most diverse in the state, serving 28 percent of Oregon's Hispanic students, 51 percent of its Asian students, and 55 percent of its Black students. In addition, the Oregon Leadership Network wanted information on the application of exclusionary discipline at different grade spans and by student gender, race/ethnicity, and special education status.

Among the key findings:

- During 2011/12, 6.4 percent of students were removed from regular classroom instruction because they were suspended or expelled.
- Out-of-school suspension was more common than in-school suspension in all grade spans (elementary, middle, and high school). The largest difference was in high school, where the percentage of students receiving out-of-school suspension was three times the percentage receiving in-school suspension.

- The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline was 2.5 times higher for male students than for female students. The percentage was higher for American Indian, Black, Hispanic, and multiracial students and lower for Asian students than for White students. And the percentage for students in special education was higher than that for students not in special education.
- Physical and verbal aggression and insubordination/disruption were the most common reasons why students were suspended or expelled.
 - Physical and verbal aggression was the most common reason for exclusionary discipline for students in elementary and middle school, and insubordination/disruption was the most common reason in high school.
 - The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression or for insubordination/disruption was higher for male students than for female students. The percentage was higher for racial/ethnic minority students, except Asian students, than for White students. And the percentage was higher for students in special education than for students not in special education.
- Nearly 40 percent of students who were suspended received more than one suspension over the school year.
 - Approximately 1 percent of elementary school students, 5 percent of middle school students, and 3 percent of high school students were suspended more than once.
 - The percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions was three times higher for male students than for female students. The percentage was higher for American Indian, Black, Hispanic, and multiracial students and lower for Asian students than for White students. And the percentage was four times higher for students in special education than for students not in special education.
- The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension was 3.3 days.
 - The average number of school days suspended was 2.2 days in elementary school, 3.3 days in middle school, and 4.1 days in high school. It was roughly half a day greater for male students than for female students in elementary school and one day greater in high school; in middle school the difference was negligible.
 - In elementary school the average number of school days suspended was approximately one day greater for Black students than for White students and was slightly less for Asian and Hispanic students than for White students. In middle and high school the average was nearly the same across all races/ethnicities (except Asian students in middle school, for whom it was less).
 - In high school the average number of school days suspended was nearly the same for students in special education and for students not in special education. In elementary and middle school it was half a day greater for students in special education than for students not in special education.

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Why this study?

Concern about the loss of classroom instruction resulting from school disciplinary actions has motivated many states and districts to review their use of suspension and expulsion (exclusionary discipline). Students may receive exclusionary discipline for offenses ranging from lesser infractions such as refusing to follow directions or violating school rules to serious threats to school safety (Dinkes, Kemp, & Baum, 2009; Fabelo et al., 2011; Skiba et al., 2011). Types of exclusionary discipline include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and for students in special education, temporary placement in alternative instruction¹ (see box 1 for definitions of key terms). Suspension is the most common exclusionary discipline. Nationally, more than 3 million students (approximately 6 percent of public school enrollment) were suspended during the 2009/10 school year (Losen & Gillespie, 2012).

The purpose of school discipline is to maintain safe and orderly schools. Since the early 1990s numerous U.S. schools and districts have enacted “zero tolerance” policies (American Psychological Association, 2008). Originating in law enforcement of drug crimes, zero tolerance as practiced in schools frequently means suspending or expelling students for specified offenses without regard to the student’s age or the seriousness or context of the behavior (American Psychological Association, 2008).

The use of exclusionary discipline in U.S. schools has increased over the past four decades. In 2009/10 across the nation 2.4 percent of elementary school students and 11.3 percent of secondary school students were suspended, up from 0.9 percent and 8 percent in 1972/73 (Losen & Martinez, 2013).

However, there is no evidence that imposing exclusionary discipline on more students has increased school safety, improved learning climates in schools, or improved the behavior of students receiving such discipline (American Psychological Association, 2008). In fact, the increased use of exclusionary discipline has been accompanied by undesirable consequences for both students and schools.

For example, gaps in the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline between White and racial/ethnic minority students have widened (Losen & Martinez, 2013). In addition, schools with higher percentages of students receiving exclusionary discipline have lower levels of academic achievement (Eitle & Eitle, 2004; Raffaele Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002) and environments less conducive to learning (Steinberg, Allensworth, & Johnson, 2011). Furthermore, exclusionary discipline is associated with poorer outcomes for students. Students who are suspended are more likely to repeat a grade, drop out, and become involved in the juvenile justice system (Fabelo et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2011). These findings are not evidence that exclusionary discipline caused these school- or student-level problems, but this type of discipline results in loss of instruction time that students can ill afford.

These dual concerns—that exclusionary discipline fails to improve learning environments in schools and that it is associated with poorer outcomes for students—have prompted action at the federal and state levels to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline. For example, in 2011 the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice created the Supportive School Discipline Initiative to promote evidence-based policies and practices that will keep students in school,

Concern about the loss of classroom instruction resulting from school disciplinary actions has motivated many states and districts to review their use of suspension and expulsion

Box 1. Key terms

Average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension.

Sum of school days suspended across all suspensions over the year divided by the number of suspended students. Statistics on suspension length in this report include days students were assigned in-school or out-of-school suspension and exclude days students were expelled.

Discretionary offense. An offense for which school administrators have discretion in assigning discipline to students. Examples include defiance, truancy, disruptive behavior, disrespect, and fighting. Contrast with *mandatory offense*.

Exclusionary discipline. Discipline imposed by school administrators that removes a student from classroom instruction or school. This study reports results for in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion.

Exclusionary discipline rate ratio. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for a target group divided by the percentage for a comparison group. A ratio of 1 indicates equal percentages for both groups, a ratio greater than 1 indicates that the percentage was higher for the target group than for the comparison group, and a ratio less than 1 indicates that the percentage was lower for the target group.

Expulsion. Discipline that removes a student from school for the remainder of the school year or longer. This includes removals resulting from violations of the Gun-Free Schools Act that are modified to less than 365 days.

In-school suspension. Temporary removal of a student from his or her regular classroom or classrooms for disciplinary purposes. The student remains under the direct supervision of school personnel (the suspended student is in the same location as school personnel assigned to the student's supervision).

Mandatory offense. An offense for which federal or state policy requires expulsion of the student (for example, weapons violations). Contrast with *discretionary offense*.

Multiple suspension rate ratio. The percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions for a target group divided by the percentage for a comparison group. A ratio of 1 indicates equal percentages for both groups, a ratio greater than 1 indicates that the percentage is higher for the target group than for the comparison group, and a ratio less than 1 indicates that the percentage is lower for the target group.

Offense category. The primary offense that resulted in exclusionary discipline. See table A3 in appendix A for a list of offense categories and their descriptions.

Out-of-school suspension. Temporary removal of a student from his or her regular school to another setting (for example, home or a behavior center) for disciplinary purposes. For students in special education this includes removals in which no special education services are provided because the removal is less than 10 days cumulatively, as well as removals in which the student continues to receive special education services according to an individualized education program.

Percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline. The number of students receiving exclusionary discipline divided by the total number of students.

(continued)

Box 1. Key terms *(continued)*

Percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions. The number of students receiving more than one suspension divided by the total number of students or by the total number of students receiving at least one suspension.

Suspension length ratio. The ratio of the average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension for a target group divided by the average for a comparison group. A ratio of 1 indicates an equal average for both groups, a ratio greater than 1 indicates that the average was higher for the target group than for the comparison group, and a ratio less than 1 indicates that the average was higher for the target group.

Source: Definitions of terms are based on Mahoney (2012); calculations are defined by authors.

and Oregon recently enacted requirements to focus discipline policies on keeping students in school and away from rote imposition of suspension and expulsion (box 2).

This study was undertaken to expand the research on exclusionary discipline (see appendix B for a discussion of the connections between this research and previous research) and to address a request from the Oregon Leadership Network, a partnership of 15 districts, two education service districts, and several community groups that have worked together for more than a decade in pursuit of better education outcomes for students (Education Northwest, 2011). The network has allied with REL Northwest to conduct research related to the network goal of promoting successful outcomes for all students by eliminating achievement gaps and disparities in discipline experienced by different groups of students. In addition to conducting research on behalf of the network, REL Northwest provides training and technical assistance to educators and administrators in network districts.

The study was conducted with six Oregon Leadership Network districts that collectively enroll 24 percent of all K–12 students attending public schools in Oregon. The student populations in these districts are among the most diverse in the state. Collectively, the districts serve 28 percent of Oregon’s Hispanic students, 51 percent of its Asian students, and 55 percent of its Black students. See table A1 in appendix A for the names and characteristics of the districts, including demographic characteristics of their student bodies.

The study was conducted with six Oregon Leadership Network districts that collectively enroll 24 percent of all K–12 students attending public schools in Oregon

Box 2. New Oregon school discipline legislation in 2013

In 2013 the Oregon legislature passed and the governor signed into law HB 2192, which established new requirements for district policies related to discipline, suspension, and expulsion. The law allows school administrators substantial discretion in assessing school safety and gives school boards broad authority to suspend or expel “any refractory student.” It also narrows the use of expulsion and sets a priority on keeping students in school and attending class. In addition, the law requires discipline policies to incorporate research-based approaches for reducing student misbehavior and promoting positive behavior. Furthermore, discipline policies must consider a student’s age and past behavior prior to assigning suspension or expulsion. Finally, the law requires school administrators to impose discipline without bias.

Source: <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2013R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB2192/Enrolled>.

The districts asked REL Northwest to identify how frequently their students received exclusionary discipline during the 2011/12 school year, the most common reasons for such discipline, the percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions, and how many school days students lost to suspensions. In addition, the districts wanted information on the application of exclusionary discipline at different grade spans and by student gender, race/ethnicity, and special education status. Examining the proportions of students receiving exclusionary discipline over the course of a school year focuses attention on differences in how groups of students experience school. Examining the number and types of infractions committed by students and instruction time lost to exclusionary discipline is important for three reasons:

- Each incident of exclusionary discipline carries personal consequences for the affected student and requires school staff members to deal with the administrative details of the discipline process.
- Information about the frequency and kinds of infractions committed by different groups of students will help districts and schools understand where to focus their efforts to improve students' behavior and prevent misbehavior.
- Information about school days students lost because of exclusionary discipline will help districts and schools understand the consequences of this discipline for students' opportunity to learn.

Examining the proportions of students receiving exclusionary discipline over the course of a school year focuses attention on differences in how groups of students experience school

Finally, Oregon law now requires districts to consider students' age and past behavior and to give weight to keeping students in school and attending class instead of automatically suspending or expelling them for specific offenses. Results from this study will provide a baseline for districts to assess their progress as they incorporate the new requirements into their discipline policies.

What the study examined

Four research questions guided this study:

1. What percentage of students were removed from regular classroom instruction for exclusionary discipline, and how did the percentage vary by student background characteristics?
2. What were the most common reasons for exclusionary discipline, and how did they vary by student background characteristics?
3. What percentage of students who were suspended received more than one suspension, and how did the percentage vary by student background characteristics?
4. What was the average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension, and how did it vary by student background characteristics?

Student background characteristics examined in the study include grade span, gender, race/ethnicity, and special education status. Average number of suspension days includes school days covered by in-school and out-of-school suspension; school days covered by expulsion are not analyzed. Box 3 summarizes the data and methodology used in the study; appendix A provides more detail.

Box 3. Data and methodology

This study uses 2011/12 data from two Oregon Department of Education data collections. The cumulative average daily membership is a student-level data collection that includes enrollment, demographic characteristics, special program status, and district and school information for all students enrolled in Oregon public schools. The discipline incidents collection includes information for each disciplinary incident that resulted in an administrative action of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion. Data sources and methods are described in more detail in appendix A.

