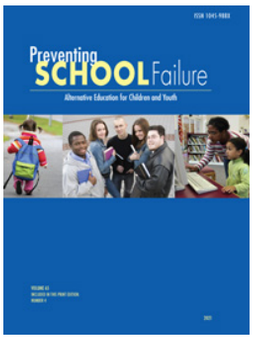

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Effects of an equity-focused PBIS approach to school improvement on exclusionary discipline and school climate

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ABSTRACT

In efforts to improve outcomes for students, state education agencies have developed systems of school improvement to identify and provide support for schools that have persistently low educational outcomes, often those with majority-Black student populations. However, such efforts have generally been ineffective in turning schools around. This article describes the effects of implementing a year-long professional development series of four full days of training based on a school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) framework with an explicit focus on equity in school discipline. Results from this quasi-experimental study showed statistically significant improvements in school outcomes, including exclusionary discipline and school climate as compared with similar, nonparticipating schools. Findings are discussed in terms of using PBIS for school improvement.

KEYWORDS

Cultural responsiveness; equity; positive behavior support; school improvement; school-wide intervention

The use of office discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions as a response to unwanted behavior has been shown to have detrimental effects on numerous student outcomes. When excluded from the classroom, students miss valuable academic and social learning experiences and are at increased risk of future behavior problems, dropout, and juvenile justice involvement (American Academy of Pediatrics Council on School Health, 2013; Raffaele Mendez, 2003; Rosenbaum, 2020). Correspondingly, higher rates of exclusionary discipline in schools are related to lower school-wide academic achievement (Noltemeyer et al., 2015).

High rates of exclusionary discipline are thus themselves problematic, but the higher use of office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions for students of color is especially concerning. Students of color are at greater risk to receive exclusionary discipline compared to White students, with Black (i.e., African American) students being most at risk (Losen et al., 2015; Morgan et al., 2019; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018). Even when controlling for factors other than race (e.g., behaviors, poverty), Black students still experience disproportionally high rates of exclusionary discipline compared to other racial groups (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Girvan, 2019; Morgan et al., 2019; Rocque, 2010).

Beyond the negative outcomes shown for the general population of students, the overuse of exclusionary discipline for Black students produces even more ripple effects. For example, there is evidence that inequitable use of school discipline predicts racial differences in school-level academic achievement (Morris & Perry, 2016). In addition, inequitable discipline can be tied to school climate outcomes. Higher rates of exclusionary discipline are related to less positive perceptions of school climate, especially for Black students (Bottiani et al., 2017). As such, reducing inequities in exclusionary discipline is an important and pivotal target for school improvement efforts.

Another important issue to consider is the concentration of high rates of exclusionary discipline in majority-Black schools. Research consistently shows that the schools with the highest proportion of Black students have the highest rates of exclusionary discipline, and the strongest predictor of suspension for Black students is attending a majority-Black school (Girvan et al., 2020; Losen et al., 2015; Skiba et al., 2014). Because of these patterns, the most effective way to reduce racial disproportionality in school discipline may be to focus on reducing overall exclusions for schools that are over 90% Black (Girvan et al., 2019).

PBIS as a framework for equity interventions

There is abundant research evidence showing the effectiveness of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS; Sugai & Horner, 2020) on reducing overall use of exclusionary discipline. A recent meta analysis, including randomized controlled trials, showed consistent effects of PBIS on decreasing suspensions (Lee & Gage, 2020). In addition to exclusionary discipline, PBIS has been shown to improve academic achievement (Kim et al., 2018; Lee & Gage, 2020). Regarding school climate, randomized trials have shown significant effects of PBIS on perceptions of school safety (Horner et al., 2009) and organizational health (Bradshaw et al., 2009). Hence, it makes sense to consider PBIS to be a potentially effective intervention for state-level school improvement efforts.

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Beyond effects of PBIS on overall school outcomes, there is emerging evidence that PBIS is also effective on reducing racial inequities in school outcomes. Three separate evaluations have shown that schools implementing PBIS with fidelity had lower racial disproportionality in exclusionary discipline than schools not implementing PBIS (McIntosh, Gion, et al., 2018; Swain-Bradway et al., 2019; Vincent & Tobin, 2011). An additional evaluation has shown no significant racial differences in perceived school climate in schools implementing PBIS (La Salle, 2020).

