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Implicit Bias in School Discipline Decisions:
Strategies for Enhancing Equity

Kent McIntosh
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Acknowledgements

- **PBIS Center Disproportionality Workgroup**

  - Timberly Baker
  - Aaron Barnes
  - Kimberly Bunch-Crump
  - Alondra Canizal Delabra
  - Yolanda Cargile
  - Erin Chaparro
  - Soraya Coccimiglio
  - Tai Collins
  - Bert Eliason
  - Erik Girvan
  - Steve Goodman
  - Clynita Grafenreed
  - Ambra Green
  - Beth Hill

  - Rob Horner
  - Don Kincaid
  - Milaney Leverson
  - Tim Lewis
  - Stephanie Martinez
  - Kent McIntosh
  - Rhonda Nese
  - Vicki Nishioka
  - Heidi von Ravensberg
  - Jennifer Rose
  - Therese Sandomierski
  - Russ Skiba
  - Kent Smith
  - Keith Smolkowski

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Overview for this Session

1. Complete some **activities** to explore disproportionality in school discipline
2. Share **an intervention approach** for enhancing equity in:
   - academic achievement
   - school discipline

Handouts: http://www.pbis.org

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Warm Up Activity #2:
Stroop Task

- Words are displayed in different colors to test "snap decision" making
- Easier to identify the color of this word:
  GREEN (i.e., green)
  than this word:
  GREEN (i.e., red)

Stroop Task:
A test of automatic associations

- Our brains are wired to look for patterns
- When we are forced to make quick decisions, we use our automatic associations to respond
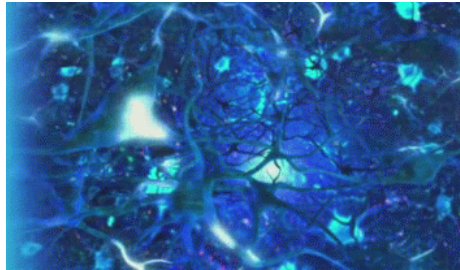
Warm Up Activity #3:
Implicit Association Test

- https://implicit.harvard.edu/
- Uses beliefs (stereotypes) and evaluations (attitudes) associated with social groups
- Example: Gender-Career IAT
  - Tests automatic association of MEN more with CAREERS (work outside the home) and WOMEN more with FAMILY

Think-Pair Share

- What did you notice about completing the activity?

- How might patterns of responses on this activity relate to real world interactions?

What is implicit bias?

- Unconscious, automatic
- Generally **not** an indication of our beliefs and values
- We all have it (even those affected by it)
- Based on stereotypes
- More likely to influence:
  - Snap decisions
  - Decisions that are ambiguous

Implicit Attractiveness Bias
(Salter, Mixon, & King, 2012)

Implicit Height Bias
(Judge & Cable, 2004)

One inch of height is worth $789 per year in salary

Implicit Gender Bias
(Reuben et al., 2014)

Column Addition (A)
Find each sum.

89	39	46	70	11
69	18	13	34	42
30	81	76	55	36
+ 87	+ 63	+ 45	+ 13	+ 69

82	81	49	24	54
76	44	59	82	13
89	52	56	42	96
+ 99	+ 29	+ 98	+ 26	+ 18

23	17	75	86	62
77	27	29	98	64
99	49	64	95	34
+ 16	+ 87	+ 74	+ 65	+ 70

33	84	36	12	96
44	17	24	97	40
86	77	95	87	65
+ 43	+ 71	+ 39	+ 42	+ 33

18	88	41	75	99
68	26	24	43	70
47	76	39	33	79
+ 70	+ 68	+ 26	+ 16	+ 21

Men were significantly more likely to choose men

Women were significantly more likely to choose men

Implicit Bias and Race

"the challenge is not a small number of twisted white supremacists but something infinitely more subtle and complex: People who believe in equality but who act in ways that perpetuate bias and inequality."

