

Announcing the Final Examination of  
Timberly L. Baker  
for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership Policy Studies  
Friday, March 9, 2012, 10 am  
Wendell W. Wright School of Education, Room 2140  
**Student and school characteristics: Factors contributing to African American overrepresentation  
for defiance**

This dissertation addresses the use of suspension and expulsion for defiant behavior. It examines the contributions of student and/or school characteristics and their relationship to suspension and expulsion for defiance, specifically focusing on African Americans.

The purpose of this study is to scrutinize the quantifiable factors that lead to students being suspended or expelled for defiance. Hierarchical linear modeling is used to examine three research questions; holding all other variables constant.

- 1) Are student characteristics, including socioeconomic status, race, or student achievement associated with suspension and expulsion of students for defiance?
- 2) Are school characteristics, including number of students by race, school free and reduced lunch percentage, teacher experience, locale, or dropout rate associated with suspension and expulsion of students for defiance?
- 3) Is the teacher racial makeup of a school associated with students being suspended or expelled for defiance?

The Critical Race Theory construct of microaggression provides a lens for viewing the dynamic interplay of student race and suspension/expulsion for defiance. A new conceptual framework to examine the cyclical nature of defiance is presented.

This study found that student characteristics: student race, student socioeconomic status (SES), and student achievement (ISTEP+ scores), predict suspension/expulsion for defiance. As well, it found that school characteristics: students by race, school free/reduced lunch percentage, teacher experience, teacher race, locale and dropout rate are good predictors of suspension/expulsion for defiance. The findings suggest that the school characteristic of free/reduced lunch percent is the strongest predictor of suspension/expulsion for defiance. Based on the findings, the study discusses that the school a student attends is a greater predictor of suspension/expulsion for defiance than the individual student.

*Outline of Current Studies*  
Major: Educational Leadership Policy Studies  
Minor: Law

*Educational Career*  
B.S. University Arkansas Pine Bluff, 2004  
M.S. Arkansas State University, 2006


*Committee in Charge*  
Professor Suzanne Eckes, Chairperson  
(812) 856-8376, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Russell J. Skiba, Ph.D.

Kevin D. Brown, J.D.

Gerardo R. Lopez, Ph. D.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Suzanne Eckes, Ph.D.

(Any member of the Graduate Faculty may attend. As a courtesy, please notify the Committee Chairperson in advance.)