Participating districts. The study sample covered six Oregon Leadership Network districts in two Oregon counties that together have the most diverse student population in the state. Two of the districts are in Multnomah County, and four are in Washington County. The six districts enroll approximately 143,000 students, representing 77 percent of K–12 students in the two-county area and 24 percent of K–12 students in Oregon. In 2011/12, 51 percent of students in these districts were male, 47 percent were racial/ethnic minority students, and 15 percent were in special education. Table A1 in appendix A summarizes the geographic locale, number of schools, and student characteristics for each district, and table A2 provides more detailed student demographic information.

Analysis methods. Descriptive statistics were calculated for all students, by grade span (K–5 elementary school, 6–8 middle school, and 9–12 high school) and by student subgroup. Rate ratios were also calculated to compare the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline between a subgroup and a reference group. For example, rate ratios were formed that compared the percentages for male and female students, for racial/ethnic minority students and White students, and for students in special education and students not in special education.

Approximately 6.4 percent of students in the study districts received exclusionary discipline that removed them from classroom instruction at least once during the 2011/12 school year

Study findings

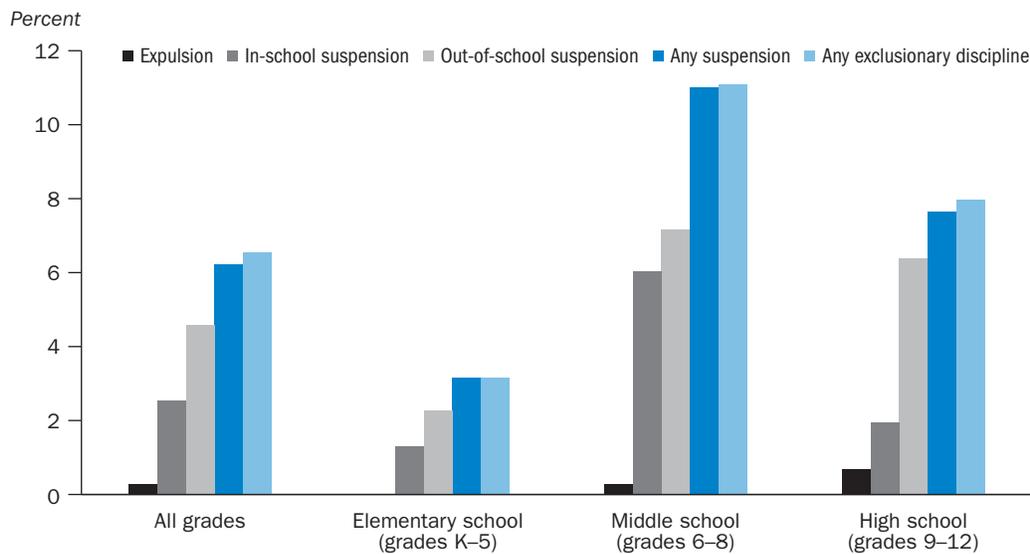
This section describes the findings for the study's four research questions.

Some 6.4 percent of students were removed from regular classroom instruction because they were suspended or expelled; the percentage of students suspended and expelled was higher for middle school students, male students, Black students, and students in special education

Approximately 6.4 percent of students in the study districts received exclusionary discipline that removed them from classroom instruction at least once during the 2011/12 school year, compared with 7.9 percent of students in other Oregon districts. By far the most common form of exclusionary discipline was suspension, with out-of-school suspension more common than in-school suspension. Expulsion was uncommon, affecting 0.3 percent of all students in the same school year (figure 1; see also table C1 in appendix C).

Grade span. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline varied across grade spans: from 3.2 percent in elementary school to 11.1 percent in middle school to 8.0 percent in high school. For all types of exclusionary discipline, the percentage of students was lower in elementary school than in middle and high school. The highest percentage of students receiving in-school and out-of-school suspensions was among middle school students. The percentage of students receiving out-of-school suspension was higher than the percentage receiving in-school suspension across all grade spans; the difference

Figure 1. Out-of-school suspension was the most common form of exclusionary discipline across all grade spans, 2011/12



The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline was 2.6–3.5 times higher for Black students than for White students in the same grade spans

Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline is the number of students in each grade span receiving each type of discipline divided by the total number of students in the same grade span, multiplied by 100. Students were counted once for each type of discipline they received (expulsion, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension) and once under any suspension if they were suspended.

Source: Authors’ analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

was largest in high school, where the percentage receiving out-of-school suspension was three times the percentage receiving in-school suspension (see figure 1 and table C1 in appendix C). Expulsion was much less common than suspension. The highest percentage of students receiving expulsion was in high school (approximately 0.7 percent of students).

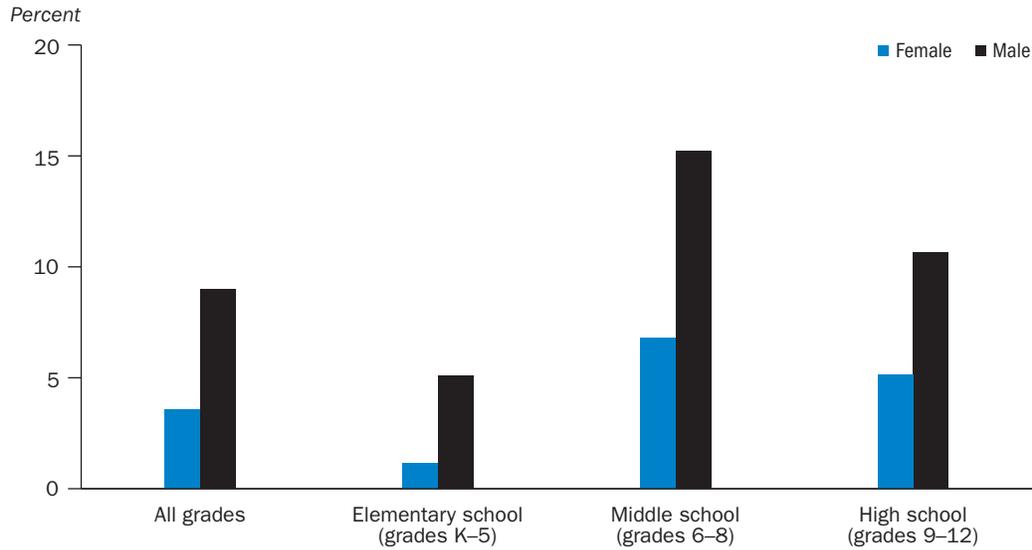
Gender. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline was higher for male students than for female students across all grade spans (figure 2; see also table C2 in appendix C). The percentage was 4.6 times higher for male students than for female students in elementary school and 2.1–2.2 times higher in middle and high school.

Race/ethnicity. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline was highest for Black students across all grade spans (figure 3; see also table C2 in appendix C): 9.5 percent in elementary school, 25.4 percent in middle school, and 16.1 percent in high school. The percentage was 2.6–3.5 times higher for Black students than for White students in the same grade spans.

The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline was 1.4–2.4 times higher for American Indian than for White students and 1.3–2 times higher for Hispanic students than for White students. Across all grade spans the percentage was 1.3 times higher for multiracial students than for White students. The lowest percentage was for Asian students (0.4–0.5 times that for White students).

Within each racial/ethnic group the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline was higher for male students than for female students across all grade spans (figure 4). The highest percentages for male and female students of all races/ethnicities were in middle school.

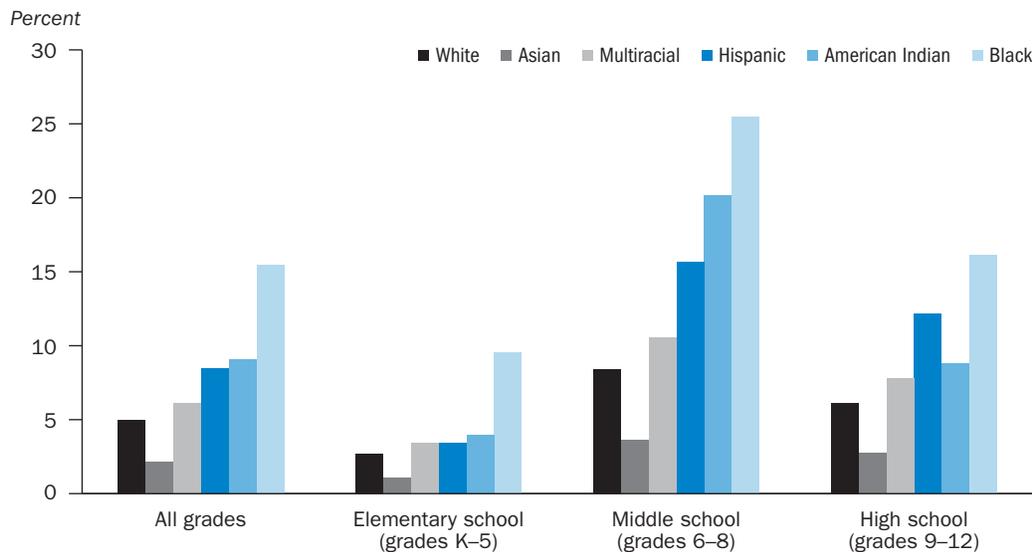
Figure 2. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline was higher for male students than for female students across all grade spans, 2011/12



Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline is the number of students of each gender in each grade span who were suspended or expelled divided by the total number of students of the same gender in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

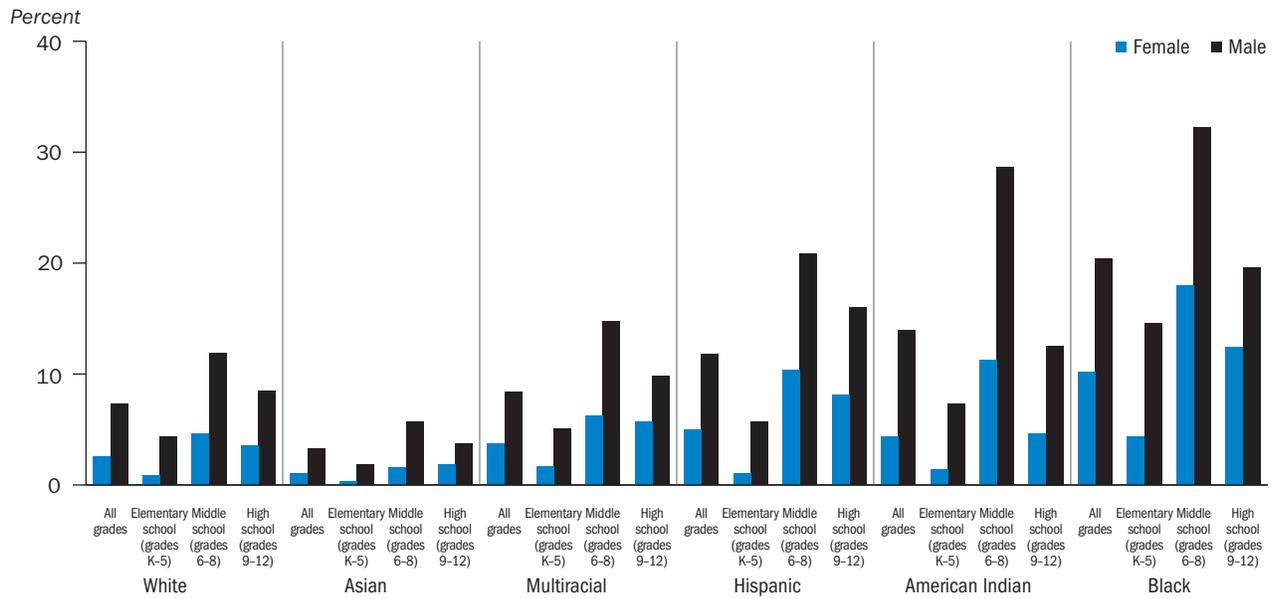
Figure 3. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline was highest for Black students, followed by American Indian and Hispanic students across all grade spans, 2011/12



Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline is the number of students of each race/ethnicity in each grade span who were suspended or expelled divided by the total number of students of the same race/ethnicity in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Figure 4. Within each racial/ethnic group the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline was higher for male students than for female students across all grade spans, 2011/12



Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline is the number of students of each gender and race/ethnicity in each grade span who were suspended or expelled divided by the total number of students of the same gender and race/ethnicity in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

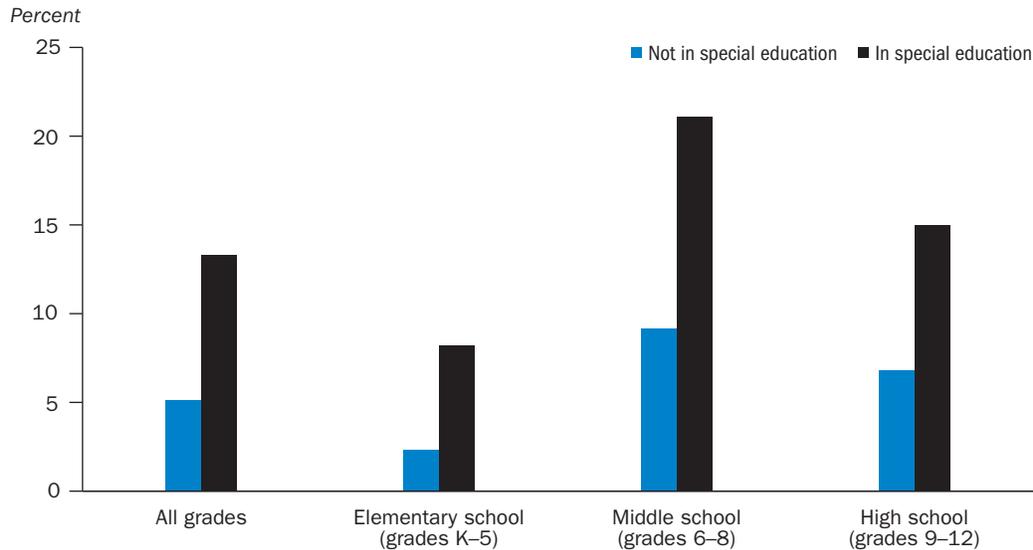
Special education. Across all grade spans the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline was higher for students in special education than for students not in special education (figure 5; see also table C2 in appendix C). The percentage was 3.6 times higher for elementary school students in special education and 2.2–2.3 times higher for middle and high school students in special education.

Aggression and insubordination/disruption were the most common reasons students were suspended or expelled; the percentage was higher for middle school students, male students, Black students, and students in special education

The Oregon Department of Education requires districts to report the primary offense whenever a student is suspended or expelled. Oregon identifies 27 types of offenses as reasons for exclusionary discipline (Mahoney, 2012). This study grouped primary offenses into six categories that align with the way the department analyzes and reports discipline data (table 1; see table A3 in appendix A for details of the offense categories and descriptions of the infractions); these categories are consistent with research on offense types by grade span (Kaufman et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2011) and on offense patterns of students involved in the juvenile justice system (Loeber & Hay, 1997; Tobin & Sugai, 1996; Wright & Dusek, 1998).

Grade span. Across all grade spans physical and verbal aggression and insubordination/disruption were the most commonly cited reasons for exclusionary discipline (figure 6; see also table C3 in appendix C). The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for aggression or for insubordination/disruption was higher in middle school than in elementary and high school. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for attendance and tobacco, alcohol, and drug infractions was higher in high school than in elementary and middle school.

Figure 5. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline was higher for students in special education than for students not in special education across all grade spans, 2011/12



Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline is the number of students with each special education status in each grade span who were suspended or expelled divided by the total number of students with the same special education status in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Table 1. Types of discipline infractions by offense category

Offense category	Type of infractions
Attendance	Not attending school or classes as required
Criminal offense	Arson, manufacture or delivery of a controlled substance, kidnapping, robbery, battery, weapons violations, other offenses
Insubordination/disruption	Disorderly conduct, insubordination, obscene/disruptive behavior, insubordination/disobedience, violation of school rules
Physical and verbal aggression	Threat/intimidation, harassment, minor physical altercation (pushing, shoving), fighting, inappropriate sexual behavior
Property-related	Stealing, theft, trespassing, or vandalism
Tobacco, alcohol, and drug	Possession, use, or sale of alcohol, inappropriate use of medication, possession or use of tobacco

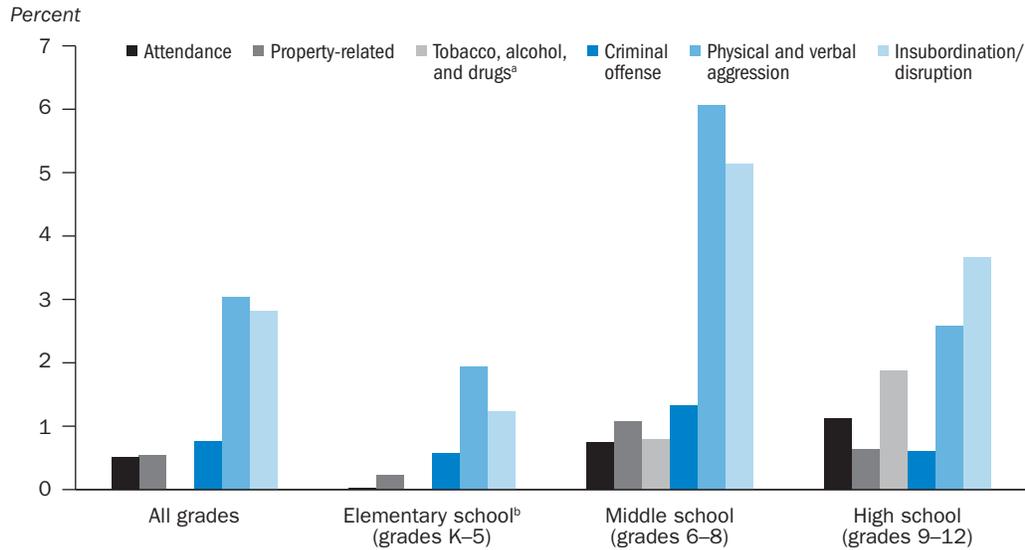
Note: See table A3 in appendix A for details of the offense categories and descriptions of the infractions.

Source: Mahoney, 2012.

Gender. The highest percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression or for insubordination/disruption was for male students in middle school (figures 7 and 8).

Race/ethnicity. Across all grade spans the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression or for insubordination/disruption was higher for racial/ethnic minority students (except Asian students) than for White students (figures 9 and 10; see also table C4 in appendix C).

Figure 6. Physical and verbal aggression and insubordination/disruption were the most commonly cited reasons for exclusionary discipline across all grade spans, 2011/12



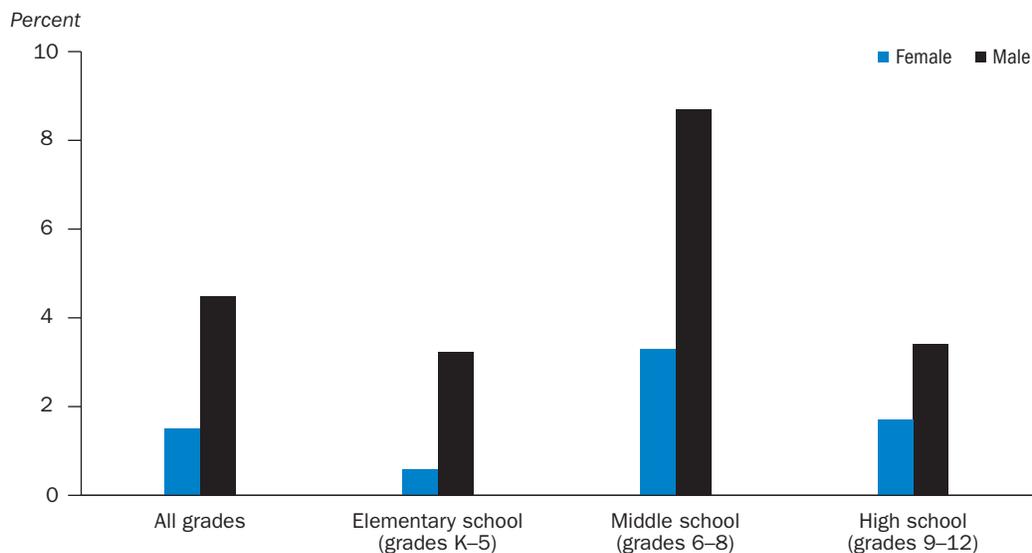
Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for each offense category is the number of students receiving exclusionary discipline for each offense category in each grade span divided by the total number of students in the same grade span, multiplied by 100. Students are counted once under each category of offense they committed.

a. Values are not shown for all grades and elementary school to protect student confidentiality.

b. Value for attendance is less than 0.045.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

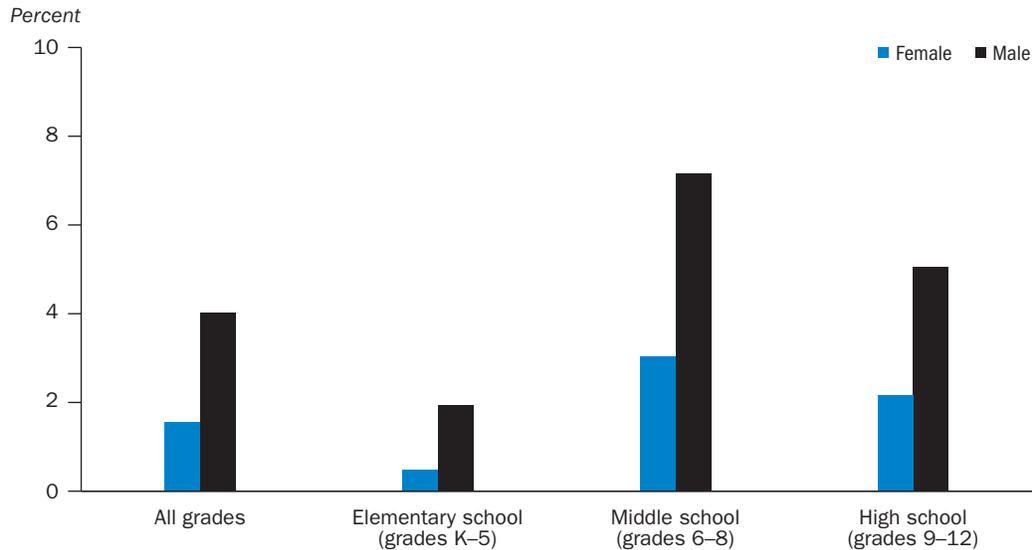
Figure 7. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression was higher for male students than for female students across all grade spans, 2011/12



Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression is the number of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression in each grade span divided by the total number of students in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