-Nicholas Kristof, *The New York Times*

BLIND SPOT

HIDDEN BIASES *of* GOOD PEOPLE

MAHZARIN R. BANAJI
ANTHONY G. GREENWALD
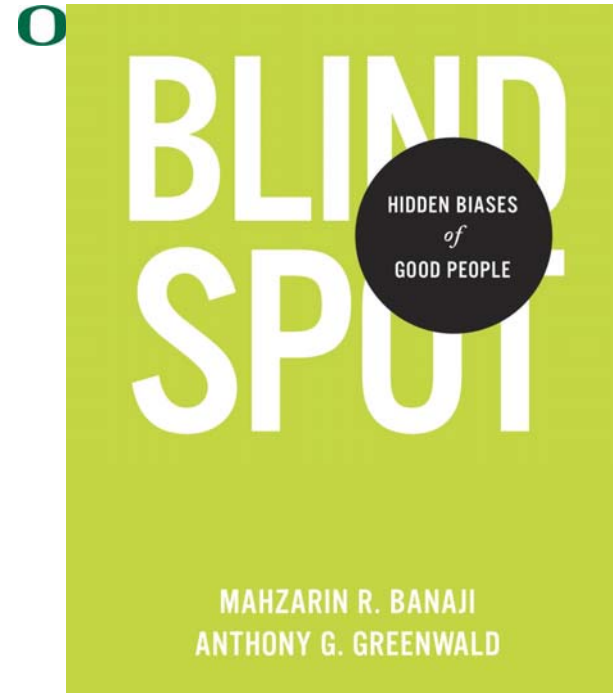
FIGURE 10

Arrest Rates for Marijuana Possession by Race (2001–2010)
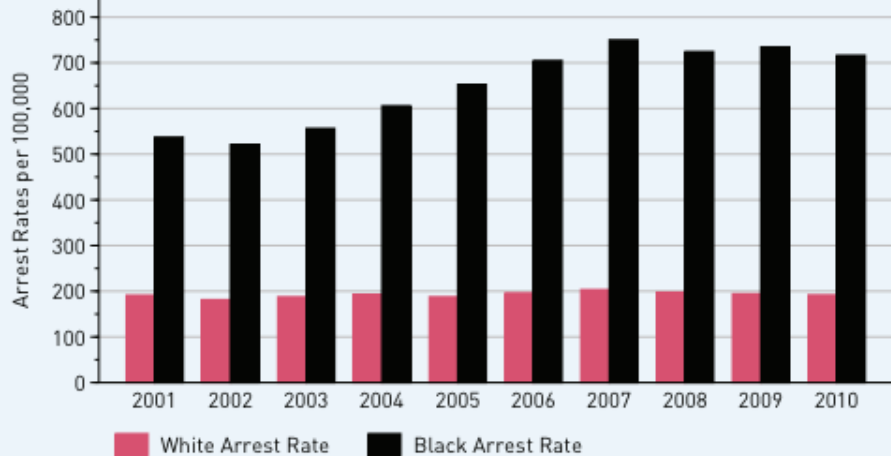
Source: FBI/Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data and U.S. Census Data

White Arrest Rate | Black Arrest Rate

FIGURE 22

Marijuana Use Among 18- to 25-Year-Olds by Race: Used Marijuana in Past 12 Months (2001–2010)

Percent White Used | Percent Black Used
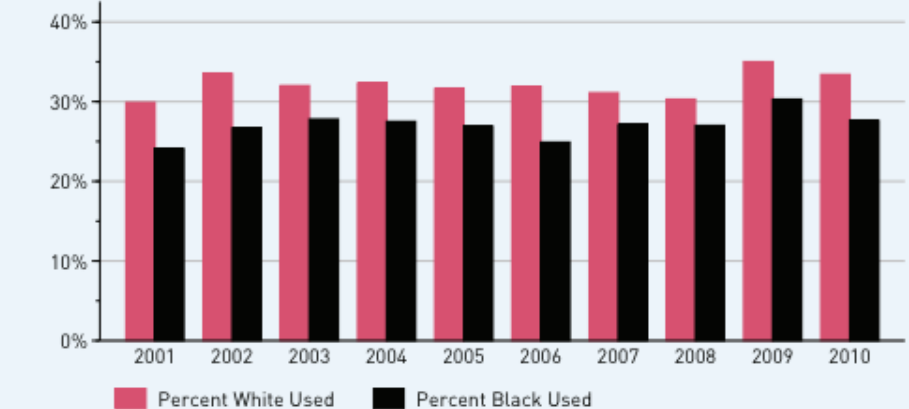
Source: National Household Survey on Drug Abuse and Health, 2001-2010

Implicit Bias predicts the extent to which…

- **Police Officers** use force when arresting Black children as opposed to White children (Goff et al., 2014)
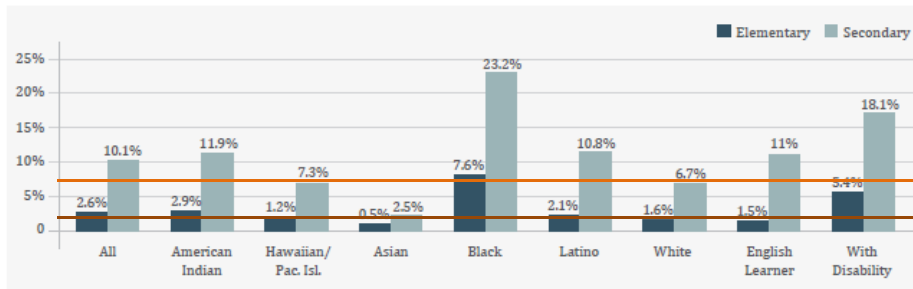

- **Arbitrators** decide labor grievances in favor of men over women (Girvan, Deason, & Borgida, 2015)

- **Pediatricians** recommend less pain medication for Black children than White children with identical symptoms (Cooper et al., 2012; Sabin & Greenwald, 2012)

Disproportionality in School Discipline (Losen et al., 2015)

Figure 1. Elementary and Secondary Out-of-school Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2011-12

■ Elementary ■ Secondary

Subgroup	Elementary	Secondary
All	2.6%	10.1%
American Indian	2.9%	11.9%
Hawaiian/Pac. Isl.	1.2%	7.3%
Asian	0.5%	2.5%
Black	7.6%	23.2%
Latino	2.1%	10.8%
White	1.6%	6.7%
English Learner	1.5%	11%
With Disability	5.4%	18.1%

http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/are-we-closing-the-school-discipline-gap

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Addressing Common Questions

"Isn't it all really about poverty?"