Although racial disparities were reduced in each of these studies, they were not entirely eliminated. To achieve even greater equity in school discipline, technical assistance providers have begun to infuse an explicit racial equity focus into PBIS systems (Cregor et al., 2010). One example is Project ReACT, a multicomponent approach to increasing equity in school discipline through (a) using data to identify specific patterns of school discipline, (b) adapting PBIS systems to make them more culturally responsive, and (c) teaching educators strategies to neutralize implicit bias in school discipline (McIntosh, Girvan, et al., 2014). Initial demonstrations of Project ReACT have shown improved racial equity in school discipline in a case study of school-wide intervention (McIntosh, Ellwood, et al., 2018) and experimental single-case design with classroom teachers (Gion et al., in press). The approach has also been shown to be acceptable and feasible to a range of educators across demographic characteristics, roles, and geographic regions (Bastable et al., in press). However, it has not been tested at scale.

School improvement program efforts

One method to help schools improve outcomes that has been scaled is for state education agencies to establish and use school improvement (i.e., school turnaround) efforts. Recent federal educational policies, beginning with No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Race to the Top (RTT), and continuing with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), placed emphasis on state-level intervention for schools identified with labels such as failing, focus, or turnaround (Tanenbaum et al., 2015; Wakelyn, 2011). The school improvement process is generally defined as expeditious attempts to improve schools that are consistently low performing. A common guideline to identify those schools was the lowest 5% of schools based on high-stakes standardized assessments for three years, although guidelines varied considerably from state to state (Meyers & Murphy, 2007). These schools were then provided with intervention—most often principal change or teacher professional development—and were potentially closed if they did not improve.

Under ESSA, districts no longer had to subscribe to an intervention model as determined by the federal government. They were instead charged with developing a strategy that best meets their needs (Le Floch et al., 2016). Decades of research demonstrates that turning around low performing schools requires bold leadership at the district and school levels to make significant changes to both school culture and instructional practices (Ross et al., 2018).

Despite the near-universal use of school improvement programs, there is little empirical evidence that they are effective in improving student outcomes. For example, a survey of 49 state education agencies found 80% reported turnaround programs as a high priority, but 50% reported extreme difficulties in their efforts to improve outcomes for these schools (Tanenbaum et al., 2015). Results vary substantially from state to state, making it difficult to identify what specific interventions are effective and sustainable (De la Torre et al., 2013; Hansen, 2012). In one national-level example, an evaluation of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program from 2010-11 to 2012-13 revealed that only 17% of the schools studied had improvements that were deemed sustainable (Le Floch et al., 2016). Hence, states desperately need state turnaround interventions that are effective in improving outcomes for schools identified as requiring assistance.

Purpose of the study

The study's purpose was to use a quasi-experimental design to determine the extent to which an equity-focused PBIS professional development series improved school outcomes for persistently low-performing schools that are also majority-Black. The authors were approached to support a state education agency in its efforts to improve outcomes for schools identified as persistently underperforming. The year-long intervention was provided to these schools, and extant school data were utilized to assess the extent to which the intervention improved overall school effectiveness and use of exclusionary discipline and school climate in particular. The following research questions were used:

1. To what extent did schools receiving the intervention have improved school effectiveness, as measured by the state's school performance rating, as compared to other turnaround schools?
2. To what extent did schools receiving the intervention have decreased use of exclusionary discipline, as compared to other turnaround schools?
3. To what extent did schools receiving the intervention have improved school climate, as measured by students, families, and staff, as compared to other turnaround schools?

