

Make It Make Sense!

What Data Tell Us About the School-to-Prison Pipeline



Children First —
IDRA
— Transforming Education





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ISSN 1069-5672 VOL. XLVIII, NO. 8 September 2021



Focus: Redefining Discipline

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Stop the Bad; Do the Good –

Hurting and Excluding Students Feeds the School-to-Prison Pipeline

by Morgan Craven, J.D.

I have worked on school discipline and policing issues for more than a decade as an attorney representing young people in schools and courts, as an advocate supporting local campaigns, and as a collaborator on state and national policies. In these roles, when I talk to people about strategies to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline, I often frame the solution as “Stop the Bad, Do the Good.”

I admit that may seem overly-simplistic, particularly for an issue that so profoundly impacts the lives of and limits opportunities for so many young people. But I use this framing precisely because the lived experiences, data, and academic research on school discipline and policing are clear about what works and what doesn’t to create safe and welcoming schools for all students.

Stopping the Bad

What exactly pushes students out of school and drives the school-to-prison pipeline? The term *school-to-prison pipeline* describes schools’ systemic use of punitive discipline practices that results in missed classroom time and increases the likelihood of justice system involvement and

their peers to be punished (and punished harshly) by teachers and administrators.

Much of the “bad” is very clear, albeit deeply-entrenched, in many schools: policies and practices (endorsed in classrooms, codified in state laws, and permitted by federal actors) allow the use of in-school and out-of-school suspensions, corporal punishment, alternative school placements, expulsions and other punitive approaches.

Studies confirm what many students and parents have complained about for years: punitive and exclusionary discipline is harmful for young people (Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2011). They suffer academically, socially, psychologically and sometimes physically. They feel cast aside, excluded from their classroom communities, and may struggle to make up the learning and socialization time they missed (IDRA, 2020). School closures during the pandemic have shown us how social and academic isolation negatively impacts students.

Exclusionary discipline policies and practices both reflect and perpetuate personal biases and

Maybe the need to have an alternative in place in order to stop doing something bad is a hang-up that only adults have.

by Lola Solís

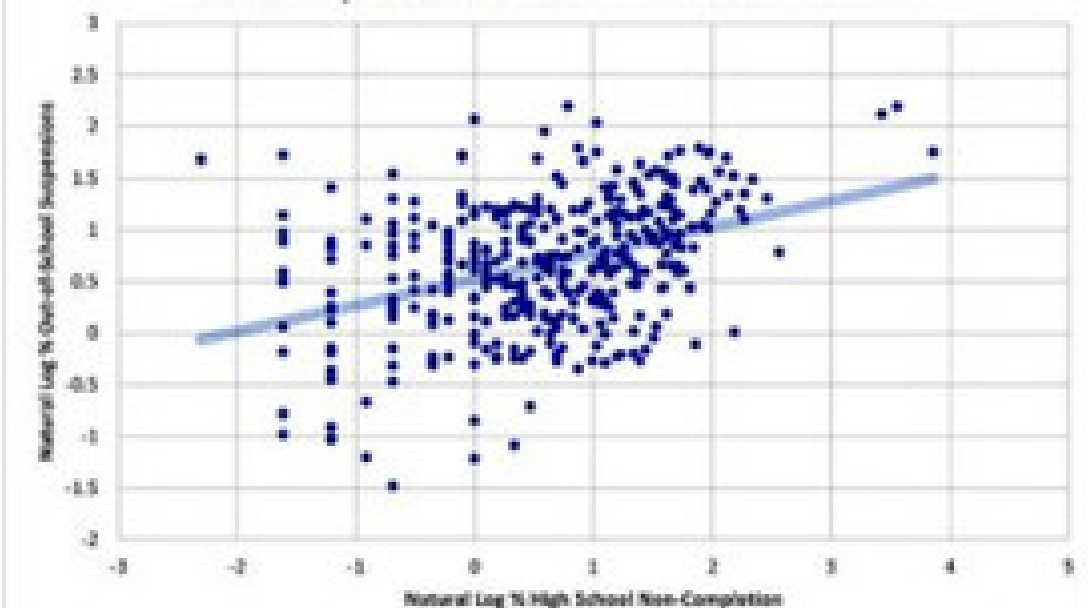
Exclusionary discipline practices that punish students by pushing them out of the classroom are proven to have adverse effects on students’ academic performance and achievements, such as attrition, graduation, state assessment test performance and dropout rates.



IDRA’s analysis of data from the Texas Education Agency and the U.S. Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection found that higher rates of out-of-school suspension are associated with higher rates of high school non-completion.

Read: School Districts with Higher Rates of Suspension Graduate Fewer Students

Association Between Out-of-School Suspensions and High School Non-Completion in Texas Public School Districts



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Do Out-of-School Suspensions Lead to Lower Graduation Rates?