■ Poverty plays a role, but racial disproportionality remains, even when controlling for poverty
  - ☐ Anyon et al., 2014
  - ☐ Skiba et al., 2002; 2005
  - ☐ Wallace et al., 2008

Addressing Common Questions

"Aren't Black boys just more violent?"

■ No evidence of different base rates of behavior for any subgroups
  - ☐ Bradshaw et al., 2010
  - ☐ Losen & Skiba, 2010
  - ☐ Skiba et al., 2014

Addressing Common Questions

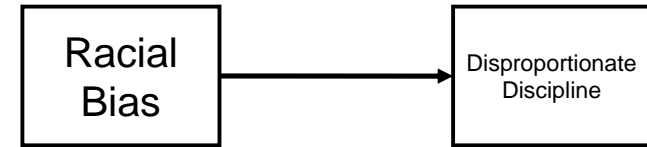*"Are you saying that all teachers are racist?"*

■ No! Our research indicates that disproportionality comes from implicit bias – that we're not even aware of.
  - ☐ Banaji & Greenwald, 2013
  - ☐ Greenwald & Pettigrew, 2014
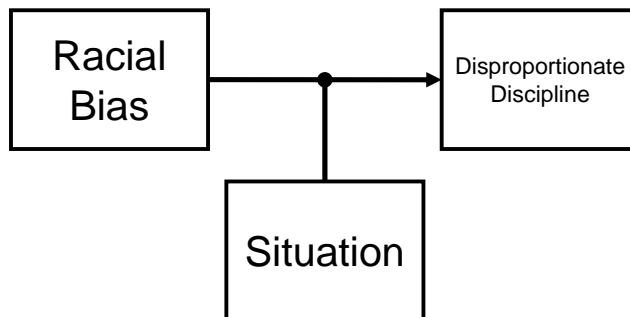 - ☐ van den Bergh et al., 2010

If you're **aware…**

…**you're halfway there.**
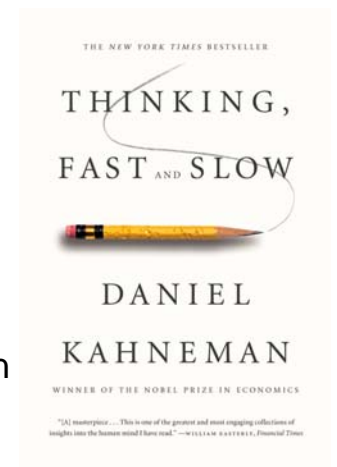
A Unidimensional View of Bias

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┌──────────┐          ┌──────────────┐
│  Racial  │────────▶ │Disproportionate│
│  Bias    │          │  Discipline    │
└──────────┘          └──────────────┘
```

A Multidimensional View of Bias