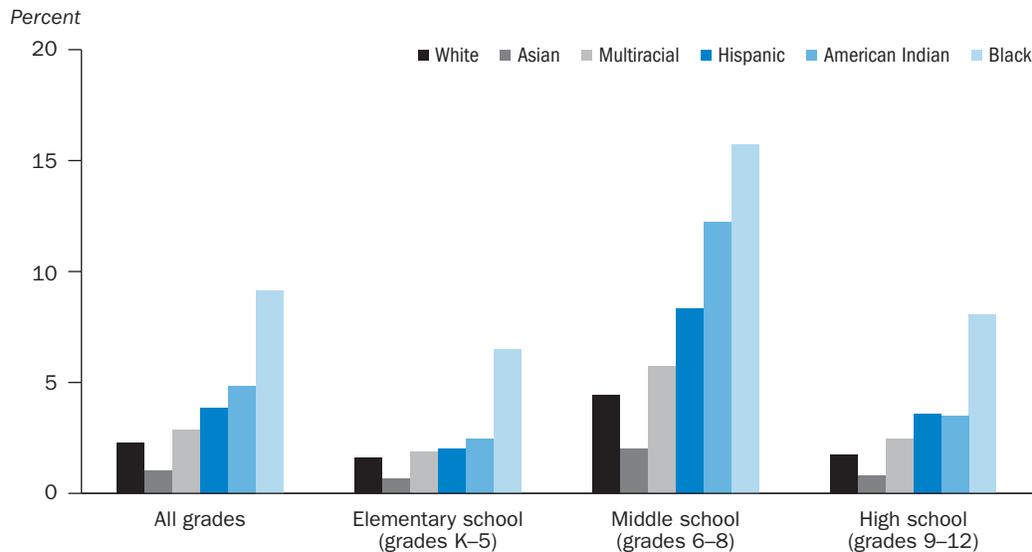
Figure 8. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption was higher for male students than for female students across all grade spans, 2011/12



Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption is the number of students receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption in each grade span divided by the total number of students in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

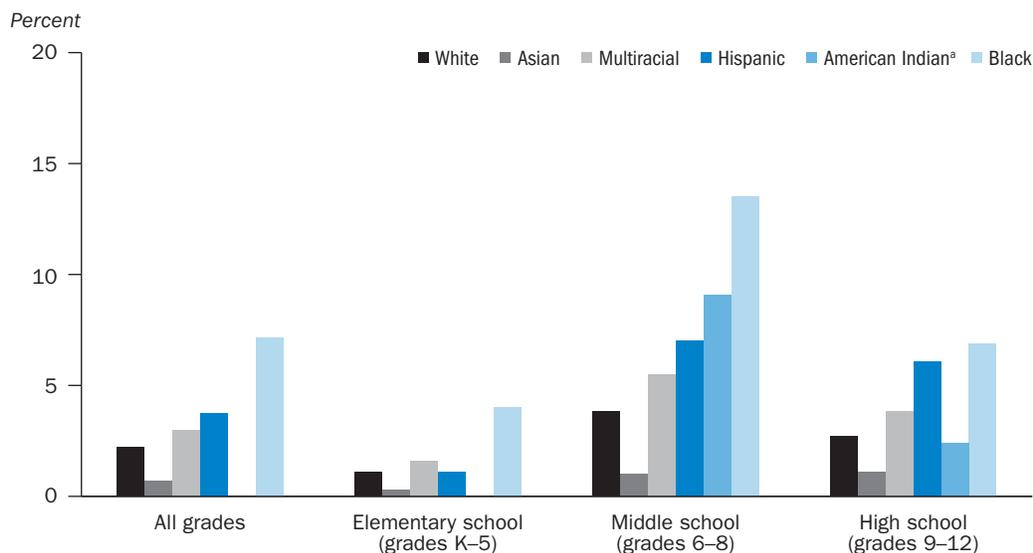
Figure 9. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression was higher for racial/ethnic minority students (except Asian students) than for White students across all grade spans, 2011/12



Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression is the number of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression in each grade span divided by the total number of students in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Figure 10. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption was higher for racial/ethnic minority students (except Asian students) than for White students across all grade spans, 2011/12



Some 1.2 percent of elementary school students, 4.5 percent of middle school students, and 2.8 percent of high school students were suspended more than once

Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption is the number of students receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption in each grade span divided by the total number of students in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

a. Values are not shown for all grades and elementary school to protect student confidentiality.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Special education. Across all grade spans the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression or for insubordination/disruption was higher for students in special education than for students not in special education (figures 11 and 12).

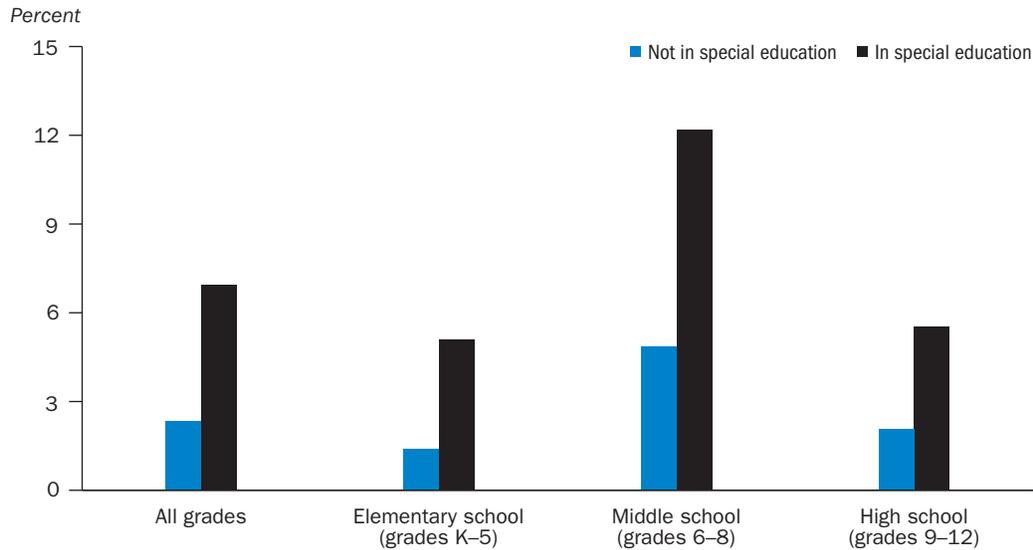
Nearly 40 percent of students who were suspended received more than one suspension; the percentage was higher for middle school students, male students, Black students, and students in special education

Suspension removes students from classroom instruction and may reduce their opportunities to complete the coursework needed to earn a passing grade. In 2011/12, 6 percent of students were suspended. For many of these students, suspension was not a one-time event—across all grades 38 percent of students who were suspended received more than one suspension during the year.

Grade span. Some 1.2 percent of elementary school students, 4.5 percent of middle school students, and 2.8 percent of high school students were suspended more than once (figure 13; see also table C6 in appendix C). Among elementary school and middle school students who were suspended, 37 percent were suspended more than once; among high school students who were suspended, 41 percent were suspended more than once.

Gender. Across all grade spans the percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions was 2.6–6.7 times higher for male students than for female students (figure 14; see also table C6 in appendix C). However, among suspended students, the percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions was similar across genders: 38 percent of male students and 30 percent of female students in elementary school, 42 percent of male students

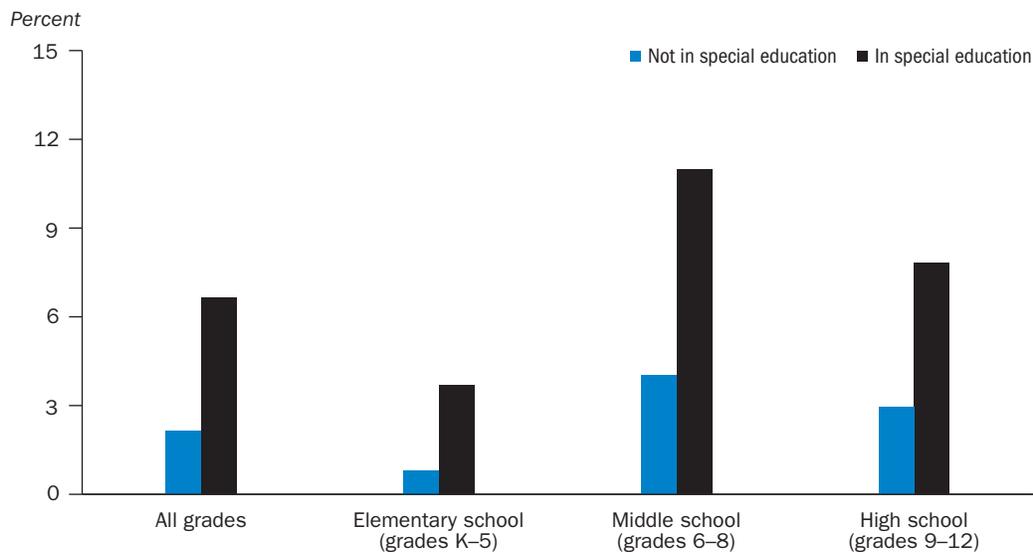
Figure 11. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression was higher for students in special education than for students not in special education across all grade spans, 2011/12



Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression is the number of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression in each grade span divided by the total number of students in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

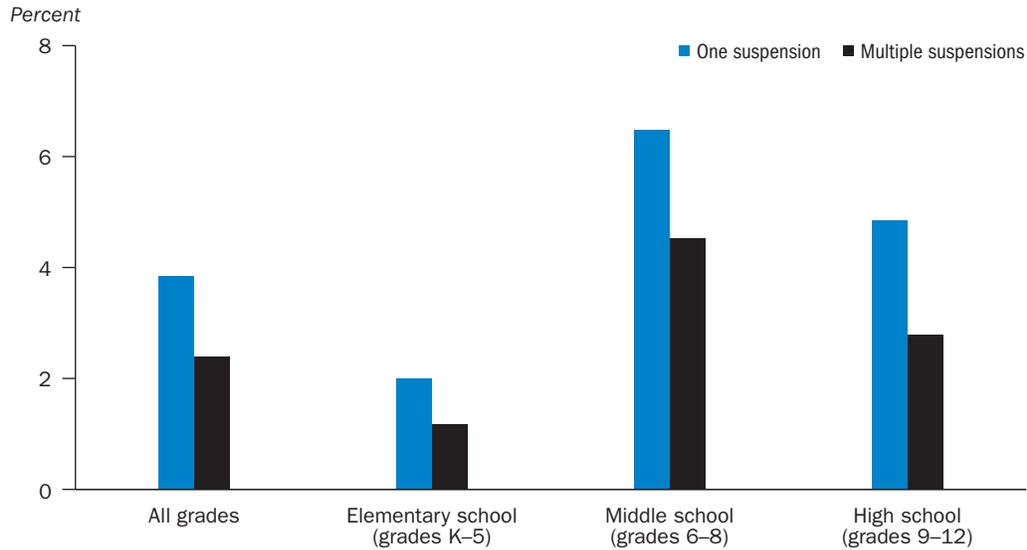
Figure 12. The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption was higher for students in special education than for students not in special education across all grade spans, 2011/12



Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption is the number of students receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption in each grade span divided by the total number of students in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

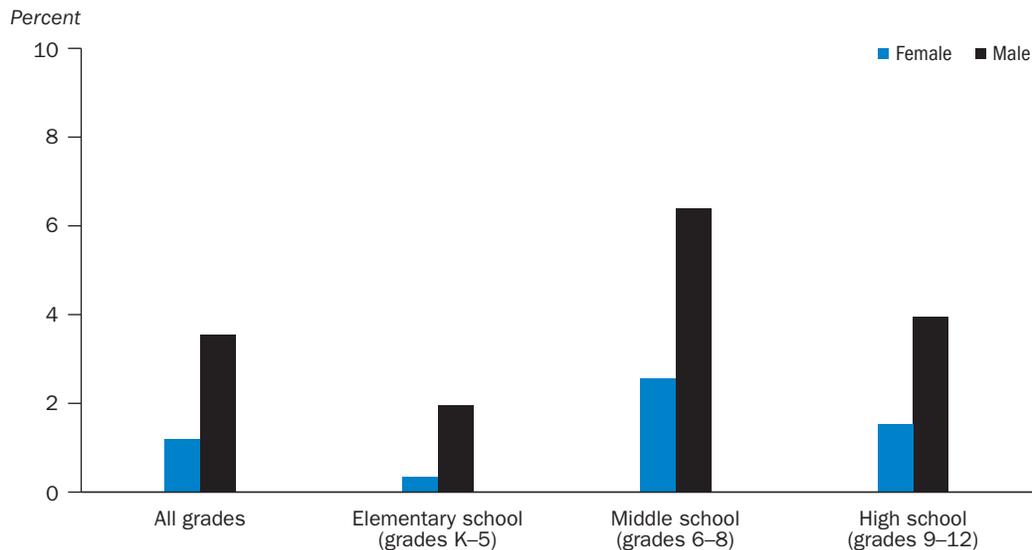
Figure 13. Students in middle school received multiple suspensions more often than students in other grade spans, 2011/12



Note: The percentage of students receiving one or multiple suspensions is the number of students in each grade span receiving one or multiple suspensions divided by the total number of students in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Figure 14. The percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions was higher for male students than for female students across all grade spans, 2011/12



Note: The percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions is the number of students of each gender in each grade span receiving multiple suspensions divided by the number of students of the same gender in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (2012).

