Abstract

Large nationally representative samples of White, Black, Hispanic, Asian American, and American Indian students were used in this study to examine current patterns and recent trends in racial, ethnic, and gender differences in school discipline from 1991 to 2005. Findings revealed that Black, Hispanic, and American Indian youth are slightly more likely than White and Asian American youth to be sent to the principal’s office and two to five times more likely to be suspended or expelled. Although school discipline rates decreased over time for most racial and ethnic groups, the rates for Black students’ school disciplinary measures increased between 1991 and 2005. Logistic regression analyses that controlled for racial and ethnic differences in sociodemographic factors suggest that those differences in school discipline do not result from differences in socioeconomic status. Authors suggest that future research and practice efforts seek to better understand and to eliminate racial, ethnic, and gender disproportionality as a first step in school discipline.