

## ABSTRACT

**DISSERTATION PROJECT:** Effectiveness of PBIS Implementation

**STUDENT:** Debra Faye Williams-Robbins

**DEGREE:** Doctor of Education

**COLLEGE:** Teachers College, Educational Leadership

**DATE:** December 2021

**PAGES:** 130

There have been ongoing conversations about disproportionality in the USA when reviewing who gets incarcerated, especially when comparing minorities to Caucasian citizens. The politicized use of the term *law and order* has resulted in zero tolerance laws, disproportionately high arrest rates, and longer incarcerations for minority citizens. This same zero tolerance philosophy has found its way into K-12 public schools, thus resulting in a disproportionate number of African American and special education students receiving referrals and ultimately higher suspension and expulsion rates than their Caucasian counterparts. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) has been one research-based strategy with proven results for decreasing infractions and closing disproportionality. For this reason, this mixed-method study was conducted to ascertain the fidelity with which PBIS's training and implementation were conducted and the impact of that implementation on discipline infractions. The two major findings were infractions significantly decreased across all the independent variables yet disproportionality continued. Focus groups were conducted with teacher and administrator volunteers from schools with the most and fewest infractions. The focus groups were asked their opinion of the training, implementation, things that were working well, and areas for improvement. The findings from this study indicated schools that implemented with

fidelity and consistency experienced the greatest drop in infractions. Given these results, further studies are recommended for a more in-depth study on sustainability of gains and implications for other initiatives introduced in the school district.