

Study examines school discipline disparities for black and low-income students

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A new [study](#) from the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans at Tulane University examines differences in school suspension rates and durations by race and family income in Louisiana from 2001-2014. These disparities are notable because of the associations between exclusionary discipline and negative outcomes for students, including lower academic achievement and greater contact with the juvenile justice system.

The study finds that black students are twice as likely as white students to be suspended, and low-income students are about 1.75 times as likely as non-low-

income students to be suspended. This includes large gaps in suspension rates for both violent and nonviolent infractions.

While many other studies have come to the same conclusion, this one is unusual in trying to understand the source of the problem. Study co-author Nathan Barrett said, "Our research suggests that reducing discipline disparities based on race and income would require addressing both within-school and across-school disparities."

The study also examines punishments resulting from fights between a black student and a white student, which allows the researchers to determine whether black and white students are punished differently for the exact same infraction. They find that black students received slightly longer suspensions than white students after these fights. The difference is about one additional suspension day for every 20 fights.

This study was authored by Nathan Barrett (Education Research Alliance for New Orleans), Andrew McEachin (RAND Corporation), Jonathan Mills (University of Arkansas) and Jon Valant (Brookings Institution). The full report is available at educationresearchalliancencola.org.