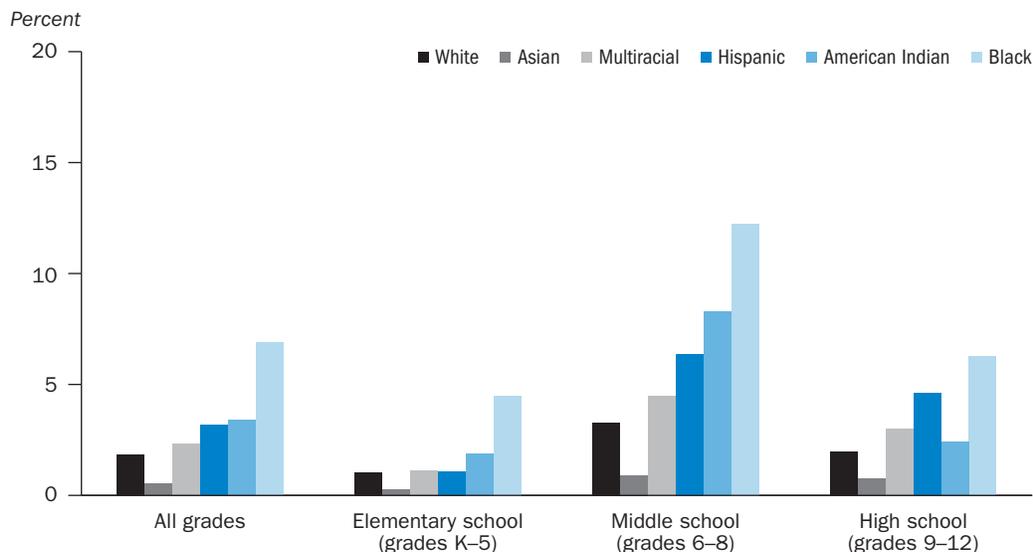
and 38 percent of female students in middle school, and 39 percent of male students and 31 percent of female students in high school.

Race/ethnicity. The percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions differed for White and racial/ethnic minority students across all grade spans (figure 15; see also table C6 in appendix C). The largest gap was in elementary school, where the percentage of Black students receiving multiple suspensions was 4.5 times that of White students. Across all grade spans the percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions was highest for Black students, followed by American Indian and Hispanic students. The percentage was 1.1–2.5 times higher for American Indian, Hispanic, and multiracial students than for White students. The percentage was lower for Asian students than for White students.

However, among suspended students, differences between White and racial/ethnic minority students were much smaller. In elementary school the percentage of suspended students receiving multiple suspensions was 48 percent for American Indian students, 25 percent for Asian students, 47 percent for Black students, 31 percent for Hispanic students, 38 percent for White students, and 32 percent for multiracial students. In middle school the percentage was 42 percent for American Indian students, 25 percent for Asian students, 48 percent for Black students, 41 percent for Hispanic students, 40 percent for White students, and 43 percent for multiracial students. In high school the percentage was 31 percent for American Indian students, 28 percent for Asian students, 41 percent for Black students, 39 percent for Hispanic students, 33 percent for White students, and 41 percent for multiracial students.

Across all grade spans the percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions was highest for Black students, followed by American Indian and Hispanic students

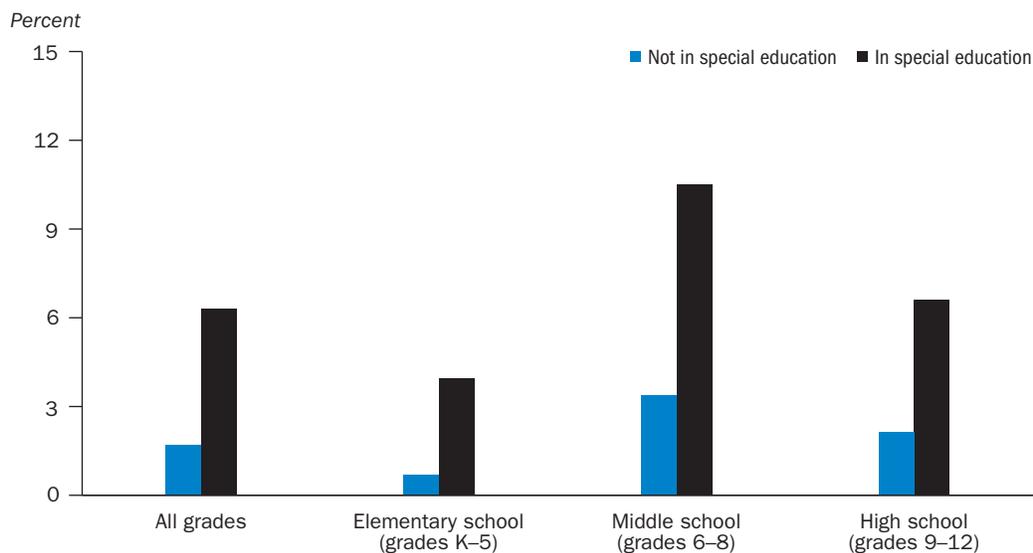
Figure 15. The percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions was higher for racial/ethnic minority students (except Asian Students) than for White students across all grade spans, 2011/12



Note: The percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions is the number of students of each race/ethnicity in each grade span receiving multiple suspensions divided by the total number of students of the same race/ethnicity in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Figure 16. The percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions was higher for students in special education than for students not in special education across all grade spans, 2011/12



Among suspended students, the percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions was 1.4–1.6 times higher for students in special education than for students not in special education

Note: The percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions is the number of students with each special education status in each grade span receiving multiple suspensions divided by the total number of students with the same special education status in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

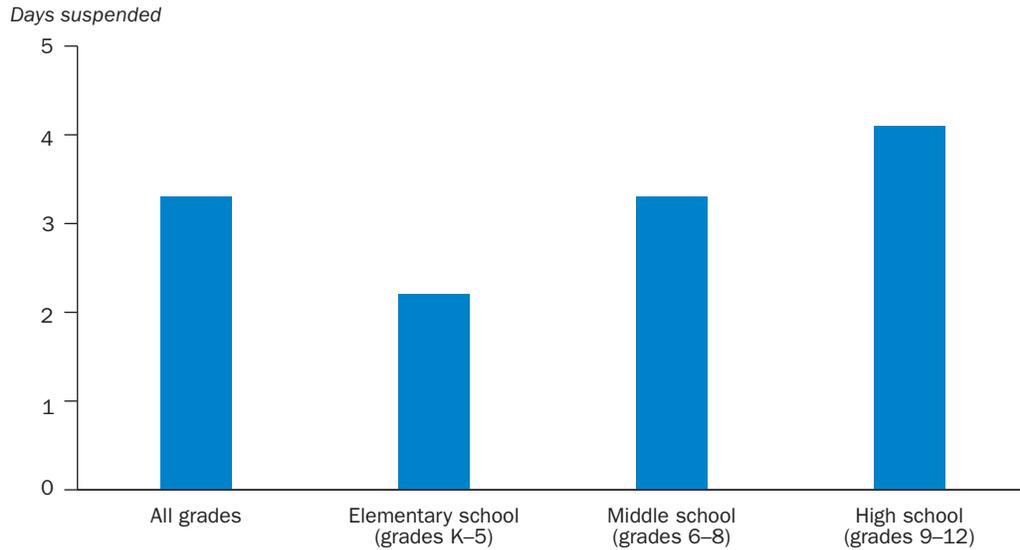
Special education. In elementary school the percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions was 5.6 times higher for students in special education than for students not in special education; in middle and high school the percentage was 3.1 times higher (figure 16; see also table C6 in appendix C). Among suspended students, the percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions was 1.4–1.6 times higher for students in special education than for students not in special education. Among suspended students in elementary school, the percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions was 30 percent for students not in special education and 48 percent for students in special education. Among suspended students in middle school, the percentage was 37 percent for students not in special education and 50 percent for students in special education. Among suspended students in high school, the percentage was 33 percent for students not in special education and 45 percent for students in special education.

The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension was 3.3 days, with higher values for high school students and male students

Grade span. The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension was 3.3 days (see table C7 in appendix C). The average was 2.2 days in elementary school, 3.3 days in middle school, and 4.1 days in high school (figure 17).

Gender. Across all grade spans the average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension was greater for male students than for female students (figure 18; see also table C7 in appendix C). It was roughly half a day greater for male students than for female students in elementary school and one day greater in high school; the difference was negligible in middle school.

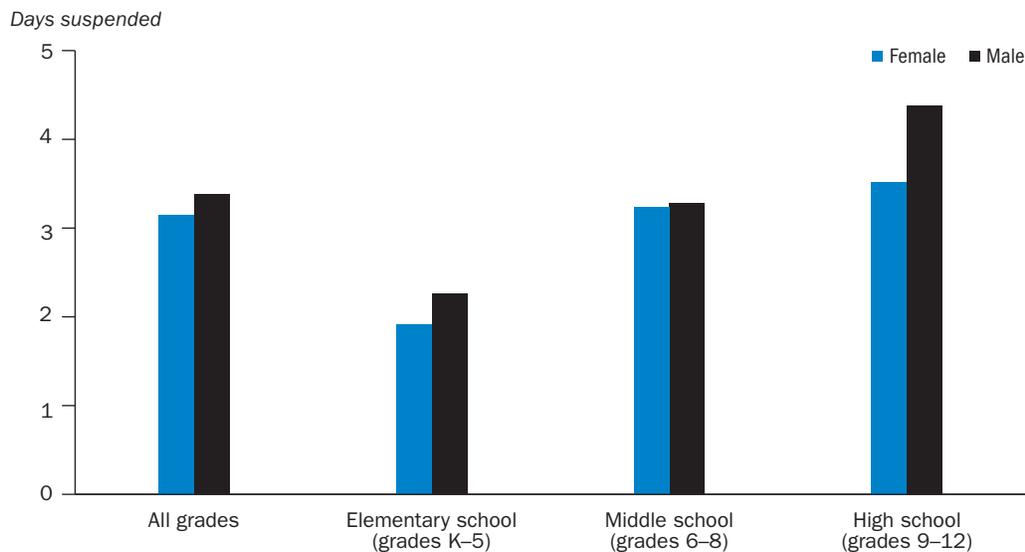
Figure 17. The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension increased across all grade spans, 2011/12



Note: The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension is the total number of school days suspended divided by the number of suspended students in each grade span. Days lost to expulsion are not included.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Figure 18. The average number of school days suspended among students in high school receiving at least one suspension was one day greater for male students than for female students; differences were smaller in elementary and middle school, 2012/12



Note: The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension is the number of suspended school days summed over all students of each gender in each grade span who were suspended divided by the total number of students of the same gender in the same grade span who were suspended. Days lost to expulsion are not included.