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The data story

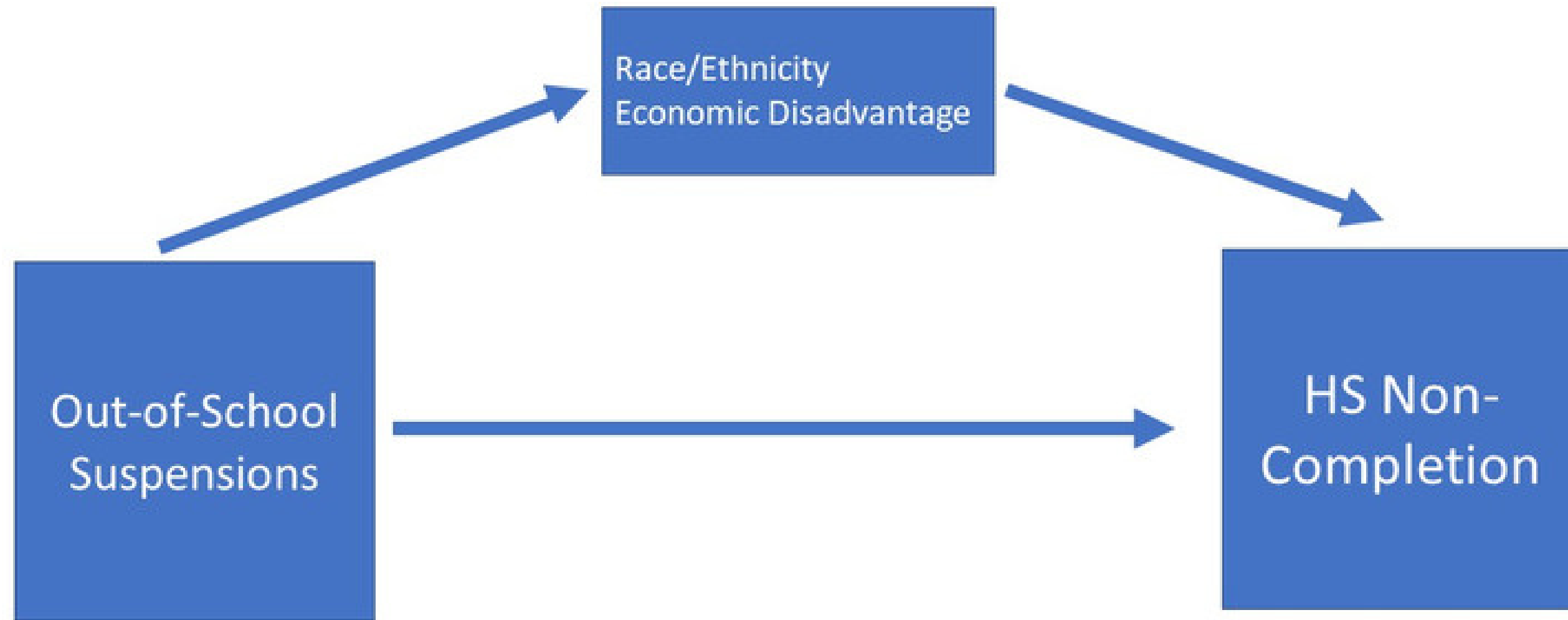
Graduation Trends



Discipline Trends



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Data

Aggregate District (local education agency) Data

2017-18 Civil Rights Data Collection

2017-18 Texas Education Agency Completion data

Public Schools Only

Charter Schools and Charter Districts Excluded

Only school districts with complete data

342 school districts out of 1,204



Method

Ordinary Least Squares Regression to predict the rate of high school completion.

Key predictor variable % Out-of-School Suspensions
Outcome variable % high school non-completion

log transformation of key variables

Control variables

- % Black Students
- % White Students
- % Hispanic Students
- % Other Students
- % Economically Disadvantaged