Method

Participants and settings

Study participants were members of 95 school leadership teams in a southeastern U.S. state that were labeled with "turnaround" status in the 2017-18 school year. In this state, the school improvement model identified schools in the bottom 5th percentile on student achievement for three consecutive years. These 95 turnaround schools were provided with a formal assessment and improvement plan, coaching, additional partnerships, and coordination with other

available supports in the region and state. The 25 lowest performing schools in the state formed the intervention group. These intervention group schools were provided a 1-year series of professional development for school culture and climate based on PBIS. These schools had a mean enrollment of 494 (range = 70 to 805). The schools' student populations were predominantly Black, with a mean Black percent enrollment of 86% (range = 68 to 100%). Seventeen schools were implementing PBIS at the time, with 13 of the 17 schools implementing with fidelity according to the *SWPBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory* (Algozzine et al., 2014), a measure with strong psychometric properties (Massar et al., 2019; McIntosh et al., 2017). Table 1 provides school characteristics for the intervention schools, the other turnaround schools, and all other schools in the state.

Measures

Effectiveness of the intervention was assessed using three school-level measures, reported to the state: School Effectiveness Rating, School Climate Index, and Exclusionary Discipline Index.

School effectiveness rating

All schools received a quality rating calculated from various measures to indicate progress toward a positive school environment, calculated by the state department of education. Each school receives a possible score that can range from 1 (in most need of improvement) to 5 (exceptional school environment). The school effectiveness rating is a composite of the following data sources: (a) perceived school climate (as reported by students, families, and personnel), (b) rates of exclusionary discipline, (c) rates of incidents of drug abuse/possession, and (d) attendance records submitted to the state. In calculating this indicator of school quality, each component contributes equally to the overall score. Table 2 provides a descriptive summary of the School Effectiveness Ratings for intervention schools, the other turnaround schools, and all other schools in the state for academic years 2017-2018 (year prior to the intervention) and 2018-2019 (the intervention year).

School climate index

The school climate index averages school climate survey scores from students, educators, and family members regarding their perceptions of the school environment. Each group of stakeholders complete a specific version of the School Climate Suite, each of which has adequate psychometric properties (La Salle et al., 2018). Elementary students complete an 11-item survey (e.g., My school wants me to do well), whereas students in secondary schools respond to 37 items (e.g., Adults in this school treat all students with respect). Similarly, school staff perceptions are captured on a 31-item instrument (e.g., I feel safe when entering or

Table 1. Number of schools in and basic demographics of schools in each condition.

2017-2018	Participating turnaround schools (intervention group) (n = 25)	Other turnaround schools (n = 70)	All other schools (n = 1714)
Grade Levels[1]			
Elementary	13 (539)	47 (528)	906 (613)
Middle	10 (452)	19 (649)	383 (839)
High	2 (508)	3 (599)	348 (1325)
K-8		1 (498)	50 (627)
6-12			20 (502)
K-12			7 (621)
Demographics[2]			
% Black	85.7 (16.0)[a]	84.0 (17.5)[a]	35.4 (28.2)[b]
% Hispanic/Latiné	6.1 (6.6)[a]	7.6 (11.1)[a]	15.1 (16.0)[b]
% Econ. Disad.	73.1 (13.9)[a]	70.7 (12.6)[a]	32.9 (18.1)[b]
% Students w/ Dis.	11.2 (3.4)[a]	12.2 (4.0)[a]	12.2 (3.8)[a]
% Lmtd Engl. Prof.	3.7 (4.4)[a]	5.3 (6.7)[a]	10.2 (14.0)[b]

Note.[1] Cell values = Number of Schools (Average Enrollment). [2] Cell values = Mean (Standard Deviation). [a, b] Schools in cells that share the same superscript as the Intervention Group are not statistically significantly different from schools in that group (i.e., $p \geq .05$).

Table 2. Means and standard deviations of criteria measures for schools by condition and school year.