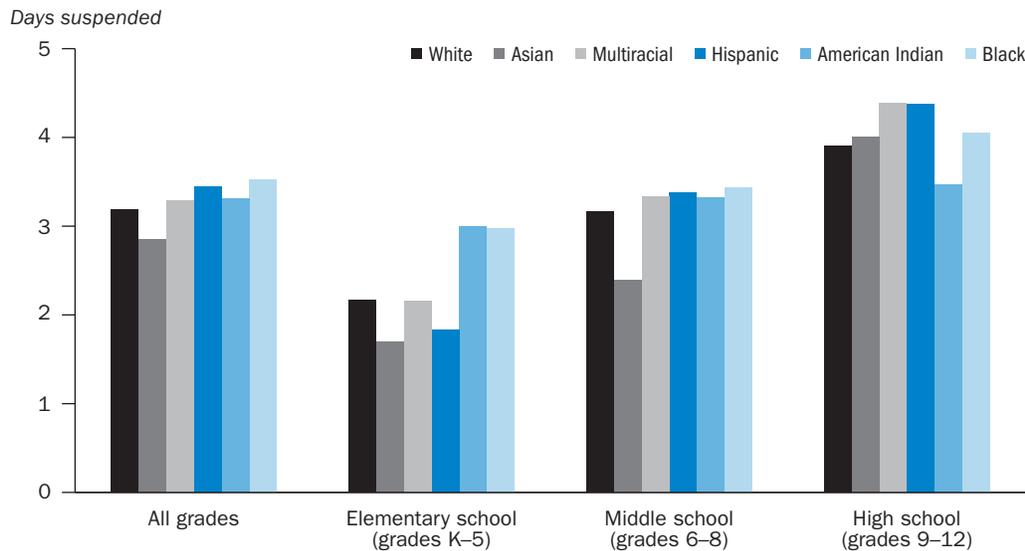
Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Race/ethnicity. The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension was approximately one day greater for American Indian and Black students than for White students (figure 19; see also table C7 in appendix C). It was slightly less for Asian and Hispanic students than for White students. In middle and high school it was nearly the same across all races/ethnicities (except for Asian students in middle school, for whom it was less).

Special education. The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension was similar for students in special education and for students not in special education (figure 20; see also table C7 in appendix C). In elementary and middle school it was half a day greater for students in special education than for students not in special education.

The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension was approximately one day greater for American Indian and Black students than for White students

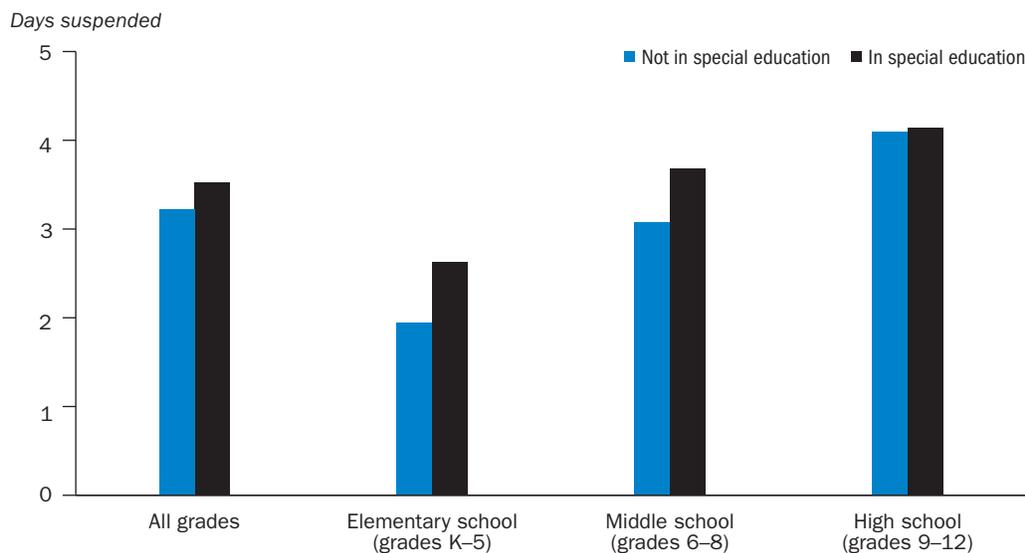
Figure 19. The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension varied more by race/ethnicity in elementary school than in middle and high school, 2011/12



Note: The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension is the number of school days suspended summed over all students of each race/ethnicity in each grade span who were suspended divided by the total number of students of the same race/ethnicity in the same grade span who were suspended. Days lost to expulsion are not included.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Figure 20. The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension was greater for students in special education than for students not in special education across all grade spans, 2011/12



The most common reasons for student suspension or expulsion included a mix of observable offenses and subjectively identified offenses

Note: The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension is the number of suspended school days summed over all students with each special education status in each grade span who were suspended divided by the total number of students with the same special education status in the same grade span who were suspended. Days lost to expulsion are not included.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Implications of the findings

The results of this study are consistent with those of other research that found differences in exclusionary discipline according to student gender, race/ethnicity, and special education status (Arcia, 2007; Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008; Pflieger & Wiley, 2012; Stavenjord, 2012; Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Vincent, Sprague, & Tobin, 2012; Bowman-Perrott et. al., 2013). These studies found that the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline was higher for male students than for female students; higher for Black, American Indian, Hispanic, and multiracial students and lower for Asian students than for White students; and higher for students in special education than for students not in special education. The percentages reported in this study for racial/ethnic minority students and for students in special education are very similar to those reported in Losen and Gillespie (2012) using national data for 2009/10.

The most common reasons for student suspension or expulsion included a mix of observable offenses (such as fighting or tobacco, alcohol, and drug offenses) and subjectively identified offenses (such as insubordination or disorderly conduct). The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension was 2.2 days in elementary school, 3.3 days in middle school, and 4.1 days in high school. Many students, particularly students who begin school less prepared and students who have fallen behind academically, can ill afford to lose school days for any reason.

The results of this study differ from those of other studies in several ways.

- First, in contrast to previous research, this study found that the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression or for insubordination/disruption was higher for racial/ethnic minority students (except Asian students) than for White students.² Other studies found that the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for aggressive behavior was similar for White and racial/ethnic minority students but that the percentage receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination or for minor disruptions of school routines, such as excessive noisiness in the classroom was higher for racial/ethnic minority students (Dinkes, Cataladi, & Lin-Kelly, 2007; Fenning & Rose, 2007; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; McFadden, Marsh, Price, & Hwang, 1992; Peguero & Shekarkhar, 2011; Rocque, 2010; Shaw & Braden, 1990; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Skiba et al., 2011).
- Second, this study found only small differences between racial/ethnic minority students and White students in the average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension. Other studies have found a higher average for suspended racial/ethnic minority students than for suspended White students (Losen, Martinez, & Gillespie, 2012).
- Finally, this study found that the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline was higher for male students than for female students at all grade levels and that the difference in the percentage for male students and female students was highest in elementary school. Other studies reported similar percentages for male and female students in elementary school but higher percentages for male students at other school levels (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; Pflieger & Wiley, 2012).

The observed differences in the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline suggest that districts and schools should examine both their discipline policies and procedures and the perceptions and responses of staff to student behavior and misbehavior

The observed differences in the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline suggest that districts and schools should examine both their discipline policies and procedures and the perceptions and responses of staff to student behavior and misbehavior. In addition, the high percentage of previously suspended students receiving multiple suspensions (38 percent) points to the importance of improving students' behavior, preventing repeated misbehavior, and providing appropriate support to students who continue to have trouble in school.

Finally, Oregon law now requires districts to consider students' age and past behavior and to give weight to keeping students in school and attending class instead of automatically suspending or expelling them for specific offenses. Results from this study could provide a baseline for districts to assess their progress as they incorporate the new requirements into their discipline policies.

Study limitations

This study provides a snapshot of exclusionary discipline for 2011/12 in response to a request from the Oregon Learning Network research alliance for information about exclusionary discipline in schools in six school districts in over the course of a single school year. The purpose of the study was to describe disciplinary actions and consequences in the study districts; the study did not test theories about the causes and consequences of exclusionary discipline.

The districts participating in the study were not selected randomly from the population of Oregon districts. Consequently, the results cannot be generalized beyond the districts in the study.

Appendix A. Data and methodology

This appendix describes the data and methodology used in the study.

Data

Data were obtained through a data-sharing agreement with the Oregon Department of Education. The study uses 2011/12 data from two Oregon Department of Education data collections: the cumulative average daily membership—a student-level data collection that includes enrollment, demographic characteristics, special program status, and district and school information for all students enrolled in Oregon public schools—and the discipline incidents collection—which includes information for each discipline incident that resulted in administrative actions of in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion (see appendix C for the file elements and data code tables). Each discipline incident record includes a unique student identification number, student race/ethnicity, and special education status information found in the cumulative average daily membership collection, as well as the student’s school and district, the date of the incident, the type of primary offense, the administrative action taken, and the number of suspension days.

The state provides training in data-entry procedures, online manuals, and ongoing technical assistance to ensure consistency in data entry and collection, as needed (Mahoney, 2012; Oregon Department of Education n.d. a, b). To ensure accuracy of student demographic data, any inconsistency between student data in the cumulative average daily membership and the discipline incidents collections automatically generates an error report. The operator must correct the error before continuing. Some data elements were used to answer the research questions, and others were used only for file matching, file cleaning, and data quality control.

The study sample included six districts that participate in the Equity in Behavioral Practices Task Force, a subcommittee of the Oregon Learning Network research alliance. The six districts are located in two Oregon counties that together have the most diverse student population in the state. Two districts are in Multnomah County, and four are in Washington County. Collectively, the six districts enroll 143,176 students, representing 77 percent of all K–12 students in the two-county area and 24 percent of all K–12 students in Oregon. Table A1 summarizes the district characteristics, and table A2 reports the total number of students by gender, race/ethnicity, and special education status.

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Northwest complied with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations protecting the privacy of study participants, including the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. All parties to this project agreed that all personally identifiable information exchanged would be protected, stored, disposed of, and otherwise kept confidential, as required by applicable federal and state laws. REL Northwest used the following procedures to ensure that personally identifiable information was protected:

- Data were transferred from the Oregon Department of Education to Education Northwest, the administrator of REL Northwest, by means of the department’s file drop system.
- Access to the study data was limited to REL Northwest researchers who were trained and authorized to de-identify the data. After procedures to de-identify the

Table A1. Characteristics of participating Oregon districts, 2011/12

District name	Geographic locale	Number of schools	Number of students	Percent of students ^a						
				American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiracial/other	Total racial/ethnic minority	White
Beaverton	Small city	51	40,815	0.6	13.2	2.9	23.5	7.7	47.9	52.1
Forest Grove	Large suburb	11	6,196	0.5	1.1	0.8	47.6	2.7	52.8	47.2
Hillsboro	Small city	35	21,824	0.8	6.7	2.1	34.3	4.4	48.3	51.7
Portland	Large city	81	48,840	1.3	7.9	12.2	15.8	7.4	44.6	55.4
Reynolds	Large suburb	20	12,325	0.9	6.9	7.6	36.4	6.3	58.2	41.8
Tigard-Tualatin	Large suburb	17	13,176	0.6	6.3	1.8	23.0	5.8	37.5	62.5
Total	na	215	143,176	0.9	8.7	6.2	24.6	6.6	47.0	53.0

na is not applicable.

a. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (2012a).