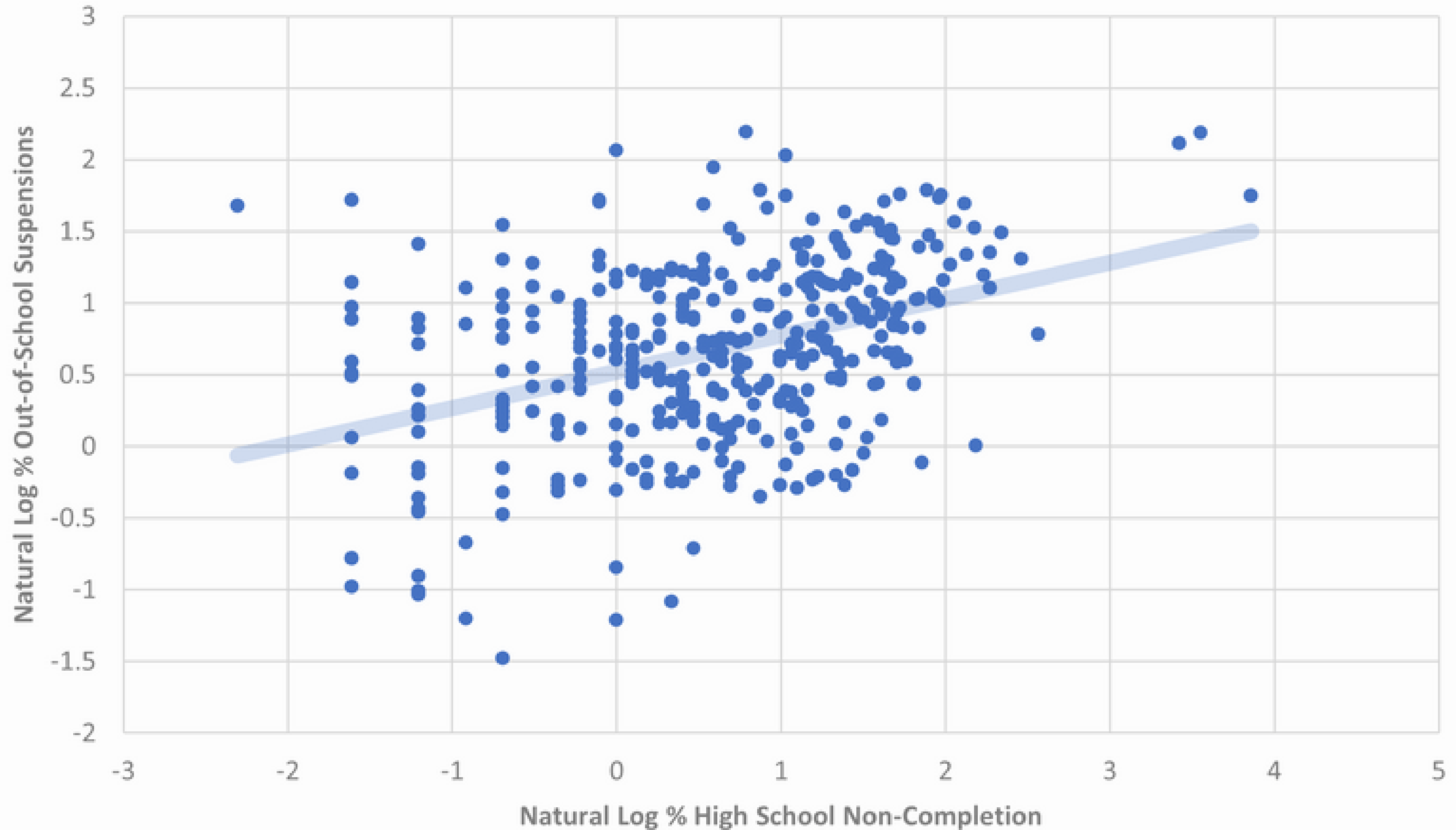
Descriptives



The median school district percentage of out-of-school suspensions was 2.1%

The median school district percentage of high school non-completion was 1.7%

Association Between Out-of-School Suspensions and High School Non-Completion For Texas School Districts.



Results

- A significant, positive relationship exists between district rates of out-of-school suspensions and district rates of high school non-completion.
- A 1% increase in district rate of out-of-school suspension is associated with a 1.4% increase in high school non-completion, controlling for race/ethnicity and economically disadvantaged.
- Additionally, a 1% increase in the percent of Latino student and Other student enrollments were associated with 1.4% and 1.1% increases in high school noncompletion, respectively.



Limitations

- The sample size does not reflect the entire state (28% of all LEA's in Texas).
- Analysis lacks essential control variables due to missingness.



Other Data Sources by IDRA





Making it Make Sense for You in Your Community

All students deserve safe and welcoming schools that do not use harmful discipline and school police to punish young people.

- Do your own research
- Raise the age at both ends
- Invest in Restorative & Supportive Practices
- Organize, Strategize, Mobilize in your school, district, and state



Upcoming Webinars



How Calculus Access and Funding Inequity Limits
College Readiness

October 20, 2021 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

<https://idra.news/SymposiumRegister>

Upcoming Webinars



Free Webinar October 27

In the Red ~ Drawing the Line on Digital Redlining Practices

featuring...

Michelle Vega, IDRA Chief Technology Officer
Christina Quintanilla-Muñoz, IDRA Research Analyst
Thomas Marshall, IDRA Policy Communications Strategist

October 27, 2021 • 11:30 am to 12:30 pm CT

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<https://idra.news/WebinarInTheRed>

Upcoming Webinars

10/20 - 1PM ET

**SCHOOL
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Moderated by: Olatunde Johnson

Kristin Henning

Jason Nance

Matt Kautz

a cross-movement conversation

Register: https://discipline_ncsd.eventbrite.com

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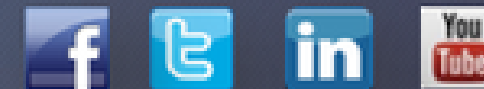
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