	Participating turnaround schools (Intervention Group) (n = 25)	Other turnaround schools (n = 70)	All other schools (n = 1714)
Criteria (2017-2018)			
Sch. Effectiveness Rtg	2.7 (1.3)[a]	2.5 (1.0)[a]	4.0 (.8)[b]
Sch. Climate Index	68.5 (18.0)[a]	73.2 (5.3)[b]	78.2 (6.8)[b]
Exc. Discipline Index	64.5 (31.8)[a]	72.7 (22.7)[b]	87.8 (12.1)[b]
Criteria (2018-2019)			
Sch. Effectiveness Rtg	3.4 (1.3)[a]	2.7 (.9)[b]	4.0 (.8)[b]
Sch. Climate Index	75.8 (9.3)[a]	74.4 (5.6)[a]	78.7 (6.5)[b]
Exc. Discipline Index	70.5 (26.2)[a]	74.7 (20.5)[a]	87.3 (12.5)[b]

Note. Cell values = Mean (Standard Deviation). School Effectiveness Ratings range from 1 to 5. School Climate Index and Exclusionary Discipline Index range from 0 to 100. For all criteria, higher values indicate better outcomes. [a, b] Schools in cells that share the same superscript as the Intervention Group are not statistically significantly different from schools in that group (i.e., $p \geq .05$).

leaving my school building), and family members completed a 23-item survey (e.g., I am involved in the decision-making process at my student's school). All versions of the school climate survey use a 4-point Likert-type scale. Elementary student response options ranged from 1 (Never) to 4 (Always), whereas response options for secondary students, school personnel, and families ranged from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 4 (Strongly Disagree). To estimate an overall school climate rating, the state first calculated a mean school score and converted it to a percent of possible points, with higher scores indicating more positive school climate. The School Climate Index was then created by averaging the student, school personnel, and family percentages. Table 2 provides a summary of the School Climate Index for intervention schools, the other turnaround schools, and all other schools in the state for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic years.

Exclusionary discipline index

An overall school discipline index was calculated by the state as a weighted count of exclusionary discipline events, including in-school suspensions (ISSs), out-of-school suspensions (OSSs), alternative school placements, and expulsions. Each incident was weighted based on severity as per state guidelines. For instance, ISSs were weighted less (i.e., 0.5) than OSSs. These weighted counts were divided by the official school enrollment reported to the state and then subtracted from 100 to produce a Exclusionary Discipline Index, with higher scores indicating less use of exclusionary discipline. Table 2 provides a summary of the Exclusionary Discipline Index for intervention schools, the other turnaround schools, and all other schools in the state for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic years.

Fidelity of training

Fidelity of the training provided was assessed through direct observation with a researcher-developed measure. The measure assessed 22 critical features of high-quality professional development delivery on a 3-point rating scale (0 = not implemented, 1 = partially implemented, 2 = fully implemented). The measure results in a percent of critical features observed.

Fidelity of implementation

Fidelity of school personnel implementation was assessed via a self-report measure of implementation of the strategies introduced in the professional development sessions, completed by each team via consensus. The measure included items assessing perceptions of the consistency of implementation of each strategy by all school personnel using a scale of 1 (not at all) to 10 (exactly as described).

Procedure

Intervention

The intervention consisted of a series of four full-day professional development workshops for school leadership teams based on Project ReACT, a school-wide intervention that utilizes PBIS systems (e.g., data, teaming, coaching) to implement strategies to improve equity in school discipline (McIntosh, Girvan, et al., 2018). The workshops, delivered to all teams together, focused on teams learning about, selecting, and practicing strategies to improve student outcomes based on their schools' specific needs (see Table 3 for the scope and sequence). Day 1 provided an introduction to implicit bias in school discipline and use of school discipline data in a 4-step problem-solving model to (1) identify the extent of the problem, (2) determine root causes, (3) create a tailored intervention plan, and (4) monitor progress (McIntosh, Barnes, et al., 2014; McIntosh, Ellwood, et al., 2018). Day 2 covered methods to tailor school behavior support systems to make them more culturally responsive, through examining expectations for students and engaging with Stakeholders to obtain input on improving expectations and how they were taught to students (Leverson et al., 2021). Day 3 focused on improving rates of behavior-specific praise and other strategies to improve student-teacher relationships (Gion et al., in press; Tobin & Vincent, 2011). Day 4 covered instructional responses to unwanted behaviors, including teaching neutralizing routines (Cook et al., 2018; McIntosh, Girvan, et al., 2014). No other

Table 3. Equity-focused PBIS Professional Development Scope and Sequence.

