

How to reduce suspensions in students of color

“Reduction of suspensions would translate to about 680 days in school for Asian American students, 7,800 more days for Latinx students, and 9,000 more days for Black students over 10 years”



<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/want-to-reduce-suspensions-for-students-of-color-look-to-teachers-of-color/2022/03>

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In this article, the author reviews a recent study from scholars at George Washington University, and the University of California, Berkeley who analyzed 10 years of data on teachers and students from New York City. Prior research has already shown us that black students are less likely to be suspended, expelled or placed in detention by black teachers. The researchers projected that by increasing the representation of teachers of color who teach same-race students, would result in about 230 fewer suspensions in Asian American

students, 1,500 fewer suspensions for Latinx students, and 1,800 fewer suspensions for Black students over a 10-year period.

Lately, there has been a rise in students misbehaving, which could be an effect of the pandemic. We recently had a training about student trauma and how that may affect students in the learning environment. COVID-19 has created a lot of trauma within our communities. While many schools are back to in person learning, the trauma from distance learning is still there. Some students may have lost a loved one and others were at home, with less-than-ideal living situations. These children are in crisis mode and are going to act out. Suspensions have a long-term effect on students. Past research shows that suspensions are linked to lower academic achievement and a lower likelihood of civil engagement. By placing students with teachers of the same ethnicity, we can decrease the suspension rate in students of color and keep students learning within the classroom.

While this article was unable to determine why students of color are less likely to be suspended if they have a teacher of color, it did open my eyes to the reality of the issue. Whether it is conscious or unconscious, we all have biases. When in the classroom, those biases should never play a role in how we perceive the severity of student misbehavior. The data proves that white teachers may have absorbed negative stereotypes about students of color and be quicker to refer them for more severe disciplinary action such as suspensions, expulsions, or detention. I plan to try to practice culturally responsive teaching and have high expectations for all students.

