

Smith, S. (2002). *School safety and discipline: Examining the effects of an in-school suspension ram at a public school*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Auburn University.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

The present study is an examination of the effectiveness of an in-school suspension (ISS) program at a public high school. The investigator, along with school discipline teams, revised the ISS program in mid-year and evaluated its effectiveness in the following areas: (1) total number of discipline referrals, (2) severity of offenses, (3) recidivism rates, and (4) faculty attitudes towards the program. A total of 1,630 students referred to the office for disciplinary reasons during the pre- and post-intervention phases of the 1999-2000 and the 2000-2001 school years were included as subjects. Eighty-five faculty members were surveyed pre- and post-intervention in order to measure faculty attitudes towards the ISS program.

Levene's test for equality of variances among groups was performed which indicated no significant difference ($p=.98$) for the pre- and post-intervention groups used to measure effect on total number of discipline referrals. An independent-samples, t-test was performed among groups relative to the total number of discipline referrals and found to be significant with $t(128) = 4.16, p<.001$ also. Effect size for this measure was $.729$, which is considered a medium effect size according to Cohen (1988).

Cramer's Phi was performed and results relative to severity of offenses for Types I, II, and III violations, pre- and post-intervention, were significant, $X^2(2, n=1630) = 440.204, p<.001$. A reverse relationship between Type I and Type II offenses were indicated with a 53% decrease in the number of type I offenses and a 53% increase in the total number of type II offenses during the pre- and post-intervention phases, respectively.

Chi-square was calculated for data relative to recidivism rates in the ISS program as well as percentages of change among pre- and post-intervention groups. Comparisons were performed using data collected from the 65 days prior to and after implementation of the revised ISS program, which indicated a significant difference, $X^2(1, n=369) = 79.69, p<.001$. Data comparisons were made in

this manner since school personnel did not begin data collection for the ISS program until the 2000-2001 school year.

An ISS Survey was administered pre- and post-intervention to 85 faculty members in order to measure their attitudes towards the ISS program. The survey contained 13 items, which reflected characteristics of an effective ISS program found in the literature. Levene's test of variances among groups was performed and indicated a significant difference between pre- and post-intervention teacher attitudes. In a paired-samples correlation, the ISS Survey reached statistical significance as well ($r = .385$, $p = .001$). A paired-samples t test indicated a significant difference between attitude scores for the pre-intervention group ($M = 2.23$, $SD = .30$) and the post-intervention group ($M = 1.66$, $SD = .42$). Statistically significant results were identified relative to each of the research questions tested in this study: (1) total number of discipline referrals, (2) severity of offenses, (3) recidivism rates, and (4) faculty attitudes towards the ISS program.