```
┌──────────┐          ┌──────────────┐
│  Racial  │────┬───▶ │Disproportionate│
│  Bias    │    │     │  Discipline    │
└──────────┘    │     └──────────────┘
           ┌────┴────┐
           │Situation│
           └─────────┘
```

Two Systems for Decision Making (Kahneman, 2011)

- System 1: *Fast Decisions*
  - Automatic, snap judgments
  - Intuitive, unconscious
- System 2: *Slow Decisions*
  - Deliberate decisions
  - Allows for conscious attention

Discussion

- Which decisions in schools are more likely to be snap judgments?

  - ☐ Correcting a student's behavior
  - ☐ Sending a student to the office
  - ☐ Picking which student to call on

  - ☐ Deciding whether to call a student's parent
  - ☐ Suspending a student from school
  - ☐ Grading students' work

Assumptions

- We all believe that a student's color should not **fate** him or her to negative outcomes
- Discussing equity and race is **uncomfortable**
- Creating discomfort without providing **effective strategies** for equity is not productive
- In discussing equity and taking steps, we will make **mistakes**

A 5-point Intervention Approach to Enhance Equity in School Discipline

PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports

August 7, 2014

Recommendations for Addressing Discipline Disproportionality in Education

Kent McIntosh, Erik J. Girvan, Robert H. Horner, Keith Smolkowski, & George Sugai

Disproportionality represents one of the most significant problems in education today (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2013). The results of decades of research consistently show that students of color, particularly African American students (and even more so for those with disabilities), are at significantly increased risk for exposure to exclusionary discipline practices, including office discipline referrals and suspensions (e.g., Fabelo et al., 2011; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Shaw & Braden, 1990). These differences have been found consistently across geographic regions and cannot be adequately explained by the correlation between race and poverty (Nolte-meyer & Mcloughlin, 2010). Given the well-documented negative effects of exclusionary discipline on a range of student outcomes (American Academy of Pediatrics Council on School Health, 2013), educators must address this issue by identifying rates of discipline disproportionality, taking steps to reduce it, and monitoring the effects of intervention on disproportionality. Disproportionality in exclusionary discipline blocks us from the overall objective of promoting positive outcomes for all students.

Components of Effective Intervention to Prevent and Reduce Disproportionality
The existing research is clear that that no single strategy will be sufficient to produce substantive and sustainable change. Multiple components may be needed, but not all components may be necessary in all schools. We describe

here a 5-point multicomponent approach to reduce disproportionality in schools.

1. Use Effective Instruction to Reduce the Achievement Gap
Because of the well-documented relation between academic achievement and problem behavior (McIntosh, Sadler, &

continued on next page

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)   1

http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis

5-point Intervention Approach

1. Use engaging **academic instruction** to reduce the opportunity (achievement) gap
2. Implement a **behavior framework** that is preventive, multi-tiered, and culturally responsive
3. Collect, use, and report **disaggregated** discipline data
4. Develop **policies** with accountability for disciplinary equity
5. Teach steps to **neutralize implicit bias**
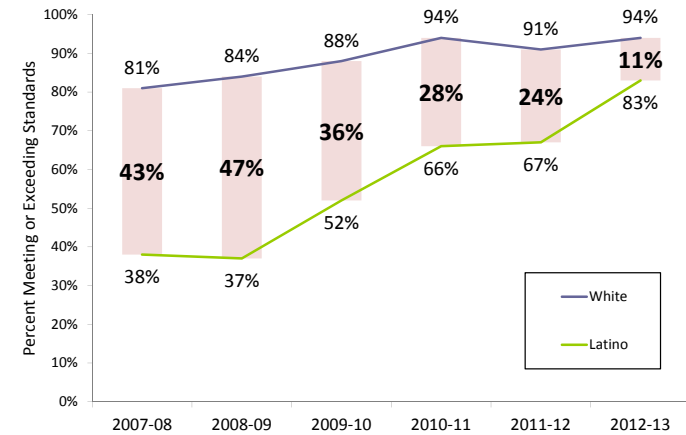
http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis

1. What do we mean by **engaging** academic instruction?

- Use explicit instruction
- Build and prime background knowledge
- Increase opportunities to respond
- Provide performance feedback

(Chaparro et al., 2015; Hattie, 2009)

Effects of Engaging Instruction on the Opportunity Gap

Line chart titled with y-axis "Percent Meeting or Exceeding Standards" (0%–100%), x-axis years 2007-08 to 2012-13. White line: 81%, 84%, 88%, 94%, 91%, 94%. Latino line: 38%, 37%, 52%, 66%, 67%, 83%. Gap values: 43%, 47%, 36%, 28%, 24%, 11%.

Tigard-Tualatin School District (Chaparro, Helton, & Sadler, 2016)

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2. Why start with a foundation of SWPBIS?

1. Proactive, instructional approach *may* prevent unwanted behavior and exposure to biased responses to unwanted behavior
2. Increasing positive student-teacher interactions *may* enhance relationships to prevent challenges
3. More objective referral and discipline procedures *may* reduce subjectivity and influence of cultural bias
4. Professional development *may* provide teachers with more instructional responses

(Greflund et al., 2014)

Effects of PBIS on Discipline Disproportionality

- **Vincent et al., 2011**
  - **Statistically significantly lower Black-White ODR disproportionality** in 72 schools implementing SWPBIS than in 81 schools not implementing SWPBIS
- **Vincent et al., 2009**
  - **Decreases in ODRs seen across racial/ethnic groups** in 69 schools implementing SWPBIS
- **Scott, 2001**
  - **Larger decreases in suspensions** for Black students when SWPBIS implemented
- **McIntosh et al., 2014**
  - Sustained decrease in suspensions over eight years of SWPBIS implementation **in an Indigenous school**

Culturally Responsive SWPBIS Implementation

- Ensure equitable access to **praise and acknowledgment systems**
- Develop and revise school-wide systems with **active involvement** of families, students, and the community
- Use **regular student and family surveys** to assess acceptability and fit

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Student Input & Satisfaction Surveys

Student Input and Satisfaction Survey –MIDDLE/SECONDARY

We would like to hear from you about how you feel about your school. This survey asks what you think about behavior at school and what should be done to enhance how we treat and relate to each other. You do not have to answer all of the questions.

This survey is anonymous – nobody will know that your answers came from you.

Please answer these questions:

Date: _____ Your Grade: _____

Your Gender: Male   Female   Other/Don't know

Your Ethnicity (please pick one):

    Hispanic/Latino/a   Not Hispanic/Latino/a   Other/Don't know

Your Race (please pick the one that best describes you):

Black/African American   Native American / American Indian/Alaska Native

Asian/Asian American   Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian

Multiracial   White/Caucasian   Other/Don't know

At home, does your family primarily speak a different language than English?   YES / NO

Do you receive special education services?   YES / NO

Please pick an answer or fill in the blanks for the following questions:

EXPECTATIONS (how your teachers want you to behave at school)

Do you know how your teachers want you to behave at school?   YES / NO

What are the school-wide behavior expectations? _____

Are the school-wide behavior expectations meaningful or important to you?   YES / NO

    If not, what do you think the expectations should be? _____

Are the school-wide behavior expectations the same as they are in your home? YES / NO

    If not, what expectations are different at school? _____

Do students usually follow the school-wide behavior expectations?   YES / NO

Do teachers usually follow the school-wide behavior expectations?   YES / NO

    If not, give an example: _____

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3. Using disaggregated data to assess and address equity

- Disproportionality Data Guide

http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis

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4. Implement policies with accountability for equity

- Equity Policy Guide

http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis

Slide 1

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5. How can we reduce implicit bias in our decision making?

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┌──────────┐         ┌──────────────┐
│ Racial   │ ──────> │ Disproportionate │
│ Bias     │         │  Outcomes    │
└──────────┘         └──────────────┘
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Slide 2

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A Multidimensional View of Bias

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┌──────────┐         ┌──────────────┐
│ Racial   │ ───●──> │ Disproportionate │
│ Bias     │    │    │  Outcomes    │
└──────────┘    │    └──────────────┘
           ┌────┴─────┐
           │ Situation │
           └──────────┘
```

