



Racial Disparities in Referrals to an Individualized Bullying Intervention Program

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Introduction

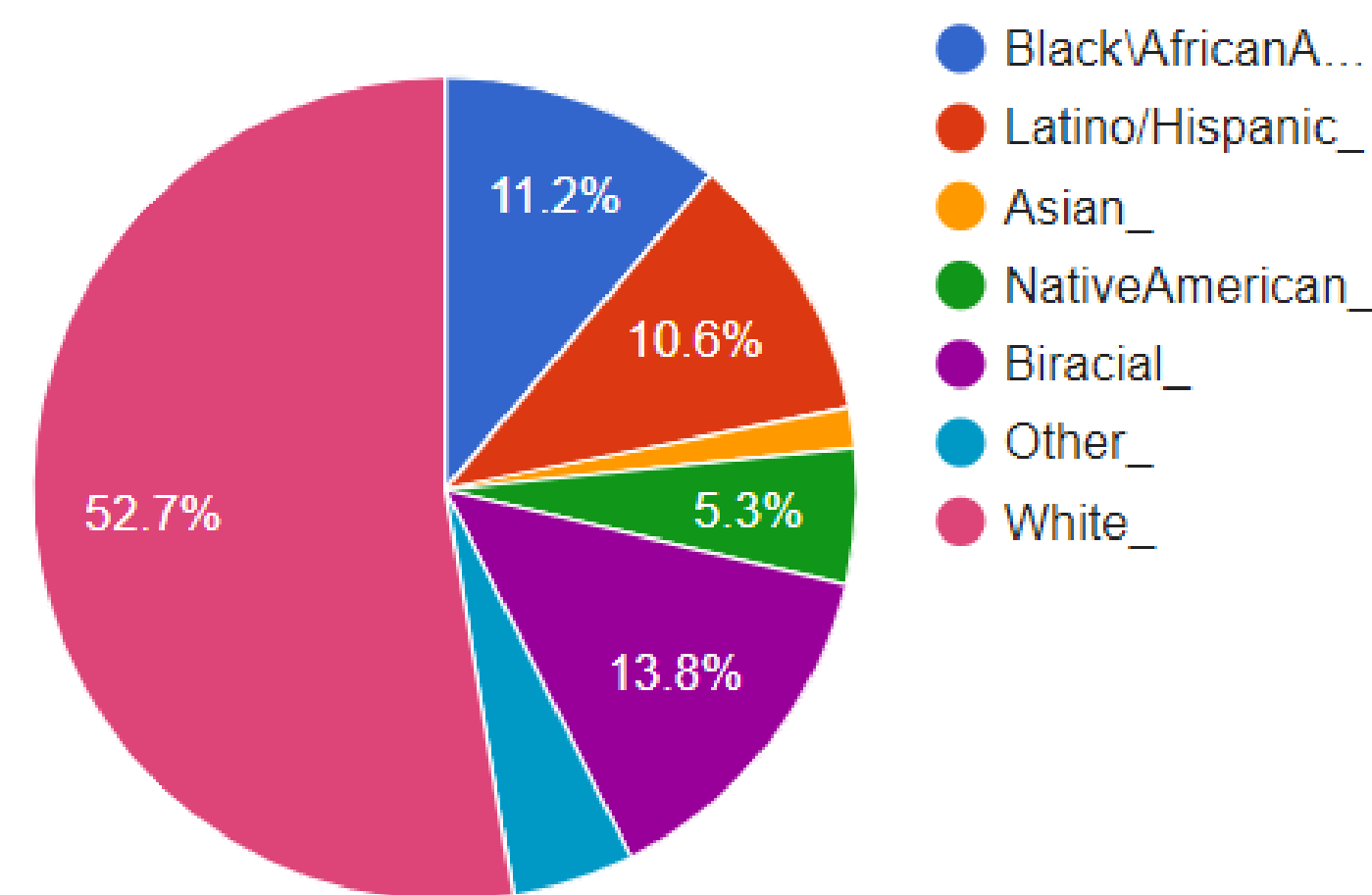
- Research suggests that bullying is widespread among school-age children and adolescents in the United States. Studies find that approximately 10-20% of students report victimization and 8-18% reported bullying others (Swearer, Collins, Fluke & Strawhun, 2012).
- Involvement in the bullying dynamic negatively impacts the emotional, psychological, and physical well-being of school aged children and adolescents (Forster, Dyal, Baezconde-Garbanati, Chou, Soto, & Unger, 2013; Peguero, 2009; Peguero & Williams, 2011).
- When bullying is racially motivated, it can further exacerbate the physical and emotional health of targets (Rosenthal et al., 2013).
- Research has found significant differences in the way students of color are disciplined. Recent reports from the United States Government Accountability Office (2018) found that there are discipline disparities for black students.
- Skiba and colleagues (2011) examined differences in disciplinary practices for minor misbehaviors and found that Black and Hispanic students were more likely to be disciplined for minor misbehaviors than their Caucasian peers.