Day	Timing	PBIS Core Practice	Equity Focus	Strategies Taught
1	September	• Use data for decision-making	• Understand implicit bias • Identify disproportionality • Make school welcoming for all student groups	• Analysis of disaggregated discipline data • Positive greetings at the door • Family focus groups
2	December	• Define school-wide expectations • Teach expectations	• Examine behavior support systems for assumptions and hidden biases • Obtain input from students and families • Engaging students in teaching expectations and academic instruction	• Tailoring school-wide expectations and matrices for fit with students and families • Personal matrix • Student advisory groups • Opportunities to respond
3	March	• Acknowledge prosocial behavior	• Build positive relationships with students of color • Assess equity in use of behavior specific praise	• Class-wide affirmations • Methods to increase praise:corrections ratios • Praise Preference Assessments • Getting to Know You Surveys
4	May	• Respond instructionally to unwanted behavior	• Identify vulnerable decision points in school discipline • Use strategies to neutralize implicit bias and respond calmly	• Neutralizing Routines • Positive redirections • Wise feedback

technical assistance (e.g., coaching) was provided to participating schools.

Fidelity of training

Fidelity of the training provided was assessed by live direct observations of the professional development sessions by an independent observer. Fidelity was assessed for 25% of trainings using a researcher-developed checklist. Observed fidelity of training was 85%.

Fidelity of implementation

Fidelity of school personnel implementation of trained strategies was assessed via a self-report measure assessing consistency on implementation between professional development sessions. The measure was completed by 12 (48%) of the 25 school teams during 33% of the follow-up sessions. An average of 83% of these schools reported implementing one or more of the trained strategies, and of schools that implemented, they rated their school personnel's consistency of implementation as 6.34 on a scale of 1 to 10.

Analytic plan

To assess the effects of the intervention, we computed change scores for each of the criteria measures by subtracting the value for the 2017-2018 school year (the year prior to the intervention) from that for the 2018-19 school year (the year of the intervention). Accordingly, positive values reflect improvement on the measures in the intervention year. We then separately regressed each of the three outcomes (Change in School Effectiveness Rating, Change in Exclusionary Discipline Index, and Change in School Climate Index) on condition: (a) Intervention Schools (i.e., treatment schools), (b) Other Turnaround Schools, and (c) All Other Schools in the state. Intervention Schools were used as the reference group. To the model, we added control variables for school grade levels served, total school enrollment, and student body demographics (percent Black, percent Hispanic/Latiné, percent students with disabilities, percent receiving free- or reduced-price meals, and percent Limited English Proficiency).

Results

Figure 1 illustrates the average changes from the 2017-18 academic year (pre-intervention) to 2018-19 academic year (intervention year) in School Effectiveness Ratings, Exclusionary Discipline Index, and School Climate Index for schools that received the intervention, turnaround eligible schools that did not receive the intervention, and all other schools in the state. Descriptively, results show an increase in performance in all three outcomes for the intervention schools and little change for the two comparison groups. With respect to change in School Effectiveness Ratings from 2017-18 to 2018-19, results of the multiple regression model indicated that, even after taking into account the control variables, neither the Other Turnaround Schools (B = −.45 [-.74, −.15], p < .001) nor All Other Schools (B = −.74 [-1.00, −.47], p < .001; model F(13, 1795) = 4.07, p < .001, Adj R^2 = .02) showed as much improvement in School Effectiveness Ratings as the Intervention Schools. For exclusionary discipline, after accounting for the effects of the control variables, neither the Other Turnaround Schools (B = −3.36 [-6.33, −.38], p = .030) nor All Other Schools (B = −5.93 [-8.63, −3.22], p < .001; model F(13, 1791) = 3.93, p < .001, Adj R^2 = .02) showed as much improvement as the Intervention Schools. Finally, with respect to change in the School Climate Index, even after controlling for grade level, enrollment, and school demographics, Other Turnaround Schools (B = −5.94 [-8.41,