Slide 3

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What is a Vulnerable Decision Point (VDP)?

- A specific decision that is more vulnerable to effects of implicit bias
- Two parts:
  - Elements of the **situation**
  - The person's **decision state** (internal state)

Slide 4

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Situations:
Options for Identifying VDPs

1. All ODR/suspension decisions (general self-instruction routine)
2. Identify specific VDPs
   a) Through national data
   b) Your own school or district data
   c) Your own personal VDPs

Slide 1

PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports

September 2014

Using Discipline Data within SWPBIS to Identify and Address Disproportionality: A Guide for School Teams

This practice guide is one of a series of guides for enhancing equity in school discipline. The guides are based on a 5-point multicomponent intervention described by McIntosh, Girvan, Horner, Smolkowski, and Sugai (2014). The 5 points include effective instruction, School-wide PBIS as a foundation for culturally-responsive behavior support, use of disaggregated discipline data, effective policies, and reducing bias in discipline decisions. This guide addresses use of data.

The recommendations and guides are available at:
http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide a reference for SWPBIS school teams in the use of discipline data (e.g., office discipline referrals, suspensions) in the area of racial and ethnic disproportionality in school discipline. The guide will describe a framework and steps for identifying levels of disproportionality, analyzing data to determine solutions, and monitoring the effectiveness of action plans in addressing disproportionality. Specific practices to address disproportionality are described in other guides in this series.

Audience

This guide is designed primarily for use by school or district teams seeking to reduce racial and ethnic disproportionality in school discipline, regardless of whether they are implementing SWPBIS.

http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis

Slide 2

SWIS Drill Down (www.swis.org)

Add demographic group of interest as a filter (click to "Include in Dataset").

Click each graph and compare to overall patterns.
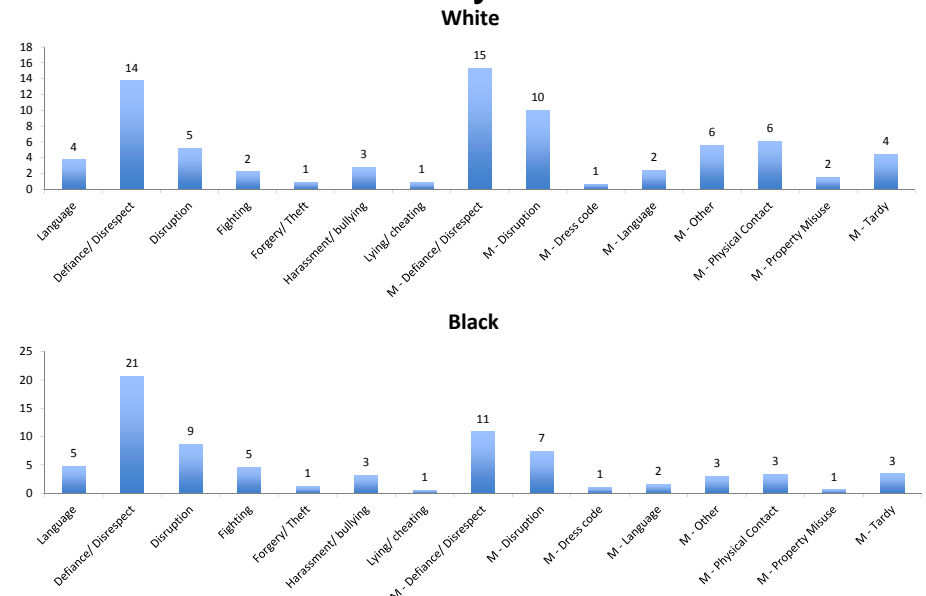
Slide 3