Table A2. Number of students in the sample, by grade span, race/ethnicity, and special education status, 2011/12

Characteristic	All students		Elementary school (grades K-5)		Middle school (grades 6-8)		High school (grades 9-12)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
All students	73,522	69,654	35,180	33,554	16,230	15,476	22,112	20,624
Race/ethnicity								
White	39,232	36,713	18,219	17,186	8,620	8,189	12,393	11,338
Asian	6,216	6,244	2,969	2,984	1,376	1,336	1,871	1,924
Multiracial/Other	4,830	4,610	2,603	2,442	1,075	1,043	1,152	1,125
Hispanic	18,085	17,169	9,223	8,771	3,958	3,816	4,904	4,582
American Indian	601	638	233	297	129	124	239	217
Black	4,558	4,280	1,933	1,874	1,072	968	1,553	1,438
Special education status								
Not in special education	59,317	62,463	28,449	30,266	12,849	13,690	18,019	18,507
Special education	14,205	7,191	6,731	3,288	3,381	1,786	4,093	2,117

Source: Oregon Department of Education 2012a.

data to the extent practicable, student-level data were placed in password-protected network folders for use by researchers, research assistants, and information technology staff assigned to the study. When staff members were added or changed, notice was given to the Oregon Department of Education, and résumés were provided for any professional researchers who were added.

- All staff members were trained to use the network. Research and information and technology staff needing access to the secured, password-protected project folders with personally identifiable information were trained and given specific written direction on use and protection of personally identifiable information before being given access to study data. Per Oregon Department of Education requirements, researchers using the department's data were required to read and sign its individual nondisclosure form.

- In creating reports, REL Northwest complied with Oregon Department of Education rules for data suppression to ensure student confidentiality in data tables and graphic displays. For reporting discipline and state assessment results, Oregon requires suppression of data if five or fewer students are represented (Mahoney, n.d.; Oregon Department of Education, 2012b).
- Approval from the Office of Management and Budget was not required for this study.

Box A1 lists the variables of interest for the study, which fall into two categories: discipline information and student background characteristics.

Offense categories. To calculate the percentage of students receiving discipline by offense category, the primary infraction for each discipline incident was first classified as one of six offense categories (table A3), which are aligned with how the Oregon Department of Education analyzes and reports district discipline data. The categories are consistent with previous research that examined offense types by school level (Kaufman et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2011) as well as with research that examined whether types of discipline offenses identify students at risk for persistent problems with aggressive behaviors (Loeber & Hay, 1997; Tobin & Sugai, 1996; Wright & Dusek, 1998).

Student race/ethnicity. Consistent with Oregon and federal practices for reporting race/ethnicity, students with Hispanic/Latino ethnicity were categorized as Hispanic, regardless of their racial subgroup (Oregon Department of Education, 2012a).

Methodology

Descriptive statistics were calculated concerning the types of offenses that resulted in exclusionary discipline, how frequently students with different background characteristics

Box A1. Discipline information and student background variables

Discipline information

Offense category: Attendance; physical and verbal aggression; insubordination/disruption; property-related; tobacco, alcohol, and drugs; criminal offense (see table A3).

Discipline action type: In-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion.

Suspension days: Suspensions of a half day or less are counted as 0.5, and suspensions of more than half a day are counted as 1 for each day.

Student background characteristics

Gender: Female, male.

Grade span: Elementary school (K–5), middle school (6–8), high school (9–12).

Race/ethnicity: Asian (includes Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander), American Indian (includes American Indian/Alaskan Native), Black (includes Black/African American), Hispanic (includes Hispanic/Latino), Multiracial (includes students identified as multiracial or other race/ethnicity), White.

Special education status: In special education, not in special education.

Table A3. Offense categories and descriptions of the infractions

Offense category	Types of infractions	Description of the infractions
Aggression, physical ^a	Fighting (mutual altercation)	Mutual participation in an incident involving physical violence where there is no major injury.
	Physical altercation, minor (pushing, shoving)	Confrontation, tussle, or physical aggression that does not result in injury.
	School threat (threat of destruction or harm)	Any threat (verbal, written, or electronic) by a person to bomb or use other substances or devices for the purpose of exploding, burning, or causing damage to a school building or school property or to harm students or staff.
	Sexual offenses, other (lewd behavior, indecent exposure)	Sexual intercourse, sexual contact, or other behavior intended to result in sexual gratification without force or threat of force.
Aggression, verbal ^a	Harassment, nonsexual (verbal or psychological)	Repeatedly annoying or attacking a student or group of students or other personnel in a way that creates an intimidating or hostile education or work environment.
	Sexual harassment	Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal conduct or communication of a sexual nature, including gender-based harassment that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education or work environment.
	Threat/intimidation (causing fear of harm)	Verbal, written, or electronic action that immediately creates fear of harm, without displaying a weapon and without subjecting the victim to an actual physical attack.
Attendance	Attendance policy (not attending school or classes as required)	Violation of state, district, or school policy relating to attendance.
Insubordination/disruption	Insubordination (disobedience)	Unwillingness to submit to authority, refusal to respond to a reasonable request, or other situations in which a student is disobedient.
	Obscene behavior	Language or actions (written, oral, physical, or electronic) in violation of community or school standards.
	Violation of school rules (disobeying school policy)	Misbehavior not captured elsewhere, including dress code violations, running in the halls, possession of contraband, cheating, lying to authorities, or falsifying records.
Property-related	Burglary/breaking and entering (stealing property/unlawful entry)	Unlawful entry or attempted entry into a building or other structure with the intent to commit a crime.
	Theft (stealing personal or other property)	The unlawful taking of property belonging to another person or entity (such as the school) without threat, violence, or bodily harm. Includes electronic theft of data.
	Trespassing (unlawful or unauthorized presence)	Entering or remaining on a public school campus or school board facility without authorization or invitation and with no lawful purpose for entry.
	Vandalism (damage to school or personal property)	Willful destruction or defacement of school or personal property.
Tobacco, alcohol, and drugs	Drugs excluding alcohol and tobacco (illegal drug possession, sale, use/under the influence)	Unlawful use, cultivation, sale, solicitation, purchase, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug (for example, Demerol or morphine) or narcotic substance.
	Alcohol	Violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation, possession, or consumption of intoxicating alcoholic beverages or substances represented as alcohol.
	Inappropriate use of medication (prescription or over the counter)	Use, possession, or distribution of any prescription or over-the-counter medication (for example, aspirin, cough syrups, caffeine pills, or nasal sprays) in violation of school policy.
	Tobacco	Possession, use, distribution, or sale of tobacco products.

(continued)

Table A3. Offense categories and descriptions of the infractions *(continued)*

Offense category	Types of infractions	Description of the infractions
Criminal offense	Arrested for manufacture or delivery of a controlled substance	Manufacture or delivery of a controlled substance.
	Arson (setting a fire)	Unlawfully and intentionally damaging, or attempting to damage, any school or personal property by fire or incendiary device.
	Battery (physical attack/harm)	Touching or striking of another person against his or her will or intentionally causing bodily harm to an individual.
	Kidnapping (abduction)	Unlawful seizure, transportation, or detention of a person against his or her will or of a minor without the consent of his or her custodial parent or legal guardian. Includes hostage taking.
	Other offenses	Any significant incident resulting in disciplinary action not previously classified, such as bribery, fraud, embezzlement, forgery, resisting arrest, gambling, extortion, or dealing in stolen property.
	Other violent criminal offense	Other violent criminal offenses not classified previously but meeting Oregon's definition of a "persistently dangerous" offense (such as coercion or hate/bias crime).
	Robbery (taking of things by force)	Taking, or attempting to take, anything of value that is owned by another person or organization under confrontational circumstances by force or threat of force or violence or by putting the victim in fear.
	Sexual battery (sexual assault)	Oral, anal, or vaginal penetration forcibly or against a person's will or where the victim is incapable of giving consent. Includes rape, fondling, indecent liberties, child molestation, and sodomy.
	Weapons possession (firearms and other weapons)	Possession of an instrument or object to inflict harm on another person.

a. Combined into a single category in this study.

Source: Mahoney, 2012.

were suspended or expelled, and the length of time students were removed from their classroom or school because they received either in-school or out-of-school suspension. The methods for calculating these statistics are described below.

$$\text{Percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline} = \frac{\text{Number of students receiving exclusionary discipline}}{\text{Total number of students}}$$

$$\text{Average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension} = \frac{\text{Total suspension days for all suspended students}}{\text{Total number of students suspended}}$$

In addition, ratios were calculated to compare the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for different subgroups of students. The ratio of percentage of students receiving discipline is used within Oregon in public reporting of student discipline and is thus a metric familiar to the study districts. Using the example of Hispanic students compared with White students, ratios of percentage of students receiving discipline were calculated as follows (Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Stavenjord, 2012):

$$\text{Rate ratio for exclusionary discipline (Hispanic to White)} = \frac{\text{Percentage of Hispanic students receiving exclusionary discipline}}{\text{Percentage of White students receiving exclusionary discipline}}$$

In addition, ratios of the average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension were calculated as follows (again using the example of Hispanic students compared with White students):

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Ratio of average number of school} \\ \text{days suspended among students} \\ \text{receiving at least one suspension} \\ \text{(Hispanic to White)} \end{array} = \frac{\text{Average number of school days suspended among Hispanic} \\ \text{students receiving at least one suspension}}{\text{Average number of school days suspended among White} \\ \text{students receiving at least one suspension}}$$

These ratios were calculated for six pairs of target and comparison groups:

- Hispanic to White students.
- Black to White students.
- American Indian to White students.
- Asian to White students.
- Male to female students.
- Students in special education to students not in special education.

Appendix B. Connections to previous research

This appendix describes some of the other research on exclusionary discipline.

Percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline

The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline varies by racial/ethnic subgroup (Aud et al., 2010; Mendez et al., 2002; Wallace et al., 2008). The percentage of students receiving suspension is higher for Black students and lower for Asian students than for White students (Arcia, 2007; Aud et al., 2010; Pflieger & Wiley, 2012; Stavenjord, 2012; Wallace et al., 2008). During the 2009/10 school year 2 percent of Asian students, 5 percent of White students, 7 percent of Hispanic students, 8 percent of American Indian students, and 17 percent of Black students were suspended in schools across the country (Losen & Gillespie, 2012).

Nationally, the percentage of students receiving suspension is higher for Hispanic and American Indian students than for White students; however, variations in these patterns have been found at the state and local levels (Horner, Fireman, & Wang, 2010; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1994). For example, similar percentages have been found for White and Latino students (Fabelo et al., 2011; Horner et al., 2010; McFadden et al., 1992). And some studies have found higher percentages for American Indian students than for White students (Devoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008; Vincent et al., 2012), while others have found similar percentages (Krezmien et al., 2006).

Student characteristics other than race/ethnicity are associated with differences in the application of exclusionary discipline. For example, beyond elementary school, the percentage of students receiving suspension is higher for male students than for female students; this occurs across racial/ethnic subgroups (Aud et al., 2010; Pflieger & Wiley, 2012). In addition, the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline is higher for students in special education than for students not in special education (Arcia, 2007; Krezmien et al., 2006; Skiba et al., 2002; Vincent et al., 2012). The percentage may be higher for students with more than one of these characteristics: For example, the percentage of students receiving suspension is highest for Black male students in special education (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, & Leaf, 2010; Krezmien et al., 2006; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Vincent et al., 2012).