Methods

- The current sample consists of school-age students referred to a Tier-III bullying intervention program (n = 212).
- The intervention program is assessment-driven and utilizes various measures to gather information from the participants regarding internalizing symptoms (e.g., depressive and anxious symptoms) and cognitive distortions.
- This study is part of a larger study with youth involved in bullying from ages 6-18 years old. Data collection for this took place from 2005 to 2018 with the Target Bullying Intervention Program (T-BIP; Swearer, 2005).
- Demographic and office referral data were collected from schools.
- Participants were asked about their experiences as a victim, bystander, and as a perpetrator of bullying using The Bully Survey Student Version (BYS; Swearer, 2001).
- Results were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results

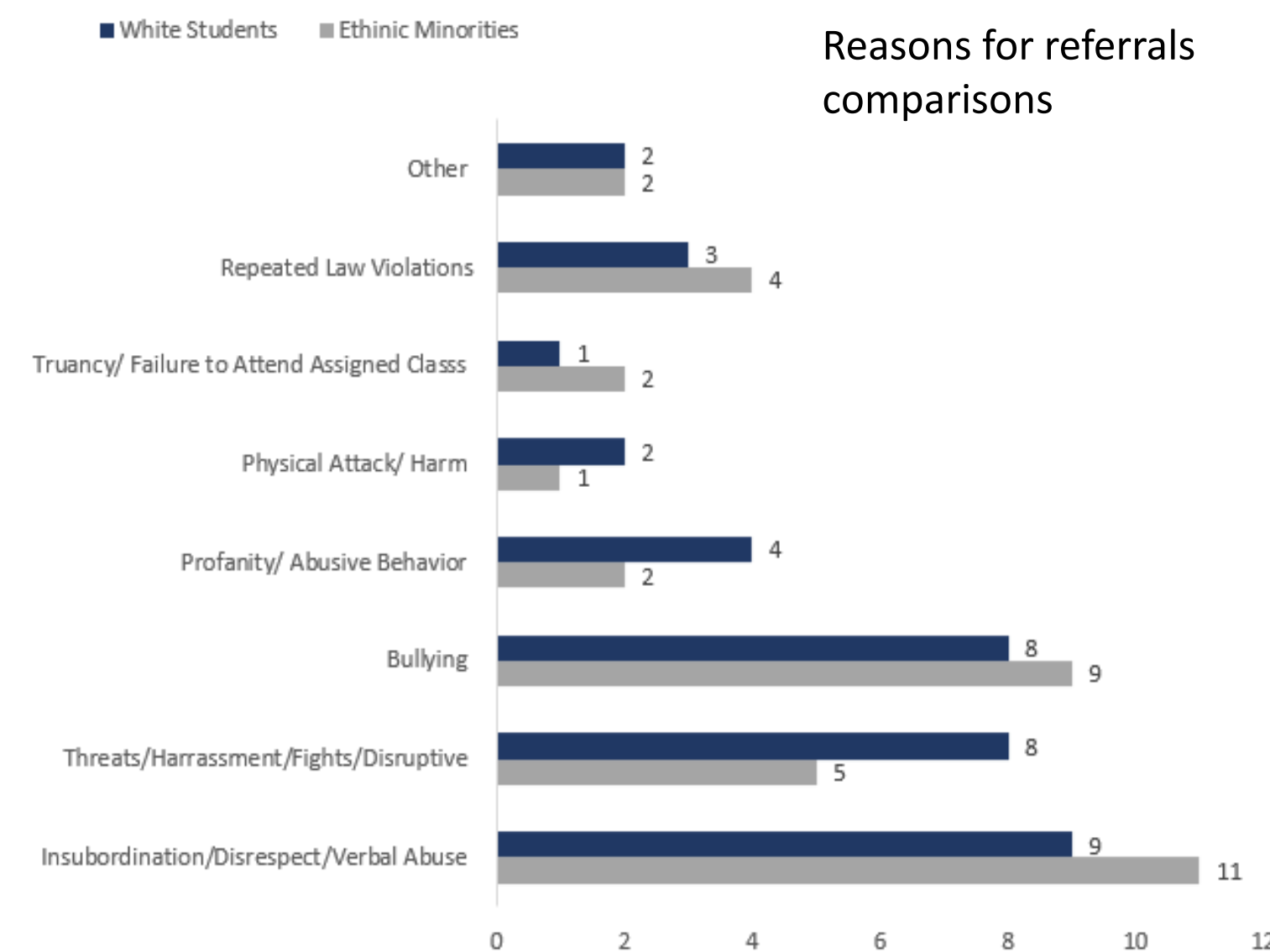
Referrals to T-BIP based on Ethnicity



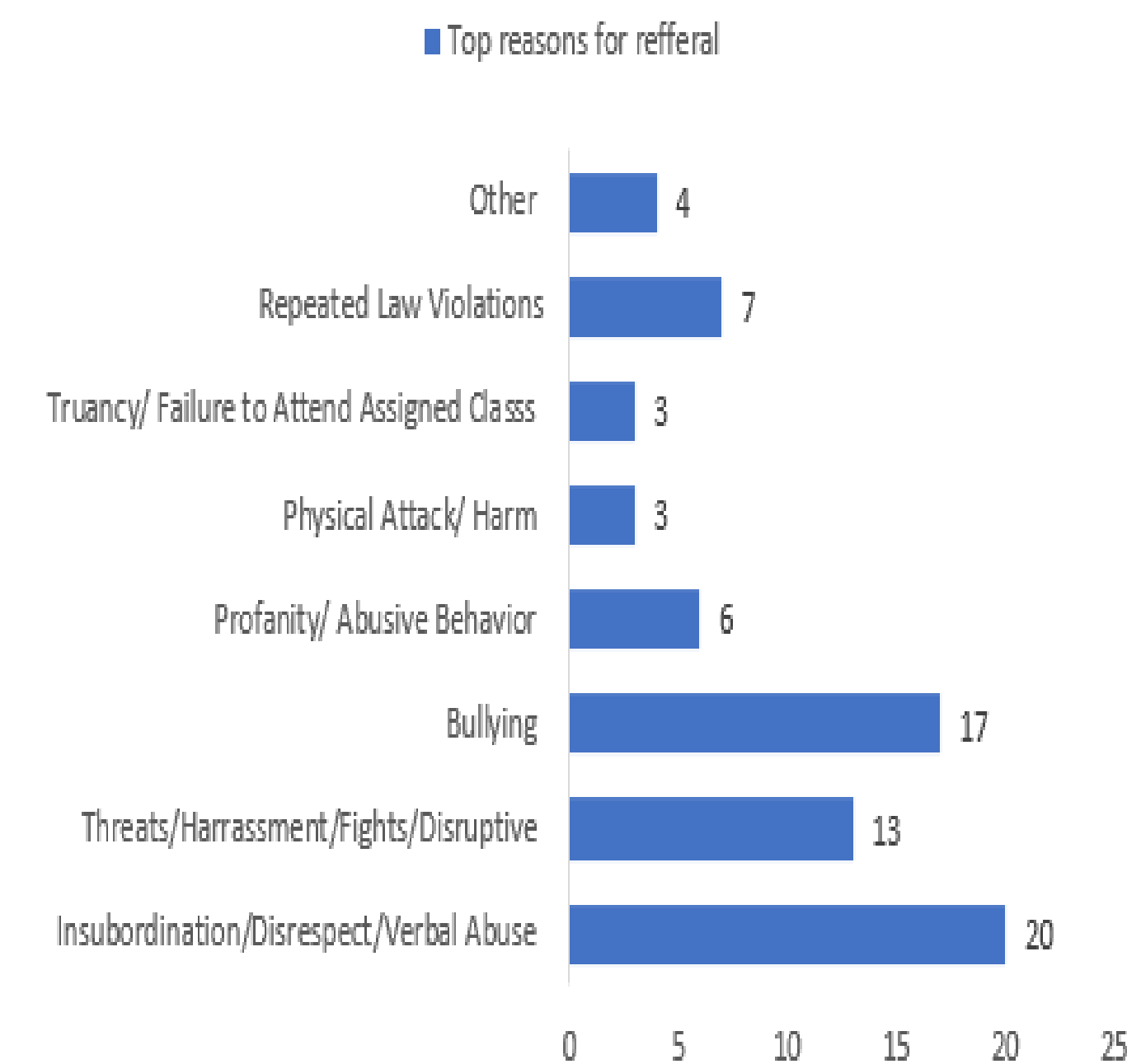
Trends in District Ethnic* Minority Membership Over the Last Five Years