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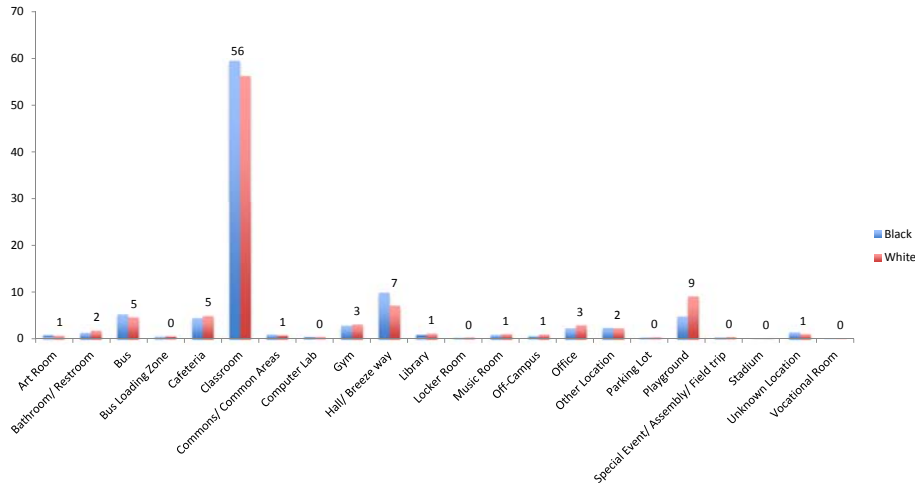# National SWIS Data (2011-12)

3,026,367 ODRs
6,269 schools
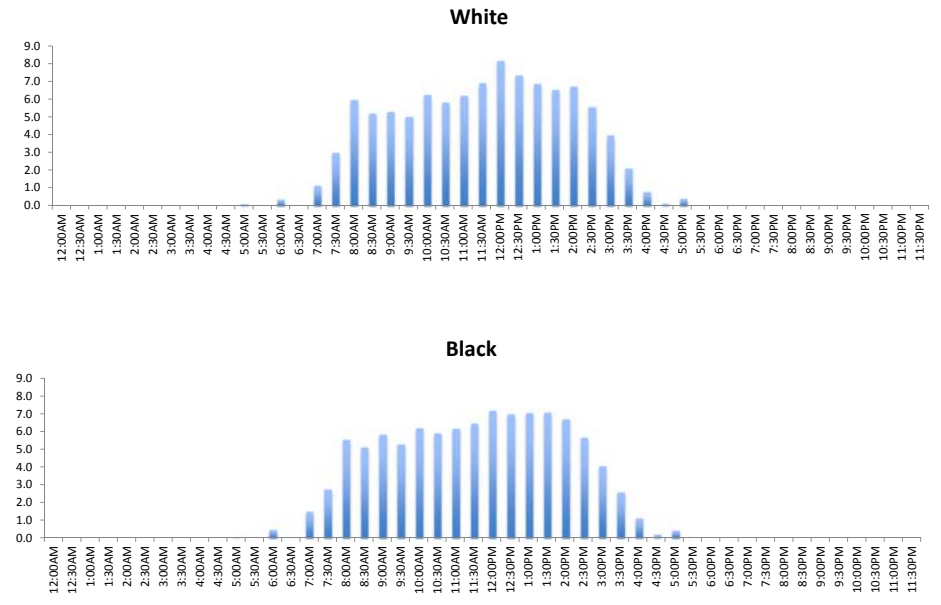47 states, plus DC

Slide 4

Office Referrals by Problem Behavior

Office Referrals by Location

Office Referrals by Time of Day

VDPs from national ODR data

- Subjective problem behavior
  - ☐ Defiance, Disrespect, Disruption
  - ☐ Major vs. minor
- Non-classroom areas
  - ☐ Hallways
- Classrooms
- Afternoons

AMBIGUITY
LACK OF CONTACT
DEMANDS? RELEVANCE?
FATIGUE

Decision States:
Setting Events

- An event occurring before or with an antecedent that increases likelihood of a behavior
- Sets it up (slow trigger)
- Sometimes is present and sometimes is not
- Does not require one's awareness
- Examples from students:

Decision States:
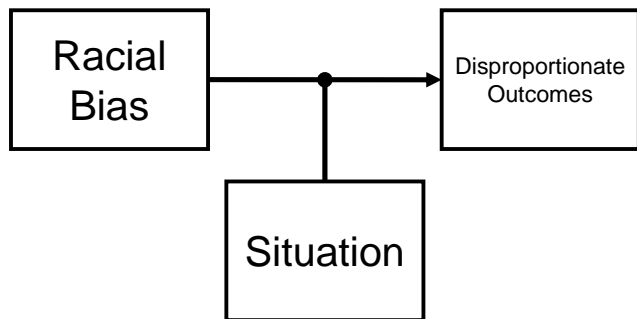## Resource Depletion
(Girvan et al., 2014)

- As we become fatigued, our filters for appropriate behavior can be affected
- Effects of hunger (Gailliot et al., 2009)
- Decreases in willpower later in day
  - "The Morning Morality Effect" (Kouchaki & Smith, 2014)
  - Examples…