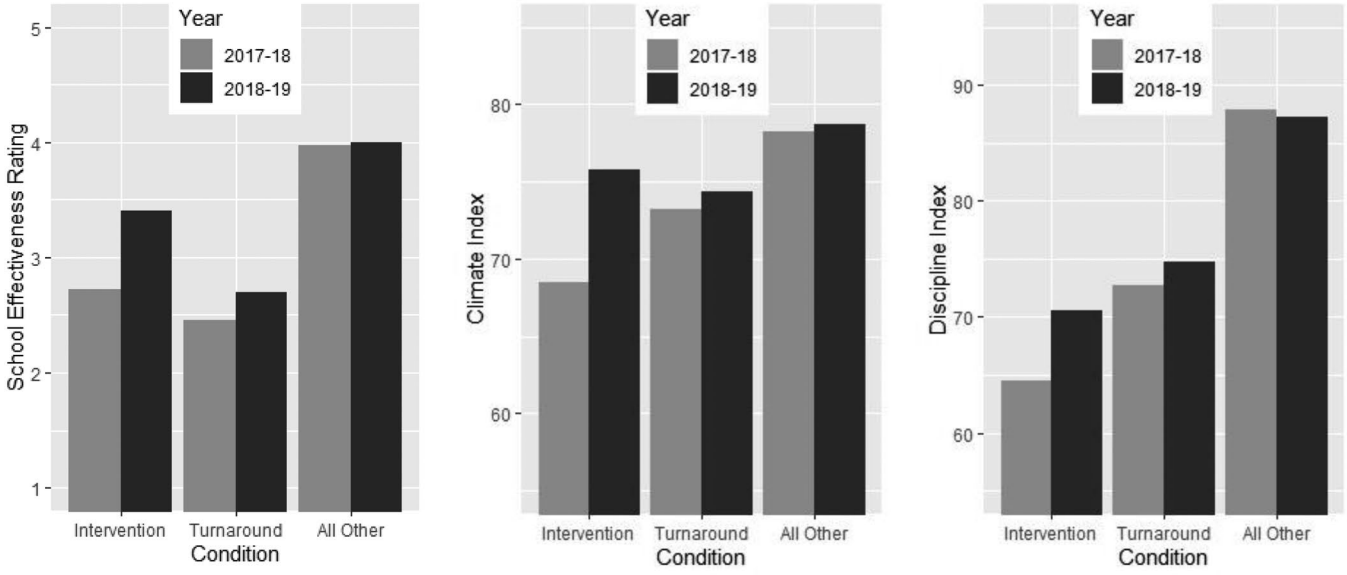

Figure 1 Average Criteria Measures for Schools by Condition and School Year.
Note. Bars indicate average values by condition in the 2017-18 or 2018-19 academic year.

−3.47], $p < .001$) or All Other Schools in the state (B = −6.90 [-9.12, −4.69], $p < .001$; model $F(13, 1795) = 5.02$, p < .001, Adj $R^2 = .03$) improved less than the Intervention Schools.

Discussion

State education agencies across the U.S. implement school improvement systems in attempts to improve outcomes for schools that score persistently low on key educational statistics. However, there is little evidence that these school reform attempts are effective (Le Floch et al., 2016). The schools in this study in need of reform, are also majority-Black, which currently and historically have some of the highest rates of exclusionary discipline (Girvan et al., 2020). Exclusionary discipline is associated with a host of poor outcomes, including decreases in academic achievement, perceived school climate, and school completion (Bottiani et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2011; Morris & Perry, 2016; Noltemeyer et al., 2015). Unfortunately, a cycle develops, as many of these lowest performing schools also serve students of color, and racial inequities in behavioral and academic outcomes stubbornly persist. This study examined the findings from an equity-focused intervention within a PBIS framework on the performance of persistently underachieving schools. After one year of professional development, schools receiving intervention had improved school outcomes, including decreased use of exclusionary discipline and improved ratings of school climate. Such findings indicate the promise of professional development in an equity-focused PBIS approach for improving important school outcomes. These quasi-experimental results add more initial support to evidence of effectiveness of a PBIS framework in majority-Black schools, consistent with previous outcomes (e.g., Scott, 2001).

