AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine if a statistical significant difference exists in group means between middle school teachers’ perception of their school environment based on school suspension rate. The *School as a Caring Community Profile—II A Survey of Student, Staff, and Parents (SCCP-II)*, developed by Lickona and Davidson (2003) at the Center for the 4th and 5th Rs, was distributed to 265 teachers from six middle schools in the Prince George’s County Public Schools system. The *SCCP-II* measures school climate as a caring community. The six middle schools were divided into three groups representing different levels of student suspension rates. Group A schools each reported a student suspension rate between 7% and 9% for the 2007-2008 school year. The schools in Group B each reflected a suspension rate between 13% and 14%. Finally, Group C schools each reported a higher suspension rate that fell between 20% and 22%.

Descriptive as well as inferential statistics were used to analyze data. Mean, median, and mode data were examined for general tendencies in responses. Six one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted to examine differences between group means. Noddings (2002) purported caring to be a major approach to character education initiatives. This study supports the need for the implementation of character education programs that hold caring at the helm of the curriculum as an effective tool for promoting positive student behavior. The examination of mean, median, and mode data as well as the data results from each ANOVA suggest Group C has the lowest perception of their school as a caring community and Group B has the highest perception. The data from Group A mirrors Group C data results in many areas. The question remains: What truly constitutes a caring school?