Resource Depletion in Action

- Outcomes of parole hearings (Danziger et al., 2011)
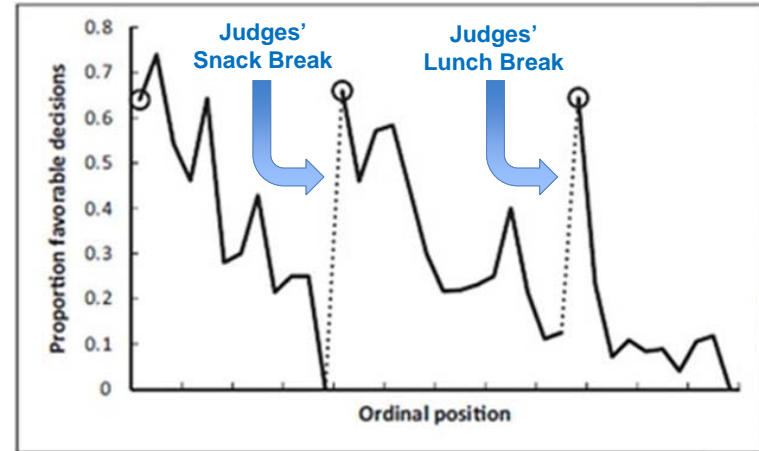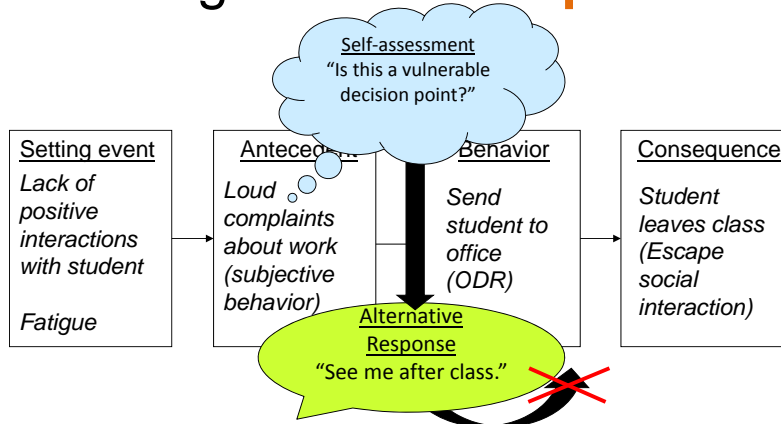
Multidimensional View of Bias

Vulnerable Decision Points

Subjective Behavior	Hunger
Vague Discipline System	Fatigue
Classrooms	Unfamiliar with Student

Two-step Neutralizing Routine for **Staff**:

- When you see unwanted behavior, stop and ask yourself:
1. Is this a VDP?
   - **Situation**
   - **Decision state**
2. If so, use an agreed-upon alternative response

Neutralizing Routines for Reducing Effects of **Implicit Bias**

Self-assessment
"Is this a vulnerable decision point?"

Setting event
Lack of positive interactions with student

Fatigue

Antecedent
Loud complaints about work (subjective behavior)

Behavior
Send student to office (ODR)

Consequence
Student leaves class (Escape social interaction)

Alternative Response
"See me after class."

What makes for a good neutralizing routine?

1. If-then statement
2. Brief
3. Clear steps
4. Doable
5. Interrupts the chain of events

Neutralizing Routine Examples

- If this is a VDP…,
  - "See me after class/at the next break"
  - am I acting in line with my values?
  - delay decision until I can think clearly
  - ask the student to reflect on their feelings/behavior
  - take two deep breaths
  - recognize my upset feelings and let them go
  - "I love you, but that behavior is not ok"
  - picture this student as a future doctor/lawyer
  - assume student's best effort at getting needs met
  - model cool-down strategy
  - know that's Rock Brain talking to me

Sample Neutralizing Routine

- ***TRY***
  - ***T**ake a deep breath*
  - ***R**eflect on your emotions*
  - ***Y**outh's best interest*
    - "Let's ***TRY*** that again."
    - "Let's ***TRY*** it a different way."
    - "Let's ***TRY*** it how we do it at school."

Classwide "Reset" Routine

- *TRY* for <u>students</u>
  - □ *T*ake three deep breaths
  - □ *R*eflect on your emotions
  - □ *Y*ou got this!
- Social-emotional Theme
  - □ Mistakes are part of the learning process
  - □ We won't always do it right the first time

Promising Neutralizing Routines

- Delay
  - □ "See me after class."
- Classroom cooldown strategy
  - □ "I'm taking my 3 deep breaths now."
- Codeswitch cue
  - □ "That's what you think, and at school you would say…"
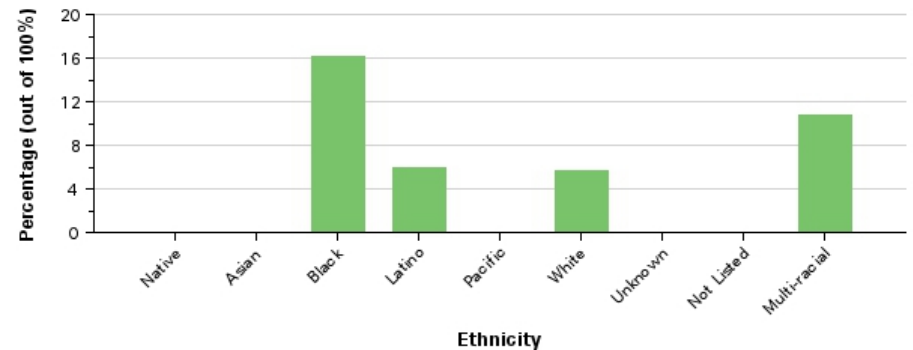- Praise around and circle back