Although these schools were underperforming and using higher rates of exclusionary discipline than schools in other states, they were not identified as using racially disproportionate discipline. However, the overuse of exclusionary discipline in these schools (as measured by the Exclusionary Discipline Index) show that overall, the students in these majority-Black schools were disproportionately disciplined. Thus, decreasing rates of exclusionary discipline in majority-Black schools provides an important opportunity for reducing racial discipline disparities, with the potential to improve student outcomes more than schools with high rates of disproportionality but smaller populations of Black students (Girvan et al., 2019). In essence, reducing exclusionary discipline in these schools improved outcomes for more Black students than reducing exclusionary discipline for Black students in more heterogeneous schools. Of course, both are needed to achieve racial equity in school discipline and perceived school climate.

Limitations

This study is not without limitations, and given the quasi-experimental nature of the design, several limitations exist that warrant caution in drawing conclusions regarding effectiveness of this intervention. The quasi-experimental design of the study presents a strong limitation to identifying causality. This intervention was delivered to the 25 lowest-performing schools in the state, and so the results could at least partially be due to regression to the mean, although regression to the mean would not explain why the intervention schools had better outcomes than the other turnaround schools. It is not known whether other characteristics of the schools that received the intervention affected the results. In addition, schools (both intervention and other turnaround schools) may have been implementing other interventions to improve outcomes. Finally, there was no external assessment of fidelity of intervention of the strategies the schools implemented, so the self-reported fidelity may not have been accurate. In light of these details, these results should be viewed as tentative until they can be replicated using an experimental trial.

Implications for research

The results of this quasi-experimental study provide some support for current findings that a PBIS framework with culturally responsive and equity-focused elaborations can improve important educational outcomes (Gion et al., in press; McIntosh, Ellwood, et al., 2018; Payno-Simmons, in press; Swain-Bradway et al., 2019). Although the design was quasi-experimental, the findings move from a classroom or individual school-level analysis to a comparative analysis of multiple schools receiving or not receiving the intervention, within a widely-used school behavior support framework. Whereas other state-wide turnaround efforts have failed, the results of this study point to an initial, promising impact on low performing and majority-Black schools. A key research question that remains is whether equity-focused PBIS implementation can experimentally improve outcomes and narrow discipline gaps for students of color in all schools. Findings from a subsequent randomized controlled trial with direct measures of fidelity of implementation have provided such evidence (McIntosh et al., 2021).

Future research can expand upon this work with further replications of the PBIS equity-driven framework. Also, research that examines effects of the specific components of ReACT (e.g., McIntosh et al., 2020; Muldrew & Miller, 2021) could further broaden the evidence base. An understanding of how this framework can impact schools with more varied demographics and with pre-identified issues with racial discipline disproportionality, are also key directions for future inquiry.

Implications for practice

This study provides one example with initial evidence of successful state-wide school improvement. Professional development for turnaround schools with majority-Black populations can be effective, despite well-publicized failures to improve school performance (Le Floch et al., 2016). Although more research is needed, the successes seen with this population of low-performing schools, for which states have

difficulty demonstrating gains in student performance, provide two tentative implications for educators seeking to improve outcomes for students from underresourced groups. First, intervening within an existing framework for school behavior support (i.e., PBIS) appears to hold promise, instead of using a standalone equity intervention that is disconnected from other initiatives. Studies have shown that interventions are more sustainable when implemented within PBIS systems (Good et al., 2011; Meng et al., 2016; Nese et al., 2016), possibly because of robust systems of professional development or educators' confidence in implementing the PBIS framework (Chitiyo et al., 2019). Second, the intervention focused on not only raising educators' consciousness, but also teaching pivotal educational strategies (namely data-based decision making, classroom PBIS systems, and acknowledging desired behavior) that have been shown to increase equity in school discipline (Tobin & Vincent, 2011). In combination with other research demonstrating effects of this equity-focused PBIS approach (McIntosh et al., 2021; Payno-Simmons, in press), educators and administrators can use these findings to take immediate action to improve equity in school discipline.

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