Examining differences in the percentage of students receiving discipline by gender, race/ethnicity, and special education status paints one picture of the frequency of student discipline. A complementary picture comes from examining how many times students are referred for discipline over a single school year. For example, in one study that involved 1,510 schools across the nation, 12 percent of elementary students, 28 percent of middle school students, and 33 percent of high school students were referred for discipline more than once in a single school year (Spaulding et al., 2010). However, these figures included students who were suspended or expelled as well as students receiving lesser punishments, such as detention or loss of privileges.

Reasons students receive exclusionary discipline

The most common reasons for receiving exclusionary discipline are aggressive behavior for students in elementary school, disrespect for students in middle school, and tardiness or

skipping school for students in high school (Kaufman et al., 2010; Spaulding et al., 2010). For each of these offenses, the percentage of students receiving discipline is higher for male students than for female students (Kaufman et al., 2010).

Differences in the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline between White and racial/ethnic minority students may not be due to differences in misbehavior rates (Dinkes et al., 2007; Fenning & Rose, 2007; Losen & Skiba, 2010; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; McFadden et al., 1992; Rocque, 2010; Shaw & Braden, 1990; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2011). The percentage is higher for Hispanic students than for White students despite similar rates of reported misbehavior (Peguero & Shekarkhar, 2011). In 21 schools Black students were more likely to be referred to the school office after controlling for teacher ratings of student behavior (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

White students in urban schools are most often referred for discipline for offenses that are observable: smoking, vandalism, truancy, and obscene language (Skiba et al., 2002). In contrast, Black students are most often referred for behaviors that require subjective judgments by school staff members: disrespect, excessive noise, threat, and loitering. For three cohorts of Texas students in grades 7–12, there were no differences in the rates that White, Black, and Hispanic students committed offenses where expulsion was mandatory, such as possession of specific weapons, which requires expulsion by federal or state statute (Fabelo et al., 2011). However, Black and Hispanic students were more likely to be suspended than White students for offenses in which administrators had discretion in assigning discipline.

Average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension

In addition to variations in the frequency of suspensions, students with different characteristics may experience different degrees of harshness, as measured by the number of instruction days lost to suspension (Fabelo et al., 2011). Time lost can range from one class period (in-school suspension) to several days or more of out-of-school suspension. Racial/ethnic minority students have been found to receive longer suspensions, on an incident-by-incident basis than White students (Losen, Martinez, & Gillespie, 2012).

Appendix C. Supplementary tables

Table C1. Percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline, by grade span and discipline type, 2011/12

Discipline type	All grades	Elementary school (grades K–5)	Middle school (grades 6–8)	High school (grades 9–12)
Expulsion	0.3	a	0.3	0.7
In-school suspension	2.5	1.3	6.0	1.9
Out-of-school suspension	4.6	2.3	7.2	6.4

a. Greater than 0 but less than 0.015.

Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline is the number of students in each grade span receiving each type of discipline divided by the total number of students in the same grade span, multiplied by 100. Students were counted once for each type of discipline they received (expulsion, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension) and once under any suspension if they were suspended.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Table C2. Percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline, by grade span, gender, race/ethnicity, and special education status

Student characteristic	Percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline				Rate ratio ^a			
	All grades	Elementary school (grades K–5)	Middle school (grades 6–8)	High school (grades 9–12)	All grades	Elementary school (grades K–5)	Middle school (grades 6–8)	High school (grades 9–12)
	All students	6.4	3.2	11.1	8.0	na	na	na
Gender								
Male	9.0	5.1	15.2	10.6	2.5	4.6	2.2	2.1
Female	3.6	1.1	6.8	5.1	—	—	—	—
Race/ethnicity								
American Indian	9.0	4.0	20.2	8.8	1.8	1.5	2.4	1.4
Asian	2.2	1.1	3.7	2.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5
Black	15.4	9.5	25.4	16.1	3.1	3.5	3.0	2.6
Hispanic	8.5	3.4	15.7	12.2	1.7	1.3	1.9	2.0
Multiracial	6.1	3.4	10.6	7.8	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3
White	5.0	2.7	8.4	6.1	—	—	—	—
Special education status								
In special education	13.3	8.2	21.1	15.0	2.6	3.6	2.3	2.2
Not in special education	5.1	2.3	9.2	6.8	—	—	—	—

na is not applicable because there is no reference group for forming a ratio.

— is not applicable because the characteristic is the reference group.

a. Compares the percentage of students in a target group receiving exclusionary discipline with the percentage of students in a reference group receiving exclusionary discipline. A ratio greater than 1 indicates that the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline is higher for the target group than for the reference group; a ratio less than 1 indicates that the percentage is lower for the target group.

Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline is the number of students with each characteristic in each grade span receiving exclusionary discipline divided by the total number of students with the same characteristic in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Table C3. Percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline, by grade span and offense category

Offense category	All grades	Elementary school (grades K–5)	Middle school (grades 6–8)	High school (grades 9–12)
Aggression, physical and verbal	3.0	1.9	6.1	2.6
Attendance	0.5	^b	0.7	1.1
Criminal offense	0.8	0.6	1.3	0.6
Insubordination/disruption	2.8	1.2	5.1	3.7
Property-related	0.5	0.2	1.1	0.6
Tobacco, alcohol, and drugs	^a	^a	0.8	1.9

a. Not reported in order to protect student confidentiality.

b. Greater than 0 but less than 0.045.

Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for each offense category is the number of students receiving exclusionary discipline in each grade span divided by the total number of students in the same grade span, multiplied by 100. Students are counted once under each category of offense they committed.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Table C4. Percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression, by grade span and race/ethnicity

Race/ethnicity	Percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline				Rate ratio ^a			
	All grades	Elementary school (grades K–5)	Middle school (grades 6–8)	High school (grades 9–12)	All grades	Elementary school (grades K–5)	Middle school (grades 6–8)	High school (grades 9–12)
American Indian	4.8	2.5	12.3	3.5	2.1	1.6	2.8	1.9
Asian	1.0	0.7	2.0	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4
Black	9.2	6.5	15.7	8.1	4.0	4.1	3.6	4.5
Hispanic	3.8	2.0	8.3	3.6	1.7	1.3	1.9	2.0
Multiracial	2.9	1.9	5.7	2.5	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.4
White	2.3	1.6	4.4	1.8	—	—	—	—

— is not applicable because the characteristic is the reference group.

a. Compares the percentage of students in a target group receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression with the percentage of students in a reference group receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression. A ratio greater than 1 indicates that the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression is higher for the target group than for the reference group; a ratio less than 1 indicates that the percentage is lower for the target group.

Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression is the number of students of each race/ethnicity in each grade span receiving exclusionary discipline for physical and verbal aggression divided by the total number of students of the same race/ethnicity in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Table C5. Percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption, by grade span and race/ethnicity

Race/ethnicity	Percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline				Rate ratio ^a			
	All grades	Elementary school (grades K–5)	Middle school (grades 6–8)	High school (grades 9–12)	All grades	Elementary school (grades K–5)	Middle school (grades 6–8)	High school (grades 9–12)
American Indian	^b	^b	9.1	2.4	^b	^b	2.4	0.9
Asian	0.7	0.3	1.0	1.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Black	7.2	4.0	13.5	6.9	3.3	3.6	3.6	2.6
Hispanic	3.7	1.1	7.0	6.1	1.7	1.0	1.8	2.3
Multiracial	3.0	1.6	5.5	3.8	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4
White	2.2	1.1	3.8	2.7	—	—	—	—

— is not applicable because the characteristic is the reference group.

a. Compares the percentage of students in a target group receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption with the percentage of students in a reference group receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption. A ratio greater than 1 indicates that the percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption is higher for the target group than for the reference group; a ratio less than 1 indicates that percentage is lower for the target group.

b. Not reported to protect student confidentiality.

Note: The percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption is the number of students of each race/ethnicity in each grade span receiving exclusionary discipline for insubordination/disruption divided by the total number of students of the same race/ethnicity in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Table C6. Percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions, by grade span, gender, race/ethnicity, and special education status

Student characteristic	Percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions				Rate ratio ^a			
	All grades	Elementary school (grades K–5)	Middle school (grades 6–8)	High school (grades 9–12)	All grades	Elementary school (grades K–5)	Middle school (grades 6–8)	High school (grades 9–12)
All students	2.4	1.2	4.5	2.8	na	na	na	na
Gender								
Male	3.5	2.0	6.4	4.0	2.9	6.7	2.5	2.7
Female	1.2	0.3	2.6	1.5	—	—	—	—
Race/ethnicity								
American Indian	3.4	1.9	8.3	2.4	1.9	1.9	2.5	1.2
Asian	0.6	0.3	0.9	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Black	6.9	4.5	12.3	6.3	3.8	4.5	3.7	3.2
Hispanic	3.2	1.1	6.4	4.6	1.8	1.1	1.9	2.3
Multiracial	2.3	1.1	4.5	3.0	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.5
White	1.8	1.0	3.3	2.0	—	—	—	—
Special education status								
In special education	6.3	3.9	10.5	6.6	3.7	5.6	3.1	3.1
Not in special education	1.7	0.7	3.4	2.1	—	—	—	—

na is not applicable because there is no reference group.

— is not applicable because the characteristic is the reference group.

a. Compares the percentage of students in a target group receiving multiple suspensions with the percentage of students in a reference group receiving multiple suspensions. A ratio greater than 1 indicates that the percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions is higher for the target group than for the reference group; a ratio less than 1 indicates that the percentage is lower for the target group.

Note: The percentage of students receiving multiple suspensions is the number of students with each characteristic in each grade span receiving multiple suspensions divided by the total number of students with the same characteristic in the same grade span, multiplied by 100.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Table C7. Average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension, by grade span, gender, race/ethnicity, and special education status

Student characteristic	Average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension				Suspension length ratio ^a			
	All grades	Elementary school (grades K–5)	Middle school (grades 6–8)	High school (grades 9–12)	All grades	Elementary school (grades K–5)	Middle school (grades 6–8)	High school (grades 9–12)
All students	3.3	2.2	3.3	4.1	na	na	na	na
Gender								
Male	3.4	2.3	3.3	4.4	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.3
Female	3.1	1.9	3.2	3.5	—	—	—	—
Race/ethnicity								
American Indian	3.3	3.0	3.3	3.5	1.0	1.4	1.0	0.9
Asian	2.8	1.7	2.4	4.0	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.0
Black	3.5	3.0	3.4	4.0	1.1	1.4	1.1	1.0
Hispanic	3.4	1.8	3.4	4.4	1.1	0.8	1.1	1.1
Multiracial	3.3	2.2	3.3	4.4	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1
White	3.2	2.2	3.2	3.9	—	—	—	—
Special education status								
In special education	3.5	2.6	3.7	4.1	1.1	1.4	1.2	1.0
Not in special education	3.2	1.9	3.1	4.1	—	—	—	—

na is not applicable because there is no reference group.

— is not applicable because the row identifies the reference group.

a. Compares the average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension for a target group with the average for a reference group. A ratio of 1 indicates an equal average for both groups, a ratio greater than 1 indicates that the average is higher for the target group than for the comparison group, and a ratio less than 1 indicates that the average is lower for the target group.

Note: The average number of school days suspended among students receiving at least one suspension is the number of suspended days summed over all students with each characteristic in each grade span who were suspended divided by the total number of students with the same characteristic in the same grade span who were suspended. Days lost to expulsion are not included.

Source: Authors' analysis of Oregon Department of Education (n.d. b).

Notes

1. In 2011/12, the period covered by this study, few Oregon students in special education received temporary placement in alternative instruction. To protect these students' confidentiality, this study does not report results for this category.
2. In this study aggression included both physical and verbal aggression, while in other studies (such as Fabelo et al., 2011) it included only physical aggression.

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