School Example

Urban K-8 School

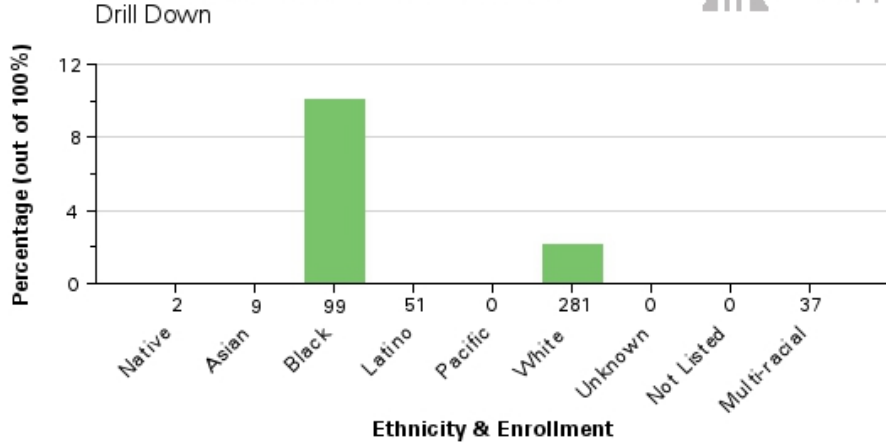# Risk Indices

Referral Risk Index
Major, 2013-14

PBISApps

- Black/White ODR Risk Ratio = 2.67

Drill Down: Phys. Aggression on Playground

Referral Risk Index (Ethnicity)
Drill Down

- Black/White ODR Risk Ratio = 4.5

The School PBIS Team's Intervention

- ODRs and observations indicated differences in perceived basketball rules
- Team clarified rules for staff and students
  - Aka "code-switching"
- Additional teaching, practice, and acknowledgement
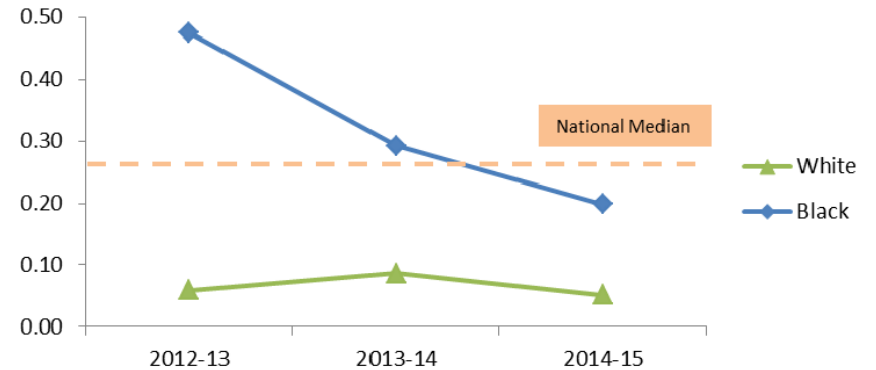- Monitor with ODRs and Black-White RRs

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The School PBIS Team's Intervention Outcomes

Black-White Risk Ratios
- Overall
  - 2013-14: **2.67**
  - 2014-15 (Sept to Dec): **2.0**
- Physical Aggression on Playground
  - 2013-14: **4.5**
  - 2014-15 (Sept to Dec): can't calculate (1 ODR)

Progress over Time

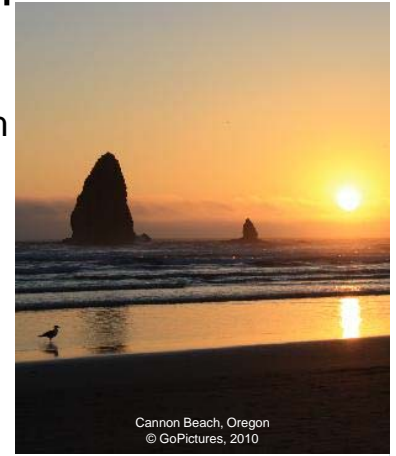**Office Discipline Referrals Per Day Per 100 Students**

Big Ideas

- Thinking about and discussing solutions is the first step
- Pick a neutralizing routine and try it out
- Use your data to assess and monitor
  - □ If you don't have the data you need at hand, advocate for it
- This is hard work – but you know how to do it!

Contact Information

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  ECS EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

  PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports

Cannon Beach, Oregon
© GoPictures, 2010

Handouts: http://www.pbis.org