School Year	White		American Indian or Alaska Native		Black or African American		Asian		Hispanic/Latino		Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander		Two or More Races	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2014-2015	25,528	68.1	284	0.8	2,312	6.2	1,704	4.5	4,834	12.9	24	0.1	2,809	7.5
2015-2016	26,034	67.7	267	0.7	2,438	6.3	1,720	4.5	5,031	13.1	27	0.1	2,943	7.7
2016-2017	26,457	67.2	265	0.7	2,460	6.3	1,809	4.6	5,229	13.3	30	0.1	3,104	7.9
2017-2018	26,838	67.0	256	0.6	2,508	6.3	1,839	4.6	5,424	13.5	28	0.1	3,193	8.0
2018-2019	26,785	66.5	248	0.6	2,555	6.3	1,845	4.6	5,512	13.7	32	0.1	3,318	8.2

*New federal identifiers are being used so the distribution across groups may vary from previous years.



- Differences in the frequency of office referrals and referrals to a Tier-III bullying intervention program were examined.
- Black/African American = 21, Latino/Hispanic = 20, Asian American = 1, Native American = 10, Middle Eastern = 2, Biracial = 36, other = 9 were compared to White students.
- Results revealed that students of color were not disproportionately referred to a Tier III intervention.
- Results also demonstrate representation in a Tier III intervention as proportional to the ethnic minority populations in a midwestern city.
- Top reasons students referred to a Tier III intervention were examined (insubordination/disrespect= 20, threat/harassment= 14, bullying =17).
- Top reason students of color were referred to a Tier III intervention were examined (Insubordination/Disrespect= 11, bullying= 9, threats/harassment= 5).



Discussion

- The most frequent reasons students were referred to a Tier III intervention may not be valid for a Tier III referral.
- Behaviors such as insubordination/ disrespect/ verbal abuse were the most common reasons for a Tier III intervention. However, it may be more effective to address these less severe behaviors within the classroom or a less intensive intervention.
- Among ethnic minorities, the most common reason students were referred to a Tier III intervention was insubordination/disrespect, this was higher than White students.
- The primary method of analysis for this study was office referral data. It must be taken into consideration that office referrals are made at the discretion of the classroom teacher. For this reason, it is very likely some behaviors were not reported at all or reported inconsistently.

For Educators

- For students who demonstrate behaviors such as class disruption or disrespect, a Tier II intervention may be more efficacious.

T-BIP Intervention Components

- Other strategies like addressing the student's behavior in class instead of referring to office may be more useful.
- For more severe behaviors, a good strategy may involve assessment, psychoeducation, and therapy. For more information about an Tier III bullying intervention visit:

<https://cehs.unl.edu/empwermnet>

