

James P. Scanlan
Attorney at Law
1529 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20007
(202) 338-9224
jps@jpscanlan.com

July 5, 2016

Electronically Transmitted

Jeffrey R. Sprague, Ph.D.
Claudia Vincent, Ph.D.
University of Oregon
Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior
901 E. 18th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97403

Erik Girvan, Ph.D., J.D.
University of Oregon School of Law
Center for Dispute Resolution
1515 Agate Street
Eugene, OR 97403

Re: Misunderstanding of Statistics in Report Titled “Eureka City Schools School-wide Positive and Restorative Discipline Assessment and Intervention Project Assessment Results and Programmatic Recommendations”

Dear Professor Sprague, Dr. Vincent, and Professor Girvan:

This a follow up to my [letter](#) dated July 3, 2016.¹

At page 4 of the earlier letter, I provided links to subpages of the [Discipline Disparities](#) page of jpscanlan.com discussing situations where recent overall reductions in discipline rates were accompanied by increased relative racial/ethnic difference in discipline rates. Two subpages ([Beaverton, OR Disparities](#), [Portland, OR Disparities](#)) pertained to jurisdictions in Oregon.

After sending the earlier letter, I discovered a February 26, 2016 Education Northwest presentation titled “[Reducing Discipline Disparities – What Teachers are Saying](#),” which contained data on recent reductions in suspensions in Oregon itself. On the basis of that data, I

¹ As discussed in the earlier letter, to facilitate consideration of issues raised in letters such as this by the addressees and others, I include links to referenced materials in electronic copies of the letters. Such copies may be found by means of the Institutional Correspondence subpage of the Measuring Health Disparities page of jpscanlan.com. In this case, the letter is being transmitted electronically, with links included.

created an [Oregon Disparities](#) subpage to the Discipline Disparities page discussing that the general reductions in suspensions were accompanied by increased relative racial differences in suspension rates.

The table used on the subpage is reproduced as Table 1 below. The table shows that each of the standard measures – the relative difference in the adverse outcome, the relative difference in the corresponding favorable outcome, the absolute difference between rates, and the difference measured by the odds ratio – changed in the manner it typically does in the circumstances of a general decline in the adverse outcome (where, as regards the absolute difference and odds ratio, the rate ranges for the declining outcome are well below 50% for both groups). The final column (EES for “estimated effect size”) indicates that to the extent the difference in the strength of the forces causing the suspension rates of blacks and whites to differ can be measured (see "Race and Mortality Revisited" and the ASA letter), it decreased very slightly.

Table 1. Rates at which black and white students in Oregon were suspended one or more times in the 2000/08 and 2013/14 school years, with measures of difference

School Year	Black Rate	White Rate	Blk/Wh Ratio Susp	Wh/Blk Ratio No Susp	Abs Diff (perc pnts)	Odds Ratio	EES
2007-08	18.3%	4.7%	3.89	1.17	13.6	4.54	0.77
2013-14	10.5%	2.3%	4.57	1.09	8.2	4.98	0.74

The online version of the presentation was not clear as to precisely what group of students the data covered. Upon clarification of that matter, I may modify the subpage.

While I have used the method yielding the EES figure in a number of discipline settings, there exist issues about the method’s validity in situations where the subject groups’ favorable or adverse outcome rates are based on a particular time frame. Such issues are discussed in the Addendum to the [Ferguson, Missouri Arrest Disparities](#) subpage of the Discipline Disparities page of [jpscanlan.com](#).

Sincerely,

/s/ **James P. Scanlan**

James P. Scanlan